

THE NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS

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“Khalifah the Fisherman of Baghdad”

There was once in times of yore and in ages and times long gone before in the city of Baghdad a fisherman, Khalifah called, a pauper wight, who had never once been married in all his days. It chanced one morning that he took his net and went with it to the river as was his wont, with the view of fishing before the others came. When he reached the bank, he girt himself and tucked up his skirts. Then stepping into the water, he spread his net and cast it a first cast and a second, but it brought up naught. He ceased not to throw it till he had made ten casts, and still naught came up therein, wherefore his breast was straitened and his mind perplexed concerning his case and he said: “I crave pardon of God the Great, there is no god but He, the Living, the Eternal, and unto Him I repent. There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in the Lord, the Glorious, the Great! Whatso He willeth is and whatso He nilleth is not! Upon the Lord (to Whom belong Honor and Glory!) dependeth daily bread! When as He giveth to His servant, none denieth him; and when as He denieth a servant, none giveth to him.” And of the excess of his distress, he recited these two couplets: “An Fate afflict thee, with grief manifest, Prepare thy patience and make broad thy breast; For of His grace the Lord of all the worlds Shall send to wait upon unrest

sweet Rest." Then he said in his mind, "I will make this one more cast, trusting in the Lord, so haply He may not disappoint my hope." And he rose, and casting into the river the net as far as his arm availed, gathered the cords in his hands and waited a full hour, after which he pulled at it and, finding it heavy, handled it gently and drew it in, little by little, till he got it ashore, when lo and behold! he saw in it a one-eyed, lame-legged ape. Seeing this, quoth Khalifah: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in the Lord Verily, we are the Lord's and to Him we are returning! What meaneth this heartbreaking, miserable ill luck and hapless fortune? What is come to me this blessed day? But all this is of the destinies of Almighty the Lord!" Then he took the ape and tied him with a cord to a tree which grew on the riverbank, and grasping a whip he had with him, raised his arm in the air, thinking to bring down the scourge upon the quarry, when the Lord made the ape speak with a fluent tongue, saying: "O Khalifah, hold thy hand and beat me not, but leave me bounden to this tree and go down to the river and cast thy net, confiding in the Lord; for He will give thee thy daily bread." Hearing this, Khalifah went down to the river, and casting his net, let the cords run out. Then he pulled it in and found it heavier than before, so he ceased not to tug at it till he brought it to land, when, behold, there was another ape in it, with front teeth wide apart, kohl-darkened eyes, and hands stained with henna dyes; and he was laughing, and wore a tattered waistcloth about his middle. Quoth Khalifah, "Praised be the Lord Who hath changed the fish of the river into apes!" Then, going up to the first ape, who was still tied to the tree, he said to him: "See, O unlucky, how fulsome was the counsel thou gavest me! None but thou made me light on this second ape; and for that thou gavest me good morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness, I am become distressed and weary, without dirham or dinar." So saying, he hent in hand a stick and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about

to come down with it upon the lame ape, when the creature cried out for mercy and said to him: "I conjure thee, by the Lord, spare me for the sake of this my fellow, and seek of him thy need; for he will guide thee to thy desire!" So he held his hand from him, and throwing down the stick, went up to and stood by the second ape, who said to him: "O Khalifah, this my speech will profit thee naught except thou hearken to what I say to thee; but an thou do my bidding and cross me not, I will be the cause of thine enrichment." Asked Khalifah, "And what hast thou to say to me that I may obey thee therein?" The ape answered, "Leave me bound on the bank and hie thee down to the river, then cast thy net a third time, and after I will tell thee what to do." So he took his net, and going down to the river, cast it once more and waited awhile. Then he drew it in, and finding it heavy, labored at it and ceased not his travail till he got it ashore, when he found in it yet another ape. But this one was red, with a blue waistcloth about his middle; his hands and feet were stained with henna and his eyes blackened with kohl. When Khalifah saw this, he exclaimed: "Glory to God the Great! Extolled be the perfection of the Lord of Dominion! Verily, this is a blessed day from first to last. Its ascendant was fortunate in the countenance of the first ape, and the scroll is known by its superscription! Verily, today is a day of apes. There is not a single fish left in the river, and we are come out today but to catch monkeys!" Then he turned to the third ape and said, "And what thing thou also, O unlucky?" Quoth the ape, "Dost thou not know me, O Khalifah!" and quoth he, "Not I!" The ape cried, "I am the ape of Abu al-Sa'adat the Talmudist, the shroff." Asked Khalifah, "And what dost thou for him?" and the ape answered, "I give him good morrow at the first of the day, and he gaineth five ducats; and again at the end of the day, I give him good even, and he gaineth other five ducats." Whereupon Khalifah turned to the first ape and said to him: "See, O unlucky, what fine apes other folk have! As for

thee, thou givest me good morrow with thy one eye and thy lameness and thy ill-omened phiz, and I become poor and bankrupt and hungry!" So saying, he took the cattle stick, and flourishing it thrice in the air, was about to come down with it on the first ape, when Abu al-Sa'adat's ape said to him: "Let him be, O Khalifah. Hold thy hand and come hither to me, that I may tell thee what to do." So Khalifah threw down the stick, and walking up to him, cried, 'And what hast thou to say to me, O monarch of all monkeys?' Replied the ape: "Leave me and the other two apes here, and take thy net and cast it into the river; and whatever cometh up, bring it to me, and I will tell thee what shall gladden thee." He replied, "I hear and obey," and took the net and gathered it on his shoulder, reciting these couplets: "When straitened is my breast I will of my Creator pray, Who may and can the heaviest weight lighten in easiest way, For ere man's glance can turn or close his eye by God His grace Waxeth the broken whole and yieldeth jail its prison prey. Therefore with the Lord one and all of thy concerns commit, Whose grace and favor men of wit shall nevermore gainsay." Now when Khalifah had made an end of his verse, he went down to the river, and casting his net, waited awhile. After which he drew it up and found therein a fine young fish, with a big head, a tail like a ladle, and eyes like two gold pieces. When Khalifah saw this fish, he rejoiced, for he had never in his life caught its like, so he took it, marveling, and carried it to the ape of Abu al-Sa'adat the Talmudist, as 'twere he had gotten possession of the universal world. Quoth the ape, "O Khalifah, what wilt thou do with this, and with thine ape?" and quoth the fisherman: "I will tell thee, O monarch of monkeys, all I am about to do. Know then that first, I will cast about to make away with yonder accursed, my ape, and take thee in his stead, and give thee every day to eat of whatso thou wilt." Rejoined the ape: "Since thou hast made choice of me, I will tell thee how thou shalt do wherein, if it please the

Lord Almighty, shall be the mending of thy fortune. Lend thy mind, then, to what I say to thee and 'tis this! Take another cord and tie me also to a tree, where leave me and go to the midst of the dike and cast thy net into the Tigris. Then after waiting awhile, draw it up and thou shalt find therein a fish than which thou never sawest a finer in thy whole life. Bring it to me and I will tell thee how thou shalt do after this." So Khalifah rose forthright, and casting his net into the Tigris, drew up a great catfish the bigness of a lamb. Never had he set eyes on its like, for it was larger than the first fish. He carried it to the ape, who said to him: "Gather thee some green grass and set half of it in a basket; lay the fish therein and cover it with the other moiety. Then, leaving us here tied, shoulder the basket and betake thee to Baghdad. If any bespeak thee or question thee by the way, answer him not, but fare on till thou comest to the market street of the money-changers, at the upper end whereof thou wilt find the shop of Master Abu al-Sa'adat the Talmudist, Sheikh of the shroffs, and wilt see him sitting on a mattress, with a cushion behind him and two collars, one for gold and one for silver, before him, while around him stand his Mamelukes and Black African slaves and servant lads. Go up to him and set the basket before him, saying: 'O Abu al-Sa'adat, verily I went out today to fish and cast my net in thy name, and the Lord Almighty sent me this fish.' He will ask, 'Hast thou shown it to any but me?' and do thou answer, 'No, by the Lord!' Then will he take it of thee and give thee a dinar. Give it him back and he will give thee two dinars; but do thou return them also, and so do with everything he may offer thee; and take naught from him, though he give thee the fish's weight in gold. Then will he say to thee, 'Tell me what thou wouldst have, and do thou reply, 'By the Lord, I will not sell the fish save for two words!' He will ask, 'What are they?' And do thou answer, 'Stand up and say, "Bear witness, O ye who are present in the market, that I give

