

Oriental Literature eBook

Oriental Literature

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ARABIAN POETRY

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ARABIAN NIGHTS

The seven voyages of Sindbad

First Voyage

Second Voyage

Third Voyage

Fourth Voyage

Fifth Voyage

Sixth Voyage

Seventh and Last Voyage

Aladdin's wonderful lamp

THE ROMANCE OF ANTAR

[Translation by Etienne Delecluse and Epiphanius Wilson]

INTRODUCTION

The romantic figure of Antar, or Antarah, takes the same place in Arabian literature as that of Achilles among the Greeks. The Cid in Spain, Orlando in Italy, and Arthur in England, are similar examples of national ideals put forth by poets and romance writers

as embodiments of a certain half-mythic age of chivalry, when personal valor, prudence, generosity, and high feeling gave the warrior an admitted preeminence among his fellows. The literature of Arabia is indeed rich in novels and tales. The "Thousand and One Nights" is of world-wide reputation, but the "Romance of Antar" is much less artificial, more expressive of high moral principles, and certainly superior in literary style to the fantastic recitals of the coffee house and bazaar, in which Sinbad and Morgiana figure. A true picture of Bedouin society, in the centuries before Mohammed had conquered the Arabian peninsula, is given us in the charming episodes of Antar. We see the encampments of the tribe, the camels yielding milk and flesh for food, the women friends and councillors of their husbands, the boys inured to arms from early days, the careful

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breeding of horses, the songs of poet and minstrel stirring all hearts, the mail-clad lines of warriors with lance and sword, the supreme power of the King—often dealing out justice with stern, sudden, and inflexible ferocity. Among these surroundings Antar appears, a dazzling and irresistible warrior and a poet of wonderful power. The Arab classics, in years long before Mohammed had taken the Kaaba and made it the talisman of his creed, were hung in the little shrine where the black volcanic stone was kept. They were known as Maallakat, or Suspended Books, which had the same meaning among Arabian literati as the term classic bore among the Italian scholars of the Renaissance. Numbered with these books of the Kaaba were the poems of Antar, who was thus the Taliessin of Arabian chivalry.

It is indeed necessary to recollect that in reading the episodes of Antar we have been taken back to the heroic age in the Arabian peninsula. War is considered the noblest occupation of a man, and Khaled despises the love of a noble maiden “from pride in his passion for war.” Antar has his famous horse as the Cid had his Babicca, and his irresistible sword as Arthur his Excalibur. The wealth of chiefs and kings consists in horses and camels; there is no mention of money or jewelry. When a wager is made the stakes are a hundred camels. The commercial spirit of the Arabian Nights is wanting in this spirited romance of chivalry. The Arabs had sunk to a race of mere traders when Aladdin became possessed of his lamp, and the trickery, greed, and avarice of peddlers and merchants are exhibited in incident after incident of the “Thousand and One Nights.” War is despised or feared, courage less to be relied upon than astute knavery, and one of the facts that strikes us is the general frivolity, dishonesty, and cruelty which prevail through the tales of Bagdad. The opposite is the case with Antar. Natural passion has full play, but nobility of character is taken seriously, and generosity and sensibility of heart are portrayed with truthfulness and naivete. Of course the whole romance is a collection of many romantic stories: it has no epic unity. It will remind the reader of the “Morte d’Arthur” of Sir Thomas Malory, rather than of the “Iliad.” We have chosen the most striking of these episodes as best calculated to serve as genuine specimens of Arabian literature. They will transport the modern reader into a new world—which is yet the old, long vanished world of pastoral simplicity and warlike enthusiasm, in primitive Arabia. But the novelty lies in the plot of the tales. Djaida and Khaled, Antar and Ibla, and the race between Shidoub and the great racers Dahir and Ghabra, bring before our eyes with singular freshness the character of a civilization, a domestic life, a political system, which were not wanting in refinement, purity, and justice. The conception of such a dramatic personage as Antar would be original in the highest degree, if it were not based upon historic fact. Antar is a more real personage than Arthur, and quite as real and historic as the Cid. Yet his adventures remind us very much of those which run through the story of the Round Table.

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The Arabs, in the days of romance, were a collection of tribes and families whose tents and villages were spread along the Red Sea, between Egypt and the Indian Ocean. There were some tribes more powerful than others, and the result of their tyranny was often bitter war. There was no central monarchy, no priesthood, and no written law. The only stable and independent unit was the family. Domestic life with its purest virtues constituted the strong point amongst the Arabian tribes, where gentleness, free obedience, and forbearance were conspicuous. Each tribe bore the name of its first ancestor, and from him and his successors came down a traditionary, unwritten law, the violation of which was considered the most heinous of offences. There was no settled religion before the conquest of Mohammed; each tribe and each family worshipped whom they would—celestial spirits, sun and moon, or certain idols. In the account given in *Antar* of the Council of War, the ancients, or old men of the tribe, came forth with idols or amulets round their necks, and the whole account of the council, in which the bard as well as the orator addressed the people, is strictly accurate in historic details. The custom of infanticide in the case of female children was perfectly authorized among the Arabs, and illustrates the motive of the pretty episode of Khaled and Djaida. War was individual and personal among the Arabs, and murder was atoned for by murder, or by the price of a certain number of camels. Raising of horses, peaceful contests in arms, or poetic competitions where each bard recited in public his compositions, formed their amusements. They were very sensible to the charms of music, poetry and oratory, and as a general rule the Arab chieftain was brave, generous, and munificent.

All these historic facts are fully reflected in the highly emotional tale of “*Antar*,” which is the greatest of all the national romances of Arabia. It would scarcely be possible to fix upon any individual writer as its author, for it has been edited over and over again by Arabian scribes, each adding his own glosses and enriching it with incidents. Its original date may have been the sixth century of our era, about five hundred years before the production of the “*Thousand and One Nights*.”

E.W.

THE EARLY FORTUNES OF ANTAR

At the time the “*Romance of Antar*” opens, the most powerful and the best governed of the Bedouin tribes were those of the Absians and the Adnamians. King Zoheir, chief of the Absians, was firmly established upon his throne, so that the kings of other nations, who were subject to him, paid him tribute. The whole of Arabia in short became subject to the Absians, so that all the chiefs of other tribes and all inhabitants of the desert dreaded their power and depredations.

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Under these circumstances, and as a consequence of a flagrant act of tyranny on the part of Zoheir, several chieftains, among whom was Shedad, a son of Zoheir, seceded from the Absian tribe, and set out to seek adventures, to attack other tribes, and to carry off their cattle and treasure. These chieftains arrived at the dwelling-place of a certain tribe, named Djezila, whom they fought with and pillaged. Amongst their booty was a black woman of extraordinary beauty, the mother of two children. Her name was Zebiba; her elder son was Djaris; her younger Shidouh. Shedad became passionately enamoured of this woman, and yielded all the rest of his share in the booty in order to obtain possession of her and her two children. He dwelt in the fields with this negress, whose sons took care of the cattle. In course of time Zebiba bore a son to Shedad. This child was born tawny as an elephant; his eyes were bleared, his head thick with hair, his features hard and fixed. The corners of his mouth drooped, his eyes started from his head, his bones were hard, his feet long; he had ears of prodigious size, and his glance flashed like fire. In other respects he resembled Shedad, who was transported with delight at the sight of his son, whom he named Antar.

Meanwhile the child waxed in strength, and his name soon became known. Then the companions of Shedad wished to dispute the possession of the boy with him, and King Zoheir was informed of the matter. He demanded that the boy should be brought into his presence, and Shedad complied. As soon as the king caught sight of this extraordinary child, he uttered a cry of astonishment, and flung him a piece of goat's flesh. At the same moment a dog, who happened to be in the tent, seized the meat and ran off with it. But Antar, filled with rage, pursued the animal, and, violently taking hold of him, drew his jaws apart, splitting the throat down to the shoulders, and thus recovered the meat. King Zoheir, in amazement, deferred the matter to the Cadi, who confirmed Shedad's possession of Zebiba, and her three children, Djaris, Shidouh, and Antar.

Shedad therefore provided a home for Zebiba, in order that his sons might be educated in their business of tending the herds. It was at this time that Antar began to develop his strength of body, his courage, and intelligence. When he was ten years of age he slew a wolf which threatened to attack the herds committed to his charge. Although brutal, headstrong, and passionate, he early exhibited a love of justice, and a disposition to protect the weak, especially women. He put to death a slave who beat an old woman, his slave and companion; and this action, although at first misunderstood, eventually gained the admiration of King Zoheir, who treated Antar with distinction, because of his nobility of character. In consequence of this action, which had been so much applauded by King Zoheir, the young Arab women and their mothers hung round Antar to learn the details of this courageous deed, and to congratulate him on his magnanimity.

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Among the young women was Ibla, daughter of Malek, the son of Zoheir. Ibla, fair as the full moon, was somewhat younger than Antar. She was accustomed to banter him in a familiar way, feeling that he was her slave. "And you," she said to him, "you, born so low, how dared you kill the slave of a prince? What provocation can you have against him?" "Mistress," replied Antar, "I struck that slave because he deserved it, for he had insulted a poor woman. He knocked her down, and made her the laughing stock of all the servants." "Of course you were right," answered Ibla, with a smile, "and we were all delighted that you escaped from the adventure safe and sound. Because of the service you have rendered us by your conduct, our mothers look upon you as a son, and we as a brother."

From that moment Antar made the service of women his special duty above all others. At that time the Arabian ladies had the habit of drinking camel's milk morning and evening, and it was especially the duty of those who waited upon them to milk the camels, and to cool it in the wind before offering it to them. Antar had been for some time released from this duty, when one morning he entered the dwelling of his uncle Malek, and found there his aunt, engaged in combing the hair of her daughter Ibla, whose ringlets, black as the night, floated over her shoulders. Antar was struck with surprise, and Ibla, as soon as she knew that he had seen her, fled and left him with his eyes fixed abstractedly on her disappearing form.

It was from this incident that the love of Antar for the daughter of his uncle took its origin. He saw how Ibla shone in society, and his passion grew to such an extent that he ventured to sound her praises, and to express the feeling she excited in him by writing verses which, while they gained the admiration of the multitude, incurred also the envy of the chieftains. Moreover his father could not pardon the presumption of Antar, who, born a slave, had dared to cast eyes on his free-born cousin.

When therefore he slew a slave who had slandered him, his father ordered him to be flogged, and sent away to watch over the cattle in the pastures. He had now before him a fresh opportunity for exhibiting his prodigious strength and invincible courage. A lion attempted to attack the herds committed to his care. He killed it at the very moment that his father Shedad, enraged against him, had come, accompanied by his brother, to do him ill. But a mingled feeling of admiration and fear held their hands, and in the evening, when Antar returned from the pastures, his father and his uncle made him seat himself at dinner with them, while the rest of the attendants stood behind them.

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Meanwhile King Zoheir was called upon a warlike expedition against the tribe of Temin. All his warriors followed him; the women alone remained behind. Shedad entrusted them to the protection of Antar, who pledged his life for their safety. During the absence of the warriors, Semiah, the lawful wife of Shedad, conceived the idea of giving an entertainment on the bank of the lake Zatoulizard. Ibla attended it with her mother, and Antar witnessed all the amusements in which his beloved took part. His passion for her became intensified. He was once tempted to violate the modesty of love by the violence of desire, but, at that moment, he saw a great cloud of dust rise in the distance; the shouts of war were heard; and suddenly the warriors of the tribe of Cathan appeared on the scene, and, descending on the pleasure-seekers, carried off the women, including Ibla. Antar, being unarmed, ran after one of the horsemen, seized him, strangled and threw him to the ground. Then he put on the armor of the vanquished foe, attacked and put to flight the tribe of Cathan, rescued the women, and obtained a booty of twenty-five horses. From that moment Semiah, the wife of Shedad, who hitherto had a pronounced aversion to Antar, conceived a sincere affection for him.

King Zoheir, meantime, had returned victorious from his expedition. Shedad returned at the same moment, and went to visit his herds. Seeing Antar surrounded by horses which he did not know, and mounted upon a fine black courser, he asked, "Where did these animals, and particularly this superb horse, come from?" Then Antar, not willing to betray the imprudence of Semiah, declared that, as the Cathanians had left their horses behind them, he had seized them. Shedad was indignant, and treated Antar as a robber, reproached him for his wickedness, and after repeatedly telling him how wrong it was to rouse discord among the Arabs, struck him with his whip, with such violence as to draw blood. Then Semiah, distressed by the sight of this unjust treatment, took off her veil, letting her hair fall over her shoulders, took Antar into her arms and told all that had happened and how she and all the other women of her tribe were indebted to this hero for their honor and liberty. Shedad could not restrain his tenderness on learning the magnanimity of his son's silence. Soon afterwards King Zoheir, to whom this incident had been related, summoned Antar into his presence, and declared that a man who could exhibit such courage and generosity was bound to become preeminent among his companions. All the chieftains who surrounded the king congratulated Antar, and one of his friends, in order to give the court a complete idea of this young man's remarkable gifts, asked him to recite some of his verses.

In compliance with this request he recited a poem in praise of warriors and war, and the king and all the court manifested their delight. Zoheir bade Antar approach, gave him a robe of honor, and thanked him. That evening Antar departed with his father Shedad, his heart full of joy over the honors which had been lavished on him, and his love for Ibla still more heightened.

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In spite of the indisputable virtues of Antar, in spite of the great services he had rendered the Absians, the chieftains of this tribe still regarded him as merely a common slave and tender of cattle. The beginning of his rise to favor excited a feeling of keen hatred, and caused many plots to be laid against him. A series of intrigues was entered upon, the aim of which was the death of the hero. But each attack upon his reputation and his life redounded to his benefit, and furnished him with an opportunity of putting his enemies to silence and defeat. For by his generosity and magnanimity, even his envious foes felt themselves under obligation to him. On each of his triumphs the mutual love between himself and Ibla went on increasing.

After the performance of many feats as a horseman, Antar came into possession of a famous horse named Abjer, and a sword of marvellous temper, Djamy—and every time he appeared on the field of combat, as well as when he returned victorious from the fight, he made a poetic address, finishing with the words, “I am the lover of Ibla.” At the conclusion of a war in which he had performed prodigies of valor, King Zoheir gave him the surname of Alboufauris, which means, “The Father of Horsemen.”

The greater grew his name, the more highly he was honored by King Zoheir, so much the more did the hatred of the chieftains and the love of Ibla towards him increase. But it came to pass that Ibla was asked in marriage by Amarah, a stupid youth, puffed up by his wealth and lineage. Antar, on hearing the news, was transported with rage, and attacked his young rival with such violence that all the Arabian chiefs begged of Zoheir to punish the aggressor. The king left to Shedad, Antar’s father, the pronouncing of sentence. Shedad had, like the others, viewed the rise of Antar, the black slave, to favor, with jealous eye, and sent him back to the pastures to keep the herds.

It was at this point that the greatness of Antar’s character appeared in its full dimensions. The hero submitted with resignation to the orders of his father, “to whom,” he said, “he owed obedience as to his master, since he was his slave”; and he swore to him, in the presence of witnesses, not to mount horse, nor engage in battle, without his permission. Tears flowed from his eyes, and before departing for the pastures he went to see his mother Zebiba, and to talk with her concerning Ibla. “Ibla?” said his mother —“but a moment ago she was here beside me, and said to me, ‘Comfort the heart of Antar, and tell him from me, that even should my father torture me to death in trying to change my mind, I would not desire nor ask for other husband than Antar.’”

These words of Ibla filled with rapture the heart of Antar, as he started for the pastures in company with his brothers, Djaris and Shidoub.

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At this time the tribe of Abs, which Zoheir ruled over, was at war with that of Tex, on account of the carrying off of Anima, daughter of the chief of the Tex, a man known as "The Drinker of Blood." Animated by the desire to take vengeance and recover his daughter, this chief and his army fell upon the Absians like a thunderbolt. The Absians were defeated, and their women, among whom was Ibla, taken prisoners. All pride was then, in this time of need, laid aside, and to their assistance Antar was summoned. But before acting Antar laid down his conditions, and stipulated that, in case he succeeded in subduing the foe and recovering the women, Ibla should be given him in marriage. Malek, the father of Ibla, and Shedad, the father of Antar, assented, and bound themselves by an oath to fulfil these conditions and to reinstate Antar in all the honors and dignities belonging to him.

Antar was victorious. He rescued Ibla, and received grateful expressions of gratitude from his beloved, while King Zoheir gave him the kiss of royal honor. Everything seemed to unite in fulfilling the hopes of Antar. But at the very moment in which he was honored by royal felicitations, several chieftains, indignant at the elevation of a black slave, employed every means to prevent his marriage with Ibla, and to force him to undertake enterprises which would prove fatal to him. Shedad, his father, and Malek, the father of Ibla, connived at these plots. They demanded of Antar, who was of that trusting disposition which belongs to generous and brave men, that he give as a wedding present to his bride, a thousand camels, of a particular breed, not to be found excepting on the borders of the Persian kingdom. The hero made no remark on hearing this treacherous demand, and was so eager to please Ibla, that he took no count of the difficulties to be undergone. He set off and soon found himself engaged in conflict with a large army of Persians, who made him prisoner, and led him off with the view of bringing him into the presence of their king. There he was taken, bound and on horseback, when at that instant, the news came that a fierce lion of extraordinary size was ravaging the country. It was alleged that even armed men fled before it. Antar, who was on the point of being put to death, asked the King of Persia to cause his arms at least to be unbound, and to let him confront the lion. His prayer was granted; he rushed upon the savage creature, and transfixed it with his lance. Nor was this the only service he did the King of Persia, who in gratitude for many others, not only gave Antar the thousand camels he was looking for, but loaded him with treasures, with which to do homage to Ibla.

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On his return Antar was received with a rapturous welcome by the Absian tribe. But the hostile and the envious continued to plot against him. They still aimed at preventing his marriage, and compassing his death. Amarah, who aspired to Ibla's hand, backed by all the chieftains hostile to Antar, renewed his suit and pretensions. Ibla was carried off from her house among the Absians, and taken to another tribe. Then Antar set out in search of her, and at length rescued her: their mutual love was intensified by this reunion. By a series of wiles and intrigues skilfully conducted, the chiefs who surrounded Ibla persuaded her to demand still further dowry from Antar. She spoke of Khaled and Djaida, whose history has already been related; she said, in presence of Antar, that that young warrior girl would not consent to marry Khaled, saving on the condition that her camel's bridle be held by the daughter of Moawich. This word was sufficient for Antar, and he promised to Ibla that Djaida should hold the bridle of her camel on her wedding day; and more than that, the head of Khaled should be slung round the neck of the warrior girl. Thus the hero, constantly loving and beloved by Ibla, incessantly deceived by the cunningly devised obstacles raised by his foes, sustained his reputation for greatness of character and strength of arm, submitted with resignation to the severest tests, and passed victoriously through them all. After the death of King Zoheir, whom he avenged, he undertook to assist Cais, Zoheir's son, in all his enterprises, and after a long series of adventures which tired the patience, love, and courage of Antar, this hero, recognized as chief among Arabian chieftains, obtained the great reward of his long struggles and mighty toils, by marriage to his well-loved Ibla.

KHALED AND DJAIDA

Moharib and Zahir were brothers, of the same father and mother; the Arabs call them "brothers germane." Both were, renowned for courage and daring. But Moharib was chief of the tribe, and Zahir, being subject to his authority, was no more than his minister, giving him counsel and advice. Now it happened that a violent dispute arose between them. Zahir subsequently retired to his tent, in profound sorrow, and not knowing what course to take. "What is the matter with you?" asked his wife, "Why are you so troubled? What has happened to you? Has any one displeased or insulted you—the greatest of Arab chiefs?" "What am I to do?" replied Zahir; "the man who has injured me is one whom I cannot lay hands on, or do him wrong; he is my companion in the bosom of my family, my brother in the world. Ah, if it had been any one but he, I would have shown him what sort of a man he was at odds with, and have made an example of him before all the chiefs of our tribes!" "Leave him; let him enjoy his possessions alone," cried his wife, and, in order to persuade her husband to take this course, she recited verses from a poet of the time, which dissuade a man from tolerating an insult even at the hands of his parents.

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Zahir assented to the advice of his wife. He made all preparations for departure, struck his tents, loaded his camels, and started off on the road towards the camp of the Saad tribe, with whom he was in alliance. Yet in spite of all, he felt a keen pang at separating himself from his brother—and thus he spoke: “On starting on a journey which removes me from you, I shall be a thousand years on the way, and each year will carry me a thousand leagues.... Even though the favors you heap upon me be worth a thousand Egypts, and each of these Egypts had a thousand Niles, all those favors would be despised. I shall be contented with little so long as I am far from you. Away from you, I shall recite this distich, which is worth more than a necklace of fine pearls: ‘When a man is wronged on the soil of his tribe, there is nothing left him but to leave it; you, who have so wickedly injured me, before long shall feel the power of the kindly divinity, for he is your judge and mine, he is unchangeable and eternal.’”

Zahir continued his journey, until he reached the Saad tribe, when he dismounted from his horse. He was cordially received and was pressed to take up his abode with them. His wife was at that time soon to become a mother, and he said to her: “If a son is given to us, he will be right welcome; but if it be a daughter, conceal her sex and let people think we have a male child, so that my brother may have no reason to crow over us.” When her time came Zahir’s wife brought into the world a daughter. They agreed that her name should be actually Djaida, but that publicly she should be known as Djonder, that people might take her for a boy. In order to promote this belief, they kept up feasting and entertainment early and late for many days.

About the same time Moharib, the other brother, had a son born to him, whom he named Khaled (The Eternal). He chose this name in gratitude to God, because, since his brother’s departure, his affairs had prospered well.

The two children eventually reached full age, and their renown was widespread among the Arabs. Zahir had taught his daughter to ride on horseback, and had trained her in all the accomplishments fitting to a warrior bold and daring. He accustomed her to the severest toils, and the most perilous enterprises. When he went to war, he put her among the other Arabs of the tribe, and in the midst of these horsemen she soon took her rank as one of the most valiant of them. Thus it came to pass that she eclipsed all her comrades, and would even attack the lions in their dens. At last her name became an object of terror; when she had overcome a champion she never failed to cry out: “I am Djonder, son of Zahir, horseman of the tribes.”

Her cousin Khaled, on the other hand, distinguished himself equally by his brilliant courage. His father Moharib, a wise and prudent chief, had built houses of entertainment for strangers; all horsemen found a welcome there. Khaled had been brought up in the midst of warriors. In this school his spirit had been formed, here he had learned to ride, and at last had become an intrepid warrior, and a redoubtable hero. It was soon perceived by the rest of the army that his spirit and valor were unconquerable.

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Eventually he heard tell of his cousin Djonder, and his desire to see and know him and to witness his skill in arms became extreme. But he could not satisfy this desire because of the dislike which his father showed for his cousin, the son of his uncle. This curiosity of Khaled continued unsatisfied until the death of his father Moharib, which put him in possession of rank, wealth, and lands. He followed the example of his father in entertaining strangers, protecting the weak and unfortunate, and giving raiment to the naked. He continued also to scour the plains on horseback with his warriors, and in this way waxed greater in bodily strength and courage. After some time, gathering together a number of rich gifts, he started, in company with his mother, to visit his uncle. He did not draw rein until he reached the dwelling of Zahir, who was delighted to see him, and made magnificent preparations for his entertainment; for the uncle had heard tell on many occasions of his nephew's worth and valor. Khaled also visited his cousin. He saluted her, pressed her to his bosom, and kissed her forehead, thinking she was a young man. He felt the greatest pleasure in her company, and remained ten days with his uncle, regularly taking part in the jousts and contests of the horsemen and warriors. As for his cousin, the moment she had seen how handsome and valiant Khaled was, she had fallen violently in love with him. Her sleep left her; she could not eat; and her love grew to such a pitch that feeling her heart completely lost to him, she spoke to her mother and said: "O mother, should my cousin leave without taking me in his company, I shall die of grief at his absence." Then her mother was touched with pity for her, and uttered no reproaches, feeling that they would be in vain. "Djaida," she said, "conceal your feelings, and restrain yourself from grief. You have done nothing improper, for your cousin is the man of your choice, and is of your own blood. Like him, you are fair and attractive; like him, brave and skilful in horsemanship. Tomorrow morning, when his mother approaches us, I will reveal to her the whole matter; we will soon afterwards give you to him in marriage, and finally we will all return to our own country."

The wife of Zahir waited patiently until the following morning, when the mother of Khaled arrived. She then presented her daughter, whose head she uncovered, so as to allow the hair to fall to her shoulders. At the sight of such charms the mother of Khaled was beyond measure astonished, and exclaimed: "What! is not this your son Djonder?" "No! it is Djaida—she the moon of beauty, at last has risen." Then she told her all that had passed between herself and her husband, and how and why they had concealed the sex of their child. "Dear kinswoman," replied the mother of Khaled, still quite surprised, "among all the daughters of Arabia who have been celebrated for their beauty I have never seen one more lovely than this

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one. What is her name?" "I have already told you that it is Djaida, and my especial purpose in telling you the secret is to offer you all these charms, for I ardently desire to marry my daughter to your son, so that we may all be able to return to our own land." The mother of Khaled at once assented to this proposal, and said: "The possession of Djaida will doubtless render my son very happy." She at once rose and went out to look for Khaled, and communicated to him all she had seen and learned, not failing to extol especially the charms of Djaida. "By the faith of an Arab," said she, "never, my son, have I seen in the desert, or in any city, a girl such as your cousin; I do not except the most beautiful. Nothing is so perfect as she is, nothing more lovely and attractive. Make haste, my son, to see your uncle and ask him for his daughter in marriage. You will be happy indeed if he grants your prayer: Go, my son, and do not waste time in winning her."

When Khaled had heard these words, he cast his eyes to the ground, and remained for some time thoughtful and gloomy. Then he replied: "My mother, I cannot remain here any longer. I must return home amid my horsemen and troops. I have no intention of saying anything more to my cousin; I am convinced that she is a person whose temper and ideas of life are uncertain; her character and manner of speech are utterly destitute of stability and propriety. I have always been accustomed to live amid warriors, on whom I spend my wealth, and with whom I win a soldier's renown. As for my cousin's love for me, it is the weakness of a woman, of a young girl." He then donned his armor, mounted his horse, bade his uncle farewell, and announced his intention of leaving at once. "What means this haste?" cried Zahir. "I can remain here no longer," answered Khaled, and, putting his horse to a gallop, he flung himself into the depths of the wilderness. His mother, after relating to Djaida the conversation she held with her son, mounted a camel and made her way towards her own country.

The soul of Djaida felt keenly this indignity. She brooded over it—sleepless and without appetite. Some days afterwards, as her father was preparing with his horsemen to make a foray against his foes, his glance fell on Djaida, and seeing how altered she was in face, and dejected in spirit, he refrained from saying anything, thinking and hoping that she would surely become herself again after a short time.

Scarcely was Zahir out of sight of his tents, when Djaida, who felt herself like to die, and whose frame of mind was quite unsupportable, said to her mother: "Mother, I feel that I am dying, and that this miserable Khaled is still in the vigor of life. I should like, if God gives me the power, to make him taste the fury of death, the bitterness of its pang and torture." So saying, she rose like a lioness, put on her armor, and mounted her horse, telling her mother she was going on a hunting expedition.

