

THE NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS

[16]

[continues]

“The Ebony Horse”

There was once in times of yore and ages long gone before, a great and puissant King, of the kings of the Persians, Sabur by name, who was the richest of all the kings in store of wealth and dominion and surpassed each and every in wit and wisdom. He was generous, openhanded and beneficent, and he gave to those who sought him and repelled not those who resorted to him, and he comforted the brokenhearted and honorably entreated those who fled to him for refuge. Moreover, he loved the poor and was hospitable to strangers and did the oppressed justice upon the oppressor. He had three daughters, like full moons of shining light or flower gardens blooming bright, and a son as he were the moon. And it was his wont to keep two festivals in the twelvemonth, those of the Nau-Roz, or New Year, and Mihrgan, the Autumnal Equinox, on which occasions he threw open his palaces and gave largess and made proclamation of safety and security and promoted his chamberlains and viceroys. And the people of his realm came in to him and saluted him and gave him joy of the holy day, bringing him gifts and servants and eunuchs. Now he loved science and geometry, and one festival day as he sat on his kingly throne there came in to him three wise men, cunning artificers and past masters in all manner of

craft and inventions, skilled in making things curious and rare, such as confound the wit, and versed in the knowledge of occult truths and perfect in mysteries and subtleties. And they were of three different tongues and countries: the first a Hindi or Indian, the second a Roumi or Greek, and the third a Farsi or Persian. The Indian came forward and, prostrating himself before the King, wished him joy of the festival and laid before him a present befitting his dignity; that is to say, a man of gold, set with precious gems and jewels of price and hending in hand a golden trumpet. When Sabur saw this, he asked, "O sage, what is the virtue of this figure?" and the Indian answered: "O my lord, if this figure be set at the gate of thy city, it will be a guardian over it; for if an enemy enter the place, it will blow this clarion against him and he will be seized with a palsy and drop down dead." Much the King marveled at this and cried, "By the Lord, O sage, an this thy word be true, I will grant thee thy wish and thy desire." Then came forward the Greek and, prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a basin of silver in whose midst was a peacock of gold, surrounded by four and twenty chicks of the same metal. Sabur looked at them and turning to the Greek, said to him, "O sage, what is the virtue of this peacock?" "O my lord," answered he, "as often as an hour of the day or night passeth, it pecketh one of its young and crieth out and flappeth its wing, till the four and twenty hours are accomplished. And when the month cometh to an end, it will open its mouth and thou shalt see the crescent therein." And the King said, "An thou speak sooth, I will bring thee to thy wish and thy desire." Then came forward the Persian sage and, prostrating himself before the King, presented him with a horse of the blackest ebony wood inlaid with gold and jewels, and ready harnessed with saddle, bridle, and stirrups such as befit kings, which when Sabur saw, he marveled with exceeding marvel and was confounded at the beauty of its form and the ingenuity of

its fashion. So he asked, "What is the use of this horse of wood, and what is its virtue and what the secret of its movement?" and the Persian answered, "O my lord, the virtue of this horse is that if one mount him, it will carry him whither he will and fare with its rider through the air and cover the space of a year in a single day." The King marveled and was amazed at these three wonders, following thus hard upon one another on the same day, and turning to the sage, said to him: "By the Lord the Omnipotent, and our Lord the Beneficent, who created all creatures and feedeth them with meat and drink, an thy speech be veritable and the virtue of thy contrivance appear, I will assuredly give thee whatsoever thou lustest for and will bring thee to thy desire and thy wish!" Then he entertained the sages three days, that he might make trial of their gifts, after which they brought the figures before him and each took the creature he had wroughten and showed him the mystery of its movement. The trumpeter blew the trump, the peacock pecked its chicks, and the Persian sage mounted the ebony horse, whereupon it soared with him high in air and descended again. When King Sabur saw all this, he was amazed and perplexed and felt like to fly for joy and said to the three sages: "Now I am certified of the truth of your words and it behooveth me to quit me of my promise. Ask ye, therefore, what ye will, and I will give you that same." Now the report of the King's daughters had reached the sages, so they answered: "If the King be content with us and accept of our gifts and allow us to prefer a request to him, we crave of him that he give us his three daughters in marriage, that we may be his sons-in-law, for that the stability of kings may not be gainsaid." Quoth the King, "I grant you that which you wish and you desire," and bade summon the kazi forthright, that he might marry each of the sages to one of his daughters. Now it fortuned that the Princesses were behind a curtain, looking on, and when they heard this, the youngest

considered her husband-to-be and behold, he was an old man, a hundred years of age, with hair frosted, forehead drooping, eyebrows mangy, ears slitten, beard and mustachios stained and dyed, eyes red and goggle, cheeks bleached and hollow, flabby nose like a brinjall or eggplant, face like a cobblees apron, teeth overlapping and lips like camel's kidneys, loose and pendulous— in brief, a terror, a horror, a monster, for he was of the folk of his time the unsightliest and of his age the frightfulest. Sundry of his grinders had been knocked out and his eyeteeth were like the tusks of the Jinni who frighteneth poultry in henhouses. Now the girl was the fairest and most graceful of her time, more elegant than the gazelle, however tender, than the gentlest zephyr blander, and brighter than the moon at her full, for amorous fray right suitable, confounding in graceful sway the waving bough and outdoing in swimming gait the pacing roe,— in fine, she was fairer and sweeter by far than all her sisters. So when she saw her suitor, she went to her chamber and strewed dust on her head and tore her clothes and fell to buffeting her face and weeping and walling. Now the Prince, her brother, Kamar al-Akmar, or the Moon of Moons called, was then newly returned from a journey and, hearing her weeping and crying, came in to her (for he loved her with fond affection, more than his other sisters) and asked her: "What aileth thee? What hath befallen thee? Tell me, and conceal naught from me." So she smote her breast and answered: "O my brother and my dear one, I have nothing to hide. If the palace be straitened upon thy father, I will go out, and if he be resolved upon a foul thing, I will separate myself from him, though he consent not to make provision for me, and my Lord will provide." Quoth he, "Tell me what meaneth this talk and what hath straitened thy breast and troubled thy temper." "O my brother and my dear one," answered the Princess, "know that my father hath promised me in marriage to a wicked magician who brought him as a gift a

