

## THE NEW ARABIAN NIGHTS

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“Abu Kir the Dyer and Abu Sir the Barber”

There dwelt once, in Alexander city, two men, of whom one was a dyer, by name of Abu Kir, and the other a barber, Abu Sir, and they were neighbors in the market street, where their shops stood side by side. The dyer was a swindler and a liar, an exceeding wicked wight, as if indeed his head temples were hewn out of a boulder rock or fashioned of the threshold of a Talmudist synagogue, nor was he ashamed of any shameful work he wrought amongst the folk. It was his wont, when any brought him cloth for staining, first to require of him payment under pretense of buying dyestuffs therewith. So the customer would give him the wage in advance and wend his ways, and the dyer would spend all he received on meat and drink, after which he would sell the cloth itself as soon as ever its owner turned his back and waste its worth in eating and drinking not else, for he ate not but of the daintiest and most delicate viands nor drank but of the best of that which doth away the wit of man. And when the owner of the cloth came to him, he would say to him, “Return to me tomorrow before sunrise and thou shalt find thy stuff dyed.” So the customer would go away, saying to himself, “One day is near another day,” and return next day at the appointed time, when the dyer would say to him: “Come tomorrow.

Yesterday I was not at work, for I had with me guests and was occupied with doing what their wants required till they went, but tomorrow before sunrise come and take thy cloth dyed." So he would fare forth and return on the third day, when Abu Kir would say to him: "Indeed yesterday I was excusable, for my wife was brought to bed in the night, and all day I was busy with manifold matters, but tomorrow, without fail, come and take thy cloth dyed." When the man came again at the appointed time, he would put him off with some other pretense, it mattered little what, and would swear to him, as often as he came, till the customer lost patience and said, "How often wilt thou say to me, 'Tomorrow?' Give me my stuff, I will not have it dyed." Whereupon the dyer would make answer: "By the Lord, O my brother, I am abashed at thee, but I must tell the truth and may the Lord harm all who harm folk in their goods!" The other would exclaim, "Tell me what hath happened," and Abu Kir would reply: "As for thy stuff, I dyed that same on matchless wise and hung it on the drying rope, but 'twas stolen and I know not who stole it." If the owner of the stuff were of the kindly he would say, "the Lord will compensate me," and if he were of the ill-conditioned, he would haunt him with exposure and insult, but would get nothing of him, though he complained of him to the judge. He ceased not doing thus till his report was noised abroad among the folk and each used to warn other against Abu Kir, who became a byword amongst them. So they all held aloof from him and none would be entrapped by him save those who were ignorant of his character; but for all this, he failed not daily to suffer insult and exposure from the Lord's creatures. By reason of this his trade became slack, and he used to go to the shop of his neighbor the barber Abu Sir and sit there, facing the dyery and with his eyes on the door. Whenever he espied anyone who knew him not standing at the dyery door with a piece of stuff in his hand, he would leave the barber's booth and go up to him saying, "What seekest

thou, O thou?" and the man would reply, "Take and dye me this thing." So the dyer would ask, "What color wilt thou have it?" For, with all his knavish tricks, his hand was in all manner of dyes. But he was never true to anyone, wherefore poverty had gotten the better of him. Then he would take the stuff and say, "Give me my wage in advance, and come tomorrow and take the stuff." So the stranger would advance him the money and wend his way, whereupon Abu Kir would carry the cloth to the market street and sell it and with its price buy meat and vegetables and tobacco and fruit and what not else he needed. But whenever he saw anyone who had given him stuff to dye standing at the door of his shop, he would not come forth to him or even show himself to him. On this wise he abode years and years, till it fortun'd one day that he received cloth to dye from a man of wrath, and sold it and spent the proceeds. The owner came to him every day, but found him not in his shop; for whenever he espied anyone who had claim against him, he would flee from him into the shop of the barber, Abu Sir. At last that angry man, finding that he was not to be seen and growing weary of such work, repaired to the kazi, and bringing one of his sergeants to the shop, nailed up the door, in presence of a number of Muslims, and sealed it, for that he saw therein naught save some broken pans of earthenware, to stand him instead of his stuff. After which the sergeant took the key, saying to the neighbors, "Tell him to bring back this man's cloth, then come to me and take his shop-key," and went his way, he and the man. Then said Abu Sir to Abu Kir: "What ill business is this? Whoever bringeth thee aught, thou lovest it for him. What hath become of this angry man's stuff?" Answered the dyer, "O my neighbor, 'twas stolen from me." "Prodigious!" exclaimed the barber. "Whenever anyone giveth thee aught, a thief stealeth it from thee! Art thou then the meeting place of every rogue upon town? But I doubt me thou liest, so tell me the truth." Replied Abu Kir,

“O my neighbor, none hath stolen aught from me.” Asked Abu Sir, “What then dost thou with the people’s property?” and the dyer answered, “Whenever anyone giveth me aught to dye, I sell it and spend the price.” Quoth Abu Sir, “Is this permitted thee of the Lord?” and quoth Abu Kir, “I do this only out of poverty, because business is slack with me and I am poor and have nothing.” And he went on to complain to him of the dullness of his trade and his lack of means. Abu Sir in like manner lamented the little profit of his own calling, saying: “I am a master of my craft and have not my equal in this city, but no one cometh to me to be polled, because I am a pauper. And I loathe this art and mystery, O my brother.” Abu Kir replied: “And I also loathe my own craft, by reason of its slackness. But, O my brother, what call is there for our abiding in this town? Let us depart from it, I and thou, and solace ourselves in the lands of mankind, carrying in our hands our crafts which are in demand all the world over. So shall we breathe the air, and rest from this grievous trouble.” And he ceased not to command travel to Abu Sir till the barber became wishful to set out, so they agreed upon their route. When they agreed to travel together, Abu Kir said to Abu Sir: “O my neighbor, we are become brethren and there is no difference between us, so it behooveth us to recite the fatihah that he of us who gets work shall of his gain feed him who is out of work, and whatever is left, we will lay in a chest. And when we return to Alexandria, we will divide it fairly and equally.” “So be it,” replied Abu Sir, and they repeated the opening chapter of the Koran on this understanding. Then Abu Sir locked up his shop and gave the key to its owner, whilst Abu Kir left his door locked and sealed and let the key lie with the kazi’s sergeant. After which they took their baggage and embarked on the morrow in a galleon upon the salt sea. They set sail the same day and fortune attended them, for, of Abu Sir’s great good luck, there was not a barber in the ship, albeit it

