





CLASSIC TALES BY
FAMOUS AUTHORS

COMPLETE IN

TWENTY VOLUMES

VOLUME XII



The Sheik of Abdallah
Photogravure. From a Painting by Ad. Schreyer

The Spirit of Adventure
by Howard Crosby and J. J. Schneider

Classic Tales
by
Famous Authors

CONTAINING COMPLETE SELECTIONS FROM
THE WORLD'S BEST AUTHORS WITH PREFATORY
BIOGRAPHICAL AND SYNOPTICAL NOTES

Edited and Arranged by

FREDERICK B. DE BERARD

14531

With a General Introduction by

ROSSITER JOHNSON, LL.D.

Published by

THE BODLEIAN SOCIETY

NEW YORK

JAN 1906

COPYRIGHT 1902

COPYRIGHT 1905

BY

THE BODLEIAN SOCIETY

PN
3/13
v. 12

CONTENTS

CRITICAL SYNOPSIS OF SELECTIONS,	iii
BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AUTHORS,	ix



Vathek,	<i>William Beckford,</i>	9
Aladdin,	<i>The Arabian Nights,</i>	125
Forty Thieves, The,	<i>The Arabian Nights,</i>	179
Murad the Unlucky,	<i>Maria Edgeworth,</i>	207
Three Calenders, The,	<i>The Arabian Nights,</i>	249

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
The Sheik of Abdallah	<i>Frontispiece</i>
In the Orient	125
The Thieves of the Desert	179
Scheherazade (An Arab Song)	249

CRITICAL SYNOPSIS
OF SELECTIONS

CRITICAL SYNOPSIS OF SELECTIONS

ALADDIN, OR THE WONDERFUL LAMP: THE "ARABIAN NIGHTS."

This is one of the most famous of the wonderful collection of Oriental tales known to English readers as the "Arabian Nights," but entitled in Arabic "The Thousand and One Nights' Entertainment."

Aladdin, the son of a poor tailor's widow, is deceived by an African magician, who personates his uncle. The magician sends him down into an underground chamber to bring a lamp that is there. Aladdin obeys, but refuses to hand up the lamp until his false uncle has helped him safely to the daylight. The magician, in a rage, thrusts the boy back, the cavern closes by magic, and Aladdin is imprisoned in the depths of the earth. As he throws himself down in despair, by chance he rubs a ring which the magician has given him, and lo! a gigantic Genie appears. He is the Slave of the Ring, and must obey its possessor. At Aladdin's commands, the Genie releases him from the cavern, and the idle youth safely reaches home with both the lamp and the ring, each of which commands the obedience of a powerful spirit. By the aid of these attendant Genii Aladdin becomes rich and powerful, and weds the daughter of the Sultan. The false uncle, a powerful magician, by his art learns that the boy, whom he supposed buried forever, has escaped with the lamp and become a great prince. By artifice he regains possession of the lamp and strips Aladdin of his palace and his treasures; but he is finally overcome, and Aladdin and his bride live happy ever after.

MURAD THE UNLUCKY: BY MARIA EDGEWORTH.

The Grand Seigneur of Constantinople and his

CRITICAL SYNOPSIS OF SELECTIONS

Vizier, while on one of their customary searches for adventure, engage in a discussion whether the blessings of life are due to prudence or luck. They visit two brothers at their houses in the city, one of whom is called Murad the Unlucky, and the other Saladin the Lucky. Murad tells them the story of his life and misfortunes, beginning with his youth in Constantinople, and proceeding in the narration of various terrible adventures met with on his travels. He is superstitious, and believes that, no matter how great his prudence, he cannot be successful. His brother Saladin, on the other hand tells of how he learned by experience in his early youth that his reputation as a lucky child could not protect him, and as a result he went through his life with great care and prudence. He succeeded in everything that he attempted, and became very popular and wealthy.

The Grand Seignior is convinced by these two stories that it is prudence, and not luck, that rules the destinies of men.

THE FORTY THIEVES: THE "ARABIAN NIGHTS."

This story tells how Ali Baba, a poor man, discovers the secret word that gives entrance to a hidden cave where forty robbers hide their treasure. His rich brother forces the secret from him, and as a result is caught and slain in one of his visits to the cave. The chief of the robbers, anxious to find the accomplice of the man he has killed, sends men to the city to discover the possessor of their secret password. After several attempts, he finds the house of Ali Baba, and, disguised as an oil merchant, begs his hospitality for the night. He has with him a number of great jars, purporting to be filled with oil, but in reality there is a robber concealed in all except one, which is filled with oil. Morgiana, Ali Baba's slave, discovers the plot to kill her master, and in the night heats the oil in the jar, and in succession pours it upon the robbers concealed in the other jars, thus killing them. The captain escapes, but in time comes back again, disguised as a well-to-do merchant, a pretended friend of Ali Baba's son. Morgiana again detects him, and, performing a dagger-dance before him, slays

CRITICAL SYNOPSIS OF SELECTIONS

him with a thrust of the weapon. As a reward for her services, she is given in marriage to Ali Baba's son.

THE THREE CALENDERS: THE "ARABIAN NIGHTS."

This is an aggregation of a number of unrelated tales, told by different narrators to amuse a numerous company. While entertaining themselves with music and feasting, a party of ladies are interrupted by a knocking at the outer gate. Soon their porter ushers in three calenders, or wandering fakirs, each blind of the right eye, with shaven heads, beards and eyebrows. Strangers in Bagdad, they ask shelter for the night; and in return they narrate their marvelous adventures, how by strange and wonderful mischances each lost an eye at a different time and place.

VATHEK: BY WILLIAM BECKFORD.

This modern tale, in imitation of the "Arabian Nights," relates the history of the Caliph Vathek, grandson of the renowned Haroun al Raschid. Sated with sensual excesses, the voluptuary, Vathek, sought new sensations and excitements in the effort to penetrate the supernatural and learn the mysteries of necromancy.

To him comes the evil Giaour and tempts him to frightful crimes in the pursuit of forbidden knowledge. Led by the demon, Vathek, accompanied by Nouronihar, his favorite, and the enchantress, Carathis, his wicked mother, sets forth in quest of the treasures of the pre-Adamite sultans, hidden in the Hall of Eblis, in the palace of subterranean fire. He ventures into the awful realms of Eblis, the prince of evil spirits, he finds the vast hoards of gold and gems for which he hunts, for a day he and his companions revel greedily in the sense of possession; and then their hearts burst into everlasting flames, and throughout eternity they wander in bitter agony and hopeless despair in the midst of uncounted riches.

EDITOR.

BIOGRAPHICAL
DICTIONARY OF AUTHORS

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF AUTHORS

THE ARABIAN NIGHTS ENTERTAINMENTS: OR THE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS. This famous collection of Oriental tales is very ancient, and its sources are largely traditional. It was current in Persia in 943. Its present literary form dates from 1450, when it was transcribed to manuscript, probably in Cairo. The Tales are of Persian, Indian and Arabian origin. The first modern translations were in French in the eighteenth century, from which several English translations have since been made.

Galland's, the first modern translation, appeared serially, 1704-8, from the earliest known Arabic manuscript of 1548. Lane's English translation, from Galland's French version, was published 1840. It is that most commonly current among English readers, and is severely expurgated, the original being extremely sensual and indecent. Sir Richard Burton published a literal version, from the original Arabic, in 1885-6. It is said to be a scholarly rendering; but its obscenity precludes it from public circulation in English-speaking countries. Since her husband's death Lady Isabel Burton has prepared a modified version, which preserves the excellencies of Sir Richard's animated and comprehensive work, without offending the moral sense.

BECKFORD, WILLIAM: One single book—the fantastic Oriental tale, "Vathek"—of several by this author, has resisted oblivion. "Vathek," published in 1787, had an immense vogue, was soon neglected, almost forgotten for nearly a century, and has only within recent years come again into general public notice.

Beckford was a man of vast wealth, inherited from his father, a great merchant and former Lord-Mayor of London. He became a dilettante, connoisseur and collector, squandered enormous sums upon "Fonthill," a villa whose bizarre gorgeousness was the wonder of all England, and posed as a man of letters. "Vathek" was originally written in French, and is said to have been begun and finished at a single sitting of several days and nights, during which the author neither ate nor slept.

Beckford also wrote two burlesques—"The Elegant Enthusiast" (1796) and "Amezia" (1797). He was born 1759 and died 1844.

EDGEWORTH, MARIA: Maria Edgeworth is an author whose writings are now but little in vogue, though once popular and admired; but many of them are still read with interest. She wrote a great number of books, both novels and juveniles, and attained a considerable fame. Miss Edgeworth was born at Black Bourton, in Oxfordshire, in 1767, and there spent her infancy. At the age of six she left England with her father, and, until the failure of her stepmother's health in 1775, they lived in Ireland. From there she went to school at Derby, and on the death of her stepmother, a few years later, went to London to a private boarding-school. It was not until thirteen years later that she made her first appearance as an author, although she had written several stories at home, without attempting to publish them. Her first books were juveniles, and were in great demand, as they are still. Miss Edgeworth was for a long time the friend of Scott, and he complimented her many times on her writings. She died in May, 1849, in her eighty-second year.

Among her kindly sketches of Irish life and character, "Castle Rackrent" is the most notable. Her works of fiction comprise twenty volumes, including the several series of "Moral Tales," "Popular Tales" and "Tales of Fashionable Life."

EDITOR.

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH
VATHEK

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK

William Beckford

4531

VATHEK, ninth Caliph of the race of the Abassides, was the son of Motassem, and the grandson of Haroun Al Raschid. From an early accession to the throne, and the talents he possessed to adorn it, his subjects were induced to expect that his reign would be long and happy. His figure was pleasing and majestic; but when he was angry one of his eyes became so terrible, that no person could bear to behold it, and the wretch upon whom it was fixed instantly fell backward, and sometimes expired. For fear, however, of depopulating his dominions and making his palace desolate, he but rarely gave way to his anger.

Being much addicted to women and the pleasures of the table, he sought by his affability to procure agreeable companions; and he succeeded the better as his generosity was unbounded, and his indulgences unrestrained, for he was by no means scrupulous, nor did he think with the Caliph Omar Ben Abdalaziz, that it was necessary to make a hell of this world to enjoy Paradise in the next.

He surpassed in magnificence all his predecessors. The palace of Alkoremme, which his father Motassem had erected on the hill of Pied Horses, and which commanded the whole city of Samarah, was in his idea far

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

too scanty; he added therefore five wings, or rather other palaces, which he destined for the particular gratification of each of his senses.

In the first of these were tables continually covered with the most exquisite dainties, which were supplied both by night and by day according to their constant consumption, whilst the most delicious wines and the choicest cordials flowed forth from a hundred fountains that were never exhausted. This palace was called, "The Eternal or Unsatiating Banquet."

The second was styled "The Temple of Melody, or the Nectar of the Soul." It was inhabited by the most skilful musicians and admired poets of the time, who not only displayed their talents within, but dispersing in bands without, caused every surrounding scene to reverberate their songs, which were continually varied in the most delightful succession.

The palace named "The Delight of the Eyes, or the Support of Memory," was one entire enchantment. Rarities collected from every corner of the earth were there found in such profusion as to dazzle and confound, but for the order in which they were arranged. One gallery exhibited the pictures of the celebrated Mani, and statues that seemed to be alive. Here a well-managed perspective attracted the sight, there the magic of optics agreeably deceived it; whilst the naturalist on his part exhibited, in their several classes, the various gifts that Heaven had bestowed on our globe. In a word, Vathek omitted nothing in this palace that might gratify the curiosity of those who resorted to it, although he was not able to satisfy his own, for he was of all men the most curious.

"The Palace of Perfumes," which was termed likewise "The Incentive to Pleasures," consisted of various halls where the different perfumes which the earth produces were kept perpetually burning in censers of gold. Flam-

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

beaus and aromatic lamps were here lighted in open day. But the too powerful effects of this agreeable delirium might be avoided by descending into an immense garden, where an assemblage of every fragrant flower diffused through the air the purest odors.

The fifth palace, denominated "The Retreat of Joy, or the Dangerous," was frequented by troops of young females beautiful as the houris and not less seducing, who never failed to receive with caresses all whom the Caliph allowed to approach them; for he was by no means disposed to be jealous, as his own women were secluded within the palace he inhabited himself.

Notwithstanding the sensuality in which Vathek indulged, he experienced no abatement in the love of his people, who thought that a sovereign immersed in pleasure was not less tolerable to his subjects than one that employed himself in creating them foes. But the unquiet and impetuous disposition of the Caliph would not allow him to rest there; he had studied so much for his amusement in the lifetime of his father, as to acquire a great deal of knowledge, though not a sufficiency to satisfy himself; for he wished to know everything, even sciences that did not exist. He was fond of engaging in disputes with the learned, but liked them not to push their opposition with warmth; he stopped the mouths of those with presents whose mouths could be stopped, whilst others, whom his liberality was unable to subdue, he sent to prison to cool their blood; a remedy that often succeeded.

Vathek discovered also a predilection for theological controversy, but it was not with the orthodox that he usually held. By this means he induced the zealots to oppose him, and then persecuted them in return; for he resolved at any rate to have reason on his side.

The great prophet Mahomet, whose vicars the caliphs are, beheld with indignation from his abode in the

seventh heaven the irreligious conduct of such a vicegerent. "Let us leave him to himself," said he to the Genii, who are always ready to receive his commands; "let us see to what lengths his folly and impiety will carry him; if he run into excess we shall know how to chastise him. Assist him, therefore, to complete the tower which, in imitation of Nimrod, he hath begun, not, like that great warrior, to escape being drowned, but from the insolent curiosity of penetrating the secrets of Heaven; he will not divine the fate that awaits him."

The Genii obeyed, and when the workmen had raised their structure a cubit in the day time, two cubits more were added in the night. The expedition with which the fabric arose was not a little flattering to the vanity of Vathek. He fancied that even insensible matter showed a forwardness to subserve his designs, not considering that the success of the foolish and wicked form the first rod of their chastisement.

His pride arrived at its height when, having ascended for the first time the eleven thousand stairs of his tower, he cast his eyes below and beheld men not larger than pismires, mountains than shells, and cities than beehives. The idea which such an elevation inspired of his own grandeur completely bewildered him; he was almost ready to adore himself, till, lifting his eyes upward, he saw the stars as high above him as they appeared when he stood on the surface of the earth. He consoled himself, however, for this transient perception of his littleness, with the thought of being great in the eyes of others, and flattered himself that the light of his mind would extend beyond the reach of his sight, and transfer to the stars the decrees of his destiny.

With this view the inquisitive Prince passed most of his nights on the summit of his tower, till he became an adept in the mysteries of astrology, and imagined that

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

the planets had disclosed to him the most marvellous adventures, which were to be accomplished by an extraordinary personage from a country altogether unknown. Prompted by motives of curiosity he had always been courteous to strangers, but from this instant he redoubled his attention, and ordered it to be announced by sound of trumpet through all the streets of Samarah that no one of his subjects, on peril of displeasure, should either lodge or detain a traveler, but forthwith bring him to the palace.

Not long after this proclamation there arrived in his metropolis a man so hideous, that the very guards who arrested him were forced to shut their eyes as they led him along. The Caliph himself appeared startled at so horrible a visage, but joy succeeded to this emotion of terror when the stranger displayed to his view such rarities as he had never before seen, and of which he had no conception.

