

# ISRAEL ABRAHAMS

THE BOOK OF DELIGHT  
AND OTHER PAPERS

**Israel Abrahams**  
**The Book of Delight**  
**and Other Papers**

*[http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio\\_book/?art=38306489](http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=38306489)*

*The Book of Delight and Other Papers:*

# Содержание

PREFACE	5
"THE BOOK OF DELIGHT"	7
THE GIANT GUEST	22
THE FOX AND THE LEOPARD	25
THE FOX AND THE LION	27
THE SILVERSMITH WHO FOLLOWED HIS WIFE'S COUNSEL	29
THE WOODCUTTER AND THE WOMAN	30
MAN'S LOVE AND WOMAN'S IN DISPRAISE OF WOMAN	31
THE WIDOW AND HER HUSBAND'S CORPSE	33
THE LEOPARD'S FATE	34
THE JOURNEY BEGUN BY JOSEPH AND ENAN	36
THE CLEVER GIRL AND THE KING'S DREAM	37
THE NIGHT'S REST	38
THE DISHONEST SINGER AND THE WEDDING ROBES	41
THE NOBLEMAN AND THE NECKLACE	42
THE STORY OF TOBIT	44
THE PARALYTICS TOUCHSTONE OF	47
	51

VIRTUE	
TABLE TALK	53
THE CITY OF ENAN	57
THE PRINCESS AND THE ROSE	58
QUESTION AND ANSWER	59
ENAN REVEALS HIMSELF	62
ENAN'S FRIEND AND HIS DAUGHTER	63
THE WASHERWOMAN WHO DID THE DEVIL'S WORK	65
JOSEPH RETURNS HOME TO BARCELONA	69
A VISIT TO HEBRON	71
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	82

# Israel Abrahams

## The Book of Delight and Other Papers

### PREFACE

The chapters of this volume were almost all spoken addresses. The author has not now changed their character as such, for it seemed to him that to convert them into formal essays would be to rob them of any little attraction they may possess.

One of the addresses—that on "Medieval Wayfaring"—was originally spoken in Hebrew, in Jerusalem. It was published, in part, in English in the London *Jewish Chronicle*, and the author is indebted to the conductors of that periodical for permission to include this, and other material, in the present collection.

Some others of the chapters have been printed before, but a considerable proportion of the volume is quite new, and even those addresses that are reprinted are now given in a fuller and much revised text.

As several of the papers were intended for popular audiences, the author is persuaded that it would ill accord with his original design to overload the book with notes and references. These have been supplied only where absolutely necessary, and a few

additional notes are appended at the end of the volume.

The author realizes that the book can have little permanent value. But as these addresses seemed to give pleasure to those who heard them, he thought it possible that they might provide passing entertainment also to those who are good enough to read them.

**ISRAEL ABRAHAMS**

CAMBRIDGE, ENG., September, 1911

# "THE BOOK OF DELIGHT"

Joseph Zabara has only in recent times received the consideration justly due to him. Yet his "Book of Delight," finished about the year 1200, is more than a poetical romance. It is a golden link between folk-literature and imaginative poetry. The style is original, and the framework of the story is an altogether fresh adaptation of a famous legend. The anecdotes and epigrams introduced incidentally also partake of this twofold quality. The author has made them his own, yet they are mostly adapted rather than invented. Hence, the poem is as valuable to the folklorist as to the literary critic. For, though Zabara's compilation is similar to such well-known models as the "Book of Sindbad," the *Kalilah ve-Dimnah*, and others of the same class, yet its appearance in Europe is half a century earlier than the translations by which these other products of the East became part of the popular literature of the Western world. At the least, then, the "Book of Delight" is an important addition to the scanty store of the folk-lore records of the early part of the thirteenth century. The folk-lore interest of the book is, indeed, greater than was known formerly, for it is now recognized as a variant of the Solomon-Marcolf legend. On this more will be said below,

As a poet and as a writer of Hebrew, Joseph Zabara's place is equally significant. He was one of the first to write extended narratives in Hebrew rhymed prose with interspersed snatches of

verse, the form invented by Arabian poets, and much esteemed as the medium for story-telling and for writing social satire. The best and best-known specimens of this form of poetry in Hebrew are Charizi's *Tachkemoni*, and his translation of Hariri. Zabara has less art than Charizi, and far less technical skill, yet in him all the qualities are in the bud that Charizi's poems present in the fullblown flower. The reader of Zabara feels that other poets will develop his style and surpass him; the reader of Charizi knows of a surety that in him the style has reached its climax.

Of Joseph Zabara little is known beyond what may be gleaned from a discriminating study of the "Book of Delight." That this romance is largely autobiographical in fact, as it is in form, there can be no reasonable doubt. The poet writes with so much indignant warmth of the dwellers in certain cities, of their manner of life, their morals, and their culture, that one can only infer that he is relating his personal experiences. Zabara, like the hero of his romance, travelled much during the latter portion of the twelfth century, as is known from the researches of Geiger. He was born in Barcelona, and returned there to die. In the interval, we find him an apt pupil of Joseph Kimchi, in Narbonne. Joseph Kimchi, the founder of the famous Kimchi family, carried the culture of Spain to Provence; and Joseph Zabara may have acquired from Kimchi his mastery over Hebrew, which he writes with purity and simplicity. The difficulties presented in some passages of the "Book of Delight" are entirely due to the corrupt state of the text. Joseph Kimchi,

who flourished in Provence from 1150 to 1170, quotes Joseph Zabara twice, with approval, in explaining verses in Proverbs. It would thus seem that Zabara, even in his student days, was devoted to the proverb-lore on which he draws so lavishly in his maturer work.

Dr. Steinschneider, to whom belongs the credit of rediscovering Zabara in modern times, infers that the poet was a physician. There is more than probability in the case; there is certainty. The romance is built by a doctor; there is more talk of medicine in it than of any other topic of discussion. Moreover, the author, who denies that he is much of a Talmudist, accepts the compliment paid to him by his visitor, Enan, that he is "skilled and well-informed in the science of medicine." There is, too, a professional tone about many of the quips and gibes in which Zabara indulges concerning doctors. Here, for instance, is an early form of a witticism that has been attributed to many recent humorists. "A philosopher," says Zabara, "was sick unto death, and his doctor gave him up; yet the patient recovered. The convalescent was walking in the street when the doctor met him. 'You come,' said he, 'from the other world.' 'Yes,' rejoined the patient, 'I come from there, and I saw there the awful retribution that falls on doctors; for they kill their patients. Yet, do not feel alarmed. You will not suffer. I told them on my oath that you are no doctor.'"

Again, in one of the poetical interludes (found only in the Constantinople edition) occurs this very professional sneer, "A

doctor and the Angel of Death both kill, but the former charges a fee." Who but a doctor would enter into a scathing denunciation of the current system of diagnosis, as Zabara does in a sarcastic passage, which Erter may have imitated unconsciously? And if further proof be needed that Zabara was a man of science, the evidence is forthcoming; for Zabara appeals several times to experiment in proof of his assertions. And to make assurance doubly sure, the author informs his readers in so many words of his extensive medical practice in his native place.

If Zabara be the author of the other, shorter poems that accompany the "Book of Delight" in the Constantinople edition, though they are not incorporated into the main work, we have a further indication that Zabara was a medical man. There is a satirical introduction against the doctors that slay a man before his time. The author, with mock timidity, explains that he withholds his name, lest the medical profession turn its attention to him with fatal results. "Never send for a doctor," says the satirist, "for one cannot expect a miracle to happen." It is important, for our understanding of another feature in Zabara's work, to observe that his invective, directed against the practitioners rather than the science of medicine, is not more curious as coming from a medical man, than are the attacks on women perpetrated by some Jewish poets (Zabara among them), who themselves amply experienced, in their own and their community's life, the tender and beautiful relations that subsist between Jewish mother and son, Jewish wife and husband.

The life of Joseph ben Meïr Zabara was not happy. He left Barcelona in search of learning and comfort. He found the former, but the latter eluded him. It is hard to say from the "Book of Delight" whether he was a woman-hater, or not. On the one hand, he says many pretty things about women. The moral of the first section of the romance is: Put your trust in women; and the moral of the second section of the poem is: A good woman is the best part of man. But, though this is so, Zabara does undoubtedly quote a large number of stories full of point and sting, stories that tell of women's wickedness and infidelity, of their weakness of intellect and fickleness of will. His philogynist tags hardly compensate for his misogynist satires. He runs with the hare, but hunts energetically with the hounds.

It is this characteristic of Zabara's method that makes it open to doubt, whether the additional stories referred to as printed with the Constantinople edition did really emanate from our author's pen. These additions are sharply misogynist; the poet does not even attempt to blunt their point. They include "The Widow's Vow" (the widow, protesting undying constancy to her first love, eagerly weds another) and "Woman's Contentions." In the latter, a wicked woman is denounced with the wildest invective. She has demoniac traits; her touch is fatal. A condemned criminal is offered his life if he will wed a wicked woman. "O King," he cried, "slay me; for rather would I die once, than suffer many deaths every day." Again, once a wicked woman pursued a heroic man. He met some devils. "What are you running from?" asked

they. "From a wicked woman," he answered. The devils turned and ran away with him.

One rather longer story may be summarized thus: Satan, disguised in human shape, met a fugitive husband, who had left his wicked wife. Satan told him that he was in similar case, and proposed a compact. Satan would enter into the bodies of men, and the other, pretending to be a skilful physician, would exorcise Satan. They would share the profits. Satan begins on the king, and the queen engages the confederate to cure the king within three days, for a large fee, but in case of failure the doctor is to die. Satan refuses to come out: his real plan is to get the doctor killed in this way. The doctor obtains a respite, and collects a large body of musicians, who make a tremendous din. Satan trembles. "What is that noise?" he asks. "Your wife is coming," says the doctor. Out sprang Satan and fled to the end of the earth.