carried a hundred and twenty men, besides captain and crew. So when they loosed the sails, the barber said to the dyer: "O my brother, this is the sea, and we shall need meat and drink. We have but little provant with us and haply the voyage will be long upon us, wherefore methinks I will shoulder my budget and pass among the passengers, and maybe someone will say to me, 'Come hither, O barber, and shave me,' and I will shave him for a scone or a silver bit or a draught of water. So shall we profit by this, I and thou too." "There's no harm in that," replied the dyer, and laid down his head and slept, whilst the barber took his gear and water tasse, and throwing over his shoulder a rag to serve as napkin (because he was poor), passed among the passengers. Quoth one of them, "Ho, master, come and shave me." So he shaved him, and the man gave him a half-dirham, whereupon quoth Abu Sir: "O my brother, I have no use for this bit. Hadst thou given me a scone, 'twere more blessed to me in this sea, for I have a shipmate, and we are short of provision." So he gave him a loaf and a slice of cheese and filled him the tasse with sweet water. The barber carried all this to Abu Kir and said, "Eat the bread and cheese and drink the water." Accordingly he ate and drank, whilst Abu Sir again took up his shaving gear and, tasse in hand and rag on shoulder, went round about the deck among the passengers. One man he shaved for two scones and another for a bittock of cheese, and he was in demand, because there was no other barber on board. Also he bargained with everyone who said to him, "Ho, master, shave me!" for two loaves and a half-dirham, and they gave him whatever he sought, so that by sundown he had collected thirty loaves and thirty silvers with store of cheese and olives and botargos. And besides these he got from the passengers whatever he asked for and was soon in possession of things galore. Amongst the rest, he shaved the captain, to whom he complained of his lack of victual for the voyage, and the skipper said to him, "That art

welcome to bring thy comrade every night and sup with me, and have no care for that so long as ye sail with us." Then he returned to the dyer, whom he found asleep. So he roused him, and when Abu Kir awoke, he saw at his head an abundance of bread and cheese and olives and botargos and said, "Whence gottest thou all this?" "From the bounty of the Lord Almighty," replied Abu Sir. Then Abu Kir would have fallen to, but the barber said to him: "Eat not of this, O my brother, but leave it to serve us another time. For know that I shaved the captain and complained to him of our lack of victual, whereupon quoth he: 'Welcome to thee! Bring thy comrade and sup both of ye with me every night.' And this night we sup with him for the first time." But Abu Kir replied, "My head goeth round with seasickness and I cannot rise from my stead, so let me sup off these things and fare thou alone to the captain." Abu Sir replied, "There is no harm in that," and sat looking at the other as he ate, and saw him hew off gobbets as the quarryman heweth stone from the hill quarries and gulp them down with the gulp of an elephant which hath not eaten for days, bolting another mouthful ere he had swallowed the previous one and glaring the while at that which was before him with the glowering of a Ghul, and blowing as bloweth the hungry bull over his beans and bruised straw. Presently up came a sailor and said to the barber, "O craftsman, the captain biddeth thee come to supper and bring thy comrade." Quoth the barber to the dyer, "Wilt thou come with us?" but quoth he, "I cannot walk." So the barber went by himself and found the captain sitting before a tray whereon were a score or more of dishes, and all the company were awaiting him and his mate. When the captain saw him, he asked, "Where is thy friend?" and Abu Sir answered, "O my lord, he is seasick." Said the skipper, "That will do him no harm, his sickness will soon pass off, but do thou carry him his supper and come back, for we tarry for thee." Then he set apart a porringer of kababs and putting therein some of

each dish, till there was enough for ten, gave it to Abu Sir, saying, "Take this to thy chum." He took it and carried it to the dyer, whom he found grinding away with his dog teeth at the food which was before him, as he were a camel, and heaping mouthful on mouthful in his hurry. Quoth Abu Sir, "Did, I not say to thee, 'Eat not of this'? Indeed the captain is a kindly man. See what he hath sent thee, for that I told him thou wast seasick." "Give it here," cried the dyer. So the barber gave him the platter, and he snatched it from him and fell upon his food, ravening for it and resembling a grinning dog or a raging lion or a roc pouncing on a pigeon or one well-nigh dead for hunger who, seeing meat, falls ravenously to eat. Then Abu Sir left him, and going back to the captain, supped and enjoyed himself and drank coffee with him, after which he returned to Abu Kir and found that he had eaten all that was in the porringer and thrown it aside, empty. So he took it up and gave it to one of the captain's servants, then went back to Abu Kir and slept till the morning. On the morrow he continued to shave, and all he got by way of meat and drink he gave to his shipmate, who ate and drank and sat still, rising not save to do what none could do for him, and every night the barber brought him a full porringer from the captain's table. They fared thus twenty days until the galleon cast anchor in the harbor of a city, whereupon they took leave of the skipper, and landing, entered the town and hired them a closet in a khan. Abu Sir furnished it, and buying a cooking pot and a platter and spoons and what else they needed, fetched meat and cooked it. But Abu Kir fell asleep the moment he entered the caravanserai and awoke not till Abu Sir aroused him and set the tray of food before him. When he awoke, he ate, and saying to Abu Sir, "Blame me not, for I am giddy," fell asleep again. Thus he did forty days, whilst every day the barber took his gear, and making the round of the city, wrought for that which fell to his lot, and returning, found the dyer asleep and aroused him. The

moment he awoke he fell ravenously upon the food, eating as one who cannot have his fill nor be satisfied, after which he went asleep again. On this wise he passed other forty days, and whenever the barber said to him, "Sit up and be comfortable and go forth and take an airing in the city, for 'tis a gay place and a pleasant and hath not its equal among the cities," he would reply, "Blame me not, for I am giddy." Abu Sir cared not to hurt his feelings nor give him hard words, but on the forty-first day, he himself fell sick and could not go abroad, so he engaged the porter of the khan to serve them both, and he did the needful for them and brought them meat and drink whilst Abu Kir would do nothing but eat and sleep. The man ceased not to wait upon them on this wise for four days, at the end of which time the barbees malady redoubled on him, till he lost his senses for stress of sickness; and Abu Kir, feeling the sharp pangs of hunger, arose and sought in his comrade's clothes, where he found a thousand silver bits. He took them and, shutting the door of the closet upon Abu Sir, fared forth without telling any, and the doorkeeper was then at market and thus saw him not go out. Presently Abu Kir betook himself to the bazaar and clad himself in costly clothes, at a price of five hundred half-dirhams. Then he proceeded to walk about the streets and divert himself by viewing the city, which he found to be one whose like was not among cities. But he noted that all its citizens were clad in clothes of white and blue, without other color. Presently he came to a dyer's, and seeing naught but blue in his shop, pulled out to him a kerchief and said, "O master, take this and dye it and win thy wage." Quoth the dyer, "The cost of dyeing this will be twenty dirhams," and quoth Abu Kir, "In our country we dye it for two." "Then go and dye it in your own country! As for me, my price is twenty dirhams and I will not bate a tittle thereof." "What color wilt thou dye it?" "I will dye it blue." "But I want it dyed red." "I know not how to dye red." "Then dye it green." "I know not how to dye it



