

THE NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS

[11]

[continues]

“The Tale of Nur Al-Din Ali and His Son Badr Al-Din Hasan”

Know, O Commander of the Faithful, that in times of yore the land of Egypt was ruled by a Sultan endowed with justice and generosity, one who loved the pious poor and companied with the Ulema and learned men. And he had a Vizier, a wise and an experienced, well versed in affairs and in the art of government. This Minister, who was a very old man, had two sons, as they were two moons. Never man saw the like of them for beauty and grace— the elder called Shams al-Din Mohammed and the younger Nur al-Din Ali. But the younger excelled the elder in seemliness and pleasing semblance, so that folk heard his fame in far countries and men flocked to Egypt for the purpose of seeing him. In course of time their father, the Vizier, died and was deeply regretted and mourned by the Sultan, who sent for his two sons and, investing them with dresses of honor, said to them, “Let not your hearts be troubled, for ye shall stand in your father’s stead and be joint Ministers of Egypt.” At this they rejoiced and kissed the ground before him and performed the ceremonial mourning for their father during a full month, after which time they entered upon the Vizierate and the power passed into their hands as it had been in the hands of their father, each doing duty for a week at a time. They lived under the same

roof and their word was one, and whenever the Sultan desired to travel they took it by turns to be in attendance on him. It fortuned one night that the Sultan purposed setting out on a journey next morning, and the elder, whose turn it was to accompany him, was sitting conversing with his brother and said to him: "O my brother, it is my wish that we both marry, I and thou, two sisters, and go in to our wives on one and the same night." "Do, O my brother, as thou desirest," the younger replied, "for right is thy recking and surely I will comply with thee in whatso thou sayest." So they agreed upon this, and quoth Shams al-Din: "If the Lord decree that we marry two damsels and go in to them on the same night, and they shall conceive on their bride nights and bear children to us on the same day, and by the Lord's will thy wife bear thee a son and my wife bear me a daughter, let us wed them either to other, for they will be cousins." Quoth Nur al-Din: "O my brother, Shams al-Din, what dower wilt thou require from my son for thy daughter?" Quoth Shams al-Din: "I will take three thousand dinars and three pleasure gardens and three farms, and it would not be seemly that the youth make contract for less than this." When Nur al-Din heard such demand, he said: "What manner of dower is this thou wouldest impose upon my son? Wottest thou not that we are brothers and both by the Lord's grace Viziers and equal in office? It behooveth thee to offer thy daughter to my son without marriage settlement, or, if one need be, it should represent a mere nominal value by way of show to the world. For thou knowest that the masculine is worthier than the feminine, and my son is a male and our memory will be preserved by him, not by thy daughter." "But what," said Shams al-Din, "is she to have?" And Nur al-Din continued, "Through her we shall not be remembered among the emirs of the earth, but I see thou wouldest do with me according to the saying, 'An thou wouldst bluff of a buyer, ask him high price and higher,' or as did a man who they say went to a friend and

asked something of him being in necessity and was answered, 'Bismillah, in the name of the Lord, I will do all what thou requirest, but come tomorrow!' Whereupon the other replied in this verse: 'When he who is asked a favor saith "Tomorrow," The wise man wots 'tis vain to beg or borrow.' Quoth Shams al-Din: "Basta! I see thee fail in respect to me by making thy son of more account than my daughter, and 'tis plain that thine understanding is of the meanest and that thou lackest manners. Thou remindest me of thy partnership in the Vizierate, when I admitted thee to share with me only in pity for thee, and not wishing to mortify thee, and that thou mightest help me as a manner of assistant. But since thou talkest on this wise, by the Lord, I will never marry my daughter to thy son— no, not for her weight in gold!" When Nur al-Din heard his brother's words, he waxed wroth and said: "And I too, I will never, never marry my son to thy daughter— no, not to keep from my lips the cup of death." Shams al-Din replied: "I would not accept him as a husband for her, and he is not worth a paring of her nail. Were I not about to travel, I would make an example of thee. However, when I return thou shalt see, and I will show thee, how I can assert my dignity and vindicate my honor. But the Lord doeth whatso He willeth." When Nur al-Din heard this speech from his brother, he was filled with fury and lost his wits for rage, but he hid what he felt and held his peace; and each of the brothers passed the night in a place far apart, wild with wrath against the other. As soon as morning dawned the Sultan fared forth in state and crossed over from Cairo to Jizah and made for the Pyramids, accompanied by the Vizier Shams al-Din, whose turn of duty it was, whilst his brother Nur al-Din, who passed the night in sore rage, rose with the light and prayed the dawn prayer. Then he betook himself to his treasury and, taking a small pair of saddlebags, filled them with gold. And he called to mind his brother's threats and the contempt wherewith he had

treated him, and he repeated these couplets: "Travel! And thou shalt find new friends for old ones left behind. Toil! For the sweets of human life by toil and moil are found. The stay-at-home no honor wins, nor aught attains but want, So leave thy place of birth and wander all the world around! I've seen, and very oft I've seen, how standing water stinks, And only flowing sweetens it and trotting makes it sound. And were the moon forever full and ne'er to wax or wane, Man would not strain his watchful eyes to see its gladsome round. Except the lion leave his lair, he ne'er would fell his game, Except the arrow leave the bow, ne'er had it reached its bound. Gold dust is dust the while it lies untraveled in the mine, And aloes wood mere fuel is upon its native ground. And gold shall win his highest worth when from his goal ungoaled, And aloes sent to foreign parts grows costlier than gold." When he ended his verse, he bade one of his pages saddle him his Nubian mare mule with her padded selle. Now she was a dapple-gray, with ears like reed pens and legs like columns and a back high and strong as a dome builded on pillars. Her saddle was of gold cloth and her stirrups of Indian steel, and her housing of Ispahan velvet. She had trappings which would serve the Chosroes, and she was like a bride adorned for her wedding night. Moreover, he bade lay on her back a piece of silk for a seat, and a prayer carpet under which were his saddlebags. When this was done, he said to his pages and slaves: "I purpose going forth a-pleasuring outside the city on the road to Kalyub town, and I shall be three nights abroad, so let none of you follow me, for there is something straiteneth my breast." Then he mounted the mule in haste and, taking with him some provaunt for the way, set out from Cairo and faced the open and uncultivated country lying around it. About noontide he entered Bilbays city, where he dismounted and stayed awhile to rest himself and his mule and ate some of his victual. He bought at Bilbays all he wanted for himself and forage for his mule and then

fared on the way of the waste. Toward nightfall he entered a town called Sa'adiyah, where he alighted and took out somewhat of his viaticum and ate. Then he spread his strip of silk on the sand and set the saddlebags under his head and slept in the open air, for he was still overcome with anger. When morning dawned he mounted and rode onward till he reached the Holy City, Jerusalem, and thence he made Aleppo, where he dismounted at one of the caravanserais and abode three days to rest himself and the mule and to smell the air. Then, being determined to travel afar and the Lord having written safety in his fate, he set out again, mending without wotting whither he was going. And having fallen in with certain couriers, he stinted not traveling till he had reached Bassorah city, albeit he knew not what the place was. It was dark night when he alighted at the khan, so he spread out his prayer carpet and took down the saddlebags from the back of the mule and gave her with her furniture in charge of the doorkeeper that he might walk her about. The man took her and did as he was bid. Now it so happened that the Vizier of Bassorah, a man shot in years, was sitting at the lattice window of his palace opposite the khan and he saw the porter walking the mule up and down. He was struck by her trappings of price, and thought her a nice beast fit for the riding of Viziers or even of royalties, and the more he looked, the more was he perplexed, till at last he said to one of his pages, "Bring hither yon doorkeeper." The page went and returned to the Vizier with the porter, who kissed the ground between his hands, and the Minister asked him, "Who is the owner of yonder mule, and what manner of man is he?" and he answered, "O my lord, the owner of this mule is a comely young man of pleasant manners, withal grave and dignified, and doubtless one of the sons of the merchants." When the Vizier heard the doorkeeper's words he arose forthright and, mounting his horse, rode to the khan and went in to Nur al-Din, who, seeing the Minister making toward him,

rose to his feet and advanced to meet him and saluted him. The Vizier welcomed him to Bassorah and dismounting, embraced him and made him sit down by his side, and said, "O my son, whence comest thou, and what dost thou seek?" "O my lord," Nur al-Din replied, "I have come from Cairo city, of which my father was whilom Vizier, but he hath been removed to the grace of the Lord." And he informed him of all that had befallen him from beginning to end, adding, "I am resolved never to return home before I have seen all the cities and countries of the world." When the Vizier heard this, he said to him: "O my son, hearken not to the voice of passion lest it cast thee into the pit, for indeed many regions be waste places, and I fear for thee the turns of Time." Then he let load the saddlebags and the silk and prayer carpets on the mule and carried Nur al-Din to his own house, where he lodged him in a pleasant place and entreated him honorably and made much of him, for he inclined to love him with exceeding love. After a while he said to him: "O my son, here am I left a man in years and have no male children, but the Lord hath blessed me with a daughter who eveneth thee in beauty, and I have rejected all her many suitors, men of rank and substance. But affection for thee hath entered into my heart. Say me, then, wilt thou be to her a husband? If thou accept this, I will go with thee to the Sultan of Bassorah and will tell him that thou art my nephew, the son of my brother, and bring thee to be appointed Vizier in my place that I may keep the house, for, by the Lord, O my son, I am stricken in years and aweary." When Nur al-Din heard the Vizier's words, he bowed his head in modesty and said, "To hear is to obey!" At this the Vizier rejoiced and bade his servants prepare a feast and decorate the great assembly hall wherein they were wont to celebrate the marriages of emirs and grandees. Then he assembled his friends and the notables of the reign and the merchants of Bassorah, and when all stood before him he said to them: "I had a brother who was

Vizier in the land of Egypt, and the Lord Almighty blessed him with two sons, whilst to me, as well ye wot, He hath given a daughter. My brother charged me to marry my daughter to one of his sons, whereto I assented, and when my daughter was of age to marry, he sent me one of his sons, the young man now present, to whom I purpose marrying her, drawing up the contract and celebrating the night of unveiling with due ceremony. For he is nearer and dearer to me than a stranger, and after the wedding, if he please he shall abide with me, or if he desire to travel, I will forward him and his wife to his father's home." Hereat one and all replied, "Right is thy recking," and they looked at the bridegroom and were pleased with him. So the Vizier sent for the kazi and legal witnesses and they wrote out the marriage contract, after which the slaves perfumed the guests with incense, and served them with sherbet of sugar and sprinkled rose-water on them, and all went their ways. Then the Vizier bade his servants take Nur al-Din to the hammam baths and sent him a suit of the best of his own especial raiment, and napkins and towelry and bowls and perfume-burners and all else that was required. And after the bath, when he came out and donned the dress, he was even as the full moon on the fourteenth night, and he mounted his mule and stayed not till he reached the Vizier's palace. There he dismounted and went in to the Minister and kissed his hands, and the Vizier bade him welcome, saying: "Arise and go in to thy wife this night, and on the morrow I will carry thee to the Sultan, and pray the Lord bless thee with all manner of weal." So Nur al-Din left him and went in to his wife the Vizier's daughter. Thus far concerning him, but as regards his elder brother, Shams al-Din, he was absent with the Sultan a long time, and when he returned from his journey he found not his brother, and he asked of his servants and slaves, who answered: "On the day of thy departure with the Sultan, thy brother mounted his mule fully caparisoned as for state