In reality nothing was ever so extraordinary as the merchandise this stranger produced; most of his curiosities, which were not less admirable for their workmanship than splendor, had, besides, their several virtues described on a parchment fastened to each. There were slippers which enabled the feet to walk; knives that cut without the motion of a hand; sabres which dealt the blow at the person they were wished to strike, and the whole enriched with gems that were hitherto unknown.

The sabres, whose blades emitted a dazzling radiance, fixed more than all the Caliph's attention, who promised himself to decipher at his leisure the uncouth characters engraven on their sides. Without, therefore, demanding their price, he ordered all the coined gold to be brought from his treasury, and commanded the merchant to take what he pleased; the stranger complied with modesty and silence.

Vathek, imagining that the merchant's taciturnity

was occasioned by the awe which his presence inspired, encouraged him to advance, and asked him, with an air of condescension, "Who he was? whence he came? and where he obtained such beautiful commodities?" The man, or rather monster, instead of making a reply, thrice rubbed his forehead, which, as well as his body, was blacker than ebony, four times clapped his paunch, the projection of which was enormous, opened wide his huge eyes which glowed like firebrands, began to laugh with a hideous noise, and discovered his long amber-colored teeth bestreaked with green.

The Caliph, though a little startled, renewed his inquiries, but without being able to procure a reply; at which, beginning to be ruffled, he exclaimed: "Knowest thou, varlet, who I am? and at whom thou art aiming thy gibes?" Then, addressing his guards, "Have ye heard him speak? is he dumb?"

"He hath spoken," they reply, "though but little."

"Let him speak again then," said Vathek, "and tell me who he is, from whence he came, and where he procured these singular curiosities, or I swear by the ass of Balaam that I will make him rue his pertinacity."

The menace was accompanied by the Caliph with one of his angry and perilous glances, which the stranger sustained without the slightest emotion, although his eyes were fixed on the terrible eye of the Prince.

No words can describe the amazement of the courtiers when they beheld this rude merchant withstand the encounter unshocked. They all fell prostrate with their faces on the ground to avoid the risk of their lives, and continued in the same abject posture till the Caliph exclaimed in a furious tone: "Up, cowards! seize the miscreant! see that he be committed to prison and guarded by the best of my soldiers! Let him, however, retain the money I gave him; it is not my intent to take from him his property, I only want him to speak."

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

No sooner had he uttered these words than the stranger was surrounded, pinioned with strong fetters, and hurried away to the prison of the great tower, which was encompassed by seven empalements of iron bars, and armed with spikes in every direction longer and sharper than spits.

The Caliph, nevertheless, remained in the most violent agitation; he sat down indeed to eat, but of the three hundred covers that were daily placed before him could taste of no more than thirty-two. A diet to which he had been so little accustomed was sufficient of itself to prevent him from sleeping; what then must be its effect when joined to the anxiety that preyed upon his spirits? At the first glimpse of dawn he hastened to the prison, again to importune this intractable stranger; but the rage of Vathek exceeded all bounds on finding the prison empty, the gates burst asunder, and his guards lying lifeless around him. In the paroxysm of his passion he fell furiously on the poor carcasses, and kicked them till evening without intermission. His courtiers and viziers exerted their efforts to soothe his extravagance, but finding every expedient ineffectual they all united in one vociferation: "The Caliph is gone mad! the Caliph is out of his senses!"

This outcry, which soon resounded through the streets of Samarah, at length reaching the ears of Carathis, his mother, she flew in the utmost consternation to try her ascendancy on the mind of her son. Her tears and caresses called off his attention, and he was prevailed upon by her entreaties to be brought back to the palace.

Carathis, apprehensive of leaving Vathek to himself, caused him to be put to bed, and seating herself by him, endeavored by her conversation to heal and compose him. Nor could any one have attempted it with better success, for the Caliph not only loved her as a mother,

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

but respected her as a person of superior genius; it was she who had induced him, being a Greek herself, to adopt all the sciences and systems of her country, which good Mussulmans hold in such thorough abhorrence. Judicial astrology was one of those systems in which Carathis was a perfect adept; she began therefore with reminding her son of the promise which the stars had made him, and intimated an intention of consulting them again.

"Alas!" sighed the Caliph, as soon as he could speak, "what a fool have I been! not for the kicks bestowed on my guards who so tamely submitted to death, but for never considering that this extraordinary man was the same the planets had foretold, whom, instead of ill-treating, I should have conciliated by all the arts of persuasion.

"The past," said Carathis, "cannot be recalled, but it behooves us to think of the future; perhaps you may again see the object you so much regret; it is possible the inscriptions on the sabres will afford information. Eat, therefore, and take thy repose, my dear son; we will consider, to-morrow, in what manner to act."

Vathek yielded to her counsel as well as he could, and arose in the morning with a mind more at ease. The sabres he commanded to be instantly brought, and poring upon them through a green glass, that their glittering might not dazzle, he sat himself in earnest to decipher the inscriptions; but his reiterated attempts were all of them nugatory; in vain did he beat his head and bite his nails, not a letter of the whole was he able to ascertain. So unlucky a disappointment would have undone him again, had not Carathis by good fortune entered the apartment.

"Have patience, son!" said she; "you certainly are possessed of every important science, but the knowledge of languages is a trifle at best, and the accomplishment

of none but a pedant. Issue forth a proclamation that you will confer such rewards as become your greatness upon any one that shall interpret what you do not understand, and what it is beneath you to learn. You will soon find your curiosity gratified."

"That may be," said the Caliph; "but in the meantime I shall be horribly disgusted by a crowd of smatterers, who will come to the trial as much for the pleasure of retailing their jargon as from the hope of gaining the reward. To avoid this evil, it will be proper to add that I will put every candidate to death who shall fail to give satisfaction; for, thank heaven! I have skill enough to distinguish between one that translates and one that invents."

"Of that I have no doubt," replied Carathis; "but to put the ignorant to death is somewhat severe, and may be productive of dangerous effects; content yourself with commanding their beards to be burnt—beards in a state are not quite so essential as men."

The Caliph submitted to the reasons of his mother, and sending for Morakanabad, his prime vizir, said: "Let the common criers proclaim, not only in Samarah, but throughout every city in my empire, that whosoever will repair hither and decipher certain characters which appear to be inexplicable, shall experience the liberality for which I am renowned; but that all who fail upon trial shall have their beards burnt off to the last hair. Let them add also that I will bestow fifty beautiful slaves, and as many jars of apricots from the isle of Kirmith, upon any man that shall bring me intelligence of the stranger."

The subjects of the Caliph, like their sovereign, being great admirers of women and apricots from Kirmith, felt their mouths water at these promises, but were totally unable to gratify their hankering, for no one knew which way the stranger had gone.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

As to the Caliph's other requisition, the result was different. The learned, the half-learned, and those who were neither, but fancied themselves equal to both, came boldly to hazard their beards, and all shamefully lost them.

The exaction of these forfeitures, which found sufficient employment for the eunuchs, gave them such a smell of singed hair as greatly to disgust the ladies of the seraglio, and make it necessary that this new occupation of their guardians should be transferred into other hands.

At length, however, an old man presented himself whose beard was a cubit and a half longer than any that had appeared before him. The officers of the palace whispered to each other, as they ushered him in, "What a pity such a beard should be burnt!" Even the Caliph, when he saw it, concurred with them in opinion, but his concern was entirely needless. This venerable personage read the characters with facility, and explained them verbatim as follows: "We were made where everything good is made; we are the least of the wonders of a place where all is wonderful, and deserving the sight of the first potentate on earth."

"You translate admirably!" cried Vathek; "I know to what these marvellous characters allude. Let him receive as many robes of honor and thousands of sequins of gold, as he hath spoken words. I am in some measure relieved from the perplexity that embarrassed me!"

Vathek invited the old man to dine, and even to remain some days in the palace. Unluckily for him he accepted the offer; for the Caliph, having ordered him next morning to be called, said: "Read again to me what you have read already; I cannot hear too often the promise that is made me, the completion of which I languish to obtain."

The old man forthwith put on his green spectacles,

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

but they instantly dropped from his nose on perceiving that the characters he had read the day preceding had given place to others of different import.

"What ails you?" asked the Caliph; "and why these symptoms of wonder?"

"Sovereign of the world," replied the old man, "these sabres hold another language to-day from that they yesterday held."

"How say you?" returned Vathek—"but it matters not! tell me, if you can, what they mean."

"It is this, my Lord," rejoined the old man: "Woe to the rash mortal who seeks to know that of which he should remain ignorant, and to undertake that which surpasseth his power!"

"And woe to thee!" cried the Caliph, in a burst of indignation; "to-day thou art void of understanding; begone from my presence, they shall burn but the half of thy beard, because thou wert yesterday fortunate in guessing;—my gifts I never resume."

The old man, wise enough to perceive he had luckily escaped, considering the folly of disclosing so disgusting a truth, immediately withdrew and appeared not again.

But it was not long before Vathek discovered abundant reason to regret his precipitation; for though he could not decipher the characters himself, yet by constantly poring upon them he plainly perceived that they every day changed, and unfortunately no other candidate offered to explain them. This perplexing occupation inflamed his blood, dazzled his sight, and brought on a giddiness and debility that he could not support. He failed not, however, though in so reduced a condition, to be often carried to his tower, as he flattered himself that he might there read in the stars which he went to consult something more congenial to his wishes: but in this his hopes were deluded; for his eyes,

dimmed by the vapors of his head, began to subserve his curiosity so ill, that he beheld nothing but a thick dun cloud, which he took for the most direful of omens.

Agitated with so much anxiety, Vathek entirely lost all firmness; a fever seized him, and his appetite failed. Instead of being one of the greatest eaters he became as distinguished for drinking. So insatiable was the thirst which tormented him, that his mouth, like a funnel, was always open to receive the various liquors that might be poured into it, and especially cold water, which calmed him more than every other.

This unhappy prince being thus incapacitated for the enjoyment of any pleasure, commanded the palaces of the five senses to be shut up, forbore to appear in public, either to display his magnificence or administer justice, and retired to the inmost apartment of his harem. As he had ever been an indulgent husband, his wives, overwhelmed with grief at his deplorable situation, incessantly offered their prayers for his health and unremittingly supplied him with water.

In the meantime the Princess Carathis, whose affliction no words can describe, instead of restraining herself to sobbing and tears, was closeted daily with the Vizier Morakanabad, to find out some cure or mitigation of the Caliph's disease. Under the persuasion that it was caused by enchantment, they turned over together, leaf by leaf, all the books of magic that might point out a remedy, and caused the horrible stranger, whom they accused as the enchanter, to be everywhere sought for with the strictest diligence.

At the distance of a few miles from Samarah stood a high mountain, whose sides were swarded with wild thyme and basil, and its summit overspread with so delightful a plain, that it might be taken for the paradise destined for the faithful. Upon it grew a hundred thickets of eglantine and other fragrant shrubs, a hun-

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

dred arbors of roses, jessamine and honeysuckle, as many clumps of orange trees, cedar and citron, whose branches, interwoven with the palm, the pomegranate, and the vine, presented every luxury that could regale the eye or the taste. The ground was strewed with violets, hare-bells, and pansies, in the midst of which sprung forth tufts of jonquils, hyacinths and carnations, with every other perfume that impregnates the air. Four fountains, not less clear than deep, and so abundant as to slake the thirst of ten armies, seemed profusely placed here to make the scene more resemble the garden of Eden, which was watered by the four sacred rivers. Here the nightingale sang the birth of the rose, her well-beloved, and at the same time lamented its short-lived beauty; whilst the turtle deplored the loss of more substantial pleasures, and the wakeful lark hailed the rising light that reanimates the whole creation. Here more than anywhere the mingled melodies of birds expressed the various passions they inspired, as if the exquisite fruits which they pecked at pleasure had given them a double energy.

To this mountain Vathek was sometimes brought for the sake of breathing a purer air, and especially to drink at will of the four fountains, which were reputed in the highest degree salubrious and sacred to himself. His attendants were his mother, his wives, and some eunuchs, who assiduously employed themselves in filling capacious bowls of rock crystal, and emulously presenting them to him; but it frequently happened that his avidity exceeded their zeal, insomuch that he would prostrate himself upon the ground to lap up the water, of which he could never have enough.

One day when this unhappy prince had been long lying in so debasing a posture, a voice, hoarse but strong, thus addressed him: "Why assumest thou the

function of a dog, O Caliph, so proud of thy dignity and power?"

At this apostrophe he raised his head and beheld the stranger that had caused him so much affliction. Inflamed with anger at the sight, he exclaimed:

"Accursed Giaour! what comest thou hither to do? is it not enough to have transformed a prince remarkable for his agility into one of those leather barrels which the Bedouin Arabs carry on their camels when they traverse the deserts? Perceivest thou not that I may perish by drinking to excess no less than by a total abstinence?"

"Drink then this draught," said the stranger, as he presented to him a phial of a red and yellow mixture; "and, to satiate the thirst of thy soul as well as of thy body, know that I am an Indian, but from a region of India which is wholly unknown."

The Caliph, delighted to see his desires accomplished in part, and flattering himself with the hope of obtaining their entire fulfilment, without a moment's hesitation swallowed the potion, and instantaneously found his health restored, his thirst appeased, and his limbs as agile as ever.

In the transports of his joy Vathek leaped upon the neck of the frightful Indian, and kissed his horrid mouth and hollow cheeks as though they had been the coral lips, and the lilies and roses of his most beautiful wives; whilst they, less terrified than jealous at the sight, dropped their veils to hide the blush of mortification that suffused their foreheads.

Nor would the scene have closed here, had not Carathis, with all the art of insinuation, a little repressed the raptures of her son. Having prevailed upon him to return to Samarah, she caused a herald to precede him, whom she commanded to proclaim as loudly as possible: "The wonderful stranger hath appeared again, he

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

hath healed the Caliph, he hath spoken! he hath spoken!"

Forthwith all the inhabitants of this vast city quitted their habitations, and ran together in crowds to see the procession of Vathek and the Indian, whom they now blessed as much as they had before execrated, incessantly shouting: "He hath healed our sovereign, he hath spoken! he hath spoken!" Nor were these words forgotten in the public festivals which were celebrated the same evening, to testify the general joy; for the poets applied them as a chorus to all the songs they composed.

The Caliph in the meanwhile caused the palaces of the senses to be again set open; and, as he found himself prompted to visit that of taste in preference to the rest, immediately ordered a splendid entertainment, to which his great officers and favorite courtiers were all invited. The Indian, who was placed near the Prince, seemed to think that as a proper acknowledgment of so distinguished a privilege he could neither eat, drink nor talk too much. The various dainties were no sooner served up than they vanished, to the great mortification of Vathek, who piqued himself on being the greatest eater alive, and at this time in particular had an excellent appetite.

The rest of the company looked round at each other in amazement; but the Indian without appearing to observe it quaffed large bumpers to the health of each of them, sung in a style altogether extravagant, related stories at which he laughed immoderately, and poured forth extemporaneous verses, which would not have been thought bad but for the strange grimaces with which they were uttered. In a word his loquacity was equal to that of a hundred astrologers, he ate as much as a hundred porters, and caroused in proportion.