green." "Yellow." "Nor yet yellow." Thereupon Abu Kir went on to name the different tints to him, one after other, till the dyer said: "We are here in this city forty master dyers, not one more nor one less, and when one of us dieth, we teach his son the craft. If he leave no son, we abide lacking one, and if he leave two sons, we teach one of them the craft, and if he die, we teach his brother. This our craft is strictly ordered, and we know how to dye but blue and no other tint whatsoever." Then said Abu Kir: "Know that I too am a dyer, and wot how to dye all colors, and I would have thee take me into thy service on hire, and I will teach thee everything of my art, so thou mayst glory therein over all the company of dyers." But the dyer answered, "We never admit a stranger into our craft." Asked Abu Kir, "And what if I open a dyery for myself?" whereto the other answered, "We will not suffer thee to do that on any wise."

Whereupon he left him, and going to a second dyer, made him the like proposal, but he returned him the same answer as the first. And he ceased not to go from one to other till he had made the round of the whole forty masters, but they would not accept him either to master or apprentice. Then he repaired to the Sheikh of the dyers and told what had passed, and he said, "We admit no strangers into our craft." Hereupon Abu Kir became exceeding wroth, and going up to the King of that city, made complaint to him, saying, "O King of the Age, I am a stranger and a dyer by trade," and he told him whatso had passed between himself and the dyers of the town, adding: "I can dye various kinds of red, such as rose-color and jujubel-color and various kinds of green, such as grass-green and pistachio-green and olive and parrot's wing, and various kinds of black, such as coal-black and kohl-black, and various shades of yellow, such as orange and lemon-color," and went on to name to him the rest of the colors. Then said he, "O King of the Age, all the dyers in thy city cannot turn out of hand any one of these tints, for they know not how to dye aught

but blue. Yet they will not admit me amongst them, either to master or apprentice." Answered the King: "Thou sayst sooth for that matter, but I will open to thee a dyery and give thee capital, and have thou no care anent them; for whoso offereth to do thee let or hindrance, I will hang him over his shop door." Then he sent for builders and said to them, "Go round about the city with this master dyer, and whatsoever place pleaseth him, be it shop or khan or what not, turn out its occupier and build him a dyery after his wish. Whatsoever he biddeth you, that do ye, and oppose him not in aught." And he clad him in a handsome suit and gave him two white slaves to serve him, and a horse with housings of brocade and a thousand dinars, saying, "Expend this upon thyself against the building be completed." Accordingly Abu Kir donned the dress, and mounting the horse, became as he were an emir. Moreover the King assigned him a house, and bade furnish it, so they furnished it for him and he took up his abode therein. On the morrow he mounted and rode through the city, whilst the architects went before him, and he looked about him till he saw a place which pleased him and said, "This stead is seemly," whereupon they turned out the owner and carried him to the King, who gave him as the price of his holding, what contented him and more. Then the builders fell to work, whilst Abu Kir said to them, "Build thus and thus and do this and that," till they built him a dyery that had not its like. Whereupon he presented himself before the King and informed him that they had done building the dyery and that there needed but the price of the dyestuffs and gear to set it going. Quoth the King, "Take these four thousand dinars to thy capital and let me see the first fruits of thy dyery." So he took the money and went to the market where, finding dyestuffs plentiful and well-nigh worthless, he bought all he needed of materials for dyeing; and the King sent him five hundred pieces of stuff, which he set himself to dye of all colors, and then he spread them before

the door of his dyery. When the folk passed by the shop, they saw a wonder sight whose like they had never in their lives seen, so they crowded about the entrance, enjoying the spectacle and questioning the dyer and saying, "O master, what are the names of these colors?" Quoth he, "This is red and that yellow and the other green," and so on, naming the rest of the colors. And they fell to bringing him longcloth and saying to him, "Dye it for us like this and that, and take what hire thou seekest." When he had made an end of dyeing the King's stuffs, he took them and went up with them to the Divan, and when the King saw them he rejoiced in them and bestowed abundant bounty on the dyer. Furthermore, all the troops brought him stuffs, saying, "Dye for us thus and thus," and he dyed for them to their liking, and they threw him gold and silver. After this his fame spread abroad, and his shop was called the Sultan's Dyery. Good came in to him at every door and none of the other dyers could say a word to him, but they used to come to him kissing his hands and excusing themselves to him for past affronts they had offered him and saying, "Take us to thine apprentices." But he would none of them, for he had become the owner of black slaves and handmaids and had amassed store of wealth. On this wise fared it with Abu Kir, but as regards Abu Sir, after closet door had been locked on him and his money had been stolen, he abode prostrate and unconscious for three successive days, at the end of which the concierge of the khan, chancing to look at the door, observed that it was locked, and bethought himself that he had not seen and heard aught of the two companions for some time. So he said in his mind: "Haply they have made off without paying rent, or perhaps they are dead, or what is to do with them?" And he waited till sunset, when he went up to the door and heard the barber groaning within. He saw the key in the lock, so he opened the door, and entering, found Abu Sir lying groaning, and said to him: "No harm to thee.