horse of black wood, and hath bewitched him with his craft and his egromancy. But as for me, I will none of him, and would, because of him, I had never come into this world!" Her brother soothed her and solaced her, then fared to his sire and said: "What be this wizard to whom thou hast given my youngest sister in marriage, and what is this present which he hast brought thee, so that thou hast killed my sister with chagrin? It is not right that this should be." Now the Persian was standing by, and when he heard the Prince's words, he was mortified and filled with fury, and the King said, "O my son, an thou sawest this horse, thy wit would be confounded and thou wouldst be amated with amazement." Then he bade the slaves bring the horse before him and they did so, and, when the Prince saw it, it pleased him. So (being an accomplished cavalier) he mounted it forthright and struck its sides with the shovelshaped stirrup irons. But it stirred not, and the King said to the sage, "Go show him its movement, that he also may help thee to win thy wish." Now the Persian bore the Prince a grudge because he willed not he should have his sister, so he showed him the pin of ascent on the right side of the horse and saying to him, "Trill this," left him. Thereupon the Prince trilled the pin and lo! the horse forthwith soared with him high in ether, as it were a bird, and gave not over flying till it disappeared from men's espying, whereat the King was troubled and perplexed about his case and said to the Persian, "O Sage, look how thou mayst make him descend." But he replied, "O my lord, I can do nothing, and thou wilt never see him again till Resurrection Day, for he, of his ignorance and pride, asked me not of the pin of descent, and I forgot to acquaint him therewith." When the King heard this, he was enraged with sore rage, and bade bastinado the sorcerer and clap him in jail, whilst he himself cast the crown from his head and beat his face and smote his breast. Moreover, he shut the doors of his palaces and gave himself up to weeping and

keening, he and his wife and daughters and all the folk of the city, and thus their joy was turned to annoy and their gladness changed into sore affliction and sadness. Thus far concerning them, but as regards the Prince, the horse gave not over soaring with him till he drew near the sun, whereat he gave himself up for lost and saw death in the sides, and was confounded at his case, repenting him of having mounted the horse and saying to himself: "Verily, this was a device of the sage to destroy me on account of my youngest sister. But there is no Majesty and there is no Might save in the Lord, the Glorious, the Great! I am lost without recourse, but I wonder, did not he who made the ascent pin make also a descent pin?" Now he was a man of wit and knowledge and intelligence, so he fell to feeling all the parts of the horse, but saw nothing save a screw like a cock's head on its right shoulder and the like on the left, when quoth he to himself, "I see no sip save these things like button." Presently he turned the right-hand pin, whereupon the horse flew heavenward with increased speed. So he left it, and looking at the sinister shoulder and finding another pin, he wound it up and immediately the steed's upward motion slowed and ceased and it began to descend, little by little, toward the face of the earth, while the rider became yet more cautious and careful of his life. And when he saw this and knew the uses of the horse, his heart was filled with joy and gladness and he thanked Almighty the Lord for that He had deigned deliver him from destruction. Then he began to turn the horse's head whithersoever he would, making it rise and fall at pleasure, till he had gotten complete mastery over its every movement. He ceased not to descend the whole of that day, for that the steed's ascending flight had borne him afar from the earth, and as he descended, he diverted himself with viewing the various cities and countries over which he passed and which he knew not, never having seen them in his life. Amongst the rest, he decried a city ordered after

the fairest fashion in the midst of a verdant and riant land, rich in trees and streams, with gazelles pacing daintily over the plains, whereat he fell a-musing and said to himself, "Would I knew the name of yon town and in what land it is!" And he took to circling about it and observing it right and left. By this time, the day began to decline and the sun drew near to its downing, and he said in his mind, "Verily I find no goodlier place to night in than this city, so I will lodge here, and early on the morrow I will return to my kith and kin and my kingdom and tell my father and family what hath passed and acquaint him with what mine eyes have seen. Then he addressed himself to seeking a place wherein he might safely bestow himself and his horse and where none should descry him, and presently, behold, he espied a-middlemost of the city a palace rising high in upper air surrounded by a great wall with lofty crenelles and battlements, guarded by forty black slaves clad in complete mail and armed with spears and swords, bows and arrows. Quoth he, "This is a goodly place," and turned the descent pin, whereupon the horse sank down with him like a weary bird, and alighted gently on the terrace roof of the palace. So the Prince dismounted and ejaculating "Alhamdolillah—praise be to the Lord," he began to go round about the horse and examine it, saying: "By the Lord, he who fashioned thee with these perfections was a cunning craftsman, and if the Almighty extend the term of my life and restore me to my country and kinsfolk in safety and reunite me with my father, I will assuredly bestow upon him all manner bounties and benefit him with the utmost beneficence." By this time night had overtaken him and he sat on the roof till he was assured that all in the palace slept, and indeed hunger and thirst were sore upon him for that he had not tasted food nor drunk water since he parted from his sire. So he said within himself, "Surely the like of this palace will not lack of victual," and, leaving the horse above, went down in search of somewhat to eat. Presently

he came to a staircase and, descending it to the bottom, found himself in a court paved with white marble and alabaster, which shone in the light of the moon. He marveled at the place and the goodliness of its fashion, but sensed no sound of speaker and saw no living soul and stood in perplexed surprise, looking right and left and knowing not whither he should wend. Then said he to himself, "I may not do better than return to where I left my horse and pass the night by it, and as soon as day shall dawn I will mount and ride away." However, as he tarried talking to himself, he espied a light within the palace, and making toward it, found that it came from a candle that stood before a door of the harem, at the head of a sleeping eunuch, as he were one of the Giant-Demons of Solomon or a tribesman of the Jinn, longer than lumber and broader than a bench. He lay before the door, with the pommel of his sword gleaming in the flame of the candle, and at his head was a bag of leather hanging from a column of granite. When the Prince saw this, he was affrighted and said, "I crave help from the Lord the Supreme! O mine Holy One, even as Thou hast already delivered me from destruction, so vouchsafe me strength to quit myself of the adventure of this palace!" So saying, he put out his hand to the budget and taking it, carried it aside and opened it and found in it food of the best. He ate his fill and refreshed himself and drank water, after which he hung up the provision bag in its place and drawing the eunuch's sword from its sheath, took it, whilst the slave slept on, knowing not whence Destiny should come to him. Then the Prince fared forward into the palace and ceased not till he came to a second door, with a curtain drawn before it. So he raised the curtain and, behold, on entering he saw a couch of the whitest ivory inlaid with pearls and jacinths and jewels, and four slave girls sleeping about it. He went up to the couch, to see what was thereon, and found a young lady lying asleep, chemised with her hair as she were the full moon