The Caliph, notwithstanding the table had been

thirty times covered, found himself incommoded by the voraciousness of his guest, who was now considerably declined in the Prince's esteem. Vathek, however, being unwilling to betray the chagrin he could hardly disguise, said in a whisper to Bababalouk, the chief of his eunuchs: "You see how enormous his performances in every way are, what would be the consequence should he get at my wives! Go! redouble your vigilance, and be sure look well to my Circassians, who would be more to his taste than all of the rest."

The bird of the morning had thrice renewed his song when the hour of the Divan sounded. Vathek in gratitude to his subjects having promised to attend, immediately arose from table and repaired thither, leaning upon his vizier, who could scarcely support him, so disordered was the poor Prince by the wine he had drunk, and still more by the extravagant vagaries of his boisterous guest.

The viziers, the officers of the crown and of the law, arranged themselves in a semicircle about their sovereign and preserved a respectful silence, whilst the Indian, who looked as cool as if come from a fast, sat down without ceremony on the step of the throne, laughing in his sleeve at the indignation with which his temerity had filled the spectators.

The Caliph, however, whose ideas were confused and his head embarrassed, went on administering justice at hap-hazard, till at length the prime vizier, perceiving his situation, hit upon a sudden expedient to interrupt the audience and rescue the honor of his master, to whom he said in a whisper: "My Lord, the Princess Carathis, who hath passed the night in consulting the planets, informs you that they portend you evil, and the danger is urgent. Beware lest this stranger, whom you have so lavishly recompensed for his magical gewgaws, should make some attempt on your life; his liquor,

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

which at first had the appearance of effecting your cure, may be no more than a poison of a sudden operation. Slight not this surmise, ask him at least of what it was compounded, whence he procured it, and mention the sabres which you seem to have forgotten.

Vathek, to whom the insolent airs of the stranger became every moment less supportable, intimated to his vizier by a wink of acquiescence that he would adopt his advice, and at once turning towards the Indian said: "Get up, and declare in full Divan of what drugs the liquor was compounded you enjoined me to take, for it is suspected to be poison; add also the explanation I have so earnestly desired concerning the sabres you sold me, and thus show your gratitude for the favors heaped on you."

Having pronounced these words in as moderate a tone as a caliph well could, he waited in silent expectation for an answer. But the Indian, still keeping his seat, began to renew his loud shouts of laughter, and exhibit the same horrid grimaces he had shown them before, without vouchsafing a word in reply. Vathek, no longer able to brook such insolence, immediately kicked him from the steps; instantly descending, repeated his blow, and persisted with such assiduity as incited all who were present to follow his example. Every foot was aimed at the Indian, and no sooner had any one given him a kick than he felt himself constrained to reiterate the stroke.

The stranger afforded them no small entertainment; for, being both short and plump, he collected himself into a ball, and rolled round on all sides at the blows of his assailants, who pressed after him wherever he turned with an eagerness beyond conception, whilst their numbers were every moment increasing. The ball, indeed, in passing from one apartment to another, drew every person after it that came in its way, inso-

much that the whole palace was thrown into confusion, and resounded with a tremendous clamor. The women of the harem, amazed at the uproar, flew to their blinds to discover the cause; but no sooner did they catch a glimpse of the ball than, feeling themselves unable to refrain, they broke from the clutches of their eunuchs, who to stop their flight pinched them till they bled, but in vain; whilst themselves, though trembling with terror at the escape of their charge, were as incapable of resisting the attraction.

The Indian, after having traversed the halls, galleries, chambers, kitchens, gardens and stables of the palace, at last took his course through the courts; whilst the Caliph, pursuing him closer than the rest, bestowed as many kicks as he possibly could, yet not without receiving now and then one, which his competitors in their eagerness designed for the ball.

Carathis, Morakanabad, and two or three old viziers, whose wisdom had hitherto withstood the attraction, wishing to prevent Vathek from exposing himself in the presence of his subjects, fell down in his way to impede the pursuit; but he, regardless of their obstruction, leaped over their heads and went on as before. They then ordered the Muezins to call the people to prayers, both for the sake of getting them out of the way, and of endeavoring by their petitions to avert the calamity; but neither of these expedients was a whit more successful; the sight of this fatal ball was alone sufficient to draw after it every beholder. The Muezins themselves, though they saw it but at a distance, hastened down from their minarets and mixed with the crowd, which continued to increase in so surprising a manner that scarce an inhabitant was left in Samarah, except the aged, the sick confined to their beds, and infants at the breast, whose nurses could run more nimbly

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

without them. Even Carathis, Morakanabad, and the rest were all become of the party.

The shrill screams of the females, who had broken from their apartments and were unable to extricate themselves from the pressure of the crowd, together with those of the eunuchs jostling after them, terrified lest their charges should escape from their sight, increased by the execrations of husbands urging forward and menacing both, kicks given and received, stumblings and overthrows at every step; in a word, the confusion that universally prevailed rendered Samarah like a city taken by storm and devoted to absolute plunder.

At last the cursed Indian, who still preserved his rotundity of figure, after passing through all the streets and public places, and leaving them empty, rolled onwards to the plain of Catoul, and traversed the valley at the foot of the mountain of the Four Fountains.

As a continual fall of water had excavated an immense gulf in the valley, whose opposite side was closed in by a steep acclivity, the Caliph and his attendants were apprehensive lest the ball should bound into the chasm, and, to prevent it, redoubled their efforts, but in vain. The Indian persevered in his onward direction, and, as had been apprehended, glancing from the precipice with the rapidity of lightning, was lost in the gulf below.

Vathek would have followed the perfidious Giaour, had not an invisible agency arrested his progress. The multitude that pressed after him were at once checked in the same manner, and a calm instantaneously ensued. They all gazed at each other with an air of astonishment; and, notwithstanding that the loss of veils and turbans, together with torn habits and dust blended with sweat, presented a most laughable spectacle, there

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

was not one smile to be seen; on the contrary all, with looks of confusion and sadness, returned in silence to Samarah and retired to their inmost apartments, without ever reflecting that they had been impelled by an invisible power into the extravagance for which they reproached themselves; for it is but just that men, who so often arrogate to their own merit the good of which they are but instruments, should attribute to themselves the absurdities which they could not prevent.

The Caliph was the only person that refused to leave the valley. He commanded his tents to be pitched there, and stationing himself on the very edge of the precipice, in spite of the representations of Carathis and Morakanabad, who pointed out the hazard of its brink giving way, and the vicinity to the Magician that had so severely tormented him. Vathek derided all their remonstrances, and, having ordered a thousand flambeaus to be lighted, and directing his attendants to proceed in lighting more, lay down on the slippery margin and attempted, by help of this artificial splendor, to look through that gloom which all the fires of the empyrean had been insufficient to pervade. One while he fancied to himself voices arising from the depth of the gulf; at another he seemed to distinguish the accents of the Indian, but all was no more than the hollow murmur of waters, and the din of the cataracts that rushed from steep to steep down the sides of the mountain.

Having passed the night in this cruel perturbation, the Caliph at daybreak retired to his tent, where, without taking the least sustenance, he continued to doze till the dusk of evening began again to come on. He then resumed his vigils as before, and persevered in observing them for many nights together. At length, fatigued with so successful an employment, he sought

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

relief from change. To this end he sometimes paced with hasty strides across the plain, and, as he wildly gazed at the stars, reproached them with having deceived him; but lo! on a sudden the clear blue sky appeared streaked over with streams of blood, which reached from the valley even to the city of Samarah. As this awful phenomenon seemed to touch his tower, Vathek at first thought of repairing thither to view it more distinctly, but feeling himself unable to advance, and being overcome with apprehension, he muffled up his face in his robe.

Terrifying as these prodigies were, this impression upon him was no more than momentary, and served only to stimulate his love of the marvellous. Instead therefore of returning to his palace, he persisted in the resolution of abiding where the Indian vanished from his view. One night, however, while he was walking as usual on the plain, the moon and the stars at once were eclipsed, and a total darkness ensued; the earth trembled beneath him, and a voice came forth, the voice of the Giaour, who, in accents more sonorous than thunder, thus addressed him: "Wouldest thou devote thyself to me? Adore then the terrestrial influences and abjure Mahomet. On these conditions I will bring thee to the palace of subterranean fire; there shalt thou behold in immense depositories the treasures which the stars have promised thee, and which will be conferred by those Intelligences whom thou shalt thus render propitious. It is from thence I brought my sabres, and it is there that Soliman Ben Daoud reposes, surrounded by the talismans that control the world."

The astonished Caliph trembled as he answered, yet in a style that showed him to be no novice in preternatural adventures: "Where art thou? be present to my eyes; dissipate the gloom that perplexes me, and

of which I deem thee the cause; after the many flambeaus I have burnt to discover thee, thou mayst at least grant a glimpse of thy horrible visage."

"Abjure then Mahomet," replied the Indian, "and promise me full proofs of thy sincerity, otherwise thou shalt never behold me again."

The unhappy Caliph, instigated by insatiable curiosity, lavished his promises in the utmost profusion. The sky immediately brightened; and by the light of the planets, which seemed almost to blaze, Vathek beheld the earth open, and at the extremity of a vast, black chasm, a portal of ebony, before which stood the Indian, still blacker, holding in his hand a golden key that caused the lock to resound.

"How," cried Vathek, "can I descend to thee without the certainty of breaking my neck? come take me, and instantly open the portal."

"Not so fast," replied the Indian, "impatient Caliph! Know that I am parched with thirst, and cannot open this door till my thirst be thoroughly appeased. I require the blood of fifty of the most beautiful sons of thy viziers and great men, or neither can my thirst nor thy curiosity be satisfied. Return to Samarah, procure for me this necessary libation, come back hither, throw it thyself into this chasm, and then shalt thou see!"

Having thus spoken the Indian turned his back on the Caliph, who, incited by the suggestion of demons, resolved on the direful sacrifice. He now pretended to have regained his tranquility, and set out for Samarah amidst the acclamations of a people who still loved him, and forebore not to rejoice when they believed him to have recovered his reason. So successfully did he conceal the emotion of his heart, that even Carathis and Morakanabad were equally deceived with the rest. Nothing was heard of but festivals and rejoicings; the ball, which no tongue had hitherto ventured to mention,

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

was again brought on the tapis; a general laugh went round, though many, still smarting under the hands of the surgeon from the hurts received in that memorable adventure, had no great reason for mirth.

The prevalence of this gay humor was not a little grateful to Vathek, as perceiving how much it conduced to his project. He put on the appearance of affability to every one, but especially to his viziers, and the grandees of his court, whom he failed not to regale with a sumptuous banquet, during which he insensibly inclined the conversation to the children of his guests. Having asked with a good-natured air who of them were blessed with the handsomest boys, every father at once asserted the pretensions of his own, and the contest imperceptibly grew so warm that nothing could have withholden them from coming to blows but their profound reverence for the person of the Caliph. Under the pretence therefore of reconciling the disputants, Vathek took upon him to decide; and with this view commanded the boys to be brought.

It was not long before a troop of these poor children made their appearance, all equipped by their fond mothers with such ornaments as might give the greatest relief to their beauty, or most advantageously display the graces of their age. But whilst this brilliant assemblage attracted the eyes and hearts of every one besides, the Caliph recognized each in his turn with a malignant avidity that passed for attention, and selected from their number the fifty whom he judged the Giaour would prefer.

With an equal show of kindness as before, he proposed to celebrate a festival on the plain for the entertainment of his young favorites, who he said ought to rejoice still more than all at the restoration of his health, on account of the favors he intended for them.

The Caliph's proposal was received with the greatest

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

delight, and soon published through Samarah; litters, camels and horses were prepared. Women and children, old men and young, every one placed himself in the station he chose. The cavalcade set forward, attended by all the confectioners in the city and its precincts; the populace following on foot composed an amazing crowd, and occasioned no little noise; all was joy, nor did any one call to mind what most of them had suffered when they first traveled the road they were now passing so gaily.

The evening was serene, the air refreshing, the sky clear, and the flowers exhaled their fragrance; the beams of the declining sun, whose mild splendor reposed on the summit of the mountain, shed a glow of ruddy light over its green declivity and the white flocks sporting upon it; no sounds were audible, save the murmurs of the Four Fountains, and the reeds and voices of shepherds, calling to each other from different eminences.

The lovely innocents proceeding to the destined sacrifice added not a little to the hilarity of the scene; they approached the plain full of sportiveness, some coursing butterflies, others culling flowers, or picking up the shining little pebbles that attracted their notice. At intervals they nimbly started from each other, for the sake of being caught again and mutually imparting a thousand caresses.

The dreadful chasm, at whose bottom the portal of ebony was placed, began to appear at a distance; it looked like a black streak that divided the plain. Morakanabad and his companions took it for some work which the Caliph had ordered; unhappy men! little did they surmise for what it was destined.

Vathek, not liking they should examine it too nearly, stopped the procession, and ordered a spacious circle to be formed on this side, at some distance from the

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

accursed chasm. The body-guard of eunuchs was detached to measure out the lists intended for the games, and prepare ringles for the lines to keep off the crowd. The fifty competitors were soon stripped, and presented to the admiration of the spectators the suppleness and grace of their delicate limbs; their eyes sparkled with a joy which those of their fond parents reflected. Every one offered wishes for the little candidate nearest his heart, and doubted not of his being victorious; a breathless suspense awaited the contest of these amiable and innocent victims.

The Caliph, availing himself of the first moment to retire from the crowd, advanced towards the chasm, and there heard, yet not without shuddering, the voice of the Indian, who, gnashing his teeth, eagerly demanded: "Where are they? where are they? perceivest thou not how my mouth waters?"

"Relentless Giaour!" answered Vathek, with emotion, "can nothing content thee but the massacre of these lovely victims? Ah! wert thou to behold their beauty it must certainly move thy compassion."

"Perdition on thy compassion, babbler!" cried the Indian; "give them me, instantly give them, or my portal shall be closed against thee forever!"

"Not so loudly," replied the Caliph, blushing.

"I understand thee," returned the Giaour, with the grin of an ogre; "thou wantest to summon up more presence of mind; I will for a moment forbear."

During this exquisite dialogue the games went forward with all alacrity, and at length concluded just as the twilight began to overcast the mountains. Vathek, who was still standing on the edge of the chasm, called out, with all his might: "Let my fifty little favorites approach me separately, and let them come in the order of their success. To the first I will give my diamond bracelet, to the second my collar of emeralds,

to the third my aigret of rubies, to the fourth my girdle of topazes, and to the rest each a part of my dress, even down to my slippers."

This declaration was received with reiterated acclamations, and all extolled the liberality of a Prince who would thus strip himself for the amusement of his subjects and the encouragement of the rising generation.

The Caliph in the meanwhile undressed himself by degrees, and, raising his arm as high as he was able, made each of the prizes glitter in the air; but whilst he delivered it with one hand to the child, who sprung forward to receive it, he with the other pushed the poor innocent into the gulf, where the Giaour with a sullen muttering incessantly repeated, "More! more!"

This dreadful device was executed with so much dexterity, that the boy who was approaching him remained unconscious of the fate of his forerunner; and as to spectators, the shades of evening, together with their distance, precluded them from perceiving any object distinctly. Vathek, having in this manner thrown in the last of the fifty, and expecting that the Giaour on receiving them would have presented the key, already fancied himself as great as Soliman, and consequently above being amenable for what he had done; when, to his utter amazement, the chasm closed, and the ground became as entire as the rest of the plain.