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Swiftly, and without stopping, she traversed rocks and mountains, her excitement increasing as she approached the dwelling-place of her cousin. As she was disguised, she entered, unrecognized, into the tent where strangers were received. Her visor was, however, lowered, like that of a horseman of Hijaz. Slaves and servants received her, offered her hospitality, comporting themselves towards her as to one of the guests, and the most noble personages of the land. That night Djaida took rest; but the following day she joined the military exercises, challenged many cavaliers, and exhibited so much address and bravery, that she produced great astonishment among the spectators. Long before noon the horsemen of her cousin were compelled to acknowledge her superiority over themselves. Khaled wished to witness her prowess, and, surprised at the sight of so much skill, he offered to match himself with her. Djaida entered the contest with him, and then both of them joining in combat tried, one after another, all the methods of attack and defence, until the shadows of night came on. When they separated both were unhurt, and none could say who was the victor. Thus Djaida, while rousing the admiration of the spectators, saw the annoyance they felt on finding their chief equalled in fight by so skilful an opponent. Khaled ordered his antagonist to be treated with all the care and honor imaginable, then retired to his tent, his mind filled with thoughts of his conflict. Djaida remained three days at her cousin's habitation. Every morning she presented herself on the ground of combat, and remained under arms until night. She enjoyed it greatly, still keeping her *incognito*, whilst Khaled, on the other hand, made no enquiries, and asked no questions of her, as to who she was and to what tribe she might belong.

On the morning of the fourth day, while Khaled, according to his custom, rode over the plain, and passed close to the tents reserved for strangers, he saw Djaida mounting her horse. He saluted her, and she returned his salute. "Noble Arab," said Khaled, "I should like to ask you one question. Up to this moment I have failed in courtesy towards you, but, I now beg of you, in the name of that God who has endowed you with such great dexterity in arms, tell me, who are you, and to what noble princes are you allied? For I have never met your equal among brave cavaliers. Answer me, I beseech you, for I am dying to learn." Djaida smiled, and raising her visor, replied: "Khaled, I am a woman, and not a warrior. I am your cousin Djaida, who offered herself to you, and wished to give herself to you; but you refused her—from the pride you felt in your passion for arms." As she spoke she turned her horse suddenly, stuck spurs into him, and dashed off at full gallop towards her own country.

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Khaled filled with confusion withdrew to his tent, not knowing what to do, nor what would be the end of the passionate love which he suddenly felt rise within him. He was seized with disgust for all these warlike habits and tastes, which had reduced him to the melancholy plight in which he found himself. His distaste for women was changed into love. He sent for his mother and related to her all that had occurred. "My son," she said, "all these circumstances should render Djaida still dearer to you. Wait patiently a little, until I have been able to go and ask her of her mother." She straightway mounted her camel, and started through the desert on the tracks of Djaida, who immediately on her arrival home had told her mother all that had happened. As soon as the mother of Khaled had arrived, she flung herself into the arms of her kinswoman and demanded Djaida in marriage for her son, for Zahir had not yet returned from his foray. When Djaida heard from her mother the request of Khaled, she said, "This shall never be, though I be forced to drink the cup of death. That which occurred at his tents was brought about by me to quench the fire of my grief and unhappiness, and soothe the anguish of my heart."

At these words the mother of Khaled, defeated of her object, went back to her son, who was tortured by the most cruel anxiety. He rose suddenly to his feet, for his love had reached the point of desperation, and asked with inquietude what were the feelings of his cousin. When he learned the answer of Djaida his distress became overwhelming, for her refusal only increased his passion. "What is to be done, my mother," he exclaimed. "I see no way of escaping from this embarrassment," she replied, "excepting you assemble all your horsemen from among the Arab sheiks, and from among those with whom you are on friendly terms. Wait until your uncle returns from the campaign, and then, surrounded by your followers, go to him, and in the presence of the assembled warriors, demand of him his daughter in marriage. If he deny that he has a daughter, tell him all that has happened, and urge him until he gives way to your demand." This advice, and the plan proposed moderated the grief of Khaled. As soon as he learned that his uncle had returned home, he assembled all the chiefs of his family and told his story to them. All of them were very much astonished, and Madi Kereb, one of the Khaled's bravest companions, could not help saying: "This is a strange affair; we have always heard say that your uncle had a son named Djonder, but now the truth is known. You are certainly the man who has most right to the daughter of your uncle. It is therefore our best course to present ourselves in a body and prostrate ourselves before him, asking him to return to his family and not to give his daughter to a stranger." Khaled, without hearing any more, took with him a hundred of his bravest horsemen, being those who had been brought up with Moharib and Zahir from their childhood, and,

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having provided themselves with presents even more costly than those they had taken before, they started off, and marched on until they came to the tribe of Saad. Khaled began by complimenting his uncle on his happy return from war, but no one could be more astonished than Zahir at this second visit, especially when he saw his nephew accompanied by all the chieftains of his family. It never for a moment occurred to him that his daughter Djaida had anything to do with Khaled's return, but thought that his nephew merely wished to persuade him to return to his native territory. He offered them every hospitality, provided them with tents and entertained them magnificently. He ordered camels and sheep to be killed, and gave a banquet; he furnished his guests with all things needful and proper for three days. On the fourth day Khaled arose, and after thanking his uncle for all his attentions, asked him for his daughter in marriage, and begged him to return to his own land. Zahir denied that he had any child but his son Djonder, but Khaled told him all that he had learned, and all that had passed between himself and Djaida. At these words Zahir was overcome with shame and turned his eyes to the ground. He remained for some moments plunged in thought, and after reflecting that the affair must needs proceed from bad to worse, he addressed those present in the following words: "Kinsmen, I will no longer delay acknowledging this secret; therefore to end the matter, she shall be married to her cousin as soon as possible, for, of all the men I know, he is most worthy of her." He offered his hand to Khaled, who immediately clasped it in presence of the chiefs who were witnesses to the contract. The dowry was fixed at five hundred brown black-eyed camels, and a thousand camels loaded with the choicest products of Yemen. The tribe of Saad, in the midst of which Zahir had lived, were excluded from all part in this incident.

But when Zahir had asked his daughter's consent to this arrangement, Djaida was overwhelmed with confusion at the course her father had taken. Since he let his daughter clearly understand that he did not wish her to remain unmarried, she at last replied: "My father, if my cousin desires to have me in marriage, I shall not enter into his tent until he undertakes to slaughter at my wedding a thousand camels, out of those which belong to Gheshem, son of Malik, surnamed 'The Brandisher of Spears.'" Khaled agreed to this condition; but the sheiks and the warriors did not leave Zahir before he had collected all his possessions for transportation to his own country. No sooner were these preparations completed than Khaled marched forth at the head of a thousand horsemen, with whose assistance he subdued the tribe of Aamir. Having thrice wounded "The Brandisher of Spears," and slain a great number of his champions, he carried off their goods and brought back from their country even a richer spoil than Djaida had demanded. Loaded with booty he returned,

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and was intoxicated with success. But when he asked that a day should be fixed for the wedding, Djaida begged him to approach, and said to him: "If you desire that I become your wife, fulfil first of all my wishes, and keep the engagement I make with you. This is my demand: I wish that on the day of my marriage, some nobleman's daughter, a free-born woman, hold the bridle of my camel; she must be the daughter of a prince of the highest rank, so that I may be the most honored of all the daughters of Arabia." Khaled consented, and prepared to carry out her wishes. That very day he started with his horsemen, and traversed plains and valleys, searching the land of Ymer, even till he reached the country of Hajar and the hills of Sand. In this place he attacked the tribe-family of Moawich, son of Mizal. He burst upon them like a rain-storm, and cutting a way with his sword through the opposing horsemen, he took prisoner Amima, daughter of Moawich, at the very moment when she was betaking herself to flight.

After having accomplished feats which rendered futile the resistance of the most experienced heroes, after having scattered all the tribes in flight, and carried off all the wealth of all the Arabs in that country, he returned home. But he did not wish to come near his tents until he had first gathered in all the wealth which he had left at different points and places in the desert.

The young maidens marched before him sounding their cymbals and other instruments of music. All the tribe rejoiced; and when Khaled appeared, he distributed clothing to the widows and orphans, and invited his companions and friends to the feast he was preparing for his wedding. All the Arabs of the country came in a crowd to the marriage. He caused them to be regaled with abundance of flesh and wine. But while all the guests abandoned themselves to feasting and pleasure, Khaled, accompanied by ten slaves, prepared to scour the wild and marshy places of the land, in order to attack hand to hand in their caverns the lions and lionesses and their cubs, and bear them slain to the tents, in order to provide meat for all those who attended the festival.

Djaida had been informed of this design. She disguised herself in coat of mail, mounted her horse, and left the tents; as three days of festivities still remained, she hastily followed Khaled into the desert, and met him face to face in a cavern. She flung herself upon him with the impetuosity of a wild beast, and attacked him furiously, crying aloud, "Arab! dismount from your horse, take off your coat of mail, and your armor; if you hesitate to do so, I will run this lance through your heart." Khaled was resolved at once to resist her in this demand. They engaged in furious combat. The struggle lasted for more than an hour, when the warrior saw in the eyes of his adversary an expression which alarmed him. He remounted his horse, and having wheeled round his steed from the place of combat, exclaimed:

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“By the faith of an Arab, I adjure you to tell me what horseman of the desert you are; for I feel that your attack and the violence of your blows are irresistible. In fact, you have prevented me from accomplishing that which I had intended, and all that I had eagerly desired to do.” At these words Djaida raised her visor, thus permitting him to see her face. “Khaled,” she cried, “is it necessary for the girl you love to attack wild beasts, in order that the daughters of Arabia may learn that this is not the exclusive privilege of a warrior?” At this cutting rebuke Khaled was overcome with shame. “By the faith of an Arab,” he replied, “no one but you can overcome me; but is there anyone in this country who has challenged you, or are you come hither merely to prove to me the extent of your valor?” “By the faith of an Arab,” replied Djaida, “I came into this desert solely for the purpose of helping you to hunt wild beasts, and in order that your warriors might not reproach you for choosing me as your wife.” At these words Khaled felt thrilled with surprise and admiration, that such spirit and resolution should have been exhibited in the conduct of Djaida.

Then both of them dismounted from their horses and entered into a cavern. There Khaled seized two ferocious wild beasts, and Djaida attacked and carried off a lion and two lionesses. After these exploits they exchanged congratulations, and Djaida felt happy to be with Khaled. “Meanwhile,” she said, “I shall not permit you to leave our tents until after our marriage.” She immediately left him in haste and betook herself to her own dwelling.

Khaled proceeded to rejoin the slaves whom he had left a little way off, and ordered them to carry to the tents the beasts he had slain. Trembling with fright at the view of what Khaled had done, they extolled him with admiration above all other champions of the land.

The feasts meanwhile went on, and all who came were welcomed with magnificence. The maidens sounded their cymbals; the slaves waved their swords in the air, and the young girls sang from morn till evening. It was in the midst of such rejoicings that Djaida and Khaled were married. Amima, the daughter of Moawich, held the reins of the young bride's camel, and men and women alike extolled the glory of Djaida.

THE ABSIANS AND FAZAREANS

King Cais, chief of the Absians, distrusting the evil designs of Hadifah, the chief of the tribe of Fazarah, had sent out his slaves in every direction to look after Antar. One of these slaves on his return said to the king: “As for Antar, I have not even heard his name; but as I passed by the tribe of Tenim, I slept one night in the tents of the tribe Byah. There I saw a colt of remarkable beauty. He belonged to a man named Jahir, son of Awef. I have never seen a colt so fine and swift.” This recital made a profound

impression upon Cais. And in truth this young animal was the wonder of the world, and never had a handsomer horse been reared among the Arabs. He was in all points high-bred and renowned for race and lineage, for his sire was Ocab and his dam Helweh, and these were horses regarded by the Arabs as quicker than lightning. All the tribes admired their points, and the tribe of Byah had become celebrated above all others, because of the mare and stallion which pertained to it.

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As for this fine colt, one day, when his sire Ocab had been put out on pasture, he was being led by the daughter of Jahir along the side of a lake at noonday, and there he saw the mare Helweh, who was tethered close to the tent of her master. He immediately began to neigh, and slipped his halter. The young girl in her embarrassment let him go, and for modesty took refuge in the tent of a friend. The stallion remained on the spot until the girl returned. She seized the halter and took him to the stables.

But her father discerned the anxiety which she could not conceal. He questioned her, and she told him what had happened. He became furious with rage on hearing her story, for he was naturally choleric; he ran among the tents, flinging off his turban, and crying at the top of his voice, while all the Arabs crowded round him, "Tribe of Byah, tribe of Byah! Kinsmen and friends, hear me." Then he related what his daughter had told him. "I cannot permit," he added, "that the blood of my horse should be blended with that of Helweh; yet I am not willing to sell him for the most costly sheep and camels; and if I cannot otherwise prevent Helweh from bearing a colt to my stallion, I shall be glad if some one will put the mare to death." "By all means," cried his listeners, "do as you please, for we can have no objection." Such were the usual terms of Arabian courtesy.

Nevertheless, Helweh, in course of time, bore a fine colt, whose birth brought great joy to her master. He named the young horse Dahir. The colt waxed in strength and beauty, until he actually excelled his sire Ocab. His chest was broad, his neck long, his hoofs hard, his nostrils widely expanded. His tail swept the ground, and he was of the gentlest temper; in short, he was the most perfect creature ever seen. Being reared with the greatest care, his shape was perfect as the archway of a royal palace. When the mare Helweh, followed by her colt, was one day moving along the shore of a lake, Ocab's owner chanced to see them. He seized the young horse, and took him home with him, leaving his mother in grief for his difference. "As for Jahir," he said, "this colt belongs to me, and I have more right to him than anyone else."

The news of the colt's disappearance soon reached his owner's ears. He assembled the chiefs of the tribe, and told them what had happened. They sent to Jahir, and he was reproached bitterly. "Jahir," they said, "you have not suffered, yet have done injustice, in that you carried off that which belonged to another man." "Say no more," answered Jahir, "and spare me these reproaches, for, by the faith of an Arab, I will not return the colt, unless compelled by main force. I will declare war against you first." At that moment the tribe was not prepared for a quarrel; and several of them said to Jahir: "We are too much attached to you to push things to such an extreme as that; we are your allies and kinsmen. We will not fight with you,

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though an idol of gold were at stake.” Then Kerim, son of Wahrab (the latter being the owner of the mare and colt, a man renowned among the Arabs for his generosity), seeing the obstinacy of Jahir, said to him: “Cousin, the colt is certainly yours, and belongs to you; as for the mare here, accept her as a present from my hand, so that mother and colt will not be separated, and no one will ever be able to accuse me of wronging a kinsman.”

The tribe highly applauded this act, and Jahir was so humiliated by the generosity with which he had been treated, that he returned mare and colt to Kerim, adding to the gift a pair of male and a pair of female camels.

Dahir soon became a horse of absolute perfection in every point, and when his master Kerim undertook to race him with another horse, he rode the animal himself, and was in the habit of saying to his antagonist, “Even should you pass me like an arrow, I could catch you up, and distance you,” and in fact this always happened.

As soon as King Cais heard tell of this horse, he became beside himself with longing and mortification, and his sleep left him. He sent to Kerim, offering to buy the horse for as much gold or silver as the owner demanded, and adding that the price would be forwarded without delay. This message enraged Kerim. “Is not this Cais a fool, or a man of no understanding?” he exclaimed. “Does he think I am a man of traffic—a horse-dealer, who cannot mount the horses he owns? I swear by the faith of an Arab that if he had asked for Dahir, as a present, I would have sent the horse, and a troop of camels besides: but if he thinks of obtaining him by bidding a price, he will never have him; even were I bound to drink the cup of death.”

The messenger returned to Cais, and gave him the answer of Kerim, at which the latter was much annoyed. “Am I a king over the tribes of Abs, of Adnan, of Fazarah, and of Dibyan,” he exclaimed, “and yet a common Arab dares to oppose me!” He summoned his people and his warriors. Immediately there was the flash of armor, of coats of mail, and swords and helmets appeared amid the tents; the champions mounted their steeds, shook their spears, and marched forth against the tribe of Byah. As soon as they reached their enemy’s territory they overran the pastures, and gathered an immense booty in cattle, which Cais divided among his followers. They next made for the tents and surprised the dwellers there, who were not prepared for such an attack: Kerim being absent with his warriors on an expedition of the same sort. Cais at the head of the Absians, pushing his way into the dwellings, carried off the wives and daughters of his foe.

As for Dahir, he was tethered to one of the tent-pegs, for Kerim never used him as a charger, for fear some harm might befall him, or he might be killed. One of the slaves who had been left in the encampment, and had been among the first to see the

approach of the Absians, went up to Dahir for the purpose of breaking the line by which he was hobbled. This he failed to accomplish, but mounting him, and digging his heels into his flanks, he forced the horse, although he was hobbled, to rush off prancing like a fawn, until he reached the desert. It was in vain that the Absians pursued him; they could not even catch up with the trail of dust that he left behind him.

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As soon as Cais perceived Dahir, he recognized him, and the desire of possessing him became intensified. He hurried on, but his chagrin was great, as he perceived that, do what he would, he never could catch up with him. At last the slave, perceiving that he had quite out-distanced the Absians, dismounted, untied the feet of Dahir, leapt again into the saddle, and galloped off. Cais, who had kept up the pursuit, gained ground during this stop, and coming within ear-shot of the slave, shouted out, "Stop, Arab, there is no cause for fear; you have my protection; by the faith of a noble Arab, I swear it." At these words the slave stopped. "Do you intend to sell that horse?" said King Cais to him, "for in that case you have the most eager buyer of all the Arabian tribesmen." "I do not wish to sell him, sire," replied the slave, "excepting at one price, the restoration of all the booty." "I will buy him then," the King answered, and he clasped the hand of the Arab as pledge of the bargain. The slave dismounted from the young horse, and delivered him over to King Cais, and the latter overjoyed at having his wish, leapt on to his back, and set out to rejoin the Absians, whom he commanded to restore all the booty which they had taken. His order was executed to the letter. King Cais, enchanted at the success of his enterprise, and at the possession of Dahir, returned home. So great was his fondness for the horse that he groomed and fed him with his own hands. Soon as Hadifah, chief of the tribe of Fazarah, heard that Cais had possession of Dahir, jealousy filled his heart. In concert with other chiefs he plotted the death of this beautiful horse.

Now it came to pass that at this time Hadifah gave a great feast, and Carwash, kinsman of King Cais, was present. At the end of the meal, and while the wine circulated freely the course of conversation turned to the most famous chiefs of the time. The subject being exhausted, the guests began to speak about their most celebrated horses, and next, of the journeys made by them in the desert. "Kinsmen," said Carwash, "none of you ever saw a horse like Dahir, which belongs to my ally Cais. It is vain to seek his equal; his pace is absolutely terrifying. He chases away sorrow from the heart of him who beholds him, and protects like a strong tower the man who mounts him." Carwash did not stop here, but continued to praise, in the highest and most distinguished language, the horse Dahir, until all of the tribe of Fazarah and of the family of Zyad, felt their hearts swell with rage. "Do you hear him, brother?" said Hami to Hadifah; "come, that is enough," he added, turning towards Carwash. "All that you have said about Dahir is absolute nonsense—for at present there are no horses better or finer than mine, and those of my brother."

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With these words he ordered his slaves to bring his horses and parade them before Carwash. This was done. "Come, Carwash, look at that horse." "He is not worth the hay you feed him on," said the other. Then those of Hadifah were led out; among them was a mare, named Ghabra, and a stallion called Marik. "Now look at these," said Hadifah. "They are not worth the hay they eat," replied Carwash. Hadifah, filled with indignation at these words: "What, not even Ghabra?" "Not even Ghabra, or all the horses in the world," repeated Carwash. "Would you like to make a bet for us with King Cais?" "Certainly," answered Carwash—"I will wager that Dahir will beat all the horses of the tribe of Fazarah, even if he carries a hundred weight of stone on his back." They discussed the matter for a long time, the one affirming the other denying the statements, until Hadifah closed the altercation by saying, "I hold to the wager, on condition that the winner takes from the loser as many male and female camels as he chooses." "You are going to play me a nice trick," said Carwash, "and for my part I tell you plainly that I won't bet more than twenty camels; the man whose horse loses shall pay this forfeit." The matter was arranged accordingly. They sat at table until nightfall, and then rested.

The next day Carwash left his tent at early morn, went to the tribe of Abs, to find Cais, whom he told about the wager. "You were wrong," said Cais. "You might have made a bet with anyone excepting Hadifah, who is a man of tricks and treachery. If you have made the wager, you will have to declare it off." Cais waited until certain persons who were with him had retired, then he at once took horse, and repaired to the tribe of Fazarah, where everybody was taking their morning meal in their tents. Cais dismounted, took off his arms, and seating himself among them began to eat with them, like a noble Arab. "Cousin," said Hadifah to him jokingly, "What large mouthfuls you take; heaven preserve me from having an appetite like yours." "It is true," said Cais, "that I am dying of hunger, but by Him who abides always, and will abide forever, I came not here merely to eat your victuals. My intention is to annul the wager which was yesterday made between you and my kinsman Carwash, I beg of you to cancel this bet, for all that is uttered over cups and flagons is of no serious account, and ought to be forgotten." "I would have you to know," was the answer, "that I will not withdraw from the challenge, unless you forfeit the camels which are staked. If you accept this condition, I shall be perfectly indifferent to everything else. Nevertheless, if you wish it, I will seize the camels by force, or, if it be your good pleasure, I will waive every claim, save as a debt of honor." In spite of all that Cais could say, Hadifah remained firm in his resolution, and as his brother began to deride Cais, the latter lost his temper, and with a face blazing with wrath he asked of Hadifah, "What stake

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did you offer in your wager with my cousin?" "Twenty she-camels," said Hadifah. "As for this first wager," answered Cais, "I cancel it, and propose another one in its stead: I will bet thirty camels." "And I forty," replied Hadifah, "I make it fifty," was the retort of Cais. "Sixty," quickly added the other; and they continued raising the terms of the wager, until the number of camels staked was one hundred. The contract of the bet was deposited in the hands of a man named Sabic, son of Wahhab, and in the presence of a crowd of youths and old men. "What shall be the length of the race?" asked Hadifah of Cais. "One hundred bow-shots," replied Cais, "and we have an archer here, Ayas, the son of Mansour, who will measure the ground." Ayas was in fact the strongest and most accomplished archer then living among the Arabs. King Cais, by choosing Ayas, wished the course to be made long, knowing the endurance of his horse, and the longer distance Dahir had to travel, the more he gained speed, from the increased excitement of his spirit. "Well now, we had better fix the day for the race," said Cais to Hadifah. "Forty days will be required," replied Hadifah, "to bring the horses into condition." "You are right," said Cais, and they agreed that the horses should be trained for forty days, that the race should take place by the lake Zatalirsad, and that the horse that first reached the goal should be declared winner. All these preliminaries having been arranged, Cais returned to his tents.

Meanwhile one of the horsemen of the tribe of Fazarah said to his neighbors: "Kinsmen, you may rest assured that there is going to be a breach between the tribe of Abs and that of Fazarah, as a result of this race between Dahir and Ghabra. The two tribes, you must know, will be mutually estranged, for King Cais has been there in person; now he is a prince and the son of a prince. He has made every effort to cancel the bet, but Hadifah would by no means consent. All this is the beginning of a broil, which may be followed by a war, possibly lasting fifty years, and many a one will fall in the struggle."

Hadifah hearing this prediction, said: "I don't trouble myself much about the matter, and your suggestion seems to me absurd." "O Hadifah," exclaimed Ayas, "I am going to tell you what will be the result of all your obstinacy towards Cais." Then he recited some verses, with the following meaning: "In thee, O Hadifah, there is no beauty; and in the purity of Cais there is not a single blot. How sincere and honest was his counsels, although they were lacking in prudence and dignity. Make a wager with a man who does not possess even an ass, and whose father has never been rich enough to buy a horse. Let Cais alone; he has wealth, lands, horses, a proud spirit, and he is the owner of this Dahir, who is always first on the day of a race, whether he is resting or running—this Dahir, a steed whose feet even appear through the obscurity of night like burning brands." "Ayas," replied Hadifah, "do you think I would break my word? I will take the camels of Cais, and will not permit my name to be inscribed among the number of those who have been vanquished. Let things run their course."

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As soon as King Cais had regained his tents he hastened to tell his slaves to begin the training of his horses, and to pay especial attention to Dahir. Then he told his kinsmen all that had taken place between himself and Hadifah. Antar was present at this recital, and as he took great interest in all that concerned the king, he said, "Cais, calm your fears, keep your eyes well open, run the race, and have no fear. For, by the faith of an Arab, if Hadifah makes any trouble or misunderstanding, I will kill him, as well as the whole tribe of Fazarah."

The conversation on this subject continued until they reached the tents, which Antar declined to enter before seeing Dahir. He walked several times round this animal, and saw at a glance that the horse actually possessed qualities which astonished any one who saw him.

Hadifah quickly learned the return of Antar, and knew that the hero was encouraging King Cais to run the race. Haml, Hadifah's brother, had also heard the news, and in the distress which he felt remarked to Hadifah, "I fear lest Antar should fall upon me, or some one of the family of Beder, and kill us, and thus render us disgraced. Give up this race, or we are ruined. Let me go to King Cais, and I will not leave him until he promises to come to you and cancel the contract." "Do as you please," answered Hadifah. Thereupon Haml took horse, and went immediately to King Cais. He found him with his uncle Assyed, a wise and prudent man. Haml approached Cais, saluted him by kissing his hand, and after saying that he was the bearer of an important message, added: "Kinsman, you know that my brother Hadifah is a low fellow, whose mind is full of intrigues. I have spent the last three days in trying to persuade him to cancel this wager. At last he has said: 'Very good, if Cais comes to me, and wishes to be released from the contract, I will annul it; but do not let any Arab think that I abandon the bet through fear of Antar.' Now you, Cais, are aware that the greatest proof of attachment between kinsmen is their willingness to give way to one another. So I am here to beg that you will come to the dwelling of my brother Hadifah and ask him to give up the race, before it causes trouble, and the tribe be utterly driven away from its territories." At this address of Haml, Cais became flushed with shame, for he was trusting and generous. He at once arose, and leaving his uncle Assyed in charge of his domestic business, he accompanied Haml to the land of Fazarah. When they were midway on their journey Haml began to utter lavish praises of Cais to the latter's face, and to blame his own brother's faults, in the following terms: "O Cais, do not let your wrath be stirred up against Hadifah, for he is verily a man headstrong and unjust in his actions. O Cais, if you persist in holding to the bet, great disasters will follow. Both you and he are impulsive and passionate, and this is what causes me to feel anxiety about you, Cais. Put aside your private feelings, be kind and generous, and it will come to pass that the oppressor himself will become the oppressed."

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HamI continued to abuse his brother, and to flatter Cais with expressions of admiration all the way, until in the evening they arrived at the tribe of Fazarah. Hadifah, who at the moment was surrounded by many powerful chiefs, upon whose aid he depended in the hour of need, had changed his mind since his brother HamI's departure, and in place of coming to terms and making peace with Cais he had determined to yield in nothing, but to maintain rigorously the conditions of the coming race. He was speaking of this very matter with one of the chiefs at the moment when Cais and HamI presented themselves before him. As soon as Hadifah saw Cais, he resolved to cover him with shame. Turning therefore to his brother, he asked: "Who ordered you to go to this man? By the faith of a noble Arab, even if all the men who cover the surface of the earth were to come and importune me, saying, 'O Hadifah, give up one hair of these camels,' I would not yield until a lance had pierced my heart and a sword stricken the head from my shoulders." Cais crimsoned, and immediately remounted his horse, bitterly reproaching HamI. He returned home with the utmost haste, and found his uncle and brothers waiting for him in extreme anxiety. "O my son!" said his uncle Assyed as soon as he saw him, "you have had a disastrous journey, for it has caused you to be disgraced."