procession saying, 'I am going towards Kalyub town, and I shall be absent one day or at most two days, for my breast is straitened, and let none of you follow me.' Then he fared forth, and from that time to this we have heard no tidings of him." Shams al-Din was greatly troubled at the sudden disappearance of his brother and grieved with exceeding grief at the loss, and said to himself: "This is only because I chided and upbraided him the night before my departure with the Sultan. Haply his feelings were hurt, and he fared forth a-traveling, but I must send after him." Then he went in to the Sultan and acquainted him with what had happened and wrote letters and dispatches, which he sent by running footmen to his deputies in every province. But during the twenty days of his brother's absence Nur al-Din had traveled far and had reached Bassorah, so after diligent search the messengers failed to come at any news of him and returned. Thereupon Shams al-Din despaired of finding his brother and said: "Indeed I went beyond all bounds in what I said to him with reference to the marriage of our children. Would that I had not done so! This all cometh of my lack of wit and want of caution." Soon after this he sought in marriage the daughter of a Cairene merchant, and drew up the marriage contract, and went in to her. And it so chanced that on the very same night when Shams al-Din went in to his wife, Nur al-Din also went in to his wife, the daughter of the Vizier of Bassorah, this being in accordance with the will of Almighty the Lord, that He might deal the decrees of Destiny to His creatures. Furthermore, it was as the two brothers had said, for their two wives became pregnant by them on the same night and both were brought to bed on the same day, the wife of Shams al-Din, Vizier of Egypt, of a daughter, never in Cairo was seen a fairer, and the wife of Nur al-Din of a son, none more beautiful was ever seen in his time, as one of the poets said concerning the like of him: That jetty hair, that glossy brow, My slender waisted youth, of thine, Can

darkness round creation throw, Or make it brightly shine.
The dusky mole that faintly shows Upon his cheek, ah!
blame it not. The tulip flower never blows Undarkened by
its spot. They named the boy Badr al-Din Hasan and his
grandfather, the Vizier of Bassorah, rejoiced in him, and on
the seventh day after his birth made entertainments and
spread banquets which would befit the birth of kings' sons
and heirs. Then he took Nur al-Din and went up with him to
the Sultan, and his son-in-law, when he came before the
presence of the King, kissed the ground between his hands
and repeated these verses, for he was ready of speech, firm
of sprite and good in heart, as he was goodly in form: "The
world's best joys long be thy lot, my lord! And last while
darkness and the dawn o'erlap. O thou who makest, when
we greet thy gifts, The world to dance and Time his palms
to clap." Then the Sultan rose up to honor them and,
thanking Nur al-Din for his fine compliment, asked the
Vizier, "Who may be this young man?" And the Minister
answered, "This is my brother's son," and related his tale
from first to last. Quoth the Sultan, "And how comes he to
be thy nephew and we have never heard speak of him?"
Quoth the Minister: "O our lord the Sultan, I had a brother
who was Vizier in the land of Egypt and he died, leaving
two sons, whereof the elder hath taken his father's place
and the younger, whom thou seest, came to me. I had
sworn I would not marry my daughter to any but him, so
when he came I married him to her. Now he is young and I
am old, my hearing is dulled and my judgment is easily
fooled, wherefore I would solicit our lord the Sultan to set
him in my stead, for he is my brother's son and my
daughter's husband, and he is fit for the Vizierate, being a
man of good counsel and ready contrivance." The Sultan
looked at Nur al-Din and liked him, so he stablished him in
office as the Vizier had requested and formally appointed
him, presenting him with a splendid dress of honor and a
she-mule from his private stud, and assigning to him solde,

stipends, and supplies. Nur al-Din kissed the Sultan's hand and went home, he and his father-in-law, joying with exceeding joy and saying, "All this followeth on the heels of the boy Hasan's birth!" Next day he presented himself before the King and, kissing the ground, began repeating: "Grow thy weal and thy welfare day by day, And thy luck prevail o'er the envier's spite, And ne'er cease thy days to be white as day, And thy foeman's day to be black as night!" The Sultan bade him be seated on the Vizier's seat, so he sat down and applied himself to the business of his office and went into the cases of the lieges and their suits, as is the wont of Ministers, while the Sultan watched him and wondered at his wit and good sense, judgment and insight. Wherefor he loved him and took him into intimacy. When the Divan was dismissed, Nur al-Din returned to his house and related what had passed to his father-in-law, who rejoiced. And thenceforward Nur al-Din ceased not so to administer the Vizierate that the Sultan would not be parted from him night or day, and increased his stipends and supplies till his means were ample and he became the owner of ships that made trading voyages at his command, as well as of Mamelukes and blackamoor slaves. And he laid out many estates and set up Persian wheels and planted gardens. When his son Hasan was four years of age, the old Vizier deceased, and he made for his father-in-law a sumptuous funeral ceremony ere he was laid in the dust. Then he occupied himself with the education of this son, and when the boy waxed strong and came to the age of seven, he brought him a fakir, a doctor of law and religion, to teach him in his own house, and charged him to give him a good education and instruct him in politeness and good manners. So the tutor made the boy read and retain all varieties of useful knowledge, after he had spent some years in learning the Koran by heart, and he ceased not to grow in beauty and stature and symmetry. The professor brought him up in his father's palace, teaching him

reading, writing and ciphering, theology, and belles lettres. His grandfather, the old Vizier, had bequeathed to him the whole of his property when he was but four years of age. Now during all the time of his earliest youth he had never left the house till on a certain day his father, the Vizier Nur al-Din, clad him in his best clothes and, mounting him on a she-mule of the finest, went up with him to the Sultan. The King gazed at Badr al-Din Hasan and marveled at his comeliness and loved him. As for the city folk, when he first passed before them with his father, they marveled at his exceeding beauty and sat down on the road expecting his return, that they might look their fill on his beauty and loveliness and symmetry and perfect grace. And they blessed him aloud as he passed and called upon Almighty the Lord to bless him. The Sultan entreated the lad with especial favor and said to his father, "O Vizier, thou must needs bring him daily to my presence." Whereupon he replied, "I hear and I obey." Then the Vizier returned home with his son and ceased not to carry him to court till he reached the age of twenty. At that time the Minister sickened and, sending for Badr al-Din Hasan, said to him: "Know, O my son, that the world of the present is but a house of mortality, while that the future is a house of eternity. I wish, before I die, to bequeath thee certain charges, and do thou take heed of what I say and incline thy heart to my words." Then he gave him his last instructions as to the properest way of dealing with his neighbors and the due management of his affairs, after which he called to mind his brother and his home and his native land and wept over his separation from those he had first loved. Then he wiped away his tears and, turning to his son, said to him: "Before I proceed, O my son, to my last charges and injunctions, know that I have a brother, and thou hast an uncle, Shams al-Din called, the Vizier of Cairo, with whom I parted, leaving him against his will. Now take thee a sheet of paper and write upon it whatso I say to

thee." Badr al-Din took a fair leaf and set about doing his father's bidding, and he wrote thereon a full account of what had happened to his sire first and last: the dates of his arrival at Bassorah and of his forgathering with the Vizier, of his marriage, of his going in to the Minister's daughter, and of the birth of his son— brief, his life of forty years from the day of his dispute with his brother, adding the words: "And this is written at my dictation, and may Almighty the Lord be with him when I am gone!" Then he folded the paper and sealed it and said: "O Hasan, O my son, keep this paper with all care, for it will enable thee to establish thine origin and rank and lineage, and if anything contrary befall thee, set out for Cairo and ask for thine uncle and show him this paper, and say to him that I died a stranger far from mine own people and full of yearning to see him and them." So Badr al-Din Hasan took the document and folded it and, wrapping it up in a piece of waxed cloth, sewed it like a talisman between the inner and outer cloth of his skullcap and wound his light turban round it. And he fell to weeping over his father and at parting with him, and he but a boy. Then Nur al-Din lapsed into a swoon, the forerunner of death, but presently recovering himself, he said: "O Hasan, O my son, I will now bequeath to thee five last behests. The FIRST BEHEST is: Be overintimate with none, nor frequent any, nor be familiar with any. So shalt thou be safe from his mischief, for security lieth in seclusion of thought and a certain retirement from the society of thy fellows, and I have heard it said by a poet: "In this world there is none thou mayst count upon To befriend thy case in the nick of need. So live for thyself nursing hope of none. Such counsel I give thee— now, take heed! "The SECOND BEHEST is, O my son: Deal harshly with none lest fortune with thee deal hardly, for the fortune of this world is one day with thee and another day against thee, and all worldly goods are but a loan to be repaid. And I have heard a poet say: "Take

thought nor haste to will the thing thou wilt, Have ruth on man, for ruth thou mayst require. No hand is there but the Lord's hand is higher, No tyrant but shall rue worse tyrant's ire! "The THIRD BEHEST is: Learn to be silent in society and let thine own faults distract thine attention from the faults of other men, for it is said, 'In silence dwelleth safety,' and thereon I have heard the lines that tell us:"Reserve's a jewel, Silence safety is. Whenas thou speakest, many a word withhold, For an of Silence thou repent thee once, Of speech thou shalt repent times manifold. "The FOURTH BEHEST, O My son, is: Beware of winebibbing, for wine is the head of all frowardness and a fine solvent of human wits. So shun, and again I say shun, mixing strong liquor, for I have heard a poet say:"From wine I turn and whoso wine cups swill, Becoming one of those who deem it ill. Wine driveth man to miss salvation way, And opes the gateway wide to sins that kill. "The FIFTH BEHEST, O My Son, is: Keep thy wealth and it will keep thee, guard thy money and it will guard thee, and waste not thy substance lest haply thou come to want and must fare a-begging from the meanest of mankind. Save thy dirhams and deem them the sovereignest salve for the wounds of the world. And here again I have heard that one of the poets said:"When fails my wealth no friend will deign befriend. When wealth abounds all friends their friendship tender. How many friends lent aid my wealth to spend, But friends to lack of wealth no friendship render." On this wise Nur al-Din ceased not to counsel his son Badr al-Din Hasan till his hour came and, sighing one sobbing sigh, his life went forth. Then the voice of mourning and keening rose high in his house and the Sultan and all the grandees grieved for him and buried him. But his son ceased not lamenting his loss for two months, during which he never mounted horse, nor attended the Divan, nor presented himself before the Sultan. At last the King, being wroth with him, stablished in his stead one of his chamberlains

and made him Vizier, giving orders to seize and set seals on all Nur al-Din's houses and goods and domains. So the new Vizier went forth with a mighty posse of chamberlains and people of the Divan, and watchmen and a host of idlers, to do this and to seize Badr al-Din Hasan and carry him before the King, who would deal with him as he deemed fit. Now there was among the crowd of followers a Mameluke of the deceased Vizier who, when he had heard this order, urged his horse and rode at full speed to the house of Badr al-Din Hasan, for he could not endure to see the ruin of his old master's son. He found him sitting at the gate with head hung down and sorrowing, as was his wont, for the loss of his father, so he dismounted and, kissing his hand, said to him, "O my lord and son of my lord, haste ere ruin come and lay waste!" When Hasan heard this he trembled and asked, "What may be the matter?" and the man answered: "The Sultan is angered with thee and hath issued a warrant against thee, and evil cometh hard upon my track, so flee with thy life!" At these words Hasan's heart flamed with the fire of bale, and his rose-red cheek turned pale, and he said to the Mameluke: "O my brother, is there time for me to go in and get some worldly gear which may stand me in stead during my strangerhood?" But the slave replied, "O my lord, up at once and save thyself and leave this house while it is yet time." And he quoted these lines: "Escape with thy life, if oppression betide thee, And let the house tell of its builder's fate! Country for country thou'lt find, if thou seek it, Life for life never, early or late. It is strange men should dwell in the house of abjection When the plain of God's earth is so wide and so great!" At these words of the Mameluke, Badr al-Din covered his head with the skirt of his garment and went forth on foot till he stood outside of the city, where he heard folk saying: "The Sultan hath sent his new Vizier to the house of the old Vizier, now no more, to seal his property and seize his son Badr al-Din Hasan and take him before the presence, that he may put