These tales and quips, it is true, are directed against "wicked" women, but if Zabara really wrote them, it would be difficult to acquit him of woman-hatred, unless the stories have been misplaced, and should appear, as part of the "Book of Delight," within the Leopard section, which rounds off a series of unfriendly tales with a moral friendly to woman. In general, Oriental satire directed against women must not be taken too seriously. As Gudemann has shown, the very Jews that wrote most bitterly of women were loud in praise of their own wives—the women whom alone they knew intimately. Woman was the standing butt for men to hurl their darts at, and one cannot

help feeling that a good deal of the fun got its point from the knowledge that the charges were exaggerated or untrue. You find the Jewish satirists exhausting all their stores of drollery on the subject of rollicking drunkenness. They roar till their sides creak over the humor of the wine-bibber. They laugh at him and with him. They turn again and again to the subject, which shares the empire with women in the Jewish poets. Yet we know well enough that the writers of these Hebrew Anacreontic lyrics were sober men, who rarely indulged in overmuch strong drink. In short, the medieval Jewish satirists were gifted with much of what a little time ago was foolishly styled "the new humor." Joseph Zabara was a "new" humorist. He has the quaint subtlety of the author of the "Ingoldsby Legends," and revelled in the exaggeration of trifles that is the stock-in-trade of the modern funny man. Woman plays the part with the former that the mother-in-law played a generation ago with the latter. In Zabara, again, there is a good deal of mere rudeness, which the author seems to mistake for cutting repartee. This, I take it, is another characteristic of the so-called new humor.

The probable explanation of the marked divergence between Zabara's stories and the moral he draws from them lies, however, a little deeper. The stories themselves are probably Indian in origin; hence they are marked by the tone hostile to woman so characteristic of Indian folk-lore. On the other hand, if Zabara himself was a friendly critic of woman, his own moralizings in her favor are explained. This theory is not entirely upset by

the presence even of the additional stories, for these, too, are translations, and Zabara cannot be held responsible for their contents. The selection of good anecdotes was restricted in his day within very narrow limits.

Yet Zabara's reading must have been extensive. He knew something of astronomy, philosophy, the science of physiognomy, music, mathematics, and physics, and a good deal of medicine. He was familiar with Arabian collections of proverbs and tales, for he informs his readers several times that he is drawing on Arabic sources. He knew the "Choice of Pearls," the Midrashic "Stories of King Solomon," the "Maxims of the Philosophers," the "Proverbs of the Wise"; but not "Sendabar" in its Hebrew form. His acquaintance with the language of the Bible was thorough; but he makes one or two blunders in quoting the substance of Scriptural passages. Though he disclaimed the title of a Talmudic scholar, he was not ignorant of the Rabbinic literature. Everyone quotes it: the fox, the woman, Enan, and the author. He was sufficiently at home in this literature to pun therein. He also knew the story of Tobit, but, as he introduces it as "a most marvellous tale," it is clear that this book of the Apocrypha was not widely current in his day. The story, as Zabara tells it, differs considerably from the Apocryphal version of it. The incidents are misplaced, the story of the betrothal is disconnected from that of the recovery of the money by Tobit, and the detail of the gallows occurs in no other known text of the story. In one point, Zabara's version strikingly agrees with the

Hebrew and Chaldee texts of Tobit as against the Greek; Tobit's son is not accompanied by a dog on his journey to recover his father's long-lost treasure.

One of the tales told by Zabara seems to imply a phenomenon of the existence of which there is no other evidence. There seems to have been in Spain a small class of Jews that were secret converts to Christianity. They passed openly for Jews, but were in truth Christians. The motive for the concealment is unexplained, and the whole passage may be merely satirical.

It remains for me to describe the texts now extant of the "Book of Delight." In 1865 the "Book of Delight" appeared, from a fifteenth century manuscript in Paris, in the second volume of a Hebrew periodical called the *Lebanon*. In the following year the late Senior Sachs wrote an introduction to it and to two other publications, which were afterwards issued together under the title *Yen Lebanon* (Paris, 1866). The editor was aware of the existence of another text, but, strange to tell, he did not perceive the need of examining it. Had he done this, his edition would have been greatly improved. For the Bodleian Library possesses a copy of another edition of the "Book of Delight," undated, and without place of issue, but printed in Constantinople, in 1577. One or two other copies of this edition are extant elsewhere. The editor was Isaac Akrish, as we gather from a marginal note to the version of Tobit given by Joseph Zabara. This Isaac Akrish was a travelling bookseller, who printed interesting little books, and hawked them about. Dr. Steinschneider points out

that the date of Isaac Akrish's edition can be approximately fixed by the type. The type is that of the Jaabez Press, established in Constantinople and Salonica in 1560. This Constantinople edition is not only longer than the Paris edition, it is, on the whole, more accurate. The verbal variations between the two editions are extremely numerous, but the greater accuracy of the Constantinople edition shows itself in many ways. The rhymes are much better preserved, though the Paris edition is occasionally superior in this respect. But many passages that are quite unintelligible in the Paris edition are clear enough in the Constantinople edition.

The gigantic visitor of Joseph, the narrator, the latter undoubtedly the author himself, is a strange being. Like the guide of Gil Bias on his adventures, he is called a demon, and he glares and emits smoke and fire. But he proves amenable to argument, and quotes the story of the washerwoman, to show how it was that he became a reformed character. This devil quotes the Rabbis, and is easily convinced that it is unwise for him to wed an ignorant bride. It would seem as though Zabara were, on the one hand, hurling a covert attack against some one who had advised him to leave Barcelona to his own hurt, while, on the other hand, he is satirizing the current beliefs of Jews and Christians in evil spirits. More than one passage is decidedly anti-Christian, and it would not be surprising to find that the framework of the romance had been adopted with polemic intention.

The character of the framework becomes more interesting

when it is realized that Zabara derived it from some version of the legends of which King Solomon is the hero. The king had various adventures with a being more or less demoniac in character, who bears several names: Asmodeus, Saturn, Marcolf, or Morolf. That the model for Zabara's visitor was Solomon's interlocutor, is not open to doubt. The Solomon legend occurs in many forms, but in all Marcolf (or whatever other name he bears) is a keen contester with the king in a battle of wits. No doubt, at first Marcolf filled a serious, respectable rôle; in course of time, his character degenerated into that of a clown or buffoon. It is difficult to summarize the legend, it varies so considerably in the versions. Marcolf in the best-known forms, which are certainly older than Zabara, is "right rude and great of body, of visage greatly misshapen and foul." Sometimes he is a dwarf, sometimes a giant; he is never normal. He appears with his counterpart, a sluttish wife, before Solomon, who, recognizing him as famous for his wit and wisdom, challenges him to a trial of wisdom, promising great rewards as the prize of victory. The two exchange a series of questions and answers, which may be compared in spirit, though not in actual content, with the questions and answers to be found in Zabara. Marcolf succeeds in thoroughly tiring out the king, and though the courtiers are for driving Marcolf off with scant courtesy, the king interposes, fulfils his promise, and dismisses his adversary with gifts. Marcolf leaves the court, according to one version, with the noble remark, *Ubi non est lex, ibi non est rex.*

This does not exhaust the story, however. In another part of the legend, to which, again, Zabara offers parallels, Solomon, being out hunting, comes suddenly on Marcolf's hut, and, calling upon him, receives a number of riddling answers, which completely foil him, and for the solution of which he is compelled to have recourse to the proposer. He departs, however, in good humor, desiring Marcolf to come to court the next day and bring a pail of fresh milk and curds from the cow. Marcolf fails, and the king condemns him to sit up all night in his company, threatening him with death in the morning, should he fall asleep. This, of course, Marcolf does immediately, and he snores aloud. Solomon asks, "Sleepest thou?"—And Marcolf replies, "No, I think."—"What thinkest thou?"—"That there are as many vertebrae in the hare's tail as in his backbone."—The king, assured that he has now entrapped his adversary, replies: "If thou provest not this, thou diest in the morning!" Over and over again Marcolf snores, and is awakened by Solomon, but he is always *thinking*. He gives various answers during the night: There are as many white feathers as black in the magpie.—There is nothing whiter than daylight, daylight is whiter than milk.—Nothing can be safely entrusted to a woman.—Nature is stronger than education.

Next day Marcolf proves all his statements. Thus, he places a pan of milk in a dark closet, and suddenly calls the king. Solomon steps into the milk, splashes himself, and nearly falls. "Son of perdition! what does this mean?" roars the monarch. "May it

please Your Majesty," says Marcolf, "merely to show you that milk is not whiter than daylight." That nature is stronger than education, Marcolf proves by throwing three mice, one after the other, before a cat trained to hold a lighted candle in its paws during the king's supper; the cat drops the taper, and chases the mice. Marcolf further enters into a bitter abuse of womankind, and ends by inducing Solomon himself to join in the diatribe. When the king perceives the trick, he turns Marcolf out of court, and eventually orders him to be hanged. One favor is granted to him: he may select his own tree. Marcolf and his guards traverse the valley of Jehoshaphat, pass to Jericho over Jordan, through Arabia and the Red Sea, but "never more could Marcolf find a tree that he would choose to hang on." By this device, Marcolf escapes from Solomon's hands, returns home, and passes the rest of his days in peace.

The legend, no doubt Oriental in origin, enjoyed popularity in the Middle Ages largely because it became the frame into which could be placed collections of proverbial lore. Hence, as happened also with the legend of the Queen of Sheba and her riddles, the versions vary considerably as to the actual content of the questions and answers bandied between Solomon and Marcolf. In the German and English versions, the proverbs and wisdom are largely Teutonic; in Zabara they are Oriental, and, in particular, Arabic. Again, Marcolf in the French version of Mauclerc is much more completely the reviler of woman. Mauclerc wrote almost contemporaneously with Zabara (about

1216-1220, according to Kemble). But, on the other hand, Mauclerc has no story, and his Marcolf is a punning clown rather than a cunning sage. Marcolf, who is Solomon's brother in a German version, has no trust in a woman even when dead. So, in another version, Marcolf is at once supernaturally cunning, and extremely skeptical as to the morality and constancy of woman. But it is unnecessary to enter into the problem more closely. Suffice it to have established that in Zabara's "Book of Delight" we have a hitherto unsuspected adaptation of the Solomon-Marcolf legend. Zabara handles the legend with rare originality, and even ventures to cast himself for the title rôle in place of the wisest of kings.

In the summary of the book which follows, the rhymed prose of the original Hebrew is reproduced only in one case. This form of poetry is unsuited to the English language. What may have a strikingly pleasing effect in Oriental speech, becomes, in English, indistinguishable from doggerel. I have not translated at full length, but I have endeavored to render Zabara accurately, without introducing thoughts foreign to him.

