

RICHARD FRANCIS BURTON

A plain and literal translation of the Arabian nights entertainments, now entituled The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night, Volume 4 (of 17)

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**To FOSTER FITZGERALD
ARBUTHNOT**

My dear Arbuthnot,

I have no fear that a friend, whose friendship has lasted nearly a third of a century, will misunderstand my reasons for inscribing his name upon these pages. You have lived long enough in the East and, as your writings show, observantly enough to detect the pearl which lurks in the kitchen-midden, and to note that its lustre is not dimmed nor its value diminished by its unclean surroundings.

Ever yours sincerely,

RICHARD F. BURTON.

Athenæum Club, *October 1, 1885.*

NI'AMAH BIN AL-RABI'A AND NAOMI HIS SLAVE-GIRL

There lived once in the city of Cufa¹ a man called Al-Rabí'a bin Hátim, who was one of the chief men of the town, a wealthy and a healthy, and Heaven had vouchsafed him a son, whom he named Ni'amat Allah.² One day, being in the slave-brokers' mart, he saw a woman exposed for sale with a little maid of wonderful beauty and grace on her arm. So he beckoned to the broker and asked him, "How much for this woman and her daughter?" He answered "Fifty dinars." Quoth Al-Rabí'a "Write the contract of sale and take the money and give it to her owner." Then he gave the broker the price and his brokerage and taking the woman and her child, carried them to his house. Now when the daughter

¹ The name is indifferently derived from the red sand about the town or the reeds and mud with which it was originally built. It was founded by the Caliph Omar, when the old Capital Madáin (Ctesiphon) opposite was held unwholesome, on the West bank of the Euphrates, four days' march from Baghdad and has now disappeared. Al-Saffáh, the first Abbaside, made it his Capital and it became a famous seat of Moslem learning; the Kufi school of Arab Grammarians being as renowned as their opponents, the Basri (of Bassorah). It gave a name to the "Cufic" characters which are, however, of much older date.

² "Ni'amat" = a blessing; and the word is perpetually occurring in Moslem conversation, "Ni'amatu 'lláh" (as pronounced) is also a favourite P. N. and few Anglo-Indians of the Mutiny date will forget the scandalous disclosures of Munshi Ni'amatu 'llah, who had been sent to England by Nana Sahib. Nu'm = prosperity, good fortune, and a P. N. like the Heb. "Naomi."

of his uncle who was his wife saw the slave, she said to her husband, "O my cousin, what is this damsel?" He replied, "Of a truth, I bought her for the sake of the little one on her arm; for know that, when she groweth up, there will not be her like for beauty, either in the land of the Arabs or the Ajams." His wife remarked, "Right was thy rede"; and said to the woman, "What is thy name?" She replied, "O my lady, my name is Taufík.³" "And what is thy daughter's name?" asked she. Answered the slave, "Sa'ad, the happy." Rejoined her mistress, "Thou sayst sooth, thou art indeed happy, and happy is he who hath bought thee." Then quoth she to her husband, "O my cousin, what wilt thou call her?"; and quoth he, "Whatso thou choolest"; so she, "Then let us call her Naomi;" and he rejoined, "Good is thy device." The little Naomi was reared with Al-Rabi'a's son Ni'amat in one cradle, so to speak, till the twain reached the age of ten and each grew handsomer than the other; and the boy used to address her, "O my sister!" and she, "O my brother!", till they came to that age when Al-Rabi'a said to Ni'amah, "O my son, Naomi is not thy sister but thy slave. I bought her in thy name whilst thou wast yet in the cradle; so call her no more sister from this day forth." Quoth Ni'amah, "If that be so, I will take her to wife." Then he went to his mother and told her of this, and she said to him, "O my son, she is thy handmaid." So he wedded and went

³ *i. e.* "causing to be prosperous"; the name, *e. corrumped* by the Turks to "Tevfik," is given to either sex, *e. g.* Taufik Pasha of Egypt, to whose unprosperous rule and miserable career the signification certainly does not apply.

in unto Naomi and loved her; and two⁴ years passed over them whilst in this condition, nor was there in all Cufa a fairer girl than Naomi, or a sweeter or a more graceful. As she grew up she learnt the Koran and read works of science and excelled in music and playing upon all kinds of instruments; and in the beauty of her singing she surpassed all the folk of her time. Now one day, as she sat with her husband in the wine-chamber, she took the lute, tightened the strings, and sang these two couplets: —

While thou'rt my lord whose bounty's my estate, ❀ A sword
whereby my woes to annihilate,
Recourse I never need to Amru or Zayd,⁵ ❀ Nor aught save
thee if way to me grow strait!

Ni'amah was charmed with these verses and said to her, “By my life, O Naomi, sing to us with the tambourine and other instruments!” So she sang these couplets to a lively measure: —

By His life who holds my guiding-rein, I swear ❀ I'll meet on

⁴ Lane (ii. 187) alters the two to four years.

⁵ *i. e.* “to Tom, Dick or Harry:” the names like John Doe and Richard Roe are used indefinitely in Arab. Grammar and Syntax. I have noted that Amru is written and pronounced Amr: hence Amru, the Conqueror of Egypt, when told by an astrologer that Jerusalem would be taken only by a *trium literarum homo*, with three letters in his name, sent for the Caliph Omar (Omr), to whom the so-called Holy City at once capitulated. Hence also most probably, the tale of Bhurtpore and the Lord Alligator (Kumbhir), who however did not change from Cotton to Combermore for some time after the successful siege.

love-ground parlous foe nor care:

Good sooth I'll vex revilers, thee obey ❀ And quit my slumbers and all joy forswear:

And for thy love I'll dig in vitals mine ❀ A grave, nor shall my vitals weet 'tis there!

And Ni'amah exclaimed, "Heaven favoured art thou, O Naomi!" But whilst they led thus the most joyous life, behold! Al-Hajjáj,⁶ the Viceroy of Cufa said to himself, "Needs must I contrive to take this girl named Naomi and send her to the

⁶ Bin Yúsusuf al-Sakafi, a statesman and soldier of the seventh and eighth centuries (A.D.). He was Governor of Al-Hijaz and Al-Irak under the fifth and sixth Ommiades, and I have noticed his vigorous rule of the Moslems' Holy Land in my Pilgrimage (iii. 194, etc.). He pulled down the Ka'abah and restored it to the condition in which it now is. Al-Siyuti (p. 219) accuses him of having suborned a man to murder Ibn Omar with a poisoned javelin, and of humiliating the Prophet's companions by "sealing them in the necks and hands," that is he tied a thong upon the neck of each and sealed the knot with lead. In Irak he showed himself equally masterful; but an iron hand was required by the revolutionists of Kufah and Basrah. He behaved like a good Knight in rescuing the Moslem women who called upon his name when taken prisoners by Dahir of Debal (Tathá in Sind). Al-Hajjaj was not the kind of man the Caliph would have chosen for a pander; but the Shi'ahs hated him and have given him a lasting bad name. In the East men respect manly measures, not the hysterical, philanthropic pseudo-humanitarianism of our modern government which is really the cruellest of all. When Ziyád bin Abihi was sent by Caliph Mu'awiyah to reform Bassorah, a den of thieves, he informed the lieges that he intended to rule by the sword and advised all evil-doers to quit the city. The people were forbidden, under pain of death, to walk the streets after prayers; on the first night two hundred suffered; on the second five and none afterwards. Compare this with our civilised rule in Egypt where even bands of brigands, a phenomenon perfectly new and unknown to this century, have started up, where crime has doubled in quantity and quality, and where "Christian rule" has thoroughly scandalised a Moslem land.

Commander of the Faithful, Abd al-Malik bin Marwán, for he hath not in his palace her like for beauty and sweet singing.” So he summoned an old woman of the duennas of his wives and said to her, “Go to the house of Al-Rabi’a and foregather with the girl Naomi and combine means to carry her off; for her like is not to be found on the face of the earth.” She promised to do his bidding; so next morning she donned the woollen clothes of a devotee and hung around her neck a rosary of beads by the thousand; and, hending in hand a staff and a leather water-bottle of Yamani manufacture, – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old woman promised to do the bidding of Al-Hajjaj, and whenas it was morning she donned the woollen clothes of a devotee⁷ and hung around her neck a rosary of beads by the thousand and hent in hand a staff and a leather water-bottle of Yamani manufacture

⁷ The old bawd’s portrait is admirably drawn: all we dwellers in the East have known her well: she is so and so. Her dress and manners are the same amongst the Hindus (see the hypocritical female ascetic in the Katha p. 287) as amongst the Moslems; men of the world at once recognise her and the prudent keep out of her way. She is found in the cities of Southern Europe, ever pious, ever prayerful; and she seems to do her work not so much for profit as for pure or impure enjoyment. In the text her task was easy, as she had to do with a pair of innocents.

and fared forth crying, "Glory be to Allah! Praised be Allah! There is no god but *the* God! Allah is Most Great! There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" Nor did she leave off her lauds and her groaning in prayer whilst her heart was full of guile and wiles, till she came to the house of Ni'amah bin al-Rabi'a at the hour of noon-prayer, and knocked at the door. The doorkeeper opened and said to her, "What dost thou want?" Quoth she, "I am a poor pious woman, whom the time of noon-prayer hath overtaken, and lief would I pray in this blessed place." Answered the porter, "O old woman, this is no mosque nor oratory, but the house of Ni'amah son of al-Rabi'a." She replied, "I know there is neither cathedral-mosque nor oratory like the house of Ni'amah bin al-Rabi'a. I am a chamberwoman of the palace of the Prince of True Believers and am come out for worship and the visitation of Holy Places." But the porter rejoined, "Thou canst not enter;" and many words passed between them, till at last she caught hold and hung to him saying, "Shall the like of me be denied admission to the house of Ni'amah bin al-Rabi'a, I who have free access to the houses of Emirs and Grandees?" Anon, out came Ni'amah and, hearing their loud language, laughed and bade the old woman enter after him. So she followed him into the presence of Naomi, whom she saluted after the godliest and goodliest fashion, and, when she looked on her, she was confounded at her exceeding seemlihead and said to her, "O my lady, I commend thee to the safeguard of Allah, who made thee and thy lord fellows in beauty and

loveliness!” Then she stood up in the prayer-niche and betook herself to inclination and prostration and prayer, till day departed and night darkened and starkened, when Naomi said to her, “O my mother, rest thy legs and feet awhile.” Replied the old woman, “O my lady, whoso seeketh the world to come let him weary him in this world, and whoso wearieeth not himself in this world shall not attain the dwellings of the just in the world to come.” Then Naomi brought her food and said to her, “Eat of my bread and pray Heaven to accept my penitence and to have mercy on me.” But she cried, “O my lady, I am fasting. As for thee, thou art but a girl and it besitteth thee to eat and drink and make merry; Allah be indulgent to thee!; for the Almighty saith: – All shall be punished except him who shall repent and believe and shall work a righteous work.”⁸ So Naomi continued sitting with the old woman in talk and presently said to Ni’amah, “O my lord, conjure this ancient dame to sojourn with us awhile, for piety and devotion are imprinted on her countenance.” Quoth he, “Set apart for her a chamber where she may say her prayers; and suffer no one to go in to her: peradventure, Allah (extolled and exalted be He!) shall prosper us by the blessing of her presence and never separate us.” So the old woman passed her night in praying and reciting the Koran; and when Allah caused the morn to dawn, she went in to Ni’amah and Naomi and, giving them good morning, said to them, “I pray Allah have you in His holy keeping!” Quoth Naomi, “Whither away, O my mother? My lord hath bidden me

⁸ Koran, xxv. 70. I give Sale’s version.

set apart for thee a chamber, where thou mayst seclude thee for thy devotions.” Replied the old woman, “Allah give him long life, and continue His favour to you both! But I would have you charge the doorkeeper not to stay my coming in to you; and, Inshallah! I will go the round of the Holy Places and pray for you two at the end of my devotions every day and night.” Then she went out (whilst Naomi wept for parting with her knowing not the cause of her coming), and returned to Al-Hajjaj who said to her, “An thou do my bidding soon, thou shalt have of me abundant good.” Quoth she, “I ask of thee a full month;” and quoth he “Take the month.” Thereupon the old hag fell to daily visiting Ni’amah’s house and frequented his slave-wife, Naomi; – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Thirty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the old hag fell to visiting daily Ni’amah’s house and frequenting his slave-wife, Naomi; and both ceased not to honour her, and she used to go in to them morning and evening and all in the house respected her till, one day, being alone with Naomi, she said to her, “O my lady! by Allah, when I go to the Holy Places, I will pray for thee; and I only wish thou wert with me, that thou mightest look on the Elders of the Faith who resort thither, and they should pray for thee, according to thy desire.” Naomi

cried, "I conjure thee by Allah take me with thee!"; and she replied, "Ask leave of thy mother-in-law, and I will take thee." So Naomi said to her husband's mother, "O my lady, ask my master to let us go forth, me and thee, one day with this my old mother, to prayer and worship with the Fakirs in the Holy Places." Now when Ni'amah came in and sat down, the old woman went up to him and would have kissed his hand, but he forbade her; so she invoked blessings⁹ on him and left the house. Next day she came again, in the absence of Ni'amah, and she addressed Naomi, saying, "We prayed for thee yesterday; but arise now and divert thyself and return ere thy lord come home." So Naomi said to her mother-in-law, "I beseech thee, for Allah's sake, give me leave to go with this pious woman, that I may sight the saints of Allah in the Holy Places, and return speedily ere my lord come back." Quoth Ni'amah's mother, "I fear lest thy lord know;" but said the old woman, "By Allah, I will not let her take seat on the floor; no, she shall look, standing on her feet, and not tarry." So she took the damsel by guile and, carrying her to Al-Hajjaj's palace, told him of her coming, after placing her in a lonely chamber; whereupon he went in to her and, looking upon her, saw her to be the loveliest of the people of the day, never had he beheld her like. Now when Naomi

⁹ Easterns, I have observed, have no way of saying "Thank you;" they express it by a blessing or a short prayer. They have a right to your surplus: daily bread is divided, they say and, eating yours, they consider it their own. I have discussed this matter in Pilgrimage i. 75-77, in opposition to those who declare that "gratitude" is unknown to Moslems.

caught sight of him she veiled her face from him; but he left her not till he had called his Chamberlain, whom he commanded to take fifty horsemen; and he bade him mount the damsel on a swift dromedary, and bear her to Damascus and there deliver her to the Commander of the Faithful, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan. Moreover, he gave him a letter for the Caliph, saying, “Bear him this letter and bring me his answer and hasten thy return to me.” So the Chamberlain, without losing time, took the damsel (and she tearful for separation from her lord) and, setting out with her on a dromedary, gave not over journeying till he reached Damascus. There he sought audience of the Commander of the Faithful and, when it was granted, the Chamberlain delivered the damsel and reported the circumstance. The Caliph appointed her a separate apartment and going into his Harim, said to his wife, “Al-Hajjaj hath bought me a slave-girl of the daughters of the Kings of Cufa¹⁰ for ten thousand dinars, and hath sent me this letter.” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fortieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when

¹⁰ Cufa (Kufah) being a modern place never had a “King,” but as the Hindu says, “Delhi is far” – it is a far cry to Loch Awe. Here we can hardly understand “Malik” as Governor or Viceroy: can it be syn. with Zú-mál (moneyed)?

the Caliph acquainted his wife with the story of the slave-girl, she said to him, "Allah increase to thee His favour!" Then the Caliph's sister went in to the supposed slave-girl and, when she saw her, she said, "By Allah, not unlucky is the man who hath thee in his house, were thy cost an hundred thousand dinars!" And Naomi replied, "O fair of face, what King's palace is this, and what is the city?" She answered, "This is the city of Damascus, and this is the palace of my brother, the Commander of the Faithful, Abd al-Malik bin Marwan.¹¹" Then she resumed, "Didst thou not know all this?" Naomi said, "By Allah, O my lady, I had no knowledge of it!"; when the other asked, "And he who sold thee and took thy price did he not tell thee that the Caliph had bought thee?" Now when Naomi heard these words, she shed tears and said to herself, "Verily, I have been tricked and the trick hath succeeded," adding to herself, "If I speak, none will credit me; so I will hold my peace and take patience, for I know that the relief of Allah is near." Then she bent her head for shame, and indeed her cheeks were tanned by the journey and the sun. So the Caliph's sister left her that day and returned to her on the morrow with clothes and necklaces of jewels, and dressed

¹¹ Abd al-Malik has been before mentioned as the "Sweat of a Stone," etc. He died recommending Al-Hajjaj to his son, Al-Walid, and one of his sayings is still remembered. "He who desireth to take a female slave for carnal enjoyment, let him take a native of Barbary; if he need one for the sake of children, let him have a Persian; and whoso desireth one for service, let him take a Greek." Moderns say, "If you want a brother (in arms) try a Nubian; one to get you wealth an Abyssinian and if you want an ass (for labour) a S awahili, or Zanzibar negroid."

her; after which the Caliph came in to her and sat down by her side, and his sister said to him, "Look on this handmaid in whom Allah hath conjoined every perfection of beauty and loveliness." So he said to Naomi, "Draw back the veil from thy face;" but she would not unveil, and he beheld not her face. However, he saw her wrists and love of her entered his heart; and he said to his sister, "I will not go in unto her for three days, till she be cheered by thy converse." Then he arose and left her, but Naomi ceased not to brood over her case and sigh for her separation from her master, Ni'amah, till she fell sick of a fever during the night and ate not nor drank; and her favour faded and her charms were changed. They told the Caliph of this and her condition grieved him; so he visited her with physicians and men of skill, but none could come at a cure for her. This how it fared with her; but as regards Ni'amah, when he returned home he sat down on his bed and cried, "Ho, Naomi!" But she answered not; so he rose in haste and called out, yet none came to him, as all the women in the house had hidden themselves for fear of him. Then he went out to his mother, whom he found sitting with her cheek on her hand, and said to her, "O my mother, where is Naomi?" She answered, "O my son, she is with one who is worthier than I to be trusted with her, namely, the devout old woman; she went forth with her to visit devotionally the Fakirs and return." Quoth Ni'amah, "Since when hath this been her habit and at what hour went she forth?" Quoth his mother, "She went out early in the morning." He asked, "And how camest thou to give her leave for this?"; and

she answered, "O my son, 'twas she persuaded me?" "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great!" exclaimed Ni'amah and, going forth from his home in a state of distraction, he repaired to the Captain of the Watch to whom said he, "Dost thou play tricks upon me and steal my slave-girl away from my house? I will assuredly complain of thee to the Commander of the Faithful." Said the Chief of Police, "Who hath taken her?" and Ni'amah replied, "An old woman of such and such a mien, clad in woollen raiment and carrying a rosary of beads numbered by thousands." Rejoined the other, "Find me the old woman and I will get thee back thy slave-girl." "And who knows the old woman?" retorted Ni'amah. "And who knows the hidden things save Allah (may He be extolled and exalted!)" cried the Chief, who knew her for Al-Hajjaj's procuress. Cried Ni'amah, "I look to thee for my slave-girl, and Al-Hajjaj shall judge between thee and me;" and the Master of Police answered, "Go to whom thou wilt." So Ni'amah went to the palace of Al-Hajjaj, for his father was one of the chief men of Cufa; and, when he arrived there, the Chamberlain went in to the Governor and told him the case; whereupon Al-Hajjaj said, "Hither with him!" and when he stood before him enquired, "What be thy business?" Said Ni'amah, "Such and such things have befallen me;" and the Governor said, "Bring me the Chief of Police, and we will command him to seek for the old woman." Now he knew that the Chief of Police was acquainted with her; so, when he came, he said to him, "I wish thee to make search for the slave-

girl of Ni'amah son of Al-Rabi'a." And he answered, "None knoweth the hidden things save Almighty Allah." Rejoined Al-Hajjaj, "There is no help for it but thou send out horsemen and look for the damsel in all the roads, and seek for her in the towns." – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Al-Hajjaj said to the Captain of the watch, "There is no help for it but thou send out horsemen, and look for the damsel on all the roads and seek for her in the towns." Then he turned to Ni'amah and said to him, "An thy slave-girl return not, I will give thee ten slave-girls from my house and ten from that of the Chief of Police." And he again bade the Captain of the Watch, "Go and seek for the girl." So he went out, and Ni'amah returned home full of trouble and despairing of life; for he had now reached the age of fourteen and there was yet no hair on his side-cheeks. So he wept and lamented and shut himself up from his household; and ceased not to weep and lament, he and his mother, till the morning, when his father came in to him and said, "O my son, of a truth, Al-Hajjaj hath put a cheat upon the damsel and hath taken her; but from hour to hour Allah giveth relief." However grief redoubled on Ni'amah, so that he knew not what he said

nor knew he who came in to him, and he fell sick for three months; his charms were changed, his father despaired of him and the physicians visited him and said, "There is no remedy for him save the damsel." Now as his father was sitting one day, behold, he heard tell of a skilful Persian physician, whom the folk gave out for perfect in medicine and astrology and geomancy. So Al-Rabi'a sent for him and, seating him by his side, entreated him with honour and said to him, "Look into my son's case." Thereupon quoth he to Ni'amah, "Give me thy hand." The young man gave him his hand and he felt his pulse and his joints and looked in his face; then he laughed and, turning to his father, said, "Thy son's sole ailment is one of the heart."¹² He replied, "Thou sayest sooth, O sage, but apply thy skill to his state and case, and acquaint me with the whole thereof and hide naught from me of his condition." Quoth the Persian, "Of a truth he is enamoured of a slave-girl and this slave-girl is either in Bassorah or Damascus; and there is no remedy for him but reunion with her." Said Al-Rabi'a, "An thou bring them together, thou shalt live all thy life in wealth and delight." Answered the Persian, "In good sooth this be an easy matter and soon brought about;" and he turned to Ni'amah and said to him, "No hurt shall befall thee; so be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear." Then quoth he to Al-Rabi'a, "Bring me out four thousand dinars of your money;" so he gave them to him, and he added, "I wish

¹² Probably suggested by the history of Antiochus and Stratonice, with an addition of Eastern mystery such as geomancy.