rising over the eastern horizon, with flower-white brow and shining hair parting and cheeks like blood-red anemones, and dainty moles thereon. He was amazed at her as she lay in her beauty and loveliness, her symmetry and grace, and he recked no more of death. So he went up to her, trembling in every nerve, and, shuddering with pleasure, kissed her on the right cheek, whereupon she awoke forthright and opened her eyes, and seeing the Prince standing at her head, said to him, "Who art thou, and whence comest thou?" Quoth he, "I am thy slave and thy lover." Asked she, "And who brought thee hither?" and he answered, "My Lord and my fortune." Then said Shams al-Nahar (for such was her name) "Haply thou art he who demanded me yesterday of my father in marriage and he rejected thee, pretending that thou wast foul of favor. By the Lord, my sire lied in his throat when he spoke this thing, for thou art not other than beautiful." Now the son of the King of Hind had sought her in marriage, but her father had rejected him for that he was ugly and uncouth, and she thought the Prince was he. So when she saw his beauty and grace (for indeed he was like the radiant moon) the syntheism of love gat hold of her heart as it were a flaming fire, and they fell to talk and converse. Suddenly, her waiting women awoke and, seeing the Prince with their mistress, said to her, "O my lady, who is this with thee?" Quoth she: "I know not. I found him sitting by me when I woke up. Haply 'tis he who seeketh me in marriage of my sire." Quoth they, "O my lady, by the Lord the All-Father, this is not he who seeketh thee in marriage, for he is hideous and this man is handsome and of high degree. Indeed, the other is not fit to be his servant." Then the handmaidens went out to the eunuch, and finding him slumbering, awoke him, and he started up in alarm. Said they, "How happeth it that thou art on guard at the palace and yet men come in to us whilst we are asleep?" When the black heard this, he sprang in haste to his sword, but found

it not, and fear took him, and trembling. Then he went in, confounded, to his mistress and seeing the Prince sitting at talk with her, said to him, "O my lord, art thou man or Jinni?" Replied the Prince: "Woe to thee, O unluckiest of slaves. How darest thou even the sons of the royal Chosroes with one of the unbelieving Satans?" And he was as a raging lion. Then he took the sword in his hand and said to the slave, "I am the King's son-in-law, and he hath married me to his daughter and bidden me go in to her." And when the eunuch heard these words he replied, "O my lord, if thou be indeed of kind a man as thou avouchest, she is fit for none but for thee, and thou art worthier of her than any other." Thereupon the eunuch ran to the King, shrieking loud and rending his raiment and heaving dust upon his head. And when the King heard his outcry, he said to him: "What hath befallen thee? Speak quickly and be brief, for thou hast fluttered my heart." Answered the eunuch, "O King, come to thy daughter's succor, for a devil of the Jinn, in the likeness of a King's son hath got possession of her, so up and at him!" When the King heard this, he thought to kill him and said, "How camest thou to be careless of my daughter and let this demon come at her?" Then he betook himself to the Princess's palace, where he found her slave women standing to await him, and asked them, "What is come to my daughter?" "O King," answered they, "slumber overcame us and when we awoke, we found a young man sitting upon her couch in talk with her, as he were the full moon. Never saw we aught fairer of favor than he. So we questioned him of his case and he declared that thou hadst given him thy daughter in marriage. More than this we know not, nor do we know if he be a man or a Jinni, but he is modest and well-bred, and doth nothing unseemly or which leadeth to disgrace." Now when the King heard these words, his wrath cooled, and he raised the curtain little by little and looking in, saw sitting at talk with his daughter a Prince of the goodliest, with a

face like the full moon for sheen. At this sight he could not contain himself, of his jealousy for his daughter's honor, and putting aside the curtain, rushed in upon them drawn sword in hand like a furious Ghul. Now when the Prince saw him he asked the Princess, "Is this thy sire?" and she answered, "Yes." Whereupon he sprang, to his feet and, seizing his sword, cried out at the King with so terrible a cry that he was confounded. Then the youth would have fallen on him with the sword, but the King, seeing that the Prince was doughtier than he, sheathed his scimitar and stood till the young man came up to him, when he accosted him courteously and said to him, "O youth, art thou a man or a Jinni?" Quoth the Prince: "Did I not respect thy right as mine host and thy daughter's honor, I would spill thy blood! How darest thou fellow me with devils, me that am a Prince of the sons of the royal Chosroes, who, had they wished to take thy kingdom, could shake thee like an earthquake from thy glory and thy dominions, and spoil thee of all thy possessions?" Now when the King heard his words, he was confounded with awe and bodily fear of him and rejoined: "If thou indeed be of the sons of the Kings, as thou pretendest, how cometh it that thou enterest my palace without my permission, and smirchest mine honor, making thy way to my daughter and feigning that thou art her husband and claiming that I have given her to thee to wife, I that have slain kings and king's sons who sought her of me in marriage? And now who shall save thee from my might and majesty when, if I cried out to my slaves and servants and bade them put thee to the vilest of deaths, they would slay thee forthright? Who shall deliver thee out of my hand?" When the Prince heard this speech of the King, he answered: "Verily, I wonder at thee and at the shortness and denseness of thy wit! Say me, canst covet for thy daughter a mate comelier than myself, and hast ever seen a stouter-hearted man or one better fitted for a Sultan or a more glorious in rank and dominion than I?" Rejoined

the King: "Nay, by the Lord! But I would have had thee, O youth, act after the custom of kings and demand her from me to wife before witnesses, that I might have married her to thee publicly. And now, even were I to marry her to thee privily, yet hast thou dishonored me in her person."

Rejoined the Prince: "Thou sayest sooth, O King, but if thou summon thy slaves and thy soldiers and they fall upon me and slay me, as thou pretendest, thou wouldst but publish thine own disgrace, and the folk would be divided between belief in thee and disbelief in thee. Wherefore, O King, thou wilt do well, meseemeth, to turn from this thought to that which I shall counsel thee." Quoth the King, "Let me hear what thou hast to advise," and quoth the Prince: "What I have to propose to thee is this: Either do thou meet me in combat singular, I and thou, and he who slayeth his adversary shall be held the worthier and having a better title to the kingdom; or else let me be this night, and whenas dawns the morn, draw out against me thy horsemen and footmen and servants, but first tell me their number." Said the King, "They are forty thousand horse, besides my own slaves and their followers, who are the like of them in number." Thereupon said the Prince: "When the day shall break, do thou array them against me and say to them: 'This man is a suitor to me for my daughter's hand, on condition that he shall do battle singlehanded against you all; for he pretendeth that he will overcome you and put you to the rout, and indeed that ye cannot prevail against him.' After which, leave me to do battle with them. If they slay me, then is thy secret the surer guarded and thine honor the better warded, and if I overcome them and see their backs, then is it the like of me a king should covet to his son-in-law." So the King approved of his opinion and accepted his proposition, despite his awe at the boldness of his speech and amaze at the pretensions of the Prince to meet in fight his whole host, such as he had described it to him, being at heart assured that he would perish in the fray