Where is thy friend?" Replied Abu Sir: "By the Lord, I came to my senses only this day and called out, but none answered my call. the Lord upon thee, O my brother, look for the purse under my head and take from it five half-dirhams and buy me somewhat nourishing, for I am sore a-hungred." The porter put out his hand, and taking the purse, found it empty and said to the barber, "The purse is empty, there is nothing in it." Whereupon Abu Sir knew that Abu Kir had taken that which was therein and had fled, and he asked the porter, "Hast thou not seen my friend?" Answered the doorkeeper, "I have not seen him for these three days, and indeed methought you had departed, thou and he." The barber cried, "Not so, but he coveted my money and took it and fled, seeing me sick." Then he fell a-weeping and a-wailing, but the doorkeeper said to him, "No harm shall befall thee, and the Lord will requite him his deed." So he went away and cooked him some broth, whereof he ladled out a plateful and brought it to him. Nor did he cease to tend him and maintain him with his own moneys for two months' space, when the barber sweated and the Almighty made him whole of his sickness. Then he stood up and said to the porter: "An ever the Most High Lord enable me, I will surely requite thee thy kindness to me. But none requiteth save the Lord of His bounty!" Answered the porter: "Praised be He for thy recovery! I dealt not thus with am but of desire for the face of the Lord the Bountiful." Then the barber went forth of the khan and threaded the market streets of the town till Destiny brought him to the bazaar wherein was Abu Kir's dyery, and he saw the varicolored stuffs dispread before the shop and a jostle of folk crowding to look upon them. So he questioned one of the townsmen and asked him, "What place is this, and how cometh it that I see the folk crowding together?" whereto the man answered, saying: "This is the Sultan's Dyery, which he set up for a foreigner, Abu Kir high! And whenever he dyeth new stuff, we all flock to him and divert

ourselves by gazing upon his handiwork, for we have no dyers in our land who know how to stain with these colors. And indeed there befell him with the dyers who are in the city that which befell." And he went on to tell him all that had passed between Abu Kir and the master dyers and how he had complained of them to the Sultan, who took him by the hand and built him that dyery and gave him this and that— brief, he, recounted to him all that had occurred. At this the barber rejoiced and said in himself: "Praised be the Lord Who hath prospered him, so that he is become a master of his craft! And the man is excusable, for of a surety he hath been diverted from thee by his work and hath forgotten thee; but thou actedst kindly by him and entreatedst him generously what time he was out of work, so when he seeth thee, he will rejoice in thee and entreat thee generously, even as thou entreatedst him." According he made for the door of the dyery, and saw Abu Kir seated on a high mattress spread upon a bench beside the doorway, clad in royal apparel and attended by four blackamoor slaves and four white Mamelukes all robed in the richest of raiment. Moreover, he saw the workmen, ten Black African slaves, standing at work; for when Abu Kir bought them, he taught them the craft of dyeing, and he himself sat amongst his cushions as he were a grand Vizier or a mighty monarch, putting his hand to naught but only saying to the men, "Do this and do that." So the barber went up to him and stood before him, deeming he would rejoice in him when he saw him and salute him and entreat him with honor and make much of him. But when eye fell upon eye, the dyer said to him: "O scoundrel how many a time have I bidden thee stand not at the door of the workshop? Hast thou a mind to disgrace me with the folk, thief that thou art? Seize him." So the blackamoors ran at him and laid hold of him, and the dyer rose up from his seat and said, "Throw him." Accordingly they threw him down and Abu Kir took a stick and dealt him a hundred strokes

on the back, after which they turned him over and he beat him other hundred blows on his belly. Then he said to him: "O scoundrel, O villain, if ever again I see thee standing at the door of this dyery, I will forthwith send thee to the King, and he will commit thee to the Chief of Police, that he may strike thy neck. Begone, may the Lord not bless thee!" So Abu Sir departed from him, brokenhearted by reason of the beating and shame that had betided him, whilst the bystanders asked Abu Kir, "What hath this man done?" He answered: "The fellow is a thief, who stealeth the stuffs of folk. He hath robbed me of cloth, how many a time! And I still said to myself, 'the Lord forgive him!' He is a poor man, and I cared not to deal roughly with him, so I used to give my customers the worth of their goods and forbid him gently, but he would not be forbidden. And if he come again, I will send him to the King, who will put him to death and rid the people of his mischief." And the bystanders fell to abusing the barber after his back was turned. Such was the behavior of Abu Kir, but as regards Abu Sir, he returned to the khan, where he sat pondering that which the dyer had done by him, and he remained seated till the burning of the beating subsided, when he went out and walked about the markets of the city. Presently he bethought him to go to the hammam bath, so he said to one of the townsfolk, "O my brother, which is the way to the baths?" Quoth the man, "And what manner of thing may the baths be?" and quoth Abu Sir, "'Tis a place where people wash themselves and do away their dirt and defilements, and it is of the best of the good things of the world." Replied the townsman, "Get thee to the sea," but the barber rejoined, "I want the hammam baths." Cried the other: "We know not what manner of thing is the hammam, for we all resort to the sea. Even the King, when he would wash, betaketh himself to the sea." When Abu Sir was assured that there was no bath in the city and that the folk knew not the baths nor the fashion thereof, he betook

himself to the King's Divan and, kissing ground between his hands, called down blessings on him and said: "I am a stranger and a bathman by trade, and I entered thy city and thought to go to the hammam, but found not one therein. How cometh a city of this comely quality to lack a hammam, seeing that the bath is of the highest of the delights of this world?" Quoth the King, "What manner of thing is the hammam?" So Abu Sir proceeded to set forth to him the quality of the bath, saying, "Thy capital will not be a perfect city till there be a hammam therein." "Welcome to thee!" said the King and clad him in a dress that had not its like and gave him a horse and two blackamoor slaves, presently adding four handmaids and as many white Mamelukes. He also appointed him a furnished house and honored him yet more abundantly than he had honored the dyer. After this he sent builders with him, saying to them, "Build him a hammam in what place soever shall please him." So he took them and went with them through the midst of the city till he saw a stead that suited him. He pointed it out to the builders and they set to work, whilst he directed them, and they wrought till they builded him a hammam that had not its like. Then he bade them paint it, and they painted it rarely, so that it was a delight to the beholders. After which Abu Sir went up to the King and told him that they had made an end of building and decorating the hammam, adding, "There lacketh naught save the furniture." The King gave him ten thousand dinars wherewith he furnished the bath and ranged the napkins on the ropes, and all who passed by the door stared at it and their mind was confounded at its decorations. So the people crowded to this spectacle, whose like they had never in their lives seen, and solaced themselves by staring at it and saying, "What is this thing?" To which Abu Sir replied, "This is a hammam," and they marveled thereat. Then he heated water and set the bath a-working, and he made a jetting fountain in the great basin, which ravished