to carry thy son with me to Damascus; and Almighty Allah willing, I will not return thence but with the damsel." Then he turned to the youth and asked, "What is thy name?"; and he answered "Ni'amah." Quoth the Persian, "O Ni'amah, sit up and be of good heart, for Allah will reunite thee with the damsel." And when he sat up the leach continued, "Be of good cheer for we set out for Damascus this very day: put thy trust in the Lord, and eat and drink and be cheerful so as to fortify thyself for travel." Upon this the Persian began making preparation of all things needed, such as presents and rarities; and he took of Al-Rabi'a in all the sum of ten thousand dinars, together with horses and camels and beasts of burden and other requisites. Then Ni'amah farewelled his father and mother and journeyed with the physician to Aleppo. They could find no news of Naomi there, so they fared on to Damascus, where they abode three days, after which the Persian took a shop and he adorned even the shelves with vessels of costly porcelain, with covers of silver, and with gildings and stuffs of price. Moreover, he set before himself vases and flagons of glass full of all manner of ointments and syrups, and he surrounded them with cups of crystal and, placing astrolabe and geomantic tablet facing him, he donned a physician's habit and took his seat in the shop. Then he set Ni'amah standing before him clad in a shirt and gown of silk and, girding his middle with a silken kerchief gold-embroidered, said to him, "O Ni'amah, henceforth thou art my son; so call me naught but sire, and I will call thee naught but son." And he

replied, "I hear and I obey." Thereupon the people of Damascus flocked to the Persian's shop that they might gaze on the youth's goodliness and the beauty of the shop and its contents, whilst the physician spoke to Ni'amah in Persian and he answered him in the same tongue, for he knew the language, after the wont of the sons of the notables. So that Persian doctor soon became known among the townsfolk and they began to acquaint him with their ailments, and he to prescribe for them remedies. Moreover, they brought him the water of the sick in phials,¹³ and he would test it and say, "He, whose water this is, is suffering from such and such a disease," and the patient would declare, "Verily this physician sayeth sooth." So he continued to do the occasions of the folk and they to flock to him, till his fame spread throughout the city and into the houses of the great. Now, one day as he sat in his shop, behold, there came up an old woman riding on an ass with a stuffed saddle of brocade embroidered with jewels; and, stopping before the Persian's shop, drew rein and beckoned him, saying, "Take my hand." He took her hand, and she alighted and asked him, "Art thou the Persian physician from Irak?" "Yes," answered he, and she said, "Know that I have a sick daughter." Then she brought out to him a phial and the Persian looked at it and said to her, "O my mistress, tell me thy daughter's name, that I may calculate her horoscope and learn the hour in which it will befit her to drink medicine." She replied, "O my brother

¹³ Arab. "Kárúrah": the "water-doctor" has always been an institution in the East and he has lately revived in Europe – especially at the German baths and in London.

the Persian,¹⁴ her name is Naomi.” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Persian heard the name of Naomi, he fell to calculating and writing on his hand and presently said, “O my lady, I cannot prescribe a medicine for her till I know what country woman she is, because of the difference of climate: so tell me in what land she was brought up and what is her age.” The old woman replied, “She is fourteen years old and she was brought up in Cufa of Irak.” He asked, “And how long hath she sojourned in this country?” “But a few months,” answered she. Now when Ni’amah heard the old woman’s words and recognised the name of his slave-girl, his heart fluttered and he was like to faint. Then said the Persian, “Such and such medicines will suit her case;” and the old woman rejoined, “Then make them up and give me what thou hast mentioned, with the blessing of Almighty Allah.” So saying, she threw upon the shop-board ten gold pieces; and he looked at Ni’amah and bade him prepare the necessary drugs; whereupon she also looked at the youth and exclaimed, “Allah

¹⁴ Lane makes this phrase “O brother of the Persians!” synonymous with “O Persian!” I think it means more, a Persian being generally considered “too clever by half.”

have thee in his keeping, O my son! Verily, she favoureth thee in age and mien.” Then said she to the physician, “O my brother the Persian, is this thy slave or thy son?” “He is my son,” answered he. So Ni’amah put up the medicine and, placing it in a little box, took a piece of paper and wrote thereon these two couplets:¹⁵—

If Naomi bless me with a single glance, ❀ Let Su’adá sue and
Juml joy to pet:

They said, “Forget her: twenty such thou’lt find.” ❀ But none
is like her – I will *not* forget!

He pressed the paper into the box and, sealing it up, wrote upon the cover the following words in Cufic character, “I am Ni’amah son of al-Rabi’a of Cufa.” Then he set it before the old woman who took it and bade them farewell and returned to the Caliph’s palace; and when she went up with the drugs to the damsel she placed the little box of medicine at her feet, saying, “O my lady, know that there is lately come to our town a Persian physician, than whom I never saw a more skilful nor a better versed in matters of malady. I told him thy name, after showing him the water-bottle, and forthwith he knew thine ailment and prescribed a remedy. Then he bade his son make thee up this medicine; and there is not in Damascus a comelier or a seemlier

¹⁵ The verses deal in untranslatable word-plays upon women’s names, Naomi (the blessing) Su’adá or Su’ád (the happy, which Mr. Redhouse, in Ka’ab’s Mantle-poem, happily renders Beatrice); and Juml (a sum or total) the two latter, moreover, being here fictitious.

youth than this lad of his, nor hath anyone a shop the like of his shop." So Naomi took the box and, seeing the names of her lord and his father written on the cover, changed colour and said to herself, "Doubtless, the owner of this shop is come in search of me." So she said to the old woman, "Describe to me this youth." Answered the old woman, "His name is Ni'amah, he hath a mole on his right eyebrow, is richly clad and is perfectly handsome." Cried Naomi, "Give me the medicine, whereon be the blessing and help of Almighty Allah!" So she drank off the potion (and she laughing) and said, "Indeed, it is a blessed medicine!" Then she sought in the box and, finding the paper, opened it, read it, understood it and knew that this was indeed her lord, whereat her heart was solaced and she rejoiced. Now when the old woman saw her laughing, she exclaimed, "This is indeed a blessed day!"; and Naomi said, "O nurse, I have a mind for something to eat and drink." The old woman said to the serving-women, "Bring a tray of dainty viands for your mistress"; whereupon they set food before her and she sat down to eat. And behold in came the Caliph who, seeing her sitting at meat, rejoiced; and the old woman said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, I give thee joy of thy handmaid Naomi's recovery! And the cause is that there is lately come to this our city a physician than whom I never saw a better versed in diseases and their remedies. I fetched her medicine from him and she hath drunken of it but once and is restored to health." Quoth he, "Take a thousand dinars and apply thyself to her treatment, till she be completely recovered."

And he went away, rejoicing in the damsel's recovery, whilst the old woman betook herself to the Persian's house and delivered the thousand dinars, giving him to know that she was become the Caliph's slave and also handing him a letter which Naomi had written. He took it and gave the letter to Ni'amah, who at first sight knew her hand and fell down in a swoon. When he revived he opened the letter and found these words written therein: "From the slave despoiled of her Ni'amah, her delight; her whose reason hath been beguiled and who is parted from the core of her heart. But afterwards. Of a truth thy letter hath reached me and hath broadened my breast, and solaced my soul, even as saith the poet: —

Thy note came: long lost fingers wrote that note, ❀ Till drop
thy sweetest scents for what they wrote:

'Twas Moses to his mother's arms restored; ❀ 'Twas Jacob's
eye-sight cured by Joseph's coat!"¹⁶

When Ni'amah read these verses, his eyes ran over with tears

¹⁶ "And he (Jacob) turned from them, and said, 'O how I am grieved for Joseph!' And his eyes became white with mourning... (Quoth Joseph to his brethren), 'Take this my inner garment and throw it on my father's face and he shall recover his sight...' So, when the messenger of good tidings came (to Jacob) he threw it (the shirt) over his face and he recovered his eye-sight." – Koran, xii. 84, 93, 96. The commentators, by way of improvement, assure us that the shirt was that worn by Abraham when thrown into the fire (Koran, chapt. xvi.) by Nimrod (!). We know little concerning "Jacob's daughters" who named the only bridge spanning the upper Jordan, and who have a curious shrine-tomb near Jewish "Safed" (North of Tiberias), one of the four "Holy Cities." The Jews ignore these "daughters of Jacob" and travellers neglect them.

and the old woman said to him, "What maketh thee to weep, O my son? Allah never cause thine eye to shed tears!" Cried the Persian, "O my lady, how should my son not weep, seeing that this is his slave-girl and he her lord, Ni'amah son of al-Rabi'a of Cufa; and her health dependeth on her seeing him, for naught aileth her but loving him." – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Persian cried out to the old woman, "How shall my son not weep, seeing that this is his slave-girl and he her lord, Ni'amah son of al-Rabi'a of Cufa; and the health of this damsel dependeth on her seeing him and naught aileth her but loving him. So, do thou, O my lady, take these thousand dinars to thyself and thou shalt have of me yet more than this; only look on us with eyes of ruth; for we know not how to bring this affair to a happy end save through thee." Then she said to Ni'amah, "Say, art thou indeed her lord?" He replied, "Yes," and she rejoined, "Thou sayest sooth; for she ceaseth not continually to name thee." Then he told her all that had passed from first to last, and she said, "O youth, thou shalt owe thy reunion with her to none but myself." So she mounted and, at once returning to Naomi, looked in her face and laughed saying, "It is just, O my daughter, that thou weep and fall sick

for thy separation from thy master, Ni'amah son of Al-Rabi'a of Cufa." Quoth Naomi, "Verily, the veil hath been withdrawn for thee and the truth revealed to thee." Rejoined the old woman, "Be of good cheer and take heart, for I will assuredly bring you together, though it cost me my life." Then she returned to Ni'amah and said to him, "I went to thy slave-girl and conversed with her, and I find that she longeth for thee yet more than thou for her; for although the Commander of the Faithful is minded to become intimate with her, she refuseth herself to him. But if thou be stout of purpose and firm of heart, I will bring you together and venture my life for you, and play some trick and make shift to carry thee into the Caliph's palace, where thou shalt meet her, for she cannot come forth." And Ni'amah answered, "Allah requite thee with good!" Then she took leave of him and went back to Naomi and said, "Thy lord is indeed dying of love for thee and would fain see thee and foregather with thee. What sayest thou?" Naomi replied, "And I too am longing for his sight and dying for his love." Whereupon the old woman took a parcel of women's clothes and ornaments and, repairing to Ni'amah, said to him, "Come with me into some place apart." So he brought her into the room behind the shop where she stained his hands and decked his wrists and plaited his hair, after which she clad him in a slave-girl's habit and adorned him after the fairest fashion of woman's adornment, till he was as one of the Houris of the Garden of Heaven, and when she saw him thus she exclaimed, "Blessed be Allah, best of Creators! By Allah, thou art handsomer than

the damsel.¹⁷ Now, walk with thy left shoulder forwards and thy right well behind, and sway thy hips from side to side.”¹⁸ So he walked before her, as she bade him; and, when she saw he had caught the trick of woman’s gait, she said to him, “Expect me to-morrow night, and Allah willing, I will take and carry thee to the palace. But when thou seest the Chamberlains and the Eunuchs be bold, and bow thy head and speak not with any, for I will prevent their speech; and with Allah is success!” Accordingly, when the morning dawned, she returned and, carrying him to the palace, entered before him and he after her step by step. The Chamberlain would have stopped his entering, but the old woman said to him, “O most ill-omened of slaves, this is the handmaid of Naomi, the Caliph’s favourite. How durst thou stay her when she would enter?” Then said she, “Come in, O damsel!”; and the old woman went in and they ceased not faring on, till they drew near the door leading to the inner piazza of the palace, when she said to him, “O Ni’amah, hearten thyself and take courage and enter and turn to the left: then count five doors and pass through the sixth, for it is that of the place prepared for thee. Fear nothing,

¹⁷ Easterns, I have remarked, mostly recognise the artistic truth that the animal man is handsomer than woman; and that “fair sex” is truly only of skin-colour. The same is the general rule throughout creation, for instance the stallion compared with the mare, the cock with the hen; while there are sundry exceptions such as the Falconidæ.

¹⁸ The Badawi (who is nothing if not horsey) compares the gait of a woman who walks well (in Europe rarely seen out of Spain) with the slightly swinging walk of a thoroughbred mare, bending her graceful neck and looking from side to side at objects as she passes.

and if any speak to thee, answer not neither stop.” Then she went up with him to the door, and the Chamberlain there on guard accosted her, saying, “What damsel is this?” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when the Chamberlain accosted the old woman, saying, “What damsel is this?”; quoth the ancient dame, “Our lady hath a mind to buy her;” and he rejoined, “None may enter save by leave of the Commander of the Faithful; so do thou go back with her. I cannot let her pass for thus am I commanded.” Replied the old woman, “O Chief Chamberlain, use thy reason. Thou knowest that Naomi, the Caliph’s slave-girl, of whom he is enamoured, is but now restored to health and the Commander of the Faithful hardly yet crediteth her recovery. She is minded to buy this handmaid; so oppose thou not her entrance, lest haply it come to Naomi’s knowledge and she be wroth with thee and suffer a relapse and this cause thy head to be cut off.” Then said she to Ni’amah, “Enter, O damsel; pay no heed to what he saith and tell not the Queen-consort that her Chamberlain opposed thine entrance.” So Ni’amah bowed his head and entered the palace, and would have turned to the left, but mistook the direction and walked to his right; and, meaning to count five doors and

enter the sixth, he counted six and entering the seventh, found himself in a place whose floor was carpeted with brocade and whose walls were hung with curtains of gold-embroidered silk. And therein stood censers of aloes-wood and ambergris and strong-scented musk, and at the upper end was a couch bespread with cloth of gold on which he seated himself, marvelling at the magnificence he saw and knowing not what was written for him in the Secret Purpose. As he sat musing on his case, the Caliph's sister, followed by her handmaid, came in upon him; and, seeing the youth seated there took him for a slave-girl and accosted him and said, "Who art thou O damsel? and what is thy case and who brought thee hither?" He made no reply, and was silent, when she continued, "O damsel! if thou be one of my brother's concubines and he be wroth with thee, I will intercede with him for thee and get thee grace." But he answered her not a word; so she said to her slave-girl, "Stand at the door and let none enter." Then she went up to Ni'amah and looking at him was amazed at his beauty and said to him, "O lady, tell me who thou art and what is thy name and how thou camest here; for I have never seen thee in our palace." Still he answered not, whereat she was angered and, putting her hand to his bosom, found no breasts and would have unveiled him, that she might know who he was; but he said to her, "O my lady, I am thy slave and I cast myself on thy protection: do thou protect me." She said, "No harm shall come to thee, but tell me who thou art and who brought thee into this my apartment." Answered he, "O Princess, I am known as Ni'amah bin al-Rabi'a

of Cufa and I have ventured my life for the sake of my slave-girl Naomi, whom Al-Hajjaj took by sleight and sent hither.” Said she, “Fear not: no harm shall befall thee;” then, calling her maid, she said to her, “Go to Naomi’s chamber and send her to me.” Meanwhile the old woman went to Naomi’s bedroom and said to her, “Hath thy lord come to thee?” “No, by Allah!” answered Naomi, and the other said, “Belike he hath gone astray and entered some chamber other than thine and lost himself.” So Naomi cried, “There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in Allah, the Glorious, the Great! Our last hour is come and we are all lost.” And while they were sitting and sadly enough pondering their case, in came the Princess’s handmaid and saluting Naomi said to her, “My lady biddeth thee to her banquet.” “I hear and I obey,” answered the damsel and the old woman said, “Belike thy lord is with the Caliph’s sister and the veil of secrecy hath been rent.” So Naomi at once sprang up and betook herself to the Princess, who said to her, “Here is thy lord sitting with me; it seemeth he hath mistaken the place; but, please Allah, neither thou nor he has any cause for fear.” When Naomi heard these words, she took heart of grace and went up to Ni’amah; and her lord when he saw her – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Ni'amah saw his handmaid Naomi, he rose to meet her and strained her to his bosom and both fell to the ground fainting. As soon as they came to themselves, the Caliph's sister said to them, "Sit ye down and take we counsel for your deliverance from this your strait." And they answered, "O our lady, we hear and obey; it is thine to command." Quoth she, "By Allah, no harm shall befall you from us!" Then she bade her handmaids bring meat and drink which was done, and they sat down and ate till they had enough, after which they sat drinking. Then the cup went round amongst them and their cares ceased from them; but Ni'amah said, "Would I knew how this will end." The Princess asked, "O Ni'amah, dost thou love thy slave Naomi?"; and he answered, "Of a truth it is my passion for her which hath brought me to this state of peril for my life." Then said she to the damsel, "O Naomi, dost thou love thy lord Ni'amah?"; and she replied, "O my lady, it is the love of him which hath wasted my body and brought me to evil case." Rejoined the Princess, "By Allah, since ye love each other thus, may he not be who would part you! Be of good cheer and keep your eyes cool and clear." At this they both rejoiced and Naomi called for a lute and, when they brought it, she took it and tuned it and played a lively measure which enchanted the

hearers, and after the prelude sang these couplets: —

When the slanderers cared but to part us twain, ❀ We owed
no blood-debt could raise their ire;
And they poured in our ears all the din of war, ❀ And aid
failed and friends, when my want was dire:
I fought them hard with mine eyes and tears; ❀ With breath
and sword, with the stream and fire!

Then Naomi gave the lute to her master, Ni'amah, saying,
“Sing thou to us some verse.” So he took it and playing a lively
measure, intoned these couplets: —

Full Moon if unfreckled would favour thee, ❀ And Sun
uneclipsed would reflect thy blee:
I wonder (but love is of wonders full ❀ And ardour and
passion and ecstasy)
How short the way to my love I fare, ❀ Which, from her
faring, so long I see.

Now when he had made an end of his song, Naomi filled the
cup and gave it to him, and he took it and drank it off; then
she filled again and gave the cup to the Caliph's sister who also
emptied it; after which the Princess in her turn took the lute and
tightened the strings and tuned it and sang these two couplets: —

Grief, cark and care in my heart reside, ❀ And the fires of
love in my breast abide;

My wasted form to all eyes shows clear; ❀ For Desire my
body hath mortified.

Then she filled the cup and gave it to Naomi, who drank it off
and taking the lute, sang these two couplets: —

O to whom I gave soul which thou torturest, ❀ And in vain
I'd recover from fair Unfaith,
Do grant thy favours my care to cure ❀ Ere I die, for this be
my latest breath.

And they ceased not to sing verses and drink to the sweet
sound of the strings, full of mirth and merriment and joy and
jollity till behold, in came the Commander of the Faithful. Now
when they saw him, they rose and kissed the ground before him;
and he, seeing Naomi with the lute in her hand, said to her,
“O Naomi, praised be Allah who hath done away from thee
sickness and suffering!” Then he looked at Ni'amah (who was
still disguised as a woman), and said to the Princess, “O my
sister, what damsel is this by Naomi's side?” She replied, “O
Commander of the Faithful, thou hast here a handmaid, one of
thy concubines and the bosom friend of Naomi who will neither
eat nor drink without her.” And she repeated the words of the
poet: —

Two contraries, and both concur in opposite charms, ❀ And
charms so contraried by contrast lovelier show.

Quoth the Caliph, “By Allah Omnipotent, verily she is as handsome as Naomi, and to-morrow I will appoint her a separate chamber beside that of her friend and send her furniture and stuffs and all that befitteth her, in honour of Naomi.” Then the Princess called for food and set it before her brother, who ate and made himself at home in their place and company. Then filling a cup he signed to Naomi to sing; so she took the lute, after draining two of them and sang these two couplets: —

Since my toper-friend in my hand hath given ❀ Three cups
that brim and bubble, e'er since
I've trailed my skirts throughout night for pride ❀ As tho',
Prince of the Faithful, I were thy Prince!

The Prince of True Believers was delighted and filling another cup, gave it to Naomi and bade her sing again; so after draining the cup and sweeping the strings, she sang as follows: —

O most noble of men in this time and stound, ❀ Of whom
none may boast he is equal found!
O matchless in greatness of soul and gifts, ❀ O thou Chief,
O thou King amongst all renowned:
Lord, who dealest large boons to the Lords of Earth, ❀
Whom thou vexest not nor dost hold them bound;
The Lord preserve thee, and spoil thy foes, ❀ And ne'er cease
thy lot with good Fortune crowned!

Now when the Caliph heard these couplets, he exclaimed, “By Allah, good! By Allah, excellent! Verily the Lord hath been copious¹⁹ to thee, O Naomi! How clever is thy tongue and how clear is thy speech!” And they ceased not their mirth and good cheer till midnight, when the Caliph’s sister said to him, “Give ear, O Commander of the Faithful to a tale I have read in books of a certain man of rank.” “And what is this tale?” quoth he. Quoth she “Know, O Prince of the Faithful that there lived once in the city of Cufa a youth called Ni’amah, son of Al-Rabi’a, and he had a slave-girl whom he loved and who loved him. They had been reared in one bed; but when they grew up and mutual love gat hold of them, Fortune smote them with her calamities and Time, the tyrant, brought upon them his adversity and decreed separation unto them. Thereupon designing and slanderous folk enticed her by sleight forth of his house and, stealing her away from his home, sold her to one of the Kings for ten thousand dinars. Now the girl loved her lord even as he loved her; so he left kith and kin and house and home and the gifts of fortune, and set out to search for her and when she was found he devised means to gain access to her” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

¹⁹ Li ‘lláhi (darr’) al-káil, a characteristic idiom. “Darr” = giving (rich) milk copiously; and the phrase expresses admiration, “To Allah be ascribed (or Allah be praised for) his rich eloquence who said,” etc. Some Hebraists would render it, “Divinely (well) did he speak who said,” etc., holding “Allah” to express a superlative like “Yah” (Jah) in Gen. iv. 1; x. 9. Nimrod was a hunter to the person (or presence) of Yah, *i. e.* mighty hunter.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph's sister said, "And Ni'amah ceased not absenting himself from his kith and kin and patrial stead, that he might gain access to his handmaid, and he incurred every peril and lavished his life till he gained access to her, and her name was Naomi, like this slave-girl. But the interview was short; they had not been long in company when in came the King, who had bought her of her kidnapper, and hastily ordered them to be slain, without doing justice by his own soul and delaying to enquire into the matter before the command was carried out. Now what sayest thou, O Commander of the Faithful, of this King's wrongous conduct?" Answered the Caliph; "This was indeed a strange thing: it behoved that King to pardon when he had the power to punish; and he ought to have regarded three things in their favour. The first was that they loved each other; the second that they were in his house and in his grasp; and the third that it befitteth a King to be deliberate in judging and ordering between folk, and how much more so in cases where he himself is concerned! Wherefore this King thus did an unkingly deed." Then said his sister, "O my brother, by the King of the heavens and the earth, I conjure thee, bid Naomi sing and hearken to that she shall sing!" So he said, "O Naomi, sing to me;" whereupon she played a lively

measure and sang these couplets: —

Beguiled us Fortune who her guile displays, ❀ Smiting the heart, bequeathing thoughts that craze,
And parting lovers whom she made to meet, ❀ Till tears in torrent either cheek displays:
They were and I was and my life was glad, ❀ While Fortune often joyed to join our ways;
I *will* pour tear-flood, *will* rain gouts of blood, ❀ Thy loss bemoaning through the nights and days!