Khalifah the fisherman my ape in exchange for his ape, and that I barter for his lot my lot and luck for his luck." This is the price of the fish, and I have no need of gold.' If he do this, I will every day give thee good morrow and good even, and every day thou shalt gain ten dinars of good gold; whilst this one-eyed, lame-legged ape shall daily give the Talmudist good morrow, and the Lord shall afflict him every day with an avanie which he must needs pay, nor will he cease to be thus afflicted till he is reduced to beggary and hath naught. Hearken then to my words, so shalt thou prosper and be guided aright." Quoth Khalifah: "I accept thy counsel, O monarch of all the monkeys! But as for this unlucky, may the Lord never bless him! I know not what to do with him." Quoth the ape, "Let him go into the water, and let me go also." "I hear and obey," answered Khalifah, and unbound the three apes, and they went down into the river. Then he took up the catfish, which he washed, then laid it in the basket upon some green grass, and covered it with other, and lastly, shouldering his load, set out with the basket upon his shoulder and ceased not faring till he entered the city of Baghdad. And as he threaded the streets the folk knew him and cried out to him, saying, "What hast thou there, O Khalifah?" But he paid no heed to them and passed on till he came to the market street of the money-changers and fared between the shops, as the ape had charged him, till he found the Talmudist seated at the upper end, with his servants in attendance upon him, as he were a King of the Kings of Khorasan. He knew him at first sight; so he went up to him and stood before him, whereupon Abu al-Sa'adat raised his eyes and recognizing him, said: "Welcome, O Khalifah! What wantest thou, and what is thy need? If any have missaid thee or spited thee, tell me and I will go with thee to the Chief of Police, who shall do thee justice on him." Replied Khalifah: "Nay, as thy head liveth, O chief of the Talmudists, none hath missaid me. But I went forth this morning to the river and, casting

my net into the Tigris on thy luck, brought up this fish.” Therewith he opened the basket and threw the fish before the Talmudist, who admired it and said, the Pentateuch and the Ten Commandments, I dreamt last night that the Virgin came to me and said, ‘Know, O Abu al-Sa’adat, that I have sent thee a pretty present!’ And doubtless ‘tis this fish.” Then he turned to Khalifah and said to him, “By thy faith, hath any seen it but I?” Khalifah replied, “No, by the Lord, and by Abu Bakr the Veridical, none hath seen it save thou, O chief of the Talmudists!” Whereupon the Talmudist turned to one of his lads and said to him: “Come, carry this fish to my house and bid Sa’adah dress it and fry and broil it, against I make an end of my business and hie me home.” And Khalifah said, “Go, O my lad, let the master’s wife fry some of it and broil the rest.” Answered the boy, “I hear and I obey, O my lord,” and, taking the fish, went away with it to the house. Then the Talmudist put out his hand and gave Khalifah the fisherman a dinar, saying, “Take this for thyself, O Khalifah, and spend it on thy family.” When Khalifah saw the dinar on his palm, he took it, saying, “Laud to the Lord of Dominion!” as if he had never seen aught of gold in his life, and went somewhat away. But before he had gone far, he was minded of the ape’s charge and turning back, threw down the ducat, saying: “Take thy gold and give folk back their fish! Dost thou make a laughingstock of folk?” The Talmudist, hearing this, thought he was jesting, and offered him two dinars upon the other, but Khalifah said: “Give me the fish, and no nonsense. How knewest thou I would sell it at this price?” Whereupon the Talmudist gave him two more dinars and said, “Take these five ducats for thy fish and leave greed.” So Khalifah hent the five dinars in hand and went away, rejoicing, and gazing and marveling at the gold and saying: “Glory be to God! There is not with the King of Baghdad what is with me this day!” Then he ceased not faring on till he came to the end of the market street, when he

remembered the words of the ape and his charge, and returning to the Talmudist, threw him back the gold. Quoth he: "What aileth thee, O Khalifah? Dost thou want silver in exchange for gold?" Khalifah replied: "I want nor dirhams nor dinars. I only want thee to give me back folk's fish." With this the Talmudist waxed wroth and shouted out at him, saying: "O Fisherman, thou bringest me a fish not worth a sequin and I give thee five for it, yet art thou not content! Art thou Jinn-mad? Tell me for how much thou wilt sell it." Answered Khalifah, "I will not sell it for silver nor for gold, only for two sayings thou shalt say me." When the Talmudist heard speak of the "two sayings," his eyes sank into his head, he breathed hard and ground his teeth for rage, and said to him, "O nail paring of the Muslims, wilt thou have me throw off my faith for the sake of thy fish, and wilt thou debauch me from my religion and stultify my belief and my conviction which I inherited of old from my forebears?" Then he cried out to the servants who were in waiting and said: "Out on you! Bash me this unlucky rogue's neck and bastinado him soundly!" So they came down upon him with blows and ceased not beating him till he fell beneath the shop, and the Talmudist said to them, "Leave him and let him rise." Whereupon Khalifah jumped up as if naught ailed him, and the Talmudist said to him: "Tell me what price thou asketh for this fish and I will give it thee; for thou hast gotten but scant good of us this day." Answered the fisherman, "Have no fear for me, O master, because of the beating, for I can eat ten donkeys' rations of stick." The Talmudist laughed at his words and said, "the Lord upon thee, tell me what thou wilt have and by the right of my faith, I will give it thee!" The fisherman replied, "Naught from thee will remunerate me for this fish save the two words whereof I spake." And the Talmudist said, "Meseemeth thou wouldst have me become a Muslim." Khalifah rejoined: "By the Lord, O Talmudist, an thou Islamize, 'twill nor advantage the Muslims nor damage the

Talmudists. And in like manner, an thou hold to thy misbelief 'twill nor damage the Muslims nor advantage the Talmudists. But what I desire of thee is that thou rise to thy feet and say: 'Bear witness against me, O people of the market, that I barter my ape for the ape of Khalifah the fisherman and my lot in the world for his lot and my luck for his luck'." Quoth the Talmudist, "If this be all thou desirest, 'twill sit lightly upon me." So he rose without stay or delay and standing on his feet, repeated the required words. After which he turned to the fisherman and asked him, "Hast thou aught else to ask of me?" "No," answered he, and the Talmudist said, "Go in peace!" Hearing this Khalifah sprung to his feet forthright, took up his basket and net, and returned straight to the Tigris, where he threw his net and pulled it in. He found it heavy and brought it not ashore but with travail, when he found it full of fish of all kinds. Presently up came a woman with a dish, who gave him a dinar, and he gave her fish for it, and after her a eunuch, who also bought a dinar's worth of fish, and so forth till he had sold ten dinars' worth. And he continued to sell ten dinars' worth of fish daily for ten days, till he had gotten a hundred dinars. Now Khalifah the fisherman had quarters in the Passage of the Merchants, and as he lay one night in his lodging much bemused with hashish, he said to himself: "O Khalifah, the folk all know thee for a poor fisherman, and now thou hast gotten a hundred golden dinars. Needs must the Commander of the Faithful, Harun al-Rashid, hear of this from someone, and haply he will be wanting money and will send for thee and say to thee: 'I need a sum of money and it hath reached me that thou hast an hundred dinars, so do thou lend them to me those same.' I shall answer, 'O Commander of the Faithful, I am a poor man, and whoso told thee that I had a hundred dinars lied against me, for I have naught of this.' Thereupon he will commit me to the Chief of Police, saying, 'Strip him of his clothes and torment him with the bastinado till he confess