"If Hadifah had not been surrounded by certain chiefs, who gave him treacherous counsels, I could have arranged the whole affair," answered Cais. "There is now nothing left but to carry out the race and the bet."

King Cais did not sleep the whole of that night. On the morrow he thought of nothing but the training of his horses during the forty days' interval before the race. All the Arabs of the land agreed to come to the pastures and see the race, and when the forty days had expired the horsemen of the two tribes came in a crowd to the banks of lake Zatalirsud. Next arrived the archer Ayas, who, turning his back to the lake at the point where the horses were to start, drew his bow as he walked toward the north a hundred times, and measured out to the goal the course of a hundred bow-shots. Soon the horsemen of Ghitfan and Dibyan arrived, for they were of the same territory, and because of their friendly relations and kinship were comprised as one tribe under the name of Adnan. King Cais had begged Antar not to show himself on this occasion, fearing that his appearance might cause dissension. Antar listened to this advice, but was unable to rest quiet in the tents. The interest he felt in Cais, and the deep distrust with which the falseness of the Fazareans—who were always ready for treason—inspired him, induced him to show himself. Girding on his sword Dhami, and mounting his famous charger, Abjer, he took with him his brother Shidoub, and reached the spot fixed upon for the race, in order that he might watch over the safety of King Zoheir's sons. On his arrival he seemed to excel all that crowd,

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like a lion clad in coat of mail. He carried his naked sword, and his eyes flashed like blazing coals. As soon as he had reached the middle of the crowd, he cried out with a loud voice, that struck terror to all hearts: "Hearken, noble Arabian chieftains and men of renown assembled here—all of you know that I was supported and favored by King Zoheir, father of King Cais, that I am a slave bound to him, by his goodness and munificence; that it is he who caused my parents to acknowledge me, and gave me my rank, making me to be numbered among Arab chiefs. Although he is no longer living, I wish to show my gratitude to him, and bring the kings of the land into subjection to him, even after his death. He has left a son, whom his brothers have acknowledged, and have set on the throne of his father. This son is Cais, whom they have thus distinguished, because of his wisdom, rectitude, and noble heart. I am the slave of Cais, and am his property; I intend to be the supporter of him whom I love, and the enemy of whosoever resists him. It shall never be said, as long as I live, that I have suffered an enemy to affront him. As to the conditions of this wager, it is our duty to see them observed. The best thing, accordingly, to do is to let the horses race unobstructed, for victory comes from the creator of day and night. I make an oath, therefore, by the holy house at Mecca, by the temple, by the eternal God, who never forgets his servants and never sleeps, that if Hadifah commits any act of violence, I will make him drink the cup of vengeance and of death; and will make the whole tribe of Fazarah the byword of all the world. And you, Arab chieftains, if you sincerely desire the race to take place, conduct yourselves with justice and impartiality; otherwise, by the eyes of my dear Ibla, I will make the horses run the race in blood." "Antar is right," the horsemen shouted on all sides.

Hadifah chose, as the rider of Ghabra, a groom of the tribe of Dibyan. This man had passed all his days and many of his nights in rearing and tending horses. Cais, on the other hand, chose as rider of Dahir a groom of the tribe of Abs, much better trained and experienced in his profession than was the Dibyanian. When the two contestants had mounted their horses King Cais gave this parting instruction to his groom: "Do not let the reins hang too loosely in managing Dahir; if you see him flag, stand up in your stirrups, and press his flanks gently with your legs. Do not urge him too much, or you will break his spirit." Hadifah heard this advice and repeated it, word for word, to his rider.

Antar began to laugh. "By the faith of an Arab," he said to Hadifah, "you will be beaten. Are words so scarce that you are obliged to use exactly those of Cais? But as a matter of fact Cais is a king, the son of a king; he ought always to be imitated by others, and since you have followed, word by word, his speech, it is a proof that your horse will follow his in the desert."

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At these words the heart of Hadifah swelled with rage and indignation, and he swore with an oath that he would not let his horse run that day, but that he wished the race to take place at sunrise, next morning. This delay was indispensable to him in preparing the act of perfidy which he meditated, for he had no sooner seen Dahir than he was speechless with astonishment at the beauty and perfections of the horse.

The judges had already dismounted and the horsemen of the various tribes were preparing to return home, when Shidoub began to cry out with a loud voice, "Tribes of Abs, of Adnan, of Fazarah and of Dibyan, and all here present attend to me for an instant, and listen to words which shall be repeated from generation to generation." All the warriors stood motionless. "Speak on," they cried, "what is your will? Perhaps there may be something good in your words." "Illustrious Arabs," continued Shidoub, "you know what happened in consequence of the match between Dahir and Ghabra: I assure you on my life that I will outstrip both of them in running, even were they swifter than the wind. But listen to the condition I offer; if I am the winner, I am to take the hundred camels which are at stake; but if I am beaten, I am to forfeit fifty." Upon this one of the Sheiks of Fazarah exclaimed, "What is that you are saying, vile slave? Why should you receive a hundred camels if you win and only forfeit fifty if you lose?" "Do you ask why, ancient mire of a dunghill," replied Shidoub, "because I have but two legs to run on and a horse has four, not counting his tail." All the Arabs burst out laughing; yet as they were astonished at the conditions proposed by Shidoub, and extremely curious to see him run the race, they agreed that he should make the hazardous experiment.

When all had returned to the tents Antar said to Shidoub: "Come, now, thou son of a cursed mother, how dared thou say that thou couldst outstrip these two horses, whose race all horsemen of our tribes have assembled to see, and who all the world admits have no equals in speed, not even among the birds of the air?" "By him who created the springs in the rocks and who knows all things," replied Shidoub, "I will outstrip those two horses, be they fleet as the winds. Yes, and my victory will have an advantageous result, for when the Arabs hear of it, they will give up all idea of pursuing me, when I run across the desert." Antar laughed, for he was in doubt about Shidoub's plan. The latter went to find King Cais and his brothers, and the other witnesses of the race, and made oath on his life that he would outstrip the two horses. All present acknowledged themselves witnesses of the oath, and left the spot, filled with astonishment at the proposition.

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As for the trickster Hadifah, in the evening he summoned one of his slaves named Dames, a rascal, if ever there was one. "O Dames," he said, "you frequently boast of your cunning, but hitherto I have had no opportunity of putting it to the proof." "My Lord," answered the slave, "tell me in what way I can be useful to you." "I desire," said Hadifah, "that you go and post yourself in the great pass. Remain in this place, and go and hide yourself there in the morning. Watch the horses well, and see if Dahir is in advance. If he is, show yourself suddenly, strike him on the head, and cause him to stop, so that Ghabra may outstrip him, and we may not incur the disgrace of defeat. For I confess that since I have seen Dahir, his excellent points have made me doubt the superiority of Ghabra, and I fear my mare will be beaten, and we shall become the laughing stock of all the Arabs." "But, sir, how shall I distinguish Dahir from Ghabra when they advance, both of them wrapped in a cloud of dust?" Hadifah replied, "I am going to give you a sign, and to explain how the matter may be free from difficulty." As he spoke he picked up some stones from the ground and said: "Take these stones with you at sunrise, begin to count them, and throw them to the earth, four at a time. You must repeat the operation five times, and the last time Ghabra will arrive. That is the calculation I have made, so that if a cloud of dust presents itself to you, and some of the stones, a third or a half of them, still remain in your hand, you may be sure that Dahir has gained first place, and is before your eyes. You must then hurl a stone at his head, as I said, and stop his running, so that my mare may gain the lead." The slave agreed to do so. He provided himself with stones and went to hide himself at the great pass, and Hadifah felt confident of gaining the wager.

At the dawn of day, the Arabs, coming from all quarters, were assembled on the race ground. The judges gave the signal for the start, and the two riders uttered loud shouts. The racers started like flashes of lightning which dazzle the sight and seemed like the wind when, as it blows, it increases in fury. Ghabra passed ahead of Dahir and distanced him. "Now you are lost, my brother of the tribe of Abs," cried the Fazarean groom to the Absian, "try and console yourself for this defeat." "You lie," retorted the Absian, "and in a few moments you will see how completely you are mistaken. Wait till we have passed this uneven ground. Mares always travel faster on rough roads than on smooth country." And so it happened, for when they arrived in the plain, Dahir shot forward like a giant, leaving a trail of dust behind him. It seemed as if he went on wings, not legs; in the twinkling of an eye he had outstripped Ghabra. "Here," cried the Absian to the Fazarean groom, "send a messenger from me to the family of Beder, and you yourself drink the bitter cup of patience behind me." Meanwhile Shidouh, swift as the north wind, kept ahead of Dahir, bounding like a fawn and running like an ostrich, until he reached the defile where Dames was hidden. The slave had only thrown down less than a third of his pebbles, when he looked up and saw Dahir approaching.

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He waited till the horse passed close by him, and suddenly showed himself with a shout, and hit the racer violently between the eyes with a stone. The horse reared, stopped one moment, and the rider was on the point of being unseated. Shidoub was a witness to the incident, and having looked at the slave, recognized him as belonging to the treacherous Hadifah. In the violence of his rage he flung himself upon Dames, and struck him dead with his sword: then he approached Dahir for the purpose of speaking soothingly to him, and starting him again on the race; but, alas, the mare Ghabra rushed up like the wind. Then Shidoub, fearing defeat, thinking of the camels he would forfeit, set out running at full speed towards the lake, where he arrived two bow-shots in advance of the horses. Ghabra followed, then Dahir last, bearing on his forehead the mark of the missile; his cheeks were covered with blood and tears.

All the spectators were astounded on seeing the agility and endurance of Shidoub; but as soon as Ghabra had reached the finish the Fazareans uttered loud shouts of joy. Dahir was led home all bleeding, and his rider told the men of the tribe of Abs what the slave had done. Cais examined the wound of his horse and asked for full details of the occurrence. Antar grew crimson with anger, and laid his hand upon his invincible sword, as if impatient to annihilate the tribe of the Fazareans. But the sheiks restrained him, although with difficulty, after which they went to Hadifah to cover him with shame, and to reproach him with the infamous deed he had done. Hadifah denied it, with false oaths, affirming that he knew nothing of the blow dealt to Dahir; then he added, "I demand the camels which are due to me, and I do not admit the treacherous pretext on which they are being withheld."

"That blow is doubtless of evil augury for the tribe of Fazarah," said Cais. "God will certainly give us victory and triumph, and destroy them. For Hadifah only desired this race to take place in order that it might cause trouble and discord, and the disturbance which this contest is sure to excite will stir up one tribe against another, so that there will be many men killed, and children made orphans." The conversation which followed among the tribesmen became more and more excited, confusion followed, shouts rang out on all sides, and drawn swords flashed. Bloodshed would have resulted had not the sheiks and wise men dismounted and with bared heads mingled with the crowd, with humble mien, imploring them, until at last the matter was settled as harmoniously as possible. It was agreed that Shidoub should receive the amount of the wager—a hundred camels from the tribe of Fazarah, and that Hadifah should abandon his claims and refrain from all dispute. Such were the measures taken to extinguish the hostility and disorder which threatened to burst out among the tribes. Then the different families retired to their own dwellings, but the hearts of all were filled

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with bitter hatred. One whose resentment seemed keenest was Hadifah, especially when he learned of the slave Dames's death. As for Cais, he was also filled with mute rage and intense hatred. Yet Antar tried to reassure him. "King," he said to him, "do not let your heart be a prey to mortification; for I swear by the tomb of King Zoheir, your father, that I will cause disgrace and infamy to fall on Hadifah, and it is only from regard for you that I have up to this time delayed action." Soon after all returned to their tents.

The following morning Shidouh killed twenty of the camels he had won the day before, and caused the meat to be distributed among the widows and those who had been wounded and crippled in war. He slaughtered twenty others, which he used in entertaining the tribe of Abs, including women and slaves. Finally, the next day, he killed the rest of the camels and made a great feast near the lake Zatalirsad, to which he invited the sons of King Zoheir and his noblest chieftains. At the end of this banquet, when the wine circulated among the guests, all praised the behavior of Shidouh. But the news of the camel slaughter and of all the feasting was soon known to the tribe of Fazarah. All the enraged tribesmen hastened to seek Hadifah. "What," said they, "while we were first in the race, slaves and traitorous Absians have eaten our camels! Send for an equal number of camels, by all means; but if he refuses them let us make a terrible war upon the Absians."

Hadifah raised his eyes upon his son Abou-Firacah. "Mount horse at once," he said to him, "and go and say to Cais: my father says that you must this instant pay the wager, or he will come and seize the amount by main force, and will bring trouble upon you." There was then present a chief among the sheiks, who, hearing the order that Hadifah had given to his son, said: "O Hadifah, are you not ashamed to send such a message to the tribe of the Absians? Are they not our kindred and allies? Does this proposal harmonize with the counsel and desire of allaying dissensions? The genuine man shows gratitude for generosity and kindness. I think it quite reasonable to expect that you desist from this perverse mood, which will end in our total extermination. Cais has shown himself quite impartial and has done wrong to no one; cherish, therefore, peace with the horsemen of the tribe of Abs. Take warning from what happened to the slave Dames; he struck Dahir, the horse of King Cais, and God punished him at once; he is left bathed in his slavish blood. I beg you to listen to none but wise counsels; act nobly, and abandon base designs. While you are thus forewarned as to your situation, keep a prudent eye on your affairs." This discourse rendered Hadifah furious. "Contemptible sheik! Dog of a traitor!" he exclaimed. "What! Must I be in fear of Cais and the whole tribe of the Absians? By the faith of an Arab, I will let all men of honor know that if Cais

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refuse to send the camels I will not leave one of his tents standing.” The sheik was indignant, and to increase the fear he would cast into the heart of Hadifah he spoke to him in verses, to the following effect: “Insult is cowardliness, for it takes by surprise him who is not expecting it, as the night enwraps those who wander in the desert. When the sword shall once be drawn look out for blows. Be just and do not clothe thyself with dishonor. Enquire of those who know the fate of Themond and his tribe, when they committed acts of rebellion and tyranny. They will tell you that a command of God from on high destroyed them in one night, and on the morrow they lay scattered on the ground, their eyes turned towards the sky.”

Hadifah dissembled his contempt for these verses and the sheik who had pronounced them, but he ordered his son to go at once to Cais. Abou-Firacah started for the tribe of Abs, and as soon as he arrived there repaired to the home of Cais, who was absent. The messenger asked then for his wife Modelilah, the daughter of Rebia. “What do you desire of my husband?” she asked. “I demand my due, the prize of the horse race.” “Misfortune take you and that which you demand,” she replied. “Son of Hadifah! Do you not fear the consequences of such perfidy? If Cais were here he would send you to your death, instantly.” Abou-Firacah returned to his father, to whom he told all that the wife of Cais had said “What, you coward,” shouted Hadifah, “do you come back without completing your errand? Are you afraid of the daughter of Rebia? Go to him again.”

As Abou-Firacah reminded his father that it was now near night-fall, the message was postponed until the next day. As for Cais, when he re-entered his home, he learned from his wife that Abou-Firacah had come to ask for the camels. “By the faith of an Arab,” he said, “if I had been here I would have slain him. But the matter is closed; let us think no more of it.” Yet King Cais passed the night in grief and annoyance until sunrise, at which time he betook himself to his tent Antar came to see him. Cais rose, and making him take a seat, mentioned the name of Hadifah. “Would you believe he had the shamelessness to send his son to demand the camels of me? Ah, if I had been present I would have slain the messenger.” Scarcely had he finished uttering these words when Abou-Firacah presented himself on horseback. Without dismounting, and uttering no word of salutation or preface, he said: “Cais, my father desires that you send him that which is his due; by so doing your conduct will be that of a generous man; but if you refuse, my father will come against you, carry off his property by force, and plunge you into misfortune.”

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On hearing these words Cais felt the light change to darkness before his eyes. "O thou son of a vile coward," he exclaimed "how is it that you are not more respectful in your address to me?" He seized a javelin and plunged it into the breast of Abou-Firacah. Pierced through, the young messenger lost control of his horse.—Antar dragged him down and flung him on the ground. Then, turning the horse's head away from the direction of Fazarah, he struck him on the flank with a holly-stick, and the horse took the road towards the pastures, and finally entered his stable, all covered with blood. The shepherds at once led him to the tents, crying out, "Misfortune! Misfortune!"

Hadifah became furious. He smote upon his breast, repeating the words: "Tribe of Fazarah, to arms, to arms, to arms!" and all the disaffected came to Hadifah once more, begging him to declare war on the Absians, and to take vengeance on them. "Kinsmen!" replied Hadifah, with alacrity, "let none of us sleep to-night without our armor on." And so it happened.

At break of day Hadifah was on horseback; the warriors were ready, and only women and children and the feeble were left in the tents. Cais, on the other hand, after slaying Abou-Firacah, expected that the Fazareans would come and attack himself and his warriors; he therefore prepared for battle. Antar was charged with taking the necessary reconnoitre. He left in the tents only women, children, and those too feeble to bear the sword; then he put himself in command of the heroes of Carad. Nothing could be more brilliant than the ranks of the Absians in their coats of mail and gleaming weapons. These preparations caused an anxious moment for both parties. They marched forth against each other, and the sun had scarcely appeared, before scimitars flashed, and the whole country was in a turmoil.

Antar was impatient to press forward, and satisfy his thirst for battle; but, lo! Hadifah, dressed in a black robe, advances, his heart broken by the death of his son. "Son of Zoheir," he cried to Cais, "it is a base action to slay a child; but it is good to meet in battle, to decide with these lances which shall predominate, you or me." These words cut Cais to the quick. Hurried along by passion he left his standard and rushed against Hadifah. Then the two chiefs, spurred on by mutual hatred, fought together on their noble chargers, until nightfall. Cais was mounted on Dahir, and Hadifah on Ghabra. In the course of this combat the exploits of the past were eclipsed. Each tribe despaired of his chieftain's safety, and they were eager to make a general attack, in order to stop the struggle of the chieftains and the fury with which they contended. Cries began to be heard in the air. Scimitars were drawn, and lances advanced over the ears of Arabian chargers. Antar approached certain Absian chiefs and said, "Let us attack the traitors." He prepared to charge, when the ancients of the two tribes came forth

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into the middle of the plain, with heads uncovered, their feet bared, and their idols hung from their shoulders. Standing between the two armies they spoke as follows: "Kinsmen and allies, in the name of that harmony which has hitherto prevailed among us, let us do nothing that will make us the byword of our slaves. Let us not furnish our enemies with ground for reproaching us. Let us forget all matter of dispute and dissension. Let us not turn wives into widows and our children into orphans. Satisfy your warlike ardor by attacking those among the Arabs who are your real foes; and you, kinsmen of Fazarah, show yourselves more humble and less haughty, towards your brethren the Absians. Above all, forget not that insolent wrong has often caused the destruction of many tribes, which have had sore reason to regret their impious actions; in this way many men have been deprived of their possessions, and a vast number been plunged into the gulf of despair and regret. Expect the fatal hour of death, the day of dissolution, for it is upon you. You will be rent asunder by the threatening eagles of destruction, and enclosed in the dark prison-house of the tomb. Take care, that when your bodies are separated from life, men may think about you without any other memory than that of your virtues."

The sheiks talked together for a long time, and meanwhile the flame of passion which had been kindled in the soul of the two heroes, Cais and Hadifah, became quenched. Hadifah withdrew from the fight, and it was agreed that Cais should pay as the price of Abou-Firacah's blood a quantity of cattle and a string of camels. The sheiks did not wish even then to quit the field of battle until Cais and Hadifah embraced each other and had agreed to all the arrangements. Antar was crimson with rage. "O King Cais," he exclaimed, "what have you done? What! while our swords flash in our hands shall the tribe of Fazarah exact a price for the blood of its dead? And we never be able to obtain retaliation excepting with our spear points! The blood of our dead is shed, and shall we not avenge it?" Hadifah was beside himself on hearing these words. "And you, vile bastard," said Antar to him, "you son of a vile mother, must your honor be purchased at the expense of our disgrace? But for the presence of these noble sheiks I would annihilate you and all your people this very instant."

Then Hadifah's indignation and anger overleaped all bounds. "By the faith of an Arab," he said to the sheiks, "I wish to hear no talk of peace at the moment that the enemy is ready to spear me." "Do not talk in that way, dear son of my mother," said Hami to his brother. "Do not dart away on the path of imprudence; abandon these gloomy resolutions. Remain in peace with the allies of the Absians, for they are shining stars: the burnished sun that guides all Arabs who love glory. It was but the other day that you wronged them by causing the horse Dahir to be wounded, and thus erred from the path of justice."

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As for your son, he was justly slain, for you had sent him to demand something that was not due you. After all, nothing is so proper as to make peace, for he who would seek and stir up war is a tyrant, and an oppressor. Accept therefore the compensation offered you, or you are likely to call up around us a fire which will burn us in the flames of hell." HamI concluded with verses of the following import: "By the truth of him who has rooted firm the mountains, without foundations, if you decline to accept the compensation offered by the Absians, you are in the wrong. They acknowledge Hadifah as their chief; be a chief in very deed, and be content with the cattle and camels offered you. Dismount from the horse of outrage, and mount it not again, for it will carry you to the sea of grief and calamity. Hadifah, renounce like a generous man, all violence, but particularly the idea of contending with the Absians. Make of them and of their leader a powerful rampart against the enemies that may attack us. Make of them friends that will remain faithful, for they are men of the noblest intentions. Such are the Absians, and if Cais has acted unjustly towards you, it is you who first set him the example some days ago."

When HamI finished these verses, the chiefs of the different tribes thanked him, and Hadifah having consented to accept the compensation offered, all the Arabs renounced violence and war. All who carried arms remained at home. Cais sent to Hadifah two hundred camels, six men-slaves, ten women-slaves, and ten horses. Thus peace was reestablished and every one rested in tranquillity throughout the land.

SELECTIONS FROM ARABIAN POETRY

[Translation by J.D. Carlyle]

INTRODUCTION

The essential qualities of Arabian poetry appear in the "Romance of Antar," and the tales of the "Thousand and One Nights." For such a blending of prose and verse is the favorite form of Arabian literature in its highest and severest form, even in the drama. But the character of the people is most clearly shown in the lyrical poems of the Bedouin country. The pastoral poetry of the peninsula is so local in its allusions that it cannot adequately be translated into English. It is in the lyrics that we find that "touch of nature which makes the whole world kin." The gorgeousness of Hindoo literature, with its lavish description of jewelry and gold, precious stones and marbles, hideous demons, and mighty gods, is not to be looked for in Arabia. There the horizon is clear, and the plain has nothing but human occupants. The common passions of men are the only powers at work; love, war, sorrow, and wine, are the subjects of these little songs, some of which might have been written by "Anacreon" Moore, and others by Catullus.

The influence of Greek poetry is indeed manifest in these light and sometimes frivolous effusions. The sweetness and grace which distinguish some are only equalled by the wit of others. For wit is the prevailing characteristic of Arabian poetry, which is attractive for its cleverness, its brightness, the alternate smiles and tears which shine through it, and make the present selections so refreshing and interesting a revelation of the national heart and intellect.

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I use the word refreshing, because some of the imagery of these lyrics is new to me, and quite unparalleled in European literature. What can be more novel, and at the same time more charming than the following simile, with which a short elegy concludes:

“But though in dust thy relics lie,
Thy virtues, Mano, ne’er shall die;
Though Nile’s full stream be seen no more,
That spread his waves from shore to shore,
Still in the verdure of the plain
His vivifying smiles remain.”

The praise of a humble lot has been sung from Hafiz to Horace, but never illustrated by a prettier conceit than the Arabic poet has recourse to in this stanza:—

“Not always wealth, not always force
A splendid destiny commands;
The lordly vulture gnaws the corse
That rots upon yon barren sands.

“Nor want nor weakness still conspires
To bind us to a sordid state;
The fly that with a touch expires,
Sips honey from the royal plate.”

This is undoubtedly a very original way of stating the philosophic axiom of the Augustan poet,

“The lord of boundless revenues,
Do not salute as happy.”

I have spoken of the wit of these verses, which is certainly one of their distinguishing qualities. It is quite Attic in its flavor and exquisitely delicate in its combined good-humor and freedom from rancor. An epigram, according to the old definition, should be like a bee; it should carry the sweetness of honey, although it bears a sting at the end. Sometimes the end has a point which does not sting, as in the following quatrain of an Arabic poet:—

“When I sent you my melons, you cried out with scorn,
They ought to be heavy and wrinkled and yellow;
When I offered myself, whom those graces adorn,
You flouted, and called me an ugly old fellow.”

Martial himself could not have excelled the wit of an epigram addressed to a very little man who wore a very big beard, which thus concludes:—

“Surely thou cherishest thy beard
In hope to hide thyself behind it.”

To study a literature like that of the Arabians, even partially and in a translation, is one of those experiences which enlarge and stimulate the mind and expand its range of impressions with a distinctly elevating and liberalizing effect. It has the result of genuine education, in that it increases our capacity for sympathy for other peoples, making us better acquainted with the language in which they reveal that common human heart which they share with us.

E.W.

AN ELEGY[1]

Those dear abodes which once contain'd the fair,
Amidst Mitata's wilds I seek in vain,
Nor towers, nor tents, nor cottages are there,
But scatter'd ruins and a silent plain.

The proud canals that once Rayana grac'd,
Their course neglected and their waters gone,
Among the level'd sands are dimly trac'd,
Like moss-grown letters on a mouldering stone.

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Rayana say, how many a tedious year
Its hallow'd circle o'er our heads hath roll'd,
Since to my vows thy tender maids gave ear,
And fondly listened to the tale I told?

How oft, since then, the star of spring, that pours
A never-failing stream, hath drenched thy head?
How oft, the summer cloud in copious showers
Or gentle drops its genial influence shed?

How oft since then, the hovering mist of morn
Hath caus'd thy locks with glittering gems to glow?
How oft hath eve her dewy treasures borne
To fall responsive to the breeze below?

The matted thistles, bending to the gale,
Now clothe those meadows once with verdure gay;
Amidst the windings of that lonely vale
The teeming antelope and ostrich stray.

The large-eyed mother of the herd that flies
Man's noisy haunts, here finds a sure retreat,
Here watches o'er her young, till age supplies
Strength to their limbs and swiftness to their feet.

Save where the swelling stream hath swept those walls
And giv'n their deep foundations to the light
(As the retouching pencil that recalls
A long-lost picture to the raptur'd sight).

Save where the rains have wash'd the gathered sand
And bared the scanty fragments to our view,
(As the dust sprinkled on a punctur'd hand
Bids the faint tints resume their azure hue).

No mossy record of those once lov'd seats
Points out the mansion to inquiring eyes;
No tottering wall, in echoing sounds, repeats
Our mournful questions and our bursting sighs.

Yet, midst those ruin'd heaps, that naked plain,
Can faithful memory former scenes restore,
Recall the busy throng, the jocund train,
And picture all that charm'd us there before.



Ne'er shall my heart the fatal morn forget
That bore the fair ones from these seats so dear—
I see, I see the crowding litters yet,
And yet the tent-poles rattle in my ear.

I see the maids with timid steps descend,
The streamers wave in all their painted pride,
The floating curtains every fold extend,
And vainly strive the charms within to hide.

What graceful forms those envious folds enclose!
What melting glances thro' those curtains play!
Sure Weira's antelopes, or Tudah's roes
Thro' yonder veils their sportive young survey!

The band mov'd on—to trace their steps I strove,
I saw them urge the camel's hastening flight,
Till the white vapor, like a rising grove,
Snatch'd them forever from my aching sight.

Nor since that morn have I Nawara seen,
The bands are burst which held us once so fast,
Memory but tells me that such things have been,
And sad Reflection adds, that they are past.

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Lebid Ben Rabi'at Alamaray.