Now when the Commander of the Faithful heard this verse, he was moved to great delight and his sister said to him, “O my brother, whoso decideth in aught against himself, him it behoveth to abide by it and do according to his word; and thou hast judged against thyself by this judgement.” Then said she, “O Ni’amah, stand up and do thou likewise up stand, O Naomi!” So they stood up and she continued, “O Prince of True Believers, she who standeth before thee is Naomi the stolen, whom Al-Hajjaj bin Yusuf al-Sakafi kidnapped and sent to thee, falsely pretending in his letter to thee that he had bought her for ten thousand gold pieces. And this other who standeth before thee is her lord, Ni’amah, son of Al-Rabi’a; and I beseech thee, by the honour of thy pious forebears and by Hamzah and Ukayl and Abbas,²⁰ to pardon them both and overlook their offence

²⁰ Hamzah and Abbás were the famous uncles of Mohammed often noticed; Ukayl is not known; possibly it may be Akíl, a son of the fourth Caliph, Ali.

and bestow them one on the other, that thou mayst win rich reward in the next world of thy just dealing with them; for they are under thy hand and verily they have eaten of thy meat and drunken of thy drink; and behold, I make intercession for them and beg of thee the boon of their blood.” Thereupon quoth the Caliph, “Thou speakest sooth: I did indeed give judgement as thou sayst, and I am not one to pass sentence and to revoke it.” Then said he, “O Naomi, say, be this thy lord?” And she answered, “Even so, O Commander of the Faithful.” Then quoth he, “No harm shall befall you, I give you each to other;” adding to the young man, “O Ni’amah, who told thee where she was and taught thee how to get at this place?” He replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, hearken to my tale and give ear to my history; for, by the virtue of thy pious forefathers, I will hide nothing from thee!” And he told him all that had passed between himself and the Persian physician and the old nurse, and how she had brought him into the palace and he had mistaken the doors; whereat the Caliph wondered with exceeding wonder and said, “Fetch me the Persian.” So they brought him into the presence and he was made one of his chief officers. Moreover the King bestowed on him robes of honour and ordered him a handsome present, saying, “When a man hath shown like this man such artful management, it behoveth us to make him one of our chief officers.” The Caliph also loaded Ni’amah and Naomi with gifts and honours and rewarded the old nurse; and they abode with him seven days in joy and content and all delight of life, when

Ni'amah craved leave to return to Cufa with his slave-girl. The Caliph gave them permission and they departed and arrived in due course at Cufa, where Ni'amah was restored to his father and mother, and they abode in all the joys and jollities of life, till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies. Now when Amjad and As'ad heard from Bahram this story, they marvelled with extreme marvel and said, "By Allah, this is indeed a rare tale!" – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Amjad and As'ad heard this story from Bahram the Magian who had become a Moslem, they marvelled with extreme marvel and thus passed that night; and when the next morning dawned, they mounted and riding to the palace, sought an audience of the King who granted it and received them with high honour. Now as they were sitting together talking, of a sudden they heard the townsfolk crying aloud and shouting to one another and calling for help; and the Chamberlain came in to the King and said to him, "Some King hath encamped before the city, he and his host, with arms and weapons displayed, and we know not their object and aim." The King took counsel with his Wazir Amjad and his brother As'ad; and Amjad said, "I will go out to him and learn

the cause of his coming.” So he took horse and, riding forth from the city, repaired to the stranger’s camp, where he found the King and with him a mighty many and mounted Mamelukes. When the guards saw him, they knew him for an envoy from the King of the city; so they took him and brought him before their Sultan. Then Amjad kissed the ground before him; but lo! the King was a Queen, who was veiled with a mouth-veil, and she said to Amjad, “Know that I have no design on this your city and that I am come hither only in quest of a beardless slave of mine, whom if I find with you, I will do you no harm; but if I find him not, then shall there befall sore onslaught between me and you.” Asked Amjad, “O Queen, what like is thy slave and what is his story and what may be his name?” Said she, “His name is As’ad and my name is Marjanah, and this slave came to my town in company of Bahram, a Magian, who refused to sell him to me; so I took him by force, but his master fell upon him by night and bore him away by stealth and he is of such and such a favour.” When Amjad heard that, he knew it was indeed his brother As’ad whom she sought and said to her, “O Queen of the age, Alhamdolillah, praised be Allah, who hath brought us relief! Verily this slave whom thou seekest is my brother.” Then he told her their story and all that had befallen them in the land of exile, and acquainted her with the cause of their departure from the Islands of Ebony, whereat she marvelled and rejoiced to have found As’ad. So she bestowed a dress of honour upon Amjad, and he returned forthright to the King and told him what

had passed, at which they all rejoiced and the King went forth with Amjad and As'ad to meet Queen Marjanah. When they were admitted to her presence and sat down to converse with her and were thus pleasantly engaged, behold, a dust-cloud rose and flew and grew, till it walled the view. And after a while it lifted and showed beneath it an army dight for victory, in numbers like the swelling sea, armed and armoured cap-à-pie who, making for the city, encompassed it around as the ring encompasseth the little finger;²¹ and a bared brand was in every hand. When Amjad and As'ad saw this, they exclaimed, "Verily to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return! What is this mighty host? Doubtless, these are enemies, and except we agree with this Queen Marjanah to fight them, they will take the town from us and slay us. There is no resource for us but to go out to them and see who they

²¹ The Eastern ring is rarely plain; and, its use being that of a signet, it is always in intaglio: the Egyptians invented engraving hieroglyphics on wooden stamps for marking bricks and applied the process to the ring. Moses B.C. 1491 (Exod. xxviii. 9) took two onyx-stones, and graved on them the names of the children of Israel. From this the signet ring was but a step. Herodotus mentions an emerald seal set in gold, that of Polycrates, the work of Theodorus son of Telecles the Samian (iii. 141). The Egyptians also were perfectly acquainted with working in cameo (anaglyph) and rilievo, as may be seen in the cavo rilievo of the finest of their hieroglyphs. The Greeks borrowed from them the cameo and applied it to gems (*e. g.* Tryphon's in the Marlborough collection), and they bequeathed the art to the Romans. We read in a modern book "Cameo means an onyx, and the most famous cameo in the world is the onyx containing the Apotheosis of Augustus." The ring is given in marriage because it was a seal by which orders were signed (Gen. xxxviii. 18 and Esther iii. 10-12). I may note that the seal-ring of Cheops (Khufu), found in the Greatest Pyramid, was in the possession of my old friend, Doctor Abbott, of Auburn (U.S.), and was sold with his collection. It is the oldest ring in the world, and settles the Cheops-question.

are.” So Amjad arose and took horse and passed through the city-gate to Queen Marjanah’s camp; but when he reached the approaching army he found it to be that of his grandsire, King Ghayur, father of his mother Queen Budur. – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that when Amjad reached the approaching host, he found it to be that of his grandsire, Lord of the Isles and the Seas and the Seven Castles; and when he went into the presence, he kissed the ground between his hands and delivered to him the message. Quoth the King, “My name is King Ghayur and I come wayfaring in quest of my daughter Budur whom fortune hath taken from me; for she left me and returned not to me, nor have I heard any tidings of her or of her husband Kamar al-Zaman. Have ye any news of them?” When Amjad heard this, he hung his head towards the ground for a while in thought till he felt assured that this King was none other than his grandfather, his mother’s father; whereupon he raised his head and, kissing ground before him, told him that he was the son of his daughter Budur; on hearing which Ghayur threw himself upon him and they both fell a-weeping.²² Then said

²² This habit of weeping when friends meet after long parting is customary, I have noted, amongst the American “Indians,” the Badawin of the New World; they shed

Ghayur, "Praised be Allah, O my son, for safety, since I have foregathered with thee," and Amjad told him that his daughter Budur was safe and sound, and her husband Kamar al-Zaman likewise, and acquainted him that both abode in a city called the City of Ebony. Moreover, he related to him how his father, being wroth with him and his brother, had commanded that both be put to death, but that his treasurer had taken pity on them and let them go with their lives. Quoth King Ghayur, "I will go back with thee and thy brother to your father and make your peace with him." So Amjad kissed the ground before him in huge delight and the King bestowed a dress of honour upon him, after which he returned, smiling, to the King of the City of the Magians and told him what he had learnt from King Ghayur, whereat he wondered with exceeding wonder. Then he despatched guest-gifts of sheep and horses and camels and forage and so forth to King Ghayur, and did the like by Queen Marjanah; and both of them told her what chanced; whereupon quoth she, "I too will accompany you with my troops and will do my endeavour to make this peace." Meanwhile behold, there arose another dust-cloud and flew and grew till it walled the view and blackened the day's bright hue; and under it they heard shouts and cries and neighing of steeds and beheld sword glance and the glint of levelled lance. When this new host drew near the city and saw the two other armies,

tears thinking of the friends they have lost. Like most primitive people they are ever ready to weep as was Æneas or Shakespeare's saline personage: —This would make a man, a man of salt
To use his eyes for garden waterpots.(King Lear, iv. 6.)

they beat their drums and the King of the Magians exclaimed, "This is indeed naught but a blessed day. Praised be Allah who hath made us of accord with these two armies; and if it be His will, He shall give us peace with yon other as well." Then said he to Amjad and As'ad, "Fare forth and fetch us news of these troops, for they are a mighty host, never saw I a mightier." So they opened the city gates, which the King had shut for fear of the beleaguering armies, and Amjad and As'ad went forth and, coming to the new host, found that it was indeed a mighty many. But as soon as they came to it behold, they knew that it was the army of the King of the Ebony Islands, wherein was their father, King Kamar al-Zaman in person. Now when they looked upon him, they kissed ground and wept; but, when he beheld them, he threw himself upon them weeping, with sore weeping, and strained them to his breast for a full hour. Then he excused himself to them and told them what desolation he had suffered for their loss and exile; and they acquainted him with King Ghayur's arrival, whereupon he mounted with his chief officers and taking with him his two sons, proceeded to that King's camp. As they drew near, one of the Princes rode forward and informed King Ghayur of Kamar al-Zaman's coming, whereupon he came out to meet him and they joined company, marvelling at these things and how they had chanced to foregather in that place. Then the townsfolk made them banquets of all manner meats and sweetmeats and presented to them horses and camels and fodder and other guest-gifts and all that the troops needed. And

while this was doing, behold, yet another cloud of dust arose and flew till it walled the view, whilst earth trembled with the tramp of steed and tabors sounded like stormy winds. After a while, the dust lifted and discovered an army clad in coats of mail and armed cap-à-pie; but all were in black garb, and in their midst rode a very old man whose beard flowed down over his breast and he also was clad in black. When the King in the city and the city-folk saw this great host, he said to the other Kings, "Praised be Allah by whose omnipotent command ye are met here, all in one day, and have proved all known one to the other! But what vast and victorious army is this which hemmeth in the whole land like a wall?" They answered, "Have no fear of them; we are three Kings, each with a great army, and if they be enemies, we will join thee in doing battle with them, were they three times as many as they now are." Meanwhile, up came an envoy from the approaching host, making for the city. So they brought him before Kamar al-Zaman, King Ghayur, Queen Marjanah and the King of the city; and he kissed the ground and said, "My liege lord cometh from Persia-land; for many years ago he lost his son and he is seeking him in all countries. If he find him with you, well and good; but if he find him not, there will be war between him and you and he will waste your city." Rejoined Kamar al-Zaman, "It shall not come to that; but how is thy master called in Aiam land?" Answered the envoy, "He is called King Shahrman, lord of the Khalidan Islands; and he hath levied these troops in the lands traversed by him, whilst seeking

his son.” Now when Kamar al-Zaman heard these words, he cried out with a great cry and fell down in a fainting fit which lasted a long while; and anon coming to himself he wept bitter tears and said to Amjad and As’ad, “Go ye, O my sons, with the herald, salute your grandfather and my father, King Shahrیمان, and give him glad tidings of me, for he mourneth my loss and even to the present time he weareth black raiment for my sake.” Then he told the other Kings all that had befallen him in the days of his youth, at which they wondered and, going down with him from the city, repaired to his father, whom he saluted, and they embraced and fell to the ground senseless for excess of joy. And when they revived after a while, Kamar al-Zaman acquainted his father with all his adventures and the other Kings saluted Shahrیمان. Then, after having married Marjanah to As’ad, they sent her back to her kingdom, charging her not to cease correspondence with them; so she took leave and went her way. Moreover they married Amjad to Bostan, Bahram’s daughter, and they all set out for the City of Ebony. And when they arrived there, Kamar al-Zaman went in to his father-in-law, King Armanus, and told him all that had befallen him and how he had found his sons; whereat Armanus rejoiced and gave him joy of his safe return. Then King Ghayur went in to his daughter, Queen Budur,²³ and saluted her and quenched his longing for her company, and they all abode a full month’s space in the City of Ebony; after which the King

²³ Here poetical justice is not done; in most Arab tales the two adulterous Queens would have been put to death.

and his daughter returned to their own country. – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Forty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that King Ghayur set out with his daughter and his host for his own land, and they took with them Amjad and returned home by easy marches. And when Ghayur was settled again in his kingdom, he made his grandson King in his stead; and as to Kamar al-Zaman he also made As'ad king in his room over the capital of the Ebony Islands, with the consent of his grandfather, King Armanus and set out himself, with his father, King Shahrman, till the two made the Islands of Khalidan. Then the lieges decorated the city in their honour and they ceased not to beat the drums for glad tidings a whole month; nor did Kamar al-Zaman leave to govern in his father's place, till there overtook them the Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies; and Allah knoweth all things! Quoth King Shahryar, "O Shahrazad, this is indeed a most wonderful tale!" And she answered, "O King, it is not more wonderful than that of

ALA AL-DIN ABU AL-SHAMAT.”²⁴

“What is that?” asked he, and she said, It hath reached me that there lived, in times of yore and years and ages long gone before, a merchant of Cairo²⁵ named Shams al-Din, who was of the best and truest-spoken of the traders of the city; and he had eunuchs and servants and negro-slaves and handmaids and Mamelukes and great store of money. Moreover, he was Consul²⁶ of the Merchants of Cairo and owned a wife, whom he loved and who loved him; except that he had lived with her forty years, yet had not been blessed with a son or even a daughter. One day, as he sat in his shop, he noted that the merchants, each and every, had a son or two sons or more sitting in their shops like their sires. Now the day being Friday; he entered the Hammam-bath and made the total ablution: after which he came out and took the barber’s glass and looked in it, saying, “I testify that there is no god but *the* God and I testify that Mohammed is the Messenger of God!” Then he considered his beard and, seeing that the white hairs in it covered the black, bethought himself that hoariness is the harbinger of death. Now his wife knew the time of his coming home and had washed and made herself ready for him, so when

²⁴ Pronounce Aladdin Abush-Shámát.

²⁵ Arab. “Misr” vulg. Masr: a close connection of Misraim – the “two Misrs,” Egypt, upper and lower.

²⁶ The Persians still call their Consuls “Shah-bandar,” lit. king of the Bandar or port.

he came in to her, she said, “Good evening,” but he replied “I see no good.” Then she called to the handmaid, “Spread the supper-tray;” and when this was done quoth she to her husband, “Sup, O my lord.” Quoth he, “I will eat nothing,” and pushing the tray away with his foot, turned his back upon her. She asked, “Why dost thou thus? and what hath vexed thee?”; and he answered, “Thou art the cause of my vexation.” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Shams al-Din said to his wife, “Thou art the cause of my vexation.” She asked, “Wherefore?” and he answered, “When I opened my shop this morning, I saw that each and every of the merchants had with him a son or two sons or more, sitting in their shops like their fathers; and I said to myself: – He who took thy sire will not spare thee. Now the night I first visited thee,²⁷ thou madest me swear that I would never take a second wife over thee nor a concubine, Abyssinian or Greek or handmaid of other race; nor would lie a single night away from thee: and behold, thou art barren, and having thee is like boring into the rock.” Rejoined she, “Allah is my witness that the fault lies with thee, for that thy seed is thin.”

²⁷ Arab. “Dukhúl,” the night of going in, of seeing the bride unveiled for the first time, etcætera.

He asked, "And what showeth the man whose semen is thin?" And she answered, "He cannot get women with child, nor beget children." Quoth he, "What thickeneth the seed? tell me and I will buy it: haply, it will thicken mine." Quoth she, "Enquire for it of the druggists." So he slept with her that night and arose on the morrow, repenting of having spoken angrily to her; and she also regretted her cross words. Then he went to the market and, finding a druggist, saluted him; and when his salutation was returned said to him, "Say, hast thou with thee a seed-thickener?" He replied, "I had it, but am out of it: enquire thou of my neighbour." Then Shams al-Din made the round till he had asked every one, but they all laughed at him, and presently he returned to his shop and sat down, sore troubled. Now there was in the bazar a man who was Deputy Syndic of the brokers and was given to the use of opium and electuary and green hashish.²⁸ He was

²⁸ Arab. "Barsh" or "Bars," the commonest kind. In India it is called Ma'jún (= electuary, generally): it is made of Ganja or young leaves, buds, capsules and florets of hemp (*C. sativa*), poppy-seed and flowers of the thorn-apple (*datura*) with milk and sugar-candy, nutmegs, cloves, mace and saffron, all boiled to the consistency of treacle which hardens when cold. Several recipes are given by Herklots (Glossary s. v. Majoon). These electuaries are usually prepared with "Charas," or gum of hemp, collected by hand or by passing a blanket over the plant in early morning, and it is highly intoxicating. Another intoxicant is "Sabzi," dried hemp-leaves, poppy-seed, cucumber-seed, black pepper and cardamoms rubbed down in a mortar with a wooden pestle, and made drinkable by adding milk, ice-cream, etc. The Hashish of Arabia is the Hindustani Bhang, usually drunk and made as follows. Take of hemp-leaves, well washed, 3 drams; black pepper 45 grains and of cloves, nutmeg and mace (which add to the intoxication) each 12 grains. Triturate in 8 ounces of water or the juice of watermelon or cucumber, strain and drink. The Egyptian Zabíbah is a preparation

called Shaykh Mohammed Samsam and being poor he used to wish Shams al-Din good morrow every day. So he came to him according to his custom and saluted him. The merchant returned his salute, but in ill-temper, and the other, seeing him vexed, said, "O my lord, what hath crossed thee?" Thereupon Shams al-Din told him all that occurred between himself and his wife, adding, "These forty years have I been married to her yet hath she borne me neither son nor daughter; and they say: – The cause of thy failure to get her with child is the thinness of thy seed; so I have been seeking a something wherewith to thicken my semen but found it not." Quoth Shaykh Mohammed, "O my lord, I have a seed-thickener, but what wilt thou say to him who causeth thy wife to conceive by thee after these forty years have passed?" Answered the merchant, "If thou do this, I will work thy weal and reward thee." "Then give me a dinar," rejoined the broker, and Shams al-Din said, "Take these two dinars." He took them and said, "Give me also yonder big bowl of porcelain." So he gave it to him and the broker betook himself to a hashish-seller, of

of hemp-florets, opium and honey, much affected by the lower orders, whence the proverb: "Temper thy sorrow with Zabibah,." In Al-Hijaz it is mixed with raisins (Zabīb) and smoked in the water-pipe. (Burckhardt No. 73). Besides these there is (1) "Post" poppy-seed prepared in various ways but especially in sugared sherbets; (2) *Datura (stramonium)* seed, the produce of the thorn-apple, bleached and put into sweetmeats by dishonest confectioners; it is a dangerous intoxicant, producing spectral visions, delirium tremens, etc.; and (3) various preparations of opium especially the "Madad," pills made up with toasted betel-leaf and smoked. Opium, however, is usually drunk in the shape of "Kusumba," a pill placed in wet cotton and squeezed in order to strain and clean it of the coudung and other filth with which it is adulterated.

whom he bought two ounces of concentrated Roumi opium and equal parts of Chinese cubebs, cinnamon, cloves, cardamoms, ginger, white pepper and mountain skink²⁹; and, pounding them all together, boiled them in sweet olive-oil; after which he added three ounces of male frankincense in fragments and a cupful of coriander-seed; and, macerating the whole, made it into an electuary with Roumi bee-honey. Then he put the confection in the bowl and carried it to the merchant, to whom he delivered it, saying, "Here is the seed-thickener, and the manner of using it is this. Take of my electuary with a spoon after supping, and wash it down with a sherbet made of rose conserve; but first sup off mutton and house-pigeon plentifully seasoned and hotly spiced." So the merchant bought all this and sent the meat and pigeons to

²⁹ Arab. "Sikankúr" (Gr. Σκίγκος, Lat. Scincus) a lizard (*S. officinalis*) which, held in the hand, still acts as an aphrodisiac in the East, and which in the Middle Ages was considered a universal medicine. In the "Adja'ib al-Hind" (Les Merveilles de l'Inde) we find a notice of a bald-headed old man who was compelled to know his wife twice a day and twice a night in consequence of having eaten a certain fish. (Chapt. lxxviii. of the translation by M. L. Marcel Devic, from a manuscript of the tenth century; Paris, Lemaire, 1878). Europeans deride these prescriptions, but Easterns know better: they affect the fancy, that is, the brain; and often succeed in temporarily relieving impotence. The recipes for this evil, which is incurable only when it comes from heart-affections, are innumerable in the East; and about half of every medical work is devoted to them. Many a quack has made his fortune with a few bottles of tincture of cantharides, and a man who could discover a specific would become a millionaire in India only. The curious reader will consult for specimens the Ananga-Ranga Shastra by Koka Pandit; or the "Rujú 'al-Shaykh ila 'l-Sabáh fi Kuwwati 'l-Báh" (the Return of the Old Man to Youth in power of Procreation) by Ahmad bin Sulaymán known as Ibn Kamál Báshá in 139 chapters lithographed at Cairo. Of these aphrodisiacs I shall have more to say.