and give up the hundred dinars in his possession.’ Wherefore, meseemeth to provide against this predicament, the best thing I can do is to rise forthright and bash myself with the whip, so to use myself to beating.” And his hashish said to him, “Rise, doff thy dress.” So he stood up, and putting off his clothes, took a whip he had by him and set handy a leather pillow. Then he fell to lashing himself, laying every other blow upon the pillow and roaring out the while-: “Alas! Alas! By the Lord, ‘tis a false saying, O my lord, and they have lied against me, for I am a poor fisherman and have naught of the goods of the world!” The noise of the whip falling on the pillow and on his person resounded in the still of night and the folk heard it, and amongst others the merchants, and they said: “Whatever can ail the poor fellow, that he crieth and we hear the noise of blows falling on him? ‘Twould seem robbers have broken in upon him and are tormenting him.” Presently they all came forth of their lodgings at the noise of the blows and the crying, and repaired to Khalifah’s room, but they found the door locked and said one to other: “Belike the robbers have come in upon him from the back of the adjoining saloon. It behooveth us to climb over by the roofs.” So they clomb over the roofs, and coming down through the skylight, saw him naked and flogging himself, and asked him, “What aileth thee, O Khalifah?” He answered: “Know, O folk, that I have gained some dinars and fear lest my case be carried up to the Prince of True Believers, Harun al-Rashid, and he send for me and demand of me those same gold pieces; whereupon I should deny, and I fear that if I deny, he will torture me, so I am torturing myself, by way of accustoming me to what may come.” The merchants laughed at him and said: “Leave this fooling. May the Lord not bless thee and the dinars thou hast gotten! Verily thou hast disturbed us this night and hast troubled our hearts.” So Khalifah left flogging himself and slept till the morning, when he rose and would have

gone about his business, but bethought him of his hundred dinars and said in his mind: "An I leave them at home, thieves will steal them, and if I put them in a belt about my waist, peradventure someone will see me and lay in wait for me till he come upon me in some lonely place and slay me and take the money. But I have a device that should serve me well, right well." So he jumped up forthright and made him a pocket in the collar of his gabardine, and tying the hundred dinars up in a purse, laid them in the collar pocket. Then he took his net and basket and staff and went down to the Tigris, where he made a cast, but brought up naught. So he removed from that place to another and threw again, but once more the net came up empty. And he went on removing from place to place till he had gone half a day's journey from the city, ever casting the net, which kept bringing up naught. So he said to himself, "By the Lord, I will throw my net a-stream but this once more, whether ill come of it or weal!" Then he hurled the net with all his force, of the excess of his wrath, and the purse with the hundred dinars flew out of his collar pocket and, lighting in midstream, was carried away by the strong current. Whereupon he threw down the net, and doffing his clothes, left them on the bank and plunged into the water after the purse. He dived for it nigh a hundred times, till his strength was exhausted and he came up for sheer fatigue, without chancing on it. When he despaired of finding the purse, he returned to the shore, where he saw nothing but staff, net, and basket and sought for his clothes but could light on no trace of them. So he said in himself: "O vilest of those wherefor was made the byword: 'The pilgrimage is not perfected save by copulation with the camel!'" Then he wrapped the net about him, and taking staff in one hand and basket in other, went trotting about like a camel in rut, running right and left and backward and forward, disheveled and dusty, as he were a rebel Marid let loose from Solomon's prison. So far for what concerns the

fisherman Khalifah; but as regards the King Harun al-Rashid, he had a friend, a jeweler called Ibn al-Kirnas, and all the traders, brokers, and middlemen knew him for the King's merchant. Wherefore there was naught sold in Baghdad by way of rarities and things of price or Mamelukes or handmaidens but was first shown to him. As he sat one day in his shop, behold, there came up to him the Sheikh of the brokers, with a slave girl whose like seers never saw, for she was of passing beauty and loveliness, symmetry and perfect grace, and among her gifts that she knew all arts and sciences and could make verses and play upon all manner musical instruments. So Ibn al-Kirnas bought her for five thousand golden dinars and clothed her with other thousand. After which he carried her to the Prince of True Believers, with whom she lay the night, and who made trial of her in every kind of knowledge and accomplishment and found her versed in all sorts of arts and sciences, having no equal in her time. Her name was Kut al-Kulub and she was even as saith the poet: I fix my glance on her, whene'er she wends, And nonacceptance of my glance breeds pain. She favors graceful-necked gazelle at gaze, And "Graceful as gazelle" to say we're fain. On the morrow the King sent for Ibn al-Kirnas, the jeweler, and bade him receive ten thousand dinars to her price. And his heart was taken up with the slave girl Kut al-Kulub and he forsook the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, for all she was the daughter of his father's brother, and he abandoned all his favorite concubines and abode a whole month without stirring from Kut al-Kulub's side save to go to the Friday prayers and return to her all in haste. This was grievous to the lords of the realm and they complained thereof to the Vizier Ja'afar the Barmecide, who bore with the Commander of the Faithful and waited till the next Friday, when he entered the cathedral mosque and, forgathering with the King, related to him all that occurred to him of extraordinary stories anent seld-seen love and lovers, with

intent to draw out what was in his mind. Quoth the King, "By the Lord, O Ja'afar, this is not of my choice, but my heart is caught in the snare of love and wot I not what is to be done!" The Vizier Ja'afar replied: "O Commander of the Faithful, thou knowest how this girl Kut al-Kulub is become at thy disposal and of the number of thy servants, and that which hand possesseth soul coveteth not. Moreover, I will tell thee another thing, which is that the highest boast of kings and princes is in hunting and the pursuit of sport and victory; and if thou apply thyself to this, perchance it will divert thee from her, and it may be thou wilt forget her." Rejoined the King: "Thou sayest well, O Ja'afar. Come let us go a-hunting forthright, without stay or delay." So soon as Friday prayers were prayed, they left the mosque, and at once mounting their she-mules, rode forth to the chase, occupied with talk, and their attendants outwent them. Presently the heat became overhot and Al-Rashid said to his Vizier, "O Ja'afar, I am sore athirst." Then he looked around, and espying a figure in the distance on a high mound, asked Ja'afar, "Seest thou what I see?" Answered the Vizier: "Yes; O Commander of the Faithful. I see a dim figure on a high mound. Belike he is the keeper of a garden or of a cucumber plot, and in whatso wise water will not be lacking in his neighborhood," presently adding, "I will go to him and fetch thee some." But Al-Rashid said: "My mule is swifter than thy mule, so do thou abide here, on account of the troops, whilst I go myself to him and get of this person drink and return." So saying, he urged his she-mule, which started off like racing wind or railing water, and in the twinkling of an eye made the mound, where he found the figure he had, seen to be none other than Khalifah the fisherman, naked and wrapped in the net. And indeed he was horrible to behold, as to and fro he rolled with eyes for very redness like cresset gleam and dusty hair in disheveled trim, as he were, Giant-Demon or a lion grim. Al-Rashid saluted him and he returned his salutation, but