the wit of an who saw it of the people of the city. Furthermore, he sought of the King ten Mamelukes not yet come to manhood, and he gave him ten boys like moons, whereupon Abu Sir proceeded to shampoo them, saying, "Do in this wise with the bathers." Then he burnt perfumes and sent out a crier to cry aloud in the city, saying, "O creatures of the Lord, get ye to the baths which be called the Sultan's Hammam!" So the lieges came thither and Abu Sir bade the slave boys wash their bodies. The folk went down into the tank and coming forth, seated themselves on the raised pavement whilst the boys shampooed them, even as Abu Sir had taught them. And they continued to enter the hammam and do their need therein gratis and go out, without paying, for the space of three days. On the fourth day the barber invited the King, who took horse with his grandees and rode to the baths, where he put off his clothes and entered. Then Abu Sir came in to him and rubbed his body with the bag gloves, peeling from his skin dirt rolls like lampwicks and showing them to the King, who rejoiced therein, and clapping his hand upon his limbs, heard them ring again for very smoothness and cleanliness. After which thorough washing Abu Sir mingled rosewater with the water of the tank and the King went down therein. When he came forth, his body was refreshed and he felt a lightness and liveliness such as he had never known in his life. Then the barber made him sit on the dais and the boys proceeded to shampoo him, whilst the censers fumed with the finest lign aloes. Then said the King, "O master, is this the hammam?" and Abu Sir said, "Yes." Quoth the King; "As my head liveth, my city is not become a city indeed but by this bath," presently adding, "But what pay takest thou for each person?" Quoth Abu Sir, "That which thou biddest will I take," whereupon the King cried, "Take a thousand gold pieces for everyone who washeth in thy hammam." Abu Sir, however, said: "Pardon, O King of the Age! All men are not alike, but there are amongst them rich and poor,



and if I take of each a thousand dinars, the hammam will stand empty, for the poor man cannot pay this price.” Asked the King, “How then wilt thou do for the price?” and the barber answered: “I will leave it to their generosity. Each who can afford aught shall pay that which his soul grudgeth not to give, and we will take from every man after the measure of his means. On this wise will the folk come to us, and he who is wealthy shall give according to his station and he who is wealthless shall give what he can afford. Under such condition the hammam will still be at work and prosper exceedingly. But a thousand dinars is a monarch’s gift, and not every man can avail to this.” The lords of the realm confirmed Abu Sir’s words, saying: “This is the truth, O King of the Age! Thinkest thou that all folk are like unto thee, O glorious King?” The King replied: “Ye say sooth, but this man is a stranger and poor, and ’tis incumbent on us to deal generously with him, for that he hath made in our city this hammam whose like we have never in our lives seen and without which our city were not adorned nor hath gotten importance. Wherefore, an we favor him with increase of fee, ’twill not be much.” But the grandees said: “An thou wilt guerdon him, be generous with thine own moneys, and let the King’s bounty be extended to the poor by means of the low price of the hammam, so the lieges may bless thee. But as for the thousand dinars, we are the lords of thy land, yet do our souls grudge to pay it, and how then should the poor be pleased to afford it?” Quoth the King: “O my Grandees, for this time let each of you give him a hundred dinars and a Mameluke, a slave girl, and a blackamoor,” and quoth they: “’Tis well. We will give it, but after today whoso entereth shall give him only what he can afford, without grudging.” “No harm in that,” said the King, and they gave him the thousand gold pieces and three chattels. Now the number of the nobles who were washed with the King that day was four hundred souls, so that the total of that which they gave him was forty thousand

dinars, besides four hundred Mamelukes and a like number of Black African slaves and slave girls. Moreover, the King gave him ten thousand dinars, besides ten white slaves and ten handmaidens and a like number of blackamoors, whereupon, coming forward, Abu Sir kissed the ground before him and said: "O auspicious Sovereign, lord of justice, what place will contain me all these women and slaves?" Quoth the King: "O weak o' wit, I bade not my nobles deal thus with thee but that we might gather together unto thee wealth galore; for maybe thou wilt bethink thee of thy country and family and repine for them and be minded to return to thy mother land— so shalt thou take from our country muchel of money to maintain thyself withal, what while thou livest in thine own country." And quoth Abu Sir: "O King of the Age (the Lord advance thee!), these white slaves and women and Black African slaves befit only kings, and hadst thou ordered me ready money, it were more profitable to me than this army; for they must eat and drink and dress, and whatever betideth me of wealth, it will not suffice for their support." The King laughed and said: "By the Lord, thou speaketh sooth! They are indeed a mighty host, and thou hast not the wherewithal to maintain them; but wilt thou sell them to me for a hundred dinars a head?" Said Abu Sir, "I sell them to thee at that price." So the King sent to his treasurer for the coin and he brought it and gave Abu Sir the whole of the price without abatement and in full tale, after which the King restored the slaves to their owners, saying, "Let each of you who knoweth his slaves take them, for they are a gift from me to you." So they obeyed his bidding and took each what belonged to him, whilst Abu Sir said to the King: "the Lord ease thee, O King of the Age, even as thou hast eased me of these Ghuls, whose bellies none may fill save the Lord!" The King laughed, and said he spake sooth. Then, taking the grandees of his realm from the hammam, returned to his palace. But the barber passed the night in

counting out his gold and laying it up in bags and sealing them, and he had with him twenty black slaves and a like number of Mamelukes and four slave girls to serve him. Now when morning morrowed, he opened the hammam and sent out a crier to cry, saying: "Whoso entereth the baths and washeth shall give that which he can afford and which his generosity requireth him to give." Then he seated himself by the pay chest and customers flocked in upon him, each putting down that which was easy to him, nor had eventide evened ere the chest was full of the good gifts of the Lord the Most High. Presently the Queen desired to go to the hammam, and when this came to Abu Sir's knowledge, he divided the day on her account into two parts, appointing that between dawn and noon to men and that between midday and sundown to women. As soon as the Queen came, he stationed a handmaid behind the pay chest, for he had taught four slave girls the service of the hammam, so that they were become expert bathwomen and tirewomen. When the Queen entered, this pleased her, and her breast waxed broad, and she laid down a thousand dinars. Thus his report was noised abroad in the city, and all who entered the bath he entreated with honor, were they rich or poor. Good came in upon him at every door, and he made acquaintance with the royal guards and got him friends and intimates. The King himself used to come to him one day in every week, leaving with him a thousand dinars, and the other days were for rich and poor alike; and he was wont to deal courteously with the folk and use them with the utmost respect. It chanced that the King's sea captain came in to him one day in the bath, so Abu Sir did off his dress and going in with him, proceeded to shampoo him, and entreated him with exceeding courtesy. When he came forth, he made him sherbet and coffee, and when he would have given him somewhat, he swore that he would not accept from him aught. So the captain was under obligation to him, by reason of his exceeding kindness and