No language could express his rage and despair. He execrated the perfidy of the Indian, loaded him with the most infamous invectives, and stamped with his foot as resolving to be heard; he persisted in his demeanor till his strength failed him, and then fell on the earth like one void of sense. His vizirs and grandees, who were nearer than the rest, supposed him at first to be sitting on the grass at play with their amiable children; but at length, prompted by doubt, they advanced

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

towards the spot and found the Caliph alone, who wildly demanded what they wanted?

"Our children! our children!" cried they.

"It is assuredly pleasant," said he, "to make me accountable for accidents; your children while at play fell from the precipice that was here, and I should have experienced their fate had I not been saved by a sudden start back."

At these words the fathers of the fifty boys cried out aloud, the mothers repeated their exclamations an octave higher, whilst the rest, without knowing the cause, soon drowned the voices of both with still louder lamentations of their own.

"Our Caliph," said they, and the report soon circulated, "our Caliph has played us this trick to gratify his accursed Giaour. Let us punish him for his perfidy! let us avenge ourselves! let us avenge the blood of the innocent! let us throw this cruel Prince into the gulf that is near, and let his name be mentioned no more!"

At this rumor and these menaces, Carathis, full of consternation, hastened to Morakanabad and said: "Vizier, you have lost two beautiful boys, and must necessarily be the most afflicted of fathers, but you are virtuous; save your master."

"I will brave every hazard," replied the Vizier, "to rescue him from his present danger, but afterwards will abandon him to his fate. Bababalouk," continued he, "put yourself at the head of your eunuchs; disperse the mob, and, if possible, bring back this unhappy Prince to his palace." Bababalouk and his fraternity, felicitating each other in a low voice on their disability of ever being fathers, obeyed the mandate of the vizier; who, seconding their exertions to the utmost of his power, at length accomplished his generous enterprise, and retired as he resolved to lament at his leisure.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

No sooner had the Caliph re-entered his palace than Carathis commanded the doors to be fastened; but, perceiving the tumult to be still violent, and hearing the imprecations which resounded from all quarters, she said to her son: "Whether the populace be right or wrong, it behooves you to provide for your safety; let us retire to your own apartment, and from thence through the subterranean passage, known only to ourselves, into your tower; there, with the assistance of the mutes who never leave it, we may be able to make some resistance. Bababalouk, supposing us to be still in the palace, will guard its avenues for his own sake; and we shall soon find, without the counsels of that blubberer Morakanabad, what expedient may be the best to adopt."

Vathek, without making the least reply, acquiesced in his mother's proposal, and repeated as he went: Nefarious Giaour! where art thou? hast thou not yet devoured those poor children? where are thy sabres? thy golden key? thy talismans?

Carathis, who guessed from these interrogations a part of the truth, had no difficulty to apprehend in getting at the whole, as soon as he should be a little composed in his tower. This Princess was so far from being influenced by scruples, that she was as wicked as woman could be, which is not saying a little, for the sex pique themselves on their superiority in every competition. The recital of the Caliph, therefore, occasioned neither terror nor surprise to his mother; she felt no emotion but from the promises of the Giaour, and said to her son: "This Giaour, it must be confessed, is somewhat sanguinary in his taste, but the terrestrial powers are always terrible; nevertheless, what the one hath promised and the others can confer will prove a sufficient indemnification; no crimes should be thought too dear for such a reward; forbear then to revile the

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

Indian; you have not fulfilled the conditions to which his services are annexed; for instance, is not a sacrifice to the subterranean Genii required? and should we not be prepared to offer it as soon as the tumult is subsided? This charge I will take on myself, and have no doubt of succeeding by means of your treasures, which, as there are now so many others in store, may without fear be exhausted."

Accordingly, the Princess, who possessed the most consummate skill in the art of persuasion, went immediately back through the subterranean passage; and, presenting herself to the populace from a window of the palace, began to harangue them with all the address of which she was mistress, whilst Bababalouk showered money from both hands amongst the crowd, who by these united means were soon appeased; every person retired to his home and Carathis returned to the tower.

Prayer at break of day was announced, when Carathis and Vathek ascended the steps which led to the summit of the tower, where they remained for some time, though the weather was lowering and wet. This impending gloom corresponded with their malignant dispositions; but when the sun began to break through the clouds they ordered a pavilion to be raised, as a screen from the intrusion of his beams. The Caliph, overcome with fatigue, sought refreshment from repose, at the same time hoping that significant dreams might attend on his slumbers; whilst the indefatigable Carathis, followed by a party of her mutes, descended to prepare whatever she adjudged proper for the oblation of the approaching night.

By secret stairs, known only to herself and to her son, she first repaired to the mysterious recesses in which were deposited the mummies that had been brought from the catacombs of the ancient Pharaohs;

of these she ordered several to be taken. From thence she resorted to a gallery where, under the guard of fifty female negroes, mute and blind of the right eye, were preserved the oil of the most venomous serpents, rhinoceros' horns, and woods of a subtile and penetrating odor procured from the interior of the Indies, together with a thousand other horrible rarities. This collection had been formed for a purpose like the present by Carathis herself, from a presentiment that she might one day enjoy some intercourse with the infernal powers to whom she had ever been passionately attached, and to whose taste she was no stranger.

To familiarize herself the better with the horrors in view, the Princess remained in the company of her negresses, who squinted in the most amiable manner from the only eye they had, and leered with exquisite delight at the skulls and skeletons which Carathis had drawn forth from her cabinets, whose key she intrusted to no one; all of them making contortions, and uttering a frightful jargon, but very amusing to the Princess, till at last being stunned by their gibbering, and suffocated by the potency of their exhalations, she was forced to quit the gallery, after stripping it of a part of its treasures.

While she was thus occupied the Caliph, who instead of the visions he expected had acquired in these insubstantial regions a voracious appetite, was greatly provoked at the negresses; for, having totally forgotten their deafness, he had impatiently asked them for food, and seeing them regardless of his demand, he began to cuff, pinch, and push them, till Carathis arrived to terminate a scene so indecent, to the great content of these miserable creatures, who, having been brought up by her, understood all her signs, and communicated in the same way their thoughts in return.

"Son! what means all this?" said she, panting for

breath. "I thought I heard, as I came up, the shrieks of a thousand bats tearing from their crannies in the recesses of a cavern; and it was the outcry only of these poor mutes, whom you were so unmercifully abusing. In truth you but ill deserve the admirable provision I have brought you."

"Give it me instantly," exclaimed the Caliph; "I am perishing for hunger!"

"As to that," answered she, "you must have an excellent stomach if it can digest what I have been preparing."

"Be quick," replied the Caliph; "but, oh heavens! what horrors! what do you intend?"

"Come, come," returned Carathis, "be not so squeamish, but help me to arrange everything properly, and you shall see that what you reject with such symptoms of disgust will soon complete your felicity. Let us get ready the pile for the sacrifice of to-night, and think not of eating till that is performed; know you not that all solemn rites are preceded by a rigorous abstinence?"

The Caliph, not daring to object, abandoned himself to grief and the wind that ravaged his entrails, whilst his mother went forward with the requisite operations. Phials of serpents' oil, mummies and bones were soon set in order on the balustrade of the tower; the pile began to rise, and in three hours was as many cubits high. At length darkness approached, and Carathis, having stripped herself to her inmost garment, clapped her hands in an impulse of ecstasy and struck light with all her force. The mutes followed her example; but Vathek, attenuated with hunger and impatience, was unable to support himself, and fell down in a swoon. The sparks had already kindled the dry wood, the venomous oil burst into a thousand blue flames, the mummies dissolving emitted a thick dun

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

vapor, and the rhinoceros' horns beginning to consume, all together diffused such a stench, that the Caliph recovering started from his trance, and gazed wildly on the scene in full blaze around him. The oil gushed forth in a plenitude of streams; and the negresses, who supplied it without intermission, united their cries to those of the Princess. At last the fire became so violent, and the flames reflected from the polished marble so dazzling, that the Caliph, unable to withstand the heat and the blaze, effected his escape, and clambered up the imperial standard.

In the meantime the inhabitants of Samarah, scared at the light which shone over the city, arose in haste, ascended their roofs, beheld the tower on fire, and hurried half naked to the square. Their love to their Sovereign immediately awoke; and, apprehending him in danger of perishing in his tower, their whole thoughts were occupied with the means of his safety. Morakanabad flew from his retirement, wiped away his tears, and cried out for water like the rest. Babalouk, whose olfactory nerves were more familiarized to magical odors, readily conjecturing that Carathis was engaged in her favorite amusements, strenuously exhorted them not to be alarmed. Him, however, they treated as an old poltroon, and forbore not to style him a rascally traitor. The camels and dromedaries were advancing with water, but no one knew by which way to enter the tower. Whilst the populace was obstinate in forcing the doors, a violent east wind drove such a volume of flame against them, as at first forced them off, but afterwards rekindled their zeal; at the same time the stench of the horns and mummies increasing, most of the crowd fell backward in a state of suffocation; those that kept their feet mutually wondered at the cause of the smell, and admonished each other to retire. Morakanabad, more sick than the

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

rest, remained in a piteous condition; holding his nose with one hand, he persisted in his efforts with the other, to burst open the doors and obtain admission. A hundred and forty of the strongest and most resolute at length accomplished their purpose; having gained the staircase by their violent exertions, they attained a great height in a quarter of an hour.

Carathis, alarmed at the signs of her mutes, advanced to the staircase, went down a few steps, and heard several voices calling out from below: "You shall in a moment have water!" Being rather alert, considering her age, she presently regained the top of the tower, and bade her son suspend the sacrifice for some minutes, adding: "We shall soon be enabled to render it more grateful; certain dolts of your subjects, imagining no doubt that we were on fire, have been rash enough to break through those doors which had hitherto remained inviolate, for the sake of bringing up water; they are very kind, you must allow, so soon to forget the wrongs you have done them, but that is of little moment. Let us offer them to the Giaour; let them come up; our mutes, who neither want strength nor experience, will soon dispatch them, exhausted as they are with fatigue."

"Be it so," answered the Caliph, "provided we finish and I dine."

In fact, these good people, out of breath from ascending eleven thousand stairs in such haste, and chagrined at having spilt by the way the water they had taken, were no sooner arrived at the top than the blaze of the flames and the fumes of the mummies at once overpowered their senses. It was a pity! for they beheld not the agreeable smile with which the mutes and the negresses adjusted the cord to their necks; these amiable personages rejoiced, however, no less at the scene; never before had the ceremony of strangling been per-

formed with so much facility; they all fell without the least resistance or struggle, so that Vathek in the space of a few moments found himself surrounded by the dead bodies of his faithfulest subjects, all of which were thrown on the top of the pile.

Carathis, whose presence of mind never forsook her, perceiving that she had carcasses sufficient to complete her oblation, commanded the chains to be stretched across the staircase, and the iron doors barricadoed, that no more might come up.

No sooner were these orders obeyed than the tower shook, the dead bodies vanished in the flames, which at once changed from a swarthy crimson to a bright rose color; an ambient vapor emitted the most exquisite fragrance, the marble columns rang with harmonious sounds and the liquefied horns diffused a delicious perfume. Carathis, in transports, anticipated the success of her enterprise, whilst her mutes and negresses, to whom these sweets had given the colic, retired to their cells grumbling.

Scarcely were they gone when, instead of the pile, horns, mummies and ashes, the Caliph both saw and felt, with a degree of pleasure which he could not express, a table covered with the most magnificent repast; flagons of wine, and vases of exquisite sherbet floating on snow. He availed himself without scruple of such an entertainment, and had already laid hands on a lamb stuffed with pistachios, whilst Carathis was privately drawing from a filagree urn a parchment that seemed to be endless, and which had escaped the notice of her son; totally occupied in gratifying an importunate appetite, he left her to peruse it without interruption, which having finished, she said to him in an authoritative tone, "Put an end to your gluttony, and hear the splendid promises with which you are favored!" She then read as follows: "Vathek, my well-beloved, thou

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

hast surpassed my hopes; my nostrils have been regaled by the savor of thy mummies, thy horns, and still more by the lives devoted on the pile. At the full of the moon cause the bands of thy musicians and thy tymbals to be heard; depart from thy palace surrounded by all the pageants of majesty; thy most faithful slaves, thy best beloved wives, thy most magnificent litters, thy richest loaden camels, and set forward on thy way to Istakhar; there await I thy coming, that is the region of wonders; there shalt thou receive the diadem of Gian Ben Gian, the talismans of Soliman, and the treasures of the Preadamite Sultans; there shalt thou be solaced with all kinds of delights. But beware how thou enterest any dwelling on thy route, or thou shall feel the effects of my anger."

The Caliph, who, notwithstanding his habitual luxury, had never before dined with so much satisfaction, gave full scope to the joy of these golden tidings, and betook himself to drinking anew. Carathis, whose antipathy to wine was by no means insuperable, failed not to supply a reason for every bumper, which they ironically quaffed to the health of Mahomet. This infernal liquor completed their impious temerity, and prompted them to utter a profusion of blasphemies; they gave a loose to their wit at the expense of the ass of Balaam, the dog of the seven sleepers, and the other animals admitted into the paradise of Mahomet. In this sprightly humor they descended the eleven thousand stairs, diverting themselves as they went at the anxious faces they saw on the square through the oilets of the tower, and at length arrived at the royal apartments by the subterranean passage. Babalouk was parading to and fro, and issuing his mandates with great pomp to the eunuchs, who were snuffing the lights and painting the eyes of the Circassians

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

No sooner did he catch sight of the Caliph and his mother than he exclaimed, "Hah! you have then, I perceive, escaped the flames; I was not, however, altogether out of doubt."

"Of what moment is it to us what you thought or think?" cried Carathis; "go, speed, tell Morakanabad that we immediately want him; and take care how you stop by the way to make your insipid reflections."

Morakanabad delayed not to obey the summons, and was received by Vathek and his mother with great solemnity; they told him, with an air of composure and commiseration, that the fire at the top of the tower was extinguished; but that it had cost the lives of the brave people who sought to assist them.

"Still more misfortunes!" cried Morakanabad, with a sigh. "Ah, Commander of the faithful, our holy Prophet is certainly irritated against us! it behooves you to appease him."

"We will appease him hereafter!" replied the Caliph, with a smile that augured nothing of good. "You will have leisure sufficient for your supplications during my absence; for this country is the bane of my health. I am disgusted with the mountain of the Four Fountains, and am resolved to go and drink of the stream of Rocnabad; I long to refresh myself in the delightful valleys which it waters. Do you, with the advice of my mother, govern my dominions, and take care to supply whatever her experiments may demand; for you well know that our tower abounds in materials for the advancement of science."

The tower but ill-suited Morakanabad's taste. Immense treasures had been lavished upon it; and nothing had he ever seen carried thither but female negroes, mutes and abominable drugs. Nor did he know well what to think of Carathis; who, like a cameleon, could assume all possible colors; her cursed elo-

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

quence had often driven the poor Mussulman to his last shifts. He considered, however, that if she possessed but few good qualities, her son had still fewer; and that the alternative on the whole would be in her favor. Consoled, therefore, with this reflection, he went in good spirits to soothe the populace, and make the proper arrangements for his master's journey.