he was wroth, and fires might have been lit at his breath. Quoth the King, "O man, hast thou any water?" and quote Khalifah: "How, thou, art thou blind, or Jinnmad? Get thee to the river Tigris, for 'tis behind this mound." So Al-Rashid went around the mound, and going down to the river, drank and watered his mule. Then without a moment's delay he returned to Khalifah and said to him, "What aileth thee, O man, to stand here, and what is thy calling.?" The fisherman cried: "This is a stranger and sillier question than that about the water! Seest thou not the gear of my craft on my shoulder?" Said the King, "Belike thou art a fisherman?" and he replied, "Yes." Asked Al-Rashid, "Where is thy gabardine, and where are thy waistcloth and girdle, and where be the rest of thy raiment?" Now these were the very things which had been taken from Khalifah, like for like, so when he heard the King name them, he got into his head that it was he who had stolen his clothes from the riverbank, and coming down from the top of the mound, swiftness than the blinding levin, laid hold of the mule's bridle, saying, "Hark ye, man, bring me back my things and leave jesting and joking." Al-Rashid replied, "By the Lord, I have not seen thy clothes, nor know aught of them!" Now the King had large cheeks and a small mouth, so Khalifah said to him: "Belike thou art by trade a singer, or a piper on pipes? But bring me back my clothes fairly and without more ado, or I will bash thee with this my staff till thou bepiss thyself and befoul thy clothes." When Al-Rashid saw the staff in the fisherman's hand and that he had the vantage of him, he said to himself, "By the Lord, I cannot brook from this mad beggar half a blow of that staff!" Now he had on a satin gown, so he pulled it off and gave it to Khalifah, saying, "O man, take this in place of thy clothes." The fisherman took it and turned it about and said, "My clothes are worth ten of this painted aba cloak," and rejoined the King, "Put it on till I bring thee thy gear." So Khalifah donned the gown, but finding it too long for him,

took a knife he had with him tied to the handle of his basket, and cut off nigh a third of the skirt, so that it fell only beneath his knees. Then he turned to Al-Rashid and said to him, "the Lord upon thee, O piper, tell me what wage thou gettest every month from thy master, for thy craft of piping." Replied the King, "My wage is ten dinars a month," and Khalifah continued: "By the Lord, my poor fellow, thou makest me sorry for thee! Why, I make thy ten dinars every day! Hast thou a mind to take service with me, and I will teach thee the art of fishing and share my gain with thee? So shalt thou make five dinars a day and be my slavey and I will protect thee against thy master with this staff." Quoth Al-Rashid, "I will well," and quoth Khalifah: "Then get off thy she-ass and tie her up, so she may serve us to carry the fish hereafter, and come hither, that I may teach thee to fish forthright." So Al-Rashid alighted, and hobbling his mule, tucked his skirts into his girdle, and Khalifah said to him, "O piper, lay hold of the net thus and put it over thy forearm thus and cast it into the Tigris thus." Accordingly the King took heart of grace and, doing as the fisherman showed him, threw the net and pulled at it, but could not draw it up. So Khalifah came to his aid and tugged at it with him, but the two together could not hale it up. Whereupon said the fisherman: "O piper of ill-omen, for the first time I took thy gown in place of my clothes, but this second time I will have thine ass and will beat thee to boot till thou bepiss and beskit thyself, an I find my net torn." Quoth Al-Rashid, "Let the twain of us pull at once." So they both pulled together, and succeeded with difficulty in hauling that net ashore, when they found it full of fish of all kinds and colors, and Khalifah said to Al-Rashid: "By the Lord, O piper, thou art foul of favor but an thou apply thyself to fishing, thou wilt make a mighty fine fisherman. But now 'twere best thou bestraddle thine ass and make for the market and fetch me a pair of frails, and I will look after the fish till thou return, when I and thou will load it on

thine ass's back. I have scales and weights and all we want, so we can take them with us, and thou wilt have nothing to do but to hold the scales and punch the price. For here we have fish worth twenty dinars. So be fast with the frails and loiter not." Answered the King, "I hear and obey" and mounting, left him with his fish, and spurred his mule, in high good humor, and ceased not laughing over his adventure with the fisherman till he came up to Ja'afar, who said to him, "O Commander of the Faithful, belike when thou wentest down to drink, thou foundest a pleasant flower garden and enteredst and tookest thy pleasure therein alone?" At this Al-Rashid fell a laughing again and all the Barmecides rose and kissed the ground before him, saying: "O Commander of the Faithful, the Lord make joy to endure for thee and do away annoy from thee! What was the cause of thy delaying when thou faredst to drink, and what hath befallen thee?" Quoth the King, "Verily, a right wondrous tale and a joyous adventure and a wondrous hath befallen me. And he repeated to them what had passed between himself and the fisherman and his words, "Thou stolest my clothes!" and how he had given him his gown and how he had cut off a part of it, finding it too long for him. Said Ja'afar, "By the Lord, O Commander of the Faithful, I had it in mind to beg the gown of thee, but now I will go straight to the fisherman and buy it of him." The King replied, "By the Lord, he hath cut off a third part of the skirt and spoilt it! But, O Ja'afar, I am tired with fishing in the river, for I have caught great store of fish, which I left on the bank with my master Khalifah, and he is watching them and waiting for me to return to him with a couple of frails and a matchet. Then we are to go, I and he, to the market and sell the fish and share the price." Ja'afar rejoined, "O Commander of the Faithful, I will bring you a purchaser for your fish." And Al-Rashid retorted: "O Ja'afar, by the virtue of my holy forefathers, whoso bringeth me one of the fish that are before Khalifah, who taught me angling,

I will give him for it a gold dinar!" So the crier proclaimed among the troops that they should go forth and buy fish for the King, and they all arose and made for the riverside. Now while Khalifah was expecting the King's return with the two frails, behold, the Mamelukes swooped down upon him like vultures and took the fish and wrapped them in gold-embroidered kerchiefs, beating one another in their eagerness to get at the fisherman Whereupon quoth Khalifah, "Doubtless these are the fish of Paradise!" and hending two fish right hand and left, plunged into the water up to his neck and fell a-saying, "O the Lord, by the virtue of these fish, let Thy servant the piper, my partner, come to me at this very moment." And suddenly up to him came a black slave which was the chief of the King's Black African eunuchs. He had tarried behind the rest, by reason of his horse having stopped to make water by the way, and finding that naught remained of the fish, little or much, looked right and left till he espied Khalifah standing in the stream with a fish in either hand, and said to him, "Come hither, O Fisherman!" But Khalifah replied, "Begone and none of your impudence!" So the eunuch went up to him and said, "Give me the fish and I will pay thee their price." Replied the fisherman: "Art thou little of wit? I will not sell them." Therewith the eunuch drew his mace upon him, and Khalifah cried out, saying: "Strike not, O loon! Better largess than the mace." So saying, he threw the two fishes to the eunuch, who took them and laid them in his kerchief. Then he put hand in pouch, but found not a single dirham, and said to Khalifah: "O fisherman, verily thou art out of luck for, by the Lord, I have not a silver about me! But come tomorrow to the palace of the Kingate and ask for the eunuch Sandal, whereupon the castratos will direct thee to me, and by coming thither thou shalt get what falleth to thy lot and therewith wend thy ways." Quoth Khalifah, "Indeed, this is a blessed day, and its blessedness was manifest from the first of it!" Then he shouldered his net and returned to