courtesy, and was perplexed how to requite the bathman his generous dealing. Thus fared it with Abu Sir, but as regards Abu Kir, hearing an the people recounting wonders of the baths and saying, "Verily, this hammam is the Paradise of this world! The Lord-willing, O Such-a-one, thou shalt go with us tomorrow to this delightful bath," he said to himself, "Needs must I fare like the rest of the world, and see this bath that hath taken folk's wits." So he donned his richest dress, and mounting a she-mule and bidding the attendance of four white slaves and four blacks, walking before and behind him, he rode to the hammam. When he alighted at the door, he smelt the scent of burning aloes wood and found people going in and out and the benches full of great and small. So he entered the vestibule, and saw Abu Sir, who rose to him and rejoiced in him, but the dyer said to him: "Is this the way of well-born men? I have opened me a dyery and am become master dyer of the city and acquainted with the King and have risen to prosperity and authority, yet camest thou not to me nor askest of me nor saidst, 'Where's my comrade?' For my part, I sought thee in vain and sent my slaves and servants to make search for thee in all the khans and other places, but they knew not whither thou hadst gone, nor could anyone give me tidings of thee." Said Abu Sir, "Did I not come to thee, and didst thou not make me out a thief and bastinado me and dishonor me before the world?" At this Abu Kir made a show of concern and asked: "What manner of talk is this? Was it thou whom I beat?" and Abu Sir answered, "Yes, 'twas I." Whereupon Abu Kir swore to him a thousand oaths that he knew him not and said: "There was a fellow like thee, who used to come every day and steal the people's stuff, and I took thee for him." And he went on to pretend penitence, beating hand upon hand and saying: "There is no Majesty and there is no Might save in the Lord, the Glorious, the Great. Indeed we have sinned against thee, but would that thou hadst discovered thyself to and said, 'I

am Such-a-one!' Indeed the fault is with thee, for that thou madest not thyself known unto me, more especially seeing that I was distracted for much business." Replied Abu Sir: "the Lord pardon thee, O my comrade! This was foreordained in the secret purpose, and reparation is with the Lord. Enter and put off thy clothes and bathe at thine ease." Said the dyer, "I conjure thee, by the Lord, O my brother, forgive me!" and said Abu Sir: "the Lord acquit thee of blame and forgive thee! Indeed this thing was decreed to me from an eternity." Then asked Abu Kir, "Whence gottest thou this high degree?" and answered Abu Sir: "He who prospered thee prospered me, for I went up to the King and described to him the fashion of the hammam, and he bade me build one." And the dyer said: "Even as thou art beknown of the King, so also am I, and, The Lord-willing, I will make him love and favor thee more than ever, for my sake. He knoweth not that thou art my comrade, but I will acquaint him of this and commend thee to him." But Abu Sir said: "There needeth no commendation, for He who moveth man's heart to love still liveth, and indeed the King and all his Court affect me and have given me this and that." And he told him the whole tale, and said to him: "Put off thy clothes behind the chest and enter the hammam, and I will go in with thee and rub thee down with the glove." So he doffed his dress, and Abu Sir, entering the bath with him, soaped him and gloved him and then dressed him and busied himself with his service till he came forth, when he brought him dinner and sherbets, whilst all the folk marveled at the honor he did him. Then Abu Kir would have given him somewhat, but he swore that he would not accept aught from him, and said to him: "Shame upon such doing! Thou art my comrade, and there is no difference between us." Then Abu Kir observed: "By the Lord, O my comrade, this is a mighty fine hammam of thine, but there lacketh somewhat in its ordinance." Asked Abu Sir, "And what is that?" and Abu Kir answered: "It is

the depilatory, to wit, the paste compounded of yellow arsenic and quicklime which removeth the hair with comfort. Do thou prepare it, and next time the King cometh, present it to him, teaching him how he shall cause the hair to fall off by such means, and he will love thee with exceeding love and honor thee." Quoth Abu Sir, "Thou speaketh sooth, and The Lord-willing, I will at once make it." Then Abu Kir left him and mounted his mule, and going to the King, said to him, "I have a warning to give thee, O King of the Age!" "And what is thy warning?" asked the King, and Abu Kir answered, "I hear that thou hast built a hamman." Quoth the King: "Yes. There came to me a stranger and I builded the baths for even as I builded the dyery for thee, and indeed 'tis a mighty fine hammam and an ornament to my city," and he went on to describe to him the virtues of the bath. Quoth the dyer, "Hast thou entered therein?" and quoth the King, "Yes." Thereupon cried Abu Kir: "Alhamdolillah— praised be God— who saved thee from the mischief of yonder villain and foe of the Faith— I mean the bathkeeper!" The King inquired, "And what of him?" and Abu Kir replied: "Know, O King of the Age, that an thou enter the hammam again after this day, thou wilt surely perish." "How so?" said the King, and the dyer said: "This bathkeeper is thy foe and the foe of the Faith, and he induced thee not to stablish this bath but because he designed therein to poison thee. He hath made for thee somewhat, and he will present it to thee when thou enterest the hammam, saying, "This is a drug which, if one apply to his parts below the waist, will remove the hair with comfort." Now it is no drug, but a drastic dreg and a deadly poison, for the Sultan of the Christians hath promised this obscene fellow to release to him his wife and children an he will kill thee. For they are prisoners in the hands of that Sultan. I myself was captive with him in their land, but I opened a dyery and dyed for them various colors, so that they conciliated the King's heart to me and he bade me ask

a boon of him. I sought of him freedom and he set me at liberty, whereupon I made my way to this city, and seeing yonder man in the hammam, said to him, 'How didst thou effect thine escape and win free with thy wife and children?' Quoth he: 'We ceased not to be in captivity, I and my wife and children, till one day the King of the Christians held a Court whereat I was present, amongst a number of others. And as I stood amongst the folk, I heard them open out on the kings and name them, one after other, till they came to the name of the King of this city, whereupon the King of the Christians cried out "Alas!" and said, "None vexeth me in the world, but the King of such a city! Whosoever will contrive me his slaughter I will give him all. he shall ask." So I went up to him and said, "An I compass for thee his slaughter, wilt thou set me free, me and my wife and my children?" The King replied, "Yes, and I will give thee to boot whatso thou shalt desire." So we agreed upon this, and he sent me in a galleon to this city, where I presented myself to the King and he built me this hammam. "Now, therefore, I have naught to do but to slay him and return to the King of the Christians, that I may redeem my children and my wife and ask a boon of him.' Quoth I: 'And how wilt thou go about to kill him?' and quoth he, 'By the simplest of all devices, for I have compounded him somewhat wherein is poison, so when he cometh to the bath, I shall say to him "Take this paste and anoint therewith thy parts below the waist for it will cause the hair to drop off." So he will take it and apply it to himself, and the poison will work in him a day and a night, till it reacheth his heart and destroyeth him. And meanwhile I shall have made off and none will know that it was I slew him.' When I heard this," added Abu Kir, "I feared for thee, my benefactor, wherefore I have told thee of what is doing. As soon as the King heard the dyer's story, he was wroth with exceeding wrath and said to him, "Keep this secret." Then he resolved to visit the hammam, that he might dispel