Vathek, to conciliate the spirits of the subterranean palace, resolved that his expedition should be uncommonly splendid. With this view he confiscated on all sides the property of his subjects, whilst his worthy mother stripped the seraglios she visited of the gems they contained. She collected all the seamstresses and embroiderers of Samarah and other cities to the distance of sixty leagues, to prepare pavilions, palanquins, sofas, canopies and litters for the train of the monarch. There was not left in Masulipatan a single piece of chintz, and so much muslin had been bought up to dress out Bababalouk and the other black eunuchs, that there remained not an ell in the whole Irak of Babylon.

During these preparations Carathis, who never lost sight of her great object, which was to obtain favor with the powers of darkness, made select parties of the fairest and most delicate ladies of the city; but in the midst of their gaiety she contrived to introduce serpents amongst them, and to break pots of scorpions, under the table; they all bit to a wonder; and Carathis would have left them to bite, were it not that, to fill up the time, she now and then amused herself in curing their wounds with an excellent anodyne of her own invention, for this good Princess abhorred being indolent.

Vathek, who was not altogether so active as his mother, devoted his time to the sole gratification of his senses, in the palaces which were severally dedicated

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

to them; he disgusted himself no more with the Divan or the Mosque. One half of Samarah followed his example, whilst the other lamented the progress of corruption.

In the midst of these transactions, the embassy returned which had been sent in pious times to Mecca. It consisted of the most reverend Moullahs, who had fulfilled their commission and brought back one of those precious besoms which are used to sweep the sacred Caaba; a present truly worthy of the greatest potentate on earth!

The Caliph happened at this instant to be engaged in an apartment by no means adapted to the reception of embassies, though adorned with a certain magnificence, not only to render it agreeable, but also because he resorted to it frequently, and stayed a considerable time together. Whilst occupied in this retreat, he heard the voice of Bababalouk calling out from between the door and the tapestry that hung before it: "Here are the excellent Mahomet Ebn Edris al Shafei, and the seraphic Al Mouhadethin, who have brought the besom from Mecca, and with tears of joy entreat they may present it to your majesty in person."

"Let them bring the besom thither; it may be of use," said Vathek, who was still employed, not having quite racked off his wine.

"How!" answered Bababalouk, half aloud and amazed.

"Obey," replied the Caliph, "for it is my sovereign will; go instantly, vanish; for here will I receive the good folk, who have thus filled thee with joy."

The eunuch departed muttering, and bade the venerable train attend him. A sacred rapture was diffused amongst these reverend old men. Though fatigued with the length of their expedition, they followed Bababalouk with an alertness almost miraculous, and felt

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

themselves highly flattered, as they swept along the stately porticoes, that the Caliph would not receive them like ambassadors in ordinary in his hall of audience. Soon reaching the interior of the harem (where, through blinds of persian, they perceived large, soft eyes, dark and blue, that went and came like lightning) penetrated with respect and wonder, and full of their celestial mission, they advanced in procession towards the small corridors that appeared to terminate in nothing, but nevertheless led to the cell where the Caliph expected their coming.

"What! is the commander of the faithful sick?" said Ebn Edris al Shafei in a low voice to his companion.

"I rather think he is in his oratory," answered Al Mouhadethin.

Vathek, who had heard the dialogue, cried out: "What imports it you how I am employed? approach without delay."

They advanced and Bababalouk almost sunk with confusion, whilst the Caliph, without showing himself, put forth his hand from behind the tapestry that hung before the door, and demanded of them the besom. Having prostrated themselves as well as the corridor would permit, and even in a tolerable semicircle, the venerable Al Shafei, drawing forth the besom from the embroidered and perfumed scarves in which it had been enveloped, and secured from the profane gaze of vulgar eyes, arose from his associates, and advanced with an air of the most awful solemnity, towards the supposed oratory; but with what astonishment! with what horror was he seized! Vathek, bursting out into a villainous laugh, snatched the besom from his trembling hand, and, fixing upon some cobwebs that hung suspended from the ceiling, gravely brushed away till not a single one remained. The old men, overpowered with amazement, were unable to lift their beards from

the ground; for, as Vathek had carelessly left the tapestry between them half drawn, they were witnesses to the whole transaction; their tears gushed forth on the marble, Al Mouhadethin swooned through mortification and fatigue, whilst the Caliph, throwing himself backward on his seat, shouted and clapped his hands without mercy. At last, addressing himself to Bababalouk: "My dear black," said he, "go, regale these pious poor souls with my good wine from Shiraz; and, as they can boast of having seen more of my palace than anyone besides let them also visit my office courts, and lead them out by the back steps that go to my stables." Having said this he threw the besom in their face, and went to enjoy the laugh with Carathis. Bababalouk did all in his power to console the ambassadors, but the two most infirm expired on the spot; the rest were carried to their beds, from whence, being heart-broken with sorrow and shame, they never arose.

The succeeding night Vathek attended by his mother ascended the tower to see if everything were ready for his journey; for he had great faith in the influence of the stars. The planets appeared in their most favorable aspects. The Caliph, to enjoy so flattering a sight, supped gaily on the roof, and fancied that he heard during his repast loud shouts of laughter resound through the sky in a manner that inspired the fullest assurance.

All was in motion at the palace; lights were kept burning through the whole of the night; the sound of implements and of artisans finishing their work, the voices of women and their guardians who sung at their embroidery, all conspired to interrupt the stillness of nature and infinitely delight the heart of Vathek, who imagined himself going in triumph to sit upon the throne of Soliman.

The people were not less satisfied than himself, all

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

assisted to accelerate the moment which should rescue them from the wayward caprices of so extravagant a master.

The day preceding the departure of this infatuated Prince was employed by Carathis in repeating to him the decrees of the mysterious parchment, which she had thoroughly gotten by heart, and in recommending him not to enter the habitation of any one by the way; "for well thou knowest," added she, "how liquorish thy taste is after good dishes and young damsels; let me, therefore, enjoin thee to be content with thy old cooks, who are the best in the world, and not to forget that in thy ambulatory seraglio there are three dozen pretty faces, which Bababalouk hath not yet unveiled. I myself have a great desire to watch over thy conduct, and visit the subterranean palace, which no doubt contains whatever can interest persons like us; there is nothing so pleasing as retiring to caverns; my taste for dead bodies and everything like mummy is decided, and I am confident thou wilt see the most exquisite of their kind. Forget me not then, but the moment thou art in possession of the talismans which are to open to thee the mineral kingdoms and the center of the earth itself, fail not to dispatch some trusty genius to take me and my cabinet, for the oil of the serpents I have pinched to death will be a pretty present to the Giaour, who cannot but be charmed with such dainties."

Scarcely had Carathis ended this gratifying discourse when the sun, setting behind the mountain of the Four Fountains, gave place to the rising moon; this planet being that evening at full appeared of unusual beauty and magnitude in the eyes of the women, the eunuchs and the pages, who were all impatient to set forward. The city re-echoed with shouts of joy and flourishing of trumpets; nothing was visible but plumes nodding on pavilions, and aigrets shining in the mild lustre of

the moon; the spacious square resembled an immense parterre, variegated with the most stately tulips of the East.

Arrayed in the robes which were only worn at the most distinguished ceremonials, and supported by his Vizier and Bababalouk, the Caliph descended the grand staircase of the tower in the sight of all his people; he could not forbear pausing at intervals to admire the superb appearance which everywhere courted his view, whilst the whole multitude, even to the camels with their sumptuous burthens, knelt down before him. For some time a general stillness prevailed, which nothing happened to disturb but the shrill screams of some eunuchs in the rear; these vigilant guards, having remarked certain cages of the ladies swagging somewhat awry, and discovered that a few adventurous gallants had contrived to get in, soon dislodged the enraptured culprits, and consigned them with good commendations to the surgeons of the serail. The majesty of so magnificent a spectacle was not, however, violated by incidents like these. Vathek meanwhile saluted the moon with an idolatrous air, that neither pleased Morakanabad nor the doctors of the law, any more than the viziers and the grandes of his court, who were all assembled to enjoy the last view of their sovereign.

At length the clarions and trumpets from the top of the tower announced the prelude of departure; though the instruments were in unison with each other, yet a singular dissonance was blended with their sounds; this proceeded from Carathis, who was singing her direful orisons to the Giaour, whilst the negresses and mutes supplied thorough-bass without articulating a word. The good Mussulmans fancied that they heard the sullen hum of those nocturnal insects which presage evil, and importuned Vathek to beware how he ventured his sacred person.

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

On a given signal the great standard of the Califat was displayed, twenty thousand lances shone around it, and the Caliph, treading loyally on the cloth of gold which had been spread for his feet, ascended his litter amidst the general awe that possessed his subjects.

The expedition commenced with the utmost order and so entire a silence that even the locusts were heard from the thickets on the plain of Catoul. Gaiety and good-humor prevailing, six good leagues were passed before the dawn; and the morning star was still glittering in the firmament when the whole of this numerous train had halted on the banks of the Tigris, where they encamped to repose for the rest of the day.

The three days that followed were spent in the same manner; but on the fourth the heavens looked angry, lightnings broke forth in frequent flashes, re-echoing peals of thunder succeeded, and the trembling Circasians clung with all their might to their ugly guardians. The Caliph himself was greatly inclined to take shelter in the large town of Gulchissar, the governor of which came forth to meet him, and tendered every kind of refreshment the place could supply; but, having examined his tablets, he suffered the rain to soak him almost to the bone, notwithstanding the importunity of his first favorites. Though he began to regret the palace of the senses, yet he lost not sight of his enterprise, and his sanguine expectations confirmed his resolution; his geographers were ordered to attend him, but the weather proved so terrible that these poor people exhibited a lamentable appearance; and, as no long journeys had been undertaken since the time of Haroun al Raschid, their maps of the different countries were in a still worse plight than themselves; every one was ignorant which way to turn; but Vathek, though well versed in the course of the heavens, no longer knew his situation on earth; he thundered even

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

louder than the elements, and muttered forth certain hints of the bowstring, which were not very soothing to literary ears. Disgusted at the toilsome weariness of the way, he determined to cross over the craggy heights and follow the guidance of a peasant, who undertook to bring him in four days to Rocnabad. Remonstrances were all to no purpose; his resolution was fixed, and an invasion commenced on the province of the goats, who sped away in large troops before them. It was curious to view on these half calcined rocks camels richly caparisoned, and pavilions of gold and silk waving on their summits, which till then had never been covered but with sapless thistles and fern.

The females and eunuchs uttered shrill wailings at the sight of the precipices below them, and the dreary prospects that opened in the vast gorges of the mountains. Before they could reach the ascent of the steepest rock night overtook them, and a boisterous tempest arose which, having rent the awnings of the palanquins and cages, exposed to the raw gusts the poor ladies within, who had never before felt so piercing a cold. The dark clouds that overcast the face of the sky deepened the horrors of this disastrous night, insomuch that nothing could be heard distinctly but the mewling of pages and lamentations of sultanas.

To increase the general misfortune, the frightful uproar of wild beasts resounded at a distance, and there were soon perceived in the forest they were skirting the glaring of eyes which could belong only to devils or tigers. The pioneers, who as well as they could had marked out a track, and a part of the advanced guard were devoured before they had been in the least apprized of their danger. The confusion that prevailed was extreme; wolves, tigers and other carnivorous animals, invited by the howling of their companions.

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

flocked together from every quarter; the crashing of bones was heard on all sides, and a fearful rush of wings overhead, for now vultures also began to be of the party.

The terror at length reached the main body of the troops which surrounded the monarch and his harem, at the distance of two leagues from the scene. Vathek (voluptuously reposed in his capacious litter upon cushions of silk, with two little pages beside him of complexions more fair than the enamel of Franguestan, who were occupied in keeping off flies) was soundly asleep, and contemplating in his dreams the treasures of Soliman. The shrieks, however, of his wives awoke him with a start, and, instead of the Giaour with his key of gold, he beheld Bababalouk full of consternation.

“Sire,” exclaimed this good servant of the most potent of monarchs, “misfortune is arrived at its height; wild beasts, who entertain no more reverence for your sacred person than for that of a dead ass, have beset your camels and their drivers; thirty of the richest laden are already become their prey, as well as your confectioners, your cooks, and purveyors; and, unless our holy Prophet should protect us, we shall have all eaten our last meal.”

At the mention of eating the Caliph lost all patience; he began to bellow and even beat himself (for there was no seeing in the dark). The rumor every instant increased, and Bababalouk, finding no good could be done with his master, stopped both his ears against the hurly-burly of the harem, and called out aloud: “Come, ladies and brothers! all hands to work; strike light in a moment! never shall it be said that the commander of the faithful served to regale these infidel brutes.”

Though there wanted not in this bevy of beauties a

sufficient number of capricious and wayward, yet on the present occasion they were all compliance; fires were visible in a twinkling in all their cages; ten thousand torches were lighted at once; the Caliph himself seized a large one of wax; every person followed his example, and, by kindling ropes' ends dipped in oil and fastened on poles, an amazing blaze was spread. The rocks were covered with the splendor of sunshine; the trails of sparks wafted by the wind communicated to the dry fern, of which there was plenty. Serpents were observed to crawl forth from their retreats with amazement and hissings, whilst the horses snorted, stamped the ground, tossed their noses in the air, and plunged about without mercy.

One of the forests of cedar that bordered their way took fire, and the branches that overhung the path, extending their flames to the muslins and chintzes which covered the cages of the ladies, obliged them to jump out at the peril of their necks. Vathek, who vented on the occasion a thousand blasphemies, was himself compelled to touch with his sacred feet the naked earth.

Never had such an incident happened before. Full of mortification, shame and despondence, and not knowing how to walk, the ladies fell into the dirt. "Must I go on foot!" said one; "Must I wet my feet!" cried another; "Must I soil my dress!" asked a third; "Execrable Bababalouk!" exclaimed all; "Outcast of hell! what hadst thou to do with torches? Better were it to be eaten by tigers than to fall into our present condition! we are forever undone! Not a porter is there in the army, nor a currier of camels, but hath seen some part of our bodies, and what is worse, our very faces!" On saying this the most bashful amongst them hid their foreheads on the ground, whilst such as had more boldness flew at Bababalouk; but he, well ap-

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

prized of their humor and not wanting in shrewdness, betook himself to his heels along with his comrades, all dropping their torches and striking their tymbals.

It was not less light than in the brightest of the dog-days, and the weather was hot in proportion; but how degrading was the spectacle, to behold the Caliph bespattered like an ordinary mortal! As the exercise of his faculties seemed to be suspended, one of his Ethiopian wives (for he delighted in variety) clasped him in her arms, threw him upon her shoulder like a sack of dates, and, finding that the fire was hemming them in, set off with no small expedition, considering the weight of her burden. The other ladies, who had just learnt the use of their feet, followed her, their guards galloped after, and the camel drivers brought up the rear as fast as their charge would permit.

They soon reached the spot where the wild beasts had commenced the carnage, and which they had too much spirit to leave, notwithstanding the approaching tumult and the luxurious supper they had made; Babalouk nevertheless seized on a few of the plumpest, which were unable to budge from the place, and began to flay them with admirable adroitness. The cavalcade being got so far from the conflagration as that the heat felt rather grateful than violent, it was immediately resolved on to halt. The tattered chintzes were picked up, the scraps left by the wolves and tigers interred, and vengeance was taken on some dozens of vultures that were too much glutted to rise on the wing. The camels, which had been left unmolested to make sal ammoniac, being numbered, and the ladies once more enclosed in their cages, the imperial tent was pitched on the levellest ground they could find.