[1] The author of this poem was a native of Yemen. He was contemporary with Mohammed and was already celebrated as a poet when the prophet began to promulgate his doctrines. Lebid embraced Islamism and was one of the most aggressive helpers in its establishment. He fixed his abode in the city of Cufa, where he died at a very advanced age. This elegy, as is evident, was written previous to Lebid's conversion to Islamism. Its subject is one that must be ever interesting to the feeling mind—the return of a person after a long absence to the place of his birth—in fact it is the Arabian “Deserted Village.”

THE TOMB OF MANO

Friends of my heart, who share my sighs!
Go seek the turf where Mano lies,
And woo the dewy clouds of spring,
To sweep it with prolific wing.

Within that cell, beneath that heap,
Friendship and Truth and Honor sleep,
Beneficence, that used to clasp
The world within her ample grasp.

There rests entomb'd—of thought bereft—
For were one conscious atom left
New bliss, new kindness to display,
'Twould burst the grave, and seek the day.

But tho' in dust thy relics lie,
Thy virtues, Mano, ne'er shall die;
Tho' Nile's full stream be seen no more,
That spread his waves from shore to shore,
Still in the verdure of the plain
His vivifying smiles remain.

Hassan Alasady.

TOMB OF SAYID[2]

Blest are the tenants of the tomb!
With envy I their lot survey!



For Sayid shares the solemn gloom,
And mingles with their mouldering clay.

Dear youth! I'm doom'd thy loss to mourn
When gathering ills around combine;
And whither now shall Malec turn,
Where look for any help but thine?

At this dread moment when the foe
My life with rage insatiate seeks,
In vain I strive to ward the blow,
My buckler falls, my sabre breaks.

Upon thy grassy tomb I knelt,
And sought from pain a short relief—
Th' attempt was vain—I only felt
Intenser pangs and livelier grief.

The bud of woe no more repress,
Fed by the tears that drench'd it there,
Shot forth and fill'd my laboring breast
Soon to expand and shed despair.

But tho' of Sayid I'm bereft,
From whom the stream of bounty came,
Sayid a nobler meed has left—
Th' exhaustless heritage of fame.

Tho' mute the lips on which I hung,
Their silence speaks more loud to me
Than any voice from mortal tongue,
"What Sayid was let Malec be."

Abd Almalec Alharithy.

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[2] Abd Almalec was a native of Arabia Felix. The exact period when he flourished is unknown, but as this production is taken from the Hamasa it is most probable that he was anterior to Mohammedanism.

THE DEATH OF HIS MISTRESS[3]

Dost thou wonder that I flew
Charm'd to meet my Leila's view?
Dost thou wonder that I hung
Raptur'd on my Leila's tongue?
If her ghost's funereal screech
Thro' the earth my grave should reach,
On that voice I lov'd so well
My transported ghost would dwell:—
If in death I can descry
Where my Leila's relics lie,
Saher's dust will flee away,
There to join his Leila's clay.

Abu Saher Alhedily.

[3] The sentiment contained in this production determines its antiquity. It was the opinion of the Pagan Arabs that upon the death of any person a bird, by them called Manah, issued from his brain, which haunted the sepulchre of the deceased, uttering a lamentable scream.

ON AVARICE[4]

How frail are riches and their joys?
Morn builds the heap which eve destroys;
Yet can they have one sure delight—
The thought that we've employed them right.

What bliss can wealth afford to me
When life's last solemn hour I see,
When Mavia's sympathizing sighs
Will but augment my agonies?

Can hoarded gold dispel the gloom
That death must shed around his tomb?



Or cheer the ghost which hovers there,
And fills with shrieks the desert air?

What boots it, Mavia, in the grave,
Whether I lov'd to waste or save?
The hand that millions now can grasp,
In death no more than mine shall clasp.

Were I ambitious to behold
Increasing stores of treasured gold,
Each tribe that roves the desert knows
I might be wealthy if I chose:—

But other joys can gold impart,
Far other wishes warm my heart—
Ne'er may I strive to swell the heap,
Till want and woe have ceas'd to weep.

With brow unalter'd I can see
The hour of wealth or poverty:
I've drunk from both the cups of fate,
Nor this could sink, nor that elate.

With fortune blest, I ne'er was found
To look with scorn on those around;
Nor for the loss of paltry ore,
Shall Hatem seem to Hatem poor.

Hatem Tai.

[4] Hatem Tai was an Arabian chief, who lived a short time prior to the promulgation of Mohammedanism. He has been so much celebrated through the East for his generosity that even to this day the greatest encomium which can be given to a generous man is to say that he is as liberal as Hatem. Hatem was also a poet; but his talents were principally exerted in recommending his favorite virtue.



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THE BATTLE OF SABLA[5]

Sabla, them saw'st th' exulting foe
In fancied triumphs crown'd;
Thou heard'st their frantic females throw
These galling taunts around:—

“Make now your choice—the terms we give,
Desponding victims, hear;
These fetters on your hands receive,
Or in your hearts the spear.”

“And is the conflict o'er,” we cried,
“And lie we at your feet?
And dare you vauntingly decide
The fortune we must meet?”

“A brighter day we soon shall see,
Tho' now the prospect lowers,
And conquest, peace, and liberty
Shall gild our future hours.”

The foe advanc'd:—in firm array
We rush'd o'er Sabla's sands,
And the red sabre mark'd our way
Amidst their yielding bands.

Then, as they writh'd in death's cold grasp,
We cried, “Our choice is made,
These hands the sabre's hilt shall clasp,
Your hearts shall have the blade.”

Jaafer Ben Alba.

[5] This poem and the one following it are both taken from the Hamasa and afford curious instances of the animosity which prevailed amongst the several Arabian clans, and of the rancor with which they pursued each other, when once at variance.

VERSES TO MY ENEMIES

Why thus to passion give the rein?
Why seek your kindred tribe to wrong?



Why strive to drag to light again
The fatal feud entomb'd so long?

Think not, if fury ye display,
But equal fury we can deal;
Hope not, if wrong'd, but we repay
Revenge for every wrong we feel.

Why thus to passion give the rein?
Why seek the robe of peace to tear?
Rash youths desist, your course restrain,
Or dread the wrath ye blindly dare.

Yet friendship we not ask from foes,
Nor favor hope from you to prove,
We lov'd you not, great Allah knows,
Nor blam'd you that ye could not love.

To each are different feelings given,
This slights, and that regards his brother;
'Tis ours to live—thanks to kind heav'n—
Hating and hated by each other.

Alfadhel Ibn Alabas.

ON HIS FRIENDS[6]

With conscious pride I view the band
Of faithful friends that round me stand,
With pride exult that I alone
Can join these scatter'd gems in one:—
For they're a wreath of pearls, and I
The silken cord on which they lie.

'Tis mine their inmost souls to see,
Unlock'd is every heart to me,
To me they cling, on me they rest,
And I've a place in every breast:—
For they're a wreath of pearls, and I
The silken cord on which they lie.

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Meskin Aldaramy.

[6] These lines are also from the Hamasa.

ON TEMPER[7]

Yes, Leila, I swore by the fire of thine eyes,
I ne'er could a sweetness unvaried endure;
The bubbles of spirit, that sparkling arise,
Forbid life to stagnate and render it pure.

But yet, my dear maid, tho' thy spirit's my pride,
I'd wish for some sweetness to temper the bowl;
If life be ne'er suffer'd to rest or subside,
It may not be flat, but I fear 'twill be foul.

Nabegat Beni Jaid.

[7] There have been several Arabian poets of the name of Nabegat. The author of these verses was descended from the family of Jaid. As he died in the fortieth year of the Hegira, aged one hundred and twenty, he must have been fourscore at the promulgation of Islamism; he, however, declared himself an early convert to the new faith.

THE SONG OF MAISUNA[8]

The russet suit of camel's hair,
With spirits light, and eye serene,
Is dearer to my bosom far
Than all the trappings of a queen.

The humble tent and murmuring breeze
That whistles thro' its fluttering wall,
My unaspiring fancy please
Better than towers and splendid halls.

Th' attendant colts that bounding fly
And frolic by the litter's side,
Are dearer in Maisuna's eye
Than gorgeous mules in all their pride.

The watch-dog's voice that bays whene'er
A stranger seeks his master's cot,



Sounds sweeter in Maisuna's ear
Than yonder trumpet's long-drawn note.

The rustic youth unspoilt by art,
Son of my kindred, poor but free,
Will ever to Maisuna's heart
Be dearer, pamper'd fool, than thee.

[8] Maisuma was a daughter of the tribe of Calab; a tribe, according to Abulfeda, remarkable both for the purity of dialect spoken in it, and for the number of poets it had produced. She was married, whilst very young, to the Caliph Mowiah. But this exalted situation by no means suited the disposition of Maisuna, and amidst all the pomp and splendor of Damascus, she languished for the simple pleasures of her native desert.

TO MY FATHER[9]

Must then my failings from the shaft
Of anger ne'er escape?
And dost thou storm because I've quaff'd
The water of the grape?

That I can thus from wine be driv'n
Thou surely ne'er canst think—
Another reason thou hast giv'n
Why I resolve to drink.

'Twas sweet the flowing cup to seize,
'Tis sweet thy rage to see;
And first I drink myself to please;
And next—to anger thee.

Yezid.

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[9] Yezid succeeded Mowiah in the Caliphate A.H. 60; and in most respects showed himself to be of a very different disposition from his predecessor. He was naturally cruel, avaricious, and debauched; but instead of concealing his vices from the eyes of his subjects, he seemed to make a parade of those actions which he knew no good Mussulman could look upon without horror; he drank wine in public, he caressed his dogs, and was waited upon by his eunuchs in sight of the whole court.

ON FATALISM[10]

Not always wealth, not always force
A splendid destiny commands;
The lordly vulture gnaws the corse
That rots upon yon barren sands.

Nor want, nor weakness still conspires
To bind us to a sordid state;
The fly that with a touch expires
Sips honey from the royal plate.

Imam Shafay Mohammed Ben Idris.

[10] Shafay, the founder of one of the four orthodox sects into which the Mohammedans are divided, was a disciple of Malek Ben Ans, and master to Ahmed Ebn Hanbal; each of whom, like himself, founded a sect which is still denominated from the name of its author. The fourth sect is that of Abou Hanifah. This differs in tenets considerably from the three others, for whilst the Malekites, the Shafaites, and the Hanbalites are invariably bigoted to tradition in their interpretations of the Koran, the Hanifites consider themselves as at liberty in any difficulty to make use of their own reason.

TO THE CALIPH HARUN-AL-RASHID[11]

Religion's gems can ne'er adorn
The flimsy robe by pleasure worn;
Its feeble texture soon would tear,
And give those jewels to the air.



Thrice happy they who seek th' abode
Of peace and pleasure, in their God!
Who spurn the world, its joys despise,
And grasp at bliss beyond the skies.

Ibrahim Ben Adham.

[11] The author of this poem was a hermit of Syria, equally celebrated for his talents and piety. He was son to a prince of Khorasan, and born about the ninety-seventh year of the Hegira. This poem was addressed to the Caliph upon his undertaking a pilgrimage to Mecca.

LINES TO HARUN AND YAHIA[12]

Th' affrighted sun ere while he fled,
And hid his radiant face in night;
A cheerless gloom the world overspread—
But Harun came, and all was bright.

Again the sun shoots forth his rays,
Nature is deck'd in beauty's robe—
For mighty Harun's sceptre sways,
And Yahia's arm sustains the globe.

Isaac Almousely.

[12] Isaac Almousely is considered by the Orientals as the most celebrated musician that ever flourished in the world. He was born in Persia, but having resided almost entirely at Mousel, he is generally supposed to have been a native of that place.

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THE RUIN OF BARMECIDES[13]

No, Barmec! Time hath never shown
So sad a change of wayward fate;
Nor sorrowing mortals ever known
A grief so true, a loss so great.

Spouse of the world! Thy soothing breast
Did balm to every woe afford;
And now no more by thee caress'd,
The widow'd world bewails her Lord.

[13] The family of Barmec was one of the most illustrious in the East. They were descended from the ancient kings of Persia, and possessed immense property in various countries; they derived still more consequence from the favor which they enjoyed at the court of Bagdad, where, for many years, they filled the highest offices of the state with universal approbation.

TO TAHER BEN HOSIEN[14]

A pair of right hands and a single dim eye
Must form not a man, but a monster, they cry:—
Change a hand to an eye, good Taher, if you can,
And a monster perhaps may be chang'd to man.

[14] Taher Ben Hosien was ambidexter and one-eyed and, strange to say, the most celebrated general of his time.

THE ADIEU[15]

The boatmen shout, "Tis time to part,
No longer we can stay"—
'Twas then Maimnna taught my heart
How much a glance could say.

With trembling steps to me she came;
"Farewell," she would have cried,
But ere her lips the word could frame
In half-form'd sounds it died.



Then bending down with looks of love,
Her arms she round me flung,
And, as the gale hangs on the grove,
Upon my breast she hung.

My willing arms embraced the maid,
My heart with raptures beat;
While she but wept the more and said,
"Would we had never met!"

Abou Mohammed.

[15] This was sung before the Caliph Wathek, by Abou Mohammed, a musician of Bagdad, as a specimen of his musical talents; and such were its effects upon the Caliph, that he immediately testified his approbation of the performance by throwing his own robe over the shoulders of Abou Mohammed, and ordering him a present of an hundred thousand dirhems.

TO MY MISTRESS[16]

Ungenerous and mistaken maid,
To scorn me thus because I'm poor!
Canst thou a liberal hand upbraid
For dealing round some worthless ore?

To spare's the wish of little souls,
The great but gather to bestow;
Yon current down the mountain rolls,
And stagnates in the swamp below.

Abou Teman Habib.

[16] Abou Teman is considered the most excellent of all the Arabian poets. He was born near Damascus A.H. 190, and educated in Egypt; but the principal part of his life was spent at Bagdad, under the patronage of the Abasside Caliphs.



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TO A FEMALE CUP-BEARER[17]

Come, Leila, fill the goblet up,
Reach round the rosy wine,
Think not that we will take the cup
From any hand but thine.

A draught like this 'twere vain to seek,
No grape can such supply;
It steals its tint from Leila's cheek,
Its brightness from her eye.

Abd Alsalam Ben Ragban.

[17] Abd Alsalam was a poet more remarkable for abilities than morality. We may form an idea of the nature of his compositions from the nickname he acquired amongst his contemporaries of Cock of the Evil Genii. He died in the 236th year of the Hegira, aged near eighty.

MASHDUD ON THE MONKS OF KHABBET[18]

Tenants of yon hallow'd fane!
Let me your devotions share,
There increasing raptures reign—
None are ever sober there.

Crowded gardens, festive bowers
Ne'er shall claim a thought of mine;
You can give in Khabbet's towers—
Purer joys and brighter wine.

Tho' your pallid faces prove
How you nightly vigils keep,
'Tis but that you ever love
Flowing goblets more than sleep.

Tho' your eye-balls dim and sunk
Stream in penitential guise,
'Tis but that the wine you've drunk
Bubbles over from your eyes.



[18] The three following songs were written by Mashdud, Rakeek, and Rais, three of the most celebrated improvisators in Bagdad, at an entertainment given by Abou Isy.

RAKEEK TO HIS FEMALE COMPANIONS

Tho' the peevish tongues upbraid,
Tho' the brows of wisdom scowl,
Fair ones here on roses laid,
Careless will we quaff the bowl.

Let the cup, with nectar crown'd,
Thro' the grove its beams display,
It can shed a lustre round,
Brighter than the torch of day.

Let it pass from hand to hand,
Circling still with ceaseless flight,
Till the streaks of gray expand
O'er the fleeting robe of night.

As night flits, she does but cry,
"Seize the moments that remain"—
Thus our joys with yours shall vie,
Tenants of yon hallow'd fane!

DIALOGUE BY RAIS

Rais:

Maid of sorrow, tell us why
Sad and drooping hangs thy head?
Is it grief that bids thee sigh?
Is it sleep that flies thy bed?

Lady:

Ah! I mourn no fancied wound,
Pangs too true this heart have wrung,
Since the snakes which curl around
Selim's brows my bosom stung.

Destin'd now to keener woes,
I must see the youth depart,
He must go, and as he goes
Rend at once my bursting heart.

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Slumber may desert my bed,
Tis not slumber's charms I seek—
'Tis the robe of beauty spread
O'er my Selim's rosy cheek.

TO A LADY WEeping[19]

When I beheld thy blue eyes shine
Thro' the bright drop that pity drew,
I saw beneath those tears of thine
A blue-ey'd violet bath'd in dew.

The violet ever scents the gale,
Its hues adorn the fairest wreath,
But sweetest thro' a dewy veil
Its colors glow, its odors breathe.

And thus thy charms in brightness rise—
When wit and pleasure round thee play,
When mirth sits smiling in thine eyes,
Who but admires their sprightly ray?
But when thro' pity's flood they gleam,
Who but must love their soften'd beam?

Ebn Alrumi.

[19] Ebn Alrumi is reckoned by the Arabian writers as one of the most excellent of all their poets. He was by birth a Syrian, and passed the greatest part of his time at Emessa, where he died A.H. 283.

ON A VALETUDINARIAN

So careful is Isa, and anxious to last,
So afraid of himself is he grown,
He swears thro' two nostrils the breath goes too fast,
And he's trying to breathe thro' but one.

Ebn Alrumi.

ON A MISER

“Hang her, a thoughtless, wasteful fool,
She scatters corn where’er she goes”—
Quoth Hassan, angry at his mule,
That dropt a dinner to the crows.

Ebn Alrumi.

TO CASSIM OBIO ALLAH[20]

Poor Cassim! thou art doom’d to mourn
By destiny’s decree;
Whatever happens it must turn
To misery for thee.

Two sons hadst thou, the one thy pride,
The other was thy pest;
Ah, why did cruel death decide
To snatch away the best?

No wonder thou shouldst droop with woe,
Of such a child bereft;
But now thy tears must doubly flow,
For, ah! the other’s left.

Aly Ben Ahmed Ben Mansour.

[20] Aly Ben Ahmed distinguished himself in prose as well as poetry, and an historical work of considerable reputation, of which he was the author, is still extant. But he principally excelled in satire, and so fond was he of indulging this dangerous talent that no one escaped his lash; if he could only bring out a sarcasm, it was matter of indifference to him whether an enemy or a brother smarted under its severity. He died at Bagdad A.H. 302.

A FRIEND’S BIRTHDAY[21]

When born, in tears we saw thee drown’d,
While thine assembled friends around,
With smiles their joy confest;
So live, that at thy parting hour,
They may the flood of sorrow pour,
And thou in smiles be drest!

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[21] The thought contained in these lines, appears so natural and so obvious, that one wonders it did not occur to all who have attempted to write upon a birthday or a death.

TO A CAT

Poor Puss is gone! 'Tis fate's decree—
Yet I must still her loss deplore,
For dearer than a child was she,
And ne'er shall I behold her more.

With many a sad presaging tear
This morn I saw her steal away,
While she went on without a fear
Except that she should miss her prey.

I saw her to the dove-house climb,
With cautious feet and slow she stept
Resolv'd to balance loss of time
By eating faster than she crept.

Her subtle foes were on the watch,
And mark'd her course, with fury fraught,
And while she hoped the birds to catch,
An arrow's point the huntress caught.

In fancy she had got them all,
And drunk their blood and suck'd their breath;
Alas! she only got a fall,
And only drank the draught of death.

Why, why was pigeons' flesh so nice,
That thoughtless cats should love it thus?
Hadst thou but liv'd on rats and mice,
Thou hadst been living still, poor Puss.

Curst be the taste, howe'er refined,
That prompts us for such joys to wish,
And curst the dainty where we find
Destruction lurking in the dish.

Ibn Alalaf Alnahrwany.



AN EPIGRAM UPON EBN NAPHTA-WAH[22]

By the former with ruin and death we are curst,
In the latter we grieve for the ills of the first;
And as for the whole, where together they meet,
It's a drunkard, a liar, a thief, and a cheat.

Mohammed Ben Zeid Almotakalam.

[22] Mohammed Ben Arfa, here called Naphta-Wah, was descended from a noble family in Khorasan. He applied himself to study with indefatigable perseverance, and was a very voluminous author in several branches of literature, but he is chiefly distinguished as a grammarian. He died in the year of the Hegira 323.

FIRE[23]

A Riddle.

The loftiest cedars I can eat,
Yet neither paunch nor mouth have I,
I storm whene'er you give me meat,
Whene'er you give me drink, I die.

[23] This composition seems a fit supplement to the preceding one; notwithstanding its absurdity, however. It is inserted merely to show that this mode of trifling was not unknown to the Orientals. It is taken from the Mostatraf, where a great number of similar productions on various subjects are preserved.

TO A LADY BLUSHING[24]



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Leila, whene'er I gaze on thee
My altered cheek turns pale,
While upon thine, sweet maid, I see
A deep'ning blush prevail.

Leila, shall I the cause impart
Why such a change takes place?
The crimson stream deserts my heart,
To mantle on thy face.

The Caliph Radhi Billah.

[24] Radhi Billah, son to Moctader, was the twentieth Caliph of the house of Abbas, and the last of these princes who possessed any substantial power.

ON THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE

Mortal joys, however pure,
Soon their turbid source betray;
Mortal bliss, however sure,
Soon must totter and decay.

Ye who now, with footsteps keen,
Range through hope's delusive field,
Tell us what the smiling scene
To your ardent grasp can yield?

Other youths have oft before
Deem'd their joys would never fade,
Till themselves were seen no more
Swept into oblivion's shade.

Who, with health and pleasure gay,
E'er his fragile state could know,
Were not age and pain to say
Man is but the child of woe?

The Caliph Radhi Billah.



TO A DOVE

The Dove to ease an aching breast,
In piteous murmurs vents her cares;
Like me she sorrows, for opprest,
Like me, a load of grief she bears.

Her complaints are heard in every wood,
While I would fain conceal my woes;
But vain's my wish, the briny flood,
The more I strive, the faster flows.

Sure, gentle Bird, my drooping heart
Divides the pangs of love with thine,
And plaintive murm'ring is thy part,
And silent grief and tears are mine.

Serage Alwarak.

ON A THUNDER STORM

Bright smil'd the morn, till o'er its head
The clouds in thicken'd foldings spread
A robe of sable hue;
Then, gathering round day's golden king,
They stretch'd their wide o'ershadowing wing,
And hid him from our view.

The rain his absent beams deplor'd,
And, soften'd into weeping, pour'd
Its tears in many a flood;
The lightning laughed with horrid glare;
The thunder growl'd, in rage; the air
In silent sorrow stood.

Ibrahim Ben Khiret Abou Isaac.

TO MY FAVORITE MISTRESS

I saw their jealous eyeballs roll,
I saw them mark each glance of mine,
I saw thy terrors, and my soul
Shar'd ev'ry pang that tortur'd thine.



In vain to wean my constant heart,
Or quench my glowing flame, they strove;
Each deep-laid scheme, each envious art,
But wak'd my fears for her I love.



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'Twas this compelled the stern decree,
That forc'd thee to those distant towers,
And left me nought but love for thee,
To cheer my solitary hours.

Yet let not Abla sink deprest,
Nor separation's pangs deplore;
We meet not—'tis to meet more blest;
We parted—'tis to part no more.

Saif Addaulet, Sultan of Aleppo.

CRUCIFIXION OF EBN BAKIAH[25]

Whatever thy fate, in life and death,
Thou'rt doom'd above us still to rise,
Whilst at a distance far beneath
We view thee with admiring eyes.

The gazing crowds still round thee throng,
Still to thy well-known voice repair,
As when erewhile thy hallow'd tongue
Pour'd in the Mosque the solemn prayer.

Still, generous Vizir, we survey
Thine arms extended o'er our head,
As lately, in the festive day,
When they were stretch'd thy gifts to shed.

Earth's narrow boundaries strove in vain
To limit thy aspiring mind,
And now we see thy dust disdain
Within her breast to be confin'd.

The earth's too small for one so great,
Another mansion thou shalt have—
The clouds shall be thy winding sheet,
The spacious vault of heaven thy grave.

Abou Hassan Alanbary.

[25] Ebn Bakiah was vizir to Azzad Addaulet or Bachteir, Emir Alomra of Bagdad, under the Caliphs Moti Lillah and Tay Lillah; but Azzad Addaulet being deprived of his office, and driven from Bagdad by

Adhed Addaulet, Sultan of Persia, Ebn Bakiah was seized and crucified at the gates of the city, by order of the conqueror.

CAPRICES OF FORTUNE[26]

Why should I blush that Fortune's frown
Dooms me life's humble paths to tread?
To live unheeded, and unknown?
To sink forgotten to the dead?

'Tis not the good, the wise, the brave,
That surest shine, or highest rise;
The feather sports upon the wave,
The pearl in ocean's cavern lies.

Each lesser star that studs the sphere
Sparkles with undiminish'd light:
Dark and eclips'd alone appear
The lord of day, the queen of night.

Shems Almaali Cabus.

[26] History can show few princes so amiable and few so unfortunate as Shems Almaali Cabus. He is described as possessed of almost every virtue and every accomplishment: his piety, justice, generosity, and humanity, are universally celebrated; nor was he less conspicuous for intellectual powers; his genius was at once penetrating, solid, and brilliant, and he distinguished himself equally as an orator, a philosopher, and a poet.

ON LIFE



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Like sheep, we're doom'd to travel o'er
The fated track to all assign'd,
These follow those that went before,
And leave the world to those behind.

As the flock seeks the pasturing shade,
Man presses to the future day,
While death, amidst the tufted glade,
Like the dun robber,[A] waits his prey.

[A] The wolf.

EXTEMPORE VERSES[27]

Lowering as Barkaidy's face
The wintry night came in,
Cold as the music of his bass,
And lengthen'd as his chin.

Sleep from my aching eyes had fled,
And kept as far apart,
As sense from Ebn Fahdi's head,
Or virtue from his heart.

The dubious paths my footsteps balk'd,
I slipp'd along the sod,
As if on Jaber's faith I'd walk'd,
Or on his truth had trod.

At length the rising King of day
Burst on the gloomy wood,
Like Carawash's eye, whose ray
Dispenses every good.

Ebn Alramacram.

[27] The occasion of the following composition is thus related by Abulfeda. Carawash, Sultan of Mousel, being one wintry evening engaged in a party of pleasure along with Barkaidy, Ebn Fahdi, Abou Jaber, and the improvisatore poet, Ebn Alramacram, resolved to divert himself at the expense of his companions. He therefore ordered the poet to give a specimen of his talents, which at the same time should convey a satire upon the three courtiers, and a compliment to himself. Ebn Alramacram took his subject from the



stormy appearance of the night, and immediately produced these verses.

ON THE DEATH OF A SON[28]

Tyrant of man! Imperious Fate!
I bow before thy dread decree,
Nor hope in this uncertain state
To find a seat secure from thee.

Life is a dark, tumultuous stream,
With many a care and sorrow foul,
Yet thoughtless mortals vainly deem
That it can yield a limpid bowl.

Think not that stream will backward flow,
Or cease its destin'd course to keep;
As soon the blazing spark shall glow
Beneath the surface of the deep.

Believe not Fate at thy command
Will grant a meed she never gave;
As soon the airy tower shall stand,
That's built upon a passing wave.

Life is a sleep of threescore years,
Death bids us wake and hail the light,
And man, with all his hopes and fears,
Is but a phantom of the night.

Aly Ben Mohammed Altahmany.

[28] Aly Ben Mohammed was a native of that part of Arabia called Hejaz;
and was celebrated not only as a poet, but as a politician.