doubt by supplying certainty, and when he entered, Abu Sir doffed his dress, and betaking himself as of wont to the service of the King, proceeded to glove him, after which he said to him, "O King of the Age, I have made a drug which assisteth in plucking out the lower hair." Cried the King, "Bring it to me." So the barber brought it to him and the King, finding it nauseous of smell, was assured that it was poison, wherefore he was incensed and called out to his guards, saying, "Seize him!" Accordingly they seized him, and the King donned his dress and returned to his palace; boiling with fury, whilst none knew the cause of his indignation, for, of the excess of his wrath he had acquainted no one therewith and none dared ask him. Then he repaired to the audience chamber, and causing Abu Sir to be brought before him with his elbows pinioned, sent for his sea captain and said to him: "Take this villain and set him in a sack with two quintals of lime unslaked and tie its mouth over his head. Then lay him in a cockboat and row out with him in front of my palace, where thou wilt see me sitting at the lattice. Do thou say to me, 'Shall I cast him in?' and if I answer, 'Cast him!' throw the sack into the sea, so the quicklime may be slacked on him to the intent that he shall die drowned and burnt." "Hearkening and obeying," quoth the captain, and taking Abu Sir from the presence, carried him to an island facing the King's palace, where he said to him: "Ho, thou, I once visited thy hammam and thou entreatedst me with honor and accomplishedst all my needs and I had great pleasure of thee. Moreover, thou swarest that thou wouldst take no pay of me, and I love thee with a great love. So tell me how the case standeth between thee and the King, and what abominable deed thou hast done with him that he is wroth with thee and hath commanded me that thou shouldst die this foul death." Answered Abu Sir, "I have done nothing, nor weet I of any crime I have committed against him which merited this!" Rejoined the captain: "Verily, thou



wast high in rank with the King, such as none ever won before thee, and all who are prosperous are envied. Haply someone was jealous of thy good fortune and threw out certain hints concerning thee to the King, by reason whereof he is become enraged against thee with rage so violent. But be of good cheer, no harm shall befall thee. For even as thou entreatedst me generously, without acquaintanceship between me and thee, so now I will deliver thee. But an I release thee, thou must abide with me on this island till some galleon sail from our city to thy native land, when I will send thee thither therein." Abu Sir kissed his hand and thanked him for that, after which the captain fetched the quicklime and set it in a sack, together with a great stone, the size of a man, saying, "I put my trust in the Lord!" Then he gave the barber a net, saying: "Cast this net into the sea, so haply thou mayest take somewhat of fish. For I am bound to supply the King's kitchen with fish every day, but today I have been distracted from fishing by this calamity which hath befallen thee, and I fear lest the cook's boys come to me in quest of fish and find none. So, an thou take aught, they will find it and thou wilt veil my face, whilst I go and play off my practice in front of the palace and feign to cast thee into the sea." Answered Abu Sir: "I will fish the while. Go thou, and God help thee!" So the captain set the sack in the boat and paddled till it came under the palace, where he saw the King seated at the lattice and said to him, "O King of the Age, shall I cast him in?" "Cast him!" cried the King, and signed to him with his hand, when lo and behold! something flashed like levin and fell into the sea. Now that which had fallen into the water was the King's seal ring, and the same was enchanted in such way that when the King was wroth with anyone and was minded to slay him, he had but to sign to him with his right hand, whereon was the signet ring, and therefrom issued a flash of lightning, which smote the object, and thereupon his head fell from between his

shoulders. And the troops obeyed him not, nor did he overcome the men of might, save by means of the ring. So when it dropped from his finger, he concealed the matter and kept silence, for that he dared not say, "My ring is fallen into the sea," for fear of the troops, lest they rise against him and slay him. On this wise it befell the King. But as regards Abu Sir, after the captain had left him on the island he took the net and casting it into the sea, presently drew it up full of fish, nor did he cease to throw it and pull it up full till there was a great mound of fish before him. So he said in himself, "By the Lord, this long while I have not eaten fish!" and chose himself a large fat fish, saying, "When the captain cometh back, I will bid him fry it for me, so I may dine on it." Then he cut its throat with a knife he had with him, but the knife stuck in its gills, and there he saw the King's signet ring, for the fish had swallowed it and Destiny had driven it to that island, where it had fallen into the net. He took the ring and drew it on his little finger, not knowing its peculiar properties. Presently up came two of the cook's boys in quest of fish, and seeing Abu Sir, said to him, "O man, whither is the captain gone?" "I know not," said he, and signed to them with his right hand, when, behold, the heads of both underlings dropped off from between their shoulders. At this Abu Sir was amazed and said, "Would I wot who slew them!" And their case was grievous to him, and he was still pondering it when the captain suddenly returned, and seeing the mound of fishes and two men lying dead and the seal ring on Abu Sir's finger, said to him: "O my brother, move not thy hand whereon is the signet ring, else thou wilt kill me." Abu Sir wondered at this speech and kept his hand motionless, whereupon the captain came up to him and said, "Who slew these two men?" "By the Lord, O my brother, I wot not!" "Thou sayest sooth, but tell me, whence hadst thou that ring?" "I found it in this fish's gills." "True," said the captain, "for I saw it fall flashing from the King's

palace and disappear in the sea, what time he signed toward thee, saying, 'Cast him in.' So I cast the sack into the water, and it was then that the ring slipped from his finger and fell into the sea, where this fish swallowed it, and the Lord drave it to thee, so that thou madest it thy prey, for this ring was thy lot. But kennest thou its property?" Said Abu Sir, "I knew not that it had any properties peculiar to it," and the captain said: "Learn, then, that the King's troops obey him not save for fear of this signet ring, because it is spelled, and when he was wroth with anyone and had a mind to kill he would sign at him therewith and his head would drop from between his shoulders, for there issued a flash of lightning from the ring and its ray smote the object of his wrath, who died forthright." At this, Abu Sir rejoiced with exceeding joy and said to the captain, "Carry me back to the city," and he said, "That will I, now that I no longer fear for thee from the King, for wert thou to sip at him with thy hand, purposing to kill him, his head would fall down between thy hands. And if thou be minded to slay him and all his host, thou mayst slaughter them without let or hindrance." So saying, he embarked him in the boat and bore him back to the city, so Abu Sir landed, and going up to the palace, entered the council chamber, where he found the King seated facing his officers, in sore cark and care by reason of the seal ring and daring not tell any of his folk anent its loss. When he saw Abu Sir, he said to him: "Did we not cast thee into the sea? How hast thou contrived to come forth of it?" Abu Sir replied: "O King of the Age, whenas thou badest throw me into the sea, thy captain carried me to an island and asked me of the cause of thy wrath against me, saying, 'What hast thou done with the King, that he should decree thy death?' I answered, 'By the Lord, I know not that I have wrought him any wrong!' Quoth he: 'Thou wast high in rank with the King, and haply someone envied thee and threw out certain hints concerning thee to him, so that