him to death." And all cried, "Alas for his beauty and his loveliness!" When he heard this, he fled forth at hazard, knowing not whither he was going, and gave not over hurrying onward till Destiny drove him to his father's tomb. So he entered the cemetery and, threading his way through the graves, at last he reached the sepulcher, where he sat down and let fall from his head the skirt of his long robe, which was made of brocade with a gold-embroidered hem whereon were worked these couplets: O thou whose forehead, like the radiant East, Tells of the stars of Heaven and bounteous dews, Endure thine honor to the latest day, And Time thy growth of glory ne'er refuse! While he was sitting by his father's tomb, behold, there came to him a Talmudist as he were a shroff, a money-changer, with a pair of saddlebags containing much gold, who accosted him and kissed his hand, saying: "Whither bound, O my lord? 'Tis late in the day, and thou art clad but lightly, and I read signs of trouble in thy face." "I was sleeping within this very hour," answered Hasan, "when my father appeared to me and chid me for not having visited his tomb. So I awoke trembling and came hither forthright lest the day should go by without my visiting him, which would have been grievous to me." "O my lord," rejoined the Talmudist, "thy father had many merchantmen at sea, and as some of them are now due, it is my wish to buy of thee the cargo of the first ship that cometh into port with this thousand dinars of gold." "I consent," quoth Hasan, whereupon the Talmudist took out a bag full of gold and counted out a thousand sequins, which he gave to Hasan, the son of the Vizier, saying, "Write me a letter of sale and seal it." So Hasan took a pen and paper and wrote these words in duplicate: "The writer, Hasan Badr al-Din, son of Vizier Nur al-Din, hath sold to Isaac the Talmudist all the cargo of the first of his father's ships which cometh into port, for a thousand dinars, and he hath received the price in advance." And after he had taken one copy, the Talmudist put it into his

pouch and went away, but Hasan fell a-weeping as he thought of the dignity and prosperity which had erst been his and night came upon him. So he leant his head against his father's grave and sleep overcame him— glory to Him who sleepeth not! He ceased not slumbering till the moon rose, when his head slipped from off the tomb and he lay on his back, with limbs outstretched, his face shining bright in the moonlight. Now the cemetery was haunted day and night by Jinns who were of the True Believers, and presently came out a Jinniyah who, seeing Hasan asleep, marveled at his beauty and loveliness and cried: "Glory to God! This youth can be none other than one of the Wuldan of Paradise." Then she flew firmamentward to circle it, as was her custom, and met an Giant-Demon on the wing, who saluted her, and said to him, "Whence comest thou?" "From Cairo," he replied. "Wilt thou come with me and look upon the beauty of a youth who sleepeth in yonder burial place?" she asked, and he answered, "I will." So they flew till they lighted at the tomb and she showed him the youth and said, "Now diddest thou ever in thy born days see aught like this?" The Giant-Demon looked upon him and exclaimed: "Praise be to Him that hath no equal! But, O my sister, shall I tell thee what I have seen this day?" Asked she, "What is that?" and he answered: "I have seen the counterpart of this youth in the land of Egypt. She is the daughter of the Vizier Shams al-Din and she is a model of beauty and loveliness, of fairest favor and formous form, and dight with symmetry and perfect grace. When she had reached the age of nineteen, the Sultan of Egypt heard of her and, sending for the Vizier her father, said to him, 'Hear me, O Vizier. It hath reached mine ear that thou hast a daughter, and I wish to demand her of thee in marriage.' The Vizier replied:" "O our lord the Sultan, deign accept my excuses and take compassion on my sorrows, for thou knowest that my brother, who was partner with me in the Vizierate, disappeared from amongst us many years ago

and we wot not where he is. Now the cause of his departure was that one night, as we were sitting together and talking of wives and children to come, we had words on the matter and he went off in high dudgeon. But I swore that I would marry my daughter to none save to the son of my brother on the day her mother gave her birth, which was nigh upon nineteen years ago. I have lately heard that my brother died at Bassorah, where he had married the daughter of the Vizier and that she bare him a son, and I will not marry my daughter but to him in honor of my brother's memory. I recorded the date of my marriage and the conception of my wife and the birth of my daughter, and from her horoscope I find that her name is conjoined with that of her cousin, and there are damsels in foison for our lord the Sultan.'"The King, hearing his Minister's answer and refusal, waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and cried: 'When the like of me asketh a girl in marriage of the like of thee, he conferreth an honor, and thou rejectest me and putteth me off with cold excuses! Now, by the life of my head, I will marry her to the meanest of my men in spite of the nose of thee!' There was in the palace a horse groom which was a Gobbo with a bunch to his breast and a hunch to his back, and the Sultan sent for him and married him to the daughter of the Vizier, lief or loth, and hath ordered a pompous marriage procession for him and that he go in to his bride this very night. I have not just flown hither from Cairo, where I left the hunchback at the door of the hammam bath amidst the Sultan's white slaves, who were waving lighted flambeaux about him. As for the Minister's daughter, she sitteth among her nurses and tirewomen, weeping and wailing, for they have forbidden her father to come near her. Never have I seen, O my sister, more hideous being than this hunchback, whilst the young lady is the likest of all folk to this young man, albeit even fairer than he." At this the Jinniyah cried at him: "Thou liest! This youth is handsomer than anyone of his day." The Giant-

Demon gave her the he again, adding: "By the Lord, O my sister, the damsel I speak of is fairer than this. Yet none but he deserveth her, for they resemble each other like brother and sister, or at least cousins. And, wellaway, how she is wasted upon that hunchback!" Then said she, "O my brother, let us get under him and lift him up and carry him to Cairo, that we may compare him with the damsel of whom thou speakest and so determine whether of the twain is the fairer." "To hear is to obey!" replied he. "Thou speakest to the point, nor is there a righter recking than this of thine, and I myself will carry him." So he raised him from the ground and flew with him like a bird soaring in upper air, the Giant-Demonah keeping close by his side at equal speed, till he alighted with him in the city of Cairo and set him down on a stone bench and woke him up. He roused himself and finding that he was no longer at his father's tomb in Bassorah city, he looked right and left and saw that he was in a strange place, and he would have cried out, but the Giant-Demon gave him a cuff which persuaded him to keep silence. Then he brought him rich raiment and clothed him therein and, giving him a lighted flambeau, said: "Know that I have brought thee hither meaning to do thee a good turn for the love of the Lord. So take this torch and mingle with the people at the hammam door and walk on with them without stopping till thou reach the house of the wedding festival. Then go boldly forward and enter the great saloon, and fear none, but take thy stand at the right hand of the hunchback bridegroom. And as often as any of the nurses and tirewomen and singing girls come up to thee, put thy hand into thy pocket, which thou wilt find filled with gold. Take it out and throw to them and spare not, for as often as thou thrustest fingers in pouch, thou shalt find it full of coin. Give largess by handfuls and fear nothing, but set thy trust upon Him who created thee, for this is not by thine own strength but by that of the Lord Almighty, that His decrees may take effect

upon His creatures." When Badr al-Din Hasan heard these words from the Giant-Demon, he said to himself, "Would Heaven I knew what all this means and what is the cause of such kindness!" However, he mingled with the people and, lighting his flambeau, moved on with the bridal procession till he came to the bath, where he found the hunchback already on horseback. Then he pushed his way in among the crowd, a veritable beauty of a man in the finest apparel, wearing tarboosh and turban and a long-sleeved robe purpled with gold. And as often as the singing women stopped for the people to give him largess, he thrust his hand into his pocket and, finding it full of gold, took out a handful and threw it on the tambourine till he had filled it with gold pieces for the music girls and the tirewomen. The singers were amazed by his bounty and the people marveled at his beauty and loveliness and the splendor of his dress. He ceased not to do thus till he reached the mansion of the Vizier (who was his uncle), where the chamberlains drove back the people and forbade them to go forward, but the singing girls and the tirewomen said, "By the Lord, we will not enter unless this young man enter with us, for he hath given us length o' life with his largess, and we will not display the bride unless he be present." Therewith they carried him into the bridal hall and made him sit down, defying the evil glances of the hunchbacked bridegroom. The wives of the emirs and Viziers and chamberlains and courtiers all stood in double line, each holding a massy cierge ready lighted. All wore thin face veils, and the two rows right and left extended from the bride's throne to the head of the hall adjoining the chamber whence she was to come forth. When the ladies saw Badr al-Din Hasan and noted his beauty and loveliness and his face that shone like the new moon, their hearts inclined to him and the singing girls said to all that were present, "Know that this beauty crossed our hands with naught but red gold, so be not chary to do him womanly service and

comply with all he says, no matter what he ask." So all the women crowded round Hasan with their torches and gazed on his loveliness and envied him his beauty, and one and all would gladly have lain on his bosom an hour, or rather a year. Their hearts were so troubled that they let fall their veils from before their faces and said, "Happy she who belongeth to this youth or to whom he belongeth!" And they called down curses on the crooked groom and on him who was the cause of his marriage to the girl beauty, and as often as they blessed Badr al-Din Hasan they damned the hunchback, saying, "Verily this youth and none else deserveth our bride. Ah, wellaway for such a lovely one with this hideous Quasimodo! the Lord's curse light on his head and on the Sultan who commanded the marriage!" Then the singing girls beat their tabrets and lulliloed with joy, announcing the appearing of the bride, and the Vizier's daughter came in surrounded by her tirewomen, who had made her goodly to look upon. For they had perfumed her and incensed her and adorned her hair, and they had robed her in raiment and ornaments befitting the mighty Chosroes kings. The most notable part of her dress was a loose robe worn over her other garments. It was diapered in red gold with figures of wild beasts, and birds whose eyes and beaks were of gems and claws of red rubies and green beryl. And her neck was graced with a necklace of Yamani work, worth thousands of gold pieces, whose bezels were great round jewels of sorts, the like of which was never owned by Kaysar or by Tobba king. And the bride was as the full moon when at fullest on fourteenth night, and as she paced into the hall she was like one of the houris of Heaven— praise be to Him who created her in such splendor of beauty! The ladies encompassed her as the white contains the black of the eye, they clustering like stars whilst she shone amongst them like the moon when it eats up the clouds. Now Badr al-Din Hasan of Bassorah was sitting in full gaze of the folk when the bride came forward

with her graceful swaying and swimming gait, and her hunchbacked bridegroom stood up to meet and receive her. She, however, turned away from the wight and walked forward till she stood before her cousin Hasan, the son of her uncle. Whereat the people laughed. But when the wedding guests saw her thus attracted toward Badr al-Din, they made a mighty clamor and the singing women shouted their loudest. Whereupon he put his hand into his pocket and, pulling out a handful of gold, cast it into their tambourines, and the girls rejoiced and said, "Could we will our wish, this bride were thine!" At this he smiled and the folk came round him, flambeaux in hand, like the eyeball round the pupil, while the Gobbo bridegroom was left sitting alone much like a tailless baboon. For every time they lighted a candle for him it went out willy-nilly, so he was left in darkness and silence and looking at naught but himself. When Badr al-Din Hasan saw the bridegroom sitting lonesome in the dark, and all the wedding guests with their flambeaux and wax candles crowding about himself, he was bewildered and marveled much, but when he looked at his cousin, the daughter of his uncle, he rejoiced and felt an inward delight. He longed to greet her, and gazed intently on her face, which was radiant with light and brilliancy. Then the tirewomen took off her veil and displayed her in all her seven toilettes before Badr al-Din Hasan, wholly neglecting the Gobbo, who sat moping alone, and when she opened her eyes, she said, "O the Lord, make this man my goodman and deliver me from the evil of this hunchbacked groom." As soon as they had made an end of this part of the ceremony they dismissed the wedding guests, who went forth, women, children and all, and none remained save Hasan and the hunchback, whilst the tirewomen led the bride into an inner room to change her garb and gear and get her ready for the bridegroom. Thereupon Quasimodo came up to Badr al-Din Hasan and said: "O my lord, thou hast cheered us this night with thy

good company and overwhelmed us with thy kindness and courtesy, but now why not get thee up and go?"