I have not thought it necessary to give elaborate parallels to Zabara's stories, nor to compare minutely the various details of the Marcolf legend with Zabara's poem. On the whole, it may be said that the parallel is general rather than specific. I am greatly mistaken, however, if the collection of stories that follows does not prove of considerable interest to those engaged in the tracking of fables to their native lairs. Here, in Zabara, we have

an earlier instance than was previously known in Europe, of an intertwined series of fables and witticisms, partly Indian, partly Greek, partly Semitic, in origin, welded together by the Hebrew poet by means of a framework. The use of the framework by a writer in Europe in the year 1200 is itself noteworthy. And when it is remembered what the framework is, it becomes obvious that the "Book of Delight" occupies a unique position in medieval literature.

# THE GIANT GUEST

Once on a night, I, Joseph, lay upon my bed; sleep was sweet upon me, my one return for all my toil. Things there are which weary the soul and rest the body, others that weary the body and rest the soul, but sleep brings calm to the body and the soul at once.... While I slept, I dreamt; and a gigantic but manlike figure appeared before me, rousing me from my slumber. "Arise, thou sleeper, rouse thyself and see the wine while it is red; come, sit thee down and eat of what I provide." It was dawn when I hastily rose, and I saw before me wine, bread, and viands; and in the man's hand was a lighted lamp, which cast a glare into every corner. I said, "What are these, my master?" "My wine, my bread, my viands; come, eat and drink with me, for I love thee as one of my mother's sons." And I thanked him, but protested: "I cannot eat or drink till I have prayed to the Orderer of all my ways; for Moses, the choice of the prophets, and the head of those called, hath ordained, 'Eat not with the blood'; therefore no son of Israel will eat until he prays for his soul, for the blood is the soul...."

Then said he, "Pray, if such be thy wish"; and I bathed my hands and face, and prayed. Then I ate of all that was before me, for my soul loved him.... Wine I would not drink, though he pressed me sore. "Wine," I said, "blindeth the eyes, robbeth the old of wisdom and the body of strength, it revealeth the

secrets of friends, and raiseth dissension between brothers." The man's anger was roused. "Why blasphemest thou against wine, and bearest false witness against it? Wine bringeth joy; sorrow and sighing fly before it. It strengtheneth the body, maketh the heart generous, prolongeth pleasure, and deferreth age; faces it maketh shine, and the senses it maketh bright."

"Agreed, but let thy servant take the water first, as the ancient physicians advise; later I will take the wine, a little, without water."

When I had eaten and drunk with him, I asked for his name and his purpose. "I come," said he, "from a distant land, from pleasant and fruitful hills, my wisdom is as thine, my laws as thine, my name Enan Hanatash, the son of Arnan ha-Desh." I was amazed at the name, unlike any I had ever heard. "Come with me from this land, and I will tell thee all my secret lore; leave this spot, for they know not here thy worth and thy wisdom. I will take thee to another place, pleasant as a garden, peopled by loving men, wise above all others." But I answered: "My lord, I cannot go. Here are many wise and friendly; while I live, they bear me on the wing of their love; when I die, they will make my death sweet.... I fear thee for thy long limbs, and in thy face I see, clear-cut, the marks of unworthiness; I fear thee, and I will not be thy companion, lest there befall me what befell the leopard with the fox." And I told him the story.

In this manner, illustrative tales are introduced throughout the poem. Zabara displays rare ingenuity in fitting the illustrations

into his framework. He proceeds:

# THE FOX AND THE LEOPARD

A leopard once lived in content and plenty; ever he found easy sustenance for his wife and children. Hard by there dwelt his neighbor and friend, the fox. The fox felt in his heart that his life was safe only so long as the leopard could catch other prey, and he planned out a method for ridding himself of this dangerous friendship. Before the evil cometh, say the wise, counsel is good. "Let me move him hence," thought the fox; "I will lead him to the paths of death; for the sages say, 'If one come to slay thee, be beforehand with him, and slay him instead.'" Next day the fox went to the leopard, and told him of a spot he had seen, a spot of gardens and lilies, where fawns and does disported themselves, and everything was fair. The leopard went with him to behold this paradise, and rejoiced with exceeding joy. "Ah," thought the fox, "many a smile ends in a tear." But the leopard was charmed, and wished to move to this delightful abode; "but, first," said he, "I will go to consult my wife, my lifelong comrade, the bride of my youth." The fox was sadly disconcerted. Full well he knew the wisdom and the craft of the leopard's wife. "Nay," said he, "trust not thy wife. A woman's counsel is evil and foolish, her heart hard like marble; she is a plague in a house. Yes, ask her advice, and do the opposite.".... The leopard told his wife that he was resolved to go. "Beware of the fox," she exclaimed; "two small animals there are, the craftiest they, by far—the serpent and the

fox. Hast thou not heard how the fox bound the lion and slew him with cunning?" "How did the fox dare," asked the leopard, "to come near enough to the lion to do it?"

The wife than takes up the parable, and cites the incident of

# THE FOX AND THE LION

Then said the leopard's wife: The lion loved the fox, but the fox had no faith in him, and plotted his death. One day the fox went to the lion whining that a pain had seized him in the head. "I have heard," said the fox, "that physicians prescribe for a headache, that the patient shall be tied up hand and foot." The lion assented, and bound up the fox with a cord. "Ah," blithely said the fox, "my pain is gone." Then the lion loosed him. Time passed, and the lion's turn came to suffer in his head. In sore distress he went to the fox, fast as a bird to the snare, and exclaimed, "Bind me up, brother, that I, too, may be healed, as happened with thee." The fox took fresh withes, and bound the lion up. Then he went to fetch great stones, which he cast on the lion's head, and thus crushed him. "Therefore, my dear leopard," concluded his wife, "trust not the fox, for I fear him and his wiles. If the place he tells of be so fair, why does not the fox take it for himself?" "Nay," said the leopard, "thou art a silly prattler. I have often proved my friend, and there is no dross in the silver of his love."

The leopard would not hearken to his wife's advice, yet he was somewhat moved by her warning, and he told the fox of his misgiving, adding, that his wife refused to accompany him. "Ah," replied the fox, "I fear your fate will be like the silversmith's; let me tell you his story, and you will know how silly it is to listen

to a wife's counsel."

# THE SILVERSMITH WHO FOLLOWED HIS WIFE'S COUNSEL

A silversmith of Babylon, skilful in his craft, was one day at work. "Listen to me," said his wife, "and I will make thee rich and honored. Our lord, the king, has an only daughter, and he loves her as his life. Fashion for her a silver image of herself, and I will bear it to her as a gift." The statue was soon made, and the princess rejoiced at seeing it. She gave a cloak and earrings to the artist's wife, and she showed them to her husband in triumph. "But where is the wealth and the honor?" he asked. "The statue was worth much more than thou hast brought." Next day the king saw the statue in his daughter's hand, and his anger was kindled. "Is it not ordered," he cried, "that none should make an image? Cut off his right hand." The king's command was carried out, and daily the smith wept, and exclaimed, "Take warning from me, ye husbands, and obey not the voice of your wives."

The leopard shuddered when he heard this tale; but the fox went on:

# THE WOODCUTTER AND THE WOMAN

A hewer of wood in Damascus was cutting logs, and his wife sat spinning by his side. "My departed father," she said, "was a better workman than thou. He could chop with both hands: when the right hand was tired, he used the left." "Nay," said he, "no woodcutter does that, he uses his right hand, unless he be a left-handed man." "Ah, my dear," she entreated, "try and do it as my father did." The witless wight raised his left hand to hew the wood, but struck his right-hand thumb instead. Without a word he took the axe and smote her on the head, and she died. His deed was noised about; the woodcutter was seized and stoned for his crime. Therefore, continued the fox, I say unto thee, all women are deceivers and trappers of souls. And let me tell you more of these wily stratagems.

The fox reinforces his argument by relating an episode in which a contrast is drawn between

# MAN'S LOVE AND WOMAN'S

A king of the Arabs, wise and well-advised, was one day seated with his counsellors, who were loud in the praise of women, lauding their virtues and their wisdom. "Cut short these words," said the king. "Never since the world began has there been a good woman. They love for their own ends." "But," pleaded his sages, "O King, thou art hasty. Women there are, wise and faithful and spotless, who love their husbands and tend their children." "Then," said the king, "here is my city before you: search it through, and find one of the good women of whom you speak." They sought, and they found a woman, chaste and wise, fair as the moon and bright as the sun, the wife of a wealthy trader; and the counsellors reported about her to the king. He sent for her husband, and received him with favor. "I have something for thy ear," said the king. "I have a good and desirable daughter: she is my only child; I will not give her to a king or a prince: let me find a simple, faithful man, who will love her and hold her in esteem. Thou art such a one; thou shalt have her. But thou art married: slay thy wife to-night, and to-morrow thou shalt wed my daughter." "I am unworthy," pleaded the man, "to be the shepherd of thy flock, much less the husband of thy daughter." But the king would take no denial. "But how shall I kill my wife? For fifteen years she has eaten of my bread and drunk of my cup. She is the joy of my heart; her love and esteem grow day

by day." "Slay her," said the king, "and be king hereafter." He went forth from the presence, downcast and sad, thinking over, and a little shaken by, the king's temptation. At home he saw his wife and his two babes. "Better," he cried, "is my wife than a kingdom. Cursed be all kings who tempt men to sip sorrow, calling it joy." The king waited his coming in vain; and then he sent messengers to the man's shop. When he found that the man's love had conquered his lust, he said, with a sneer, "Thou art no man: thy heart is a woman's."

In the evening the king summoned the woman secretly. She came, and the king praised her beauty and her wisdom. His heart, he said, was burning with love for her, but he could not wed another man's wife. "Slay thy husband to-night, and tomorrow be my queen." With a smile, the woman consented; and the king gave her a sword made of tin, for he knew the weak mind of woman. "Strike once," he said to her; "the sword is sharp; you need not essay a second blow." She gave her husband a choice repast, and wine to make him drunken. As he lay asleep, she grasped the sword and struck him on the head; and the tin bent, and he awoke. With some ado she quieted him, and he fell asleep again. Next morning the king summoned her, and asked whether she had obeyed his orders. "Yes," said she, "but thou didst frustrate thine own counsel." Then the king assembled his sages, and bade her tell all that she had attempted; and the husband, too, was fetched, to tell his story. "Did I not tell you to cease your praises of women?" asked the king, triumphantly.