he is become incensed against thee. But when I visited thee in thy hammam, thou entreatedst me honorably, and I will requite thee thy hospitality to me by setting thee free and sending thee back to thine own land.' Then he set a great stone in the sack in my stead and cast it into the sea, but when thou signedst to him to throw me in, thy seal ring dropped from thy finger into the main, and a fish swallowed it." Now I was on the island a-fishing, and this fish came up in the net with others, whereupon I took it, intending to broil it. But when I opened its belly, I found the signet ring therein, so I took it and put it on my finger. Presently up came two of the servants of the kitchen, questing fish, and I signed to them with my hand, knowing not the property of the seal ring, and their heads fell off. Then the captain came back, and seeing the ring on my finger, acquainted me with its spell. And, behold, I have brought it back to thee, for that thou dealtest kindly by me and entreatedst me with the utmost honor, nor is that which thou hast done me of kindness lost upon me. Here is thy ring, take it! But an I have done with thee aught deserving of death, tell me my crime and slay me and thou shalt be absolved of sin in shedding my blood." So saying, he pulled the ring from his finger and gave it to the King, who, seeing Abu Sir's noble conduct, took the ring and put it on and felt life return to him afresh. Then he rose to his feet, and embracing the barber, said to him: "O man, thou art indeed of the flower of the well-born! Blame me not, but forgive me the wrong I have done thee. Had any but thou gotten hold of this ring, he had never restored it to me." Answered Abu Sir: "O King of the Age, an thou wouldst have me forgive thee, tell me what was my fault which drew down thine anger upon me, so that thou commandedst to do me die." Rejoined the King: "By the Lord, 'tis clear to me that thou art free and guiltless in all things of offense, since thou hast done this good deed. Only the dyer denounced thee to me in such and such words," and he told him all that Abu Kir had said. Abu

Sir replied: "By the Lord, O King of the Age, I know no King of the Christians, nor during my days have ever journeyed to a Christian country, nor did it ever come into my mind to kill thee. But this dyer was my comrade and neighbor in the city of Alexandria, where life was straitened upon us. Therefore we departed thence, to seek our fortunes, by reason of the narrowness of our means at home, after we had recited the opening chapter of the Koran together, pledging ourselves that he who got work should feed him who lacked work. And there befell me with him such-and-such things." Then he went on to relate to the King all that had betided him with Abu Kir the dyer: how he had robbed him of his dirhams and had left him alone and sick in the khan closet, and how the door keeper had fed him of his own moneys till the Lord recovered him of his sickness, when he went forth and walked about the city with his budget, as was his wont, till his espied a dyery, about which the folk were crowding; so he looked at the door, and seeing Abu Kir seated on a bench there, went in to salute him, whereupon he accused him of being a thief and beat him a grievous beating— brief, he told him his whole tale, from first to last, and added: "O King of the Age, 'twas he who counseled me to make the depilatory and present it to thee, saying: 'The hammam is perfect in all things but that it lacketh this.' And know, O King of the Age, that this drug is harmless and we use it in our land, where 'tis one of the requisites bath, but I had forgotten it. So when the dyer visited the hammam, I entreated him with honor and he reminded me of it, and enjoined me to make it forthwith. But do thou send after the porter of such a khan and the workmen of the dyery and question them all of that which I have told thee." Accordingly the King sent for them and questioned them one and all and they acquainted him with the truth of the matter. Then he summoned the dyer, saying, "Bring him barefooted, bareheaded, and with elbows pinioned!" Now he was sitting in his house,

rejoicing in Abu Sir's death, but ere he could be ware, the King's guards rushed in upon him and cuffed him on the nape, after which they bound him and bore him into the presence, where he saw Abu Sir seated by the King's side and the doorkeeper of the khan and workmen of the dyery standing before him. Quoth the doorkeeper to him: "Is not this thy comrade whom thou robbedst of his silvers and leftest with me sick in the closet doing such-and-such by him?" And the workmen said to him, "Is not this he whom thou badest us seize and beat?" Therewith Abu Kir's baseness was made manifest to the King, and he was certified that he merited torture yet sorer than the torments of Munkar and Nakir. So he said to his guards: "Take him and parade him about the city and the markets; then set him in a sack and cast him into the sea."

Whereupon quoth Abu Sir: "O King of the Age, accept my intercession for him, for I pardon him all he hath done with me." But quoth the King: "An thou pardon him all his offenses against thee, I cannot pardon him his offenses against me." And he cried out, saying, "Take him." So they took him and paraded him about the city, after which they set him in a sack with quicklime and cast him into the sea, and he died, drowned and burnt. Then said the King to the barber, "O Abu Sir, ask of me what thou wilt and it shall be given thee." And he answered, saying, "I ask of thee to send me back to my own country, for I care no longer to tarry here." Then the King gifted him great store of gifts, over and above that which he had whilom bestowed on him, and amongst the rest a galleon freighted with goods. And the crew of this galleon were Mamelukes, so he gave him these also, after offering to make him his Vizier, whereto the barber consented not. Presently he farewelled the King and set sail in his own ship manned by his own crew, nor did he cast anchor till he reached Alexandria and made fast to the shore there. They landed, and one of his Mamelukes, seeing a sack on the beach, said to Abu Sir: "O my lord,

there is a great heavy sack on the seashore, with the mouth tied up, and I know not what therein." So Abu Sir came up, and opening the sack, found therein the remains of Abu Kir, which the sea had borne thither. He took it forth, and burying it near Alexandria, built over the grave a place of visitation. After this Abu Sir abode awhile, till the Lord took him to Himself, and they buried him hard by the tomb of his comrade Abu Kir, wherefore that place was called Abu Kir and Abu Sir, but it is now known as Abu Kir only. This, then, is that which hath reached us of their history, and glory be to Him Who endureth forever and aye and by Whose will enterchange the night and the day. And of the stories they tell is one anent