Baghdad, and as he passed through the streets, the folk saw the King's gown on him and stared at him till he came to the gate of his quarter, by which was the shop of the King's tailor. When the man saw him wearing dress of the apparel of the King, worth a thousand dinars, he said to him, "O Khalifah, whence hadst thou that gown?" Replied the fisherman: "What aileth thee to be impudent? I had it of one whom I taught to fish and who is become my apprentice. I forgave him the cutting off of his hand for that he stole my clothes and gave me this cape in their place." So the tailor knew that the King had come upon him as he was fishing and jested with him and given him the gown. Such was his case, but as regards Harun al-Rashid, he had gone out a-hunting and a-fishing only to divert his thoughts from the damsel Kut al-Kulub. But when Zubaydah heard of her and of the King's devotion to her, the lady was fired with the jealousy which the more especially fireth women, so that she refused meat and drink and rejected the delights of sleep, and awaited the King's going forth on a journey or what not, that she might set a snare for the damsel. So when she learnt that he was gone hunting and fishing, she bade her women furnish the palace fairly and decorate it splendidly and serve up viands and confections. And amongst the rest she made a China dish of the daintiest sweetmeats that can be made, wherein she had put bhang. Then she ordered one of her eunuchs go to the damsel Kut al-Kulub and bid her to the banquet, saying: "The Lady Zubaydah bint alKasim, the wife of the Commander of the Faithful, hath drunken medicine today, and having heard tell of the sweetness of thy singing, longeth to divert herself with somewhat of thine art." Kut al-Kulub replied, "Hearing and obedience are due to the Lord and the Lady Zubaydah," and rose without stay or delay, unknowing what was hidden for her in the secret purpose. Then she took with her what instruments she needed and, accompanying the eunuch, ceased not faring

till she stood in the presence of the Princess. When she entered she kissed the ground before her again and again, then rising to her feet, said: "Peace be on the Lady of the exalted seat and the presence whereto none may avail, daughter of the house Abbasi and scion of the Prophet's family! May the Lord fulfill thee of peace and prosperity in the days and the years!" Then she stood with the rest of the women and eunuchs, and presently the Lady Zubaydah raised her eyes and considered her beauty and loveliness. She saw a damsel with cheeks smooth as rose and breasts like granado, a face moon-bright, a brow flower-white, and great eyes black as night. Her eyelids were languor-dight and her face beamed with light, as if the sun from her forehead arose and the murks of the night from the locks of her brow. And the fragrance of musk from her breath strayed, and flowers bloomed in her lovely face inlaid. The moon beamed from her forehead and in her slender shape the branches swayed. She was like the full moon shining in the nightly shade. Her eyes wantoned, her eyebrows were like a bow arched, and her lips of coral molded. Her beauty amazed all who espied her and her glances amated all who eyed her. Glory be to Him Who formed her and fashioned her and perfected her! Quoth the Lady Zubaydah: "Well come, and welcome and fair cheer to thee, O Kut al-Kulub! Sit and divert us with thine art and the goodliness of thine accomplishments." Quoth the damsel, "I hear and I obey," and rose and exhibited tricks of sleight of hand and legerdemain and all manner pleasing arts, till the Princess came near to fall in love with her and said to herself, "Verily, my cousin Al-Rashid is not to blame for loving her!" Then the damsel kissed ground before Zubaydah and sat down, whereupon they set food before her. Presently they brought her the drugged dish of sweetmeats and she ate thereof, and hardly had it settled in her stomach when her head fell backward and she sank on the ground sleeping. With this, the lady said to her women, "Carry her up to one

of the chambers, till I summon her," and they replied, "We hear and we obey. Then said she to one of her eunuchs,"Fashion me a chest and bring it hitherto to me!" And shortly afterward she bade make the semblance of a tomb and spread the report that Kut al-Kulub had choked and died, threatening her familiars that she would smite the neck of whoever should say, "She is alive." Now, behold, the King suddenly returned from the chase, and the first inquiry he made was for the damsel. So there came to him one of his eunuchs, whom the Lady Zubaydah had charged to declare she was dead if the King should ask for her and, kissing ground before him, said: "May thy head live, O my lord! Be certified that Kut al-Kulub choked in eating and is dead." Whereupon cried Al-Rashid, "God never gladden thee with good news, O thou bad slave!" and entered the palace, where he heard of her death from everyone and asked, "Where is her tomb?" So they brought him to the sepulcher and showed him the pretended tomb, saying, "This is her burial place." The King, weeping sore for her, abode by the tomb a full hour, after which he arose and went away, in the utmost distress and the deepest melancholy. So the Lady Zubaydah saw that her plot had succeeded, and forthright sent for the eunuch and said, "Hither with the chest!" He set it before her, when she bade bring the damsel, and locking her up therein, said to the eunuch: "Take all pains to sell this chest, and make it a condition with the purchaser that he buy it locked. Then give alms with its price." So he took it and went forth to do her bidding. Thus fared it with these, but as for Khalifah the fisherman, when morning morrowed and shone with its light and sheen, he said to himself, "I cannot do aught better today than visit the eunuch who bought the fish of me, for he appointed me to come to him in the palace of the Kingate." So he went forth of his lodging, intending for the palace, and when he came thither, he found Mamelukes, Black African slaves, and eunuchs standing and sitting, and

looking at them, behold, seated amongst them was the eunuch who had taken the fish of him, with the white slaves waiting on him. Presently, one of the Mameluke lads called out to him, whereupon the eunuch turned to see who he was and lo! it was the fisherman. Now when Khalifah was ware that he saw him and recognized him, he said to him: "I have not failed thee, O my little Tulip! On this wise are men of their word." Hearing his address, Sandal the eunuch laughed and replied, "By the Lord, thou art right, O Fisherman," and put his hand to his pouch, to give him somewhat. But at that moment there arose a great clamor. So he raised his head to see what was to do, and finding that it was the Vizier Ja'afar the Barmecide coming forth from the King's presence, he rose to him and forewent him, and they walked about conversing for a longsome time. Khalifah the fisherman waited awhile, then, growing weary of standing, and finding that the eunuch took no heed of him, he set himself in his way and beckoned to him from afar, saying, "O my lord Tulip, give me my due and let me go!" The eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him because of the Minister's presence, so he went on talking with Ja'afar and took no notice whatever of the fisherman. Whereupon quoth Khalifah: "O slow o' pay! May the Lord put to shame all churls and all who take folk's goods and are niggardly with them! I put myself under thy protection, O my lord Bran-belly, to give me my due and let me go!" The eunuch heard him, but was ashamed to answer him before Ja'afar, and the Minister saw the fisherman beckoning and talking to him, though he knew not what he was saying. So he said to Sandal, misliking his behavior, "O Eunuch, what would yonder beggar with thee?" Sandal replied, "Dost thou not know him, O my lord the Vizier?" and Ja'afar answered: "By the Lord I know him not! How should I know a man I have never seen but at this moment?" Rejoined the Eunuch: "O my lord, this is the fisherman whose fish we seized on the banks of the Tigris. I

came too late to get any and was ashamed to return to the Prince of True Believers emptyhanded when all the Mamelukes had some. Presently I espied the fisherman standing in midstream, calling on the Lord, with four fishes in his hands, and said to him, 'Give me what thou hast there and take their worth.' He handed me the fish and I put my hand into my pocket, purposing to gift him with somewhat, but found naught therein and said, 'Come to me in the palace, and I will give thee wherewithal to aid thee in thy poverty.' So he came to me today and I was putting hand to pouch, that I might give him somewhat, when thou camest forth and I rose to wait on thee and was diverted with thee from him, till he grew tired of waiting. And this is the whole story how he cometh to be standing here." The Vizier, hearing this account, smiled and said: "O Eunuch, how is it that this fisherman cometh in his hour of need and thou satisfiest him not? Dost thou not know him, O chief of the eunuchs?" "No," answered Sandal, and Ja'afar said. "This is the master of the Commander of the Faithful, and his partner and our lord the King hath arisen this morning strait of breast, heavy of heart, and troubled in thought, nor is there aught will broaden his breast save this fisherman. So let him not go till I crave the King's pleasure concerning him and bring him before him. Perchance the Lord will relieve him of his oppression and console him for the loss of Kut al-Kulub by means of the fisherman's presence, and he will give him wherewithal to? better himself, and thou wilt be the cause of this." Replied Sandal: "O my lord, do as thou wilt, and may the Lord Almighty long continue thee a pillar of the dynasty of the Commander of the Faithful, whose shadow the Lord perpetuate and prosper it, root and branch!" Then the Vizier Ja'afar rose up and went in to the King, and Sandal ordered the Mamelukes not to leave the fisherman, whereupon Khalifah cried: "How goodly is thy bounty, O Tulip! The seeker is become the sought. I come to seek my due, and they imprison me for debts in arrears!"