his wife, saying; "Dress them deftly and lay up the seed-thickener until I want it and call for it." She did his bidding and, when she served up the meats, he ate the evening meal, after which he called for the bowl and ate of the electuary. It pleased him well, so he ate the rest and knew his wife. That very night she conceived by him and, after three months, her courses ceased, no blood came from her and she knew that she was with child. When the days of her pregnancy were accomplished, the pangs of labour took her and they raised loud lulliloosings and cries of joy. The midwife delivered her with difficulty, by pronouncing over the boy at his birth the names of Mohammed and Ali, and said, "Allah is Most Great!"; and she called in his ear the call to prayer. Then she wrapped him up and passed him to his mother, who took him and gave him the breast; and he sucked and was full and slept. The midwife abode with them three days, till they had made the mothering-cakes of sugared bread and sweetmeats; and they distributed them on the seventh day. Then they sprinkled salt against the evil eye and the merchant, going in to his wife, gave her joy of her safe delivery, and said, "Where is Allah's deposit?" So they brought him a babe of surpassing beauty, the handiwork of the Orderer who is ever present and, though he was but seven days old, those who saw him would have deemed him a yearling child. So the merchant looked on his face and, seeing it like a shining full moon, with moles on either cheek, said he to his wife, "What hast thou named him?" Answered she, "If it were a girl I had named her; but this is a boy, so none shall name

him but thou.” Now the people of that time used to name their children by omens; and, whilst the merchant and his wife were taking counsel of the name, behold, one said to his friend, “Ho my lord, Ala al-Din!” So the merchant said, “We will call him Ala al-Din Abú al-Shámát.”³⁰ Then he committed the child to the nurse, and he drank milk two years, after which they weaned him and he grew up and throve and walked upon the floor. When he came to seven years old, they put him in a chamber under a trap-door, for fear of the evil eye, and his father said, “He shall not come out, till his beard grow.” So he gave him in charge to a handmaid and a blackamoor; the girl dressed him his meals and the slave carried them to him. Then his father circumcised him and made him a great feast; after which he brought him a doctor of the law, who taught him to write and read and repeat the Koran, and other arts and sciences, till he became a good scholar and an accomplished. One day it so came to pass that the slave, after bringing him the tray of food went away and left

³⁰ Alá al-Din (our old friend Aladdin) = Glory of the Faith, a name of which Mohammed, who preferred the simplest, like his own, would have highly disapproved. The most grateful names to Allah are Abdallah (Allah’s Slave) and Abd al-Rahmán (Slave of the Compassionate); the truest are Al-Hárith (the gainer, “bread-winner”) and Al-Hammám (the griever); and the hatefullest are Al-Harb (witch) and Al-Murrah (bitterness, Abu Murrah being a kunyat or by-name of the Devil). Abu al-Shámát (pronounced Abush-shámát) = Father of Moles, concerning which I have already given details. These names ending in – Din (faith) began with the Caliph Al-Muktadi bi-Amri ‘llah (regn. A.H. 467 = 1075), who entitled his Wazir “Zahír al-Din” (Backer or Defender of the Faith) and this gave rise to the practice. It may be observed that the superstition of naming by omens is in no way obsolete.

the trap-door open: so Ala al-Din came forth from the vault and went in to his mother, with whom was a company of women of rank. As they sat talking, behold, in came upon them the youth as he were a white slave drunken³¹ for the excess of his beauty; and when they saw him, they veiled their faces and said to his mother, “Allah requite thee, O such an one! How canst thou let this strange Mameluke in upon us? Knowest thou not that modesty is a point of the Faith?” She replied, “Pronounce Allah’s name³² and cry Bismillah! this is my son, the fruit of my vitals and the heir of Consul Shams al-Din, the child of the nurse and the collar and the crust and the crumb.”³³ Quoth they, “Never in our days knew we that thou hadst a son”; and quoth she, “Verily his father feared for him the evil eye and reared him in an underground chamber;” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ala-al-Din’s mother said to her lady-friends, “Verily his father feared for him the evil eye and reared him in an under-ground chamber;

³¹ Meaning that he appeared intoxicated by the pride of his beauty as though it had been strong wine.

³² *i. e.* against the evil eye.

³³ Meaning that he had been delicately reared.

and haply the slave forgot to shut the door and he fared forth; but we did not mean that he should come out, before his beard was grown." The women gave her joy of him, and the youth went out from them into the court yard where he seated himself in the open sitting-room; and behold, in came the slaves with his father's she-mule, and he said to them, "Whence cometh this mule?" Quoth they, "We escorted thy father when riding her to the shop, and we have brought her back." He asked, "What may be my father's trade?"; and they answered, "Thy father is Consul of the merchants in the land of Egypt and Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs." Then he went in to his mother and said to her, "O my mother, what is my father's trade?" Said she, "O my son, thy sire is a merchant and Consul of the merchants in the land of Egypt and Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs. His slaves consult him not in selling aught whose price is less than one thousand gold pieces, but merchandise worth him an hundred and less they sell at their own discretion; nor doth any merchandise whatever, little or muchel, leave the country without passing through his hands and he disposeth of it as he pleaseth; nor is a bale packed and sent abroad amongst folk but what is under his disposal. And Almighty Allah, O my son, hath given thy father monies past compt." He rejoined, "O my mother, praised be Allah, that I am son of the Sultan of the Sons of the Arabs and that my father is Consul of the merchants! But why, O my mother, do ye put me in the under-ground chamber and leave me prisoner there?" Quoth she, "O my son, we imprisoned thee not save for

fear of folks' eyes: 'the evil eye is a truth,'³⁴ and most of those in their long homes are its victims." Quoth he, "O my mother, and where is a refuge-place against Fate? Verily care never made Destiny forbear, nor is there flight from what is written for every wight. He who took my grandfather will not spare myself nor my father; for, though he live to-day he shall not live to-morrow. And when my father dieth and I come forth and say: – I am Ala al-Din, son of Shams al-Din the merchant, none of the people will believe me, but men of years and standing will say: – In our lives never saw we a son or a daughter of Shams al-Din. Then the public Treasury will come down and take my father's estate, and Allah have mercy on him who said: – The noble dieth and his wealth passeth away, and the meanest of men take his women. Therefore, O my mother, speak thou to my father, that he carry me with him to the bazar and open for me a shop; so may I sit there with my merchandise and teach me to buy and sell and take and give." Answered his mother, "O my son, as soon as thy sire returneth I will tell him this." So when the merchant came home, he found his son Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat sitting with his mother and said to her, "Why hast thou brought him forth of the under-ground chamber?" She replied, "O son of my uncle, it was not I that brought him out; but the servants forgot to shut the door and left it open; so, as I sat with a company of women of rank, behold, he came forth and walked in to me." Then she went on to repeat to him his son's words; so he said, "O my son, to-

³⁴ A traditional saying of Mohammed.

morrow, Inshallah! I will take thee with me to the bazar; but, my boy, sitting in markets and shops demandeth good manners and courteous carriage in all conditions.” Ala al-Din passed the night rejoicing in his father’s promise and, when the morrow came, the merchant carried him to the Hammam and clad him in a suit worth a mint of money. As soon as they had broken their fast and drunk their sherbets, Shams al-Din mounted his she-mule and putting his son upon another, rode to the market, followed by his boy. But when the market-folk saw their Consul making towards them, foregoing a youth as he were a slice of the full moon on the fourteenth night, they said, one to other, “See thou yonder boy behind the Consul of the merchants; verily, we thought well of him, but he is, like the leek, gray of head and green at heart.”³⁵ And Shaykh Mohammed Samsam, Deputy Syndic of the market, the man before mentioned, said to the dealers, “O merchants, we will not keep the like of him for our Shaykh; no, never!” Now it was the custom anent the Consul when he came from his house of a morning and sat down in his shop, for the Deputy Syndic of the market to go and recite to him and to all the merchants assembled around him the Fátihah or opening chapter of the Koran,³⁶ after which they accosted him one by one and wished

³⁵ So Boccaccio’s “Capo bianco” and “Coda verde.” (Day iv., Introdect.)

³⁶ The opening chapter is known as the “Mother of the Book,” (as opposed to Yá Sín, the “heart of the Koran”) the “Surat (chapter) of Praise,” and the “Surat of repetition,” (because twice revealed?) or thanksgiving, or laudation (Al-Masáni) and by a host of other names for which see Mr. Rodwell who, however, should not write “Fatthah” (p. xxv.) nor “Fathah” (xxvii.). The Fátihah, which is to Al-Islam

him good morrow and went away, each to his business-place. But when Shams al-Din seated himself in his shop that day as usual, the traders came not to him as accustomed; so he called the Deputy and said to him, "Why come not the merchants together as usual?" Answered Mohammed Samsam, "I know not how to tell thee these troubles, for they have agreed to depose thee from the Shaykh-ship of the market and to recite the Fatihah to thee no more." Asked Shams al-Din, "What may be their reason?"; and asked the Deputy, "What boy is this that sitteth by thy side and thou a man of years and chief of the merchants? Is this lad a Mameluke or akin to thy wife? Verily, I think thou lovest him and inclinest lewdly to the boy." Thereupon the Consul cried out at him, saying, "Silence, Allah curse thee, genus and species! This is my son." Rejoined the Deputy, "Never in our born days have we seen thee with a son," and Shams al-Din answered, "When thou gavest me the seed-thickener, my wife conceived and bare this youth; but I reared him in a souterrain for fear of the evil eye, nor was it my purpose that he should come forth, till he

much what the "Paternoster" is to Christendom, consists of seven verses, in the usual Saj'a or rhymed prose, and I have rendered it as follows: —In the name of the Compassionating, the Compassionate! ❀ Praise be to Allah who all the Worlds made ❀ The Compassionating, the Compassionate ❀ King of the Day of Faith! ❀ Thee only do we adore and of Thee only do we crave aid ❀ Guide us to the path which is straight ❀ The path of those for whom Thy love is great, not those on whom is hate, nor they that deviate ❀ Amen! O Lord of the World's trine. My Pilgrimage (i. 285; ii. 78 and *passim*) will supply instances of its application; how it is recited with open hands to catch the blessing from Heaven and the palms are drawn down the face (Ibid. i. 286), and other details.

could take his beard in his hand.³⁷ However, his mother would not agree to this, and he on his part begged I would stock him a shop and teach him to sell and buy.” So the Deputy Syndic returned to the other traders and acquainted them with the truth of the case, whereupon they all arose to accompany him; and, going in a body to Shams al-Din’s shop, stood before him and recited the “Opener” of the Koran; after which they gave him joy of his son and said to him, “The Lord prosper root and branch! But even the poorest of us, when son or daughter is born to him, needs must cook a pan-full of custard³⁸ and bid his friends and kith and kin; yet hast thou not done this.” Quoth he, “This I owe you; be our meeting in the garden.” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-second Night,

Her sister Dunyazad said to her, “Pray continue thy story for us, an thou be awake and not inclined to sleep.” Quoth she: – With pleasure and goodwill: it hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Consul of the merchants promised them a banquet

³⁷ *i. e.* when the evil eye has less effect than upon children. Strangers in Cairo often wonder to see a woman richly dressed leading by the hand a filthy little boy (rarely a girl) in rags, which at home will be changed to cloth of gold.

³⁸ Arab. “Asīdah” flour made consistent by boiling in water with the addition of “Samn” (clarified butter) and honey: more like pap than custard.

and said "Be our meeting in the garden." So when morning dawned he despatched the carpet-layer to the saloon of the garden-pavilion and bade him furnish the two. Moreover, he sent thither all that was needful for cooking, such as sheep and clarified butter and so forth, according to the requirements of the case; and spread two tables, one in the pavilion and another in the saloon. Then Shams al-Din and his boy girded themselves, and he said to Ala al-Din "O my son, whenas a greybeard entereth, I will meet him and seat him at the table in the pavilion; and do thou, in like manner, receive the beardless youths and seat them at the table in the saloon." He asked, "O my father, why dost thou spread two tables, one for men and another for youths?"; and he answered, "O my son, the beardless is ashamed to eat with the bearded." And his son thought this his answer full and sufficient. So when the merchants arrived, Shams al-Din received the men and seated them in the pavilion, whilst Ala al-Din received the youths and seated them in the saloon. Then the food was set on and the guests ate and drank and made merry and sat over their wine, whilst the attendants perfumed them with the smoke of scented woods, and the elders fell to conversing of matters of science and traditions of the Prophet. Now there was amongst them a merchant called Mahmúd of Balkh, a professing Moslem but at heart a Magian, a man of lewd and mischievous life who loved boys. And when he saw Ala al-Din from whose father he used to buy stuffs and merchandise, one sight of his face sent him a thousand sighs and Satan dangled the jewel before his eyes,

so that he was taken with love-longing and desire and affection and his heart was filled with mad passion for him. Presently he arose and made for the youths, who stood up to receive him; and at this moment Ala al-Din being taken with an urgent call of Nature, withdrew to make water; whereupon Mahmud turned to the other youths and said to them, "If ye will incline Ala al-Din's mind to journeying with me, I will give each of you a dress worth a power of money." Then he returned from them to the men's party; and, as the youths were sitting, Ala al-Din suddenly came back, when all rose to receive him and seated him in the place of highest honour. Presently, one of them said to his neighbour, "O my lord Hasan, tell me whence came to thee the capital whereon thou tradest." He replied, "When I grew up and came to man's estate, I said to my sire: – O my father, give me merchandise. Quoth he: – O my son, I have none by me; but go thou to some merchant and take of him money and traffic with it; and so learn to buy and sell, give and take. So I went to one of the traders and borrowed of him a thousand dinars, wherewith I bought stuffs and carrying them to Damascus, sold them there at a profit of two for one. Then I bought Syrian stuffs and carrying them to Aleppo, made a similar gain of them; after which I bought stuffs of Aleppo and repaired with them to Baghdad, where I sold them with like result, two for one; nor did I cease trading upon my capital till I was worth nigh ten thousand ducats." Then each of the others told his friend some such tale, till it came to Ala al-Din's turn to speak, when they said to him, "And thou, O my lord

Ala al-Din?” Quoth he, “I was brought up in a chamber underground and came forth from it only this week; and I do but go to the shop and return home from the shop.” They remarked, “Thou art used to wone at home and wottest not the joys of travel, for travel is for men only.” He replied, “I reckon not of voyaging and wayfaring doth not tempt me.” Whereupon quoth one to the other, “This one is like the fish: when he leaveth the water he dieth.” Then they said to him, “O Ala al-Din, the glory of the sons of the merchants is not but in travel for the sake of gain.” Their talk angered him; so he left them weeping-eyed and heavy-hearted and mounting his mule returned home. Now his mother saw him in tears and in bad temper and asked him, “What hath made thee weep, O my son?”; and he answered, “Of a truth, all the sons of the merchants put me to shame and said: – Naught is more glorious for a merchant’s son than travel for gain and to get him gold.” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ala al-Din said to his mother, “Of a truth all the sons of the merchants put me to shame and said: – Naught is more honourable for a merchant’s son than travel for gain.” “O my son, hast thou a mind to travel?” “Even so!” “And whither wilt thou go?” “To the

city of Baghdad; for there folk make double the cost price on their goods.” “O my son, thy father is a very rich man and, if he provide thee not with merchandise, I will supply it out of my own monies.” “The best favour is that which is soonest bestowed; if this kindness is to be, now is the time.” So she called the slaves and sent them for cloth-packers; then, opening a store-house, brought out ten loads of stuffs, which they made up into bales for him. Such was his case; but as regards his father, Shams al-Din, he looked about and failed to find Ala al-Din in the garden and enquiring after him, was told that he had mounted mule and gone home; so he too mounted and followed him. Now when he entered the house, he saw the bales ready bound and asked what they were; whereupon his wife told him what had chanced between Ala al-Din and the sons of the merchants; and he cried, “O my son, Allah’s malison on travel and stranger-hood! Verily Allah’s Apostle (whom the Lord bless and preserve!) hath said: – It is of a man’s happy fortune that he eat his daily bread in his own land; and it was said of the ancients: – Leave travel, though but for a mile.” Then quoth he to his son, “Say, art thou indeed resolved to travel and wilt thou not turn back from it?” Quoth the other, “There is no help for it but that I journey to Baghdad with merchandise, else will I doff clothes and don dervish gear and fare a-wandering over the world.” Shams al-Din rejoined, “I am no penniless pauper but have great plenty of wealth;” then he showed him all he owned of monies and stuffs and stock-in-trade and observed, “With me are stuffs and merchandise befitting

every country in the world.” Then he showed him among the rest, forty bales ready bound, with the price, a thousand dinars, written on each, and said, “O my son take these forty loads, together with the ten which thy mother gave thee, and set out under the safeguard of Almighty Allah. But, O my child, I fear for thee a certain wood in thy way, called the Lion’s Copse,³⁹ and a valley hight the Vale of Dogs, for there lives are lost without mercy.” He said, “How so, O my father?”; and he replied, “Because of a Badawi bandit named Ajlán.” Quoth Ala al-Din, “Such is Allah’s luck; if any share of it be mine, no harm shall hap to me.” Then they rode to the cattle-bazar, where behold, a cameleer⁴⁰ alighted from his she-mule and kissing the Consul’s hand, said to him, “O my lord, it is long, by Allah, since thou hast employed us in the way of business.” He replied, “Every time hath its fortune and its men,⁴¹ and Allah have ruth on him who said: —

And the old man crept o’er the worldly ways ❀ So bowed,
his beard o’er his knees down flow’th:

Quoth I: – What gars thee so doubled go? ❀ Quoth he (as to
me his hands he show’th)

My youth is lost, in the dust it lieth; ❀ And see, I bend me

³⁹ Arab. “Ghábah” = I have explained as a low-lying place where the growth is thickest and consequently animals haunt it during the noon-heats.

⁴⁰ Arab. “Akkám,” one who loads camels and has charge of the luggage. He also corresponds with the modern Mukharrij or camel-hirer (Pilgrimage i. 339); and hence the word Moucre (Moucres) which, first used by La Brocquière (A.D. 1432), is still the only term known to the French.

⁴¹ *i. e.* I am old and can no longer travel.

to find my youth.”⁴²

Now when he had ended his verses, he said, “O chief of the caravan, it is not I who am minded to travel, but this my son.” Quoth the cameleer, “Allah save him for thee.” Then the Consul made a contract between Ala al-Din and the man, appointing that the youth should be to him as a son, and gave him into his charge, saying, “Take these hundred gold pieces for thy people.” Moreover he bought his son threescore mules and a lamp and a tomb-covering for the Sayyid Abd al-Kadir of Gílán⁴³ and said to him, “O my son, while I am absent, this is thy sire in my stead: whatsoever he biddeth thee, do thou obey him.” So saying, he returned home with the mules and servants and that night they made a *Khitmah* or perlection of the Koran and held a festival in honour of the Shaykh Abd al-Kadir al-Jiláni. And when the morrow dawned, the Consul gave his son ten thousand dinars, saying, “O my son, when thou comest to Baghdad, if thou find stuffs easy of sale, sell them; but if they be dull, spend of these dinars.” Then they loaded the mules and, taking leave of one another, all the wayfarers setting out on their journey, marched

⁴² Taken from *Al-Asma'i*, the “Romance of Antar,” and the episode of the *Asafir Camels*.

⁴³ A Mystic of the twelfth century A.D. who founded the *Kádirí* order (the oldest and chiefest of the four universally recognised), to which I have the honour to belong, teste my diploma (*Pilgrimage*, Appendix i.). Visitation is still made to his tomb at Baghdad. The Arabs (who have no hard g-letter) alter to “*Jílán*” the name of his birth-place “*Gilan*,” a tract between the Caspian and the Black Seas.

forth from the city. Now Mahmud of Balkh had made ready his own venture for Baghdad and had moved his bales and set up his tents without the walls, saying in himself, "Thou shalt not enjoy this youth but in the desert, where there is neither spy nor marplot to trouble thee." It chanced that he had in hand a thousand dinars which he owed to the youth's father, the balance of a business-transaction between them; so he went and bade farewell to the Consul, who charged him, "Give the thousand dinars to my son Ala al-Din;" and commended the lad to his care, saying, "He is as it were thy son." Accordingly, Ala al-Din joined company with Mahmud of Balkh – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that Ala al-Din joined company with Mahmud of Balkh who, before beginning the march, charged the youth's cook to dress nothing for him, but himself provided him and his company with meat and drink. Now he had four houses, one in Cairo, another in Damascus, a third in Aleppo and a fourth in Baghdad. So they set out and ceased not journeying over waste and wold till they drew near Damascus, when Mahmud sent his slave to Ala al-Din, whom he found sitting and reading. He went up to him and kissed his hands, and Ala al-Din having asked him what he

wanted, he answered, "My master saluteth thee and craveth thy company to a banquet at his place." Quoth the youth, "Not till I consult my father Kamál al-Din, the captain of the caravan." So he asked advice of the Makaddam,⁴⁴ who said, "Do not go." Then they left Damascus and journeyed on till they came to Aleppo, where Mahmud made a second entertainment and sent to invite Ala al-Din; but he consulted the Chief Cameleer who again forbade him. Then they marched from Aleppo and fared on, till there remained between them and Baghdad only a single stage. Here Mahmud prepared a third feast and sent to bid Ala al-Din to it: Kamal al-Din once more forbade his accepting it, but he said, "I must needs go." So he rose and, slinging a sword over his shoulder, under his clothes, repaired to the tent of Mahmud of Balkh, who came to meet him and saluted him. Then he set before him a sumptuous repast and they ate and drank and washed hands. At last Mahmud bent towards Ala al-Din to snatch a kiss from him, but the youth received the kiss on the palm of his hand and said to him, "What wouldest thou be at?" Quoth Mahmud, "In very sooth I brought thee hither that I might take my pleasure with thee in this jousting-ground, and we will comment upon the words of him who saith: —

Say, canst not come to us one momentling, ❀ Like milk of ewekin or aught glistening,

⁴⁴ The well-known Anglo-Indian "Mucuddum;" lit. "one placed before (or over) others;" an overseer.

And eat what liketh thee of dainty cate, ❀ And take thy due
of fee in silverling,

And bear whatso thou wilt, without mislike, ❀ Of spanling,
fistling or a spanlong thing?”