TO LEILA



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Leila, with too successful art,
Has spread for me love's cruel snare;
And now, when she has caught my heart,
She laughs, and leaves it to despair.

Thus the poor sparrow pants for breath,
Held captive by a playful boy,
And while it drinks the draught of death,
The thoughtless child looks on with joy.

Ah! were its flutt'ring pinions free,
Soon would it bid its chains adieu,
Or did the child its suff'rings see,
He'd pity and relieve them too.

ON MODERATION IN OUR PLEASURES[29]

How oft does passion's grasp destroy
The pleasure that it strives to gain?
How soon the thoughtless course of joy
Is doom'd to terminate in pain?

When prudence would thy steps delay,
She but restrains to make thee blest;
Whate'er from joy she lops away,
But heightens and secures the rest.

Wouldst thou a trembling flame expand,
That hastens in the lamp to die?
With careful touch, with sparing hand,
The feeding stream of life supply.

But if thy flask profusely sheds
A rushing torrent o'er the blaze,
Swift round the sinking flame it spreads,
And kills the fire it fain would raise.

Abou Alcassim Ebn Tabataba.

[29] Tabataba deduced his pedigree from Ali Ben Abou Taleb, and Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed. He was born at Ispahan, but passed the principal part of his life in Egypt, where he was appointed chief of the sheriffs, *i.e.* the descendants of the Prophet, a dignity held in the highest veneration by every Mussulman. He died in the

year of the Hegira 418, with the reputation of being one of the most excellent poets of his time.

THE VALE OF BOZAA[30]

The intertwining boughs for thee
Have wove, sweet dell, a verdant vest,
And thou in turn shalt give to me
A verdant couch upon thy breast.

To shield me from day's fervid glare
Thine oaks their fostering arms extend,
As anxious o'er her infant care
I've seen a watchful mother bend.

A brighter cup, a sweeter draught,
I gather from that rill of thine,
Than maddening drunkards ever quaff'd,
Than all the treasures of the vine.

So smooth the pebbles on its shore,
That not a maid can thither stray,
But counts her strings of jewels o'er,
And thinks the pearls have slipp'd away.

Ahmed Ben Yousef Almenazy.

[30] Ben Yousef for many years acted as vizir to Abou Nasser, Sultan of Diarbeker. His political talents are much praised, and he is particularly celebrated for the address he displayed while upon an embassy to the Greek Emperor at Constantinople. Yousef's poetry must be looked upon merely as a jeu d'esprit suggested by the beauties of the vale of Bozaa, as he passed through it.

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TO ADVERSITY[31]

Hail, chastening friend Adversity! 'Tis thine
The mental ore to temper and refine,
To cast in virtue's mould the yielding heart,
And honor's polish to the mind impart.
Without thy wakening touch, thy plastic aid,
I'd lain the shapeless mass that nature made;
But form'd, great artist, by thy magic hand,
I gleam a sword to conquer and command.

Abou Menbaa Carawash.

[31] The life of this prince was checkered with various adventures; he was perpetually engaged in contests either with the neighboring sovereigns, or the princes of his own family. After many struggles he was obliged to submit to his brother, Abou Camel, who immediately ordered him to be seized, and conveyed to a place of security.

ON THE INCOMPATIBILITY OF PRIDE AND TRUE GLORY[32]

Think not, Abdallah, pride and fame
Can ever travel hand in hand;
With breast oppos'd, and adverse aim,
On the same narrow path they stand.

Thus youth and age together meet,
And life's divided moments share;
This can't advance till that retreat,
What's here increas'd, is lessen'd there.

And thus the falling shades of night
Still struggle with the lucid ray,
And e'er they stretch their gloomy flight
Must win the lengthen'd space from day.

Abou Alola.

[32] Abou Alola is esteemed as one of the most excellent of the Arabian poets. He was born blind, but this did not deter him from



the pursuit of literature. Abou Alola died at Maara in the year 449, aged eighty-six.

THE DEATH OF NEDHAM ALMOLK

Thy virtues fam'd thro' every land,
Thy spotless life, in age and youth,
Prove thee a pearl, by nature's hand,
Form'd out of purity and truth.

Too long its beams of Orient light
Upon a thankless world were shed;
Allah has now reveng'd the slight,
And call'd it to its native bed.

Shebal Addaulet.

LINES TO A LOVER

When you told us our glances soft, timid and mild,
Could occasion such wounds in the heart,
Can ye wonder that yours, so ungovern'd and wild,
Some wounds to our cheeks should impart?

The wounds on our cheeks are but transient, I own,
With a blush they appear and decay;
But those on the heart, fickle youths, ye have shown
To be even more transient than they.

Waladata.

VERSES TO MY DAUGHTERS[33]

With jocund heart and cheerful brow
I used to hail the festal morn—
How must Mohammed greet it now?—
A prisoner helpless and forlorn.

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While these dear maids in beauty's bloom,
With want opprest, with rags o'erspread,
By sordid labors at the loom
Must earn a poor, precarious bread.

Those feet that never touched the ground,
Till musk or camphor strew'd the way,
Now bare and swell'n with many a wound.
Must struggle thro' the miry clay.

Those radiant cheeks are veil'd in woe,
A shower descends from every eye,
And not a starting tear can flow,
That wakes not an attending sigh.

Fortune, that whilom own'd my sway,
And bow'd obsequious to my nod,
Now sees me destin'd to obey,
And bend beneath oppression's rod.

Ye mortals with success elate,
Who bask in hope's delusive beam,
Attentive view Mohammed's fate,
And own that bliss is but a dream.

Mohammed Bed Abad.

[33] Seville was one of those small sovereignties into which Spain had been divided after the extinction of the house of Ommiah. It did not long retain its independence, and the only prince who ever presided over it as a separate kingdom seems to have been Mohammed Ben Abad, the author of these verses. For thirty-three years he reigned over Seville and the neighboring districts with considerable reputation, but being attacked by Joseph, son to the Emperor of Morocco, at the head of a numerous army of Africans, was defeated, taken prisoner, and thrown into a dungeon, where he died in the year 488.

SERENADE TO MY SLEEPING MISTRESS[34]

Sure Harut's[B] potent spells were breath'd
Upon that magic sword, thine eye;



For if it wounds us thus while sheath'd,
When drawn, 'tis vain its edge to fly.

How canst thou doom me, cruel fair,
Plung'd in the hell[C] of scorn to groan?
No idol e'er this heart could share,
This heart has worshipp'd thee alone.

Aly Ben Abd.

[34] This author was by birth an African; but having passed over to Spain, he was much patronized by Mohammed, Sultan of Seville. After the fall of his master, Ben Abd returned to Africa, and died at Tangier, A.H. 488.

[B] A wicked angel who is permitted to tempt mankind by teaching them magic; see the legend respecting him in the Koran.

[C] The poet here alludes to the punishments denounced in the Koran against those who worship a plurality of Gods: "their couch shall be in hell, and over them shall be coverings of fire."

THE INCONSISTENT[35]

When I sent you my melons, you cried out with scorn,
They ought to be heavy and wrinkled and yellow;
When I offer'd myself, whom those graces adorn,
You flouted, and call'd me an ugly old fellow.

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[35] Written to a lady upon her refusal of a present of melons, and her rejection of the addresses of an admirer.

THE CAPTURE OF JERUSALEM[36]

From our distended eyeballs flow
A mingled stream of tears and blood;
No care we feel, nor wish to know,
But who shall pour the largest flood.

But what defense can tears afford?
What aid supply in this dread hour?
When kindled by the sparkling sword
War's raging flames the land devour.

No more let sleep's seductive charms
Upon your torpid souls be shed:
A crash like this, such dire alarms,
Might burst the slumbers of the dead.

Think where your dear companions lie—
Survey their fate, and hear their woes—
How some thro' trackless deserts fly,
Some in the vulture's maw repose;

While some more wretched still, must bear
The tauntings of a Christian's tongue—
Hear this—and blush ye not to wear
The silken robe of peace so long?

Remember what ensanguin'd showers
The Syrian plains with crimson dyed,
And think how many blooming flowers
In Syrian forts their beauties hide.

Arabian youths! In such a cause
Can ye the voice of glory slight?
Warriors of Persia! Can ye pause,
Or fear to mingle in the fight?

If neither piety nor shame
Your breasts can warm, your souls can move,
Let emulation's bursting flame
Wake you to vengeance and to love.



Almodhafer Alabiwerdy.

[36] The capture of Jerusalem took place in the 492d year of the Hegira, A.D. 1099. Alabiwerdy, who wrote these verses, was a native of Khorasan; he died A.H. 507.

TO A LADY

No, Abla, no—when Selim tells
Of many an unknown grace that dwells
In Abla's face and mien,
When he describes the sense refin'd,
That lights thine eye and fills thy mind,
By thee alone unseen.

Tis not that drunk with love he sees
Ideal charms, which only please
Thro' passion's partial veil,
'Tis not that flattery's glozing tongue
Hath basely fram'd an idle song,
But truth that breath'd the tale.

Thine eyes unaided ne'er could trace
Each opening charm, each varied grace,
That round thy person plays;
Some must remain conceal'd from thee,
For Selim's watchful eye to see,
For Selim's tongue to praise.

One polish'd mirror can declare
That eye so bright, that face so fair,
That cheek which shames the rose;
But how thy mantle waves behind,
How float thy tresses on the wind,
Another only shows.

AN EPIGRAM[37]



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Whoever has recourse to thee
Can hope for health no more,
He's launched into perdition's sea,
A sea without a shore.

Where'er admission thou canst gain,
Where'er thy phiz can pierce,
At once the Doctor they retain,
The mourners and the hearse.

George.

[37] Written to Abou Alchair Selamu, an Egyptian physician. The author was a physician of Antioch.

ON A LITTLE MAN WITH A VERY LARGE BEARD

How can thy chin that burden bear?
Is it all gravity to shock?
Is it to make the people stare?
And be thyself a laughing stock?

When I behold thy little feet
After thy beard obsequious run,
I always fancy that I meet
Some father followed by his son.

A man like thee scarce e'er appear'd—
A beard like thine—where shall we find it?
Surely thou cherishest thy beard
In hope to hide thyself behind it.

Isaai, Ben Khalif.

LAMIAT ALAJEM[38]

No kind supporting hand I meet,
But Fortitude shall stay my feet;
No borrow'd splendors round me shine,
But Virtue's lustre all is mine;
A Fame unsullied still I boast,
Obscur'd, conceal'd, but never lost—



The same bright orb that led the day
Pours from the West his mellow'd ray.

Zaura, farewell! No more I see
Within thy walls, a home for me;
Deserted, spurn'd, aside I'm toss'd,
As an old sword whose scabbard's lost:
Around thy walls I seek in vain
Some bosom that will soothe my pain—
No friend is near to breathe relief,
Or brother to partake my grief.
For many a melancholy day
Thro' desert vales I've wound my way;
The faithful beast, whose back I press,
In groans laments her lord's distress;

In every quiv'ring of my spear
A sympathetic sigh I hear;
The camel bending with his load,
And struggling thro' the thorny road,
'Midst the fatigues that bear him down,
In Hassan's woes forgets his own;
Yet cruel friends my wanderings chide,
My sufferings slight, my toils deride.

Once wealth, I own, engrossed each thought,
There was a moment when I sought
The glitt'ring stores Ambition claims
To feed the wants his fancy frames;
But now 'tis past—the changing day
Has snatch'd my high-built hopes away,
And bade this wish my labors close—
Give me not riches, but repose.
'Tis he—that mien my friend declares,
That stature, like the lance he bears;
I see that breast which ne'er contain'd
A thought by fear or folly stain'd,
Whose powers can every change obey,
In business grave, in trifles gay,
And, form'd each varying taste to please,
Can mingle dignity with ease.



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What, tho' with magic influence, sleep,
O'er every closing eyelid creep:
Tho' drunk with its oblivious wine
Our comrades on their bales recline,
My Selim's trance I sure can break—
Selim, 'tis I, 'tis I who speak.
Dangers on every side impend,
And sleep'st thou, careless of thy friend?
Thou sleep'st while every star on high,
Beholds me with a wakeful eye—
Thou changest, ere the changeful night
Hath streak'd her fleeting robe with white.

'Tis love that hurries me along—
I'm deaf to fear's repressive song—
The rocks of Idham I'll ascend,
Tho' adverse darts each path defend,
And hostile sabres glitter there,
To guard the tresses of the fair.

Come, Selim, let us pierce the grove,
While night befriends, to seek my love.
The clouds of fragrance as they rise
Shall mark the place where Abla lies.
Around her tent my jealous foes,
Like lions, spread their watchful rows;
Amidst their bands, her bow'r appears
Embosom'd in a wood of spears—
A wood still nourish'd by the dews,
Which smiles, and softest looks diffuse.
Thrice happy youths! who midst yon shades
Sweet converse hold with Idham's maids,
What bliss, to view them gild the hours,
And brighten wit and fancy's powers,
While every foible they disclose
New transport gives, new graces shows.
'Tis theirs to raise with conscious art
The flames of love in every heart;
'Tis yours to raise with festive glee
The flames of hospitality:
Smit by their glances lovers lie,
And helpless sink and hopeless die;
While slain by you the stately steed
To crown the feast, is doom'd to bleed,



To crown the feast, where copious flows
The sparkling juice that soothes your woes,
That lulls each care and heals each wound,
As the enlivening bowl goes round.
Amidst those vales my eager feet
Shall trace my Abla's dear retreat,
A gale of health may hover there,
To breathe some solace to my care.
I fear not love—I bless the dart
Sent in a glance to pierce the heart:
With willing breast the sword I hail
That wounds me thro' an half-clos'd veil:
Tho' lions howling round the shade,
My footsteps haunt, my walks invade,
No fears shall drive me from the grove,
If Abla listen to my love.

Ah, Selim! shall the spells of ease
Thy friendship chain, thine ardor freeze!
Wilt thou enchanted thus, decline
Each gen'rous thought, each bold design?
Then far from men some cell prepare;
Or build a mansion in the air—
But yield to us, ambition's tide,
Who fearless on its waves can ride;
Enough for thee if thou receive
The scattered spray the billows leave.



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Contempt and want the wretch await
Who slumbers in an abject state—
'Midst rushing crowds, by toil and pain
The meed of Honor we must gain;
At Honor's call, the camel hastes
Thro' trackless wilds and dreary wastes,
Till in the glorious race she find
The fleetest coursers left behind:
By toils like these alone, he cries,
Th' adventurous youths to greatness rise;
If bloated indolence were fame,
And pompous ease our noblest aim,
The orb that regulates the day
Would ne'er from Aries' mansion stray.

I've bent at Fortune's shrine too long—
Too oft she heard my suppliant tongue—
Too oft has mock'd my idle prayers,
While fools and knaves engross'd her cares,
Awake for them, asleep to me,
Heedless of worth she scorn'd each plea.
Ah! had her eyes, more just survey'd
The diff'rent claims which each display'd,
Those eyes from partial fondness free
Had slept to them, and wak'd for me.

But, 'midst my sorrows and my toils,
Hope ever sooth'd my breast with smiles;
Her hand remov'd each gathering ill,
And oped life's closing prospects still.
Yet spite of all her friendly art
The specious scene ne'er gain'd my heart;
I lov'd it not altho' the day
Met my approach, and cheer'd my way;
I loath it now the hours retreat,
And fly me with reverted feet.

My soul from every tarnish free
May boldly vaunt her purity,
But ah, how keen, however bright,
The sabre glitter to the sight,
Its splendor's lost, its polish vain,
Till some bold hand the steel sustain.



Why have my days been stretch'd by fate,
To see the vile and vicious great—
While I, who led the race so long,
Am last and meanest of the throng?
Ah, why has death so long delay'd
To wrap me in his friendly shade,
Left me to wander thus alone,
When all my heart held dear is gone!

But let me check these fretful sighs—
Well may the base above me rise,
When yonder planets as they run
Mount in the sky above the sun.
Resigned I bow to Fate's decree,
Nor hope his laws will change for me;
Each shifting scene, each varying hour,
But proves the ruthless tyrants' power.

But tho' with ills unnumber'd curst,
We owe to faithless man the worst;
For man can smile with specious art,
And plant a dagger in the heart.
He only's fitted for the strife
Which fills the boist'rous paths of life,
Who, as he treads the crowded scenes,
Upon no kindred bosom leans.
Too long my foolish heart had deem'd
Mankind as virtuous as they seem'd;
The spell is broke, their faults are bare,
And now I see them as they are;
Truth from each tainted breast has flown,
And falsehood marks them all her own.

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Incredulous I listen now
To every tongue, and every vow,
For still there yawns a gulf between
Those honeyed words, and what they mean;
With honest pride elate, I see
The sons of falsehood shrink from me,
As from the right line's even way
The biass'd curves deflecting stray—
But what avails it to complain?
With souls like theirs reproof is vain;
If honor e'er such bosoms share
The sabre's point must fix it there.
But why exhaust life's rapid bowl,
And suck the dregs with sorrow foul,
When long ere this my youth has drain'd
Whatever zest the cup contain'd?
Why should we mount upon the wave,
And ocean's yawning horrors brave,
When we may swallow from the flask
Whatever the wants of mortals ask?

Contentment's realms no fears invade,
No cares annoy, no sorrows shade,
There plac'd secure, in peace we rest,
Nor aught demand to make us blest.
While pleasure's gay fantastic bower,
The splendid pageant of an hour,
Like yonder meteor in the skies,
Flits with a breath no more to rise.

As thro' life's various walks we're led,
May prudence hover o'er our head!
May she our words, our actions guide,
Our faults correct, our secrets hide!

May she, where'er our footsteps stray,
Direct our paths, and clear the way!

Till, every scene of tumult past,
She bring us to repose at last,



Teach us to love that peaceful shore,
And roam thro' folly's wilds no more!

Mauid Eddin Alhassan Abou Ismael Altograi.

[38] Abou Ismael was a native of Ispahan. He devoted himself to the service of the Seljuk Sultans of Persia, and enjoyed the confidence of Malec Shah, and his son and grandson, Mohammed and Massoud, by the last of whom he was raised to the dignity of vizir. Massoud, however, was not long in a condition to afford Abou Ismael any protection, for, being attacked by his brother Mahmoud, he was defeated, and driven from Mousel, and upon the fall of his master the vizir was seized and thrown into prison, and at length in the year 515 sentenced to be put to death.

TO YOUTH

Yes, youth, thou'rt fled, and I am left,
Like yonder desolated bower,
By winter's ruthless hand bereft
Of every leaf and every flower.

With heaving heart and streaming eyes
I woo'd thee to prolong thy stay,
But vain were all my tears and sighs,
Thou only fled'st more fast away.

Yet tho' thou fled'st away so fast,
I can recall thee if I will;
For I can talk of what is past,
And while I talk, enjoy thee still.

Ebn Alrabia.

ON LOVE[39]



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I never knew a sprightly fair
That was not dear to me,
And freely I my heart could share,
With every one I see.

It is not this or that alone
On whom my choice would fall,
I do not more incline to one
Than I incline to all.

The circle's bounding line are they,
Its centre is my heart,
My ready love the equal ray
That flows to every part.

Abou Aly.

[39] Abou Aly flourished in Egypt about the year 530, and was equally celebrated as a mathematician and as a poet.

A REMONSTRANCE WITH A DRUNKARD[40]

As drench'd in wine, the other night,
Zeid from the banquet sallied,
Thus I reprov'd his drunken plight,
Thus he my prudence rallied;

"In bev'rage so impure and vile,
How canst thou thus delight?"—
"My cups," he answer'd with a smile,
"Are generous and bright."

"Beware those dang'rous draughts," I cried,
"With love the goblet flows"—
"And curst is he," the youth replied,
"Who hatred only knows."

"Those cups too soon with sickness fraught
Thy stomach shall deplore"—
"Then soon," he cried, "the noxious draught
And all its ills are o'er."

"Rash youth, thy guilty joys resign."
"I will," at length he said,



"I vow I'll bid adieu to wine
As soon as I am dead."

Yahia Ben Salamet.

[40] This author was a native of Syria, and died at Miafarakir in the year of the Hegira 553.

VERSES[41]

Tho' such unbounded love you swear,
'Tis only art I see;
Can I believe that one so fair
Should ever dote on me?

Say that you hate, and freely show
That age displeases youth;
And I may love you when I know
That you can tell the truth.

Caliph Almonklafi Laimrillah.

[41] Almonklafi was the thirty-first Caliph of the house of Abbas, and the only one who possessed any real authority since the reign of Radhi. These lines were addressed to a lady who pretended a passion for him in his old age.

ON PROCRASTINATION[42]

Youth is a drunken noisy hour,
With every folly fraught;
But man, by age's chast'ning power,
Is sober'd into thought.

Then we resolve our faults to shun,
And shape our course anew;
But ere the wise reform's begun
Life closes on our view.

The travellers thus who wildly roam,
Or heedlessly delay,
Are left, when they should reach their home,
Benighted on the way.

Hebat Allah Ibn Altalmith.

[42] Ibn Althamith died in the 560th year of the Hegira, at the advanced age of one hundred.



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THE EARLY DEATH OF ABOU ALHASSAN ALY[43]

Soon hast thou run the race of life,
Nor could our tears thy speed control—
Still in the courser's gen'rous strife
The best will soonest reach the goal.

As Death upon his hand turns o'er
The different gems the world displays,
He seizes first to swell his store
The brightest jewel he surveys.

Thy name, by every breath convey'd,
Stretch'd o'er the globe its boundless flight;
Alas! in eve the lengthening shade
But lengthens to be lost in night!

If gracious Allah bade thee close
Thy youthful eyes so soon on day,
'Tis that he readiest welcomes those
Who love him best and best obey.

Alnassar Ledin Allah.

[43] Alnassar Ledin Allah was the thirty-fourth Abasside Caliph, and the last excepting three who enjoyed this splendid title, which was finally abolished by the Tartars in the year 656.

THE INTERVIEW

A Song

Darkness clos'd around, loud the tempest drove,
When thro' yonder glen I saw my lover rove,
Dearest youth!
Soon he reach'd our cot—weary, wet, and cold,
But warmth, wine, and I, to cheer his spirits strove,
Dearest youth!
How my love, cried I, durst thou hither stray
Thro' the gloom, nor fear the ghosts that haunt the grove?
Dearest youth!
In this heart, said he, fear no seat can find,

When each thought is fill'd alone with thee and love,
Dearest maid!

ARABIAN NIGHTS

[Selected tales edited by Andrew Lang]

THE SEVEN VOYAGES OF SINDBAD

In the times of the Caliph Harun-al-Rashid there lived in Bagdad a poor porter named Hindbad, who, on a very hot day, was sent to carry a heavy load from one end of the city to the other. Before he had accomplished half the distance he was so tired that, finding himself in a quiet street where the pavement was sprinkled with rose-water, and a cool breeze was blowing, he set his burden upon the ground, and sat down to rest in the shade of a grand house. Very soon he decided that he could not have chosen a pleasanter place; a delicious perfume of aloes-wood and pastilles came from the open windows and mingled with the scent of the rose-water which steamed up from the hot pavement. Within the palace he heard some music, as of many instruments cunningly played, and the melodious warble of nightingales and other birds, and by this, and the appetizing smell of many dainty dishes of which he presently became aware, he judged that feasting and merry-making were going on. He wondered who lived in this magnificent house which he had never seen before, the street in which it stood being one which he seldom had occasion to pass. To satisfy his curiosity he went up to some splendidly dressed servants who stood at the door, and asked one of them the name of the master of the mansion.

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"What," replied he, "do you live in Bagdad, and not know that here lives the noble Sindbad the Sailor, that famous traveller who sailed over every sea upon which the sun shines?"

The porter, who had often heard people speak of the immense wealth of Sindbad, could not help feeling envious of one whose lot seemed to be as happy as his own was miserable. Casting his eyes up to the sky he exclaimed aloud:—

"Consider, Mighty Creator of all things, the difference between Sindbad's life and mine. Every day I suffer a thousand hardships and misfortunes, and have hard work to get even enough bad barley bread to keep myself and my family alive, while the lucky Sindbad spends money right and left and lives upon the fat of the land! What has he done that you should give him this pleasant life—what have I done to deserve so hard a fate?"

So saying he stamped upon the ground like one beside himself with misery and despair. Just at this moment a servant came out of the palace, and taking him by the arm said, "Come with me, the noble Sindbad, my master, wishes to speak to you."

Hindbad was not a little surprised at this summons, and feared that his unguarded words might have drawn upon him the displeasure of Sindbad, so he tried to excuse himself upon the pretext that he could not leave the burden which had been intrusted to him in the street. However the lackey promised him that it should be taken care of, and urged him to obey the call so pressing that at last the porter was obliged to yield.

He followed the servant into a vast room, where a great company was seated round a table covered with all sorts of delicacies. In the place of honor sat a tall, grave man, whose long white beard gave him a venerable air. Behind his chair stood a crowd of attendants eager to minister to his wants. This was the famous Sindbad himself. The porter, more than ever alarmed at the sight of so much magnificence, tremblingly saluted the noble company. Sindbad, making a sign to him to approach, caused him to be seated at his right hand, and himself heaped choice morsels upon his plate, and poured out for him a draught of excellent wine, and presently, when the banquet drew to a close, spoke to him familiarly, asking his name and occupation.

"My lord," replied the porter, "I am called Hindbad."

"I am glad to see you here," continued Sindbad. "And I will answer for the rest of the company that they are equally pleased, but I wish you to tell me what it was that you said just now in the street." For Sindbad, passing by the open window before the feast began, had heard his complaint and therefore had sent for him.

At this question Hindbad was covered with confusion, and hanging down his head, replied, "My lord, I confess that, overcome by weariness and ill-humor, I uttered indiscreet words, which I pray you to pardon me."

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"Oh!" replied Sindbad, "do not imagine that I am so unjust as to blame you. On the contrary, I understand your situation and can pity you. Only you appear to be mistaken about me, and I wish to set you right. You doubtless imagine that I have acquired all the wealth and luxury that you see me enjoy without difficulty or danger, but this is far indeed from being the case. I have only reached this happy state after having for years suffered every possible kind of toil and danger.

"Yes, my noble friends," he continued, addressing the company, "I assure you that my adventures have been strange enough to deter even the most avaricious men from seeking wealth by traversing the seas. Since you have, perhaps, heard but confused accounts of my Seven Voyages, and the dangers and wonders that I have met with by sea and land, I will now give you a full and true account of them, which I think you will be well pleased to hear."

As Sindbad was relating his adventures chiefly on account of the porter, he ordered, before beginning his tale, that the burden which had been left in the street should be carried by some of his own servants to the place for which Hindbad had set out at first, while he remained to listen to the story.

FIRST VOYAGE

I had inherited considerable wealth from my parents, and being young and foolish I at first squandered it recklessly upon every kind of pleasure, but presently, finding that riches speedily take to themselves wings if managed as badly as I was managing mine, and remembering also that to be old and poor is misery indeed, I began to bethink me of how I could make the best of what still remained to me. I sold all my household goods by public auction, and joined a company of merchants who traded by sea, embarking with them at Balsora in a ship which we had fitted out between us.

We set sail and took our course towards the East Indies by the Persian Gulf, having the coast of Persia upon our left hand and upon our right the shores of Arabia Felix. I was at first much troubled by the uneasy motion of the vessel, but speedily recovered my health, and since that hour have been no more plagued by sea-sickness.