and so he should be quit of him and freed from the fear of dishonor. Thereupon he called the eunuch and bade him go to his Vizier without stay and delay and command him to assemble the whole of the army and cause them don their arms and armor and mount their steeds. So the eunuch carried the King's order to the Minister, who straightway summoned the captains of the host and the lords of the realm and bade them don their harness of derring-do and mount horse and sally forth in battle array. Such was their case, but as regards the King, he sat a long while conversing with the young Prince, being pleased with his wise speech and good sense and fine breeding. And when it was daybreak, he returned to his palace and, seating himself on his throne, commanded his merry men to mount, and bade them saddle one of the best of the royal steeds with handsome selle and housings and trappings and bring it to the Prince. But the youth said, "O King, I will not mount horse till I come in view of the troops and review them." "Be it as thou wilt," replied the King. Then the two repaired to the parade ground where the troops were drawn up, and the young Prince looked upon them and noted their great number. After which the King cried out to them, saying: "Ho, all ye men, there is come to me a youth who seeketh my daughter in marriage, and in very sooth never have I seen a goodlier than he— no, nor a stouter of heart nor a doughtier of arm, for he pretendeth that he can overcome you singlehanded, and force you to flight and that, were ye a hundred thousand in number, yet for him would ye be but few. Now when he chargeth down on you, do ye receive him upon point of pike and sharp of saber, for indeed he hath undertaken a mighty matter." Then quoth the King to the Prince, "Up, O my son, and do thy devoir on them." Answered he: "O King, thou dealest not justly and fairly by me. How shall I go forth against them, seeing that I am afoot and the men be mounted?" The King retorted, "I bade thee mount, and thou refusedst, but choose thou

which of my horses thou wilt." Then he said, "Not one of thy horses pleaseth me, and I will ride none but that on which I came." Asked the King, "And where is thy horse?" "Atop of thy palace." "In what part of my palace?" "On the roof." Now when the King heard these words, he cried: "Out on thee! This is the first sip thou hast given of madness. How can the horse be on the roof.? But we shall at once see if thou speak truth or lies." Then he turned to one of his chief officers and said to him, "Go to my palace and bring me what thou findest on the roof." So all the people marveled at the young Prince's words, saying one to other, "How can a horse come down the steps from the roof.? Verily this is a thing whose like we never heard." In the meantime the King's messenger repaired to the palace and, mounting to the roof, found the horse standing there, and never had he looked on a handsomer. But when he drew near and examined it, he saw that it was made of ebony and ivory. Now the officer was accompanied by other high officers, who also looked on, and they laughed to one another, saying: "Was it of the like of this horse that the youth spake? We cannot deem him other than mad. However, we shall soon see the truth of his case. Peradventure herein is some mighty matter, and he is a man of high degree." Then they lifted up the horse bodily, carrying it to the King, set it down before him. And all the lieges flocked round to look at it, marveling at the beauty of its proportions and the richness of its saddle and bridle. The King also admired it, and wondered at it with extreme wonder, and he asked the Prince, "O youth, is this thy horse?" He answered, "Yes, O King, this is my horse, and thou shalt soon see the marvel it showeth." Rejoined the King, "Then take and mount it," and the Prince retorted, "I will not mount till the troops withdraw afar from it." So the King bade them retire a bowshot from the horse, whereupon quoth its owner: "O King, see thou, I am about to mount my horse and charge upon thy host and scatter

them right and left and split their hearts asunder." Said the King, "Do as thou wilt, and spare not their lives, for they will not spare thine." Then the Prince mounted, whilst the troops ranged themselves in ranks before him, and one said to another, "When the youth cometh between the ranks, we will take him on the points of our pikes and the sharps of our sabers." Quoth another: "By the Lord, this is a mere misfortune. How shall we slay a youth so comely of face and shapely of form?" And a third continued: "Ye will have hard work to get the better of him, for the youth had not done this but for what he knew of his own prowess and pre-eminence of valor." Meanwhile, having settled himself in his saddle, the Prince turned the pin of ascent whilst an eyes were strained to see what he would do, whereupon the horse began to heave and rock and sway to and fro and make the strangest of movements steed ever made, till its belly was filled with air and it took flight with its rider and soared high into the sky. When the King saw this, he cried out to his men, saying: "Woe to you! Catch him, catch him, ere he 'scape you!" But his Viziers and viceroys said to him: "O King, can a man overtake the flying bird? This is surely none but some mighty magician or Marid of the, Jinn, or devil, and the Lord save thee from him! So praise thou the Almighty for deliverance of thee and of all thy host from his hand." Then the King returned to his palace after seeing the feat of the Prince, and going in to his daughter, acquainted her with what had befallen them both on the parade ground. He found her grievously afflicted for the Prince and bewailing her separation from him, wherefore she fell sick with violent sickness and took to her pillow. Now when her father saw her on this wise, he pressed her to his breast and kissing her between the eyes, said to her: "O my daughter, praise the Lord Almighty and thank Him for that He hath delivered us from this crafty enchanter, this villain, this low fellow, this thief who thought only of seducing thee!" And he repeated to her the story of the

Prince and how he had disappeared in the firmament, and he abused him and cursed him, knowing not how dearly his daughter loved him. But she paid no heed to his words and did but redouble in her tears and wails, saying to herself, "By the Lord, I will neither eat meat nor drink till the Lord reunite me with him!" Her father was greatly concerned for her case and mourned much over her plight, but for all he could do to soothe her, love longing only increased on her. Thus far concerning the King and Princess Shams al-Nahar, but as regards Prince Kamar al-Akmar, when he had risen high in air, he turned his horse's head toward his native land, and being alone, mused upon the beauty of the Princess and her loveliness. Now he had inquired of the King's people the name of the city and of its King and his daughter, and men had told him that it was the city of Sana'a. So he journeyed with all speed till he drew near his father's capital and, making an airy circuit about the city, alighted on the roof of the King's palace, where he left his horse whilst he descended into the palace, and seeing its threshold strewn with ashes, thought that one of his family was dead. Then he entered, as of wont, and found his father and mother and sisters clad in mourning raiment of black, all pale of faces and lean of frames. When his sire descried him and was assured that it was indeed his son, he cried out with a great cry and fell down in a fit, but after a time, coming to himself, threw himself upon him and embraced him, clipping him to his bosom and rejoicing in him with exceeding joy and extreme gladness. His mother and sisters heard this, so they came in, and seeing the Prince, fell upon him, kissing him and weeping and joying with exceeding joyance. Then they questioned him of his case, so he told them all that had past from first to last, and his father said to him, "Praised be the Lord for thy safety, O coolth of my eyes and core of my heart!" Then the King bade hold high festival, and the glad tidings flew through the city. So they beat drums and