"Bismillah," he answered. "In the Lord's name, so be it!" And rising, he went forth by the door, where the Giant-Demon met him and said, "Stay in thy stead, O Badr al-Din, and when the hunchback goes out to the closet of ease, go in without losing time and seat thyself in the alcove, and when the bride comes say to her: 'Tis I am thy husband, for the King devised this trick only fearing for thee the evil eye, and he whom thou sawest is but a syce, a groom, one of our stablemen.' Then walk boldly up to her and unveil her face, for jealousy hath taken us of this matter." While Hasan was still talking with the Giant-Demon, behold, the groom fared forth from the hall and entering the closet of ease, sat down on the stool. Hardly had he done this when the Giant-Demon came out of the tank, wherein the water was, in semblance of a mouse and squeaked out "Zeek!" Quoth the hunchback, "What ails thee?" And the mouse grew and grew till it became a coal-black cat and caterwauled "Miaowl! Miaow!" Then it grew still more and more till it became a dog and barked out, "Owh! Owh!" When the bridegroom saw this, he was frightened and exclaimed "Out with thee, O unlucky one!" But the dog grew and swelled till it became an ass colt that brayed and snorted in his face, "Hauk! Hauk!" Whereupon the hunchback quaked and cried, "Come to my aid, O people of the house!" But behold, the ass colt grew and became big as a buffalo and walled the way before him and spake with the voice of the sons of Adam, saying, "Woe to thee, O thou hunchback, thou stinkard, O thou filthiest of grooms!" Hearing this, the groom was seized with a colic and he sat down on the jakes in his clothes with teeth chattering and knocking together. Quoth the Giant-Demon, "Is the world so strait to thee thou findest none to marry save my ladylove?" But as he was silent the Giant-Demon continued, "Answer me or I will do thee dwell in the dust!" "By the

Lord," replied the Gobbo, "O King of the Buffaloes, this is no fault of mine, for they forced me to wed her, and verily I wot not that she had a lover amongst the buffaloes. But now I repent, first before the Lord and then before thee." Said the Giant-Demon to him: "I swear to thee that if thou fare forth from this place, or thou utter a word before sunrise, I assuredly will wring thy neck. When the sun rises, wend thy way and never more return to this house." So saying, the Giant-Demon took up the Gobbo bridegroom and set him head downward and feet upward in the slit of the privy, and said to him: "I will leave thee here, but I shall be on the lookout for thee till sunrise, and if thou stir before then, I will seize thee by the feet and dash out thy brains against the wall. So look out for thy life!" Thus far concerning the hunchback, but as regards Badr al-Din Hasan of Bassorah, he left the Gobbo and the Giant-Demon jangling and wrangling and, going into the house, sat him down in the very middle of the alcove. And behold, in came the bride attended by an old woman, who stood at the door and said, "O Father of Uprightness, arise and take what God giveth thee." Then the old woman went away and the bride, Sitt al-Husn or the Lady of Beauty called, entered the inner part of the alcove brokenhearted and saying in herself, "By the Lord, I will never yield my person to him—no, not even were he to take my life!" But as she came to the further end she saw Badr al-Hasan and she said, "Dearling! Art thou still sitting here? By the Lord, I was wishing that thou wert my bridegroom, or at least that thou and the hunchbacked horsegroom were partners in me." He replied, "O beautiful lady, how should the syce have access to thee, and how should he share in thee with me?" "Then," quoth she, "who is my husband, thou or he?" "Sitt al-Husn," rejoined Hasan, "we have not done this for mere fun, but only as a device to ward off the evil eye from thee. For when the tirewomen and singers and wedding guests saw thy beauty being displayed to me, they feared

fascination, and thy father hired the horsegroom for ten dinars and a porringer of meat to take the evil eye off us, and now he hath received his hire and gone his gait." When the Lady of Beauty heard these words she smiled and rejoiced and laughed a pleasant laugh. Then she whispered him: "By the Lord, thou hast quenched a fire which tortured me and now, by the Lord, O my little dark-haired darling, take me to thee and press me to thy bosom!" Then she began singing: "By the Lord, set thy foot upon my soul, Since long, long years for this alone I long. And whisper tale of love in ear of me, To me 'tis sweeter than the sweetest song! No other youth upon my heart shall lie, So do it often, dear, and do it long." Then she stripped off her outer gear and she threw open her chemise from the neck downward and showed her person and all the rondure of her hips. When Badr al-Din saw the glorious sight, his desires were roused, and he arose and doffed his clothes, and wrapping up in his bam, trousers the purse of gold which he had taken from the Talmudist and which contained the thousand dinars, he laid it under the edge of the bedding. Then he took off his turban and set it upon the settle atop of his other clothes, remaining in his skullcap and fine shirt of blue silk laced with gold. Whereupon the Lady of Beauty drew him to her and he did likewise. Then he took her to his embrace and found her a pearl unpierced, and he abaged her virginity and had joyance of her youth in his virility; and she conceived by him that very night. Then he laid his hand under her head and she did the same and they embraced and fell asleep in each other's arms, as a certain poet said of such lovers in these couplets: Visit thy lover, spurn what envy told, No envious churl shall smile on love ensouled. Merciful the Lord made no fairer sight Than coupled lovers single couch doth hold, Breast pressing breast and robed in joys their own, With pillowed forearms cast in finest mold. And when heart speaks to heart with tongue of love, Folk who would part

them hammer steel ice-cold. If a fair friend thou find who cleaves to thee, Live for that friend, that friend in heart enfold. O ye who blame for love us lover-kind, Say, can ye minister to diseased mind? This much concerning Badr al-Din Hasan and Sitt al-Husn his cousin, but as regards the Giant-Demon, as soon as he saw the twain asleep, he said to the Giant-Demonah: "Arise, slip thee under the youth, and let us carry him back to his place ere dawn overtake us, for the day is near-hand." Thereupon she came forward and getting under him as he lay asleep, took him up clad only in his fine blue shirt, leaving the rest of his garments, and ceased not flying (and the Giant-Demon vying with her in flight) till the dawn advised them that it had come upon them midway, and the muezzin began his call from the minaret: "Haste ye to salvation! Haste ye to salvation!" Then the Lord suffered His angelic host to shoot down the Giant-Demon with a shooting star, so he was consumed, but the Giant-Demonah escaped, and she descended with Badr al-Din at the place where the Giant-Demon was burnt, and did not carry him back to Bassorah, fearing lest he come to harm. Now by the order of Him who predestineth all things, they alighted at Damascus of Syria, and the Giant-Demonah set down her burden at one of the city gates and flew away. When day arose and the doors were opened, the folk who came forth saw a handsome youth, with no other raiment but his blue shirt of gold-embroidered silk and skullcap, lying upon the ground drowned in sleep after the hard labor of the night, which had not suffered him to take his rest. So the folk, looking at him, said: "Oh, her luck with whom this one spent the night! But would he had waited to don his garments!" Quoth another: "A sorry lot are the sons of great families! Haply he but now came forth of the tavern on some occasion of his own and his wine flew to his head, whereby he hath missed the place he was making for and strayed till he came to the gate of the city, and finding it shut, lay him down and went to by-by!" As the people

were bandying guesses about him, suddenly the morning breeze blew upon Badr al-Din and raising his shirt to his middle, showed a stomach and navel with something below it, and legs and thighs clear as crystal and smooth as cream. Cried the people, "By the Lord, he is a pretty fellow!" and at the cry Badr al-Din awoke and found himself lying at a city gate with a crowd gathered around him. At this he greatly marveled and asked: "Where am I, O good folk, and what causeth you thus to gather round me, and what have I had to do with you?" and they answered: "We found thee lying here asleep during the call to dawn prayer, and this is all we know of the matter. But where diddest thou lie last night?" "By the Lord, O good people," replied he, "I lay last night in Cairo." Said somebody, "Thou hast surely been eating hashish," and another, "He is a fool," and a third, "He is a citrouille," and a fourth asked him: "Art thou out of thy mind? Thou sleepest in Cairo and thou wakest in the morning at the gate of Damascus city!" Cried he: "By the Lord, my good people, one and all, I lie not to you. Indeed I lay yesternight in the land of Egypt and yesternoon I was at Bassorah." Quoth one, "Well! well!" and quoth another, "Ho! ho!" and a third, "So! so!" and a fourth cried, "This youth is mad, is possessed of the Jinni!" So they clapped hands at him and said to one another: "Alas, the pity of it for his youth! By the Lord, a madman! And madness is no respecter of persons." Then said they to him: "Collect thy wits and return to thy reason! How couldest thou be in Bassorah yesterday and in Cairo yesternight and withal awake in Damascus this morning?" But he persisted, "Indeed I was a bridegroom in Cairo last night." "Belike thou hast been dreaming," rejoined they, "and sawest all this in thy sleep." So Hasan took thought for a while and said to them: "By the Lord, this is no dream, nor visionlike doth it seem! I certainly was in Cairo, where they displayed the bride before me, in presence of a third person, the hunchback groom, who was sitting hard by. By

the Lord, O my brother, this be no dream, and if it were a dream, where is the bag of gold I bore with me, and where are my turban and my robe, and my trousers?" Then he rose and entered the city, threading its highways and byways and bazaar streets, and the people pressed upon him and jeered at him, crying out "Madman! Madman!" till he, beside himself with rage, took refuge in a cook's shop. Now that cook had been a trifle too clever— that is, a rogue and thief— but the Lord had made him repent and turn from his evil ways and open a cookshop, and all the people of Damascus stood in fear of his boldness and his mischief. So when the crowd saw the youth enter his shop, they dispersed, being afraid of him, and went their ways. The cook looked at Badr al-Din and, noting his beauty and loveliness, fell in love with him forthright and said: "Whence comest thou, O youth? Tell me at once thy tale, for thou art become dearer to me than my soul." So Hasan recounted to him all that had befallen him from beginning to end (but in repetition there is no fruition) and the cook said: "O my lord Badr al-Din, doubtless thou knowest that this case is wondrous and this story marvelous. Therefore, O my son, hide what hath betide thee, till the Lord dispel what ills be thine, and tarry with me here the meanwhile, for I have no child and I will adopt thee." Badr al-Din replied, "Be it as thou wilt, O my uncle!" Whereupon the cook went to the bazaar and bought him a fine suit of clothes and made him don it, then fared with him to the kazi, and formally declared that he was his son. So Badr al-Din Hasan became known in Damascus city as the cook's son, and he sat with him in the shop to take the silver, and on this wise he sojourned there for a time. Thus far concerning him, but as regards his cousin, the Lady of Beauty, when morning dawned she awoke and missed Badr al-Din Hasan from her side; but she thought that he had gone to the privy and she sat expecting him for an hour or so, when behold, entered her father Shams al-Din