From time to time we landed at various islands, where we sold or exchanged our merchandise, and one day, when the wind dropped suddenly, we found ourselves becalmed close to a small island like a green meadow, which only rose slightly above the surface of the water. Our sails were furled, and the captain gave permission to all who wished to land for a while and amuse themselves. I was among the number, but when after strolling about for some time we lighted a fire and sat down to enjoy the repast which we had brought with us, we were startled by a sudden and violent trembling of the island, while at the same moment those left upon the ship set up an

outcry bidding us come on board for our lives, since what we had taken for an island was nothing but

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the back of a sleeping whale. Those who were nearest to the boat threw themselves into it, others sprang into the sea, but before I could save myself the whale plunged suddenly into the depths of the ocean, leaving me clinging to a piece of the wood which we had brought to make our fire. Meanwhile a breeze had sprung up, and in the confusion that ensued on board our vessel in hoisting the sails and taking up those who were in the boat and clinging to its sides, no one missed me and I was left at the mercy of the waves. All that day I floated up and down, now beaten this way, now that, and when night fell I despaired for my life; but, weary and spent as I was, I clung to my frail support, and great was my joy when the morning light showed me that I had drifted against an island.

The cliffs were high and steep, but luckily for me some tree-roots protruded in places, and by their aid I climbed up at last, and stretched myself upon the turf at the top, where I lay, more dead than alive, till the sun was high in the heavens. By that time I was very hungry, but after some searching I came upon some eatable herbs, and a spring of clear water, and much refreshed I set out to explore the island. Presently I reached a great plain where a grazing horse was tethered, and as I stood looking at it I heard voices talking apparently underground, and in a moment a man appeared who asked me how I came upon the island. I told him my adventures, and heard in return that he was one of the grooms of Mihrage, the King of the island, and that each year they came to feed their master's horses in this plain. He took me to a cave where his companions were assembled, and when I had eaten of the food they set before me, they bade me think myself fortunate to have come upon them when I did, since they were going back to their master on the morrow, and without their aid I could certainly never have found my way to the inhabited part of the island.

Early the next morning we accordingly set out, and when we reached the capital I was graciously received by the King, to whom I related my adventures, upon which he ordered that I should be well cared for and provided with such things as I needed. Being a merchant I sought out men of my own profession, and particularly those who came from foreign countries, as I hoped in this way to hear news from Bagdad, and find out some means of returning thither, for the capital was situated upon the sea-shore, and visited by vessels from all parts of the world. In the meantime I heard many curious things, and answered many questions concerning my own country, for I talked willingly with all who came to me. Also to while away the time of waiting I explored a little island named Cassel, which belonged to King Mihrage, and which was supposed to be inhabited by a spirit named Deggial. Indeed, the sailors assured me that often at night the playing of timbals could be heard upon it. However, I saw nothing strange upon my voyage, saving some fish that were full two hundred cubits long, but were fortunately more in dread of us than even we were of them, and fled from us if we did but strike upon a board to frighten them. Other fishes there were only a cubit long which had heads like owls.

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One day after my return, as I went down to the quay, I saw a ship which had just cast anchor, and was discharging her cargo, while the merchants to whom it belonged were busily directing the removal of it to their warehouses. Drawing nearer I presently noticed that my own name was marked upon some of the packages, and after having carefully examined them, I felt sure that they were indeed those which I had put on board our ship at Balsora. I then recognized the captain of the vessel, but as I was certain that he believed me to be dead, I went up to him and asked who owned the packages that I was looking at.

“There was on board my ship,” he replied, “a merchant of Bagdad named Sindbad. One day he and several of my other passengers landed upon what we supposed to be an island, but which was really an enormous whale floating asleep upon the waves. No sooner did it feel upon its back the heat of the fire which had been kindled, than it plunged into the depths of the sea. Several of the people who were upon it perished in the waters, and among others this unlucky Sindbad. This merchandise is his, but I have resolved to dispose of it for the benefit of his family if I should ever chance to meet with them.”

“Captain,” said I, “I am that Sinbad whom you believe to be dead, and these are my possessions!”

When the captain heard these words he cried out in amazement, “Lackaday! and what is the world coming to? In these days there is not an honest man to be met with. Did I not with my own eyes see Sindbad drown, and now you have the audacity to tell me that you are he! I should have taken you to be a just man, and yet for the sake of obtaining that which does not belong to you, you are ready to invent this horrible falsehood.”

“Have patience, and do me the favor to hear my story,” said I.

“Speak then,” replied the captain, “I am all attention.”

So I told him of my escape and of my fortunate meeting with the king’s grooms, and how kindly I had been received at the palace. Very soon I began to see that I had made some impression upon him, and after the arrival of some of the other merchants, who showed great joy at once more seeing me alive, he declared that he also recognized me.

Throwing himself upon my neck he exclaimed, “Heaven be praised that you have escaped from so great a danger. As to your goods, I pray you take them, and dispose of them as you please.” I thanked him, and praised his honesty, begging him to accept several bales of merchandise in token of my gratitude, but he would take nothing. Of the choicest of my goods I prepared a present for King Mihrage, who was at first amazed, having known that I had lost my all. However, when I had explained to him

how my bales had been miraculously restored to me, he graciously accepted my gifts, and in return gave me many valuable things. I then took leave of him, and exchanging my merchandise for sandal and aloes-wood, camphor,

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nutmegs, cloves, pepper, and ginger, I embarked upon the same vessel and traded so successfully upon our homeward voyage that I arrived in Balsora with about one hundred thousand sequins. My family received me with as much joy as I felt upon seeing them once more. I bought land and slaves, and built a great house in which I resolved to live happily, and in the enjoyment of all the pleasures of life to forget my past sufferings.

Here Sindbad paused, and commanded the musicians to play again, while the feasting continued until evening. When the time came for the porter to depart, Sindbad gave him a purse containing one hundred sequins, saying, "Take this, Hindbad, and go home, but to-morrow come again and you shall hear more of my adventures."

The porter retired quite overcome by so much generosity, and you may imagine that he was well received at home, where his wife and children thanked their lucky stars that he had found such a benefactor.

The next day Hindbad, dressed in his best, returned to the voyager's house, and was received with open arms. As soon as all the guests had arrived the banquet began as before, and when they had feasted long and merrily, Sindbad addressed them thus:—

"My friends, I beg that you will give me your attention while I relate the adventures of my second voyage, which you will find even more astonishing than the first."

SECOND VOYAGE

I had resolved, as you know, on my return from my first voyage, to spend the rest of my days quietly in Bagdad, but very soon I grew tired of such an idle life and longed once more to find myself upon the sea.

I procured, therefore, such goods as were suitable for the places I intended to visit, and embarked for the second time in a good ship with other merchants whom I knew to be honorable men. We went from island to island, often making excellent bargains, until one day we landed at a spot which, though covered with fruit-trees and abounding in springs of excellent water, appeared to possess neither houses nor people. While my companions wandered here and there gathering flowers and fruit I sat down in a shady place, and, having heartily enjoyed the provisions and the wine I had brought with me, I fell asleep, lulled by the murmur of a clear brook which flowed close by.

How long I slept I know not, but when I opened my eyes and started to my feet I perceived with horror that I was alone and that the ship was gone. I rushed to and fro like one distracted, uttering cries of despair, and when from the shore I saw the vessel



under full sail just disappearing upon the horizon, I wished bitterly enough that I had been content to stay at home in safety. But since wishes could do me no good, I presently took courage and looked about me for a means of escape. When I had climbed a tall tree I first of all directed my anxious glances towards the sea; but, finding nothing hopeful there, I turned landward, and my curiosity was excited by a huge dazzling white object, so far off that I could not make out what it might be.

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Descending from the tree I hastily collected what remained of my provisions and set off as fast as I could go towards it. As I drew near it seemed to me to be a white ball of immense size and height, and when I could touch it, I found it marvellously smooth and soft. As it was impossible to climb it—for it presented no foothold—I walked round about it seeking some opening, but there was none. I counted, however, that it was at least fifty paces round. By this time the sun was near setting, but quite suddenly it fell dark, something like a huge black cloud came swiftly over me, and I saw with amazement that it was a bird of extraordinary size which was hovering near. Then I remembered that I had often heard the sailors speak of a wonderful bird called a roc, and it occurred to me that the white object which had so puzzled me must be its egg.

Sure enough the bird settled slowly down upon it, covering it with its wings to keep it warm, and I cowered close beside the egg in such a position that one of the bird's feet, which was as large as the trunk of a tree, was just in front of me. Taking off my turban I bound myself securely to it with the linen in the hope that the roc, when it took flight next morning, would bear me away with it from the desolate island. And this was precisely what did happen. As soon as the dawn appeared the bird rose into the air carrying me up and up till I could no longer see the earth, and then suddenly it descended so swiftly that I almost lost consciousness. When I became aware that the roc had settled and that I was once again upon solid ground, I hastily unbound my turban from its foot and freed myself, and that not a moment too soon; for the bird, pouncing upon a huge snake, killed it with a few blows from its powerful beak, and seizing it rose up into the air once more and soon disappeared from my view. When I had looked about me I began to doubt if I had gained anything by quitting the desolate island.

The valley in which I found myself was deep and narrow, and surrounded by mountains which towered into the clouds, and were so steep and rocky that there was no way of climbing up their sides. As I wandered about, seeking anxiously for some means of escaping from this trap, I observed that the ground was strewn with diamonds, some of them of an astonishing size. This sight gave me great pleasure, but my delight was speedily dampened when I saw also numbers of horrible snakes so long and so large that the smallest of them could have swallowed an elephant with ease. Fortunately for me they seemed to hide in caverns of the rocks by day, and only came out by night, probably because of their enemy the roc.

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All day long I wandered up and down the valley, and when it grew dusk I crept into a little cave, and having blocked up the entrance to it with a stone, I ate part of my little store of food and lay down to sleep, but all through the night the serpents crawled to and fro, hissing horribly, so that I could scarcely close my eyes for terror. I was thankful when the morning light appeared, and when I judged by the silence that the serpents had retreated to their dens I came tremblingly out of my cave and wandered up and down the valley once more, kicking the diamonds contemptuously out of my path, for I felt that they were indeed vain things to a man in my situation. At last, overcome with weariness, I sat down upon a rock, but I had hardly closed my eyes when I was startled by something which fell to the ground with a thud close beside me.

It was a huge piece of fresh meat, and as I stared at it several more pieces rolled over the cliffs in different places. I had always thought that the stories the sailors told of the famous valley of diamonds, and of the cunning way which some merchants had devised for getting at the precious stones, were mere travellers' tales invented to give pleasure to the hearers, but now I perceived that they were surely true. These merchants came to the valley at the time when the eagles, which keep their eyries in the rocks, had hatched their young. The merchants then threw great lumps of meat into the valley. These, falling with so much force upon the diamonds, were sure to take up some of the precious stones with them, when the eagles pounced upon the meat and carried it off to their nests to feed their hungry broods. Then the merchants, scaring away the parent birds with shouts and outcries, would secure their treasures. Until this moment I had looked upon the valley as my grave, for I had seen no possibility of getting out of it alive, but now I took courage and began to devise a means of escape. I began by picking up all the largest diamonds I could find and storing them carefully in the leathern wallet which had held my provisions; this I tied securely to my belt. I then chose the piece of meat which seemed most suited to my purpose, and with the aid of my turban bound it firmly to my back; this done I laid down upon my face and awaited the coming of the eagles. I soon heard the flapping of their mighty wings above me, and had the satisfaction of feeling one of them seize upon my piece of meat, and me with it, and rise slowly towards his nest, into which he presently dropped me. Luckily for me the merchants were on the watch, and setting up their usual outcries, they rushed to the nest, scaring away the eagle. Their amazement was great when they discovered me, and also their disappointment, and with one accord they fell to abusing me for having robbed them of their usual profit. Addressing myself to the one who seemed most aggrieved, I said:—

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"I am sure, if you knew all that I have suffered, you would show more kindness towards me, and as for diamonds, I have enough here of the very best for you and me and all your company." So saying I showed them to him. The others all crowded around me, wondering at my adventures and admiring the device by which I had escaped from the valley, and when they had led me to their camp and examined my diamonds, they assured me that in all the years that they had carried on their trade they had seen no stones to be compared with them for size and beauty.

I found that each merchant chose a particular nest, and took his chance of what he might find in it. So I begged the one who owned the nest to which I had been carried to take as much as he would of my treasure, but he contented himself with one stone, and that by no means the largest, assuring me that with such a gem his fortune was made, and he need toil no more. I stayed with the merchants several days, and then as they were journeying homewards I gladly accompanied them. Our way lay across high mountains infested with frightful serpents, but we had the good luck to escape them and came at last to the seashore. Thence we sailed to the isle of Roha, where the camphor-trees grow to such a size that a hundred men could shelter under one of them with ease. The sap flows from an incision made high up in the tree into a vessel hung there to receive it, and soon hardens into the substance called camphor, but the tree itself withers up and dies when it has been so treated.

In this same island we saw the rhinoceros, an animal which is smaller than the elephant and larger than the buffalo. It has one horn about a cubit long which is solid, but has a furrow from the base to the tip. Upon it is traced in white lines the figure of a man. The rhinoceros fights with the elephant, and transfixing him with his horn carries him off upon his head, but becoming blinded with the blood of his enemy, he falls helpless to the ground, and then comes the roc, and clutches them both up in his talons and takes them to feed his young. This doubtless astonishes you, but if you do not believe my tale go to Roha and see for yourself. For fear of wearying you I pass over in silence many other wonderful things which we saw in this island. Before we left I exchanged one of my diamonds for much goodly merchandise by which I profited greatly on our homeward way. At last we reached Balsora, whence I hastened to Bagdad, where my first action was to bestow large sums of money upon the poor, after which I settled down to enjoy tranquilly the riches I had gained with so much toil and pain.

Having thus related the adventures of his second voyage, Sindbad again bestowed a hundred sequins upon Hindbad, inviting him to come again on the following day and hear how he fared upon his third voyage. The other guests also departed to their homes, but all returned at the same hour next day, including the porter, whose former life of hard work and poverty had already begun to seem to him like a bad dream. Again after the feast was over did Sindbad claim the attention of his guests and began the account of his third voyage.

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THIRD VOYAGE

After a very short time the pleasant easy life I led made me quite forget the perils of my two voyages. Moreover, as I was still in the prime of life, it pleased me better to be up and doing. So once more providing myself with the rarest and choicest merchandise of Bagdad, I conveyed it to Balsora, and set sail with other merchants of my acquaintance for distant lands. We had touched at many ports and made much profit, when one day upon the open sea we were caught by a terrible wind which blew us completely out of our reckoning, and lasting for several days finally drove us into harbor on a strange island.

“I would rather have come to anchor anywhere than here,” quoth our captain. “This island and all adjoining it are inhabited by hairy savages, who are certain to attack us, and whatever these dwarfs may do we dare not resist, since they swarm like locusts, and if one of them is killed the rest will fall upon us, and speedily make an end of us.”

These words caused great consternation among all the ship’s company, and only too soon we were to find out that the captain spoke truly. There appeared a vast multitude of hideous savages, not more than two feet high and covered with reddish fur. Throwing themselves into the waves they surrounded our vessel. Chattering meanwhile in a language we could not understand, and clutching at ropes and gangways, they swarmed up the ship’s side with such speed and agility that they almost seemed to fly.

You may imagine the rage and terror that seized us as we watched them, neither daring to hinder them nor able to speak a word to deter them from their purpose, whatever it might be. Of this we were not left long in doubt. Hoisting the sails, and cutting the cable of the anchor, they sailed our vessel to an island which lay a little further off, where they drove us ashore; then taking possession of her, they made off to the place from which they had come, leaving us helpless upon a shore avoided with horror by all mariners for a reason which you will soon learn.

Turning away from the sea we wandered miserably inland, finding as we went various herbs and fruits which we ate, feeling that we might as well live as long as possible though we had no hope of escape. Presently we saw in the far distance what seemed to us to be a splendid palace, towards which we turned our weary steps, but when we reached it we saw that it was a castle, lofty, and strongly built. Pushing back the heavy ebony doors we entered the courtyard, but upon the threshold of the great hall beyond it we paused, frozen with horror, at the sight which greeted us. On one side lay a huge pile of bones—human bones; and on the other numberless spits for roasting! Overcome with despair we sank trembling to the ground, and lay there without speech or motion. The sun was setting when a loud noise aroused us, the door of the hall was violently burst open and a horrible giant entered. He was as tall as a palm tree, and perfectly black, and had one eye, which flamed like a burning coal in the middle of his

forehead. His teeth were long and sharp and grinned horribly, while his lower lip hung down upon his chest, and he had ears like elephant's ears, which covered his shoulders, and nails like the claws of some fierce bird.

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At this terrible sight our senses left us and we lay like dead men. When at last we came to ourselves the giant sat examining us attentively with his fearful eye. Presently when he had looked at us enough he came towards us, and stretching out his hand took me by the back of the neck, turning me this way and that, but feeling that I was mere skin and bone he set me down again and went on to the next, whom he treated in the same fashion; at last he came to the captain, and finding him the fattest of us all, he took him up in one hand and stuck him upon a spit and proceeded to kindle a huge fire at which he presently roasted him. After the giant had supped he lay down to sleep, snoring like the loudest thunder, while we lay shivering with horror the whole night through, and when day broke he awoke and went out, leaving us in the castle.

When we believed him to be really gone we started up bemoaning our horrible fate, until the hall echoed with our despairing cries. Though we were many and our enemy was alone it did not occur to us to kill him, and indeed we should have found that a hard task, even if we had thought of it, and no plan could we devise to deliver ourselves. So at last, submitting to our sad fate, we spent the day in wandering up and down the island eating such fruits as we could find, and when night came we returned to the castle, having sought in vain for any other place of shelter. At sunset the giant returned, supped upon one of our unhappy comrades, slept and snored till dawn, and then left us as before. Our condition seemed to us so frightful that several of my companions thought it would be better to leap from the cliffs and perish in the waves at once, rather than await so miserable an end; but I had a plan of escape which I now unfolded to them, and which they at once agreed to attempt.

“Listen, my brothers,” I added. “You know that plenty of driftwood lies along the shore. Let us make several rafts, and carry them to a suitable place. If our plot succeeds, we can wait patiently for the chance of some passing ship which would rescue us from this fatal island. If it fails, we must quickly take to our rafts; frail as they are, we have more chance of saving our lives with them than we have if we remain here.”

All agreed with me, and we spent the day in building rafts, each capable of carrying three persons. At nightfall we returned to the castle, and very soon in came the giant, and one more of our number was sacrificed. But the time of our vengeance was at hand! As soon as he had finished his horrible repast he lay down to sleep as before, and when we heard him begin to snore I, and nine of the boldest of my comrades, rose softly, and took each a spit, which we made red-hot in the fire, and then at a given signal we plunged it with one accord into the giant's eye, completely blinding him. Uttering a terrible cry, he sprang to his feet clutching in all directions to try to seize one of us, but we had all fled different ways as soon as the deed was done, and thrown ourselves flat upon the ground in corners where he was not likely to touch us with his feet.

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After a vain search he fumbled about till he found the door, and fled out of it howling frightfully. As for us, when he was gone we made haste to leave the fatal castle, and, stationing ourselves beside our rafts, we waited to see what would happen. Our idea was that if, when the sun rose, we saw nothing of the giant, and no longer heard his howls, which still came faintly through the darkness, growing more and more distant, we should conclude that he was dead, and that we might safely stay upon the island and need not risk our lives upon the frail rafts. But alas! morning light showed us our enemy approaching us, supported on either hand by two giants nearly as large and fearful as himself, while a crowd of others followed close upon their heels. Hesitating no longer we clambered upon our rafts and rowed with all our might out to sea. The giants, seeing their prey escaping them, seized up huge pieces of rock, and wading into the water hurled them after us with such good aim that all the rafts except the one I was upon were swamped, and their luckless crews drowned, without our being able to do anything to help them. Indeed I and my two companions had all we could do to keep our own raft beyond the reach of the giants, but by dint of hard rowing we at last gained the open sea. Here we were at the mercy of the winds and waves, which tossed us to and fro all that day and night, but the next morning we found ourselves near an island, upon which we gladly landed.

There we found delicious fruits, and having satisfied our hunger we presently lay down to rest upon the shore. Suddenly we were aroused by a loud rustling noise, and starting up, saw that it was caused by an immense snake which was gliding towards us over the sand. So swiftly it came that it had seized one of my comrades before he had time to fly, and in spite of his cries and struggles speedily crushed the life out of him in its mighty coils and proceeded to swallow him. By this time my other companion and I were running for our lives to some place where we might hope to be safe from this new horror, and seeing a tall tree we climbed up into it, having first provided ourselves with a store of fruit off the surrounding bushes. When night came I fell asleep, but only to be awakened once more by the terrible snake, which after hissing horribly round the tree at last reared itself up against it, and finding my sleeping comrade who was perched just below me, it swallowed him also, and crawled away leaving me half dead with terror.

When the sun rose I crept down from the tree with hardly a hope of escaping the dreadful fate which had overtaken my comrades; but life is sweet, and I determined to do all I could to save myself. All day long I toiled with frantic haste and collected quantities of dry brushwood, reeds and thorns, which I bound with fagots, and making a circle of them under my tree I piled them firmly one upon another until I had a kind of tent in which I crouched like a mouse

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in a hole when she sees the cat coming. You may imagine what a fearful night I passed, for the snake returned eager to devour me, and glided round and round my frail shelter seeking an entrance. Every moment I feared that it would succeed in pushing aside some of the fagots, but happily for me they held together, and when it grew light my enemy retired, baffled and hungry, to his den. As for me I was more dead than alive! Shaking with fright and half suffocated by the poisonous breath of the monster, I came out of my tent and crawled down to the sea, feeling that it would be better to plunge from the cliffs and end my life at once than pass such another night of horror. But to my joy and relief I saw a ship sailing by, and by shouting wildly and waving my turban I managed to attract the attention of her crew.

A boat was sent to rescue me, and very soon I found myself on board surrounded by a wondering crowd of sailors and merchants eager to know by what chance I found myself in that desolate island. After I had told my story they regaled me with the choicest food the ship afforded, and the captain, seeing that I was in rags, generously bestowed upon me one of his own coats. After sailing about for some time and touching at many ports we came at last to the island of Salahat, where sandal-wood grows in great abundance. Here we anchored, and as I stood watching the merchants disembarking their goods and preparing to sell or exchange them, the captain came up to me and said:—

“I have here, brother, some merchandise belonging to a passenger of mine who is dead. Will you do me the favor to trade with it, and when I meet with his heirs I shall be able to give them the money, though it will be only just that you shall have a portion for your trouble.”

I consented gladly, for I did not like standing by idle. Whereupon he pointed the bales out to me, and sent for the person whose duty it was to keep a list of the goods that were upon the ship. When this man came he asked in what name the merchandise was to be registered.

“In the name of Sindbad the Sailor,” replied the captain.

At this I was greatly surprised, but looking carefully at him I recognized him to be the captain of the ship upon which I had made my second voyage, though he had altered much since that time. As for him, believing me to be dead it was no wonder that he had not recognized me.

“So, captain,” said I, “the merchant who owned those bales was called Sindbad?”

“Yes,” he replied. “He was so named. He belonged to Bagdad, and joined my ship at Balsora, but by mischance he was left behind upon a desert island where we had

landed to fill up our water-casks, and it was not until four hours later that he was missed. By that time the wind had freshened, and it was impossible to put back for him."

"You suppose him to have perished then?" said I.

"Alas! yes," he answered.

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"Why, captain!" I cried, "look well at me. I am that Sindbad who fell asleep upon the island and awoke to find himself abandoned!"

The captain stared at me in amazement, but was presently convinced that I was indeed speaking the truth, and rejoiced greatly at my escape.

"I am glad to have that piece of carelessness off my conscience at any rate," said he. "Now take your goods, and the profit I have made for you upon them, and may you prosper in future."

I took them gratefully, and as we went from one island to another I laid in stores of cloves, cinnamon, and other spices. In one place I saw a tortoise which was twenty cubits long and as many broad, also a fish that was like a cow and had skin so thick that it was used to make shields. Another I saw that was like a camel in shape and color. So by degrees we came back to Balsora, and I returned to Bagdad with so much money that I could not myself count it, besides treasures without end. I gave largely to the poor, and bought much land to add to what I already possessed, and thus ended my third voyage.

When Sindbad had finished his story he gave another hundred sequins to Hindbad, who then departed with the other guests, but next day when they had all reassembled, and the banquet was ended, their host continued his adventures.

FOURTH VOYAGE

Rich and happy as I was after my third voyage, I could not make up my mind to stay at home altogether. My love of trading, and the pleasure I took in anything that was new and strange, made me set my affairs in order, and begin my journey through some of the Persian provinces, having first sent off stores of goods to await my coming in the different places I intended to visit. I took ship at a distant seaport, and for some time all went well, but at last, being caught in a violent hurricane, our vessel became a total wreck in spite of all our worthy captain could do to save her, and many of our company perished in the waves. I, with a few others, had the good fortune to be washed ashore clinging to pieces of the wreck, for the storm had driven us near an island, and scrambling up beyond the reach of the waves we threw ourselves down quite exhausted, to wait for morning.

At daylight we wandered inland, and soon saw some huts, to which we directed our steps. As we drew near their black inhabitants swarmed out in great numbers and surrounded us, and we were led to their houses, and as it were divided among our captors. I with five others was taken into a hut, where we were made to sit upon the ground, and certain herbs were given to us, which the blacks made signs to us to eat. Observing that they themselves did not touch them, I was careful only to pretend to

taste my portion; but my companions, being very hungry, rashly ate up all that was set before them, and very soon I had the horror of seeing them become perfectly mad.

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Though they chattered incessantly I could not understand a word they said, nor did they heed when I spoke to them. The savages now produced large bowls full of rice prepared with cocoanut oil, of which my crazy comrades ate eagerly, but I only tasted a few grains, understanding clearly that the object of our captors was to fatten us speedily for their own eating, and this was exactly what happened. My unlucky companions having lost their reason, felt neither anxiety nor fear, and ate greedily all that was offered them. So they were soon fat and there was an end of them, but I grew leaner day by day, for I ate but little, and even that little did me no good by reason of my fear of what lay before me. However, as I was so far from being a tempting morsel, I was allowed to wander about freely, and one day, when all the blacks had gone off upon some expedition leaving only an old man to guard me, I managed to escape from him and plunged into the forest, running faster the more he cried to me to come back, until I had completely distanced him.

For seven days I hurried on, resting only when the darkness stopped me, and living chiefly upon cocoanuts, which afforded me both meat and drink, and on the eighth day I reached the sea-shore and saw a party of white men gathering pepper, which grew abundantly all about. Reassured by the nature of their occupation, I advanced towards them and they greeted me in Arabic, asking who I was and whence I came. My delight was great on hearing this familiar speech, and I willingly satisfied their curiosity, telling them how I had been shipwrecked, and captured by the blacks. "But these savages devour men!" said they. "How did you escape?" I repeated to them what I have just told you, at which they were mightily astonished. I stayed with them until they had collected as much pepper as they wished, and then they took me back to their own country and presented me to their King, by whom I was hospitably received. To him also I had to relate my adventures, which surprised him much, and when I had finished he ordered that I should be supplied with food and raiment and treated with consideration.

The island on which I found myself was full of people, and abounded in all sorts of desirable things, and a great deal of traffic went on in the capital, where I soon began to feel at home and contented. Moreover, the King treated me with special favor, and in consequence of this everyone, whether at the court or in the town, sought to make life pleasant to me. One thing I remarked which I thought very strange; this was that, from the greatest to the least, all men rode their horses without bridle or stirrups. I one day presumed to ask his Majesty why he did not use them, to which he replied, "You speak to me of things of which I have never before heard!" This gave me an idea. I found a clever workman and made him cut out under my direction the foundation of a saddle, which I wadded and covered with choice

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leather, adorning it with rich gold embroidery. I then got a locksmith to make me a bit and a pair of spurs after a pattern that I drew for him, and when all these things were completed I presented them to the King and showed him how to use them. When I had saddled one of his horses he mounted it and rode about quite delighted with the novelty, and to show his gratitude he rewarded me with large gifts. After this I had to make saddles for all the principal officers of the King's household, and as they all gave me rich presents I soon became very wealthy and quite an important person in the city.