cymbals and, doffing the weed of mourning, they donned the gay garb of gladness and decorated the streets and markets, whilst the folk vied with one another who should be the first to give the King joy, and the King proclaimed a general pardon, and opening the prisons, released those who were therein prisoned. Moreover, he made banquets for the people, with great abundance of eating and drinking, for seven days and nights, and all creatures were gladsomest. And he took horse with his son and rode out with him, that the folk might see him and rejoice. After a while the Prince asked about the maker of the horse, saying, "O my father, what hath fortune done with him?" and the King answered: "the Lord never bless him nor the hour wherein I set eyes on him! For he was the cause of thy separation from us, O my son, and he hath lain in jail since the day of thy disappearance." Then the King bade release him from prison and, sending for him, invested him in a dress of satisfaction and entreated him with the utmost favor and munificence, save that he would not give him his daughter to wife. Whereat the sage raged with sore rage and repented of that which he had done, knowing that the Prince had secured the secret of the steed and the manner of its motion. Moreover, the King said to his son: "I reckon thou wilt do well not to go near the horse henceforth, and more especially not to mount it after this day; for thou knowest not its properties, and belike thou art in error about it." Now the Prince had told his father of his adventure with the King of Sana'a and his daughter, and he said, "Had the King intended to kill thee, he had done so, but thine hour was not yet come." When the rejoicings were at an end, the people returned to their places and the King and his son to the palace, where they sat down and fell to eating, drinking, and making merry. Now the King had a handsome handmaiden who was skilled in playing the lute, so she took it and began to sweep the strings and sing thereto before the King and his son of separation of lovers,

and she chanted the following verses: "Deem not that absence breeds in me aught of forgetfulness. What should remember I did you fro' my remembrance wane? Time dies but never dies the fondest love for you we bear, And in your love I'll die and in your love I'll arise again." When the Prince heard these verses, the fires of longing flamed up in his heart, and pine and passion redoubled upon him. Grief and regret were sore upon him and his bowels yeamed in him for love of the King's daughter of Sana'a. So he rose forthright and, escaping his father's notice, went forth the palace to the horse and mounting it, turned the pin of ascent, whereupon birdlike it flew with him high in air and soared toward the upper regions of the sky. In early morning his father missed him, and going up to the pinnacle of the palace in great concern, saw his son rising into the firmament, whereat he was sore afflicted and repented in all penitence that he had not taken the horse and hidden it. And he said to himself, "By the Lord, if but my son returned to me, I will destroy the horse, that my heart may be at rest concerning my son." And he fell again to weeping and bewailing himself. Such was his case, but as regards the Prince, he ceased not flying on through air till he came to the city of Sana'a and alighted on the roof as before. Then he crept down stealthily and, finding the eunuch asleep, as of wont, raised the curtain and went on little by little till he came to the door of the Princess's alcove chamber and stopped to listen, when lo! he heard her shedding plenteous tears and reciting verses, whilst her women slept round her. Presently, overhearing her weeping and wailing, quoth they, "O our mistress, why wilt thou mourn for one who mourneth not for thee?" Quoth she, "O ye little of wit, is he for whom I mourn of those who forget or who are forgotten?" And she fell again to wailing and weeping, till sleep overcame her. Hereat the Prince's heart melted for her and his gall bladder was like to burst, so he entered and, seeing her lying asleep without

covering, touched her with his hand, whereupon she opened her eyes and espied him standing by her. Said he, "Why all this crying and mourning?" And when she knew him, she threw herself upon him and took him around the neck and kissed him and answered, "For thy sake and because of my separation from thee." Said he, "O my lady, I have been made desolate by thee all this long time!" But she replied, "'Tis thou who hast desolated me, and hadst thou tarried longer, I had surely died!" Rejoined he: "O my lady, what thinkest thou of my case with thy father, and how he dealt with me? Were it not for my love of thee, O temptation and seduction of the Three Worlds, I had certainly slain him and made him a warning to all beholders, but even as I love thee, so I love him for thy sake." Quoth she: "How couldst thou leave me? Can my life be sweet to me after thee?" Quoth he: "Let what hath happened suffice. I am now hungry, and thirsty." So she bade her maidens make ready meat and drink, and they sat eating and drinking and conversing till night was well-nigh ended; and when day broke he rose to take leave of her and depart ere the eunuch should awake. Shams al-Nahar asked him, "Whither goest thou?" and he answered, "To my father' house, and I plight thee my troth that I will come to thee once in every week." But she wept and said: "I conjure thee, by the Lord the Almighty, take me with thee whereso thou wendest and make me not taste anew the bitter gourd of separation from thee." Quoth he, "Wilt thou indeed go with me?" and quoth she, "Yes." "Then," said he, "arise, that we depart." So she rose forthright and going to a chest, affayed herself in what was richest and dearest to her of her trinkets of gold and jewels of price, and she fared forth, her handmaids recking naught. So he carried her up to the roof of the palace and, mounting the ebony horse, took her up behind him and made her fast to himself, binding her with strong bonds. After which he turned the shoulder pin of ascent and the horse rose with him high in

air. When her slave women saw this, they shrieked aloud and told her father and mother, who in hot haste ran to the palace roof and looking up, saw the magical horse flying away with the Prince and Princess. At this the King was troubled with ever-increasing trouble and cried out, saying, "O King's son, I conjure thee, by the Lord, have ruth on me and my wife and bereave us not of our daughter!" The Prince made him no reply, but, thinking in himself that the maiden repented of leaving father and mother, asked her, "O ravishment of the age, say me, wilt thou that I restore thee to thy mother and father?" Whereupon she answered: "By the Lord, O my lord, that is not my desire. My only wish is to be with thee, wherever thou art, for I am distracted by the love of thee from all else, even from my father and mother." Hearing these words, the Prince joyed with great joy, and made the horse fly and fare softly with them, so as not to disquiet her. Nor did they stay their flight till they came in sight of a green meadow, wherein was a spring of running water. Here they alighted and ate and drank, after which the Prince took horse again and set her behind him, binding her in his fear for her safety, after which they fared on till they came in sight of his father's capital. At this, the Prince was filled with joy and bethought himself to show his beloved the seat of his dominion and his father's power and dignity and give her to know that it was greater than that of her sire. So he set her down in one of his father's gardens without the city where his parent was wont to take his pleasure, and carrying her into a domed summerhouse prepared there for the King, left the ebony horse at the door and charged the damsel keep watch over it, saying, "Sit here till my messenger come to thee, for I go now to my father to make ready a palace for thee and show thee my royal estate." She was delighted when she heard these words and said to him, "Do as thou wilt," for she thereby understood that she should not enter the city but with due honor and worship, as became her rank. Then the Prince