Mohammed, Vizier of Egypt. Now he was disconsolate by reason of what had befallen him through the Sultan, who had entreated him harshly and had married his daughter by force to the lowest of his menials and he too a lump of a groom hunchbacked withal, and he said to himself, "I will slay this daughter of mine if her own free she had yielded her person to this accursed carle." So he came to the door of the bride's private chamber, and said, "Ho! Sitt al-Husn." She answered him: "Here am I! Here am I! O my lord," and came out unsteady of pit after the pains and pleasures of the night. And she kissed his hand, her face showing redoubled brightness and beauty for having lain in the arms of that gazelle, her cousin. When her father, the Vizier, saw her in such case, he asked her, "O thou accursed, art thou rejoicing because of this horse groom?" And Sitt al-Husn smiled sweetly and answered: "By the Lord, don't ridicule me. Enough of what passed yesterday when folk laughed at me, and evened me with that groom fellow who is not worthy to bring my husband's shoes or slippers— nay, who is not worth the paring of my husband's nails! By the Lord, never in my life have I nighted a night so sweet as yesternight, so don't mock by reminding me of the Gobbo." When her parent heard her words he was filled with fury, and his eyes glared and stared, so that little of them showed save the whites and he cried: "Fie upon thee! What words are these? 'Twas the hunchbacked horse groom who passed the night with thee!" "the Lord upon thee," replied the Lady of Beauty, "do not worry me about the Gobbo— the Lord damn his father— and leave jesting with me, for this groom was only hired for ten dinars and a porringer of meat and he took his wage and went his way. As for me, I entered the bridal chamber, where I found my true bridegroom sitting, after the singer women had displayed me to him— the same who had crossed their hands with red gold till every pauper that was present waxed wealthy. And I passed the night on the breast of my

bonny man, a most lively darling, with his black eyes and joined eyebrows." When her parent heard these words, the light before his face became night, and he cried out at her, saying: "O thou whore! What is this thou tellest me? Where be thy wits?" "O my father," she rejoined, "thou breakest my heart. Enough for thee that thou hast been so hard upon me! Indeed my husband who took my virginity is but just now gone to the draught-house, and I feel that I have conceived by him." The Vizier rose in much marvel and entered the privy, where he found the hunchbacked horse groom with his head in the hole and his heels in the air. At this sight he was confounded and said, "This is none other than he, the rascal hunchback!" So he called to him, "Ho, Hunchback!" The Gobbo grunted out, "Taghum! Taghum!" thinking it was the Giant-Demon spoke to him, so the Vizier shouted at him and said, "Speak out, or I'll strike off thy pate with this sword." Then quoth the hunchback, "By the Lord, O Sheikh of the Giant-Demons, ever since thou settest me in this place I have not lifted my head, so the Lord upon thee, take pity and entreat me kindly!" When the Vizier heard this he asked: "What is this thou sayest? I'm the bride's father and no Giant-Demon." "Enough for thee that thou hast well-nigh done me die," answered Quasimodo. "Now go thy ways before he come upon thee who hath served me thus. Could ye not marry me to any save the ladylove of buffaloes and the beloved of Giant-Demons? the Lord curse her, and curse him who married me to her and was the cause of this my case." Then said the Vizier to him, "Up and out of this place!" "Am I mad," cried the groom, "that I should go with thee without leave of the Giant-Demon whose last words to me were: 'When the sun rises, arise and go thy gait.' So hath the sun risen, or no? For I dare not budge from this place till then." Asked the Vizier, "Who brought thee hither?" And he answered, "I came here yesternight for a call of nature and to do what none can do for me, when lo! a mouse came out of the water, and

squeaked at me and swelled and waxed gross till it was big as a buffalo, and spoke to me words that entered my ears. Then he left me here and went away. the Lord curse the bride and him who married me to her!" The Vizier walked up to him and lifted his head out of the cesspool hole, and he fared forth running for dear life and hardly crediting that the sun had risen, and repaired to the Sultan, to whom he told all that had befallen him with the Giant-Demon. But the Vizier returned to the bride's private chamber, sore troubled in spirit about her, and said to her, "O my daughter, explain this strange matter to me!" Quoth she: "'Tis simply this. The bridegroom to whom they displayed me yestereve lay with me all night, and took my virginity, and I am with child by him. He is my husband, and if thou believe me not, there are his turban twisted as it was, lying on the settle and his dagger and his trousers beneath the bed with a something, I wot not what, wrapped up in them." When her father heard this, he entered the private chamber and found the turban which had been left there by Badr al-Din Hasan, his brother's son, and he took it in hand and turned it over, saying, "This is the turban worn by Viziers, save that it is of Mosul stuff." So he opened it and, finding what seemed to be an amulet sewn up in the fez, he unsewed the lining and took it out. Then he lifted up the trousers, wherein was the purse of the thousand gold pieces and opening that also, found in it a written paper. This he read, and it was the sale receipt of the Talmudist in the name of Badr al-Din Hasan son of Nur al-Din All, the Egyptian, and the thousand dinars were also there. No sooner had Shams al-Din read this than he cried out with a loud cry and fell to the ground fainting, and as soon as he revived and understood the gist of the matter he marveled and said: "There is no god but the God, whose All-might is over all things! Knowest thou, O my daughter, who it was that became the husband of thy virginity?" "No," answered she, and he said: "Verily he is the son of my brother, thy

cousin, and this thousand dinars is thy dowry. Praise be to the Lord! And would I wot how this matter came about!" Then opened he the amulet which was sewn up and found therein a paper in the handwriting of his deceased brother, Nur al-Din the Egyptian, father of Badr al-Din Hasan. And when he saw the handwriting, he kissed it again and again, and he wept and wailed over his dead brother. Then he read the scroll and found in it recorded the dates of his brother's marriage with the daughter of the Vizier of Bassorah, and of his going in to her, and her conception, and the birth of Badr al-Din Hasan, and all his brother's history and doings up to his dying day. So he marveled much and shook with joy and, comparing the dates with his own marriage and going in unto his wife and the birth of his daughter, Sitt al-Husn, he found that they perfectly agreed. So he took the document and, repairing with it to the Sultan, acquainted him with what had passed, from first to last, whereat the King marveled and commanded the case to be at once recorded. The Vizier abode that day expecting to see his brother's son, but he came not, and he waited a second day, a third day, and so on to the seventh day without any tidings of him. So he said, "By the Lord, I will do a deed such as none hath ever done before me!" And he took reed pen and ink and drew upon a sheet of paper the plan of the whole house, showing whereabouts was the private chamber with the curtain in such a place and the furniture in such another and so on with all that was in the room. Then he folded up the sketch and, causing all the furniture to be collected, he took Badr al-Din's garments and the turban and fez and robe and purse, and carried the whole to his house and locked them up, against the coming of his nephew, Badr al-Din Hasan, the son of his lost brother, with an iron padlock on which he set his seal. As for the Vizier's daughter, when her tale of months was fulfilled, she bare a son like the full moon, the image of his father in beauty and loveliness and fair proportions and

perfect grace. They cut his navel string and kohled his eyelids to strengthen his eyes, and gave him over to the nurses and nursery governesses, naming him Ajib, the Wonderful. His day was as a month and his month was as a year, and when seven years had passed over him, his grandfather sent him to school, enjoining the master to teach him Koran-reading, and to educate him well. He remained at the school four years, till he began to bully his schoolfellows and abuse them and bash them and thrash them and say: "Who among you is like me? I am the son of the Vizier of Egypt! At last the boys came in a body to complain to the monitor of what hard usage they were wont to have from Ajib, and he said to them: "I will tell you somewhat you may do to him so that he shall leave off coming to the school, and it is this. When he enters tomorrow, sit ye down about him and say some one of you to some other: 'By the Lord, none shall play with us at this game except he tell us the names of his mamma and papa, for he who knows not the names of his mother and his father is a bastard, a son of adultery, and he shall not play with us.'" When morning dawned, the boys came to school, Ajib being one of them, and all flocked round him saying: "We will play a game wherein none shall join save he can tell the name of his mamma and his papa." And they all cried, "By the Lord, good!" Then quoth one of them, "My name is Majid and my mammy's name is Alawiyah and my daddy's Izz al-Din." Another spoke in like guise and yet a third, till Ajib's turn came, and he said, "My name is Ajib, and my mother's is Sitt al-Husn, and my father's Shams al-Din, the Vizier of Cairo." "By the Lord," cried they, "the Vizier is not thy true father." Ajib answered, "The Vizier is my father in very deed." Then the boys all laughed and clapped their hands at him, saying: "He does not know who is his papa. Get out from among us, for none shall play with us except he know his father's name." Thereupon they dispersed from around him and laughed him to scorn, so

his breast was straitened and he well-nigh choked with tears and hurt feelings. Then said the monitor to him: "We know that the Vizier is thy grandfather, the father of thy mother, Sitt al-Husn, and not thy father. As for thy father, neither dost thou know him nor yet do we, for the Sultan married thy mother to the hunchbacked horse groom, but the Jinni came and slept with her and thou hast no known father. Leave, then, comparing thyself too advantageously with the littles ones of the school, till thou know that thou hast a lawful father, for until then thou wilt pass for a child of adultery amongst them. Seest thou not that even a huckster's son knoweth his own sire? Thy grandfather is the Vizier of Egypt, but as for thy father, we wot him not and we say indeed that thou hast none. So return to thy sound senses!" When Ajib heard these insulting words from the monitor and the schoolboys and understood the reproach they put upon him, he went out at once and ran to his mother, Sitt al-Husn, to complain, but he was crying so bitterly that his tears prevented his speech for a while. When she heard his sobs and saw his tears, her heart burned as though with fire for him, and she said: "O my son, why dost thou weep? the Lord keep the tears from thine eyes! Tell me what hath betided thee." So he told her all that he heard from the boys and from the monitor and ended with asking, "And who, O my mother, is my father?" She answered, "Thy father is the Vizier of Egypt." But he said: "Do not lie to me. The Vizier is thy father, not mine! Who then is my father? Except thou tell me the very truth I will kill myself with this hanger." When his mother heard him speak of his father she wept, remembering her cousin and her bridal night with him and all that occurred there and then, and she repeated these couplets: "Love in my heart they lit and went their ways, And all I love to furthest lands withdrew, And when they left me sufferance also left, And when we parted Patience bade adieu. They fled and flying with my joys they fled, In

very constancy my spirit flew. They made my eyelids flow with severance tears And to the parting pang these drops are due. And when I long to see reunion day, ruth I sue. My groans prolonging sore for ruth I sue. Then in my heart of hearts their shapes I trace, And love and longing care and care renew. O ye whose names cling round me like a cloak, Whose love yet closer than a shirt I drew, Beloved ones, how long this hard despite? How long this severance and this coy shy flight?" Then she wailed and shrieked aloud and her son did the like, and behold, in came the Vizier, whose heart burnt within him at the sight of their lamentations and he said, "What makes you weep?" So the Lady of Beauty acquainted him with what happened between her son and the schoolboys, and he also wept, calling to mind his brother and what had past between them and what had betided his daughter and how he had failed to find out what mystery there was in the matter. Then he rose at once and, repairing to the audience hall, went straight to the King and told his tale and craved his permission to travel eastward to the city of Bassorah and ask after his brother's son. Furthermore, he besought the Sultan to write for him letters patent, authorizing him to seize upon Badr al-Din, his nephew and son-in-law, wheresoever he might find him. And he wept before the King, who had pity on him and wrote royal autographs to his deputies in all climes and countries and cities, whereat the Vizier rejoiced and prayed for blessings on him. Then, taking leave of his sovereign, he returned to his house, where he equipped himself and his daughter and his adopted child Ajib with all things meet for a long march, and set out and traveled the first day and the second and the third and so forth till he arrived at Damascus city. The Vizier encamped on the open space called AlHasa, and after pitching tents, said to his servants, "A halt here for two days!" So they went into the city upon their several occasions, this to sell and that to buy, this to go to the