Then Mahmud of Balkh would have laid hands on Ala al-Din
to ravish him; but he rose and baring his brand, said to him,
“Shame on thy gray hairs! Hast thou no fear of Allah, and He of
exceeding awe?⁴⁵ May He have mercy on him who saith: —

Preserve thy hoary hairs from soil and stain, ❀ For whitest
colours are the easiest stained!”

And when he ended his verses he said to Mahmud of Balkh,
“Verily this merchandise⁴⁶ is a trust from Allah and may not be
sold. If I sold this property to other than thee for gold, I would
sell it to thee for silver; but by Allah, O filthy villain, I will never
again company with thee; no, never!” Then he returned to Kamal
al-Din the guide and said to him, “Yonder man is a lewd fellow,
and I will no longer consort with him nor suffer his company by
the way.” He replied, “O my son, did I not say to thee: – Go not
near him? But if we part company with him, I fear destruction
for ourselves; so let us still make one caravan.” But Ala al-Din
cried, “It may not be that I ever again travel with him.” So he

⁴⁵ Koran xiii. 14.

⁴⁶ *i. e.* his chastity: this fashion of objecting to infamous proposals is very
characteristic: ruder races would use their fists.

loaded his beasts and journeyed onwards, he and his company, till they came to a valley, where Ala al-Din would have halted, but the Cameleer said to him, “Do not halt here; rather let us fare forwards and press our pace, so haply we make Baghdad before the gates are closed, for they open and shut them with the sun, in fear lest the Rejectors⁴⁷ should take the city and throw the books of religious learning into the Tigris.” But Ala al-Din replied to him, “O my father, I came not forth from home with this merchandise, or travelled hither for the sake of traffic, but to divert myself with the sight of foreign lands and folks;” and he rejoined, “O my son, we fear for thee and for thy goods from the wild Arabs.” Whereupon the youth answered, “Harkye, fellow, art thou master or man? I will not enter Baghdad till the morning, that the sons of the city may see my merchandise and know me.” “Do as thou wilt,” said the other; “I have given thee the wisest advice, but thou art the best judge of thine own case.” Then Ala al-Din bade them unload the mules and pitch the tent;

⁴⁷ Arab. “Ráfizí” = the Shi’ah (tribe, sect) or Persian schismatics who curse the first three Caliphs: the name is taken from their own saying “Inná rafizná-hum” = verily we have rejected them. The feeling between Sunni (the so-called orthodox) and Shi’ah is much like the Christian love between a Catholic of Cork and a Protestant from the Black North. As Al-Siyuti or any historian will show, this sect became exceedingly powerful under the later Abbaside Caliphs, many of whom conformed to it and adopted its practices and innovations (as in the Azan or prayer-call), greatly to the scandal of their co-religionists. Even in the present day the hatred between these representatives of Arab monotheism and Persian Guebrism continues unabated. I have given sundry instances in my Pilgrimage, *e. g.* how the Persians attempt to pollute the tombs of the Caliphs they abhor.

so they did his bidding and abode there till the middle of the night, when he went out to obey a call of nature and suddenly saw something gleaming afar off. So he said to Kamal al-Din, "O captain, what is yonder glittering?" The Cameleer sat up and, considering it straitly, knew it for the glint of spear-heads and the steel of Badawi weapons and swords. And lo and behold! this was a troop of wild Arabs under a chief called Ajlán Abú Náib, Shaykh of the Arabs, and when they neared the camp and saw the bales and baggage, they said one to another, "O night of loot!" Now when Kamal al-Din heard these their words he cried, "Avaunt, O vilest of Arabs!" But Abu Naib so smote him with his throw-spear in the breast, that the point came out gleaming from his back, and he fell down dead at the tent-door. Then cried the water-carrier,⁴⁸ "Avaunt, O foulest of Arabs!" and one of them smote him with a sword upon the shoulder, that it issued shining from the tendons of the throat, and he also fell down dead. (And all this while Ala al-Din stood looking on.) Then the Badawin surrounded and charged the caravan from every side and slew all Ala al-Din's company without sparing a man: after which they loaded the mules with the spoil and made off. Quoth Ala al-Din to himself, "Nothing will slay thee save thy mule and thy dress!"; so he arose and put off his gown and threw it over the back of a mule, remaining in his shirt and bag-trousers only; after which he looked towards the tent-door and, seeing there a pool of gore

⁴⁸ Arab. "Sakká," the Indian "Bihishtí" (man from Heaven): Each party in a caravan has one or more.

flowing from the slaughtered, wallowed in it with his remaining clothes till he was as a slain man drowned in his own blood. Thus it fared with him; but as regards the Shaykh of the wild Arabs, Ajlan, he said to his banditti, "O Arabs, was this caravan bound from Egypt for Baghdad or from Baghdad for Egypt?" – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King that when the Badawi asked his banditti, "O Arabs, was this caravan bound from Egypt for Baghdad or from Baghdad for Egypt?"; they answered, "'Twas bound from Egypt for Baghdad;" and he said, "Return ye to the slain, for methinks the owner of this caravan is not dead." So they turned back to the slain and fell to prodding and slashing them with lance and sword till they came to Ala al-Din, who had thrown himself down among the corpses. And when they came to him, quoth they, "Thou dost but feign thyself dead, but we will make an end of thee," and one of the Badawin levelled his javelin and would have plunged it into his breast when he cried out, "Save me, O my lord Abd al-Kadir, O Saint of Gilan!" and behold, he saw a hand turn the lance away from his breast to that of Kamal al-Din the cameleer, so that it pierced

him and spared himself.⁴⁹ Then the Arabs made off; and, when Ala al-Din saw that the birds were flown with their god-send, he sat up and finding no one, rose and set off running; but, behold Abu Náib the Badawi looked back and said to his troop, "I see somewhat moving afar off, O Arabs!" So one of the bandits turned back and, spying Ala al-Din running, called out to him, saying, "Flight shall not forward thee and we after thee;" and he smote his mare with his heel and she hastened after him. Then Ala al-Din seeing before him a watering tank and a cistern beside it, climbed up into a niche in the cistern and, stretching himself at full length, feigned to be asleep and said, "O gracious Protector, cover me with the veil of Thy protection which may not be torn away!" And lo! the Badawi came up to the cistern and, standing in his stirrup-irons put out his hand to lay hold of Ala al-Din; but he said, "O my lady Nafísah⁵⁰! Now is thy time!" And behold, a scorpion stung the Badawi in the palm and he cried out, saying,

⁴⁹ These "Kirámát" or Saints' miracles, which Spiritualists will readily accept, are recorded in vast numbers. Most men have half a dozen to tell, each of his "Pír" or patron, including the Istidráj or prodigy of chastisement (Dabistan, iii. 274).

⁵⁰ Great-grand-daughter of the Imam Hasan, buried in Cairo and famed for "Kirámát." Her father, governor of Al-Medinah, was imprisoned by Al-Mansur and restored to power by Al-Mahdi. She was married to a son of the Imam Ja'afar al-Sadik and lived a life of devotion in Cairo, dying in A.H. 218 = 824. The corpse of the Imam al-Shafi'i was carried to her house, now her mosque and mausoleum: it stood in the Darb al-Sabúia which formerly divided Old from New Cairo and is now one of the latter's suburbs. Lane (M. E. chapt. x.) gives her name but little more. The mention of her shows that the writer of the tale or the copyist was a Cairene: Abd al-Kadir is world-known: not so the "Sitt."

“Help, O Arabs! I am stung;” and he alighted from his mare’s back. So his comrades came up to him and mounted him again, asking, “What hath befallen thee?” whereto he answered, “A young scorpion⁵¹ stung me.” So they departed, with the caravan. Such was their case; but as regards Ala al-Din, he tarried in the niche, and Mahmud of Balkh bade load his beasts and fared forwards till he came to the Lion’s Copse where he found Ala al-Din’s attendants all lying slain. At this he rejoiced and went on till he reached the cistern and the reservoir. Now his mule was athirst and turned aside to drink, but she saw Ala al-Din’s shadow in the water and shied and started; whereupon Mahmud raised his eyes and, seeing Ala al-Din lying in the niche, stripped to his shirt and bag-trousers, said to him, “What man this deed to thee hath dight and left thee in this evil plight?” Answered Ala al-Din, “The Arabs,” and Mahmud said, “O my son, the mules and the baggage were thy ransom; so do thou comfort thyself with his saying who said: —

If thereby man can save his head from death, ❀ His good
is worth him but a slice of nail!

But now, O my son, come down and fear no hurt.” Thereupon he descended from the cistern-niche and Mahmud mounted him on a mule, and they fared on till they reached Baghdad, where he brought him to his own house and carried him to the bath, saying to him, “The goods and money were the ransom of thy life, O

⁵¹ Arab. “Farkh akrah” for Ukayrib, a vulgarism.

my son; but, if thou wilt hearken to me, I will give thee the worth of that thou hast lost, twice told.” When he came out of the bath, Mahmud carried him into a saloon decorated with gold with four raised floors, and bade them bring a tray with all manner of meats. So they ate and drank and Mahmud bent towards Ala al-Din to snatch a kiss from him; but he received it upon the palm of his hand and said, “What, dost thou persist in thy evil designs upon me? Did I not tell thee that, were I wont to sell this merchandise to other than thee for gold, I would sell it thee for silver?” Quoth Mahmud, “I will give thee neither merchandise nor mule nor clothes save at this price; for I am gone mad for love of thee, and bless him who said: —

Told us, ascribing to his Shaykhs, our Shaykh ❀ Abú Bilál, these words they wont to utter:⁵²

Unhealed the lover wones of love desire, ❀ By kiss and clip; his only cure’s to futter!”

Ala al-Din replied, “Of a truth this may never be, take back thy dress and thy mule and open the door that I may go out.” So he opened the door, and Ala al-Din fared forth and walked on, with the dogs barking at his heels, and he went forwards through the dark when behold, he saw the door of a mosque standing open and, entering the vestibule, there took shelter and concealment; and suddenly a light approached him and on examining it he saw

⁵² The usual Egyptian irreverence: he relates his abomination as if it were a Hadis or Tradition of the Prophet with due ascription.

that it came from a pair of lanthorns borne by two slaves before two merchants. Now one was an old man of comely face and the other a youth; and he heard the younger say to the elder, “O my uncle, I conjure thee by Allah, give me back my cousin!” The old man replied, “Did I not forbid thee, many a time, when the oath of divorce was always in thy mouth, as it were Holy Writ?” Then he turned to his right and, seeing Ala al-Din as he were a slice of the full moon, said to him, “Peace be with thee! who art thou, O my son?” Quoth he, returning the salutation of peace, “I am Ala al-Din, son of Shams al-Din, Consul of the merchants for Egypt. I besought my father for merchandise; so he packed me fifty loads of stuffs and goods,” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ala al-Din continued, “So he packed me fifty loads of goods and gave me ten thousand dinars, wherewith I set out for Baghdad; but when I reached the Lion’s Copse, the wild Arabs came out against me and took all my goods and monies. So I entered the city knowing not where to pass the night and, seeing this place, I took shelter here.” Quoth the old man, “O my son, what sayest thou to my giving thee a thousand dinars and a suit of clothes and a mule worth other two thousand?” Ala al-Din asked, “To

what end wilt thou give me these things, O my uncle?” and the other answered, “This young man who accompanieth me, is the son of my brother and an only son; and I have a daughter called Zubaydah⁵³ the lutist, an only child who is a model of beauty and loveliness, so I married her to him. Now he loveth her, but she loatheth him; and when he chanced to take an oath of triple divorcement and broke it, forthright she left him. Whereupon he egged on all the folk to intercede with me to restore her to him; but I told him that this could not lawfully be save by an intermediate marriage, and we have agreed to make some stranger the intermediary⁵⁴ in order that none may taunt and shame him with this affair. So, as thou art a stranger, come with us and we will marry thee to her; thou shalt lie with her to-night and on the morrow divorce her and we will give thee what I said.” Quoth Ala al-Din to himself, “By Allah, to bide the night with a bride on a bed in a house is far better than sleeping in the

⁵³ A popular name, dim. of Zubdah, cream, fresh butter, “creamkin.”

⁵⁴ Arab. “Mustahall,” “Mustahill” and vulg. “Muhallil” (= one who renders lawful). It means a man hired for the purpose who marries *pro formâ* and after wedding, and bedding with actual consummation, at once divorces the woman. He is held the reverse of respectable and no wonder. Hence, probably, Mandeville’s story of the Islanders who, on the marriage-night, “make another man to lie by their wives, to have their maidenhead, for which they give great hire and much thanks. And there are certain men in every town that serve for no other thing; and they call them cadeberiz, that is to say, the fools of despair, because they believe their occupation is a dangerous one.” Burckhardt gives the proverb (No. 79), “A thousand lovers rather than one Mustahall,” the latter being generally some ugly fellow picked up in the streets and disgusting to the wife who must permit his embraces.

streets and vestibules!” So he went with them to the Kazi whose heart, as soon as he saw Ala al-Din, was moved to love him, and who said to the old man, “What is your will?” He replied, “We wish to make this young man an intermediary husband for my daughter; but we will write a bond against him binding him to pay down by way of marriage-settlement ten thousand gold pieces. Now if after passing the night with her he divorce her in the morning, we will give him a mule and dress each worth a thousand dinars, and a third thousand of ready money; but if he divorce her not, he shall pay down the ten thousand dinars according to contract.” So they agreed to the agreement and the father of the bride to be received his bond for the marriage-settlement. Then he took Ala al-Din and, clothing him anew, carried him to his daughter’s house and there he left him standing at the door, whilst he himself went in to the young lady and said, “Take the bond of thy marriage-settlement, for I have wedded thee to a handsome youth by name Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat: so do thou use him with the best of usage.” Then he put the bond into her hands and left her and went to his own lodging. Now the lady’s cousin had an old duenna who used to visit Zubaydah, and he had done many a kindness to this woman, so he said to her, “O my mother, if my cousin Zubaydah see this handsome young man, she will never after accept my offer; so I would fain have thee contrive some trick to keep her and him apart.” She answered, “By the life of thy youth,⁵⁵ I will not suffer him to

⁵⁵ This is a woman’s oath, not used by men.

approach her!” Then she went to Ala al-Din and said to him, “O my son, I have a word of advice to give thee, for the love of Almighty Allah and do thou accept my counsel, as I fear for thee from this young woman: better thou let her lie alone and feel not her person nor draw thee near to her.” He asked, “Why so?”; and she answered, “Because her body is full of leprosy and I dread lest she infect thy fair and seemly youth.” Quoth he, “I have no need of her.” Thereupon she went to the lady and said the like to her of Ala al-Din; and she replied, “I have no need of him, but will let him lie alone, and on the morrow he shall gang his gait.” Then she called a slave-girl and said to her, “Take the tray of food and set it before him that he may sup.” So the handmaid carried him the tray of food and set it before him and he ate his fill: after which he sat down and raised his charming voice and fell to reciting the chapter called Y. S.⁵⁶ The lady listened to him and found his voice as melodious as the psalms of David sung by David himself,⁵⁷ which when she heard, she exclaimed, “Allah disappoint the old hag who told me that he was affected with leprosy! Surely this is not the voice of one who hath such a disease; and all was a lie against him.”⁵⁸ Then she took a lute

⁵⁶ Pronounced “Yá Sín” (chapt. xxxvi.) the “heart of the Koran” much used for edifying recitation. Some pious Moslems in Egypt repeat it as a Wazífah, or religious task, or as masses for the dead, and all educated men know its 83 versets by rote.

⁵⁷ Arab. “Ál Dáúid” = the family of David, *i. e.* David himself, a popular idiom. The prophet’s recitation of the “Mazámir” (Psalter) worked miracles.

⁵⁸ There is a peculiar thickening of the voice in leprosy which at once betrays the hideous disease.

of India-land workmanship and, tuning the strings, sang to it in a voice so sweet its music would stay the birds in the heart of heaven; and began these two couplets: —

I love a fawn with gentle white-black eyes, ❀ Whose walk
the willow-wand with envy kills:
Forbidding me he bids for rival mine, ❀ Tis Allah's grace
who grants to whom He wills!

And when he heard her chant these lines he ended his recitation of the chapter, and began also to sing and repeated the following couplet: —

My Salám to the Fawn in the garments concealed, ❀
And to roses in gardens of cheek revealed.

The lady rose up when she heard this, and her inclination for him redoubled and she lifted the curtain; and Ala al-Din, seeing her, recited these two couplets: —

She shineth forth, a moon, and bends, a willow-wand, ❀ And
breathes out ambergris, and gazes, a gazelle.
Meseems as if grief loved my heart and when from her ❀
Estrangement I abide possession to it fell.⁵⁹

Thereupon she came forward, swinging her haunches and gracefully swaying a shape the handiwork of Him whose boons

⁵⁹ These lines have occurred in Night clxxxiii. I quote Mr. Payne (in loco) by way of variety.

are hidden; and each of them stole one glance of the eyes that cost them a thousand sighs. And when the shafts of the two regards which met rankled in his heart, he repeated these two couplets:

She 'spied the moon of Heaven, reminding me ❀ Of nights
when met we in the meadows li'en:
True, both saw moons, but sooth to say, it was ❀ Her very
eyes I saw, and she my eyne.

And when she drew near him, and there remained but two paces between them, he recited these two couplets: —

She spread three tresses of unplaited hair ❀ One night, and
showed me nights not one but four;
And faced the moon of Heaven with her brow, ❀ And showed
me two-fold moons in single hour.

And as she was hard by him he said to her, "Keep away from me, lest thou infect me." Whereupon she uncovered her wrist⁶⁰ to him, and he saw that it was cleft, as it were in two halves, by its veins and sinews and its whiteness was as the whiteness of virgin silver. Then said she, "Keep away from me, thou! for thou art stricken with leprosy, and may be thou wilt infect me." He

⁶⁰ Where the "Juzám" (leprosy, elephantiasis, morbus sacrum, etc. etc.) is supposed first to show: the swelling would alter the shape. Lane (ii. 267) translates "her wrist which was bipartite."

asked, "Who told thee I was a leper?" and she answered, "The old woman so told me." Quoth he, "'Twas she told me also that thou wast afflicted with white scurvy;" and so saying, he bared his forearms and showed her that his skin was also like virgin silver. Thereupon she pressed him to her bosom and he pressed her to his bosom and the twain embraced with closest embrace, then she took him and, lying down on her back, let down her petticoat-trousers, and in an instant that which his father had left him rose up in rebellion against him and he said, "Go it, O Shaykh Zachary⁶¹ of shaggery, O father of veins!"; and putting both hands to her flanks, he set the sugar-stick⁶² to the mouth of the cleft and thrust on till he came to the wicket called "Pecten." His passage was by the Gate of Victories⁶³ and therefrom he entered the Monday market, and those of Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday,⁶⁴ and, finding the carpet after the measure of the daïs-floor,⁶⁵ he plied the box within its cover till he came to the end of it. And when morning dawned he cried to her, "Alas for delight

⁶¹ Arab. "Zakariyá" (Zacharias): a play upon the term "Zakar" = the sign of "masculinity." Zacharias mentioned in the Koran as the educator of the Virgin Mary (chapt. iii.) and repeatedly referred to (chapt. xix. etc.), is a well-known personage amongst Moslems and his church is now the great Cathedral-Mosque of Aleppo.

⁶² Arab. "Ark al-Haláwat" = vein of sweetness.

⁶³ Arab. "Futúh," which may also mean openings, has before occurred.

⁶⁴ *i. e.* four times without withdrawing.

⁶⁵ *i. e.* a correspondence of size, concerning which many rules are given in the Ananga-ranga Shastra which justly declares that discrepancy breeds matrimonial troubles.

which is not fulfilled! The raven⁶⁶ taketh it and flieth away!” She asked, “What meaneth this saying?”; and he answered, “O my lady, I have but this hour to abide with thee.” Quoth she, “Who saith so?” and quoth he, “Thy father made me give him a written bond to pay ten thousand dinars to thy wedding-settlement; and, except I pay it this very day, they will imprison me for debt in the Kazi’s house; and now my hand lacketh one half-dirham of the sum.” She asked, “O my lord, is the marriage-bond in thy hand or in theirs?”; and he answered, “O my lady, in mine, but I have nothing.” She rejoined, “The matter is easy; fear thou nothing. Take these hundred dinars: an I had more, I would give thee what thou lackest; but of a truth my father, of his love for my cousin, hath transported all his goods, even to my jewellery, from my lodging to his. But when they send thee a serjeant of the Ecclesiastical Court,” – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

⁶⁶ Arab. “Ghuráb al-Bayn” = raven of the waste or the parting; hence the bird of Odin symbolises separation (which is also called Al-bayn). The Raven (Ghurab = Heb. Oreb and Lat. Corvus, one of the prehistoric words) is supposed to be seen abroad earlier than any other bird; and it is entitled “Abu Zájir,” father of omens, because lucky when flying towards the right and *v. v.* It is opposed in poetry to the (white) pigeon, the emblem of union, peace and happiness. The vulgar declare that when Mohammed hid in the cave the crow kept calling to his pursuers, “Ghár! Ghár!” (cavern, cavern): hence the Prophet condemned him to wear eternal mourning and ever to repeat the traitorous words. This is the old tale of Coronis and Apollo (Ovid, lib. ii.)– who blacked the raven o’er And bid him prate in his white plumes no more.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-seventh Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the young lady rejoined to Ala al-Din, “And when they send thee at an early hour a serjeant of the Ecclesiastical Court, and the Kazi and my father bid thee divorce me, do thou reply, By what law is it lawful and right that I should marry at nightfall and divorce in the morning? Then kiss the Kazi’s hand and give him a present, and in like manner kiss the Assessors’ hands and give each of them ten gold pieces. So they will all speak with thee, and if they ask thee, Why dost thou not divorce her and take the thousand dinars and the mule and suit of clothes, according to contract duly contracted? do thou answer, Every hair of her head is worth a thousand ducats to me and I will never put her away, neither will I take a suit of clothes nor aught else. And if the Kazi say to thee, Then pay down the marriage settlement, do thou reply, I am short of cash at this present; whereupon he and the Assessors will deal in friendly fashion with thee and allow thee time to pay.” Now whilst they were talking, behold, the Kazi’s officer knocked at the door; so Ala al-Din went down and the man said to him, “Come, speak the Efendi,⁶⁷ for thy father-in-law summoneth thee.” So Ala al-Din gave him five dinars and said to

⁶⁷ This use of a Turkish title, “Efendi” being = our esquire, and inferior to a Bey, is a rank anachronism, probably of the copyist.

him, "O Summoner, by what law am I bound to marry at nightfall and divorce next morning?" The serjeant answered, "By no law of ours at all, at all; and if thou be ignorant of the religious law, I will act as thine advocate." Then they went to the divorce-court and the Kazi said to Ala al-Din, "Why dost thou not put away the woman and take what falleth to thee by the contract?" Hearing this he went up to the Kazi; and, kissing his hand, put fifty dinars in it and said, "O our lord the Kazi, by what law is it lawful and right that I should marry at nightfall and divorce in the morning in my own despite?" The Kazi answered, "Divorce on compulsion and by force is sanctioned by no school of the Moslems." Then said the young lady's father, "If thou wilt not divorce, pay me the ten thousand dinars, her marriage-settlement." Quoth Ala al-Din, "Give me a delay of three days;" but the Kazi said, "Three days is not time enough; he shall give thee ten." So they agreed to this and bound him after ten days either to pay the dowry or to divorce her. And after consenting he left them and taking meat and rice and clarified butter⁶⁸ and what else of food he needed, returned to the house and told the young woman all that had passed; whereupon she said, "Twixt night and day, wonders may display; and Allah bless him for his say: —

Be mild when rage shall come to afflict thy soul; ❀ Be patient
when calamity breeds ire;

Lookye, the Nights are big with child by Time, ❀ Whose

⁶⁸ Arab. "Samn" = Hind. "Ghi;" butter melted, skimmed and allowed to cool.

pregnancy bears wondrous things and dire.”