left her and betook himself to the palace of the King his father, who rejoiced in his return and met him and welcomed him, and the Prince said to him: "Know that I have brought with me the King's daughter of whom I told thee, and have left her without the city in such a garden and come to tell thee, that thou mayest make ready the procession of estate and go forth to meet her and show her the royal dignity and troops and guards." Answered the King, "With joy and gladness," and straightway bade decorate the town with the goodliest adornment. Then he took horse and rode out in all magnificence and majesty, he and his host, high officers, and household, with drums and kettledrums, fifes and clarions and all manner instruments, whilst the Prince drew forth of his treasuries jewelry and apparel and what else of the things which kings hoard and made a rare display of wealth-and splendor. Moreover he got ready for the Princess a canopied litter of brocades, green, red, and yellow, wherein he set Indian and Greek and Abyssinian slave girls. Then he left the litter and those who were therein and preceded them to the pavilion where he had set her down, and searched but found naught, neither Princess nor horse. When he saw this, he beat his face and rent his raiment and began to wander round about the garden as he had lost his wits, after which he came to his senses and said to himself: "How could she have come at the secret of this horse, seeing I told her nothing of it? Maybe the Persian sage who made the horse hath chanced upon her and stolen her away, in revenge for my father's treatment of him." Then he sought the guardians of the garden and asked them if they had seen any pass the precincts, and said: "Hath anyone come in here? Tell me the truth and the whole truth, or I will at once strike off your heads." They were terrified by his threats, but they answered with one voice, "We have seen no man enter save the Persian sage, who came to gather healing herbs." So the Prince was certified that it was indeed he that had

taken away the maiden, and abode confounded and perplexed concerning his case. And he was abashed before the folk and, turning to his sire, told him what had happened and said to him: "Take the troops and march them back to the city. As for me, I will never return till I have cleared up this affair." When the King heard this, he wept and beat his breast and said to him: "O my son, calm thy choler and master thy chagrin and come home with us and look what Idng's daughter thou wouldst fain have, that I may marry thee to her." But the Prince paid no heed to his words and farewelling him, departed, whilst the King returned to the city, and their joy was changed into sore annoy. Now, as Destiny issued her decree, when the Prince left the Princess in the garden house and betook himself to his father's palace for the ordering of his affair, the Persian entered the garden to pluck certain simples and, scenting the sweet savor of musk and perfumes that exhaled from the Princess and impregnated the whole place, followed it till he came to the pavilion and saw standing at the door the horse which he had made with his own hands. His heart was filled with joy and gladness, for he had bemoaned its loss much since it had gone out of his hand. So he went up to it and, examining its every part, found it whole and sound, whereupon he was about to mount and ride away when he bethought himself and said, "Needs must I first look what the Prince hath brought and left here with the horse." So he entered the pavilion and seeing the Princess sitting there, as she were the sun shining sheen in the sky serene, knew her at the first glance to be some highborn lady, and doubted not but the Prince had brought her thither on the horse and left her in the pavilion whilst he went to the city to make ready for her entry in state procession with all splendor. Then he went up to her and kissed the earth between her hands, whereupon she raised her eyes to him and, finding him exceedingly foul of face and favor, asked, "Who art thou?", and he answered, "O my

lady, I am a messenger sent by the Prince, who hath bidden me bring thee to another pleasance nearer the city, for that my lady the Queen cannot walk so far and is unwilling, of her joy in thee, that another should forestall her with thee." Quoth she, "Where is the Prince?" and quoth the Persian, "He is in the city, with his sire, and forthwith he shall come for thee in great state." Said she: "O thou! Say me, could he find none handsomer to send to me?" Whereat loud laughed the sage and said: "Yea verily, he hath not a Mameluke as ugly as I am, but, O my lady, let not the ill favor of my face and the foulness of my form deceive thee. Hadst thou profited of me as hath the Prince, verily thou wouldst praise my affair. Indeed, he chose me as his messenger to thee because of my uncomeliness and loathsomeness in his jealous love of thee. Else hath he Mamelukes and Black African slaves, pages, eunuchs, and attendants out of number, each goodlier than other." Whenas she heard this, it commended itself to her reason and she believed him, so she rose forthright and, putting her hand in his, said, "O my father, what hast thou brought me to ride?" He replied, "O my lady thou shalt ride the horse thou camest on," and she, "I cannot ride it by myself." Whereupon he smiled and knew that he was her master and said, "I will ride with thee myself." So he mounted and, taking her up behind him, bound her to himself with firm bonds, while she knew not what he would with her. Then he turned the ascent pin, whereupon the belly of the horse became full of wind and it swayed to and fro like a wave of the sea, and rose with them high in air, nor slackened in its flight till it was out of sight of the city. Now when Shams al-Nahar saw this, she asked him: "Ho, thou! What is become of that thou toldest me of my Prince, making me believe that he sent thee to me?" Answered the Persian, "the Lord damn the Prince! He is a mean and skinflint knave." She cried: "Woe to thee! How darest thou disobey thy lord's commandment?" Whereto the Persian

replied: "He is no lord of mine. Knowest thou who I am?" Rejoined the Princess, "I know nothing of thee save what thou toldest me," and retorted he: "What I told thee was a trick of mine against thee and the King's son. I have long lamented the loss of this horse which is under us, for I constructed it and made myself master of it. But now I have gotten firm hold of it and of thee too, and I will burn his heart even as he hath burnt mine, nor shall he ever have the horse again— no, never! So be of good cheer and keep thine eyes cool and clear, for I can be of more use to thee than he. And I am generous as I am wealthy. My servants and slaves shall obey thee as their mistress. I will robe thee in finest raiment and thine every wish shall be at thy will." When she heard this, she buffeted her face and cried out, saying: "Ah, wellaway! I have not won my beloved and I have lost my father and mother!" And she wept bitter tears over what had befallen her, whilst the sage fared on with her, without ceasing, till he came to the land of the Greeks and alighted in a verdant mead, abounding in streams and trees. Now this meadow lay near a city wherein was a King of high puissance, and it chanced that he went forth that day to hunt and divert himself. As he passed by the meadow, he saw the Persian standing there, with the damsel and the horse by his side, and before the sage was ware, the King's slaves fell upon him and carried him and the lady and the horse to their master, who, noting the foulness of the man's favor and his loathsomeness and the beauty of the girl and her loveliness, said, "O my lady, what kin is this oldster to thee?" The Persian made haste to reply, saying, "She is my wife and the daughter of my father's brother." But the lady at once gave him the lie and said: "O King, by the Lord, I know him not, nor is he my husband. Nay, he is a wicked magician who hath stolen me away by force and fraud." Thereupon the King bade bastinado the Persian, and they beat him till he was well-nigh dead, after which the King commanded to carry him to