hammam and that to visit the cathedral mosque of the Banu Umayyah, the Omniades, whose like is not in this world. Ajib also went, with his attendant eunuch, for solace and diversion to the city, and the servant followed with a quarterstaff of almond wood so heavy that if he struck a camel therewith the beast would never rise again. When the people of Damascus saw Ajib's beauty and brilliancy and perfect grace and symmetry (for he was a marvel of comeliness and winning loveliness, softer than the cool breeze of the North, sweeter than limpid waters to man in drought, and pleasanter than the health for which sick man sueth), a mighty many followed him, whilst others ran on before and sat down on the road until he should come up, that they might gaze on him, till, as Destiny stopped opposite the shop of Ajib's father, Badr al-Din Hasan. Now his beard had grown long and thick and his wits had ripened during the twelve years which had passed over him, and the cook and ex-rogue having died, the so-called Hasan of Bassorah had succeeded to his goods and shop, for that he had been formally adopted before the kazi and witnesses. When his son and the eunuch stepped before him, he gazed on Ajib and, seeing how very beautiful he was, his heart fluttered and throbbed, and blood drew to blood and natural affection spake out and his bowels yearned over him. He had just dressed a conserve of pomegranate grains with sugar, and Heaven implanted love wrought within him, so he called to his son Ajib and said: "O my lord, O thou who hast gotten the mastery of my heart and my very vitals and to whom my bowels yearn, say me, wilt thou enter my house and solace my soul by eating of my meat?" Then his eyes streamed with tears which he could not stay, for he bethought him of what he had been and what he had become. When Ajib heard his father's words, his heart also yearned himward, and he looked at the eunuch and said to him: "Of a truth, O my good guard, my heart yearns to this cook. He is as one that hath a son

far away from him. So let us enter and gladden his heart by tasting of his hospitality. Perchance for our so doing the Lord may reunite me with my father." When the eunuch heard these words, he cried: "A fine thing this, by the Lord! Shall the sons of Viziers be seen eating in a common cookshop? Indeed I keep off the folk from thee with this quarterstaff lest they even look upon thee, and I dare not suffer thee to enter this shop at all." When Hasan of Bassorah heard his speech he marveled and turned to the eunuch with the tears pouring down his cheeks, and Ajib said, "Verily my heart loves him!" But he answered: "Leave this talk. Thou shalt not go in." Thereupon the father turned to the eunuch and said, "O worthy sir, why wilt thou not gladden my soul by entering my shop? O thou who art like a chestnut, dark without but white of heart within! O thou of the like, of whom a certain poet said..." The eunuch burst out a-laughing and asked: "Said what? Speak out, by the Lord, and be quick about it." So Hasan the Bassorite began reciting these couplets: "If not master of manners or aught but discreet, In the household of kings no trust could he take, And then for the harem! What eunuch is he Whom angels would serve for his service' sake?" The eunuch marveled and was pleased at these words, so he took Ajib by the hand and went into the cook's shop; whereupon Hasan the Bassorite ladled into a saucer some conserve of pomegranate grains wonderfully good, dressed with almonds and sugar, saying: "You have honored me with your company. Eat, then, and health and happiness to you!" Thereupon Ajib said to his father, "Sit thee down and eat with us, so perchance the Lord may unite us with him we long for." Quoth Hasan, "O my son, hast thou then been afflicted in thy tender years with parting from those thou lovest?" Quoth Ajib: "Even so, O nuncle mine. My heart burns for the loss of a beloved one who is none other than my father, and indeed I come forth, I and my grandfather, to circle and search the world for him. Oh, the pity of it,

and how I long to meet him!" Then he wept with exceeding weeping, and his father also wept seeing him weep and for his own bereavement, which recalled to him his long separation from dear friends and from his mother, and the eunuch was moved to pity for him. Then they ate together till they were satisfied, and Ajib and the slave rose and left the shop. Hereat Hasan the Bassorite felt as though his soul had departed his body and had gone with them, for he could not lose sight of the boy during the twinkling of an eye, albeit he knew not that Ajib was his son. So he locked up his shop and hastened after them, and he walked so fast that he came up with them before they had gone out of the western gate. The eunuch turned and asked him, "What ails thee?" and Badr al-Din answered, "When ye went from me, meseemed my soul had gone with you, and as I had business without the city gate, I purposed to bear you company till my matter was ordered, and so return." The eunuch was angered, and said to Ajib: "This is just what I feared! We ate that unlucky mouthful (which we are bound to respect), and here is the fellow following us from place to place, for the vulgar are ever the vulgar." Ajib, turning and seeing the cook just behind him, was wroth, and his face reddened with rage and he said to the servant: "Let him walk the highway of the Muslims, but when we turn off it to our tents and find that he still follows us, we will send him about his business with a flea in his ear." Then he bowed his head and walked on, the eunuch walking behind him. But Hasan of Bassorah followed them to the plain Al-Hasa, and as they drew near to the tents, they turned round and saw him close on their heels, so Ajib was very angry, fearing that the eunuch might tell his grandfather what had happened. His indignation was the hotter for apprehension lest any say that after he had entered a cookshop the cook had followed him. So he turned and looked at Hasan of Bassorah and found his eyes fixed on his own, for the father had become a body without a soul, and

it seemed to Ajib that his eye was a treacherous eye or that he was some lewd fellow. So his rage redoubled and, stooping down, he took up a stone weighing half a pound and threw it at his father. It struck him on the forehead, cutting it open from eyebrow to eyebrow and causing the blood to stream down, and Hasan fell to the ground in a swoon whilst Ajib and the eunuch made for the tents. When the father came to himself, he wiped away the blood and tore off a strip from his turban and bound up his head, blaming himself the while, and saying, "I wronged the lad by shutting up my shop and following, so that he thought I was some evil-minded fellow." Then he returned to his place, where he busied himself with the sale of his sweetmeats, and he yeamed after his mother at Bassorah, and wept over her and broke out repeating: "Unjust it were to bid the world be just And blame her not. She ne'er was made for justice. Take what she gives thee, leave all grief aside, For now to fair and then to foul her lust is." So Hasan of Bassorah set himself steadily to sell his sweetmeats, but the Vizier, his uncle, halted in Damascus three days and then marched upon Emesa, and passing through that town, he made inquiry there, and at every place where he rested. Thence he fared on by way of Hamah and Aleppo and thence through Diyar Bakr and Maridin and Mosul, still inquiring, till he arrived at Bassorah city. Here, as soon as he had secured a lodging, he presented himself before the Sultan, who entreated him with high honor and the respect due to his rank, and asked the cause of his coming. The Vizier acquainted him with his history and told him that the Minister Nur al-Din was his brother, whereupon the Sultan exclaimed, "the Lord have mercy upon him!" and added: "My good Sahib, he was my Vizier for fifteen years and I loved him exceedingly. Then he died leaving a son who abode only a single month after his father's death, since which time he has disappeared and we could gain no tidings of him. But his mother, who is the

daughter of my former Minister, is still among us." When the Vizier Shams al-Din heard that his nephew's mother was alive and well, he rejoiced and said, "O King, I much desire to meet her." The King on the instant gave him leave to visit her, so he betook himself to the mansion of his brother Nur al-Din and cast sorrowful glances on all things in and around it and kissed the threshold. Then he bethought him of his brother Nur al-Din Ali, and how he had died in a strange land far from kith and kin and friends, and he wept and repeated these lines: "I wander 'mid these walls, my Lavla's walls, And kissing this and other wall I roam. 'Tis not the walls or roof my heart so loves, But those who in this house had made their home." Then he passed through the gate into a courtyard and found a vaulted doorway builded of hardest syenite inlaid with sundry kinds of multicolored marble. Into this he walked, and wandered about the house and, throwing many a glance around, saw the name of his brother Nur al-Din written in gold wash upon the walls. So he went up to the inscription and kissed it and wept and thought of how he had been separated from his brother and had now lost him forever. Then he walked on till he came to the apartment of his brother's widow, the mother of Badr al-Din Hasan, the Egyptian. Now from the time of her son's disappearance she had never ceased weeping and wailing through the light hours and the dark, and when the years grew longsome with her, she built for him a tomb of marble in the midst of the saloon and there used to weep for him day and night, never sleeping save thereby. When the Vizier drew near her apartment, he heard her voice and stood behind the door while she addressed the sepulcher in verse and said: "Answer, by the Lord! Sepulcher, are all his beauties gone? Hath change the power to blight his charms, that beauty's paragon? Thou art not earth, O Sepulcher! Nor art thou sky to me. How comes it, then, in thee I see conjoint the branch and moon?" While she was bemoaning herself after this fashion,

behold, the Vizier went in to her and saluted her and informed her that he was her husband's brother, and, telling her all that had passed between them, laid open before her the whole story— how her son Badr al-Din Hasan had spent a whole night with his daughter full ten years ago, but had disappeared in the morning. And he ended with saying: "My daughter conceived by thy son and bare a male child who is now with me, and he is thy son and thy son's son by my daughter." When she heard the tidings that her boy Badr al-Din was still alive and saw her brother-in-law, she rose up to him and threw herself at his feet and kissed them. Then the Vizier sent for Ajib and his grandmother stood up and fell on his neck and wept, but Shams al-Din said to her: "This is no time for weeping. This is the time to get thee ready for traveling with us to the land of Egypt. Haply the Lord will reunite me and thee with thy son and my nephew." Replied she, "Hearkening and obedience," and, rising at once, collected her baggage and treasures and her jewels, and equipped herself and her slave girls for the march, whilst the Vizier went to take his leave of the Sultan of Bassorah, who sent by him presents and rarities for the Sultan of Egypt. Then he set out at once upon his homeward march and journeyed till he came to Damascus city, where he alighted in the usual place and pitched tents, and said to his suite, "We will halt a sennight here to buy presents and rare things for the Sultan." Now Ajib bethought him of the past, so he said to the eunuch: "O Laik, I want a little diversion. Come, let us go down to the great bazaar of Damascus and see what hath become of the cook whose sweetmeats we ate and whose head we broke, for indeed he was kind to us and we entreated him scurvily." The eunuch answered, "Hearing is obeying!" So they went forth from the tents, and the tie of blood drew Ajib toward his father, and forthwith they passed through the gateway, Bab al-Faradis called, and entered the city and ceased not walking through the streets till they

reached the cookshop, where they found Hasan of Bassorah standing at the door. It was near the time of midafternoon prayer, and it so fortuned that he had just dressed a confection of pomegranate grains. When the twain drew near to him and Ajib saw him, his heart yearned toward him, and noticing the scar of the blow, which time had darkened on his brow, he said to him: "Peace be on thee, O man! Know that my heart is with thee." But when Badr al-Din looked upon his son, his vitals yearned and his heart fluttered, and he hung his head earthward and sought to make his tongue give utterance to his words, but he could not. Then he raised his head humbly and suppliant-wise toward his boy and repeated these couplets: "I longed for my beloved, but when I saw his face, Abashed I held my tongue and stood with downcast eye, And hung my head in dread and would have hid my love, But do whatso I would, hidden it would not be. Volumes of complaints I had prepared, reproach and blame, But when we met, no single word remembered I." And then said he to them: "Heal my broken heart and eat of my sweetmeats, for, by the Lord, I cannot look at thee but my heart flutters. Indeed I should not have followed thee the other day but that I was beside myself." "By the Lord," answered Ajib, "thou dost indeed love us! We ate in thy house a mouthful when we were here before and thou madest us repent for it, for that thou followedst us and wouldst have disgraced us, so now we will not eat aught with thee save on condition that thou make oath not to go out after us nor dog us. Otherwise we will not visit thee again during our present stay, for we shall halt a week here whilst my grandfather buys certain presents for the King." Quoth Hasan of Bassorah, "I promise you this." So Ajib and the eunuch entered the shop, and his father set before them a saucerful of conserve of pomegranate grains. Said Ajib: "Sit thee down and eat with us. So haply shall the Lord dispel our sorrows." Hasan the Bassorite was joyful and sat down and ate with them, but his eyes kept gazing