# IN DISPRAISE OF WOMAN

The fox follows up these effective narratives with a lengthy string of well-worn quotations against women, of which the following are a few: Socrates, the wise and saintly, hated and despised them. His wife was thin and short. They asked him, "How could a man like you choose such a woman for your wife?" "I chose," said Socrates, "of the evil the least possible amount." "Why, then, do you look on beautiful women?" "Neither," said Socrates, "from love nor from desire, but to admire the handiwork of God in their outward form. It is within that they are foul." Once he was walking by the way, and he saw a woman hanging from a fig-tree. "Would," said Socrates, "that all the fruit were like this."—A nobleman built a new house, and wrote over the door, "Let nothing evil pass this way." "Then how does his wife go in?" asked Diogenes.—"Your enemy is dead," said one to another. "I would rather hear that he had got married," was the reply.

"So much," said the fox to the leopard, "I have told thee that thou mayest know how little women are to be trusted. They deceive men in life, and betray them in death." "But," queried the leopard, "what could my wife do to harm me after I am dead?" "Listen," rejoined the fox, "and I will tell thee of a deed viler than any I have narrated hitherto."

# THE WIDOW AND HER HUSBAND'S CORPSE

The kings of Rome, when they hanged a man, denied him burial until the tenth day. That the friends and relatives of the victim might not steal the body, an officer of high rank was set to watch the tree by night. If the body was stolen, the officer was hung up in its place. A knight of high degree once rebelled against the king, and he was hanged on a tree. The officer on guard was startled at midnight to hear a piercing shriek of anguish from a little distance; he mounted his horse, and rode towards the voice, to discover the meaning. He came to an open grave, where the common people were buried, and saw a weeping woman loud in laments for her departed spouse. He sent her home with words of comfort, accompanying her to the city gate. He then returned to his post. Next night the same scene was repeated, and as the officer spoke his gentle soothings to her, a love for him was born in her heart, and her dead husband was forgotten. And as they spoke words of love, they neared the tree, and lo! the body that the officer was set to watch was gone. "Begone," he said, "and I will fly, or my life must pay the penalty of my dalliance." "Fear not, my lord," she said, "we can raise my husband from his grave and hang him instead of the stolen corpse." "But I fear the Prince of Death. I cannot drag a man from his grave." "I alone will do it then," said the woman; "I will dig him out; it is lawful to cast a

dead man from the grave, to keep a live man from being thrown in." "Alas!" cried the officer, when she had done the fearsome deed, "the corpse I watched was bald, your husband has thick hair; the change will be detected." "Nay," said the woman, "I will make him bald," and she tore his hair out, with execrations, and they hung him on the tree. But a few days passed and the pair were married.

And now the leopard interlude nears its close. Zabara narrates the *dénouement* in these terms:

# THE LEOPARD'S FATE

The leopard's bones rattled while he listened to this tale. Angrily he addressed his wife, "Come, get up and follow me, or I will slay thee." Together they went with their young ones, and the fox was their guide, and they reached the promised place, and encamped by the waters. The fox bade them farewell, his head laughing at his tail. Seven days were gone, when the rains descended, and in the deep of the night the river rose and engulfed the leopard family in their beds. "Woe is me," sighed the leopard, "that I did not listen to my wife." And he died before his time.

# THE JOURNEY BEGUN BY JOSEPH AND ENAN

The author has now finished his protest against his visitor's design, to make him join him on a roving expedition. Enan glares, and asks, "Am I a fox, and thou a leopard, that I should fear thee?" Then his note changes, and his tone becomes coaxing and bland. Joseph cannot resist his fascination. Together they start, riding on their asses. Then says Enan unto Joseph, "Carry thou me, or I will carry thee." "But," continues the narrator, Joseph, "we were both riding on our asses. 'What dost thou mean? Our asses carry us both. Explain thy words.'—'It is the story of the peasant with the king's officer.'"

# THE CLEVER GIRL AND THE KING'S DREAM

A king with many wives dreamt that he saw a monkey among them; his face fell, and his spirit was troubled. "This is none other," said he, "than a foreign king, who will invade my realm, and take my harem for his spoil." One of his officers told the king of a clever interpreter of dreams, and the king despatched him to find out the meaning of his ominous vision. He set forth on his mule, and met a countryman riding. "Carry me," said the officer, "or I will carry thee." The peasant was amazed. "But our asses carry us both," he said. "Thou tiller of the earth," said the officer, "thou art earth, and eatest earth. There is snow on the hill," continued the officer, and as the month was Tammuz, the peasant laughed. They passed a road with wheat growing on each side. "A horse blind in one eye has passed here," said the officer, "loaded with oil on one side, and with vinegar on the other." They saw a field richly covered with abounding corn, and the peasant praised it. "Yes," said the officer, "if the corn is not already eaten." They went on a little further and saw a lofty tower. "Well fortified," remarked the peasant. "Fortified without, if not ruined within," replied the officer. A funeral passed them. "As to this old man whom they are burying," said the officer, "I cannot tell whether he is alive or dead." And the peasant thought his companion mad to make such unintelligible remarks. They neared a village where

the peasant lived, and he invited the officer to stay with him overnight.

The peasant, in the dead of the night, told his wife and daughters of the foolish things the officer had said, though he looked quite wise. "Nay," said the peasant's youngest daughter, a maiden of fifteen years, "the man is no fool; thou didst not comprehend the depth of his meaning. The tiller of the earth eats food grown from the earth. By the 'snow on the hill' is meant thy white beard (on thy head); thou shouldst have answered, 'Time caused it.' The horse blind in one eye he knew had passed, because he saw that the wheat was eaten on one side of the way, and not on the other; and as for its burden, he saw that the vinegar had parched the dust, while the oil had not. His saying, 'Carry me, or I will carry thee,' signifies that he who beguiles the way with stories and proverbs and riddles, carries his companion, relieving him from the tedium of the journey. The corn of the field you passed," continued the girl, "was already eaten if the owner was poor, and had sold it before it was reaped. The lofty and stately tower was in ruins within, if it was without necessary stores. About the funeral, too, his remark was true. If the old man left a son, he was still alive; if he was childless, he was, indeed, dead."

In the morning, the girl asked her father to give the officer the food she would prepare. She gave him thirty eggs, a dish full of milk, and a whole loaf. "Tell me," said she, "how many days old the month is; is the moon new, and the sun at its zenith?" Her father ate two eggs, a little of the loaf, and sipped some of

the milk, and gave the rest to the officer. "Tell thy daughter," he said, "the sun is not full, neither is the moon, for the month is two days old." "Ah," laughed the peasant, as he told his daughter the answers of the officer, "ah, my girl, I told you he was a fool, for we are now in the middle of the month." "Did you eat anything of what I gave you?" asked the girl of her father. And he told her of the two eggs, the morsel of bread, and the sip of milk that he had taken. "Now I know," said the girl, "of a surety that the man is very wise." And the officer, too, felt that she was wise, and so he told her the king's dream. She went back with him to the king, for she told the officer that she could interpret the vision, but would do so only to the king in person, not through a deputy. "Search thy harem," said the girl, "and thou wilt find among thy women a man disguised in female garb." He searched, and found that her words were true. The man was slain, and the women, too, and the peasant's daughter became the king's sole queen, for he never took another wife besides her.

# THE NIGHT'S REST

Thus Joseph and the giant Enan journey on, and they stay overnight in a village inn. Then commences a series of semi-medical wrangles, which fill up a large portion of the book. Joseph demands food and wine, and Enan gives him a little of the former and none of the latter. "Be still," says Enan, "too much food is injurious to a traveller weary from the way. But you cannot be so very hungry, or you would fall to on the dry bread. But wine with its exciting qualities is bad for one heated by a long day's ride." Even their asses are starved, and Joseph remarks sarcastically, "Tomorrow it will be, indeed, a case of carry-thou-me-or-I-thee, for our asses will not be able to bear us." They sleep on the ground, without couch or cover. At dawn Enan rouses him, and when he sees that his ass is still alive, he exclaims, "Man and beast thou savest, O Lord!" The ass, by the way, is a lineal descendant of Balaam's animal.

They proceed, and the asses nod and bow as though they knew how to pray. Enan weeps as they near a town. "Here," says he, "my dear friend died, a man of wisdom and judgment. I will tell thee a little of his cleverness."

# THE DISHONEST SINGER AND THE WEDDING ROBES

A man once came to him crying in distress. His only daughter was betrothed to a youth, and the bridegroom and his father came to the bride's house on the eve of the wedding, to view her ornaments and beautiful clothes. When the bride's parents rose next day, everything had vanished, jewels and trousseau together. They were in despair, for they had lavished all their possessions on their daughter. My friend [continued Enan] went back with the man to examine the scene of the robbery. The walls of the house were too high to scale. He found but one place where entry was possible, a crevice in a wall in which an orange tree grew, and its edge was covered with thorns and prickles. Next door lived a musician, Paltiel ben Agan [or Adan] by name, and my late friend, the judge, interviewed him, and made him strip. His body was covered with cuts and scratches; his guilt was discovered, and the dowry returned to the last shoe-latchet. "My son," said he, "beware of singers, for they are mostly thieves; trust no word of theirs, for they are liars; they dally with women, and long after other people's money. They fancy they are clever, but they know not their left hand from their right; they raise their hands all day and call, but know not to whom. A singer stands at his post, raised above all other men, and he thinks he is as lofty as his place. He constantly emits sounds, which mount to his brain, and dry it up;

hence he is so witless."

Then Enan tells Joseph another story of his friend the judge's sagacity:

# THE NOBLEMAN AND THE NECKLACE

A man lived in Cordova, Jacob by name, the broker; he was a man of tried honesty. Once a jewelled necklet was entrusted to him for sale by the judge, the owner demanding five hundred pieces of gold as its price. Jacob had the chain in his hand when he met a nobleman, one of the king's intimate friends. The nobleman offered four hundred pieces for the necklet, which Jacob refused. "Come with me to my house, and I will consider the price," said the would-be purchaser. The Jew accompanied him home, and the nobleman went within. Jacob waited outside the gate till the evening, but no one came out. He passed a sleepless night with his wife and children, and next morning returned to the nobleman. "Buy the necklace," said he, "or return it." The nobleman denied all knowledge of the jewels, so Jacob went to the judge. He sent for the nobles, to address them as was his wont, and as soon as they had arrived, he said to the thief's servant, "Take your master's shoe and go to his wife. Show the shoe and say, Your lord bids me ask you for the necklace he bought yesterday, as he wishes to exhibit its beauty to his friends." The wife gave the servant the ornament, the theft was made manifest, and it was restored to its rightful owner.