the city and cast him into jail; and, taking from him the damsel and the ebony horse (though he knew not its properties nor the secret of its motion), set the girl in his seraglio and the horse amongst his hoards. Such was the case with the sage and the lady, but as regards Prince Kamar al-Akmar, he garbed himself in traveling gear and taking what he needed of money, set out tracking their trail in very sorry plight, and journeyed from the country to country and city to city seeking the Princess and inquiring after the ebony horse, whilst all who heard him marveled at him and deemed his talk extravagant. Thus he continued doing a long while, but for all his inquiry and quest, he could hit on no news of her. At last he came to her father's city of Sana'a and there asked for her, but could get no tidings of her and found her father mourning her loss. So he turned back and made for the land of the Greeks, continuing to inquire concerning the twain as he went till, as chance would have it, he alighted at a certain khan and saw a company of merchants sitting at talk. So he sat down near them and heard one say, "O my friends, I lately witnessed a wonder of wonders." They asked, "What was that?" and he answered: "I was visiting such a district in such a city (naming the city wherein was the Princess), and I heard its people chatting of a strange thing which had lately befallen. It was that their King went out one day hunting and coursing with a company of his courtiers and the lords of his realm, and issuing from the city, they came to a green meadow where they espied an old man standing, with a woman sitting hard by a horse of ebony. The man was foulest foul of face and loathly of form, but the woman was a marvel of beauty and loveliness and elegance and perfect grace, and as for the wooden horse, it was a miracle— never saw eyes aught goodlier than it nor more gracious than its make." Asked the others, "And what did the King with them?" and the merchant answered; "As for the man, the King seized him and questioned him of the

damsel and he pretended that she was his wife and the daughter of his paternal uncle, but she gave him the lie forthright and declared that he was a sorcerer and a villain. So the King took her from the old man and bade beat him and cast him into the trunk house. As for the ebony horse, I know not what became of it." When the Prince heard these words, he drew near to the merchant and began questioning him discreetly and courteously touching the name of the city and of its King, which when he knew, he passed the night full of joy. And as soon as dawned the day he set out and traveled sans surcease till he reached that city. But when he would have entered, the gatekeepers laid hands on him, that they might bring him before the King to question him of his condition and the craft in which he skilled and the cause of his coming thither— such being the usage and custom of their ruler. Now it was suppertime when he entered the city, and it was then impossible to go in to the King or take counsel with him respecting the stranger. So the guards carried him to the jail, thinking to lay him by the heels there for the night. But when the warders saw his beauty and loveliness, they could not find it in their hearts to imprison him. They made him sit with them without the walls, and when food came to them, he ate with them what sufficed him. As soon as they had made an end of eating, they turned to the Prince and said, "What countryman art thou?" "I come from Fars," answered he, "the land of the Chosroes." When they heard this, they laughed and one of them said: "O Chosroan, I have heard the talk of men and their histories and I have looked into their conditions, but never saw I or heard I a bigger liar than the Chosroan which is with us in the jail." Quoth another, "And never did I see aught fouler than his favor or more hideous than his visnomy." Asked the Prince, "What have ye seen of his lying?" and they answered: "He pretendeth that he is one of the wise! Now the King came upon him as he went a-hunting, and found with him a most

beautiful woman and a horse of the blackest ebony— never saw I a handsomer. As for the damsel, she is with the King, who is enamored of her and would fain marry her. But she is mad, and were this man a leech, as he claimeth to be, he would have healed her, for the King doth his utmost to discover a cure for her case and a remedy for her disease, and this whole year past hath he spent treasures upon physicians and astrologers on her account, but none can avail to cure her. As for the horse, it is in the royal hoard house, and the ugly man is here with us in prison, and as soon as night falleth, he weepeth and bemoaneth himself and will not let us sleep.” When the warders had recounted the case of the Persian egromancer they held in prison and his weeping and wailing, the Prince at once devised a device whereby he might compass his desire, and presently the guards of the gate, being minded to sleep, led him into the jail and locked the door. So he overheard the Persian weeping and bemoaning himself in his own tongue, and saying: “Alack, and alas for my sin, that I sinned against myself and against the King’s son, in that which I did with the damsel, for I neither left her nor won my will of her! All this cometh of my lack of sense, in that I sought for myself that which I deserved not and which befitted not the like of me. For whoso seeketh what suiteth him not at all, falleth with the like of my fall.” Now when the King’s son heard this, he accosted him in Persian, saying: “How long will this weeping and wailing last? Say me, thinkest thou that hath befallen thee that which never befell other than thou?” Now when the Persian heard this, he made friends with him and began to complain to him of his case and misfortunes. And as soon as the morning morrowed, the warders took the Prince and carried him before their King, informing him that he had entered the city on the previous night, at a time when audience was impossible. Quoth the King to the Prince, “Whence comest thou, and what is thy name and trade, and why hast thou traveled hither?” He replied: “As

to my name, I am called in Persian Harjah. As to my country, I come from the land of Fars, and I am of the men of art and especially of the art of medicine and healing the sick and those whom the Jinns drive mad. For this I go round about all countries and cities, to profit by adding knowledge to my knowledge, and whenever I see a patient I heal him, and this is my craft." Now when the King heard this, he rejoiced with exceeding joy and said, "O excellent sage, thou hast indeed come to us at a time when we need thee." Then he acquainted him with the case of the Princess, adding, "If thou cure her and recover her from her madness, thou shalt have of me everything thou seekest." Replied the Prince, "the Lord save and favor the King. Describe to me all thou hast seen of her insanity, and tell me how long it is since the access attacked her, also how thou camest by her and the horse and the sage." So the King told him the whole story, from first to last, adding, "The sage is in jail." Quoth the Prince, "O auspicious King, and what hast thou done with the horse?" Quoth the King, "O youth, it is with me yet, laid up in one of my treasure chambers." Whereupon said the Prince within himself: "The best thing I can do is first to see the horse and assure myself of its condition. If it be whole and sound, all will be well and end well. But if its motor works be destroyed, I must find some other way of delivering my beloved." Thereupon he turned to the King and said to him: "O King, I must see the horse in question. Haply I may find in it somewhat that will serve me for the recovery of the damsel." "With all my heart," replied the King, and taking him by the hand, showed him into the place where the horse was. The Prince went round about it, examining its condition, and found it whole and sound, whereat he rejoiced greatly and said to the King: "the Lord save and exalt the King! I would fain go in to the damsel, that I may see how it is with her, for I hope in the Lord to heal her by my healing hand through means of the horse." Then he