One day the King sent for me and said, "Sindbad, I am going to ask a favor of you. Both I and my subjects esteem you, and wish you to end your days amongst us. Therefore I desire that you will marry a rich and beautiful lady whom I will find for you, and think no more of your own country."

As the King's will was law I accepted the charming bride he presented to me, and lived happily with her. Nevertheless I had every intention of escaping at the first opportunity, and going back to Bagdad. Things were thus going prosperously with me when it happened that the wife of one of my neighbors, with whom I had struck up quite a friendship, fell ill, and presently died. I went to his house to offer my consolations, and found him in the depths of woe.

"Heaven preserve you," said I, "and send you a long life!"

"Alas!" he replied, "what is the good of saying that when I have but an hour left to live!"

"Come, come!" said I, "surely it is not so bad as all that. I trust that you may be spared to me for many years."

"I hope," answered he, "that your life may be long, but as for me, all is finished. I have set my house in order, and to-day I shall be buried with my wife. This has been the law upon our island from the earliest ages—the living husband goes to the grave with his dead wife, the living wife with her dead husband. So did our fathers, and so must we do. The law changes not, and all must submit to it!"

As he spoke the friends and relations of the unhappy pair began to assemble. The body, decked in rich robes and sparkling with jewels, was laid upon an open bier, and the procession started, taking its way to a high mountain at some distance from the city, the wretched husband, clothed from head to foot in a black mantle, following mournfully.

When the place of interment was reached the corpse was lowered, just as it was, into a deep pit. Then the husband, bidding farewell to all his friends, stretched himself upon another bier, upon which were laid seven little loaves of bread and a pitcher of water, and he also was let down-down-down to the depths of the horrible cavern, and then a

stone was laid over the opening, and the melancholy company wended its way back to the city.

You may imagine that I was no unmoved spectator of these proceedings; to all the others it was a thing to which they had been accustomed from their youth up; but I was so horrified that I could not help telling the King how it struck me.

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"Sire," I said, "I am more astonished than I can express to you at the strange custom which exists in your dominions of burying the living with the dead. In all my travels I have never before met with so cruel and horrible a law."

"What would you have, Sindbad?" he replied. "It is the law for everybody. I myself should be buried with the Queen if she were the first to die."

"But, your Majesty," said I, "dare I ask if this law applies to foreigners also?"

"Why, yes," replied the king smiling, in what I could but consider a very heartless manner: "they are no exception to the rule if they have married in the country."

When I heard this I went home much cast down, and from that time forward my mind was never easy. If only my wife's little finger ached I fancied she was going to die, and sure enough before very long she fell really ill and in a few days breathed her last. My dismay was great, for it seemed to me that to be buried alive was even a worse fate than to be devoured by cannibals, nevertheless there was no escape. The body of my wife, arrayed in her richest robes and decked with all her jewels, was laid upon the bier. I followed it, and after me came a great procession, headed by the king and all his nobles, and in this order we reached the fatal mountain, which was one of a lofty chain bordering the sea.

Here I made one more frantic effort to excite the pity of the King and those who stood by, hoping to save myself even at this last moment, but it was of no avail. No one spoke to me, they even appeared to hasten over their dreadful task, and I speedily found myself descending into the gloomy pit, with my seven loaves and pitcher of water beside me. Almost before I reached the bottom the stone was rolled into its place above my head, and I was left to my fate. A feeble ray of light shone into the cavern through some chink, and when I had the courage to look about me I could see that I was in a vast vault, bestrewn with bones and bodies of the dead. I even fancied that I heard the expiring sighs of those who, like myself, had come into this dismal place alive. All in vain did I shriek aloud with rage and despair, reproaching myself for the love of gain and adventure which had brought me to such a pass, but at length, growing calmer, I took up my bread and water, and wrapping my face in my mantle I groped my way towards the end of the cavern, where the air was fresher.

Here I lived in darkness and misery until my provisions were exhausted, but just as I was nearly dead from starvation the rock was rolled away overhead and I saw that a bier was being lowered into the cavern, and that the corpse upon it was a man. In a moment my mind was made up, the woman who followed had nothing to expect but a lingering death; I should be doing her a service if I shortened her misery. Therefore when she descended, already insensible from terror, I was ready armed with a huge bone, one blow from

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which left her dead, and I secured the bread and water which gave me a hope of life. Several times did I have recourse to this desperate expedient, and I know not how long I had been a prisoner when one day I fancied that I heard something near me, which breathed loudly. Turning to the place from which the sound came I dimly saw a shadowy form which fled at my movement, squeezing itself through a cranny in the wall. I pursued it as fast as I could, and found myself in a narrow crack among the rocks, along which I was just able to force my way. I followed it for what seemed to me many miles, and at last saw before me a glimmer of light which grew clearer every moment until I emerged upon the sea-shore with a joy which I cannot describe. When I was sure that I was not dreaming, I realized that it was doubtless some little animal which had found its way into the cavern from the sea, and when disturbed had fled, showing me a means of escape which I could never have discovered for myself. I hastily surveyed my surroundings, and saw that I was safe from all pursuit from the town.

The mountains sloped sheer down to the sea, and there was no road across them. Being assured of this I returned to the cavern, and amassed a rich treasure of diamonds, rubies, emeralds and jewels of all kinds, which strewed the ground. These I made up into bales, and stored them into a safe place upon the beach, and then waited hopefully for the passing of a ship. I had looked out for two days, however, before a single sail appeared, so it was with much delight that I at last saw a vessel not very far from the shore, and by waving my arms and uttering loud cries succeeded in attracting the attention of her crew. A boat was sent off to me, and in answer to the questions of the sailors as to how I came to be in such a plight, I replied that I had been shipwrecked two days before, but had managed to scramble ashore with the bales which I pointed out to them. Luckily for me they believed my story, and without even looking at the place where they found me, took up my bundles, and rowed me back to the ship. Once on board, I soon saw that the captain was too much occupied with the difficulties of navigation to pay much heed to me, though he generously made me welcome, and would not even accept the jewels with which I offered to pay my passage. Our voyage was prosperous, and after visiting many lands, and collecting in each place great store of goodly merchandise, I found myself at last in Bagdad once more with unheard-of riches of every description. Again I gave large sums of money to the poor, and enriched all the mosques in the city, after which I gave myself up to my friends and relations, with whom I passed my time in feasting and merriment.

Here Sindbad paused, and all his hearers declared that the adventures of his fourth voyage had pleased them better than anything they had heard before. They then took their leave, followed by Hindbad, who had once more received a hundred sequins, and with the rest had been bidden to return next day for the story of the fifth voyage.

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When the time came all were in their places, and when they had eaten and drunk of all that was set before them Sindbad began his tale.

FIFTH VOYAGE

Not even all that I had gone through could make me contented with a quiet life. I soon wearied of its pleasures, and longed for change and adventure. Therefore I set out once more, but this time in a ship of my own, which I built and fitted out at the nearest seaport. I wished to be able to call at whatever port I chose, taking my own time; but as I did not intend carrying enough goods for a full cargo, I invited several merchants of different nations to join me. We set sail with the first favorable wind, and after a long voyage upon the open seas we landed upon an unknown island which proved to be uninhabited. We determined, however, to explore it, but had not gone far when we found a roc's egg, as large as the one I had seen before and evidently very nearly hatched, for the beak of the young bird had already pierced the shell. In spite of all I could say to deter them, the merchants who were with me fell upon it with their hatchets, breaking the shell, and killing the young roc. Then lighting a fire upon the ground they hacked morsels from the bird, and proceeded to roast them while I stood by aghast.

Scarcely had they finished their ill-omened repast, when the air above us was darkened by two mighty shadows. The captain of my ship, knowing by experience what this meant, cried out to us that the parent birds were coming, and urged us to get on board with all speed. This we did, and the sails were hoisted, but before we had made any way the rocs reached their despoiled nest and hovered about it, uttering frightful cries when they discovered the mangled remains of their young one. For a moment we lost sight of them, and were flattering ourselves that we had escaped, when they reappeared and soared into the air directly over our vessel, and we saw that each held in its claws an immense rock ready to crush us. There was a moment of breathless suspense, then one bird loosed its hold and the huge block of stone hurtled through the air, but thanks to the presence of mind of the helmsman, who turned our ship violently in another direction, it fell into the sea close beside us, cleaving it asunder till we could nearly see the bottom. We had hardly time to draw a breath of relief before the other rock fell with a mighty crash right in the midst of our luckless vessel, smashing it into a thousand fragments, and crushing, or hurling into the sea, passengers and crew. I myself went down with the rest, but had the good fortune to rise unhurt, and by holding on to a piece of driftwood with one hand and swimming with the other I kept myself afloat and was presently washed up by the tide on to an island. Its shores were steep and rocky, but I scrambled up safely and threw myself down to rest upon the green turf.

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When I had somewhat recovered I began to examine the spot in which I found myself, and truly it seemed to me that I had reached a garden of delights. There were trees everywhere, and they were laden with flowers and fruit, while a crystal stream wandered in and out under their shadow. When night came I slept sweetly in a cosy nook, though the remembrance that I was alone in a strange land made me sometimes start up and look around me in alarm, and then I wished heartily that I had stayed at home at ease. However, the morning sunlight restored my courage, and I once more wandered among the trees, but always with some anxiety as to what I might see next. I had penetrated some distance into the island when I saw an old man bent and feeble sitting upon the river bank, and at first I took him to be some shipwrecked mariner like myself. Going up to him I greeted him in a friendly way, but he only nodded his head at me in reply. I then asked what he did there, and he made signs to me that he wished to get across the river to gather some fruit, and seemed to beg me to carry him on my back. Pitying his age and feebleness, I took him up, and wading across the stream I bent down that he might more easily reach the bank, and bade him get down. But instead of allowing himself to be set upon his feet (even now it makes me laugh to think of it!), this creature who had seemed to me so decrepit leaped nimbly upon my shoulders, and hooking his legs round my neck gripped me so tightly that I was well-nigh choked, and so overcome with terror that I fell insensible to the ground. When I recovered my enemy was still in his place, though he had released his hold enough to allow me breathing space, and seeing me revive he prodded me adroitly first with one foot and then with the other, until I was forced to get up and stagger about with him under the trees while he gathered and ate the choicest fruits. This went on all day, and even at night, when I threw myself down half dead with weariness, the terrible old man held on tight to my neck, nor did he fail to greet the first glimmer of morning light by drumming upon me with his heels, until I perforce awoke and resumed my dreary march with rage and bitterness in my heart.

It happened one day that I passed a tree under which lay several dry gourds, and catching one up I amused myself with scooping out its contents and pressing into it the juice of several bunches of grapes which hung from every bush. When it was full I left it propped in the fork of a tree, and a few days later, carrying the hateful old man that way, I snatched at my gourd as I passed it and had the satisfaction of a draught of excellent wine so good and refreshing that I even forgot my detestable burden, and began to sing and caper.

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The old monster was not slow to perceive the effect which my draught had produced and that I carried him more lightly than usual, so he stretched out his skinny hand and seizing the gourd first tasted its contents cautiously, then drained them to the very last drop. The wine was strong and the gourd capacious, so he also began to sing after a fashion, and soon I had the delight of feeling the iron grip of his goblin legs unclasp, and with one vigorous effort I threw him to the ground, from which he never moved again. I was so rejoiced to have at last got rid of this uncanny old man that I ran leaping and bounding down to the sea-shore, where, by the greatest good luck, I met with some mariners who had anchored off the island to enjoy the delicious fruits, and to renew their supply of water.

They heard the story of my escape with amazement, saying, "You fell into the hands of the Old Man of the Sea, and it is a mercy that he did not strangle you as he has everyone else upon whose shoulders he has managed to perch himself. This island is well-known as the scene of his evil deeds, and no merchant or sailor who lands upon it cares to stray far away from his comrades." After we had talked for awhile they took me back with them on board their ship, where the captain received me kindly, and we soon set sail, and after several days reached a large and prosperous-looking town where all the houses were built of stone. Here we anchored, and one of the merchants, who had been very friendly to me on the way, took me ashore with him and showed me a lodging set apart for strange merchants. He then provided me with a large sack, and pointed out to me a party of others equipped in like manner.

"Go with them," said he, "and do as they do, but beware of losing sight of them, for if you strayed your life would be in danger."

With that he supplied me with provisions, and bade me farewell, and I set out with my new companions. I soon learnt that the object of our expedition was to fill our sacks with cocoa-nuts, but when at length I saw the trees and noted their immense height and the slippery smoothness of their slender trunks, I did not at all understand how we were to do it. The crowns of the cocoa-palms were all alive with monkeys, big and little, which skipped from one to the other with surprising agility, seeming to be curious about us and disturbed at our appearance, and I was at first surprised when my companions after collecting stones began to throw them at the lively creatures, which seemed to me quite harmless. But very soon I saw the reason of it and joined them heartily, for the monkeys, annoyed and wishing to pay us back in our own coin, began to tear the nuts from the trees and cast them at us with angry and spiteful gestures, so that after very little labor our sacks were filled with the fruit which we could not otherwise have obtained.

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As soon as we had as many as we could carry we went back to the town, where my friend bought my share and advised me to continue the same occupation until I had earned money enough to carry me to my own country. This I did, and before long had amassed a considerable sum. Just then I heard that there was a trading ship ready to sail, and taking leave of my friend I went on board, carrying with me a goodly store of cocoanuts; and we sailed first to the islands where pepper grows, then to Comari where the best aloes-wood is found, and where men drink no wine by an unalterable law. Here I exchanged my nuts for pepper and good aloes-wood, and went a-fishing for pearls with some of the other merchants, and my divers were so lucky that very soon I had an immense number, and those very large and perfect. With all these treasures I came joyfully back to Bagdad, where I disposed of them for large sums of money, of which I did not fail as before to give the tenth part to the poor, and after that I rested from my labors and comforted myself with all the pleasures that my riches could give me.

Having thus ended his story, Sindbad ordered that one hundred sequins should be given to Hindbad, and the guests then withdrew; but after the next day's feast he began the account of his sixth voyage as follows.

SIXTH VOYAGE

It must be a marvel to you how, after having five times met with shipwreck and unheard-of perils, I could again tempt fortune and risk fresh trouble. I am even surprised myself when I look back, but evidently it was my fate to rove, and after a year of repose I prepared to make a sixth voyage, regardless of the entreaties of my friends and relations, who did all they could to keep me at home. Instead of going by the Persian Gulf, I travelled a considerable way overland, and finally embarked from a distant Indian port with a captain who meant to make a long voyage. And truly he did so, for we fell in with stormy weather which drove us completely out of our course, so that for many days neither captain nor pilot knew where we were, nor where we were going. When they did at last discover our position we had small ground for rejoicing, for the captain, casting his turban upon the deck and tearing his beard, declared that we were in the most dangerous spot upon the whole wide sea, and had been caught by a current which was at that moment sweeping us to destruction. It was too true! In spite of all the sailors could do we were driven with frightful rapidity towards the foot of a mountain, which rose sheer out of the sea, and our vessel was dashed to pieces upon the rocks at its base, not, however, until we had managed to scramble on shore, carrying with us the most precious of our possessions. When we had done this the captain said to us:—

“Now we are here we may as well begin to dig our graves at once, since from this fatal spot no shipwrecked mariner has ever returned.”

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This speech discouraged us much, and we began to lament over our sad fate.

The mountain formed the seaward boundary of a large island, and the narrow strip of rocky shore upon which we stood was strewn with the wreckage of a thousand gallant ships, while the bones of the luckless mariners shone white in the sunshine, and we shuddered to think how soon our own would be added to the heap. All around, too, lay vast quantities of the costliest merchandise, and treasures were heaped in every cranny of the rocks, but all these things only added to the desolation of the scene. It struck me as a very strange thing that a river of clear fresh water, which gushed out from the mountain not far from where we stood, instead of flowing into the sea as rivers generally do, turned off sharply, and flowed out of sight under a natural archway of rock, and when I went to examine it more closely I found that inside the cave the walls were thick with diamonds, rubies, and masses of crystal, and the floor was strewn with ambergris. Here, then, upon this desolate shore we abandoned ourselves to our fate, for there was no possibility of scaling the mountain, and if a ship had appeared it could only have shared our doom. The first thing our captain did was to divide equally amongst us all the food we possessed, and then the length of each man's life depended on the time he could make his portion last. I myself could live upon very little.

Nevertheless, by the time I had buried the last of my companions my stock of provisions was so small that I hardly thought I should live long enough to dig my own grave, which I set about doing, while I regretted bitterly the roving disposition which was always bringing me into such straits, and thought longingly of all the comfort and luxury that I had left. But luckily for me the fancy took me to stand once more beside the river where it plunged out of sight in the depths of the cavern, and as I did so an idea struck me. This river which hid itself underground doubtless emerged again at some distant spot. Why should I not build a raft and trust myself to its swiftly flowing waters? If I perished before I could reach the light of day once more I should be no worse off than I was now, for death stared me in the face, while there was always the possibility that, as I was born under a lucky star, I might find myself safe and sound in some desirable land. I decided at any rate to risk it, and speedily built myself a stout raft of drift-wood with strong cords, of which enough and to spare lay strewn upon the beach. I then made up many packages of rubies, emeralds, rock crystal, ambergris, and precious stuffs, and bound them upon my raft, being careful to preserve the balance, and then I seated myself upon it, having two small oars that I had fashioned laid ready to my hand, and loosed the cord which held it to the bank. Once out in the current my raft flew swiftly under the gloomy archway, and I found myself in total darkness,

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carried smoothly forward by the rapid river. On I went as it seemed to me for many nights and days. Once the channel became so small that I had a narrow escape of being crushed against the rocky roof, and after that I took the precaution of lying flat upon my precious bales. Though I only ate what was absolutely necessary to keep myself alive, the inevitable moment came when, after swallowing my last morsel of food, I began to wonder if I must after all die of hunger. Then, worn out with anxiety and fatigue, I fell into a deep sleep, and when I again opened my eyes I was once more in the light of day; a beautiful country lay before me, and my raft, which was tied to the river bank, was surrounded by friendly looking black men. I rose and saluted them, and they spoke to me in return, but I could not understand a word of their language. Feeling perfectly bewildered by my sudden return to life and light, I murmured to myself in Arabic, "Close thine eyes, and while thou sleepest Heaven will change thy fortune from evil to good."

One of the natives, who understood this tongue, then came forward saying:—

"My brother, be not surprised to see us; this is our land, and as we came to get water from the river we noticed your raft floating down it, and one of us swam out and brought you to the shore. We have waited for your awakening; tell us now whence you come and where you were going by that dangerous way?"

I replied that nothing would please me better than to tell them, but that I was starving, and would fain eat something first. I was soon supplied with all I needed, and having satisfied my hunger I told them faithfully all that had befallen me. They were lost in wonder at my tale when it was interpreted to them, and said that adventures so surprising must be related to their King only by the man to whom they had happened. So, procuring a horse, they mounted me upon it, and we set out, followed by several strong men carrying my raft just as it was upon their shoulders. In this order we marched into the city of Serendib, where the natives presented me to their King, whom I saluted in the Indian fashion, prostrating myself at his feet and kissing the ground; but the monarch bade me rise and sit beside him, asking first what was my name.

"I am Sindbad," I replied, "whom men call 'the Sailor,' for I have voyaged much upon many seas."

"And how came you here?" asked the King.

I told my story, concealing nothing, and his surprise and delight were so great that he ordered my adventures to be written in letters of gold and laid up in the archives of his kingdom.



Presently my raft was brought in and the bales opened in his presence, and the king declared that in all his treasury there were no such rubies and emeralds as those which lay in great heaps before him. Seeing that he looked at them with interest, I ventured to say that I myself and all that I had were at his disposal, but he answered me smiling:—

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“Nay, Sindbad. Heaven forbid that I should covet your riches; I will rather add to them, for I desire that you shall not leave my kingdom without some tokens of my good-will.” He then commanded his officers to provide me with a suitable lodging at his expense, and sent slaves to wait upon me and carry my raft and my bales to my new dwelling-place. You may imagine that I praised his generosity and gave him grateful thanks, nor did I fail to present myself daily in his audience-chamber, and for the rest of my time I amused myself in seeing all that was most worthy of attention in the city. The island of Serendib being situated on the equinoctial line, the days and nights there are of equal length. The chief city is placed at the end of a beautiful valley, formed by the highest mountain in the world, which is in the middle of the island. I had the curiosity to ascend to its very summit, for this was the place to which Adam was banished out of Paradise. Here are found rubies and many precious things, and rare plants grow abundantly, with cedar-trees and cocoa-palms. On the sea-shore and at the mouths of the rivers the divers seek for pearls, and in some valleys diamonds are plentiful. After many days I petitioned the King that I might return to my own country, to which he graciously consented. Moreover, he loaded me with rich gifts, and when I went to take leave of him he intrusted me with a royal present and a letter to the Commander of the Faithful, our sovereign lord, saying, “I pray you give these to the Caliph Harun-al-Rashid, and assure him of my friendship.”

I accepted the charge respectfully, and soon embarked upon the vessel which the King himself had chosen for me. The King’s letter was written in blue characters upon a rare and precious skin of yellowish color, and these were the words of it: “The King of the Indies, before whom walk a thousand elephants, who lives in a palace, of which the roof blazes with a hundred thousand rubies, and whose treasure-house contains twenty thousand diamond crowns, to the Caliph Harun-al-Rashid sends greeting. Though the offering we present to you is unworthy of your notice, we pray you to accept it as a mark of the esteem and friendship which we cherish for you, and of which we gladly send you this token, and we ask of you a like regard if you deem us worthy of it. Adieu, brother.”

The present consisted of a vase carved from a single ruby, six inches high and as thick as my finger; this was filled with the choicest pearls, large, and of perfect shape and lustre; secondly, a huge snake-skin, with scales as large as a sequin, which would preserve from sickness those who slept upon it. Then quantities of aloes-wood, camphor, and pistachio-nuts; and lastly, a beautiful slave-girl, whose robes glittered with precious stones.

After a long and prosperous voyage we landed at Balsora, and I made haste to reach Bagdad, and taking the King’s letter I presented myself at the palace gate, followed by the beautiful slave, and various members of my own family, bearing the treasure.

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As soon as I had declared my errand I was conducted into the presence of the Caliph, to whom, after I had made my obeisance, I gave the letter and the King's gift, and when he had examined them he demanded of me whether the Prince of Serendib was really as rich and powerful as he claimed to be.

"Commander of the Faithful," I replied, again bowing humbly before him, "I can assure your Majesty that he has in no way exaggerated his wealth and grandeur. Nothing can equal the magnificence of his palace. When he goes abroad his throne is prepared upon the back of an elephant, and on either side of him ride his ministers, his favorites, and courtiers. On his elephant's neck sits an officer, his golden lance in his hand, and behind him stands another bearing a pillar of gold, at the top of which is an emerald as long as my hand. A thousand men in cloth of gold, mounted upon richly caparisoned elephants, go before him, and as the procession moves onward the officer who guides his elephant cries aloud, 'Behold the mighty monarch, the powerful and valiant Sultan of the Indies, whose palace is covered with a hundred thousand rubies, who possesses twenty thousand diamond crowns. Behold a monarch greater than Solomon and Mihrage in all their glory!'

"Then the one who stands behind the throne answers: 'This king, so great and powerful, must die, must die, must die!'

"And the first takes up the chant again, 'All praise to Him who lives for evermore.'

"Further, my lord, in Serendib no judge is needed, for to the King himself his people come for justice."

The Caliph was well satisfied with my report.

"From the King's letter," said he, "I judged that he was a wise man. It seems that he is worthy of his people, and his people of him."

So saying he dismissed me with rich presents, and I returned in peace to my own house.

When Sindbad had done speaking his guests withdrew, Hindbad having first received a hundred sequins, but all returned next day to hear the story of the seventh voyage.

SEVENTH AND LAST VOYAGE

After my sixth voyage I was quite determined that I would go to sea no more. I was now of an age to appreciate a quiet life, and I had run risks enough. I only wished to end my days in peace. One day, however, when I was entertaining a number of my friends, I was told that an officer of the Caliph wished to speak to me, and when he was admitted

he bade me to follow him into the presence of Harun-al-Rashid, which I accordingly did. After I had saluted him, the Caliph said:—

“I have sent for you, Sindbad, because I need your services. I have chosen you to bear a letter and a gift to the King of Serendib in return for his message of friendship.”

The Caliph’s commandment fell upon me like a thunderbolt.

“Commander of the Faithful,” I answered, “I am ready to do all that your Majesty commands, but I humbly pray you to remember that I am utterly disheartened by the unheard-of sufferings I have undergone. Indeed, I have made a vow never again to leave Bagdad.”

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With this I gave him a long account of some of my strangest adventures, to which he listened patiently.

"I admit," said he, "that you have indeed had some extraordinary experiences, but I do not see why they should hinder you from doing as I wish. You have only to go straight to Serendib and give my message, then you are free to come back and do as you will. But go you must; my honor and dignity demand it."

Seeing that there was no help for it, I declared myself willing to obey; and the Caliph, delighted at having got his own way, gave me a thousand sequins for the expenses of the voyage. I was soon ready to start, and taking the letter and the present I embarked at Balsora, and sailed quickly and safely to Serendib. Here, when I had disclosed my errand, I was well received, and brought into the presence of the king, who greeted me with joy.

"Welcome, Sindbad," he cried. "I have thought of you often, and rejoice to see you once more."

After thanking him for the honor that he did me, I displayed the Caliph's gifts. First a bed with complete hangings all cloth of gold, which cost a thousand sequins, and another like to it of crimson stuff. Fifty robes of rich embroidery, a hundred of the finest white linen from Cairo, Suez, Cufa, and Alexandria. Then more beds of different fashion, and an agate vase carved with the figure of a man aiming an arrow at a lion, and finally a costly table, which had once belonged to King Solomon. The King of Serendib received with satisfaction the assurance of the Caliph's friendliness towards him, and now my task being accomplished I was anxious to depart, but it was some time before the king would think of letting me go. At last, however, he dismissed me with many presents, and I lost no time in going on board a ship, which sailed at once, and for four days all went well. On the fifth day we had the misfortune to fall in with pirates, who seized our vessel, killing all who resisted, and making prisoners of those who were prudent enough to submit at once, of whom I was one. When they had despoiled us of all we possessed, they forced us to put on vile raiment, and sailing to a distant island there sold us for slaves. I fell into the hands of a rich merchant, who took me home with him, and clothed and fed me well, and after some days sent for me and questioned me as to what I could do.

I answered that I was a rich merchant who had been captured by pirates, and therefore I knew no trade.

"Tell me," said he, "can you shoot with a bow?"

I replied that this had been one of the pastimes of my youth, and that doubtless with practice my skill would come back to me.

Upon this he provided me with a bow and arrows, and mounting me with him upon his own elephant took the way to a vast forest which lay far from the town. When we had reached the wildest part of it we stopped, and my master said to me: "This forest swarms with elephants. Hide yourself in this great tree, and shoot at all that pass you. When you have succeeded in killing one come and tell me."

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So saying he gave me a supply of food, and returned to the town, and I perched myself high up in the tree and kept watch. That night I saw nothing, but just after sunrise the next morning a large herd of elephants came crashing and trampling by. I lost no time in letting fly several arrows, and at last one of the great animals fell to the ground dead, and the others retreated, leaving me free to come down from my hiding-place and run back to tell my master of my success, for which I was praised and regaled with good things. Then we went back to the forest together and dug a mighty trench in which we buried the elephant I had killed, in order that when it became a skeleton my master might return and secure its tusks.