When Ja'afar came into the presence of the King, he found him sitting with his head bowed earthward, breast straitened and mind melancholy, humming the verses of the poet: My blamers instant bid that I for her become consoled, But I, what can I do, whose heart declines to be controlled? And how can I in patience bear the loss of lovely maid When fails me patience for a love that holds with firmest hold! Ne'er I'll forget her nor the bowl that 'twixt us both went round And wine of glances maddened me with drunkenness ensouled. Whenas Ja'afar stood in the presence, he said: "Peace be upon thee, O Commander of the Faithful, Defender of the honor of the Faith and descendant of the uncle of the Prince of the Apostles, the Lord assain him and save him and his family one and an!" The King raised his head and answered, "And on thee be peace and the mercy of the Lord and His blessings!" Quoth Ja'afar, "With leave of the Prince of True Believers, his servant would speak without restraint." Asked the King: "And when was restraint put upon thee in speech, and thou the Prince of Viziers? Say what thou wilt." Answered Ja'afar: "When I went out, O my lord, from before thee, intending for my house, I saw standing at the door thy master and teacher and partner, Khalifah the fisherman, who was aggrieved at thee and complained of thee, saying: 'Glory be to God! I taught him to fish and he went away to fetch me a pair of frails, but never came back. And this is not the way of a good partner or of a good apprentice.' So, if thou hast a mind to partnership, well and good; and if not, tell him, that he may take to partner another." Now when the King heard these words, he smiled and his straitness of breast was done away with and he said, "My life on thee, is this the truth thou sayest, that the fisherman standeth at the door?" and Ja'afar replied, "By thy life, O Commander of the Faithful, he standeth at the door." Quoth the King: "O Ja'afar, by the Lord, I will assuredly do my best to give him his due! If the Lord at my hands send him

misery, he shall have it, and if prosperity, he shall have it." Then he took a piece of paper, and cutting it in pieces, said to the Vizier: "O Ja'afar, write down with thine own hand twenty sums of money, from one dinar to a thousand, and the names of all kinds of offices and dignities from the least appointment to the Kingate; also twenty kinds of punishment, from the calledest beating to death." "I hear and I obey, O Commander of the Faithful," answered Ja'afar, and did as he was bidden. Then said the King: "O Ja'afar, I swear by my holy forefathers and by my kinship to Hamzah and Akil, that I mean to summon the fisherman and bid him take one of these papers, whose contents none knoweth save thou and I. And whatsoever is written in the paper which he shall choose, I will give it to him. Though it be the Kingate, I will divest myself thereof and invest him therewith and grudge it not to him. And on the other hand, if there be written therein hanging or mutilation or death, I will execute it upon him. Now go and fetch him to me." When Ja'afar heard this, he said to himself: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in the Lord, the Glorious, the Great' It may be somewhat will fall to this poor wretch's lot that will bring about his destruction and I shall be the cause. But the King hath sworn, so nothing remains now but to bring him in, and naught will happen save whatso the Lord willeth." Accordingly he went out to Khalifah the fisherman and laid hold of his hand, to carry him in to the King, whereupon his reason fled and he said in himself: "What a stupid I was to come after yonder ill-omened slave, Tulip, whereby he hath brought me in company with Bran-belly!" Ja'afar fared on with him, with Mamelukes before and behind, whilst he said, "Doth not arrest suffice, but these must go behind and before me, to hinder my making off?" till they had traversed seven vestibules, when the Vizier said to him: "Mark my words, O Fisherman! Thou standest before the Commander of the Faithful and Defender of the Faith!" Then he raised the

great curtain and Khalifah's eyes fell on the King, who was seated on his couch, with the lords of the realm standing in attendance upon him. As soon as he knew him, he went up to him and said: "Well come, and welcome to thee, O piper! 'Twas not right of thee to make thyself a fisherman and go away, leaving me sitting to guard the fish, and never to return! For, before I was aware, there came up Mamelukes on beasts of all manner colors, and snatched away the fish from me, I standing alone. And this was all of thy fault, for hadst thou returned with the frails forthright, we had sold a hundred dinars' worth of fish. And now I come to seek my due, and they have arrested me. But thou, who hath imprisoned thee also in this place?" The King smiled, and raising a corner of the curtain, put forth his head and said to the fisherman, "Come hither and take thee one of these papers." Quoth Khalifah the fisherman: "Yesterday thou wast a fisherman, and today thou hast become an astrologer, but the more trades a man hath, the poorer he waxeth." Thereupon Ja'afar said: "Take the paper at once, and do as the Commander of the Faithful biddeth thee, without prating." So he came forward and put forth his hand saying, "Far be it from me that this piper should ever again be my knave and fish with me!" Then, taking the paper, he handed it to the King, saying: "O piper, what hath come out for me therein? Hide naught thereof." So Al-Rashid received it and passed it on to Ja'afar and said to him, "Read what is therein." He looked at it and said, "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in the Lord, the Glorious, the Great!" Said the King: "Good news, O Ja'afar? What seest thou therein?" Answered the Vizier: "O Commander of the Faithful there came up from the paper, 'Let the Fisherman receive a hundred blows with a stick.'" So the King commanded to beat the Fisherman and they gave him a hundred sticks, after which he rose, saying: "the Lord damn this, O Branbelly! Are jail and sticks part of the game?" Then said Ja'afar: " O Commander

of the Faithful, this poor devil is come to the river, and how shall he go away thirsting? We hope that among the alms deeds of the Commander of the Faithful he may have leave to take another paper, so haply somewhat may come out wherewithal he may succor his poverty." Said the King: "By the Lord, O Ja'afar, if he take another paper and death be written therein, I will assuredly kill him, and thou wilt be the cause." Answered Ja'afar, "If he die he will be at rest." But Khalifah the fisherman said to him: "the Lord ne'er, gladden thee with good news! Have I made Baghdad strait upon you, that ye seek to slay me?" Quoth Ja'afar, "Take thee a paper, and crave the blessing of the Lord Almighty!" So he put out his hand, and taking a paper, gave it to Ja'afar, who read it and was silent. The King asked, "Why art thou silent, O son of Yahya?" and he answered: "O Commander of the Faithful, there hath come out on this paper, 'Naught shall be given to the fisherman.'" Then said the King: "His daily bread will not come from us. Bid him fare forth from before our face." Quoth Ja'afar: "By the claims of thy pious forefathers, let him take a third paper. It may be it will bring him alimony," and quoth the King, "Let him take one and no more." So he put out his hand and took a third paper, and behold, therein was written, "Let the Fisherman be given one dinar." Ja'afar cried to him, "I sought good fortune for thee, but the Lord willed not to thee aught save this dinar." And Khalifah answered: "Verily, a dinar for every hundred sticks were rare good luck. May the Lord not send thy body health!" The King laughed at him and Ja'afar took him by the hand and led him out. When he reached the door, Sandal the eunuch saw him and said to him: "Hither, O Fisherman! Give us portion of that which the Commander of the Faithful hath bestowed on thee whilst jesting with thee." Replied Khalifah: "By the Lord, O Tulip, thou art right! Wilt thou share with me, O nigger? Indeed, I have eaten stick to the tune of a hundred blows and have earned one dinar, and thou art but too