Then she rose and made ready food and brought the tray, and they two ate and drank and were merry and mirthful. Presently, Ala al-Din besought her to let him hear a little music; so she took the lute and played a melody that had made the hardest stone dance for glee, and the strings cried out in present ecstasy, “O Loving One!”;⁶⁹ after which she passed from the adagio into the presto and a livelier measure. As they thus spent their leisure in joy and jollity and mirth and merriment, behold, there came a knocking at the door and she said to him; “Go see who is at the door.” So he went down and opened it and finding four Dervishes standing without, said to them, “What want ye?” They replied, “O my lord, we are foreign and wandering religious mendicants, the viands of whose souls are music and dainty verse, and we would fain take our pleasure with thee this night till morning doth appear, when we will wend our way, and with Almighty Allah be thy reward; for we adore music and there is not one of us but knoweth by heart store of odes and songs and ritornellos.”⁷⁰ He answered, “There is one I must consult;” and he returned and told Zubaydah who said, “Open the door to them.” So he brought them up and made them sit down and welcomed them; then he fetched them food, but they would not eat and said, “O our lord,

⁶⁹ Arab. “Ya Wadúd;” a title of the Almighty: the Mac. Edit. has “O David!”

⁷⁰ Arab. “Muwashshahah;” a complicated stanza of which specimens have occurred. Mr. Payne calls it a “ballad,” which would be a “Kunyat al-Zidd.”

our meat is to repeat Allah's name in our hearts and to hear music with our ears: and bless him who saith: —

Our aim is only converse to enjoy, ❀ And eating joyeth only cattle-kind.⁷¹

And just now we heard pleasant music in thy house, but when we entered, it ceased; and fain would we know whether the player was a slave-girl, white or black, or a maiden of good family.” He answered, “It was this my wife,” and told them all that had befallen him, adding, “Verily my father-in-law hath bound me to pay a marriage settlement of ten thousand dinars for her, and they have given me ten days' time.” Said one of the Dervishes, “Have no care and think of naught but good; for I am Shaykh of the Convent and have forty Dervishes under my orders. I will presently collect from them the ten thousand dinars and thou shalt pay thy father-in-law the wedding settlement. But now bid thy wife make us music that we may be gladdened and pleased; for to some folk music is meat, to others medicine and to others refreshing as a fan.” Now these four Dervishes were none other than the Caliph Harun al-Rashid, his Wazir Ja'afar the Barmecide, Abu al-Nowás al-Hasan son of Háni⁷² and Masrur

⁷¹ Arab. “Baháim” (plur. of Bahímah = Heb. Behemoth), applied in Egypt especially to cattle. A friend of the “Oppenheim” house, a name the Arabs cannot pronounce, was known throughout Cairo as “Jack al-baháim” (of the cows.)

⁷² Lit. “The father of side-locks,” a nickname of one of the Tobba Kings. This “Hasan of the ringlets” who wore two long pig-tails hanging to his shoulders was the Rochester or Piron of his age: his name is still famous for brilliant wit, extempore verse and the wildest debauchery. D'Herbelot's sketch of his life is very meagre. “His poetry has

the sworder; and the reason of their coming to the house was that the Caliph, being heavy at heart, had summoned his Minister and said, "O Wazir! it is our will to go down to the city and pace its streets, for my breast is sore straitened." So they all four donned dervish-dress and went down and walked about, till they came to that house where, hearing music, they were minded to know the cause. They spent the night in joyance and harmony and telling tale after tale until morning dawned, when the Caliph laid an hundred gold pieces under the prayer-carpet and all taking leave of Ala al-Din, went their way. Now when Zubaydah lifted the carpet she found beneath it the hundred dinars and she said to her husband, "Take these hundred dinars which I have found under the prayer-carpet; assuredly the Dervishes when about to leave us laid them there, without our knowledge." So Ala al-Din took the money and, repairing to the market, bought therewith meat and rice and clarified butter and all they required. And when it was night, he lit the wax-candles and said to his wife, "The mendicants, it is true, have not brought the ten thousand dinars which they promised me; but indeed they are poor men." As they were talking, behold, the Dervishes knocked at the door and she said, "Go down and open to them." So he did her bidding and bringing them up, said to them, "Have you brought

survived to the present day and (unhappily) we shall hear more of Abu Nowás." On the subject of these patronymics Lane (Mod. Egypt, chapt. iv.) has a strange remark that "Abu Dáúid is not the Father of Dáúid or Abu Ali the Father of Ali, but whose Father is (or was) Dáúid or Ali." Here, however, he simply confounds Abu = father of (followed by a genitive), with Abu-h (for Abu-hu) = he, whose father.

me the ten thousand dinars you promised me?" They answered, "We have not been able to collect aught thereof as yet; but fear nothing: Inshallah, to-morrow we will compound for thee some alchemical cookery. But now bid thy wife play us her very best pieces and gladden our hearts for we love music." So she took her lute and made them such melody that had caused the hardest rocks to dance with glee; and they passed the night in mirth and merriment, converse and good cheer, till morn appeared with its sheen and shone, when the Caliph laid an hundred gold pieces under the prayer-carpet and all, after taking leave of Ala al-Din, went their way. And they ceased not to visit him thus every night for nine nights; and each morning the Caliph put an hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet, till the tenth night, when they came not. Now the reason of their failure to come was that the Caliph had sent to a great merchant, saying to him, "Bring me fifty loads of stuffs, such as come from Cairo," – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-eighth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Prince of True Believers said to that merchant, "Bring me fifty loads of stuffs such as come from Cairo, and let each one be worth a thousand dinars, and write on each bale its price; and bring me also a male Abyssinian slave." The merchant did the

bidding of the Caliph who committed to the slave a basin and ewer of gold and other presents, together with the fifty loads; and wrote a letter to Ala al-Din as from his father Shams al-Din and said to him, "Take these bales and what else is with them, and go to such and such a quarter wherein dwelleth the Provost of the merchants and say: – Where be Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat? till folk direct thee to his quarter and his house." So the slave took the letter and the goods and what else and fared forth on his errand. Such was his case; but as regards Zubaydah's cousin and first husband, he went to her father and said to him, "Come let us go to Ala al-Din and make him divorce the daughter of my uncle." So they set out both together and, when they came to the street in which the house stood, they found fifty he-mules laden with bales of stuffs, and a blackamoor riding on a she-mule. So they said to him, "Whose loads are these?" He replied, "They belong to my lord Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat; for his father equipped him with merchandise and sent him on a journey to Baghdad-city; but the wild Arabs came forth against him and took his money and goods and all he had. So when the ill news reached his father, he despatched me to him with these loads, in lieu of those he had lost; besides a mule laden with fifty thousand dinars, a parcel of clothes worth a power of money, a robe of sables⁷³ and a basin and ewer of gold." Whereupon the lady's father said, "He whom thou seekest is my son-in-law and I will

⁷³ Arab. "Samúr," applied in slang language to cats and dogs, hence the witty Egyptians converted Admiral Seymour (Lord Alcester) into "Samúr."

show thee his house.” Meanwhile Ala al-Din was sitting at home in huge concern, when lo! one knocked, at the door and he said, “O Zubaydah, Allah is all-knowing! but I fear thy father hath sent me an officer from the Kazi or the Chief of Police.” Quoth she, “Go down and see what it is.” So he went down; and, opening the door, found his father-in-law, the Provost of the merchants with an Abyssinian slave, dusky-complexioned and pleasant of favour, riding on a mule. When the slave saw him he dismounted and kissed his hands; and Ala al-Din said, “What dost thou want?” He replied, “I am the slave of my lord Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, son of Shams al-Din, Consul of the merchants for the land of Egypt, who hath sent me to him with this charge.” Then he gave him the letter and Ala al-Din opening it found written what followeth:⁷⁴—

Ho thou my letter! when my friend shall see thee, ❀ Kiss
thou the ground and buss his sandal-shoon:
Look thou hie softly and thou hasten not; ❀ My life and rest
are in those hands so boon.

“After hearty salutions and congratulations and high estimation from Shams al-Din to his son, Abu al-Shamat. Know, O my son, that news hath reached me of the slaughter of thy men and the plunder of thy monies and goods; so I send thee herewith fifty loads of Egyptian stuffs, together with a suit of clothes and a robe of sables and a basin and ewer of gold. Fear

⁷⁴ The home-student of Arabic may take this letter as a model even in the present day; somewhat stiff and old-fashioned, but gentlemanly and courteous.

thou no evil and the goods thou hast lost were the ransom of thy life; so regret them not and may no further grief befall thee. Thy mother and the people of the house are doing well in health and happiness and all greet thee with abundant greetings. Moreover, O my son, it hath reached me that they have married thee, by way of intermediary, to the lady Zubaydah the Lutist and they have imposed on thee a marriage-settlement of ten thousand dinars; wherefore I send thee also fifty thousand dinars by the slave Salím.”⁷⁵ Now when Ala al-Din had made an end of reading the letter, he took possession of the loads and, turning to the Provost, said to him, “O my father-in-law, take the ten thousand dinars, the marriage-settlement of thy daughter Zubaydah, and take also the loads of goods and dispose of them, and thine be the profit; only return me the cost-price.” He answered, “Nay, by Allah, I will take nothing; and, as for thy wife’s settlement, do thou settle the matter with her.” Then, after the goods had been brought in, they went to Zubaydah and she said to her sire, “O my father, whose loads be these?” He said, “These belong to thy husband, Ala al-Din: his father hath sent them to him instead of those whereof the wild Arabs spoiled him. Moreover, he hath sent him fifty thousand dinars with a parcel of clothes, a robe of sables, a she-mule for riding and a basin and ewer of gold. As for the marriage-settlement that is for thy recking.” Thereupon Ala al-Din rose and, opening the money-box, gave her her settlement and the lady’s cousin said, “O my uncle, let

⁷⁵ Arab. “Salím” (not Sé-lim) meaning the “Safe and sound.”

him divorce to me my wife;" but the old man replied, "This may never be now; for the marriage-tie is in his hand." Thereupon the young man went out, sore afflicted and sadly vexed and, returning home, fell sick, for his heart had received its death-blow; so he presently died. But as for Ala al-Din, after receiving his goods he went to the bazar and buying what meats and drinks he needed, made a banquet as usual against the night, saying to Zubaydah, "See these lying Dervishes; they promised us and broke their promises." Quoth she, "Thou art the son of a Consul of the merchants, yet was thy hand short of half a dirham; how then should it be with poor Dervishes?" Quoth he, "Almighty Allah hath enabled us to do without them; but if they come to us never again will I open the door to them." She asked, "Why so, whenas their coming footsteps brought us good luck; and, moreover, they put an hundred dinars under the prayer-carpet for us every night? Perforce must thou open the door to them an they come." So when day departed with its light and in gloom came night, they lighted the wax candles and he said to her, "Rise, Zubaydah, make us music;" and behold, at this moment some one knocked at the door, and she said, "Go and look who is at the door." So he went down and opened it and seeing the Dervishes, said, "Oh, fair welcome to the liars! Come up." Accordingly they went up with him and he seated them and brought them the tray of food; and they ate and drank and became merry and mirthful, and presently said to him, "O my lord, our hearts have been troubled for thee: what hath passed between thee and thy father-

in-law?" He answered, "Allah compensated us beyond and above our desire." Rejoined they, "By Allah, we were in fear for thee" – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Fifty-ninth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Dervishes thus addressed Ala al-Din, "By Allah, we were in fear for thee and naught kept us from thee but our lack of cash and coin." Quoth he, "Speedy relief hath come to me from my Lord; for my father hath sent me fifty thousand dinars and fifty loads of stuffs, each load worth a thousand dinars; besides a riding-mule, a robe of sables, an Abyssinian slave and a basin and ewer of gold. Moreover, I have made my peace with my father-in-law and my wife hath become my lawful wife by my paying her settlement; so laud to Allah for that!" Presently the Caliph rose to do a necessity; whereupon Ja'afar bent him towards Ala al-Din and said, "Look to thy manners, for thou art in the presence of the Commander of the Faithful." Asked he, "How have I failed in good breeding before the Commander of the Faithful, and which of you is he?" Quoth Ja'afar, "He who went out but now to make water is the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, and I am the Wazir Ja'afar; and this is Masrur the executioner and this other is Abu Nowas Hasan bin Hani. And now, O Ala al-Din,

use thy reason and bethink thee how many days' journey it is between Cairo and Baghdad." He replied, "Five-and-forty days' journey;" and Ja'afar rejoined, "Thy baggage was stolen only ten days ago; so how could the news have reached thy father, and how could he pack thee up other goods and send them to thee five-and-forty days' journey in ten days' time?" Quoth Ala al-Din, "O my lord and whence then came they?" "From the Commander of the Faithful," replied Ja'afar, "of his great affection for thee." As they were speaking, lo! the Caliph entered and Ala al-Din rising, kissed the ground before him and said, "Allah keep thee, O Prince of the Faithful, and give thee long life; and may the lieges never lack thy bounty and beneficence!" Replied the Caliph, "O Ala al-Din, let Zubaydah play us an air, by way of house-warming⁷⁶ for thy deliverance." Thereupon she played him on the lute so rare a melody that the very stones shook for glee, and the strings cried out for present ecstasy, "O Loving One!" They spent the night after the merriest fashion, and in the morning the Caliph said to Ala al-Din, "Come to the Divan to-morrow." He answered, "Hearkening and obedience, O Commander of the Faithful; so Allah will and thou be well and in good case!" On the morrow he took ten trays and, putting on each a costly present, went up with them to the palace; and the Caliph was sitting on the throne when, behold, Ala al-Din appeared at the door of the

⁷⁶ Arab. "Haláwah" = sweetmeat; meaning an entertainment such as men give to their friends after sickness or a journey: it is technically called as above, "The Sweetmeat of Safety."

Divan, repeating these two couplets: —

Honour and Glory wait on thee each morn! ❀ Thine enviers' noses in the dust be set!

Ne'er cease thy days to be as white as snow; ❀ Thy foeman's days to be as black as jet!

“Welcome, O Ala al-Din!” said the Caliph, and he replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, the Prophet (whom Allah bless and assain!)⁷⁷ was wont to accept presents; and these ten trays, with what is on them, are my offering to thee.” The Caliph accepted his gift and, ordering him a robe of honour, made him Provost of the merchants and gave him a seat in the Divan. And as he was sitting behold, his father-in-law came in and, seeing Ala al-Din seated in his place and clad in a robe of honour, said to the Caliph, “O King of the age, why is this man sitting in my place and wearing this robe of honour?” Quoth the Caliph, “I have made him Provost of the merchants, for offices are by investiture and not in perpetuity, and thou art deposed.” Answered the merchant, “Thou hast done well, O Commander of the Faithful, for he is ours and one of us. Allah make the best of us the managers of our affairs! How many a

⁷⁷ Arab. “Salát” which from Allah means mercy; from the Angels intercession and pardon; and from mankind blessing. Concerning the specific effects of blessing the Prophet, see Pilgrimage (ii. 70). The formula is often slurred over when a man is in hurry to speak: an interrupting friend will say “Bless the Prophet!” and he does so by ejaculating “Sa’am.”

little one hath become great!" Then the Caliph wrote Ala al-Din a Firman⁷⁸ of investiture and gave it to the Governor who gave it to the crier,⁷⁹ and the crier made proclamation in the Divan saying, "None is Provost of the merchants but Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, and his word is to be heard, and he must be obeyed with due respect paid, and he meriteth homage and honour and high degree!" Moreover, when the Divan broke up, the Governor went down with the crier before Ala al-Din and the crier repeated the proclamation and they carried Ala al-Din through the thoroughfares of Baghdad, making proclamation of his dignity. Next day, Ala al-Din opened a shop for his slave Salim and set him therein, to buy and sell, whilst he himself rode to the palace and took his place in the Caliph's Divan. – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixtieth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ala al-Din rode to the palace and took his place in the Caliph's Divan. Now it came to pass one day, when he sat in his stead as was his wont, behold, one said to the Caliph, "O Commander of the

⁷⁸ Persian, meaning originally a command: it is now applied to a Wazirial order as opposed to the "Irádah," the Sultan's order.

⁷⁹ Arab. "Mashá'ilí": lit. the cresset-bearer who has before appeared as hangman.

Faithful, may thy head survive such an one the cup-companion!; for he is gone to the mercy of Almighty Allah, but be thy life prolonged!”⁸⁰ Quoth the Caliph, “Where is Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat?” So he went up to the Commander of the Faithful, who at once clad him in a splendid dress of honour and made him his boon-companion; appointing him a monthly pay and allowance of a thousand dinars. He continued to keep him company till, one day, as he sat in the Divan, according to his custom attending upon the Caliph, lo and behold! an Emir came up with sword and shield in hand and said, “O Commander of the Faithful, may thy head long outlive the Head of the Sixty, for he is dead this day;” whereupon the Caliph ordered Ala al-Din a dress of honour and made him Chief of the Sixty, in place of the other who had neither wife nor son nor daughter. So Ala al-Din laid hands on his estate and the Caliph said to him, “Bury him in the earth and take all he hath left of wealth and slaves and handmaids.”⁸¹ Then he shook the handkerchief⁸² and dismissed the Divan, whereupon Ala al-Din went forth, attended by Ahmad al-Danaf, captain of the right, and Hasan Shúmán, captain of the left, riding at his either stirrup, each with his forty men.⁸³ Presently, he turned to Hasan Shuman and his men and said to them, “Plead ye for

⁸⁰ Another polite formula for announcing a death.

⁸¹ As he died heirless the property lapsed to the Treasury.

⁸² This shaking the kerchief is a signal to disperse and the action suggests its meaning. Thus it is used in an opposite sense to “throwing the kerchief,” a pseudo-Oriental practice whose significance is generally understood in Europe.

⁸³ The body-guard being of two divisions.

me with the Captain Ahmad al-Danaf that he please to accept me as his son by covenant before Allah.” And Ahmad assented, saying, “I and my forty men will go before thee to the Divan every morning.” Now after this Ala al-Din continued in the Caliph’s service many days; till one day it chanced that he left the Divan and returning home, dismissed Ahmad al-Danaf and his men and sat down with his wife Zubaydah, the lute-player, who lighted the wax candles and went out of the room upon an occasion. Suddenly he heard a loud shriek; so he rose up and running in haste to see what was the matter, found that it was his wife who had cried out. She was lying at full length on the ground and, when he put his hand to her breast, he found her dead. Now her father’s house faced that of Ala al-Din, and he, hearing the shriek, came in and said, “What is the matter, O my lord Ala al-Din?” He replied, “O my father, may thy head outlive thy daughter Zubaydah! But, O my father, honour to the dead is burying them.” So when the morning dawned, they buried her in the earth and her husband and father condoled with and mutually consoled each other. Thus far concerning her; but as regards Ala al-Din, he donned mourning dress and declined the Divan, abiding tearful-eyed and heavy-hearted at home. After a while, the Caliph said to Ja’afar, “O Wazir, what is the cause of Ala al-Din’s absence from the Divan?” The Minister answered, “O Commander of the Faithful, he is in mourning for his wife Zubaydah; and is occupied in receiving those who come to console him;” and the Caliph said, “It behoveth us to

pay him a visit of condolence.” “I hear and I obey,” replied Ja’afar. So they took horse, the Caliph and the Minister and a few attendants, and rode to Ala al-Din’s house and, as he was sitting at home, behold, the party came in upon him; whereupon he rose to receive them and kissed the ground before the Caliph, who said to him, “Allah make good thy loss to thee!” Answered Ala al-Din, “May Allah preserve thee to us, O Commander of the Faithful!” Then said the Caliph, “O Ala al-Din, why hast thou absented thyself from the Divan?” And he replied, “Because of my mourning for my wife, Zubaydah, O Commander of the Faithful.” The Caliph rejoined, “Put away grief from thee: verily she is dead and gone to the mercy of Almighty Allah and mourning will avail thee nothing; no, nothing.” But Ala al-Din said “O Commander of the Faithful, I shall never leave mourning for her till I die and they bury me by her side.” Quoth the Caliph, “In Allah is compensation for every decease, and neither device nor riches can deliver from death; and divinely gifted was he who said: —

All sons of woman, albe long preserved, ❀ Are borne upon
the bulging bier some day.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Arab. “Hadbá,” lit. “hump-backed;” alluding to the Badawi bier; a pole to which the corpse is slung (Lane). It seems to denote the protuberance of the corpse when placed upon the bier which before was flat. The quotation is from Ka’ab’s Mantle-Poem (Burdah v. 37) “Every son of a female, long though his safety may be, is a day borne upon a *ridged implement*,” says Mr. Redhouse, explaining the latter as a “bier with a ridged lid.” Here we differ: the Janázah with a lid is not a Badawi article: the wildlings use the simplest stretcher; and I would translate the lines: —The son of

How then shall 'joy man joy or taste delight, ❀ Upon whose cheeks shall rest the dust and clay?"