fixedly on Ajib's face, for his very heart and vitals clove to him, and at last the boy said to him: "Did I not tell thee thou art a most noyous dotard? So do stint thy staring in my face!" Hansan kept putting morsels into Ajib's mouth at one time and at another time did the same by the eunuch, and they ate till they were satisfied and could no more. Then all rose up and the cook poured water on their hands, and loosing a silken waist shawl, dried them and sprinkled them with rose-water from a casting bottle he had by him. Then he went out and presently returned with a gugglet of sherbet flavored with rose-water, scented with musk, and cooled with snow, and he set this before them saying, "Complete your kindness to me!" So Ajib took the gugglet and drank and passed it to the eunuch, and it went round till their stomachs were full and they were surfeited with a meal larger than their wont. Then they went away and made haste in walking till they reached the tents, and Ajib went in to his grandmother, who kissed him and, thinking of her son Badr al-Din Hasan, groaned aloud and wept. Then she asked Ajib: "O my son! Where hast thou been?" And he answered, "In Damascus city." Whereupon she rose and set before him a bit of scone and a saucer of conserve of pomegranate grains (which was too little sweetened), and she said to the eunuch, "Sit down with thy master!" Said the servant to himself: "By the Lord, we have no mind to eat. I cannot bear the smell of bread." But he sat down, and so did Ajib, though his stomach was full of what he had eaten already and drunken. Nevertheless he took a bit of the bread and dipped it in the pomegranate conserve and made shift to eat it, but he found it too little sweetened, for he was cloyed and surfeited, so he said, "Faugh, what be this wild-beast stuff?" "O my son," cried his grandmother, "dost thou find fault with my cookery? I cooked this myself and none can cook it as nicely as I can, save thy father, Badr al-Din Hasan." "By the Lord, O my lady," Ajib answered, "this dish is nasty stuff, for we saw but now in

the city of Bassorah a cook who so dresseth pomegranate grains that the very smell openeth a way to the heart and the taste would make a full man long to eat. And as for this mess compared with his, 'tis not worth either much or little." When his grandmother heard his words, she waxed wroth with exceeding wrath and looked at the servant and said: "Woe to thee! Dost thou spoil my son, and dost take him into common cookshops?" The eunuch was frightened and denied, saying, "We did not go into the shop, we only passed by it." "By the Lord," cried Ajib, "but we did go in, and we ate till it came out of our nostrils, and the dish was better than thy dish!" Then his grandmother rose and went and told her brother-in-law, who was incensed against the eunuch, and sending for him, asked him, "Why didst thou take my son into a cookshop?" And the eunuch, being frightened, answered, "We did not go in." But Ajib said, "We did go inside and ate conserve of pomegranate grains till we were full, and the cook gave us to drink of iced and sugared sherbet." At this the Vizier's indignation redoubled and he questioned the castrato, but as he still denied, the Vizier said to him, "If thou speak sooth, sit down and eat before us." So he came forward and tried to eat, but could not, and threw away the mouthful crying: "O my lord! I am surfeited since yesterday." By this the Vizier was certified that he had eaten at the cook's, and bade the slaves throw him, which they did. Then they came down on him with a rib-basting which burned him till he cried for mercy and help from the Lord, saying, "O my master, beat me no more and I will tell thee the truth." Whereupon the Vizier stopped the bastinado and said, "Now speak thou sooth." Quoth the eunuch, "Know then that we did enter the shop of a cook while he was dressing conserve of pomegranate grains, and he set some of it before us. By the Lord! I never ate in my life its like, nor tasted aught nastier than this stuff which is now before us." Badr al-Din Hasan's mother was angry at this and said, "Needs must thou go back to

the cook and bring me a saucer of conserved pomegranate grains from that which is in his shop and show it to thy master, that he may say which be the better and the nicer, mine or his." Said the unsexed, "I will." So on the instant she gave him a saucer and a half-dinar and he returned to the shop and said to the cook, "O Sheikh of all Cooks, we have laid a wager concerning thy cookery in my lord's house, for they have conserve of pomegranate grains there also. So give me this half-dinar's worth and look to it, for I have eaten a full meal of stick on account of thy cookery, and so do not let me eat aught more thereof." Hasan of Bassorah laughed and answered: "By the Lord, none can dress this dish as it should be dressed save myself and my mother, and she at this time is in a far country." Then he ladled out a saucerful and, finishing it off with musk and rose-water, put it in a cloth, which he sealed, and gave it to the eunuch, who hastened back with it. No sooner had Badr al-Din Hasan's mother tasted it and perceived its fine flavor and the excellence of the cookery then she knew who had dressed it, and she screamed and fell down fainting. The Vizier, sorely startled, sprinkled rose-water upon her, and after a time she recovered and said: "If my son be yet of this world, none dressed this conserve of pomegranate grains but he, and this cook is my very son Badr al-Din Hasan. There is no doubt of it, nor can there be any mistake, for only I and he knew how to prepare it and I taught him." When the Vizier heard her words, he joyed with exceeding joy and said: "Oh, the longing of me for a sight of my brother's son! I wonder if the days will ever unite us with him! Yet it is to Almighty the Lord alone that we look for bringing about this meeting." Then he rose without stay or delay and, going to his suite, said to them, "Be off, some fifty of you, with sticks and staves to the cook's shop and demolish it, then pinion his arms behind him with his own turban, saying, 'It was thou madest that foul mess of pomegranate grains!' And drag him here

perforce, but without doing him a harm." And they replied, "It is well." Then the Vizier rode off without losing an instant to the palace and, forgathering with the Viceroy of Damascus, showed him the Sultan's orders. After careful perusal he kissed the letter and placing it upon his head, said to his visitor, "Who is this offender-of thine?" Quoth the Vizier, "A man which is a cook." So the Viceroy at once sent his apparitors to the shop, which they found demolished and everything in it broken to pieces, for whilst the Vizier was riding to the palace his men had done his bidding. Then they awaited his return from the audience, and Hasan of Bassorah, who was their prisoner, kept saying, "I wonder what they have found in the conserve of pomegranate grains to bring things to this pass!" When the Vizier returned to them after his visit to the Viceroy, who had given him formal permission to take up his debtor and depart with him, on entering the tents he called for the cook. They brought him forward pinioned with his turban, and, when Badr al-Din Hasan saw his uncle, he wept with exceeding weeping and said, "O my lord, what is my offense against thee?" "Art thou the man who dressed that conserve of pomegranate grains?" asked the Vizier, and he answered "Yes! Didst thou find in it aught to call for the cutting off of my head?" Quoth the Vizier, "That were the least of thy deserts!" Quoth the cook, "O my lord, wilt thou not tell me my crime, and what aileth the conserve of pomegranate grains?" "Presently," replied the Vizier, and called aloud to his men, saying "Bring hither the camels." So they struck the tents and by the Vizier's orders the servants took Badr al-Din Hasan and set him in a chest which they padlocked and put on a camel. Then they departed and stinted not journeying till nightfall, when they halted and ate some victual, and took Badr al-Din Hasan out of his chest and gave him a meal and locked him up again. They set out once more and traveled till they reached Kimrah, where they took him out of the box and

brought him before the Vizier, who asked him, "Art thou he who dressed that conserve of pomegranate grains?" He answered "Yes, O my lord!" and the Vizier said, "Fetter him!" So they fettered him and returned him to the chest and fared on again till they reached Cairo and lighted at the quarter called Al-Raydaniyah. Then the Vizier gave order to take Badr al-Din Hasan out of the chest and sent for a carpenter and said to him, "Make me a cross of wood for this fellow!" Cried Badr al-Din Hasan, "And what wilt thou do with it?" and the Vizier replied, "I mean to crucify thee thereon, and nail thee thereto and parade thee all about the city." "And why wilt thou use me after this fashion?" "Because of thy villainous cookery of conserved pomegranate grains. How durst thou dress it and sell it lacking pepper?" "And for that it lacked pepper, wilt thou do all this to me? Is it not enough that thou hast broken my shop and smashed my gear and boxed me up in a chest and fed me only once a day?" "Too little pepper! Too little pepper! This is a crime which can be expiated only upon the cross!" Then Badr al-Din Hasan marveled and fell a-mourning for his life, whereupon the Vizier asked him, "Of what thinkest thou?" and he answered him, "Of maggoty heads like thine, for an thou had one ounce of sense, thou hadst not treated me thus." Quoth the Vizier, "It is our duty to punish thee, lest thou do the like again." Quoth Badr al-Din Hasan, "Of a truth my offense were overpunished by the least of what thou hast already done to me, and the Lord damn all conserve of pomegranate grains and curse the hour when I cooked it, and would I had died ere this!" But the Vizier rejoined, "There is no help for it. I must crucify a man who sells conserve of pomegranate grains lacking pepper." All this time the carpenter was shaping the wood and Badr al-Din looked on, and thus they did till night, when his uncle took him and clapped him into the chest, saying, "The thing shall be done tomorrow!" Then he waited till he knew Badr al-Din Hasan to be asleep, when

he mounted and, taking the chest up before him, entered the city and rode on to his own house, where he alighted and said to his daughter, Sitt al-Husn, "Praised be the Lord Who hath reunited thee with thy husband, the son of thine uncle! Up now, and order the house as it was on thy bridal night." So the servants arose and lit the candles, and the Vizier took out his plan of the nuptial chamber, and directed them what to do till they had set everything in its stead, so that whoever saw it would have no doubt but it was the very night of the marriage. Then he bade them put down Badr al-Din Hasan's turban on the settle, as he had deposited it with his own hand, and in like manner his bag trousers and the purse which were under the mattress, and told his daughter to undress herself and go to bed in the private chamber as on her wedding night, adding: "When the son of thine uncle comes in to thee say to him, 'Thou hast loitered while going to the privy,' and call him to lie by thy side and keep him in converse till daybreak, when we will explain the whole matter to him." Then he bade take Badr al-Din Hasan out of the chest, after loosing the fetters from his feet and stripping off all that was on him save the fine shirt of blue silk in which he had slept on his wedding night, so that he was well-nigh naked, and trouserless. All this was done whilst he was sleeping on utterly unconscious. Then, by doom of Destiny, Badr al-Din Hasan turned over and awoke, and finding himself in a lighted vestibule, said to himself, "Surely I am in the mazes of some dream." So he rose and went on a little to an inner door and looked in, and lo! he was in the very chamber wherein the bride had been displayed to him, and there he saw the bridal alcove and the settle and his turban and all his clothes. When he saw this, he was confounded, and kept advancing with one foot and retiring with the other, saying, "Am I sleeping or waking?" And he began rubbing his forehead and saying (for indeed he was thoroughly astounded): "By the Lord, verily this is the chamber of the