welcome to it." So saying, he threw him the dinar and went out, with the tears flowing down the plain of his cheeks. When the eunuch saw him in this plight, he knew that he had spoken sooth and called to the lads to fetch him back. So they brought him back and Sandal, putting his hand to his pouch, pulled out a red purse, whence he emptied a hundred golden dinars into the fisherman's hand, saying, "Take this gold in payment of thy fish, and wend thy ways." So Khalifah, in high good humor, took the hundred ducats and the King's one dinar and went his way, and forgot the beating. Now as the Lord willed it for the furthering of that which He had decreed, he passed by the mart of the handmaidens, and seeing there a mighty ring where many folks were forgathering, said to himself, "What is this crowd?" So he brake through the merchants and others, who said, "Make wide the way for Skipper Rapsallion, and let him pass." Then he looked, and behold, he saw a chest, with a eunuch seated thereon and an old man standing by it,—and the Sheikh was crying: "O merchants, O men of money, who will hasten and hazard his coin for this chest of unknown contents from the palace of the Lady Zubaydah bint al-Kasim, wife of the Commander of the Faithful? How much shall I say for you? the Lord bless you all!" Quoth one of the merchants; "By the Lord, this is a risk! But I will say one word, and no blame to me. Be it mine for twenty dinars." Quoth another, "Fifty," and they went on bidding, one against other, till the price reached a hundred ducats. Then said the crier, "Will any of you bid more, O merchants?" And Khalifah the fisherman said, "Be it mine for a hundred dinars and one dinar." The merchants, hearing these words, thought he was jesting and laughed at him, saying, "O Eunuch, sell it to Khalifah for a hundred dinars and one dinar!" Quoth the eunuch: "By the Lord, I will sell it to none but him! Take it, O Fisherman. The Lord bless thee in it, and here with thy gold." So Khalifah pulled out the ducats and gave them to the eunuch, who, the

bargain being duly made, delivered to him the chest and bestowed the price in alms on the spot, after which he returned to the palace and acquainted the Lady Zubaydah with what he had done, whereat she rejoiced. Meanwhile the fisherman hove the chest on shoulder, but could not carry it on this wise for the excess of its weight, so he lifted it onto his head and thus bore it to the quarter where he lived. Here he set it down, and being weary, sat awhile bemusing what had befallen him and saying in himself, "Would Heaven I knew what is in this chest!" Then he opened the door of his lodging and haled the chest till he got it into his closet, after which he strove to open it, but failed. Quoth he: "What folly possessed me to buy this chest? There is no help for it but to break it open and see what is herein." So he applied himself to the lock, but could not open it, and said to himself, "I will leave it till tomorrow." Then he would have stretched him out to sleep, but could find no room, for the chest filled the whole closet. So he got upon it and lay him down. But when he had lain awhile, behold, he felt something stir under him, whereat sleep forsook him and his reason fled. So he arose and cried: "Meseems there be Jinns in the chest. Praise to the Lord Who suffered me not to open it! For had I done so, they had risen against me in the dark and slain me, and from them would have befallen me naught of good." Then he lay down again, when lo! the chest moved a second time, more than before, whereupon he sprang to his feet and said: "There it goes again. But this is terrible!" And he hastened to look for the lamp, but could not find it and had not the wherewithal to buy another. So he went forth and cried out, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Now the most part of the folk were asleep, but they awoke at his crying and asked, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" He answered, "Bring me a lamp, for the Jinn are upon me." They laughed at him and gave him a lamp, wherewith he returned to his closet. Then he smote the lock of the chest with a stone and broke

it, and opening it, saw a damsel like a houri lying asleep within. Now she had been drugged with bhang, but at that moment she threw up the stuff and awoke. Then she opened her eyes, and feeling herself confined and cramped, moved. At this sight quoth Khalifah, "By the Lord, O my lady, whence art thou?" and quoth she, "Bring me jessamine, and narcissus." And Khalifah answered, "There is naught here but henna flowers." Thereupon she came to herself, and considering Khalifah, said to him, "What art thou?" presently adding, "And where am I?" He said, "Thou art in my lodging." Asked she, "Am I not in the palace of the King Harun al-Rashid?" And quoth he: "What manner of thing is Al-Rashid? O madwoman, Thou art naught but my slave girl. I bought thee this very day for a hundred dinars and one dinar, and brought thee home, and thou wast asleep in this here chest." When she heard these words she said to him, "What is thy name?" Said he: "My name is Khalifah. How comes my star to have grown propitious, when I know my ascendant to have been otherwise?" She laughed and cried: "Spare me this talk! Hast thou anything to eat?" Replied he: "No, by the Lord, nor yet to drink! I have not eaten these two days, and am now in want of a morsel." She asked, "Hast thou no money?" and he said: "the Lord keep this chest which hath beggared me. I gave all I had for it and am become bankrupt." The damsel laughed at him and said: "Up with thee and seek of thy neighbors somewhat for me to eat, for I am hungry." So he went forth and cried out, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Now the folk were asleep, but they awoke and asked, "What aileth thee, O Khalifah?" Answered he, "O my neighbors, I am hungry and have nothing to eat." So one came down to him with a bannock and another with broken meats and a third with a bittock of cheese and a fourth with a cucumber, and so on till his lap was full and he returned to his closet and laid the whole between her hands, saying, "Eat." But she laughed at him, saying: "How can I eat of

this when I have not a mug of water whereof to drink? I fear to choke with a mouthful and die." Quoth he, "I will fill thee this pitcher." So he took the pitcher, and going forth, stood 'm the midst of the street and cried out, saying, "Ho, people of the quarter!" Quoth they, "What calamity is upon thee tonight, O Khalifah!" And he said, "Ye gave me food and I ate, but now I am athirst, so give me to drink."

Thereupon one came down to him with a mug and another with an ewer and a third with a gugglet, and he filled his pitcher, and bearing it back, said to the damsel, "O my lady, thou lackest nothing now." Answered she, "True, I want nothing more at this present." Quoth he, "Speak to me and say me thy story." And quoth she: "Fie upon thee! An thou knowest me not, I will tell thee who I am. I am Kut al-Kulub, the King's handmaiden, and the Lady Zubaydah was jealous of me, so she drugged me with bhang and set me in this chest," presently adding: "Alhamdolillah—praised be God—for that the matter hath come to easy issue and no worse! But this befell me not save for thy good luck, for thou wilt certainly get of the King Al-Rashid money galore, that will be the means of thine enrichment." Quoth Khalifah, "Is not Al-Rashid he in whose palace I was imprisoned?" "Yes," answered she, and he said: "By the Lord, never saw I more niggardly wight than he, that piper little of good and wit! He gave me a hundred blows with a stick yesterday and but one dinar, for all I taught him to fish and made him my partner, but he played me false." Replied she: "Leave this unseemly talk, and open thine eyes and look thou bear thyself respectfully whenas thou seest him after this, and thou shalt win thy wish." When he heard her words, it was if he had been asleep and awoke, and the Lord removed the veil from his judgment, because of his good luck, and he answered, "O my head and eyes!" Then said he to her, "Sleep, in the name of the Lord." So she lay down and fell asleep (and he afar from her) till the morning, when she sought of him ink case and paper, and

when they were brought, wrote to Ibn al-Kirnas, the King's friend, acquainting him with her case and how at the end of all that had befallen her she was with Khalifah the fisherman, who had bought her. Then she gave him the scroll, saying-"Take this and hie thee to the jewel market and ask for the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas the Jeweler and give him this paper, and speak not." "I hear and I obey," answered Khalifah, and going with the scroll to the market, inquired for the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas. They directed him thither, and on entering it he saluted the merchant, who returned his salaam with contempt and said to him, "What dost thou want?" Thereupon he gave him the letter and he took it, but read it not, thinking the fisherman a beggar who sought an alms of him, and said to one of his lads, "Give him half a dirham." Quoth Khalifah: "I want no alms. Read the paper." So Ibn al-Kirnas took the letter and read it, and no sooner knew its import than he kissed it and laid it on his head. Then he arose and said to Khalifah, "O my brother, where is thy house?" Asked Khalifah: "What wantest thou with my house? Wilt thou go thither and steal my slave girl?" Then Ibn al-Kirnas answered: "Not so. On the contrary, I will buy thee somewhat whereof you may eat, thou and she." So he said, "My house is in such a quarter," and the merchant rejoined: "Thou hast done well. May the Lord not give thee health, O unlucky one!" Then he called out to two of his slaves and said to them: "Carry this man to the shop of Mohsin the shroff and say to him, 'O Mohsin, give this man a thousand dinars of gold,' then bring him back to me in haste." So they carried him to the money-changer, who paid him the money, and returned with him to their master, whom they found mounted on a dapple she-mule worth a thousand dinars, with Mamelukes and pages about him, and by his side another mule like his own, saddled and bridled. Quoth the jeweler to Khalifah, "Bismillah, mount this mule." Replied he, "I won't, for by the Lord, I fear she throw me," and quoth Ibn al-Kirnas, "By