bade them take care of the horse and the King carried him to the Princess's apartment, where her lover found her wringing her hands and writhing and beating herself against the ground, and tearing her garments to tatters as was her wont. But there was no madness of Jinn in her, and she did this but that none might approach her. When the Prince saw her thus, he said to her, "No harm shall betide thee, O ravishment of the Three Worlds," and went on to soothe her and speak her fair, till he managed to whisper, "I am Kamar al-Akmar," whereupon she cried out with a loud cry and fell down fainting for excess of joy. But the King thought this was epilepsy brought on by her fear of him, and by her suddenly being startled. Then the Prince put his mouth to her ear and said to her: "O Shams al-Nahar, O seduction of the universe, have a care for thy life and mine and be patient and constant; for this our position needeth sufferance and skillful contrivance to make shift for our delivery from this tyrannical King. My first move will be now to go out to him and tell him that thou art possessed of a Jinn and hence thy madness, but that I will engage to heal thee and drive away the evil spirit if he will at once unbind thy bonds. So when he cometh in to thee, do thou speak him smooth words, that he may think I have cured thee, and all will be done for us as we desire." Quoth she, "Hearkening and obedience," and he went out to the King in joy and gladness, and said to him: "O august King, I have, by thy good fortune, discovered her disease and its remedy, and have cured her for thee. So now do thou go in to and speak her softly and treat her kindly, and promise her what thou desirest of her be accomplished to thee." Thereupon the King went in to her, and when she saw him, she rose and kissing the ground before him, bade him welcome and said, "I admire how thou hast come to visit thy handmaid this day." Whereat he was ready to fly for joy and bade the waiting women and the eunuchs attend her and carry her to the hammam and make ready for her

dresses and adornment. So they went in to her and saluted her, and she returned their salaams with the goodliest language and after the pleasantest fashion. Whereupon they clad her in royal apparel and, clasping a collar of jewels about her neck, carried her to the bath and served her there. Then they brought her forth as she were the full moon, and when she came into the King's presence, she saluted him and kissed ground before him. Whereupon he joyed in her with joy exceeding and said to the Prince: "O Sage, O Philosopher, all this is of thy blessing. the Lord increase to us the benefit of thy healing breath!" The Prince replied: "O King, for the completion of her cure it behooveth that thou go forth, thou and all thy troops and guards, to the place where thou foundest her, not forgetting the beast of black wood which was with her. For therein is a devil, and unless I exorcise him, he will return to her and afflict her at the head of every month." "With love and gladness," cried the King, "O thou Prince of all philosophers and most learned of all who see the light of day." Then he brought out the ebony horse to the meadow in question and rode thither with all his troops and the Princess, little weeting the purpose of the Prince. Now when they came to the appointed place, the Prince, still habited as a leech, bade them set the Princess and the steed as far as eye could reach from the King and his troops, and said to him: "With thy leave, and at thy word, I will now proceed to the fumigations and conjurations, and here imprison the adversary of mankind, that he may never more return to her. After this, I shall mount this wooden horse, which seemeth to be made of ebony, and take the damsel up behind me, whereupon it will shake and sway to and fro and fare forward till it come to thee, when the affair will be at an end. And after this thou mayest do with her as thou wilt." When the King heard his words, he rejoiced with extreme joy, so the Prince mounted the horse, and taking the damsel up behind him, whilst the King and his troops

watched him, bound her fast to him. Then he turned the ascending pin and the horse took flight and soared with them high in air, till they disappeared from every eye. After this the King abode half the day expecting their return, but they returned not. So when he despaired of them, repenting him greatly of that which he had done and grieving sore for the loss of the damsel, he went back to the city with his troops. He then sent for the Persian who was in prison and said to him: "O thou traitor, O thou villain, why didst thou hide from me the mystery of the ebony horse? And now a sharper hath come to me and hath carried it off, together with a slave girl whose ornaments are worth a mint of money, and I shall never see anyone or anything of them again!" So the Persian related to him all his past, first and last, and the King was seized with a fit of by which well-nigh ended his life. He shut himself up in his palace for a while, mourning and afflicted. But at last his Viziers came in to him and applied themselves to comfort him, saying: "Verily, he who took the damsel is an enchanter, and praised be the Lord who hath delivered thee from his craft and sorcery!" And they ceased not from him till he was comforted for her loss. Thus far concerning the the King, but as for the Prince, he continued his career toward his father's capital in joy and cheer, and stayed not till he alighted on his own palace, where he set the lady in safety. After which he went in to his father and mother and saluted them and acquainted them with her coming, whereat they were filled with solace and gladness. Then he spread great banquets for the townsfolk and they held high festival a whole month, at the end of which time he went in to the Princess and they took their joy of each other with exceeding joy. But his father brake the ebony horse in pieces and destroyed its mechanism for flight. Moreover, the Prince wrote a letter to the Princess's father, advising him of all that had befallen her and informing him how she was now married to him and in all health and happiness,

and sent it by a messenger, together with costly presents and curious rarities. And when the messenger arrived at the city which was Sana'a and delivered the letter and the presents to the King, he read the missive and rejoiced greatly thereat and accepted the presents, honoring and rewarding the bearer handsomely. Moreover, he forwarded rich gifts to his son-in-law by the same messenger, who returned to his master and acquainted him with what had passed, whereat he was much cheered. And after this the Prince wrote a letter every year to his father-in-law and sent him presents till, in course of time, his sire King Sabur deceased and he reigned in his stead, ruling justly over his lieges and conducting himself well and righteously toward them, so that the land submitted to him and his subjects did him loyal service. And Kamar al-Akmar and his wife Shams al-Nahar abode in the enjoyment of all satisfaction and solace of life till there came to them the Destroyer of delights and Sunderer of societies, the Plunderer of palaces, the Caterer for cemeteries, and the Garnerer of graves. And now glory be to the Living One who dieth not and in whose hand is the dominion of the worlds visible and invisible! Moreover I have heard tell the tale of