bride who was displayed before me! Where am I, then? I was surely but now in a box!" Whilst he was talking with himself, Sitt al-Husn suddenly lifted the corner of the chamber curtain and said, "O my lord, wilt thou not come in? Indeed thou hast loitered long in the watercloset." When he heard her words and saw her face, he burst out laughing and said, "Of a truth this is a very nightmare among dreams!" Then he went in sighing, and pondered what had come to pass with him and was perplexed about his case, and his affair became yet more obscure to him when he saw his turban and bag trousers and when, feeling the pocket, he found the purse containing the thousand gold pieces. So he stood still and muttered: "the Lord is All-knowing! Assuredly I am dreaming a wild waking dream!" Then said the Lady of Beauty to him, "What ails thee to look puzzled and perplexed?" adding, "Thou wast a very different man during the first of the night!" He laughed and asked her, "How long have I been away from thee?" and she answered him: "the Lord preserve thee and His Holy Name be about thee! Thou didst but go out an hour ago for an occasion and return. Are thy wits clean gone?" When Badr al-Din Hasan heard this, he laughed and said: "Thou hast spoken truth, but when I went out from thee, I forgot myself awhile in the draughthouse and dreamed that I was a cook at Damascus and abode there ten years, and there came to me a boy who was of the sons of the great, and with him a eunuch." Here he passed his hand over his forehead and, feeling the scar, cried: "By the Lord, O my lady, it must have been true, for he struck my forehead with a stone and cut it open from eyebrow to eyebrow, and here is the mark, so it must have been on wake." Then he added: "But perhaps I dreamt it when we fell asleep, I and thou, in each other's arms, for meseems it was as though I traveled to Damascus without tarboosh and trousers and set up as a cook there." Then he was perplexed and considered for a while, and said: "By the Lord, I also

fancied that I dressed a conserve of pomegranate grains and put too little pepper in it. By the Lord, I must have slept in the numero-cent and have seen the whole of this is a dream, but how long was that dream!" "the Lord upon thee," said Sitt al-Husn, "and what more sawest thou?" So he related all to her, and presently said, "By the Lord, had I not woke up, they would have nailed me to a cross of wood!" "Wherefore?" asked she, and he answered: "For putting too little pepper in the conserve of pomegranate grains, and meseemed they demolished my shop and dashed to pieces my pots and pans, destroyed all my stuff, and put me in a box. Then they sent for the carpenter to fashion a cross for me and would have crucified me thereon. Now Alhamdolillah! thanks be to the Lord, for that all this happened to me in sleep, and not on wake." Sitt al-Husn laughed and clasped him to her bosom and he her to his. Then he thought again and said: "By the Lord, it could not be save while I was awake. Truly I know not what to think of it." Then he lay down, and all the night he was bewildered about his case, now saying, "I was dreaming!" and then saying, "I was awake!" till morning, when his uncle Shams al-Din, the Vizier, came too him and saluted him. When Badr al-Din Hasan saw him he said: "By the Lord, art thou not he who bade bind my hands behind me and smash my shop and nail me to a cross on a matter of conserved pomegranate grains because the dish lacked a sufficiency of pepper?" Whereupon the Vizier said to him: "Know, O my son, that truth hath shown it soothfast and the concealed hath been revealed! Thou art the son of my brother, and I did all this with thee to certify myself that thou wast indeed he who went in unto my daughter that night. I could not be sure of this till I saw that thou knewest the chamber and thy turban and thy trousers and thy gold and the papers in thy writing and in that of thy father, my brother, for I had never seen thee afore that and knew thee not. And as to thy mother, I have prevailed upon her to

come with me from Bassorah." So saying, he threw himself on his nephew's breast and wept for joy, and Badr al-Din Hasan, hearing these words from his uncle, marveled with exceeding marvel and fell on his neck and also shed tears for excess of delight. Then said the Vizier to him, "O my son, the sole cause of all this is what passed between me and thy sire," and he told him the manner of his father wayfaring to Bassorah and all that had occurred to part them. Lastly the Vizier sent for Ajib, and when his father saw him he cried, "And this is he who struck me with the stone!" Quoth the Vizier, "This is thy son!" And Badr al-Din Hasan threw himself upon his boy and began repeating: "Long have I wept o'er severance' ban and bane, Long from mine eyelids tear rills rail and rain. And vowed I if Time reunion bring, My tongue from name of"Severance" I'll restrain. Joy hath o'ercome me to this stress that I From joy's revulsion to shed tears am fain. Ye are so trained to tears, O eyne of me! You weep with pleasure as you weep in pain." When he had ended his verse his mother came in and threw herself upon him and began reciting: "When we met we complained, Our hearts were sore wrung. But plaint is not pleasant Fro' messenger's tongue." Then she wept and related to him what had befallen her since his departure, and he told her what he had suffered, and they thanked the Lord Almighty for their reunion. Two days after his arrival the Vizier Shams al-Din went in to the Sultan and, kissing the ground between his hands, greeted him with the greeting due to kings. The Sultan rejoiced at his return and his face brightened and, placing him hard by his side, asked him to relate all he had seen in his wayfaring and whatso had betided him in his going and coming. So the Vizier told him all that had passed from first to last and the Sultan said: "Thanks be to the Lord for thy victory and the winning of thy wish and thy safe return to thy children and thy people! And now I needs must see the son of thy brother, Hasan of Bassorah, so bring him to the

audience hall tomorrow." Shams al-Din replied, "Thy slave shall stand in thy presence tomorrow, The Lord-willing, if it be God's will." Then he saluted him and, returning to his own house, informed his nephew of the Sultan's desire to see him, whereto replied Hasan, whilom the Bassorite, "Me slave is obedient to the orders of his lord." And the result was that next day he accompanied his uncle, Shams al-Din, to the Divan, and after saluting the Sultan and doing him reverence in most ceremonious obeisance and with most courtly obsequiousness, he began improvising these verses: "The first in rank to kiss the ground shall deign Before you, and all ends and aims attain. You are Honor's fount, and all that hope of you, Shall gain more honor than Hope hoped to gain." The Sultan smiled and signed to him to sit down. So he took a seat close to his uncle, Shams al-Din, and the King asked him his name. Quoth Badr al-Din Hasan, "The meanest of thy slaves is known as Hasan the Bassorite, who is instant in prayer for thee day and night." The Sultan was pleased at his words and, being minded to test his learning and prove his good breeding, asked him, "Dost thou remember any verses in praise of the mole on the cheek?" He answered, "I do," and began reciting: "When I think of my love and our parting smart, My groans go forth and my tears upstart. He's a mole that reminds me in color and charms O' the black o' the eye and the grain of the heart." The King admired and praised the two couplets and said to him: "Quote something else. the Lord bless thy sire, and may thy tongue never tire!" So he began: That cheek mole's spot they evened with a grain Of Musk, nor did they here the simile strain. Nay, marvel at the face comprising all Beauty, nor falling short by single grain." The King shook with pleasure and said to him: "Say more. the Lord bless thy days!" So he began: "O you whose mole on cheek enthroned recalls A dot of musk upon a stone of ruby, Grant me your favors! Be not stone at heart! Core of my heart, whose only sustenance you be!" Quoth the King:

“Fair comparison, O Hasan! Thou hast spoken excellently well and hast proved thyself accomplished in every accomplishment! Now explain to me how many meanings be there in the Arabic language for the word khal or mole.” He replied, “the Lord keep the King! Seven and fifty, and some by tradition say fifty.” Said the Sultan, “Thou sayest sooth,” presently adding, “Hast thou knowledge as to the points of excellence in beauty?” “Yes,” answered Badr al-Din Hasan. “Beauty consisteth in brightness of face, clearness of complexion, shapeliness of nose, gentleness of eyes, sweetness of mouth, cleverness of speech, slenderness of shape, and seemliness of all attributes. But the acme of beauty is in the hair and indeed al-Shihab the Hijazi hath brought together all these items in his doggerel verse of the meter Rajaz, and it is this:” Say thou to skin ‘Be soft,’ to face ‘Be fair,’ And gaze, nor shall they blame howso thou stare. Fine nose in Beauty’s list is high esteemed, Nor less an eye full, bright and debonnair. Eke did they well to laud the lovely lips (Which e’en the sleep of me will never spare), A winning tongue, a stature tall and straight, A seemly union of gifts rarest rare. But Beauty’s acme in the hair one views it, So hear my strain and with some few excuse it!” The Sultan was captivated by his converse and, regarding him as a friend, asked, “What meaning is there in the saw ‘Shurayh is foxier than the fox’?” And he answered, “Know, O King (whom Almighty the Lord keep!), that the legist Shurayh was wont, during the days of the plague, to make a visitation to Al-Najaf, and whenever he stood up to pray, there came a fox which would plant himself facing him and which, by mimicking his movements, distracted him from his devotions. Now when this became longsome to him, one day he doffed his shirt and set it upon a cane and shook out the sleeves. Then, placing his turban on the top and girding its middle with a shawl, he stuck it up in the place where he used to pray. Presently up trotted the fox according to his custom and stood over against the

figure, whereupon Shurayh came behind him, and took him. Hence the sayer saith, 'Shurayh is foxier than the fox.'" When the Sultan heard Badr al-Din Hasan's explanation he said to his uncle, Shams al-Din, "Truly this the son of thy brother is perfect in courtly breeding and I do not think that his like can be found in Cairo." At this Hasan arose and kissed the ground before him and sat down again as a Mameluke should sit before his master. When the Sultan had thus assured himself of his courtly breeding and bearing and his knowledge of the liberal arts and belles-lettres, he joyed with exceeding joy and invested him with a splendid robe of honor and promoted him to an office whereby he might better his condition. Then Badr al-Din Hasan arose and, kissing the ground before the King, wished him continuance of glory and asked leave to retire with his uncle, the Vizier Shams al-Din. The Sultan gave him leave and he issued forth, and the two returned home, where food was set before them and they ate what the Lord had given them. After finishing his meal Hasan repaired to the sitting chamber of his wife, the Lady of Beauty, and told her what had past between him and the Sultan, whereupon quoth she: "He cannot fail to make thee a cup companion and give thee largess in excess and load thee with favors and bounties. So shalt thou, by the Lord's blessing, dispread, like the greater light, the rays of thy perfection wherever thou be, on shore or on sea." Said he to her, "I purpose to recite a Kasidah, an ode, in his praise, that he may redouble in affection for me." "Thou art right in thine intent," she answered, "so gather thy wits together and weigh thy words, and I shall surely see my husband favored with his highest favor." Thereupon Hasan shut himself up and composed these couplets on a solid base and abounding in inner grace and copied them out in a handwriting of the nicest taste. They are as follows: Mine is a Chief who reached most haught estate, Treading the pathways of the good and great. His justice makes all

regions safe and sure, And against froward foes bars every gate. Bold lion, hero, saint, e'en if you call Seraph or Sovran he with an may rate! The poorest suppliant rich from him returns, All words to praise him were inadequate. He to the day of peace is saffron Morn, And murky Night in furious warfare's bate, Bow 'neath his gifts our necks, and by his deeds As King of freeborn souls he 'joys his state. the Lord increase for us his term of years, And from his lot avert all risks and fears! When he had finished transcribing the lines, he dispatched them in charge of one of his uncle's slaves to the Sultan, who perused them, and his fancy was pleased, so he read them to those present and all praised them with the highest praise. Thereupon he sent for the writer to his sitting chamber and said to him: "Thou art from this day forth my boon companion, and I appoint to thee a monthly solde of a thousand dirhams, over and above that I bestowed on thee aforetime." So Hasan rose and, kissing the ground before the King several times, prayed for the continuance of his greatness and glory and length of life and strength. Thus Badr al-Din Hasan the Bassorite waxed high in honor and his fame flew forth to many regions, and he abode in all comfort and solace and delight of life with his uncle and his own folk till death overtook him. When the King Harun al-Rashid heard this story from the mouth of his Vizier, Ja'afar the Barmecide, he marveled much and said, "It behooves that these stories be written in letters of liquid gold." Then he set the slaves at liberty and assigned to the youth who had slain his wife such a monthly stipend as sufficed to make his life easy. He also gave him a concubine from amongst his own slave girls, and the young man became one of his cup companions.