God, needs must thou mount." So he came up, and mounting her, face to crupper, caught hold of her tail and cried out, whereupon she threw him on the ground and they laughed at him. But he rose and said, "Did I not tell thee I would not mount this great jenny-ass?" Thereupon Ibn al-Kirnas left him in the market, and repairing to the King, told him of the damsel, after which he returned and removed her to his own house. Meanwhile Khalifah went home to look after the handmaid and found the people of the quarter forgathering and saying: "Verily, Khalifah is today in a terrible pickle! Would we knew whence he can have gotten this damsel!" Quoth one of them: "He is a mad pimp. Haply he found her lying on the road drunken, and carried her to his own house, and his absence showeth that he knoweth his offense." As they were talking, behold, up came Khalifah, and they said to him: "What a plight is thine, O unhappy! Knowest thou not what is come to thee?" He replied, "No, by the Lord!" and they said: "But just now there came Mamelukes and took away thy slave girl whom thou stolest, and sought for thee, but found thee not." Asked Khalifah, "And how came they to take my slave girl?" and quoth one, "Had he fallen in their way, they had slain him." But he, so far from heeding them, returned running to the shop of Ibn al-Kirnas, whom he met riding, and said to him: "By the Lord, 'twas not right of thee to wheedle me and meanwhile send thy Mamelukes to take my slave girl!" Replied the jeweler, "O idiot, come with me, and hold thy tongue." So he took him and carried him into a house handsomely builded, where he found the damsel seated on a couch of gold, with ten slave girls like moons round her. Sighting her, Ibn al-Kirnas kissed ground before her, and she said, "What hast thou done with my new master, who bought me with all he owned?" He replied, "O my lady, I gave him a thousand golden dinars," and related to her Khalifah's history from first to last, whereat she laughed and said: "Blame him not, for he is but a

common wight. These other thousand dinars are a gift from me to him, and Almighty the Lord willing, he shall win of the King what shall enrich him." As they were talking, there came a eunuch from the Commander of the Faithful in quest of Kut al-Kulub, for when he knew that she was in the house of Ibn al-Kirnas, he could not endure, the severance, but bade bring her forthwith. So she repaired to the Palace, taking Khalifah with her, and going into the presence, kissed ground before the King, who rose to her, saluting and welcoming her, and asked her how she had fared with him who had brought her. She replied: "He is a man, Khalifah the fisherman called, and there he standeth at the door. He telleth me that he hath an account to settle with the Commander of the Faithful, by reason of a partnership between him and the King in fishing." Asked Al-Rashid, "Is he at the door?" and she answered, "Yes." So the King sent for him and he kissed ground before him and wished him endurance of glory and prosperity. The King marveled at him and laughed at him, and said to him, "O Fisherman, wast thou in very deed my partner yesterday?" Khalifah took his meaning, and heartening his heart and summoning spirit, replied: "By Him who bestowed upon thee the succession to thy cousin, I know her not in anywise and have had no commerce with her save by way of sight and speech!" Then he repeated to him all that had befallen him since he last saw him, whereat the King laughed and his breast broadened and he said to Khalifah, "Ask of us what thou wilt, O thou who bringest to owners their own!" But he was silent, so the King ordered him fifty thousand dinars of gold and a costly dress of honor such as great sovereigns don, and a she-mule, and gave him black slaves of the Sudan to serve him, so that he became as he were one of the kings of that time. The King was rejoiced at the recovery of his favorite and knew that all this was the doing of his cousin-wife, the Lady Zubaydah, wherefore he, was sore enraged against her and held aloof from her a great

while, visiting her not, neither inclining to pardon her. When she was certified of this, she was sore concerned for his wrath, and her face, that was wont to be rosy, waxed pale and wan till, when her patience was exhausted, she sent a letter to her cousin, the Commander of the Faithful, making her excuses to him and confessing her offenses, and ending with these verses: I long once more the love that was between us to regain, That I may quench the fire of grief and bate the force of bane. O lord of me, have ruth upon the stress my passion deals, Enough to me is what you doled of sorrow and of pain. 'Tis life to me an deign you keep the troth you deigned to plight, 'Tis death to me an troth you break and fondest vows profane. Given I've sinned a sorry sin, yet grant me ruth, for naught, By the Lord, sweeter is than friend who is of pardon fain. When the Lady Zubaydah's letter reached the King, and reading it, he saw that she confessed her offense and sent her excuses to him therefor, he said to himself, "Verily, all sins doth the Lord forgive-aye, Gracious, Merciful is He!" And he returned her an answer expressing satisfaction and pardon and forgiveness for what was past, whereat she rejoiced greatly. As for Khalifah the fisherman, the King assigned him a monthly solde of fifty dinars, and took him into especial favor, which would lead to rank and dignity, honor and worship. Then he kissed ground before the Commander of the Faithful and went forth with stately gait. When he came to the door, the eunuch Sandal, who had given him the hundred dinars, saw him, and knowing him, said to him, "O Fisherman, whence all this?" So he told him all that had befallen him, first and last, whereat Sandal rejoiced, because he had been the cause of his enrichment, and said to him, "Wilt thou not give me largess of this wealth which is now become thine?" So Khalifah put hand to pouch and taking out a purse containing a thousand dinars, gave it to the eunuch, who said, "Keep thy coins, and the Lord bless thee therein!" and marveled at his

manliness and at the liberality of his soul, for all his late poverty. Then, leaving the eunuch, Khalifah mounted his she-mule and rode, with the slaves' hands on her crupper, till he came to his lodging at the khan, whilst the folk stared at him in surprise for that which had betided him of advancement. When he alighted from his beast, they accosted him and inquired the cause of his change from poverty to prosperity, and he told them an that had happened to him from incept to conclusion. Then he bought a fine mansion and laid out thereon much money, till it was perfect in all points. And he took up his abode therein and was wont to recite thereon these two couplets: Behold a house that's like the Dwelling of Delight, Its aspect heals the sick and banishes despite. Its sojourn for the great and wise appointed is, And Fortune fair therein abideth day and night. Then, as soon as he was settled in his house, he sought him in marriage the daughter of one of the chief men of the city, a handsome girl, and went in unto her and led a life of solace and satisfaction, joyaunce and enjoyment; and he rose to passing affluence and exceeding prosperity. So when he found himself in this fortunate condition, he offered up thanks to the Lord (extolled and excelled be He!) for what He had bestowed on him of wealth exceeding and of favors ever succeeding, praising his Lord with the praise of the grateful. And thereafter Khalifah continued to pay frequent visits to the King Harun al-Rashid, with whom he found acceptance and who ceased not to overwhelm him with boons and bounty. And he abode in the enjoyment of the utmost honor and happiness and joy and gladness, and in riches more than sufficing and in rank ever rising— brief, a sweet life and a savory, pure as pleasurable, till there came to him die Destroyer of delights and the Sunderer of societies. And extolled be the perfection of Him to whom belong glory and permanence and He is the Living, the Eternal, who shall never die! And amongst the tales they, tell is one of