And Enan goes on:

## THE SON AND THE SLAVE

A merchant of measureless wealth had an only son, who, when he grew up, said, "Father, send me on a voyage, that I may trade and see foreign lands, and talk with men of wisdom, to learn from their words." The father purchased a ship, and sent him on a voyage, with much wealth and many friends. The father was left at home with his slave, in whom he put his trust, and who filled his son's place in position and affection. Suddenly a pain seized him in the heart, and he died without directing how his property was to be divided. The slave took possession of everything; no one in the town knew whether he was the man's slave or his son. Ten years passed, and the real son returned, with his ship laden with wealth. As they approached the harbor, the ship was wrecked. They had cast everything overboard, in a vain effort to save it; finally, the crew and the passengers were all thrown into the sea. The son reached the shore destitute, and returned to his father's house; but the slave drove him away, denying his identity. They went before the judge. "Find the loathly merchant's grave," he said to the slave, "and bring me the dead man's bones. I shall burn them for his neglect to leave a will, thus rousing strife as to his property." The slave started to obey, but the son stayed him. "Keep all," said he, "but disturb not my father's bones." "Thou art the son," said the judge; "take this other as thy lifelong slave."

Joseph and Enan pass to the city of Tobiah. At the gate they

are accosted by an old and venerable man, to whom they explain that they have been on the way for seven days. He invites them to his home, treats them hospitably, and after supper tells them sweet and pleasant tales, "among his words an incident wonderful to the highest degree." This wonderful story is none other than a distorted version of the Book of Tobit. I have translated this in full, and in rhymed prose, as a specimen of the original.

# THE STORY OF TOBIT

Here, in the days of the saints of old, in the concourse of elders of age untold, there lived a man upright and true, in all his doings good fortune he knew. Rich was he and great, his eyes looked ever straight: Tobiah, the son of Ahiah, a man of Dan, helped the poor, to each gave of his store; whene'er one friendless died, the shroud he supplied, bore the corpse to the grave, nor thought his money to save. The men of the place, a sin-ruled race, slandering, cried, "O King, these Jewish knaves open our graves! Our bones they burn, into charms to turn, health to earn." The king angrily spoke: "I will weighten their yoke, and their villainy repay; all the Jews who, from to-day, die in this town, to the pit take down, to the pit hurry all, without burial. Who buries a Jew, the hour shall rue; bitter his pang, on the gallows shall he hang." Soon a sojourner did die, and no friends were by; but good Tobiah the corpse did lave, and dress it for the grave. Some sinners saw the deed, to the judge the word they gave, who Tobiah's death decreed. Forth the saint they draw, to hang him as by law. But now they near the tree, lo! no man can see, a blindness falls on all, and Tobiah flies their thrall. Many friends his loss do weep, but homewards he doth creep, God's mercies to narrate, and his own surprising fate, "Praise ye the Lord, dear friends, for His mercy never ends, and to His servants good intends." Fear the king distressed, his heart beat at his breast, new decrees his fear

expressed. "Whoe'er a Jew shall harm," the king cried in alarm, "touching his person or personalty, touches the apple of my eye; let no man do this wrong, or I'll hang him 'mid the throng, high though his rank, and his lineage long." And well he kept his word, he punished those who erred; but on the Jews his mercies shone, the while he rilled the throne.

Once lay the saint at rest, and glanced upon the nest of a bird within his room. Ah! cruel was his doom! Into his eye there went the sparrow's excrement. Tobiah's sight was gone! He had an only son, whom thus he now addressed: "When business ventures pressed, I passed from clime to clime. Well I recall the time, when long I dwelt in Ind, of wealth full stores to find. But perilous was the road, and entrusted I my load with one of honest fame, Peër Hazeman his name. And now list, beloved son, go out and hire thee one, thy steps forthwith to guide unto my old friend's side. I know his love's full stream, his trust he will redeem; when heareth he my plight, when seeth he thy sight, then will he do the right." The youth found whom he sought, a man by travel taught, the ways of Ind he knew; he knew them through and through, he knew them up and down, as a townsman knows his town. He brought him to his sire, who straightway did inquire, "Knowest thou an Indian spot, a city named Tobot?"—"Full well I know the place, I spent a two years' space in various enterprise; its people all are wise, and honest men and true."—"What must I give to you," asked Tobiah of his guest, "to take my son in quest?"—"Of pieces pure of gold, full fifty must be told."—"I'll pay you that

with joy; start forth now with my boy." A script the son did write, which Tobiah did indite, and on his son bestow a sign his friend would know. The father kissed his son, "In peace," said he, "get gone; may God my life maintain till thou art come again." The youth and guide to Tobot hied, and reached anon Peër Hazeman. "Why askest thou my name?" Straight the answer came, "Tobiah is my sire, and he doth inquire of thy health and thy household's." Then the letter he unfolds. The contents Peër espies, every doubt flies, he regards the token with no word spoken. "'Tis the son of my friend, who greeting thus doth send. Is it well with him? Say."—"Well, well with him alway."—"Then dwell thou here a while, and hours sweet beguile with the tales which thou wilt tell of him I loved so well."—"Nay, I must forthwith part to soothe my father's heart. I am his only trust, return at once I must." Peër Hazeman agrees the lad to release; gives him all his father's loan, and gifts adds of his own, raiment and two slaves. To music's pleasant staves, the son doth homeward wend. By the shore of the sea went the lad full of glee, and the wind blew a blast, and a fish was upward cast. Then hastened the guide to ope the fish's side, took the liver and the gall, for cure of evil's thrall: liver to give demons flight, gall to restore men's sight. The youth begged his friend these specifics to lend, then went he on his way to where his sick sire lay. Then spake the youth to his father all the truth. "Send not away the guide without pay." The son sought the man, through the city he ran, but the man had disappeared. Said Tobiah, "Be not afeared, 'twas Elijah the seer, whom God sent

here to stand by our side, our needs to provide." He bathed both his eyes with the gall of the prize, and his sight was restored by the grace of the Lord.

Then said he to his son, "Now God His grace has shown, dost thou not yearn to do a deed in turn? My niece forthwith wed."—"But her husbands three are dead, each gave up his life as each made her his wife; to her shame and to her sorrow, they survived not to the morrow."—"Nay, a demon is the doer of this harm to every wooer. My son, obey my wish, take the liver of the fish, and burn it in full fume, at the door of her room, 'twill give the demon his doom." At his father's command, with his life in his hand, the youth sought the maid, and wedded her unafraid. For long timid hours his prayer Tobiah pours; but the incense was alight, the demon took to flight, and safe was all the night. Long and happily wed, their lives sweetly sped.

Their entertainer tells Joseph and Enan another story of piety connected with the burial of the dead:

# THE PARALYTICS TOUCHSTONE OF VIRTUE

Once upon a time there lived a saintly man, whose abode was on the way to the graveyard. Every funeral passed his door, and he would ever rise and join in the procession, and assist those engaged in the burial. In his old age his feet were paralyzed, and he could not leave his bed; the dead passed his doors, and he sighed that he could not rise to display his wonted respect. Then prayed he to the Lord: "O Lord, who givest eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, hear me from the corner of my sorrowful bed. Grant that when a pious man is borne to his grave, I may be able to rise to my feet." An angel's voice in a vision answered him, "Lo, thy prayer is heard." And so, whenever a pious man was buried, he rose and prayed for his soul. On a day, there died one who had grown old in the world's repute, a man of excellent piety, yet the lame man could not rise as his funeral passed. Next day died a quarrelsome fellow of ill fame for his notorious sins, and when his body was carried past the lame man's door, the paralytic was able to stand. Every one was amazed, for hitherto the lame man's rising or resting had been a gauge of the departed's virtue. Two sage men resolved to get to the bottom of the mystery. They interviewed the wife of the fellow who had died second. The wife confirmed the worst account of him, but added: "He had an old father, aged one hundred years, and he honored and served

him. Every day he kissed his hand, gave him drink, stripped and dressed him when, from old age, he could not turn himself on his couch; daily he brought ox and lamb bones, from which he drew the marrow, and made dainty foods of it." And the people knew that honoring his father had atoned for his transgressions. Then the two inquisitors went to the house of the pious man, before whom the paralytic had been unable to rise. His widow gave him an excellent character; he was gentle and pious; prayed three times a day, and at midnight rose and went to a special chamber to say his prayers. No one had ever seen the room but himself, as he ever kept the key in his bosom. The two inquisitors opened the door of this chamber, and found a small box hidden in the window-sill; they opened the box, and found in it a golden figure bearing a crucifix. Thus the man had been one of those who do the deeds of Zimri, and expect the reward of Phineas.

## TABLE TALK

Joseph and Enan then retire to rest, and their sleep is sweet and long. By strange and devious ways they continue their journey on the morrow, starting at dawn. Again they pass the night at the house of one of Enan's friends, Rabbi Judah, a ripe old sage and hospitable, who welcomes them cordially, feeds them bountifully, gives them spiced dishes, wine of the grape and the pomegranate, and then tells stories and proverbs "from the books of the Arabs."

A man said to a sage, "Thou braggest of thy wisdom, but it came from me." "Yes," replied the sage, "and it forgot its way back."—Who is the worst of men? He who is good in his own esteem.—Said a king to a sage, "Sweet would be a king's reign if it lasted forever." "Had such been your predecessor's lot," replied the wise man, "how would you have reached the throne?"—A man laid a complaint before the king; the latter drove the suppliant out with violence. "I entered with one complaint," sighed the man, "I leave with two."—What is style? Be brief and do not repeat yourself.—The king once visited a nobleman's house, and asked the latter's son, "Whose house is better, your father's or mine?" "My father's," said the boy, "while the king is in it."—A king put on a new robe, which did not become him. "It is not good to wear," said a courtier, "but it is good to put on." The king put the robe on him.—A bore visited a sick man.