Vathek, reposing upon a mattress of down, and tolerably recovered from the jolting of the Ethiopian, who to his feelings seemed the roughest trotting jade

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

he had hitherto mounted, called out for something to eat. But alas! those delicate cakes which had been baked in silver ovens for his royal mouth, those rich manchets, amber comfits, flagons of Schiraz wine, porcelain vases of snow, and grapes from the banks of the Tigris, were all irremediably lost! And nothing had Bababalouk to present in their stead but a roasted wolf, vultures a la daube, aromatic herbs of the most acrid poignancy, rotten truffles, boiled thistles, and such other wild plants as must ulcerate the throat and parch up the tongue. Nor was he better provided in the article of drink, for he could procure nothing to accompany these irritating viands but a few vials of abominable brandy, which had been secreted by the scullions in their slippers.

Vathek made wry faces at so savage a repast, and Bababalouk answered them with shrugs and contortions; the Caliph however eat with tolerable appetite, and fell into a nap that lasted six hours. The splendor of the sun reflected from the white cliffs of the mountains, in spite of the curtains that enclosed him, at length disturbed his repose; he awoke terrified, and stung to the quick by those wormwood-colored flies, which emit from their wings a suffocating stench. The miserable monarch was perplexed how to act, though his wits were not idle in seeking expedients, whilst Bababalouk lay snoring amidst a swarm of those insects, that busily thronged to pay court to his nose. The little pages, famished with hunger, had dropped their fans on the ground, and exerted their dying voices in bitter reproach on the Caliph, who now for the first time heard the language of truth.

Thus stimulated, he renewed his imprecations against the Giaour, and bestowed upon Mahomet some soothing expressions. "Where am I?" cried he; "what are these dreadful rocks? these valleys of darkness? are

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

we arrived at the horrible Kaf? is the Simurgh coming to pluck out my eyes, as a punishment for undertaking this impious enterprise?" Having said this he bellowed like a calf, and turned himself towards an outlet in the side of his pavilion; but alas! what objects occurred to his view? on one side a plain of black sand that appeared to be unbounded, and on the other perpendicular crags, bristled over with those abominable thistles which had so severely lacerated his tongue. He fancied, however, that he perceived, amongst the brambles and briars, some gigantic flowers, but was mistaken; for these were only the dangling palampores and variegated tatters of his gay retinue. As there were several clefts in the rock from whence water seemed to have flowed, Vathek applied his ear with the hope of catching the sound of some latent runnel, but could only distinguish the low murmurs of his people, who were repining at their journey, and complaining for the want of water.

"To what purpose," asked they, "have we been brought hither? hath our Caliph another tower to build? or have the relentless Afrits, whom Carathis so much loves, fixed in this place their abode?"

At the name of Carathis Vathek recollected the tablets he had received from his mother, who assured him they were fraught with preternatural qualities, and advised him to consult them as emergencies might require. Whilst he was engaged in turning them over, he heard a shout of joy and a loud clapping of hands; the curtains of his pavilion were soon drawn back, and he beheld Bababalouk, followed by a troop of his favorites, conducting two dwarfs, each a cubit high, who brought between them a large basket of melons, oranges and pomegranates. They were singing in the sweetest tones the words that follow:

"We dwell on the top of these rocks in a cabin of

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

rushes and canes; the eagles envy us our nest; a small spring supplies us with Abdest, and we daily repeat prayers which the Prophet approves. We love you, O commander of the faithful! our master, the good Emir Fakreddin, loves you also; he reveres in your person the vicegerent of Mahomet. Little as we are, in us he confides; he knows our hearts to be good as our bodies are contemptible, and hath placed us here to aid those who are bewildered on these dreary mountains. Last night, whilst we were occupied within our cell in reading the holy Koran, a sudden hurricane blew out our lights and rocked our habitation; for two whole hours a palpable darkness prevailed, but we heard sounds at a distance which we conjectured to proceed from the bells of a Cafilá passing over the rocks; our ears were soon filled with deplorable shrieks, frightful roarings, and the sound of tymbals. Chilled with terror, we concluded that the Deggial, with his exterminating angels, had sent forth their plagues on the earth. In the midst of these melancholy reflections we perceived flames of the deepest red glow in the horizon, and found ourselves in a few moments covered with flakes of fire; amazed at so strange an appearance, we took up the volume dictated by the blessed Intelligence, and, kneeling by the light of the fire that surrounded us, we recited the verse which says: 'Put no trust in any thing but the mercy of Heaven; there is no help save in the holy Prophet; the mountain of Kaf itself may tremble, it is the power of Alla only that cannot be moved.' After having pronounced these words we felt consolation, and our minds were hushed into a sacred repose; silence ensued, and our ears clearly distinguished a voice in the air, saying, 'Servants of my faithful servant! go down to the happy valley of Fakreddin; tell him that an illustrious opportunity now offers to satiate the thirst of his hospitable heart. The

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

Commander of true believers is this day bewildered amongst these mountains, and stands in need of thy aid.' We obeyed with joy the angelic mission, and our master, filled with pious zeal, hath culled with his own hands these melons, oranges and pomegranates; he is following us with a hundred dromedaries laden with the purest waters of his fountains, and is coming to kiss the fringe of your consecrated robe, and implore you to enter his humble habitation, which, placed amidst these barren wilds, resembles an emerald set in lead." The dwarfs, having ended their address, remained still standing, and, with hands crossed upon their bosoms, preserved a respectful silence.

Vathek in the midst of this curious harangue seized the basket, and long before it was finished the fruits had dissolved in his mouth; as he continued to eat his piety increased, and in the same breath which recited his prayers he called for the Koran and sugar.

Such was the state of his mind when the tablets, which were thrown by at the approach of the dwarfs, again attracted his eye; he took them up, but was ready to drop on the ground when he beheld, in large red characters, these words inscribed by Carathis, which were indeed enough to make him tremble:

"Beware of thy old doctors, and their puny messengers of but one cubit high; distrust their pious frauds, and, instead of eating their melons, impale on a spit the bearers of them. Shouldest thou be such a fool as to visit them, the portal of the subterranean palace will be shut in thy face, and with such force as shall shake thee asunder; thy body shall be spit upon, and bats will engender in thy belly."

"To what tends this ominous rhapsody?" cries the Caliph; "and must I then perish in these deserts with thirst, whilst I may refresh myself in the valley of melons and cucumbers? Accursed be the Giaour, with

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

his portal of ebony! he hath made me dance attendance too long already. Besides, who shall prescribe laws to me? I forsooth must not enter any one's habitation! Be it so; but what one can I enter that is not my own!"

Bababalouk, who lost not a syllable of this soliloquy, applauded it with all his heart, and the ladies for the first time agreed with him in opinion.

The dwarfs were entertained, caressed and seated with great ceremony on little cushions of satin. The symmetry of their persons was the subject of criticism; not an inch of them was suffered to pass unexamined; knick-knacks and dainties were offered in profusion, but all were declined with respectful gravity. They clambered up the sides of the Caliph's seat, and, placing themselves each on one of his shoulders, began to whisper prayers in his ears; their tongues quivered like the leaves of a poplar, and the patience of Vathek was almost exhausted, when the acclamations of the troops announced the approach of Fakreddin, who was come with a hundred old gray-beards and as many Korans and dromedaries; they instantly set about their ablutions, and began to repeat the Bismillah; Vathek, to get rid of these officious monitors, followed their example, for his hands were burning.

The good Emir, who was punctiliously religious and likewise a great dealer in compliments, made an harangue five times more prolix and insipid than his harbingers had already delivered. The Caliph, unable any longer to refrain, exclaimed:

"For the love of Mahomet, my dear Fakreddin, have done! let us proceed to your valley, and enjoy the fruits that heaven hath vouchsafed to you."

The hint of proceeding put all into motion; the venerable attendants of the Emir set forward somewhat slowly, but Vathek, having ordered his little pages in

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

private to goad on the dromedaries, loud fits of laughter broke forth from the cages, for the unwieldy curvetting of these poor beasts, and the ridiculous distress of their superannuated riders, afforded the ladies no small entertainment.

They descended however unhurt into the valley, by the large steps which the Emir had cut in the rock, and already the murmuring of streams and the rustling of leaves began to catch their attention. The cavalcade soon entered a path which was skirted by flowering shrubs, and extended to a vast wood of palm-trees, whose branches overspread a building of hewn stone. This edifice was crowned with nine domes, and adorned with as many portals of bronze, on which was engraven the following inscription: "This is the asylum of pilgrims, the refuge of travelers, and the depository of secrets for all parts of the world."

Nine pages, beautiful as the day, and clothed in robes of Egyptian linen, very long and very modest, were standing at each door. They received the whole retinue with an easy and inviting air. Four of the most amiable placed the Caliph on a magnificent taktrevan; four others, somewhat less graceful, took charge of Bababalouk, who capered for joy at the snug little cabin that fell to his share; the pages that remained waited on the rest of the train.

When everything masculine was gone out of sight, the gate of a large enclosure on the right turned on its harmonious hinges, and a young female of a slender form came forth; her light brown hair floated in the hazy breeze of the twilight; a troop of young maidens, like the Pleiades, attended her on tip-toe. They hastened to the pavilions that contained the sultanas, and the young lady, gracefully bending, said to them:

"Charming Princesses, everything is ready; we have prepared beds for your repose, and strewed your apart-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

ments with jasmine; no insects will keep off slumber from visiting your eyelids, we will dispel them with a thousand plumes; come, then, amiable ladies! refresh your delicate feet and your ivory limbs in baths of rose water, and, by the light of perfumed lamps, your servants will amuse you with tales."

The sultanas accepted with pleasure these obliging offers, and followed the young lady to the Emir's harem, where we must for a moment leave them and return to the Caliph.

Vathek found himself beneath a vast dome, illuminated by a thousand lamps of rock crystal; as many vases of the same material, filled with excellent sherbet, sparkled on a large table, where a profusion of viands were spread; amongst others were sweetbreads stewed in milk of almonds, saffron soups, and lamb a la crème, of all which the Caliph was amazingly fond. He took of each as much as he was able, testified his sense of the Emir's friendship by the gaiety of his heart, and made the dwarfs dance against their will, for these little devotees durst not refuse the Commander of the faithful; at last he spread himself on the sofa, and slept sounder than he had ever before.

Beneath this dome a general silence prevailed, for there was nothing to disturb it but the jaws of Bababalouk, who had untrussed himself to eat with greater advantage, being anxious to make amends for his fast in the mountains. As his spirits were too high to admit of his sleeping, and not loving to be idle, he proposed with himself to visit the harem, and repair to his charge of the ladies, to examine if they had been properly lubricated with the balm of Mecca, if their eyebrows and tresses were in order, and, in a word, to perform all the little offices they might need. He sought for a long time together, but without being able to find out the door; he durst not speak aloud for fear of disturbing the Caliph,

and not a soul was stirring in the precincts of the palace; he almost despaired of effecting his purpose, when a low whispering just reached his ear; it came from the dwarfs, who were returned to their old occupation, and, for the nine hundred and ninety-ninth time in their lives, were reading over the Koran. They very politely invited Bababalouk to be of their party, but his head was full of other concerns. The dwarfs, though scandalized at his dissolute morals, directed him to the apartments he wanted to find; his way thither lay through a hundred dark corridors, along which he groped as he went, and at last began to catch, from the extremity of a passage, the charming gossip of the women, which not a little delighted his heart. "Ah, ha! what, not yet asleep?" cried he; and, taking long strides as he spoke, "did you not suspect me of abjuring my charge? I stayed but to finish what my master had left."

Two of the black eunuchs, on hearing a voice so loud, detached a party in haste, sabre in hand, to discover the cause; but presently was repeated on all sides: "Tis only Bababalouk! no one but Bababalouk!" This circumspect guardian, having gone up to a thin veil of carnation-colored silk that hung before the doorway, distinguished, by means of the softened splendor that shone through it, an oval bath of dark porphyry, surrounded by curtains festooned in large folds; through the apertures between them, as they were not drawn close, groups of young slaves were visible, amongst whom Bababalouk perceived his pupils, indulgently expanding their arms, as if to embrace the perfumed water and refresh themselves after their fatigues. The looks of tender languor, their confidential whispers, and the enchanting smiles with which they were imparted, the exquisite fragrance of the roses, all combined to inspire

a voluptuousness, which even Bababalouk himself was scarce able to withstand.

He summoned up however his usual solemnity, and, in the peremptory tone of authority, commanded the ladies instantly to leave the bath. Whilst he was issuing these mandates the young Nouronihar, daughter of the Emir, who was sprightly as an antelope, and full of wanton gaiety, beckoned one of her slaves to let down the great swing, which was suspended to the ceiling by cords of silk, and whilst this was doing, winked to her companions in the bath, who, chagrined to be forced from so soothing a state of indolence, began to twist it round Bababalouk, and tease him with a thousand vagaries.

When Nouronihar perceived that he was exhausted with fatigue she accosted him with an arch air of respectful concern and said: "My Lord! it is not by any means decent that the chief eunuch of the Caliph, our Sovereign, should thus continue standing, deign but to recline your graceful person upon this sofa, which will burst with vexation, if it have not the honor to receive you."

Caught by these flattering accents, Bababalouk gallantly replied: "Delight of the apple of my eye! I accept the invitation of thy honeyed lips; and, to say truth, my senses are dazzled with the radiance that beams from thy charms."

"Repose then at your ease," replied the beauty, and placed him on the pretended sofa, which, quicker than lightning, gave way all at once. The rest of the women, having aptly conceived her design, sprang naked from the bath, and plied the swing with such unmerciful jerks, that it swept through the whole compass of a very lefty dome, and took from the poor victim all power of respiration; sometimes his feet rased the surface of the water, and at others the skylight almost flattened his

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

nose; in vain did he pierce the air with the cries of a voice that resembled the ringing of a cracked basin, for their peals of laughter were still more predominant.

Nouronihar, in the inebriety of youthful spirits, being used only to eunuchs of ordinary harems, and having never seen anything so royal and disgusting, was far more diverted than all of the rest; she began to parody some Persian verses, and sung with an accent most demurely piquant:

“O gentle white dove, as thou soar’st through the air,
Vouchsafe one kind glance on the mate of thy love;
Melodious Philomel, I am thy rose;
Warble some couplet to ravish my heart!”

The sultanas and their slaves, stimulated by these pleasantries, persevered at the swing with such unre-mitted assiduity, that at length the cord which had secured it snapt suddenly asunder, and Bababalouk fell floundering like a turtle to the bottom of the bath. This accident occasioned a universal shout; twelve little doors, till now unobserved, flew open at once, and the ladies in an instant made their escape, after throwing all the towels on his head, and putting out the lights that remained.

The deplorable animal, in water to the chin, overwhelmed with darkness, and unable to extricate himself from the wrap that embarrassed him, was still doomed to hear for his further consolation the fresh bursts of merriment his disaster occasioned. He bustled, but in vain, to get from the bath, for the margin was become so slippery with the oil spilt in breaking the lamps, that at every effort he slid back with a plunge, which resounded aloud through the hollow of the dome. These cursed peals of laughter at every relapse were redoubled; and he, who thought the place infested rather

by devils than women, resolved to cease groping and abide in the bath, where he amused himself with soliloquies, interspersed with imprecations, of which his malicious neighbors reclining on down suffered not an accent to escape. In this delectable plight the morning surprised him. The Caliph, wondering at his absence, had caused him to be everywhere sought for. At last he was drawn forth, almost smothered from the wisp of linen, and wet even to the marrow. Limping and chattering his teeth, he appeared before his master, who inquired what was the matter, and how he came soused in so strange a pickle?

