

THE NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS

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“The Ruined Man Who Became Rich Again Through a Dream”

There lived once in Baghdad a wealthy man and made of money, who lost all his substance and became so destitute that he could earn his living only by hard labor. One night he lay down to sleep dejected and heavyhearted, and saw in a dream a speaker who said to him, “Verily thy fortune is in Cairo. Go thither and seek it.” So he set out for Cairo, but when he arrived there, evening overtook him and he lay down to sleep in a mosque. Presently, by decree of the Lord Almighty a band of bandits entered the mosque and made their way thence into an adjoining house, but the owners, being aroused by the noise of the thieves, awoke and cried out. Whereupon the Chief of Police came to their aid with his officers. The robbers made off, but the Wali entered the mosque, and finding the man from Baghdad asleep there, laid hold of him and beat him with palm rods so grievous a beating that he was well-nigh dead. Then they cast him into jail, where he abode three days, after which the Chief of Police sent for him and asked him, “Whence art thou?” and he answered, “From Baghdad.” Quoth the Wali, “And what brought thee to Cairo?” and quoth the Baghdadi, “I saw in a dream One who said to me, ‘Thy fortune is in Cairo. Go thither to it.’ But when I came to Cairo the fortune which

he promised me proved to be the palm rods thou so generously gavest to me." The Wali laughed till he showed his wisdom teeth and said, "O man of little wit, thrice have I seen in a dream one who said to me: 'There is in Baghdad a house in such a district and of such a fashion and its courtyard is laid out gardenwise, at the lower end whereof is a jetting fountain and under the same a great sum of money lieth buried. Go thither and take it.' Yet I went not, but thou, of the briefness of thy wit, hast journeyed from place to place on the faith of a dream, which was but an idle galimatias of sleep." Then he gave him money, saying, "Help thee back herewith to thine own country," and he took the money and set out upon his homeward march. Now the house the Wali had described was the man's own house in Baghdad, so the wayfarer returned thither and, digging underneath the fountain in his garden, discovered a great treasure. And thus the Lord gave him abundant fortune, and a marvelous coincidence occurred. And a story is also current of