When the Caliph had made an end of condoling with him, he charged him not to absent himself from the Divan and returned to his palace. And Ala al-Din, after a last sorrowful night, mounted early in the morning and, riding to the court, kissed the ground before the Commander of the Faithful who made a movement as if rising from the throne,⁸⁵ to greet and welcome him; and bade him take his appointed place in the Divan, saying, "O Ala al-Din, thou art my guest to-night." So presently he carried him into his serraglio and calling a slave-girl named Kút al-Kulúb, said to her, "Ala al-Din had a wife called Zubaydah, who used to sing to him and solace him of cark and care; but she is gone to the mercy of Almighty Allah, and now I would have thee play him an air upon the lute," – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-first Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph said to the damsel Kut al-Kulub, "I would have thee play him upon the lute an air, of fashion sweet and rare, that he may

woman, whatso his career, One day is borne upon the gibbous bier.

⁸⁵ This is a high honour to any courtier.

be solaced of his cark and care.” So she rose and made sweet music; and the Caliph said to Ala al-Din, “What sayst thou of this damsel’s voice?” He replied, “Verily, O Commander of the Faithful, Zubaydah’s voice was the finer; but she is skilled in touching the lute cunningly and her playing would make a rock dance with glee.” The Caliph asked, “Doth she please thee?” and he answered, “She doth, O Commander of the Faithful;” whereupon the King said, “By the life of my head and the tombs of my forefathers, she is a gift from me to thee, she and her waiting-women!” Ala al-Din fancied that the Caliph was jesting with him; but, on the morrow, the King went in to Kut al-Kulub and said to her, “I have given thee to Ala al-Din;” whereat she rejoiced, for she had seen and loved him. Then the Caliph returned from his serraglio-palace to the Divan; and, calling porters, said to them, “Set all the goods of Kut al-Kulub and her waiting-women in a litter, and carry them to Ala al-Din’s home.” So they conducted her to the house and showed her into the pavilion, whilst the Caliph sat in the hall of audience till the close of day, when the Divan broke up and he retired to his harem. Such was his case; but as regards Kut al-Kulub, when she had taken up her lodging in Ala al-Din’s mansion, she and her women, forty in all, besides the eunuchry, she called two of these caponised slaves and said to them, “Sit ye on stools, one on the right and another on the left hand of the door; and, when Ala al-Din cometh home, both of you kiss his hands and say to him, “Our mistress Kut al-Kulub requesteth thy presence

in the pavilion, for the Caliph hath given her to thee, her and her women.”” They answered, “We hear and obey;” and did as she bade them. So, when Ala al-Din returned, he found two of the Caliph’s eunuchs sitting at the door and was amazed at the matter and said to himself, “Surely, this is not my own house, or else what can have happened?” Now when the eunuchs saw him, they rose to him and, kissing his hands, said to him, “We are of the Caliph’s household and slaves to Kut al-Kulub, who saluteth thee giving thee to know that the Caliph hath bestowed her on thee, her and her women, and requesteth thy presence.” Quoth Ala al-Din, “Say ye to her: – Thou art welcome; but so long as thou shalt abide with me, I will not enter the pavilion wherein thou art, for what was the master’s should not become the man’s; and furthermore ask her: – What was the sum of thy day’s expenditure in the Caliph’s palace?” So they went in and did his errand to her, and she answered, “An hundred dinars a day;” whereupon quoth he to himself, “There was no need for the Caliph to give me Kut al-Kulub, that I should be put to such expense for her; but there is no help for it.” So she abode with him awhile and he assigned her daily an hundred dinars for her maintenance; till, one day, he absented himself from the Divan and the Caliph said to Ja’afar, “O Wazir, I gave not Kut al-Kulub unto Ala al-Din but that she might console him for his wife; why, then, doth he still hold aloof from us?” Answered Ja’afar, “O Commander of the Faithful, he spake sooth who said: – Whoso findeth his fere, forgetteth his friends.” Rejoined the

Caliph, "Haply he hath not absented himself without excuse, but we will pay him a visit." Now some days before this, Ala al-Din had said to Ja'afar, "I complained to the Caliph of my grief and mourning for the loss of my wife Zubaydah and he gave me Kut al-Kulub;" and the Minister replied, "Except he loved thee, he had not given her to thee. Say hast thou gone in unto her, O Ala al-Din?" He rejoined, "No, by Allah! I know not her length from her breadth." He asked "And why?" and he answered, "O Wazir, what befitteth the lord befitteth not the liege." Then the Caliph and Ja'afar disguised themselves and went privily to visit Ala al-Din; but he knew them and rising to them kissed the hands of the Caliph, who looked at him and saw signs of sorrow in his face. So he said to him, "O Ala al-Din, whence cometh this sorrow wherein I see thee? Hast thou not gone in unto Kut al-Kulub?" He replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, what befitteth the lord befitteth not the thrall. No, as yet I have not gone in to visit her nor do I know her length from her breadth; so pray quit me of her." Quoth the Caliph, "I would fain see her and question her of her case;" and quoth Ala al-Din, "I hear and I obey, O Commander of the Faithful." So the Caliph went in – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-second Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Caliph went in to Kut al-Kulub, who rose to him on sighting him and kissed the ground between his hands; when he said to her, "Hath Ala al-Din gone in unto thee?" and she answered, "No, O Commander of the Faithful, I sent to bid him come, but he would not." So the Caliph bade carry her back to the Harim and saying to Ala al-Din, "Do not absent thyself from us," returned to his palace. Accordingly, next morning, Ala al-Din mounted and rode to the Divan, where he took his seat as Chief of the Sixty. Presently the Caliph ordered his treasurer to give the Wazir Ja'afar ten thousand dinars and said when his order was obeyed, "I charge thee to go down to the bazar where handmaidens are sold and buy Ala al-Din a slave-girl with this sum." So in obedience to the King Ja'afar took Ala al-Din and went down with him to the bazar. Now as chance would have it, that very day, the Emir Khálid, whom the Caliph had made Governor of Baghdad, went down to the market to buy a slave-girl for his son and the cause of his going was that his wife, Khátún by name, had borne him a son called Habzalam Bazázah,⁸⁶ and the same

⁸⁶ "Khatun" in Turk. means any lady: mistress, etc., and follows the name, *e. g.* Fátimah Khatun. Habzalam Bazazah is supposed to be a fanciful compound, uncouth as the named; the first word consisting of "Habb" seed, grain; and "Zalam" of Zulm =

was foul of favour and had reached the age of twenty, without learning to mount horse; albeit his father was brave and bold, a doughty rider ready to plunge into the Sea of Darkness.⁸⁷ And it happened that on a certain night he had a dream which caused nocturnal pollution, whereof he told his mother who rejoiced and said to his father, “I want to find him a wife, as he is now ripe for wedlock.” Quoth Khalid, “The fellow is so foul of favour and withal so rank of odour, so sordid and beastly that no woman would take him at a gift.” And she answered, “We will buy him a slave-girl.” So it befel, for the accomplishing of what Allah Almighty had decreed, that on the same day Ja’afar and Ala al-Din, the Governor Khalid and his son went down to the market and behold, they saw in the hands of a broker, a beautiful girl lovely-faced and of perfect shape, and the Wazir said to him, “O broker, ask her owner if he will take a thousand dinars for her.” And as the broker passed by the Governor with the slave, Habzalam Bazazah cast at her one glance of the eyes which entailed for himself one thousand sighs; and he fell in love with her and passion got hold of him and he said, “O my father, buy me yonder slave-girl.” So the Emir called the broker, who brought the girl to him, and asked her her name. She replied, “My name is Jessamine;” and he said to Habzalam Bazazah, “O my son, an she please thee, do thou bid higher for her.” Then he asked

seed of tyranny. Can it be a travesty of “Absalom” (Ab Salám, father of peace)? Lane (ii. 284) and Payne (iii. 286) prefer Habzalam and Hebezlem.

⁸⁷ Or night. A metaphor for rushing into peril.

the broker, "What hath been bidden for her?" and he replied, "A thousand dinars." Said the Governor's son, "She is mine for a thousand pieces of gold and one more;" and the broker passed on to Ala al-Din who bid two thousand dinars for her; and as often as the Emir's son bid another dinar, Ala al-Din bid a thousand. The ugly youth was vexed at this and said, "O broker! who is it that outbiddeth me for the slave-girl?" Answered the broker, "It is the Wazir Ja'afar who is minded to buy her for Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat." And Ala al-Din continued till he brought her price up to ten thousand dinars, and her owner was satisfied to sell her for that sum. Then he took the girl and said to her, "I give thee thy freedom for the love of Almighty Allah;" and forthwith wrote his contract of marriage with her and carried her to his house. Now when the broker returned, after having received his brokerage, the Emir's son summoned him and said to him, "Where is the girl?" Quoth he, "She was bought for ten thousand dinars by Ala al-Din, who hath set her free and married her." At this the young man was greatly vexed and cast down and, sighing many a sigh, returned home, sick for love of the damsel; and he threw himself on his bed and refused food, for love and longing were sore upon him. Now when his mother saw him in this plight, she said to him, "Heaven assain thee, O my son! What aileth thee?" And he answered, "Buy me Jessamine, O my mother." Quoth she, "When the flower-seller passeth I will buy thee a basketful of jessamine." Quoth he, "It is not the jessamine one smells, but a slave-girl 'named Jessamine, whom my father

would not buy for me.” So she said to her husband, “Why and wherefore didst thou not buy him the girl?” and he replied, “What is fit for the lord is not fit for the liege and I have no power to take her: no less a man bought her than Ala al-Din, Chief of the Sixty.” Then the youth’s weakness redoubled upon him, till he gave up sleeping and eating, and his mother bound her head with the fillets of mourning. And while in her sadness she sat at home, lamenting over her son, behold, came in to her an old woman, known as the mother of Ahmad Kamákim⁸⁸ the arch-thief, a knave who would bore through a middle wall and scale the tallest of the tall and steal the very kohl off the eye-ball.⁸⁹ From his earliest years he had been given to these malpractices, till they made him Captain of the Watch, when he stole a sum of money; and the Chief of Police, coming upon him in the act, carried him to the Caliph, who bade put him to death on the common execution-ground.⁹⁰ But he implored protection of the Wazir whose intercession the Caliph never rejected; so he pleaded for him with the Commander of the Faithful who said, “How canst thou intercede for this pest of the human race?” Ja’afar answered, “O Commander of the Faithful, do thou imprison him; whoso built the first jail was a sage, seeing that a jail is the grave of the living and a joy for the foe.” So the Caliph bade lay him in bilboes

⁸⁸ Plur. of kumkum, cucurbite, gourd-shaped vessel, jar.

⁸⁹ A popular exaggeration for a very expert thief.

⁹⁰ Arab. “Buka’at al-dam”: lit. the “low place of blood” (where it stagnates): so Al-Buká’ah = Coelestria.

and write thereon, "Appointed to remain here until death and not to be loosed but on the corpse-washer's bench;" and they cast him fettered into limbo. Now his mother was a frequent visitor to the house of the Emir Khalid, who was Governor and Chief of Police; and she used to go in to her son in jail and say to him, "Did I not warn thee to turn from thy wicked ways?"⁹¹ And he would always answer her, "Allah decreed this to me; but, O my mother, when thou visitest the Emir's wife make her intercede for me with her husband." So when the old woman came into the Lady Khatun, she found her bound with the fillets of mourning and said to her, "Wherefore dost thou mourn?" She replied, "For my son Habzalam Bazazah;" and the old woman exclaimed, "Heaven assain thy son!; what hath befallen him?" So the mother told her the whole story, and she said, "What wouldst thou say of him who should achieve such a feat as would save thy son?" Asked the lady, "And what feat wilt thou do?" Quoth the old woman, "I have a son called Ahmad Kamakim, the arch-thief, who lieth chained in jail and on his bilboes is written: – Appointed to remain till death; so do thou don thy richest clothes and trick thee out with thy finest jewels and present thyself to thy husband with an open face and smiling mien; and when he seeketh of thee what men seek of women, put him off and baulk him of his will and say: – By Allah, 'tis a strange thing! When a man desireth aught of his

⁹¹ That common and very unpleasant phrase, full of egotism and self-esteem, "I told you so," is even more common in the naïve East than in the West. In this case the son's answer is far superior to the mother's question.

wife he dunneth her till she doeth it; but if a wife desire aught of her husband, he will not grant it to her. Then he will say: – What dost thou want?; and do thou answer: – First swear to grant my request. If he swear to thee by his head or by Allah, say to him: – Swear to me the oath of divorce, and do not yield to him, except he do this. And whenas he hath sworn to thee the oath of divorce, say to him: – Thou keepest in prison a man called Ahmad Kamakim, and he hath a poor old mother, who hath set upon me and who urgeth me in the matter and who saith, Let thy husband intercede for him with the Caliph, that my son may repent and thou gain heavenly guerdon.” And the Lady Khatun replied, “I hear and obey.” So when her husband came into her – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-third Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that the Governor came in to his wife, who spoke to him as she had been taught and made him swear the divorce-oath before she would yield to his wishes. He lay with her that night and, when morning dawned, after he had made the Ghushl-ablution and prayed the dawn-prayer, he repaired to the prison and said, “O Ahmad Kamakim, O thou arch-thief, dost thou repent of thy works?”; whereto he replied, “I do indeed repent and turn to Allah and say

with heart and tongue: – I ask pardon of Allah.” So the Governor took him out of jail and carried him to the Court (he being still in bilboes) and, approaching the Caliph kissed ground before him. Quoth the King, “O Emir Khalid, what seekest thou?”; whereupon he brought forward Ahmad Kamakim, shuffling and tripping in his fetters, and the Caliph said to him, “What! art thou yet alive, O Kamakim?” He replied, “O Commander of the Faithful, the miserable are long-lived.” Quoth the Caliph to the Emir, “Why hast thou brought him hither?”; and quoth he, “O Commander of the Faithful, he hath a poor old mother cut off from the world who hath none but this son and she hath had recourse to thy slave, imploring him to intercede with thee to strike off his chains, for he repenteth of his evil courses; and to make him Captain of the Watch as before.” The Caliph asked Ahmad Kamakim, “Dost thou repent of thy sins?” “I do indeed repent me to Allah, O Commander of the Faithful,” answered he; whereupon the Caliph called for the blacksmith and made him strike off his irons on the corpse-washer’s bench.⁹² Moreover, he restored him to his former office and charged him to walk in the ways of godliness and righteousness. So he kissed the Caliph’s hands and, being invested with the uniform of Captain of the Watch, he went forth, whilst they made proclamation of his appointment. Now for a long time he abode in the exercise of his office, till one day his mother went in to the Governor’s wife, who said to her, “Praised be Allah who hath delivered thy son

⁹² In order to keep his oath to the letter.

from prison and restored him to health and safety! But why dost thou not bid him contrive some trick to get the girl Jessamine for son Habzalam Bazazah?" "That will I," answered she and, going out from her, repaired to her son. She found him drunk with wine and said to him, "O my son, no one caused thy release from jail but the wife of the Governor, and she would have thee find some means to slay Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat and get his slave-girl Jessamine for her son Habzalam Bazazah." He answered, "That will be the easiest of things; and I must needs set about it this very night." Now this was the first night of the new month, and it was the custom of the Caliph to spend that night with the Lady Zubaydah, for the setting free of a slave-girl or a Mameluke or something of the sort. Moreover, on such occasions he used to doff his royal habit, together with his rosary and dagger-sword and royal signet, and set them all upon a chair in the sitting-saloon: and he had also a golden lanthorn, adorned with three jewels strung on a wire of gold, by which he set great store; and he would commit all these things to the charge of the eunuchry, whilst he went into the Lady Zubaydah's apartment. So arch-thief Ahmad Kamakim waited till midnight, when Canopus shone bright, and all creatures to sleep were dight whilst the Creator veiled them with the veil of night. Then he took his drawn sword in his right and his grappling-hook in his left and, repairing to the Caliph's sitting-saloon planted his scaling ladder and cast his grapnel on to the side of the terrace-roof; then, raising the trap-door, let himself down into the saloon, where he found

the eunuchs asleep. He drugged them with hemp-fumes;⁹³ and, taking the Caliph's dress, dagger, rosary, kerchief, signet-ring and the lanthorn whereupon were the pearls, returned whence he came and betook himself to the house of Ala al-Din, who had that night celebrated his wedding festivities with Jessamine and had gone in unto her and gotten her with child. So arch-thief Ahmad Kamakim climbed over into his saloon and, raising one of the marble slabs from the sunken part of the floor,⁹⁴ dug a hole under it and laid the stolen things therein, all save the lanthorn, which he kept for himself. Then he plastered down the marble slab as it before was, and returning whence he came, went back to his own house, saying, "I will now tackle my drink and set this lanthorn before me and quaff the cup to its light."⁹⁵ Now as soon as it was dawn of day, the Caliph went out into the sitting-chamber; and, seeing the eunuchs drugged with hemp, aroused them. Then he put his hand to the chair and found neither dress nor signet nor rosary nor dagger-sword nor kerchief nor lanthorn; whereat he was exceeding wroth and donning the dress of anger, which was a scarlet suit,⁹⁶ sat down in the Divan. So

⁹³ "Tabannuj" literally "hemping" (drugging with hemp or henbane) is the equivalent in Arab medicine of our "anæsthetics." These have been used in surgery throughout the East for centuries before ether and chloroform became the fashion in the civilised West.

⁹⁴ Arab. "Durká'ah," the lower part of the floor, opposed to the "liwan" or daïs. Liwán = Al-Aywán (Arab. and Pers.) the hall (including the daïs and the sunken parts).

⁹⁵ *i. e.* he would toast it as he would a mistress.

⁹⁶ This till very late years was the custom in Persia; and Fath Ali Shah never appeared

the Wazir Ja'afar came forward and kissing the ground before him, said, "Allah avert all evil from the Commander of the Faithful!" Answered the Caliph, "O Wazir, the evil is passing great!" Ja'afar asked, "What has happened?" so he told him what had occurred; and, behold, the Chief of Police appeared with Ahmad Kamakim the robber at his stirrup, when he found the Commander of the Faithful sore enraged. As soon as the Caliph saw him, he said to him, "O Emir Khalid, how goes Baghdad?" And he answered, "Safe and secure." Cried he, "Thou liest!" "How so, O Prince of True Believers?" asked the Emir. So he told him the case and added, "I charge thee to bring me back all the stolen things." Replied the Emir, "O Commander of the Faithful, the vinegar worm is of and in the vinegar, and no stranger can get at this place."⁹⁷ But the Caliph said, "Except thou bring me these things, I will put thee to death." Quoth he, "Ere thou slay me, slay Ahmad Kamakim, for none should know the robber and the traitor but the Captain of the Watch." Then came forward Ahmad Kamakim and said to the Caliph, "Accept my intercession for the Chief of Police, and I will be responsible

in scarlet without ordering some horrible cruelties. In Dar-For wearing a red cashmere turban was a sign of wrath and sending a blood-red dress to a subject meant that he would be slain.

⁹⁷ That is, this robbery was committed in the palace by some one belonging to it. References to vinegar are frequent; that of Egypt being famous in those days. "Optimum et laudatissimum acetum a Romanis habebatur Ægyptum" (Facciolati); and possibly it was sweetened: the Gesta (Tale xvii.) mentions "must and vinegar." In Arab Proverbs, "One mind by vinegar and another by wine" = each mind goes its own way. (Arab. Prov. ii. 628); or, "with good and bad," vinegar being spoilt wine.

to thee for the thief and will track his trail till I find him; but give me two Kazis and two Assessors for he who did this thing feareth thee not, nor doth he fear the Governor nor any other.” Answered the Caliph, “Thou shalt have what thou wantest; but let search be made first in my palace and then in those of the Wazir and the Chief of the Sixty.” Rejoined Ahmad Kamakim, “Thou sayest well, O Commander of the Faithful; belike the man that did this ill-deed be one who hath been reared in the King’s household or in that of one of his officers.” Cried the Caliph, “As my head liveth, whosoever shall have done the deed I will assuredly put him to death, be it mine own son!” Then Ahmad Kamakim received a written warrant to enter and perforce search the houses; – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-fourth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Ahmad Kamakim got what he wanted, and received a written warrant to enter and perforce search the houses; so he fared forth, taking in his hand a rod⁹⁸ made of bronze and copper, iron and steel, of each three equal parts. He first searched the palace of the Caliph, then that of the Wazir Ja’afar; after which he went the

⁹⁸ We have not heard the last of this old “dowsing rod”: the latest form of rhabdromancy is an electrical rod invented in the United States.

round of the houses of the Chamberlains and the Viceroy's till he came to that of Ala al-Din. Now when the Chief of the Sixty heard the clamour before his house, he left his wife Jessamine and went down and, opening the door, found the Master of Police without in the midst of a tumultuous crowd. So he said, "What is the matter, O Emir Khalid?" Thereupon the Chief told him the case and Ala al-Din said, "Enter my house and search it." The Governor replied, "Pardon, O my lord; thou art a man in whom trust is reposed and Allah forbend that the trusty turn traitor!" Quoth Ala al-Din, "There is no help for it but that my house be searched." So the Chief of Police entered, attended by the Kazi and his Assessors; whereupon Ahmad Kamakim went straight to the depressed floor of the saloon and came to the slab, under which he had buried the stolen goods and let the rod fall upon it with such violence that the marble broke in sunder and behold something glittered underneath. Then said he, "Bismillah; in the name of Allah! Mashallah; whatso Allah willeth! By the blessing of our coming a hoard hath been hit upon; wait while we go down into this hiding-place and see what is therein." So the Kazi and Assessors looked into the hole and finding there the stolen goods, drew up a statement⁹⁹ of how they had discovered them in Ala al-Din's house, to which they set their seals. Then, they bade seize upon Ala al-Din and took his turband from his head, and officially registered all his monies and effects which were in the mansion. Meanwhile, arch-thief Ahmad Kamakim laid hands on

⁹⁹ This is the *procès verbal* always drawn up on such occasions.