"And why did you enter this cursed lodge?" answered Bababalouk, gruffly. "Ought a monarch like you to visit with his harem the abode of a gray bearded emir, who knows nothing of life? And with what gracious damsels doth the place, too, abound! Fancy to yourself how they have soaked me like a burnt crust, and made me dance like a jack-pudding the live-long night through, on their damnable swing. What an excellent lesson for your sultanas to follow, into whom I have instilled such reserve and decorum!"

Vathek, comprehending not a syllable of all this invective, obliged him to relate minutely the transaction; but, instead of sympathizing with the miserable sufferer, he laughed immoderately at the device of the swing, and the figure of Bababalouk mounting upon it. The stung eunuch could scarcely preserve the semblance of respect.

"Ay, laugh, my lord! laugh," said he; "but I wish this Nouronihar would play some trick on you, she is too wicked to spare even majesty itself."

Those words made for the present but a slight impression on the Caliph; but they not long after recurred to his mind.

This conversation was cut short by Fakreddin, who

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

came to request that Vathek would join in the prayers and ablutions to be solemnized on a spacious meadow, watered by innumerable streams. The Caliph found the waters refreshing, but the prayers abominably irksome; he diverted himself however with the multitude of Calenders, Santons and Dervishes, who were continually coming and going, but especially with the Brahmins, Fakirs and other enthusiasts, who had traveled from the heart of India, and halted on their way with the Emir. These latter had, each of them, some mummery peculiar to himself. One dragged a huge chain wherever he went, another an ourang-outang, whilst a third was furnished with scourges, and all performed to a charm; some clambered up trees, holding one foot in the air; others poised themselves over a fire, and without mercy filliped their noses. There were some amongst them that cherished vermin, which were not ungrateful in requiting their caresses. These rambling fanatics revolted the hearts of the Dervishes, the Calenders and Santons; however, the vehemence of their aversion soon subsided, under the hope that the presence of the Caliph would cure their folly, and convert them to the Mussulman faith; but, alas! how great was their disappointment, for Vathek, instead of preaching to them, treated them as buffoons, bade them present his compliments to Visnow and Ixhora, and discovered a predilection for a squat old man from the isle of Serendib, who was more ridiculous than any of the rest.

"Come!" said he, "for the love of your gods bestow a few slaps on your chops to amuse me."

The old fellow, offended at such an address, began loudly to weep; but, as he betrayed a villanous drivelling in his tears, the Caliph turned his back and listened to Bababalouk, who whispered, whilst he held the umbrella over him: "Your Majesty should be cautious of this odd assembly, which hath been collected I

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

know not for what. Is it necessary to exhibit such spectacles to a mighty Potentate, with interludes of Talapoins more mangy than dogs? Were I you I would command a fire to be kindled, and at once purge the earth of the Emir, his harem, and all his menagery."

"Tush, dolt," answered Vathek, "and know that all this infinitely charms me; nor shall I leave the meadow till I have visited every hive of these pious mendicants."

Wherever the Caliph directed his course objects of pity were sure to swarm round him; the blind, the purblind, smarts without noses, damsels without ears, each to extol the munificence of Fakreddin, who, as well as his attendant graybeards, dealt about gratis plasters and cataplasms to all that applied. At noon a superb corps of cripples made its appearance, and soon after advanced by platoons on the plain, the completest association of invalids that had ever been embodied till then. The blind went groping with the blind, the lame limped on together, and the maimed made gestures to each other with the only arm that remained; the sides of a considerable waterfall were crowded by the deaf, amongst whom were some from Pegû with ears uncommonly handsome and large, but were still less able to hear than the rest; nor were there wanting others in abundance with hump-backs, wenny necks, and even horns of an exquisite polish.

The Emir, to aggrandize the solemnity of the festival in honor of his illustrious visitant, ordered the turf to be spread on all sides with skins and table-cloths, upon which were served up for the good Mussulmans pilaus of every hue, with other orthodox dishes; and, by the express order of Vathek, who was shamefully tolerant, small plates of abominations for regaling the rest. This Prince, on seeing so many mouths put in motion, began to think it time for employing his own; in spite therefore of every remonstrance from the chief of his

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK

eunuchs, he resolved to have a dinner dressed on the spot. The complaisant Emir immediately gave orders for a table to be placed in the shade of the willows. The first service consisted of fish, which they drew from a river flowing over sands of gold at the foot of a lofty hill; these were broiled as fast as taken, and served up with a sauce of vinegar, and small herbs that grew on Mount Sinai; for everything with the Emir was excellent and pious.

The dessert was not quite set on when the sound of lutes from the hill was repeated by the echoes of the neighboring mountains. The Caliph, with an emotion of pleasure and surprise, had no sooner raised up his head than a handful of jasmine dropped on his face; an abundance of tittering succeeded the frolic, and instantly appeared through the bushes the elegant forms of several young females, skipping and bounding like roses. The fragrance diffused from their hair struck the sense of Vathek, who, in an ecstasy, suspending his repast, said to Bababalouk:

"Are the Peries come down from their spheres? Note her in particular whose form is so perfect, venturously running on the brink of the precipice, and turning back her head, as regardless of nothing but the graceful flow of her robe; with what captivating impatience doth she contend with the bushes for her veil! could it be she who threw the jasmine at me?"

"Ah! she it was; and you too would she throw from the top of the rock," answered Bababalouk; "for that is my good friend Nouronihar, who so kindly lent me her swing; my dear lord and master," added he, twisting a twig that hung by the rind from a willow, "let me correct her for her want of respect; the Emir will have no reason to complain since (bating what I owe to his piety) he is much to be censured for keeping a

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

troop of girls on the mountains, whose sharp air gives their blood too brisk a circulation."

"Peace, blasphemer," said the Caliph; "speak not thus of her, who over her mountains leads my heart a willing captive; contrive rather that my eyes may be fixed upon hers, that I may respire her sweet breath, as she bounds panting along these delightful wilds!" On saying these words Vathek extended his arms towards the hill, and directing his eyes with an anxiety unknown to him before, endeavored to keep within view the object that enthralled his soul; but her course was as difficult to follow as the flight of one of those beautiful blue butterflies of Cashmere, which are at once so volatile and rare.

The Caliph, not satisfied with seeing, wished also to hear Nouronihar, and eagerly turned to catch the sound of her voice; at last he distinguished her whispering to one of her companions behind the thicket from whence she had thrown the jasmine; "A Caliph, it must be owned, is a fine thing to see, but my little Gulchenrouz is much more amiable; one lock of his hair is of more value to me than the richest embroidery of the Indies; I had rather that his teeth should mischievously press my finger than the richest ring of the imperial treasure; where have you left him, Sutlememe? and why is he now not here?"

The agitated Caliph still wished to hear more, but she immediately retired with all her attendants; the fond monarch pursued her with his eyes till she was gone out of sight, and then continued like a bewildered and benighted traveler, from whom the clouds had obscured the constellation that guided his way; the curtain of night seemed dropped before him; everything appeared discolored; the falling waters filled his soul with dejection, and his tears trickled down the jasmines he had caught from Nouronihar, and placed in his inflamed

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

bosom; he snatched up a shining pebble, to remind him of the scene where he felt the first tumults of love. Two hours were elapsed, and evening drew on before he could resolve to depart from the place; he often, but in vain, attempted to go; a soft languor enervated the powers of his mind; extending himself on the brink of the stream, he turned his eyes towards the blue summits of the mountain and exclaimed: "What conceal-est thou behind thee? what is passing in thy solitudes? Whither is she gone? O heaven! perhaps she is now wandering in thy grottos, with her happy Gulchenrouz!"

In the meantime the damps began to descend, and the Emir, solicitous for the health of the Caliph, ordered the imperial litter to be brought. Vathek, absorbed in his reveries, was imperceptibly removed and conveyed back to the saloon that received him the evening before.

But let us leave the Caliph, immersed in his new passion, and attend Nouronihar beyond the rocks, where she had again joined her beloved Gulchenrouz. This Gulchenrouz was the son of Ali Hassan, brother to the Emir, and the most delicate and lovely creature in the world. Ali Hassan, who had been absent ten years on a voyage to the unknown seas, committed at his departure this child, the only survivor of many, to the care and protection of his brother. Gulchenrouz could write in various characters with precision, and paint upon vellum the most elegant arabesques that fancy could devise; his sweet voice accompanied the lute in the most enchanting manner, and when he sung the loves of Megnoun and Leileh, or some unfortunate lovers of ancient days, tears insensibly overflowed the cheeks of his auditors; the verses he composed (for, like Megnoun, he too was a poet) inspired that unresisting languor so frequently fatal to the female heart; the

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

women all doted upon him; for though he had passed his thirteenth year, they still detained him in the harem; his dancing was light as the gossamer waved by the zephyrs of spring, but his arms which twined so gracefully with those of the young girls in the dance, could neither dart the lance in the chase, nor curb the steeds that pastured his uncle's domains. The bow, however, he drew with a certain aim, and would have excelled his competitors in the race, could he have broken the ties that bound him to Nouronihar.

The two brothers had mutually engaged their children to each other, and Nouronihar loved her cousin more than her eyes; both had the same tastes and amusements, the same long, languishing looks, the same tresses, the same fair complexions, and when Gulchenrouz appeared in the dress of his cousin he seemed to be more feminine than even herself.* If at any time he left the harem to visit Fakreddin, it was with all the bashfulness of a fawn, that consciously ventures from the lair of its dam; he was, however, wanton enough to mock the solemn old graybeards to whom he was subject, though sure to be rated without mercy in return; whenever this happened, he would plunge into the recesses of the harem, and sobbing take refuge in the arms of Nouronihar, who loved even his faults beyond the virtues of others.

It fell out this evening that, after leaving the Caliph in the meadow, she ran with Gulchenrouz over the green sward of the mountain that sheltered the vale where Fakreddin had chosen to reside. The sun was dilated on the edge of the horizon; and the young people, whose fancies were lively and inventive, imagined they beheld in the gorgeous clouds of the west the domes of Shadukiam and Ambreabad, where the Peries have fixed their abode. Nouronihar, sitting on the slope of the hill, supported on her knees the perfumed head

of Gulchenrouz; the air was calm, and no sound stirred but the voices of other young girls, who were drawing cool water from the streams below. The unexpected arrival of the Caliph, and the splendor that marked his appearance, had already filled with emotion the ardent soul of Nouronihar; her vanity irresistibly prompted her to pique the Prince's attention, and this she before took good care to effect whilst he picked up the jasmine she had thrown upon him. But when Gulchenrouz asked after the flowers he had culled for her bosom, Nouronihar was all in confusion; she hastily kissed his forehead, arose in a flutter, and walked with unequal steps on the border of the precipice. Night advanced, and the pure gold of the setting sun had yielded to a sanguine red, the glow of which, like the reflection of a burning furnace, flushed Nouronihar's animated countenance. Gulchenrouz, alarmed at the agitation of his cousin, said to her with a supplicating accent:

"Let us be gone; the sky looks portentous, the tamarisks tremble more than common, and the raw wind chills my very heart; come! let us be gone, 'tis a melancholy night!"

Then, taking hold of her hand, he drew it towards the path he besought her to go. Nouronihar unconsciously followed the attraction, for a thousand strange imaginations occupied her spirit; she passed the large round of honeysuckles, her favorite resort, without ever vouchsafing it a glance, yet Gulchenrouz could not help snatching off a few shoots in his way, though he ran as if a wild beast were behind.

The young females seeing him approach in such haste, and according to custom expecting a dance, instantly assembled in a circle and took each other by the hand; but Gulchenrouz, coming up out of breath, fell down at once on the grass. This accident struck with

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

consternation the whole of this frolicsome party; whilst Nouronihar, half distracted and overcome, both by the violence of her exercise and the tumult of her thoughts, sunk feebly down at his side, cherished his cold hands in her bosom, and chafed his temples with a fragrant unguent. At length he came to himself, and, wrapping up his head in the robe of his cousin, entreated that she would not return to the harem; he was afraid of being snapped at by Shaban his tutor, a wrinkled old eunuch of a surly disposition; for having interrupted the stated walk of Nouronihar, he dreaded lest the churl should take it amiss. The whole of this sprightly group, sitting round upon a mossy knoll, began to entertain themselves with various pastimes, whilst their superintendants the eunuchs were gravely conversing at a distance. The nurse of the Emir's daughter, observing her pupil sit ruminating with her eyes on the ground, endeavored to amuse her with diverting tales, to which Gulchenrouz, who had already forgotten his inquietudes, listened with a breathless attention; he laughed, he clapped his hands, and passed a hundred little tricks on the whole of the company, without omitting the eunuchs, whom he provoked to run after him, in spite of their age and decrepitude.

During these occurrences the moon arose, the wind subsided, and the evening became so serene and inviting, that a resolution was taken to sup on the spot. Sutlememe, who excelled in dressing a salad, having filled large bowls of porcelain with eggs of small birds, curds turned with citron juice, slices of cucumber, and the inmost leaves of delicate herbs, handed it round from one to another, and gave each their shares in a large spoon of Cocknos. Gulchenrouz, nestling as usual in the bosom of Nouronihar, pouted out his vermilion little lips against the offer of Sutlememe, and would take it only from the hand of his cousin, on whose

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

mouth he hung like a bee inebriated with the quintessence of flowers. One of the eunuchs ran to fetch melons, whilst others were employed in showering down almonds from the branches that overhung this amiable party.

In the midst of this festive scene there appeared a light on the top of the highest mountain, which attracted the notice of every eye; this light was not less bright than the moon when at full, and might have been taken for her, had it not been that the moon was already risen. The phenomenon occasioned a general surprise, and no one could conjecture the cause; it could not be a fire, for the light was clear and bluish, nor had meteors ever been seen of that magnitude or splendor. This strange light faded for a moment, and immediately renewed its brightness; it first appeared motionless at the foot of the rock, whence it darted in an instant to sparkle in a thicket of palm-trees; from thence it glided along the torrent, and at last fixed in a glen that was narrow and dark. The moment it had taken its direction, Gulchenrouz, whose heart always trembled at anything sudden or rare, drew Nouronihar by the robe, and anxiously requested her to return to the harem; the women were importunate in seconding the entreaty, but the curiosity of the Emir's daughter prevailed; she not only refused to go back, but resolved at all hazards to pursue the appearance. Whilst they were debating what was best to be done, the light shot forth so dazzling a blaze, that they all fled away shrieking; Nouronihar followed them a few steps, but, coming to the turn of a little bypath, stopped, and went back alone: as she ran with an alertness peculiar to herself, it was not long before she came to the place where they had just been supping. The globe of fire now appeared stationary in the glen, and burned in majestic stillness. Nouronihar, compressing her hands upon her bosom,

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

hesitated for some moments to advance; the solitude of her situation was new, the silence of the night awful, and every object inspired sensations which till then she never had felt; the affright of Gulchenrouz recurred to her mind, and she a thousand times turned to go back, but this luminous appearance was always before her; urged on by an irresistible impulse she continued to approach it, in defiance of every obstacle that opposed her progress.