"What ails thee?" he asked. "Thy presence," said the sufferer.—A man of high lineage abused a wise man of lowly birth. "My lineage is a blot on me," retorted a sage, "thou art a blot on thy lineage."—To another who reviled him for his lack of noble ancestry, he retorted, "Thy noble line ends with thee, with me mine begins."—Diogenes and Dives were attacked by robbers. "Woe is me," said Dives, "if they recognize me." "Woe is me," said Diogenes, "if they do not recognize me."—A philosopher sat by the target at which the archers were shooting. "'Tis the safest spot," said he.—An Arab's brother died. "Why did he die?" one asked. "Because he lived," was the answer.—"What hast thou laid up for the cold weather?" they asked a poor fellow. "Shivering," he answered.—Death is the dread of the rich and the hope of the poor.—Which is the best of the beasts? Woman.—Hide thy virtues as thou hidest thy faults.—A dwarf brought a complaint to his king. "No one," said the king, "would hurt such a pigmy." "But," retorted the dwarf, "my injurer is smaller than I am."—A dolt sat on a stone. "Lo, a blockhead on a block," said the passers-by.—"What prayer make you by night?" they asked a sage. "Fear God by day, and by night you will sleep, not pray."—Rather a wise enemy than a foolish friend.—Not everyone who flees escapes, not everyone who begs has need.—A sage had weak eyes. "Heal them," said they. "To see what?" he rejoined.—A fool quarrelled with a sage. Said the former, "For every word of abuse I hear from thee, I will retort ten." "Nay," replied the other, "for every ten words of abuse I hear from thee,

I will not retort one."—An honest man cannot catch a thief.—All things grow with time except grief.—The character of the sent tells the character of the sender.—What is man's best means of concealment? Speech.—"Why walkest thou so slowly?" asked the lad of the greybeard. "My years are a chain to my feet: and thy years are preparing thy chain."—Do not swallow poison because you know an antidote.—The king heard a woman at prayer. "O God," she said, "remove this king from us." "And put a better in his stead," added the eavesdropping monarch.—Take measure for this life as though thou wilt live forever; prepare for the next world as though thou diest to-morrow.—"He will die," said the doctor, but the patient recovered. "You have returned from the other world," said the doctor when he met the man. "Yes," said the latter, "and the doctors have a bad time there. But fear not. Thou art no doctor."—Three things weary: a lamp that will not burn, a messenger that dawdles, a table spread and waiting.

Then follows a string of sayings about *threes*:

Reason rules the body, wisdom is the pilot, law is its light. Might is the lion's, burdens are the ox's, wisdom is man's; spinning the spider's, building the bee's, making stores the ant's. In three cases lying is permissible: in war, in reconciling man to man, in appeasing one's wife.

Their host concludes his lengthy list of sententious remarks thus:

A king had a signet ring, on which were engraved the words, "Thou hast bored me: rise!" and when a guest stayed too long,

he showed the visitor the ring.-The heir of a wealthy man squandered his money, and a sage saw him eating bread and salted olives. "Hadst thou thought that this would be thy food, this would not be thy food."-Marry no widow. She will lament her first husband's death.

# THE CITY OF ENAN

This was the signal for the party to retire to rest.

Next day the wayfarers reach Enan's own city, the place he had all along desired Joseph to see. He shows Joseph his house; but the latter replies, "I crave food, not sight-seeing." "Surely," says Enan, "the more hurry the less speed." At last the table is spread; the cloth is ragged, the dishes contain unleavened bread, such as there is no pleasure in eating, and there is a dish of herbs and vinegar. Then ensues a long wrangle, displaying much medical knowledge, on the physiology of herbs and vegetables, on the eating of flesh, much and fast. Enan makes sarcastic remarks on Joseph's rapacious appetite. He tells Joseph, he must not eat this or that. A joint of lamb is brought on the table, Enan says the head is bad, and the feet, and the flesh, and the fat; so that Joseph has no alternative but to eat it all. "I fear that what happened to the king, will befall thee," said Enan. "Let me feed first," said Joseph; "then you can tell me what happened to the king."

# THE PRINCESS AND THE ROSE

A gardener came to his garden in the winter. It was the month of Tebet, and he found some roses in flower. He rejoiced at seeing them; and he plucked them, and put them on a precious dish, carried them to the king, and placed them before him. The king was surprised, and the flowers were goodly in his sight; and he gave the gardener one hundred pieces of gold. Then said the king in his heart, "To-day we will make merry, and have a feast." All his servants and faithful ministers were invited to rejoice over the joy of the roses. And he sent for his only daughter, then with child; and she stretched forth her hand to take a rose, and a serpent that lay in the dish leapt at her and startled her, and she died before night.

# QUESTION AND ANSWER

But Joseph's appetite was not to be stayed by such tales as this. So Enan tells him of the "Lean Fox and the Hole"; but in vain. "Open not thy mouth to Satan," says Joseph. "I fear for my appetite, that it become smaller"; and goes on eating.

Now Enan tries another tack: he will question him, and put him through his paces. But Joseph yawns and protests that he has eaten too much to keep his eyes open.

"How canst thou sleep," said Enan, "when thou hast eaten everything, fresh and stale? As I live, thou shalt not seek thy bed until I test thy wisdom-until I prove whether all this provender has entered the stomach of a wise man or a fool."

Then follows an extraordinary string of anatomical, medical, scientific, and Talmudic questions about the optic nerves; the teeth; why a man lowers his head when thinking over things he has never known, but raises his head when thinking over what he once knew but has forgotten; the physiology of the digestive organs, the physiology of laughter; why a boy eats more than a man; why it is harder to ascend a hill than to go down; why snow is white; why babies have no teeth; why children's first set of teeth fall out; why saddest tears are saltiest; why sea water is heavier than fresh; why hail descends in summer; why the sages said that bastards are mostly clever. To these questions, which Enan pours out in a stream, Joseph readily gives answers. But

now Enan is hoist with his own petard.

"I looked at him," continues the poet, "and sleep entrapped his eyes, and his eyelids kissed the irides. Ah! I laughed in my heart. Now I will talk to him, and puzzle him as he has been puzzling me. He shall not sleep, as he would not let me sleep. 'My lord,' said I, 'let me now question thee.' 'I am sleepy,' said he, 'but ask on.' 'What subject shall I choose?' I said. 'Any subject,' he replied; 'of all knowledge I know the half.'" Joseph asks him astronomical, musical, logical, arithmetical questions; to all of which Enan replies, "I do not know." "But," protests Joseph, "how couldst thou assert that thou knewest half of every subject, when it is clear thou knowest nothing?" "Exactly," says Enan, "for Aristotle says, 'He who says, I do not know, has already attained the half of knowledge.'"

But he says he knows medicine; so Joseph proceeds to question him. Soon he discovers that Enan is again deceiving him; and he abuses Enan roundly for his duplicity.

Enan at length is moved to retort.

"I wonder at thy learning," says Enan, "but more at thy appetite." Then the lamp goes out, the servant falls asleep, and they are left in darkness till the morning. Then Joseph demands his breakfast, and goes out to see his ass. The ass attempts to bite Joseph, who strikes it, and the ass speaks. "I am one of the family of Balaam's ass," says the animal. "But I am not Balaam," says Joseph, "to divine that thou hast eaten nothing all night." The servant asserts that he fed the ass, but the animal had gobbled up

everything, his appetite being equal to his owner's. But Joseph will not believe this, and Enan is deeply hurt. "Peace!" he shouts, and his eyes shoot flames, and his nostrils distil smoke. "Peace, cease thy folly, or, as I live, and my ancestor Asmodeus, I will seize thee with my little finger, and will show thee the city of David."

In timid tones Joseph asks him, "Who is this Asmodeus, thy kinsman?"

# ENAN REVEALS HIMSELF

"Asmodeus," said Enan, "the great prince who, on his wing, bore Solomon from his kingdom to a distant strand." "Woe is me," I moaned, "I thought thee a friend; now thou art a fiend. Why didst thou hide thy nature? Why didst thou conceal thy descent? Why hast thou taken me from my home in guile?" "Nay," said Enan, "where was thy understanding? I gave thee my name, thou shouldst have inverted it" [i.e., transpose *Desh* to *Shed*. Enan at the beginning of the tale had announced himself as *ha-Desh*, he now explains that meant *ha-Shed* = the demon]. Then Enan gives his pedigree: "I am Enan, the Satan, son of Arnan the Demon, son of the Place of Death, son of Rage, son of Death's Shadow, son of Terror, son of Trembling, son of Destruction, son of Extinction, son of Evil-name, son of Mocking, son of Plague, son of Deceit, son of Injury, son of Asmodeus."

Nevertheless Enan quiets Joseph's fears, and promises that no harm shall befall him. He goes through Enan's city, sees wizards and sorcerers, and sinners and fools, all giants.

## ENAN'S FRIEND AND HIS DAUGHTER

Then Enan introduces his own especial friend. "He is good and wise," said Enan, "despite his tall stature. He shows his goodness in hating the wise and loving fools; he is generous, for he will give a beggar a crust of dry bread, and make him pay for it; he knows medicine, for he can tell that if a man is buried, he either has been sick, or has had an accident; he knows astronomy, for he can tell that it is day when the sun shines, and night when the stars appear; he knows arithmetic, for he can tell that one and one make two; he knows mensuration, for he can tell how many handbreadths his belly measures; he knows music, for he can tell the difference between the barking of a dog and the braying of an ass." "But," said I," continues Joseph, "how canst thou be the friend of such a one? Accursed is he, accursed his master." "Nay," answered Enan, "I love him not; I know his vile nature: 'tis his daughter that binds me to him, for she, with her raven locks and dove's eyes and lily cheeks, is fair beyond my power to praise." Yet I warned him against marrying the daughter of an uneducated man, an Am ha-Arez. Then follows a compilation of passages directed against ignorance. "Ah!" cries Enan, "your warning moves me. My love for her is fled. Thou fearest God and lovest me, my friend. What is a friend? One heart in two bodies. Then find me another wife, one who is beautiful and good. Worse than a plague is a bad

woman. Listen to what once befell me with such a one."