Jessamine, who was with child by Ala al-Din, and committed her to his mother, saying, "Deliver her to Khatun, the Governor's lady:" so the old woman took her and carried her to the wife of the Master of Police. Now as soon as Habzalam Bazazah saw her, health and heart returned to him and he arose without stay or delay and joyed with exceeding joy and would have drawn near her; but she pluckt a dagger from her girdle and said, "Keep off from me, or I will kill thee and kill myself after." Exclaimed his mother, "O strumpet, let my son have his will of thee!" But Jessamine answered "O bitch, by what law is it lawful for a woman to marry two men; and how shall the dog be admitted to the place of the lion?" With this, the ugly youth's love-longing redoubled and he sickened for yearning and unfulfilled desire; and refusing food returned to his pillow. Then said his mother to her, "O harlot, how canst thou make me thus to sorrow for my son? Needs must I punish thee with torture; and as for Ala al-Din, he will assuredly be hanged." "And I will die for love of him," answered Jessamine. Then the Governor's wife arose and stripped her of her jewels and silken raiment and, clothing her in petticoat-trousers of sack-cloth and a shift of hair-cloth, sent her down into the kitchen and made her a scullery-wench, saying, "The reward for thy constancy shall be to break up fire-wood and peel onions and set fire under the cooking-pots." Quoth she, "I am willing to suffer all manner of hardships and servitude, but I will not suffer the sight of thy son." However, Allah inclined the hearts of the slave-girls to her and they used to do her service in

the kitchen. Such was the case with Jessamine; but as regards Ala al-Din they carried him, together with the stolen goods, to the Divan where the Caliph still sat upon his throne. And behold, the King looked upon his effects and said, "Where did ye find them?" They replied, "In the very middle of the house belonging to Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat;" whereat the Caliph was filled with wrath and took the things, but found not the lanthorn among them and said, "O Ala al-Din, where is the lanthorn?" He answered "I stole it not; I know naught of it; I never saw it; I can give no information about it!" Said the Caliph, "O traitor, how cometh it that I brought thee near unto me and thou hast cast me out afar, and I trusted in thee and thou betrayest me?" And he commanded to hang him. So the Chief of Police took him and went down with him into the city, whilst the crier preceded them proclaiming aloud and saying, "This is the reward and the least of the reward he shall receive who doth treason against the Caliphs of True Belief!" And the folk flocked to the place where the gallows stood. Thus far concerning him; but as regards Ahmad al-Danaf, Ala al-Din's adopted father, he was sitting making merry with his followers in a garden, and carousing and pleasuring when lo! in came one of the water-carriers of the Divan and, kissing the hand of Ahmad al-Danaf, said to him, "O Captain Ahmad, O Danaf! thou sittest at thine ease with water flowing at thy feet,¹⁰⁰ and thou knowest not what hath happened." Asked Ahmad, "What is

¹⁰⁰ The sight of running water makes a Persian long for strong drink as the sight of a fine view makes the Turk feel hungry.

it?” and the other answered, “They have gone down to the gallows with thy son Ala al-Din, adopted by a covenant before Allah!” Quoth Ahmad, “What is the remedy here, O Hasan Shuuman, and what sayst thou of this?” He replied, “Assuredly Ala al-Din is innocent and this blame hath come to him from some one enemy.”¹⁰¹ Quoth Ahmad, “What counsellest thou?” and Hasan said, “We must rescue him, Inshallah!” Then he went to the jail and said to the gaolor, “Give us some one who deserveth death.” So he gave him one that was likest of men to Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat; and they covered his head and carried him to the place of execution between Ahmad al-Danaf and Ali al-Zaybak of Cairo.¹⁰² Now they had brought Ala al-Din to the gibbet, to hang him, but Ahmad al-Danaf came forward and set his foot on that of the hangman, who said, “Give me room to do my duty.” He replied, “O accursed, take this man and hang him in Ala al-Din’s stead; for he is innocent and we will ransom him with this fellow, even as Abraham ransomed Ishmael with the ram.”¹⁰³ So the hangman seized the man and hanged him in lieu of Ala al-

¹⁰¹ Arab. “Min wahid aduww” a peculiarly Egyptian or rather Cairene phrase.

¹⁰² Al-Danaf = the Distressing Sickness: the title would be Ahmad the Calamity. Ali al-Zaybak (the Quicksilver) = Mercury Ali: Hasan “Shuuman” = a pestilent fellow. We shall meet all these worthies again and again: see the Adventures of Mercury Ali of Cairo, Night dccviii., a sequel to The Rogueries of Dalilah, Night dxcviii.

¹⁰³ For the “Sacrifice-place of Ishmael” (not Isaac) see my Pilgrimage (iii. 306). According to all Arab ideas Ishmael, being the eldest son, was the chief of the family after his father. I have noted that this is the old old quarrel between the Arabs and their cousins the Hebrews.

Din; whereupon Ahmad and Ali took Ala al-Din and carried him to Ahmad's quarters and, when there, Ala al-Din turned to him and said, "O my sire and chief, Allah requite thee with the best of good!" Quoth he, "O Ala al-Din" – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-fifth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Calamity Ahmad cried, "O Ala al-Din, what is this deed thou hast done? The mercy of Allah be on him who said: – Whoso trusteth thee betray him not, e'en if thou be a traitor. Now the Caliph set thee in high place about him and stiled thee 'Trusty' and 'Faithful'; how then couldst thou deal thus with him and steal his goods?" "By the Most Great Name, O my father and chief," replied Ala al-Din, "I had no hand in this, nor did I such deed, nor know I who did it." Quoth Ahmad, "Of a surety none did this but a manifest enemy and whoso doth aught shall be requited for his deed; but, O Ala al-Din, thou canst sojourn no longer in Baghdad, for Kings, O my son, may not pass from one thing to another, and when they go in quest of a man, ah! longsome is his travail." "Whither shall I go, O my chief?" asked Ala al-Din; and he answered, "O my son, I will bring thee to Alexandria, for it is a blessed place; its threshold is green and its sojourn is agreeable." And Ala al-Din rejoined, "I hear and I obey, O my chief." So Ahmad said

to Hasan Shuuman, “Be mindful and, when the Caliph asketh for me, say: – He is gone touring about the provinces.” Then, taking Ala al-Din, he went forth of Baghdad and stayed not going till they came to the outlying vineyards and gardens, where they met two Jews of the Caliph’s tax-gatherers, riding on mules. Quoth Ahmad Al-Danaf to these, “Give me the black-mail;”¹⁰⁴ and quoth they, “Why should we pay thee black-mail?” whereto he replied, “Because I am the watchman of this valley.” So they gave him each an hundred gold pieces, after which he slew them and took their mules, one of which he mounted, whilst Ala al-Din bestrode the other. Then they rode on till they came to the city of Ayás¹⁰⁵ and put up their beasts for the night at the Khan. And when morning dawned, Ala al-Din sold his own mule and committed that of Ahmad to the charge of the doorkeeper of the caravanserai, after which they took ship from Ayas port and sailed to Alexandria. Here they landed and walked up to the bazar and behold, there was a broker crying a shop and a chamber behind it for nine hundred and fifty dinars. Upon this Ala al-Din bid a thousand which the broker accepted, for the premises belonged to the Treasury; and the seller handed over to him the keys and the buyer opened the shop and found the inner parlour furnished with carpets and cushions. Moreover, he found there a store-room full of sails and masts, cordage and seamen’s chests,

¹⁰⁴ This black-mail was still paid to the Badawin of Ramlah (Alexandria) till the bombardment in 1881.

¹⁰⁵ The famous Issus of Cilicia, now a port-village on the Gulf of Scanderoon.

bags of beads and cowrie¹⁰⁶-shells, stirrups, battle-axes, maces, knives, scissors and such matters, for the last owner of the shop had been a dealer in second-hand goods.¹⁰⁷ So he took his seat in the shop and Ahmad al-Danaf said to him, "O my son, the shop and the room and that which is therein are become thine; so tarry thou here and buy and sell; and repine not at thy lot for Almighty Allah blesseth trade." After this he abode with him three days and on the fourth he took leave of him, saying, "Abide here till I go back and bring thee the Caliph's pardon and learn who hath played thee this trick." Then he shipped for Ayas, where he took the mule from the inn and, returning to Baghdad met Pestilence Hasan and his followers, to whom said he, "Hath the Caliph asked after me?"; and he replied, "No, nor hast thou come to his thought." So he resumed his service about the Caliph's person and set himself to sniff about for news of Ala al-Din's case, till one day he heard the Caliph say to the Wazir, "See, O Ja'afar, how Ala al-Din dealt with me!" Replied the Minister, "O Commander of the Faithful, thou hast requited him with hanging and hath he not met with his reward?" Quoth he, "O Wazir, I have a mind to go down and see him hanging;" and the Wazir answered, "Do what thou wilt, O Commander of the Faithful." So the Caliph, accompanied by Ja'afar, went down to the place of execution and, raising his eyes, saw the hanged man to be

¹⁰⁶ Arab. "Wada'a" = the *concha veneris*, then used as small change.

¹⁰⁷ Arab. "Sakati" = a dealer in "castaway" articles, such as old metal, damaged goods, the pluck and feet of animals, etc.

other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, surnamed the Trusty, and said, "O Wazir, this is not Ala al-Din!" "How knowest thou that it is not he?" asked the Minister, and the Caliph answered, "Ala al-Din was short and this one is tall." Quoth Ja'afar, "Hanging stretcheth." Quoth the Caliph, "Ala al-Din was fair and this one's face is black." Said Ja'afar, "Knowest thou not, O Commander of the Faithful, that death is followed by blackness?" Then the Caliph bade take down the body from the gallows-tree and they found the names of the two Shaykhs, Abu Bakr and Omar, written on its heels;¹⁰⁸ whereupon cried the Caliph, "O Wazir, Ala al-Din was a Sunnite, and this fellow is a Rejecter, a Shi'ah." He answered, "Glory be to Allah who knoweth the hidden things, while we know not whether this was Ala al-Din or other than he." Then the Caliph bade bury the body and they buried it; and Ala al-Din was forgotten as though he never had been. Such was his case; but as regards Habzalam Bazazah, the Emir Khalid's son, he ceased not to languish for love and longing till he died and they joined him to the dust. And as for the young wife Jessamine, she accomplished the months of her pregnancy and, being taken with labour-pains, gave birth to a boy-child like unto the moon. And when her fellow slave-girls said to her, "What wilt thou name him?" she answered, "Were his father well he had named him;

¹⁰⁸ The popular tale of Burckhardt's death in Cairo was that the names of the three first Caliphs were found written upon his slipper-soles and that he was put to death by decree of the Olema. It is the merest nonsense, as the great traveller died of dysentery in the house of my old friend John Thurburn and was buried outside the Bab al-Nasr of Cairo, where his tomb was restored by the late Rogers Bay (Pilgrimage i. 123).

but now I will name him Aslán.”¹⁰⁹ She gave him suck for two successive years, then weaned him, and he crawled and walked. Now it so came to pass that one day, whilst his mother was busied with the service of the kitchen, the boy went out and, seeing the stairs, mounted to the guest-chamber.¹¹⁰ And the Emir Khalid who was sitting there took him upon his lap and glorified his Lord for that which he had created and fashioned; then closely eyeing his face, the Governor saw that he was the likest of all creatures to Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat. Presently, his mother Jessamine sought for him and finding him not, mounted to the guest-chamber, where she saw the Emir seated, with the child playing in his lap, for Allah had inclined his heart to the boy. And when the child espied his mother, he would have thrown himself upon her; but the Emir held him tight to his bosom and said to Jessamine, “Come hither, O damsel.” So she came to him, when he said to her, “Whose son is this?”; and she replied, “He is my son and the fruit of my vitals.” “And who is his father?” asked the Emir; and she answered, “His father was Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, but now he is become thy son.” Quoth Khalid, “In very sooth Ala al-Din was a traitor.” Quoth she, “Allah deliver him from treason! the Heavens forbend and forbid that the ‘Trusty’ should be a traitor!” Then said he, “When this boy shall grow up and reach man’s estate and say to thee: – Who is my father? say to him: – Thou art the son of the Emir Khalid, Governor and

¹⁰⁹ Prob. a mis-spelling for Arslán, in Turk, a lion, and in slang a piastre.

¹¹⁰ Arab. “Maka’ad”; lit. = sitting-room.

Chief of Police.” And she answered, “I hear and I obey.” Then he circumcised the boy and reared him with the goodliest rearing, and engaged for him a professor of law and religious science, and an expert pensman who taught him to read and write; so he read the Koran twice and learnt it by heart and he grew up, saying to the Emir, “O my father!” Moreover, the Governor used to go down with him to the tilting-ground and assemble horsemen and teach the lad the fashion of fight and fray, and the place to plant lance-thrust and sabre-stroke; so that by the time he was fourteen years old, he became a valiant wight and accomplished knight and gained the rank of Emir. Now it chanced one day that Aslan fell in with Ahmad Kamakim, the arch-thief, and accompanied him as cup-companion to the tavern¹¹¹ and behold, Ahmad took out the jewelled lanthorn he had stolen from the Caliph and, setting it before him, pledged the wine cup to its light, till he became drunken. So Aslan said to him, “O Captain, give me this lanthorn;” but he replied, “I cannot give it to thee.” Asked Aslan, “Why not?”; and Ahmad answered, “Because lives have been lost for it.” “Whose life?” enquired Aslan; and Ahmad rejoined, “There came hither a man who was made Chief of the Sixty; he was named Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat and he lost his life through this lanthorn.” Quoth Aslan, “And what was that story, and what brought about his death?” Quoth Ahmad Kamakim,

¹¹¹ Arab. “Khammárah”; still the popular term throughout Egypt for a European Hotel. It is not always intended to be insulting but it is, meaning the place where Franks meet to drink forbidden drinks.

“Thou hadst an elder brother by name Habzalam Bazazah, and when he reached the age of sixteen and was ripe for marriage, thy father would have bought him a slave-girl named Jessamine.” And he went on to tell him the whole story from first to last of Habzalam Bazazah’s illness and what befel Ala al-Din in his innocence. When Aslan heard this, he said in thought, “Haply this slave-girl was my mother Jessamine, and my father was none other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat.” So the boy went out from him sorrowful, and met Calamity Ahmad, who at sight of him exclaimed, “Glory be to Him unto whom none is like!” Asked Hasan the Pestilence, “Whereat dost thou marvel, O my chief?” and Ahmad the Calamity replied, “At the make of yonder boy Aslan, for he is the likest of human creatures to Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat.” Then he called the lad and said to him, “O Aslan what is thy mother’s name?”; to which he replied, “She is called the damsel Jessamine;” and the other said, “Harkye, Aslan, be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear; for thy father was none other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat: but, O my son, go thou in to thy mother and question her of thy father.” He said, “Hearkening and obedience,” and, going in to his mother put the question; whereupon quoth she, “Thy sire is the Emir Khalid!” “Not so,” rejoined he, “my father was none other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat.” At this the mother wept and said, “Who acquainted thee with this, O my son?” And he answered “Ahmad Al-Danaf, Captain of the Guard.” So she told him the whole story, saying, “O my son, the True hath prevailed and the

False hath failed:¹¹² know that Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat was indeed thy sire, but it was none save the Emir Khalid who reared thee and adopted thee as his son. And now, O my child, when thou seest Ahmad al-Danaf the captain, do thou say to him: – I conjure thee, by Allah, O my chief, take my blood-revenge on the murderer of my father Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat!” So he went out from his mother – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased to say her permitted say.

Now when it was the Two Hundred and Sixty-sixth Night,

She said, It hath reached me, O auspicious King, that Aslan went out from his mother and, betaking himself to Calamity Ahmad, kissed his hand. Quoth the captain, “What aileth thee, O Aslan?” and quoth he, “I know now for certain that my father was Ali al-Din Abu al-Shamat and I would have thee take my blood-revenge on his murderer.” He asked, “And who was thy

¹¹² A reminiscence of Mohammed who cleansed the Ka’abah of its 360 idols (of which 73 names are given by Freytag, *Einleitung*, etc. pp. 270, 342-57) by touching them with his staff, whereupon all fell to the ground; and the Prophet cried (Koran xvii. 84), “Truth is come, and falsehood is vanished: verily, falsehood is a thing that vanisheth” (*magna est veritas*, etc.). Amongst the “idols” are said to have been a statue of Abraham and the horns of the ram sacrificed in lieu of Ishmael, which (if true) would prove conclusively that the Abrahamic legend at Meccah is of ancient date and not a fiction of Al-Islam. Hence, possibly, the respect of the Judaising Tobbas of Himyarland for the Ka’abah (*Pilgrimage*, iii. 295).

father's murderer?" whereto Aslan answered, "Ahmad Kamakim the Arch-thief." "Who told thee this?" enquired he, and Aslan rejoined, "I saw in his hand the jewelled lanthorn which was lost with the rest of the Caliph's gear, and I said to him: – Give me this lanthorn! but he refused, saying, Lives have been lost on account of this; and told me it was he who had broken into the palace and stolen the articles and deposited them in my father's house." Then said Ahmad al-Danaf, "When thou seest the Emir Khalid don his harness of war say to him: – Equip me like thyself and take me with thee. Then do thou go forth and perform some feat of prowess before the Commander of the Faithful, and he will say to thee: – Ask a boon of me, O Aslan! And do thou make answer, I ask of thee this boon, that thou take my blood-revenge on my father's murderer. If he say, Thy father is yet alive and is the Emir Khalid, the Chief of the Police; answer thou: – My father was Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, and the Emir Khalid hath a claim upon me only as the foster-father who adopted me. Then tell him all that passed between thee and Ahmad Kamakim and say: – O Prince of True Believers, order him to be searched and I will bring the lanthorn forth from his bosom." Thereupon said Aslan to him, "I hear and obey;" and, returning to the Emir Khalid, found him making ready to repair to the Caliph's court and said to him, "I would fain have thee arm and harness me like thyself and take me with thee to the Divan." So he equipped him and carried him thither. Then the Caliph sallied forth of Baghdad with his troops and they pitched tents and pavilions without the

city; whereupon the host divided into two parties and forming ranks fell to playing Polo, one striking the ball with the mallet, and another striking it back to him. Now there was among the troops a spy, who had been hired to slay the Caliph; so he took the ball and smiting it with the bat drove it straight at the Caliph's face, when behold, Aslan fended it off and catching it drove it back at him who smote it, so that it struck him between the shoulders and he fell to the ground. The Caliph exclaimed, "Allah bless thee, O Aslan!" and they all dismounted and sat on chairs. Then the Caliph bade them bring the smiter of the ball before him and said, "Who tempted thee to do this thing and art thou friend or foe?" Quoth he, "I am thy foe and it was my purpose to kill thee." Asked the Caliph, "And wherefore? Art not a Moslem?" Replied the spy; "No! I am a Rejecter."¹¹³ So the Caliph bade them put him to death and said to Aslan, "Ask a boon of me." Quoth he, "I ask of thee this boon, that thou take my blood-revenge on my father's murderer." He said, "Thy father is alive and there he stands on his two feet." "And who is he?" asked Aslan; and the Caliph answered, "He is the Emir Khalid, Chief of Police." Rejoined Aslan, "O Commander of the Faithful, he is no father of mine, save by right of fosterage; my father was none other than Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat." "Then thy father was a traitor," cried the Caliph. "Allah forbid, O Commander of the Faithful,"

¹¹³ This was evidently written by a Sunni as the Shí'ahs claim to be the only true Moslems. Lane tells an opposite story (ii. 329). It suggests the common question in the South of Europe, "Are you a Christian or a Protestant?"

rejoined Aslan, "that the 'Trusty' should be a traitor! But how did he betray thee?" Quoth the Caliph, "He stole my habit and what was therewith." Aslan retorted, "O Commander of the Faithful, Allah forbend that my father should be a traitor! But, O my lord, when thy habit was lost and found didst thou likewise recover the lanthorn which was stolen from thee?" Answered the Caliph, "We never got it back;" and Aslan said, "I saw it in the hands of Ahmad Kamakim and begged it of him; but he refused to give it me, saying: – Lives have been lost on account of this. Then he told me of the sickness of Habzalam Bazazah, son of the Emir Khalid, by reason of his passion for the damsel Jessamine, and how he himself was released from bonds and that it was he who stole the habit and the lamp: so do thou, O Commander of the Faithful, take my blood-revenge for my father on him who murdered him." At once the Caliph cried, "Seize ye Ahmad Kamakim!" and they seized him; whereupon he asked, "Where be the Captain, Ahmad al-Danaf?" And when he was summoned the Caliph bade him search Kamakim; so he put his hand into the thief's bosom and pulled out the lanthorn. Said the Caliph, "Come hither, thou traitor: whence hadst thou this lanthorn?" and Kamakim replied, "I bought it, O Commander of the Faithful!" The Caliph rejoined, "Where didst thou buy it?" Then they beat him till he owned that he had stolen the lanthorn, the habit and the rest, and the Caliph said "What moved thee to do this thing O traitor, and ruin Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, the Trusty and Faithful?" Then he bade them lay hands on him and on the Chief

of Police, but the Chief said, "O Commander of the Faithful, indeed I am unjustly treated; thou badest me hang him, and I had no knowledge of this trick, for the plot was contrived between the old woman and Ahmad Kamakim and my wife. I crave thine intercession,¹¹⁴ O Aslan." So Aslan interceded for him with the Caliph, who said, "What hath Allah done with this youngster's mother?" Answered Khalid, "She is with me," and the Caliph continued, "I command that thou order thy wife to dress her in her own clothes and ornaments and restore her to her former degree, a lady of rank; and do thou remove the seals from Ala al-Din's house and give his son possession of his estate." "I hear and obey," answered Khalid; and, going forth, gave the order to his wife who clad Jessamine in her own apparel; whilst he himself removed the seals from Ala al-Din's house and gave Aslan the keys. Then said the Caliph, "Ask a boon of me, O Aslan;" and he replied, "I beg of thee the boon to unite me with my father." Whereat the Caliph wept and said, "Most like thy sire was he that was hanged and is dead; but by the life of my forefathers, whoso bringeth me the glad news that he is yet in the bondage of this life, I will give him all he seeketh!" Then came forward Ahmad al-Danaf and, kissing the ground between his hands, said, "Grant me indemnity, O Commander of the Faithful!" "Thou hast it," answered the Caliph; and Calamity Ahmad said, "I give thee the good news that Ala al-Din Abu al-Shamat, the Trusty, the Faithful, is alive and well." Quoth the Caliph "What is this thou

¹¹⁴ Arab. "Ana fı jırat-ak!" a phrase to be remembered as useful in time of danger.

sayest?” Quoth Al-Danaf, “As thy head liveth I say sooth; for I ransomed him with another, of those who deserved death; and carried him to Alexandria, where I opened for him a shop and set him up as dealer in second-hand goods.” Then said the Prince of True Believers – And Shahrazad perceived the dawn of day and ceased saying her permitted say.

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