For two months I hunted thus, and no day passed without my securing an elephant. Of course I did not always station myself in the same tree, but sometimes in one place, sometimes in another. One morning as I watched the coming of the elephants I was surprised to see that, instead of passing the tree I was in, as they usually did, they paused, and completely surrounded it, trumpeting horribly, and shaking the very ground with their heavy tread, and when I saw that their eyes were fixed upon me I was terrified, and my arrows dropped from my trembling hand. I had indeed good reason for my terror when, an instant later, the largest of the animals wound his trunk round the stem of my tree, and with one mighty effort tore it up by the roots, bringing me to the ground entangled in its branches. I thought now that my last hour was surely come, but the huge creature, picking me up gently enough, set me upon its back, where I clung more dead than alive, and followed by the whole herd turned and crashed off into the dense forest. It seemed to me a long time before I was once more set upon my feet by the elephant, and I stood as if in a dream watching the herd, which turned and trampled off in another direction, and were soon hidden in the dense underwood. Then, recovering myself, I looked about me, and found that I was standing upon the side of a great hill, strewn as far as I could see on either hand with bones and tusks of elephants. "This then must be the elephants' burying-place," I said to myself, "and they must have brought me here that I might cease to persecute them, seeing that I want nothing but their tusks, and here lie more than I could carry away in a lifetime."

Whereupon I turned and made for the city as fast as I could go, not seeing a single elephant by the way, which convinced me that they had retired deeper into the forest to leave the way open to the Ivory Hill, and I did not know how sufficiently to admire their sagacity. After a day and a night I reached my master's house, and was received by him with joyful surprise.

"Ah! poor Sindbad," he cried, "I was wondering what could have become of you. When I went to the forest I found the tree newly uprooted, and the arrows lying beside it, and I feared I should never see you again. Pray tell me how you escaped death."

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I soon satisfied his curiosity, and the next day we went together to the Ivory Hill, and he was overjoyed to find that I had told him nothing but the truth. When we had loaded our elephant with as many tusks as it could carry and were on our way back to the city, he said:—

“My brother—since I can no longer treat as a slave one who has enriched me thus—take your liberty, and may Heaven prosper you. I will no longer conceal from you that these wild elephants have killed numbers of our slaves every year. No matter what good advice we gave them, they were caught sooner or later. You alone have escaped the wiles of these animals, therefore you must be under the special protection of Heaven. Now through you the whole town will be enriched without further loss of life, therefore you shall not only receive your liberty, but I will also bestow a fortune upon you.”

To which I replied, “Master, I thank you, and wish you all prosperity. For myself I only ask liberty to return to my own country.”

“It is well,” he answered, “the monsoon will soon bring the ivory ships hither, then I will send you on your way with somewhat to pay your passage.”

So I stayed with him till the time of the monsoon, and every day we added to our store of ivory till all his warehouses were overflowing with it. By this time the other merchants knew the secret, but there was enough and to spare for all. When the ships at last arrived my master himself chose the one in which I was to sail, and put on board for me a great store of choice provisions, also ivory in abundance, and all the costliest curiosities of the country, for which I could not thank him enough, and so we parted. I left the ship at the first port we came to, not feeling at ease upon the sea after all that had happened to me by reason of it, and having disposed of my ivory for much gold, and bought many rare and costly presents, I loaded my pack animals, and joined a caravan of merchants. Our journey was long and tedious, but I bore it patiently, reflecting that at least I had not to fear tempests, nor pirates, nor serpents, nor any of the other perils from which I had suffered before, and at length we reached Bagdad. My first care was to present myself before the Caliph, and give him an account of my embassy. He assured me that my long absence had disquieted him much, but he had nevertheless hoped for the best. As to my adventure among the elephants he heard it with amazement, declaring that he could not have believed it had not my truthfulness been well-known to him.

By his orders this story and the others I had told him were written by his scribes in letters of gold, and laid up among his treasures. I took my leave of him, well satisfied with the honors and rewards he bestowed upon me; and since that time I have rested from my labors, and given myself up wholly to my family and my friends.

Thus Sindbad ended the story of his seventh and last voyage, and turning to Hindbad he added:—



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"Well, my friend, and what do you think now? Have you ever heard of anyone who has suffered more, or had more narrow escapes than I have? Is it not just that I should now enjoy a life of ease and tranquillity?"

Hindbad drew near, and kissing his hand respectfully, replied, "Sir, you have indeed known fearful perils; my troubles have been nothing compared to yours. Moreover, the generous use you make of your wealth proves that you deserve it. May you live long and happily in the enjoyment of it."

Sindbad then gave him a hundred sequins, and henceforward counted him among his friends; also he caused him to give up his profession as a porter, and to eat daily at his table that he might all his life remember Sindbad the Sailor.

ALADDIN'S WONDERFUL LAMP

There once lived a poor tailor, who had a son called Aladdin, a careless, idle boy, who would do nothing but play all day long in the streets with little idle boys like himself. This so grieved the father that he died; yet, in spite of his mother's tears and prayers, Aladdin did not mend his ways. One day, when he was playing in the streets as usual, a stranger asked him his age, and if he were not the son of Mustapha the tailor.

"I am, sir," replied Aladdin; "but he died a long while ago."

On this the stranger, who was a famous African magician, fell on his neck and kissed him, saying: "I am your uncle, and knew you from your likeness to my brother. Go to your mother and tell her I am coming."

Aladdin ran home, and told his mother of his newly-found uncle.

"Indeed, child," she said, "your father had a brother, but I always thought he was dead."

However, she prepared supper, and bade Aladdin seek his uncle, who came laden with wine and fruit. He presently fell down and kissed the place where Mustapha used to sit, bidding Aladdin's mother not to be surprised at not having seen him before, as he had been forty years out of the country. He then turned to Aladdin and asked him his trade, at which the boy hung his head, while his mother burst into tears. On learning that Aladdin was idle and would learn no trade, he offered to take a shop for him and stock it with merchandise. Next day he bought Aladdin a fine suit of clothes, and took him all over the city, showing him the sights, and brought him home at nightfall to his mother, who was overjoyed to see her son so fine.

Next day the magician led Aladdin into some beautiful gardens a long way outside the city gates. They sat down by a fountain, and the magician pulled a cake from his girdle, which he divided between them. They then journeyed onwards till they almost reached

the mountains. Aladdin was so tired that he begged to go back, but the magician beguiled him with pleasant stories, and led him on in spite of himself.

At last they came to two mountains divided by a narrow valley.

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"We will go no farther," said the false uncle. "I will show you something wonderful; only do you gather up sticks while I kindle a fire."

When it was lit the magician threw on it a powder he had about him, at the same time saying some magical words. The earth trembled a little and opened in front of them, disclosing a square flat stone with a brass ring in the middle to raise it by. Aladdin tried to run away, but the magician caught him and gave him a blow that knocked him down.

"What have I done, uncle?" he said piteously; whereupon the magician said more kindly: "Fear nothing, but obey me. Beneath this stone lies a treasure which is to be yours, and no one else may touch it, so you must do exactly as I tell you."

At the word treasure, Aladdin forgot his fears, and grasped the ring as he was told, saying the names of his father and grandfather. The stone came up quite easily and some steps appeared.

"Go down," said the magician; "at the foot of those steps you will find an open door leading into three large halls. Tuck up your gown and go through them without touching anything, or you will die instantly. These halls lead into a garden of fine fruit-trees. Walk on till you come to a niche in a terrace where stands a lighted lamp. Pour out the oil it contains and bring it to me."

He drew a ring from his finger and gave it to Aladdin, bidding him prosper.

Aladdin found everything as the magician had said, gathered some fruit off the trees, and, having got the lamp, arrived at the mouth of the cave. The magician cried out in a great hurry:—

"Make haste and give me the lamp." This Aladdin refused to do until he was out of the cave. The magician flew into a terrible passion, and throwing some more powder on the fire, he said something, and the stone rolled back into its place.

The magician left Persia forever, which plainly showed that he was no uncle of Aladdin's, but a cunning magician who had read in his magic books of a wonderful lamp, which would make him the most powerful man in the world. Though he alone knew where to find it, he could only receive it from the hand of another. He had picked out the foolish Aladdin for this purpose, intending to get the lamp and kill him afterwards.

For two days Aladdin remained in the dark, crying and lamenting. At last he clasped his hands in prayer, and in so doing rubbed the ring, which the magician had forgotten to take from him. Immediately an enormous and frightful genie rose out of the earth, saying:—

"What wouldst thou with me? I am the Slave of the Ring, and will obey thee in all things."

Aladdin fearlessly replied: "Deliver me from this place!" whereupon the earth opened, and he found himself outside. As soon as his eyes could bear the light he went home, but fainted on the threshold. When he came to himself he told his mother what had passed, and showed her the lamp and the fruits he had gathered in the garden, which were in reality precious stones. He then asked for some food.

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“Alas! child,” she said, “I have nothing in the house, but I have spun a little cotton and will go and sell it.”

Aladdin bade her keep her cotton, for he would sell the lamp instead. As it was very dirty she began to rub it, that it might fetch a higher price. Instantly a hideous genie appeared, and asked what she would have. She fainted away, but Aladdin, snatching the lamp, said boldly:—

“Fetch me something to eat!”

The genie returned with a silver bowl, twelve silver plates containing rich meats, two silver cups, and two bottles of wine. Aladdin’s mother, when she came to herself, said:
—

“Whence comes this splendid feast?”

“Ask not, but eat,” replied Aladdin.

So they sat at breakfast till it was dinner-time, and Aladdin told his mother about the lamp. She begged him to sell it, and have nothing to do with devils.

“No,” said Aladdin, “since chance has made us aware of its virtues, we will use it and the ring likewise, which I shall always wear on my finger.” When they had eaten all the genie had brought, Aladdin sold one of the silver plates, and so on till none was left. He then had recourse to the genie, who gave him another set of plates, and thus they lived for many years.

One day Aladdin heard an order from the Sultan proclaimed that everyone was to stay at home and close his shutters while the princess, his daughter, went to and from the bath. Aladdin was seized by a desire to see her face, which was very difficult, as she always went veiled. He hid himself behind the door of the bath, and peeped through a chink. The princess lifted her veil as she went in, and looked so beautiful that Aladdin fell in love with her at first sight. He went home so changed that his mother was frightened. He told her he loved the princess so deeply that he could not live without her, and meant to ask her in marriage of her father. His mother, on hearing this, burst out laughing, but Aladdin at last prevailed upon her to go before the Sultan and carry his request. She fetched a napkin and laid in it the magic fruits from the enchanted garden, which sparkled and shone like the most beautiful jewels. She took these with her to please the Sultan, and set out, trusting in the lamp. The grand-vizir and the lords of council had just gone in as she entered the hall and placed herself in front of the Sultan. He, however, took no notice of her. She went every day for a week, and stood in the same place.

When the council broke up on the sixth day the Sultan said to his vizir: "I see a certain woman in the audience-chamber every day carrying something in a napkin. Call her next time, that I may find out what she wants."

Next day, at a sign from the vizir, she went up to the foot of the throne, and remained kneeling till the Sultan said to her: "Rise, good woman, and tell me what you want."

She hesitated, so the Sultan sent away all but the vizir, and bade her speak freely, promising to forgive her beforehand for anything she might say. She then told him of her son's violent love for the princess.

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"I prayed him to forget her," she said, "but in vain; he threatened to do some desperate deed if I refused to go and ask your Majesty for the hand of the princess. Now I pray you to forgive not me alone, but my son Aladdin."

The Sultan asked her kindly what she had in the napkin, whereupon she unfolded the jewels and presented them.

He was thunderstruck, and turning to the vizir said: "What sayest thou? Ought I not to bestow the princess on one who values her at such a price?"

The vizir, who wanted her for his own son, begged the Sultan to withhold her for three months, in the course of which he hoped his son would contrive to make him a richer present. The Sultan granted this, and told Aladdin's mother that, though he consented to the marriage, she must not appear before him again for three months.

Aladdin waited patiently for nearly three months, but after two had elapsed his mother, going into the city to buy oil, found everyone rejoicing, and asked what was going on.

"Do you not know," was the answer, "that the son of the grand-vizir is to marry the Sultan's daughter to-night?"

Breathless, she ran and told Aladdin, who was overwhelmed at first, but presently bethought him of the lamp. He rubbed it, and the genie appeared, saying: "What is thy will?"

Aladdin replied: "The Sultan, as thou knowest, has broken his promise to me, and the vizir's son is to have the princess. My command is that to-night you bring hither the bride and bridegroom."

"Master, I obey," said the genie.

Aladdin then went to his chamber, where, sure enough at midnight the genie transported the bed containing the vizir's son and the princess.

"Take this new-married man," he said, "and put him outside in the cold, and return at daybreak."

Whereupon the genie took the vizir's son out of bed, leaving Aladdin with the princess.

"Fear nothing," Aladdin said to her; "you are my wife, promised to me by your unjust father, and no harm shall come to you."

The princess was too frightened to speak, and passed the most miserable night of her life, while Aladdin lay down beside her and slept soundly. At the appointed hour the

genie fetched in the shivering bridegroom, laid him in his place, and transported the bed back to the palace.

Presently the Sultan came to wish his daughter good-morning. The unhappy vizir's son jumped up and hid himself, while the princess would not say a word, and was very sorrowful.

The Sultan sent her mother to her, who said: "How comes it, child, that you will not speak to your father? What has happened?"

The princess sighed deeply, and at last told her mother how, during the night, the bed had been carried into some strange house, and what had passed there. Her mother did not believe her in the least, but bade her rise and consider it an idle dream.

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The following night exactly the same thing happened, and next morning, on the princess's refusing to speak, the Sultan threatened to cut off her head. She then confessed all, bidding him ask the vizir's son if it were not so. The Sultan told the vizir to ask his son, who owned the truth, adding that, dearly as he loved the princess, he had rather die than go through another such fearful night, and wished to be separated from her. His wish was granted, and there was an end of feasting and rejoicing.

When the three months were over, Aladdin sent his mother to remind the Sultan of his promise. She stood in the same place as before, and the Sultan, who had forgotten Aladdin, at once remembered him, and sent for her. On seeing her poverty the Sultan felt less inclined than ever to keep his word, and asked the vizir's advice, who counselled him to set so high a value on the princess that no man living could come up to it.

The Sultan then turned to Aladdin's mother, saying: "Good woman, a Sultan must remember his promises, and I will remember mine, but your son must first send me forty basins of gold brimful of jewels, carried by forty black slaves, led by as many white ones, splendidly dressed. Tell him that I await his answer." The mother of Aladdin bowed low and went home, thinking all was lost.

She gave Aladdin the message, adding: "He may wait long enough for your answer!"

"Not so long, mother, as you think," her son replied. "I would do a great deal more than that for the princess." He summoned the genie, and in a few moments the eighty slaves arrived, and filled up the small house and garden.

Aladdin made them set out to the palace, two and two, followed by his mother. They were so richly dressed, with such splendid jewels in their girdles, that everyone crowded to see them and the basins of gold they carried on their heads.

They entered the palace, and, after kneeling before the Sultan, stood in a half-circle round the throne with their arms crossed, while Aladdin's mother presented them to the Sultan.

He hesitated no longer, but said: "Good woman, return and tell your son that I wait for him with open arms."

She lost no time in telling Aladdin, bidding him make haste. But Aladdin first called the genie.

"I want a scented bath," he said, "a richly embroidered habit, a horse surpassing the Sultan's, and twenty slaves to attend me. Besides this, six slaves, beautifully dressed, to wait on my mother; and lastly, ten thousand pieces of gold in ten purses."



No sooner said than done. Aladdin mounted his horse and passed through the streets, the slaves strewing gold as they went. Those who had played with him in his childhood knew him not, he had grown so handsome.

When the Sultan saw him he came down from his throne, embraced him, and led him into a hall where a feast was spread, intending to marry him to the princess that very day.

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But Aladdin refused, saying, “I must build a palace fit for her,” and took his leave.

Once home he said to the genie: “Build me a palace of the finest marble, set with jasper, agate, and other precious stones. In the middle you shall build me a large hall with a dome, its four walls of massy gold and silver, each side having six windows, whose lattices, all except one, which is to be left unfinished, must be set with diamonds and rubies. There must be stables and horses and grooms and slaves; go and see about it!”

The palace was finished by next day, and the genie carried him there and showed him all his orders faithfully carried out, even to the laying of a velvet carpet from Aladdin’s palace to the Sultan’s. Aladdin’s mother then dressed herself carefully, and walked to the palace with her slaves, while he followed her on horseback. The Sultan sent musicians with trumpets and cymbals to meet them, so that the air resounded with music and cheers. She was taken to the princess, who saluted her and treated her with great honor. At night the princess said good-by to her father, and set out on the carpet for Aladdin’s palace, with his mother at her side, and followed by the hundred slaves. She was charmed at the sight of Aladdin, who ran to receive her.

“Princess,” he said, “blame your beauty for my boldness if I have displeased you.”

She told him that, having seen him, she willingly obeyed her father in this matter. After the wedding had taken place Aladdin led her into the hall, where a feast was spread, and she supped with him, after which they danced till midnight.

Next day Aladdin invited the Sultan to see the palace. On entering the hall with the four-and-twenty windows, with their rubies, diamonds, and emeralds, he cried:—

“It is a world’s wonder! There is only one thing that surprises me. Was it by accident that one window was left unfinished?”

“No, sir, by design,” returned Aladdin. “I wished your Majesty to have the glory of finishing this palace.”

The Sultan was pleased, and sent for the best jewellers in the city. He showed them the unfinished window, and bade them fit it up like the others.

“Sir,” replied their spokesman, “we cannot find jewels enough.”

The Sultan had his own fetched, which they soon used, but to no purpose, for in a month’s time the work was not half done. Aladdin, knowing that their task was vain, bade them undo their work and carry the jewels back, and the genie finished the window at his command. The Sultan was surprised to receive his jewels again and visited Aladdin, who showed him the window finished. The Sultan embraced him, the envious vizir meanwhile hinting that it was the work of enchantment.

Aladdin had won the hearts of the people by his gentle bearing. He was made captain of the Sultan's armies, and won several battles for him, but remained modest and courteous as before, and lived thus in peace and content for several years.

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But far away in Africa the magician remembered Aladdin, and by his magic arts discovered that Aladdin, instead of perishing miserably in the cave, had escaped, and had married a princess, with whom he was living in great honor and wealth. He knew that the poor tailor's son could only have accomplished this by means of the lamp, and travelled night and day till he reached the capital of China, bent on Aladdin's ruin. As he passed through the town he heard people talking everywhere about a marvellous palace.

"Forgive my ignorance," he asked, "what is this palace you speak of?"

"Have you not heard of Prince Aladdin's palace," was the reply, "the greatest wonder of the world? I will direct you if you have a mind to see it."

The magician thanked him who spoke, and having seen the palace knew that it had been raised by the genie of the lamp, and became half mad with rage. He determined to get hold of the lamp, and again plunge Aladdin into the deepest poverty.

Unluckily, Aladdin had gone a-hunting for eight days, which gave the magician plenty of time. He bought a dozen copper lamps, put them into a basket, and went to the palace, crying: "New lamps for old!" followed by a jeering crowd.

The princess, sitting in the hall of four-and-twenty windows, sent a slave to find out what the noise was about, who came back laughing, so that the princess scolded her.

"Madam," replied the slave, "who can help laughing to see an old fool offering to exchange fine new lamps for old ones?"

Another slave, hearing this, said: "There is an old one on the cornice there which he can have."

Now this was the magic lamp, which Aladdin had left there, as he could not take it out hunting with him. The princess, not knowing its value, laughingly bade the slave take it and make the exchange.

She went and said to the magician: "Give me a new lamp for this."

He snatched it and bade the slave take her choice, amid the jeers of the crowd. Little he cared, but left off crying his lamps, and went out of the city gates to a lonely place, where he remained till nightfall, when he pulled out the lamp and rubbed it. The genie appeared, and at the magician's command carried him, together with the palace and the princess in it, to a lonely place in Africa.

Next morning the Sultan looked out of the window towards Aladdin's palace and rubbed his eyes, for it was gone. He sent for the vizir, and asked what had become of the palace. The vizir looked out too, and was lost in astonishment. He again put it down to

enchantment, and this time the Sultan believed him, and sent thirty men on horseback to fetch Aladdin in chains. They met him riding home, bound him, and forced him to go with them on foot. The people, however, who loved him, followed, armed, to see that he came to no harm. He was carried before the Sultan, who ordered the executioner to cut off his

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head. The executioner made Aladdin kneel down, bandaged his eyes, and raised his scimitar to strike. At that instant the vizir, who saw that the crowd had forced their way into the courtyard and were scaling the walls to rescue Aladdin, called to the executioner to stay his hand. The people, indeed, looked so threatening that the Sultan gave way and ordered Aladdin to be unbound, and pardoned him in the sight of the crowd.

Aladdin now begged to know what he had done.

"False wretch!" said the Sultan, "come hither," and showed him from the window the place where his palace had stood.

Aladdin was so amazed that he could not say a word.

"Where is my palace and my daughter?" demanded the Sultan. "For the first I am not so deeply concerned, but my daughter I must have, and you must find her or lose your head."

Aladdin begged for forty days in which to find her, promising if he failed, to return and suffer death at the Sultan's pleasure. His prayer was granted, and he went forth sadly from the Sultan's presence. For three days he wandered about like a madman, asking everyone what had become of his palace, but they only laughed and pitied him. He came to the banks of a river, and knelt down to say his prayers before throwing himself in. In so doing he rubbed the magic ring he still wore.

The genie he had seen in the cave appeared, and asked his will.

"Save my life, genie," said Aladdin, "and bring my palace back."

"That is not in my power," said the genie; "I am only the Slave of the Ring; you must ask the Slave of the Lamp."

"Even so," said Aladdin, "but thou canst take me to the palace, and set me down under my dear wife's window." He at once found himself in Africa, under the window of the princess, and fell asleep out of sheer weariness.

He was awakened by the singing of the birds, and his heart was lighter. He saw plainly that all his misfortunes were owing to the loss of the lamp, and vainly wondered who had robbed him of it.

That morning the princess rose earlier than she had done since she had been carried into Africa by the magician, whose company she was forced to endure once a day. She, however, treated him so harshly that he dared not live there altogether. As she was

dressing, one of her women looked out and saw Aladdin. The princess ran and opened the window, and at the noise she made Aladdin looked up. She called to him to come to her, and great was the joy of these lovers at seeing each other again.

After he had kissed her Aladdin said: "I beg of you, Princess, in God's name, before we speak of anything else, for your own sake and mine, tell me what has become of an old lamp I left on the cornice in the hall of four-and-twenty windows, when I went a-hunting."

"Alas!" she said, "I am the innocent cause of our sorrows," and told him of the exchange of the lamp.

"Now I know," cried Aladdin, "that we have to thank the African magician for this! Where is the lamp?"

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"He carries it about with him," said the princess, "I know, for he pulled it out of his breast to show me. He wishes me to break my faith with you and marry him, saying that you were beheaded by my father's command. He is forever speaking ill of you, but I only reply by my tears. If I persist, I doubt not that he will use violence."

Aladdin comforted her, and left her for awhile. He changed clothes with the first person he met in the town, and having bought a certain powder returned to the princess, who let him in by a little side door.

"Put on your most beautiful dress," he said to her, "and receive the magician with smiles, leading him to believe that you have forgotten me. Invite him to sup with you, and say you wish to taste the wine of his country. He will go for some, and while he is gone I will tell you what to do."

She listened carefully to Aladdin, and when he left her arrayed herself gayly for the first time since she left China. She put on a girdle and head-dress of diamonds, and seeing in a glass that she looked more beautiful than ever, received the magician, saying to his great amazement: "I have made up my mind that Aladdin is dead, and that all my tears will not bring him back to me, so I am resolved to mourn no more, and have therefore invited you to sup with me; but I am tired of the wines of China, and would fain taste those of Africa."

The magician flew to his cellar, and the princess put the powder Aladdin had given her in her cup. When he returned she asked him to drink her health in the wine of Africa, handing him her cup in exchange for his as a sign she was reconciled to him.

Before drinking the magician made her a speech in praise of her beauty, but the princess cut him short, saying:—

"Let me drink first, and you shall say what you will afterwards." She set her cup to her lips and kept it there, while the magician drained his to the dregs and fell back lifeless.

The princess then opened the door to Aladdin, and flung her arms round his neck, but Aladdin put her away, bidding her to leave him, as he had more to do. He then went to the dead magician, took the lamp out of his vest, and bade the genie carry the palace and all in it back to China. This was done, and the princess in her chamber only felt two little shocks, and little thought she was at home again.

The Sultan, who was sitting in his closet, mourning for his lost daughter, happened to look up, and rubbed his eyes, for there stood the palace as before! He hastened thither, and Aladdin received him in the hall of the four-and-twenty windows, with the princess at his side. Aladdin told him what had happened, and showed him the dead body of the magician, that he might believe. A ten days' feast was proclaimed, and it seemed as if Aladdin might now live the rest of his life in peace; but it was not to be.

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The African magician had a younger brother, who was, if possible, more wicked and more cunning than himself. He travelled to China to avenge his brother's death, and went to visit a pious woman called Fatima, thinking she might be of use to him. He entered her cell and clapped a dagger to her breast, telling her to rise and do his bidding on pain of death. He changed clothes with her, colored his face like hers, put on her veil and murdered her, so that she might tell no tales. Then he went towards the palace of Aladdin, and all the people thinking he was the holy woman, gathered round him, kissing his hands and begging his blessing. When he got to the palace there was such a noise going on round him that the princess bade her slave look out of the window and ask what was the matter. The slave said it was the holy woman, curing people by her touch of their ailments, whereupon the princess, who had long desired to see Fatima, sent for her. On coming to the princess the magician offered up a prayer for her health and prosperity. When he had done the princess made him sit by her, and begged him to stay with her always. The false Fatima, who wished for nothing better, consented, but kept his veil down for fear of discovery. The princess showed him the hall, and asked him what he thought of it.

"It is truly beautiful," said the false Fatima. "In my mind it wants but one thing."

"And what is that?" said the princess.

"If only a roc's egg," replied he, "were hung up from the middle of this dome, it would be the wonder of the world."

After this the princess could think of nothing but a roc's egg, and when Aladdin returned from hunting he found her in a very ill humor. He begged to know what was amiss, and she told him that all her pleasure in the hall was spoilt for the want of a roc's egg hanging from the dome.

"If that is all," replied Aladdin, "you shall soon be happy."

He left her and rubbed the lamp, and when the genie appeared commanded him to bring a roc's egg. The genie gave such a loud and terrible shriek that the hall shook.

"Wretch!" he said, "is it not enough that I have done everything for you, but you must command me to bring my master and hang him up in the midst of this dome? You and your wife and your palace deserve to be burnt to ashes; but this request does not come from you, but from the brother of the African magician whom you destroyed. He is now in your palace disguised as the holy woman—whom he murdered. He it was who put that wish into your wife's head. Take care of yourself, for he means to kill you." So saying the genie disappeared.

Aladdin went back to the princess, saying his head ached, and requesting that the holy Fatima should be fetched to lay her hands on it. But when the magician came near, Aladdin, seizing his dagger, pierced him to the heart.

“What have you done?” cried the princess. “You have killed the holy woman!”

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“Not so,” replied Aladdin, “but a wicked magician,” and told her of how she had been deceived.

After this Aladdin and his wife lived in peace. He succeeded the Sultan when he died, and reigned for many years, leaving behind him a long line of kings.