Thereupon Enan introduces the last of the stories incorporated into the book:

# THE WASHERWOMAN WHO DID THE DEVIL'S WORK

Once upon a time, in my wanderings to and fro upon the earth, I came to a city whose inhabitants dwelt together, happy, prosperous, and secure. I made myself well acquainted with the place and the people, but, despite all my efforts, I was unable to entrap a single one. "This is no place for me," I said, "I had better return to my own country." I left the city, and, journeying on, came across a river, at the brink of which I seated myself. Scarcely had I done so, when a woman appeared bearing her garments to be washed in the river. She looked at me, and asked, "Art thou of the children of men or of demons?" "Well," said I, "I have grown up among men, but I was born among demons." "But what art thou after here?" "Ah," I replied, "I have spent a whole month in yonder city. And what have I found? A city full of friends, enjoying every happiness in common. In vain have I tried to put a little of wickedness among them." Then the woman, with a supercilious air: "If I am to take thee for a specimen, I must have a very poor opinion of the whole tribe of demons. You seem mighty enough, but you haven't the strength of women. Stop here and keep an eye on the wash; but mind, play me no tricks. I will go back to the city and kindle therein fire and fury, and pour over it a spirit of mischief, and thou shalt see how I can manage things." "Agreed!" said I, "I will stay here and await thy

coming, and watch how affairs turn out in thy hands."

The washerwoman departed, went into the city, called upon one of the great families there residing, and requested to see the lady of the house. She asked for a washing order, which she promised to execute to the most perfect satisfaction. While the housemaid was collecting the linen, the washerwoman lifted her eyes to the beautiful face of the mistress, and exclaimed: "Yes, they are a dreadful lot, the men; they are all alike, a malediction on them! The best of them is not to be trusted. They love all women but their own wives." "What dost thou mean?" asked the lady. "Merely this," she answered. "Coming hither from my house, whom should I meet but thy husband making love to another woman, and such a hideous creature, too! How he could forsake beauty so rare and exquisite as thine for such disgusting ugliness, passes my understanding. But do not weep, dear lady, don't distress thyself and give way. I know a means by which I shall bring that husband of thine to his senses, so that thou shalt suffer no reproach, and he shall never love any other woman than thee. This is what thou must do. When thy husband comes home, speak softly and sweetly to him; let him suspect nothing; and when he has fallen asleep, take a sharp razor and cut off three hairs from his beard; black or white hairs, it matters not. These thou must afterwards give to me, and with them I will compound such a remedy that his eyes shall be darkened in their sockets, so that he will look no more upon other lovely women, but cling to thee alone in mighty and manifest and enduring love." All this the

lady promised, and gifts besides for the washerwoman, should her plan prosper.

Carrying the garments with her, the woman now sought out the lady's husband. With every sign of distress in her voice and manner, she told him that she had a frightful secret to divulge to him. She knew not if she would have the strength to do so. She would rather die first. The husband was all the more eager to know, and would not be refused. "Well, then," she said, "I have just been to thy house, where my lady, thy wife, gave me these garments to wash; and, while I was yet standing there, a youth, of handsome mien and nobly attired, arrived, and the two withdrew into an adjoining room: so I inclined mine ear to listen to their speech, and this is what I overheard: The young man said to thy wife, 'Kill thy husband, and I will marry thee,' She, however, declared that she was afraid to do such a dreadful deed. 'O,' answered he, 'with a little courage it is quite easy. When thy husband is asleep, take a sharp razor and cut his throat.'" In fierce rage, but suppressing all outward indication of it, the husband returned home. Pretending to fall asleep, he watched his wife closely, saw her take a razor to sever the three hairs for the washerwoman's spell, darted up suddenly, wrested the razor from her hands, and with it slew his wife on the spot.

The news spread; the relations of the wife united to avenge her death, and kill the husband. In their turn his relatives resolved to avenge him; both houses were embroiled, and before the feud was at an end, two hundred and thirty lives were sacrificed. The

city resounded with a great cry, the like of which had never been heard. "From that day," concluded Enan, "I decided to injure no man more. Yet for this very reason I fear to wed an evil woman." "Fear not," returned Joseph, "the girl I recommend is beautiful and good." And Enan married her, and loved her.

Thus Enan is metamorphosed from a public demon into something of a domestic saint. Zabara gives us an inverted Faust.

# JOSEPH RETURNS HOME TO BARCELONA

"After a while," concludes Joseph, "I said to him, 'I have sojourned long enough in this city, the ways of which please me not. Ignorance prevails, and poetry is unknown; the law is despised; the young are set over the old; they slander and are impudent. Let me go home after my many years of wandering in a strange land. Fain would I seek the place where dwells the great prince, Rabbi Sheshet Benveniste, of whom Wisdom says, Thou art my teacher, and Faith, Thou art my friend.' 'What qualitie,' asked Enan, 'brought him to this lofty place of righteousness and power?' 'His simplicity and humility, his uprightness and saintliness.'"

And with this eulogy of the aged Rabbi of Barcelona, the poem somewhat inconsequently ends. It may be that the author left the work without putting in the finishing touches. This would account for the extra stories, which, as was seen above, may belong to the book, though not incorporated into it.

It will be thought, from the summary mode in which I have rendered these stories, that I take Zabara to be rather a literary curiosity than a poet. But Zabara's poetical merits are considerable. If I have refrained from attempting a literal rendering, it is mainly because the rhymed-prose *genre* is so characteristically Oriental that its charm is incommunicable in

a Western language. Hence, to those who do not read Zabara in the original, he is more easily appreciated as a *conteur* than as an imaginative writer. To the Hebraist, too, something of the same remark applies. Rhymed prose is not much more consistent with the genius of Hebrew than it is with the genius of English. Arabic and Persian seem the only languages in which rhymed prose assumes a natural and melodious shape. In the new-Hebrew, rhymed prose has always been an exotic, never quite a native flower. The most skilful gardeners failed to acclimatize it thoroughly in European soil. Yet Zabara's humor, his fluent simplicity, his easy mastery over Hebrew, his invention, his occasional gleams of fancy, his gift of satire, his unfailing charm, combine to give his poem some right to the title by which he called it—"The Book of Delight."

# A VISIT TO HEBRON

Of a land where every stone has its story, it can hardly be asserted that any one place has a fuller tale to tell than another. But Hebron has a peculiar old-world charm as the home of the founder of the Hebrew race. Moreover, one's youthful imagination associates Hebron with the giants, the sons of Anak, sons, that is, of the long neck; men of Arba, with broad, square shoulders. A sight of the place itself revives this memory. Ancient Hebron stood higher than the present city, but as things now are, though the hills of Judea reach their greatest elevation in the neighborhood, Hebron itself rests in a valley. Most towns in Palestine are built on hills, but Hebron lies low. Yet the surrounding hills are thirty-two hundred feet above the level of the Mediterranean, and five hundred feet higher than Mount Olivet. For this reason Hebron is ideally placed for conveying an impression of the mountainous character of Judea. In Jerusalem you are twenty-six hundred feet above the sea, but, being high up, you scarcely realize that you are in a mountain city. The hills about Hebron tower loftily above you, and seem a fitting abode for the giants whom Joshua and Caleb overthrew.

Hebron, from yet another point of view, recalls its old-world associations. Not only is Hebron one of the oldest cities in the world still inhabited, but it has been far less changed by Western influences than other famous places. Hebron is almost

entirely unaffected by Christian influence. In the East, Christian influence more or less means European influence, but Hebron is still completely Oriental. It is a pity that modern travellers no longer follow the ancient route which passed from Egypt along the coast to Gaza, and then struck eastwards to Hebron. By this route, the traveller would come upon Judea in its least modernized aspect. He would find in Hebron a city without a hotel, and unblessed by an office of the Monarch of the East, Mr. Cook. There are no modern schools in Hebron; the only institution of the kind, the Mildmay Mission School, had scarcely any pupils at the time of my visit. This is but another indication of the slight effect that European forces are producing; the most useful, so far, has been the medical mission of the United Free Church of Scotland. But Hebron has been little receptive of the educational and sanitary boons that are the chief good—and it is a great good—derived from the European missions in the East. I am almost reluctant to tell the truth, as I must, of Hebron, and point out the pitiful plight of our brethren there, lest, perchance, some philanthropists set about mending the evil, to the loss of the primitiveness in which Hebron at present revels. This is the pity of it. When you employ a modern broom to sweep away the dirt of an ancient city, you are apt to remove something else as well as the dirt.

Besides its low situation and its primitiveness, Hebron has a third peculiarity. Go where one may in Judea, the ancient places, even when still inhabited, wear a ruined look. Zion itself

is scarcely an exception. Despite its fifty thousand inhabitants, Jerusalem has a decayed appearance, for the newest buildings often look like ruins. The cause of this is that many structures are planned on a bigger scale than can be executed, and thus are left permanently unfinished, or like the windmill of Sir Moses are disused from their very birth. Hebron, in this respect again, is unlike the other cities of Judea. It had few big buildings, hence it has few big ruins. There are some houses of two stories in which the upper part has never been completed, but the houses are mostly of one story, with partially flat and partially domed roofs. The domes are the result both of necessity and design; of necessity, because of the scarcity of large beams for rafters; of design, because the dome enables the rain to collect in a groove, or channel, whence it sinks into a reservoir.

Hebron, then, produces a favorable impression on the whole. It is green and living, its hills are clad with vines, with plantations of olives, pomegranates, figs, quinces, and apricots. Nowhere in Judea, except in the Jordan valley, is there such an abundance of water. In the neighborhood of Hebron, there are twenty-five springs, ten large perennial wells, and several splendid pools. Still, as when the huge cluster was borne on two men's shoulders from Eshkol, the best vines of Palestine grow in and around Hebron. The only large structure in the city, the mosque which surmounts the Cave of Machpelah, is in excellent repair, especially since 1894-5, when the Jewish lads from the *Alliance* school of Jerusalem renewed the iron gates within, and supplied

fresh rails to the so-called sarcophagi of the Patriarchs. The ancient masonry built round the cave by King Herod, the stones of which exactly resemble the masonry of the Wailing Place in Jerusalem, still stands in its massive strength.

I have said that Hebron ought to be approached from the South or West. The modern traveller, however, reaches it from the North. You leave Jerusalem by the Jaffa gate, called by the Mohammedans Bab el-Khalil, *i.e.* Hebron gate. The Mohammedans call Hebron el-Khalil, City of the Friend of God, a title applied to Abraham both in Jewish and Mohammedan tradition. Some, indeed, derive the name Hebron from Chaber, comrade or friend; but Hebron may mean "confederation of cities," just as its other name, Kiriath-arba, may possibly mean Tetrapolis. The distance from Jerusalem to Hebron depends upon the views of the traveller. You can easily get to Hebron in four hours and a half by the new carriage road, but the distance, though less than twenty miles, took me fourteen hours, from five in the morning till seven at night. Most travellers turn aside to the left to see the Pools of Solomon, and the grave of Rachel lies on the right of the highroad itself. It is a modern building with a dome, and the most affecting thing is the rough-hewn block of stone worn smooth by the lips of weeping women. On the opposite side of the road is Tekoah, the birthplace of Amos; before you reach it, five miles more to the north, you get a fine glimpse also of Bethlehem, the White City, cleanest of Judean settlements. Travellers tell you that the rest of the road is

uninteresting. I did not find it so. For the motive of my journey was just to see those "uninteresting" sites, Beth-zur, where Judas Maccabeus won such a victory that he was able to rededicate the Temple, and Beth-zacharias, through whose broad valley-roads the Syrian elephants wound their heavy way, to drive Judas back on his precarious base at the capital.

It is somewhat curious that this indifference to the Maccabean sites is not restricted to Christian tourists. For, though several Jewish travellers passed from Jerusalem to Hebron in the Middle Ages, none of them mentions the Maccabean sites, none of them spares a tear or a cheer for Judas Maccabeus. They were probably absorbed in the memory of the Patriarchs and of King David, the other and older names identified with this district. Medieval fancy, besides, was too busy with peopling Hebron with myths to waste itself on sober facts. Hebron, according to a very old notion, was the place where Adam and Eve lived after their expulsion from Eden; it was from Hebron's red earth that the first man was made. The *Pirke di Rabbi Eliezer* relate, that when the three angels visited Abraham, and he went to get a lamb for their meal, the animal fled into a cave. Abraham followed it, and saw Adam and Eve lying asleep, with lamps burning by their tombs, and a sweet savor, as of incense, emanating from the dead father and mother of human-kind. Abraham conceived a love for the Cave, and hence desired it for Sarah's resting-place.

I suppose that some will hold, that we are not on surer historical ground when we come to the Biblical statement

that connects Abraham with Hebron. Before arguing whether Abraham lived in Hebron, and was buried in Machpelah, one ought to prove that Abraham ever lived at all, to be buried anywhere. But I shall venture to take Abraham's real existence for granted, as I am not one of those who think that a statement must be false because it is made in the Book of Genesis. That there was a very ancient shrine in Hebron, that the great Tree of Mamre was the abode of a local deity, may be conceded, but to my mind there is no more real figure in history than Abraham. Especially when one compares the modern legends with the Biblical story does the substantial truth of the narrative in Genesis manifest itself. The narrative may contain elements of folk poetry, but the hero Abraham is a genuine personality.

As I have mentioned the tree, it may be as well to add at once that Abraham's Oak is still shown at Hebron, and one can well imagine how it was thought that this magnificent terebinth dated from Bible times. A few years ago it was a fresh, vigorous giant, but now it is quite decayed. The ruin began in 1853, when a large branch was broken off by the weight of the snow. Twelve years ago the Russian Archimandrite of Jerusalem purchased the land on which the tree stands, and naturally he took much care of the relic. In fact, he took too much care, for some people think that the low wall which the Russians erected as a safeguard round the Oak, has been the cause of the rapid decay that has since set in. Year by year the branches have dropped off, the snow and the lightning have had their victims. It is said that only two or three

years ago one branch towards the East was still living, but when I saw it, the trunk was bare and bark-less, full of little worm-holes, and quite without a spark of vitality. The last remaining fragment has since fallen, and now the site of the tree is only marked by the row of young cypresses which have been planted in a circle round the base of the Oak of Mamre. But who shall prophesy that, a century hence, a tree will not have acquired sufficient size and antiquity to be foisted upon uncritical pilgrims as the veritable tree under which Father Abraham dwelt!

The Jewish tradition does not quite agree with the view that identified this old tree with Mamre. According to Jewish tradition, the Tree is at the ruins of Ramet el-Khalil, the High Place of the Friend, *i.e.* of Abraham, about two miles nearer Jerusalem. Mr. Shaw Caldecott has propounded the theory that this site is Samuel's Ramah, and that the vast ruins of a stone-walled enclosure here represent the enclosure within which Samuel's altar stood. The Talmud has it that Abraham erected a guest-house for the entertainment of strangers near the Grove of Mamre. There were doors on every side, so that the traveller found a welcome from whichever direction he came. There our father made the name of God proclaimed at the mouth of all wayfarers. How? After they had eaten and refreshed themselves, they rose to thank him. Abraham answered, "Was the food mine? It is the bounty of the Creator of the Universe." Then they praised, glorified, and blessed Him who spake and the world was.

We are on the road now near Hebron, but, before entering, let

us recall a few incidents in its history. After the Patriarchal age, Hebron was noted as the possession of Caleb. It also figures as a priestly city and as one of the cities of refuge. David passed much of his life here, and, after Saul's death, Hebron was the seat of David's rule over Judea. Abner was slain here by Joab, and was buried here—they still show Abner's tomb in the garden of a large house within the city. By the pool at Hebron were slain the murderers of Ishbosheth, and here Absalom assumed the throne. After his time we hear less of Hebron. Jerusalem overshadowed it in importance, yet we have one or two mentions. Rehoboam strengthened the town, and from a stray reference in Nehemiah, we gather that the place long continued to be called by its older name of Kiriath Arba. For a long period after the return from the Exile Hebron belonged to the Idumeans. It was the scene of warfare in the Maccabean period, and also during the rebellion against Rome. In the market-place at Hebron, Hadrian sold numbers of Jewish slaves after the fall of Bar-Cochba, in 135 C.E. In the twelfth century Hebron was in the hands of the Christian Crusaders. The fief of Hebron, or, as it was called, of Saint Abraham, extended southwards to Beer-sheba. A bishopric was founded there in 1169, but was abandoned twenty years later.

We hear of many pilgrims in the Middle Ages. The Christians used to eat some of the red earth of Hebron, the earth from which Adam was made. On Sunday the seventeenth of October, 1165, Maimonides was in Hebron, passing the city on his way from Jerusalem to Cairo. Obadiah of Bertinoro, in 1488, took

Hebron on the reverse route. He went from Egypt across the desert to Gaza, and, though he travelled all day, did not reach Hebron from Gaza till the second morning. If the text is correct, David Reubeni was four days in traversing the same road, a distance of about thirty-three miles. To revert to an earlier time, Nachmanides very probably visited Hebron. Indeed, his grave is shown to the visitor. But this report is inaccurate. He wrote to his son, in 1267, from Jerusalem, "Now I intend to go to Hebron, to the sepulchre of our ancestors, to prostrate myself, and there to dig my grave." But he must have altered his mind in the last-named particular, for his tomb is most probably in Acre.

I need not go through the list of distinguished visitors to Hebron. Suffice it to say that in the fourteenth century there was a large and flourishing community of Jews in the town; they were weavers and dyers of cotton stuffs and glass-makers, and the Rabbi was often himself a shepherd in the literal sense, teaching the Torah while at work in the fields. He must have felt embarrassed sometimes between his devotion to his metaphorical and to his literal flock. When I was at Moza, I was talking over some Biblical texts with Mr. David Yellin, who was with me. The colonists endured this for a while, but at last they broke into open complaint. One of the colonists said to me: "It is true that the Mishnah forbids you to turn aside from the Torah to admire a tree, but you have come all the way from Europe to admire my trees. Leave the Torah alone for the present." I felt that he was right, and wondered how the Shepherd Rabbis of

Hebron managed in similar circumstances.

In the century of which I am speaking, the Hebron community consisted entirely of Sefardim, and it was not till the sixteenth century that Ashkenazim settled there in large numbers. I have already mentioned the visit of David Reubeni. He was in Hebron in 1523, when he entered the Cave of Machpelah on March tenth, at noon. It is of interest to note that his account of the Cave agrees fully with that of Conder. It is now quite certain that he was really there in person, and his narrative was not made up at second hand. The visit of Reubeni, as well as Sabbatai Zebi's, gave new vogue to the place. When Sabbatai was there, a little before the year 1666, the Jews were awake and up all night, so as not to lose an instant of the sacred intercourse with the Messiah. But the journey to Hebron was not popular till our own days. It was too dangerous, the Hebron natives enjoying a fine reputation for ferocity and brigandage. An anonymous Hebrew writer writes from Jerusalem in 1495, that a few days before a Jew from Hebron had been waylaid and robbed. But he adds: "I hear that on Passover some Jews are coming here from Egypt and Damascus, with the intention of also visiting Hebron. I shall go with them, if I am still alive."

In Baedeker, Hebron is still given a bad character, the Muslims of the place being called fanatical and violent. I cannot confirm this verdict. The children throw stones at you, but they take good care not to hit. As I have already pointed out, Hebron is completely non-Christian, just as Bethlehem is completely non-

Mohammedan. The Crescent is very disinclined to admit the Cross into Hebron, the abode of Abraham, a name far more honored by Jews and Mohammedans than by Christians.

It is not quite just to call the Hebronites fanatical and sullen; they really only desire to hold Hebron as their own. "Hebron for the Hebronites" is their cry. The road, at all events, is quite safe. One of the surprises of Palestine is the huge traffic along the main roads. Orientals not only make a great bustle about what they do, but they really are very busy people. Along the roads you meet masses of passengers, people on foot, on mules and horses, on camels, in wheeled vehicles. You come across groups of pilgrims, with one mule to the party, carrying the party's goods, the children always barefooted and bareheaded—the latter fact making you realize how the little boy in the Bible story falling sick in the field exclaimed "My head, my head!" Besides the pilgrims, there are the bearers of goods and produce. You see donkeys carrying large stones for building, one stone over each saddle. If you are as lucky as I was, you may see a runaway camel along the Hebron road, scouring alone at break-neck speed, with laughter-producing gait.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

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

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