At length she arrived at the opening of the glen; but, instead of coming up to the light, she found herself surrounded by darkness, excepting that at a considerable distance a faint spark glimmered by fits. She stopped a second time; the sound of waterfalls mingling their murmurs, the hollow rustlings amongst the palm-branches, and the funereal screams of the birds from their rifted trunks, all conspired to fill her with terror; she imagined every moment that she trod on some venomous reptile; all the stories of malignant Dives and dismal Goules thronged into her memory; but her curiosity was, notwithstanding, more predominant than her fears; she therefore firmly entered a winding track that led towards the spark, but, being a stranger to the path, she had not gone far till she began to repent of her rashness.

"Alas!" said she, "that I were but in those secure and illuminated apartments where my evenings glided on with Gulchenrouz! Dear child! how would thy heart flutter with terror wert thou wandering in these wild solitudes like me!" At the close of this apostrophe she regained her road, and, coming to steps hewn out in the rock, ascended them undismayed; the light, which was now gradually enlarging, appeared above her on the summit of the mountain; at length she distinguished a plaintive and melodious union of voices, proceeding from a sort of cavern, that resembled the dirges

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

which are sung over tombs; a sound likewise, like that which arises from the filling of baths, at the same time struck her ear; she continued ascending, and discovered large wax torches in full blaze planted here and there in the fissures of the rock; this preparation filled her with fear, whilst the subtle and potent odor which the torches exhaled caused her to sink almost lifeless at the entrance of the grot.

Casting her eyes within in this kind of trance, she beheld a large cistern of gold filled with a water, whose vapor distilled on her face a dew of the essence of roses; a soft symphony resounded through the grot; on the sides of the cistern she noticed appendages of royalty, diadems and feathers of the heron, all sparkling with carbuncles; whilst her attention was fixed on this display of magnificence, the music ceased, and a voice instantly demanded:

“For what monarch were these torches kindled, this bath prepared, and these habiliments, which belong, not only to the sovereigns of the earth, but even to the Talismanic Powers?”

To which a second voice answered: “They are for the charming daughter of the Emir Fakreddin.”

“What,” replied the first, “for that trifler, who consumes her time with a giddy child, immersed in softness, and who at best can make but an enervated husband?”

“And can she,” rejoined the other voice, “be amused with such empty trifles, whilst the Caliph, the sovereign of the world, he who is destined to enjoy the treasures of the pre-adamite Sultans, a prince six feet high, and whose eyes pervade the inmost soul of a female, is inflamed with the love of her. No! she will be wise enough to answer that passion alone that can aggrandize her glory; no doubt she will, and despise the puppet of her fancy. Then all the riches this place

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

contains, as well as the carbuncle of Gianschid, shall be hers."

"You judge right," returned the first voice, "and I haste to Istakar to prepare the palace of subterranean fire for the reception of the bridal pair."

The voices ceased, the torches were extinguished, the most entire darkness succeeded, and Nouronihar, recovering with a start, found herself reclined on a sofa in the harem of her father. She clapped her hands, and immediately came together Gulchenrouz and her women, who, in despair at having lost her, had despatched eunuchs to seek her in every direction; Shaban appeared with the rest, and began to reprimand her with an air of consequence:

"Little impertinent," said he, "whence got you false keys? or are you beloved of some Genius that hath given you a pick-lock? I will try the extent of your power; come, to your chamber! through the two skylights; and expect not the company of Gulchenrouz; be expeditious! I will shut you up in the double tower."

At these menaces Nouronihar indignantly raised her head, opened on Shaban her black eyes, which, since her important dialogue of the enchanted grot, were considerably enlarged, and said: "Go, speak thus to slaves, but learn to reverence her who is born to give laws, and subject all to her power."

She was proceeding in the same style, but was interrupted by a sudden exclamation of "The Caliph! The Caliph!" The curtains at once were thrown open, and the slaves prostrate in double rows, whilst poor little Gulchenrouz hid himself beneath the elevation of a sofa. At first appeared a file of black eunuchs, trailing after them long trains of muslin embroidered with gold, and holding in their hands censers, which dispensed as they passed the grateful perfume of the wood of aloes;

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

next marched Bababalouk with a solemn strut, and tossing his head as not overpleased at the visit; Vathek come close after, superbly robed, his gait was unembarrassed and noble, and his presence would have engaged admiration, though he had not been the Sovereign of the world; he approached Nouronihar with a throbbing heart, and seemed enraptured at the full effulgence of her radiant eyes, of which he had before caught but a few glimpses; but she instantly depressed them, and her confusion augmented her beauty.

Bababalouk, who was a thorough adept in coincidences of this nature, and knew that the worst game should be played with the best face, immediately made a signal for all to retire; and no sooner did he perceive beneath the sofa the little one's feet, than he drew him forth without ceremony, set him upon his shoulders, and lavished on him as he went off a thousand odious caresses; Gulchenrouz cried out, and resisted till his cheeks became the color of the blossom of the pomegranate, and the tears that started into his eyes shot forth a gleam of indignation; he cast a significant glance at Nouronihar, which the Caliph noticing asked: "Is that then your Gulchenrouz?"

"Sovereign of the world!" answered she, "spare my cousin, whose innocence and gentleness deserve not your anger!"

"Take comfort," said Vathek, with a smile, "he is in good hands; Bababalouk is fond of children, and never goes without sweetmeats and comfits."

The daughter of Fakreddin was abashed, and suffered Gulchenrouz to be borne away without adding a word. The tumult of her bosom betrayed her confusion; and Vathek, becoming still more impassioned, gave a loose to his frenzy, which had only not subdued the last faint strugglings of reluctance, when the Emir suddenly

bursting in, threw his face upon the ground at the feet of the Caliph, and said:

“Commander of the faithful! abase not yourself to the meanness of your slave.”

“No, Emir,” replied Vathek, “I raise her to an equality with myself; I declare her my wife, and the glory of your race shall extend from one generation to another.”

“Alas! my lord,” said Fakreddin, as he plucked off the honors of his beard, “cut short the days of your faithful servant, rather than force him to depart from his word. Nouronihar, as her hands evince, is solemnly promised to Gulchenrouz, the son of my brother Ali Hassan; they are united also in heart, their faith is mutually plighted, and affiances so sacred cannot be broken.”

“What then!” replied the Caliph bluntly, “would you surrender this divine beauty to a husband more womanish than herself? and can you imagine that I will suffer her charms to decay in hands so inefficient and nerveless? No! she is destined to live out her life within my embraces; such is my will; retire and disturb not the night I devote to the homage of her charms.”

The irritated Emir drew forth his sabre, presented it to Vathek, and, stretching out his neck, said in a firm tone of voice: “Strike your unhappy host, my lord! he has lived long enough since he hath seen the Prophet’s Vicegerent violate the rites of hospitality.”

At his uttering these words Nouronihar, unable to support any longer the conflict of her passions, sunk down in a swoon. Vathek, both terrified for her life and furious at an opposition to his will, bade Fakreddin assist his daughter, and withdrew, darting his terrible look at the unfortunate Emir, who suddenly fell backward bathed in a sweat cold as the damp of death.

Gulchenrouz, who had escaped from the hands of

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

Bababalouk, and was that instant returned, called out for help as loudly as he could, not having strength to afford it himself. Pale and panting, the poor child attempted to revive Nouronihar by caresses; and it happened that the thrilling warmth of his lips restored her to life. Fakreddin beginning also to recover from the look of the Caliph, with difficulty tottered to a seat, and after warily casting round his eye to see if this dangerous Prince were gone, sent for Shaban and Sutlememe, and said to them apart:

“My friends! violent evils require as violent remedies; the Caliph has brought desolation and horror into my family, and how shall we resist his power? another of his looks will send me to my grave. Fetch then that narcotic powder, which the Dervish brought me from Aracan; a dose of it, the effect of which will continue three days, must be administered to each of these children; the Caliph will believe them to be dead, for they will have all the appearance of death; we shall go as if to inter them in the cave of Meimoune, at the entrance of the great desert of sand, and near the cabin of my dwarfs. When all the spectators shall be withdrawn, you Shaban, and four select eunuchs, shall convey them to the lake, where provision shall be ready to support them a month; for one day allotted to the surprise this event will occasion, five to the tears, a fortnight to reflection, and the rest to prepare for renewing his progress, will, according to my calculation, fill up the whole time that Vathek will tarry, and I shall then be freed from his intrusion.”

“Your plan,” said Sutlememe, “is a good one, if it can but be effected. I have remarked, that Nouronihar is well able to support the glances of the Caliph, and that he is far from being sparing of them to her; be assured therefore, notwithstanding her fondness for Gulchenrouz, she will never remain quiet while she

knows him to be here, unless we can persuade her that both herself and Gulchenrouz are really dead, and that they were conveyed to those rocks for a limited season to expiate the little faults of which their love was the cause; we will add that we killed ourselves in despair, and that your dwarfs, whom they never yet saw, will preach to them delectable sermons. I will engage that every thing shall succeed to the bent of your wishes."

"Be it so!" said Fakreddin, "I approve your proposal; let us lose not a moment to give it effect."

They forthwith hastened to seek for the powder, which, being mixed in a sherbet, was immediately drunk by Gulchenrouz and Nouronihar. Within the space of an hour both were seized with violent palpitations, and a general numbness gradually ensued; they arose from the floor, where they had remained ever since the Caliph's departure, and, ascending to the sofa, reclined themselves at full length upon it, clasped in each other's embraces.

"Cherish me, my dear Nouronihar!" said Gulchenrouz; "put thy hand upon my heart, for it feels as if it were frozen. Alas! thou art as cold as myself! hath the Caliph murdered us both with his terrible look?"

"I am dying!" cried she in a faltering voice; "press me closer, I am ready to expire!"

"Let us die then together," answered the little Gulchenrouz, whilst his breast labored with a convulsive sigh; "let me at least breathe forth my soul on thy lips!" They spoke no more, and became as dead.

Immediately the most piercing cries were heard through the harem, whilst Shaban and Sutlememe personated with great adroitness the parts of persons in despair. The Emir, who was sufficiently mortified to be forced into such untoward expedients, and had now for the first time made a trial of his powder, was under

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

no necessity of counterfeiting grief. The slaves, who had flocked together from all quarters, stood motionless at the spectacle before them; all lights were extinguished save two lamps, which shed a wan glimmering over the faces of these lovely flowers, that seemed to be faded in the spring-time of life; funeral vestments were prepared, their bodies were washed with rose-water, their beautiful tresses were braided and incensed, and they were wrapped in simars whiter than alabaster. At the moment that their attendants were placing two wreaths of their favorite jasmines on their brows, the Caliph, who had just heard the tragical catastrophe, arrived; he looked not less pale and haggard than the Goules, that wander at night among graves; forgetful of himself and every one else, he broke through the midst of the slaves, fell prostrate at the foot of the sofa, beat his bosom, called himself "atrocious murderer!" and invoked upon his head a thousand imprecations; with a trembling hand he raised the veil that covered the countenance of Nouronihar, and, uttering a loud shriek, fell lifeless on the floor. The chief of the eunuchs dragged him off with horrible grimaces, and repeated as he went: "Ay, I foresaw she would play you some ungracious turn!"

No sooner was the Caliph gone than the Emir commanded biers to be brought, and forbade that any one should enter the harem. Every window was fastened, all instruments of music were broken, and the Imans began to recite their prayers; towards the close of this melancholy day Vathek sobbed in silence, for they had been forced to compose with anodynes his convulsions of rage and desperation.

At the dawn of the succeeding morning the wide folding doors of the palace were set open, and the funeral procession moved forward for the mountain. The wailful cries of "La Ilah illa Alla!" reached to the

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

Caliph, who was eager to cicatrize himself and attend the ceremonial; nor could he have been dissuaded, had not his excessive weakness disabled him from walking; at the few first steps he fell on the ground, and his people were obliged to lay him on a bed, where he remained many days in such a state of insensibility, as excited compassion in the Emir himself.

When the procession was arrived at the grot of Meimoune, Shaban and Sutlememe dismissed the whole of the train, excepting the four confidential eunuchs who were appointed to remain. After resting some moments near the biers which had been left in the open air, they caused them to be carried to the brink of a small lake, whose banks were overgrown with a hoary moss; this was the great resort of herons and storks, which preyed continually on little blue fishes. The dwarfs instructed by the Emir soon repaired thither, and, with the help of the eunuchs, began to construct cabins of rushes and reeds, a work in which they had admirable skill; a magazine also was contrived for provisions, with a small oratory for themselves, and a pyramid of wood neatly piled, to furnish the necessary fuel, for the air was bleak in the hollows of the mountains.

At evening two fires were kindled on the brink of the lake, and the two lovely bodies, taken from their biers, were carefully deposited upon a bed of dried leaves within the same cabin. The dwarfs began to recite the Koran with their clear shrill voices, and Shaban and Sutlememe stood at some distance, anxiously waiting the effects of the powder. At length Nouronihar and Gulchenrouz faintly stretched out their arms, and gradually opening their eyes, began to survey with looks of increasing amazement every object around them; they even attempted to rise, but, for want of strength fell back again; Sutlememe on this administered a cordial, which the Emir had taken care to provide.

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

Gulchenrouz, thoroughly aroused, sneezed out aloud, and raising himself with an effort that expressed his surprise, left the cabin, and inhaled the fresh air with the greatest avidity.

"Yes," said he, "I breathe again! again do I exist! I hear sounds! I behold a firmament spangled over with stars!"

Nouronihar, catching these beloved accents, extricated herself from the leaves, and ran to clasp Gulchenrouz to her bosom. The first objects she remarked were their long simars, their garlands of flowers, and their naked feet; she hid her face in her hands to reflect; the vision of the enchanted bath, the despair of her father, and, more vividly than both, the majestic figure of Vathek recurred to her memory; she recollected also that herself and Gulchenrouz had been sick and dying; but all these images bewildered her mind. Not knowing where she was, she turned her eyes on all sides, as if to recognize the surrounding scene; this singular lake, those flames reflected from its glassy surface, the pale hues of its banks, the romantic cabins, the bull-rushes that sadly waved their drooping heads, the storks whose melancholy cries blended with the shrill voices of the dwarfs, everything conspired to persuade them that the Angel of Death had opened the portal of some other world.

Gulchenrouz on his part, lost in wonder, clung to the neck of his cousin; he believed himself in the region of phantoms, and was terrified at the silence she preserved; at length addressing her:

"Speak," said he, "where are we? do you not see those spectres that are stirring the burning coals? are they Monker and Nakir, come to throw us into them? does the fatal bridge cross this lake, whose solemn stillness perhaps conceals from us an abyss, in which for whole ages we shall be doomed incessantly to sink?"

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

“No, my children!” said Sutlememe, going towards them, “take comfort! the exterminating Angel, who conducted our souls hither after yours, hath assured us that the chastisement of your indolent and voluptuous life shall be restricted to a certain series of years, which you must pass in this dreary abode, where the sun is scarcely visible, and where the soil yields neither fruits nor flowers. These,” continued she, pointing to the dwarfs, “will provide for our wants, for souls so mundane as ours retain too strong a tincture of their earthly extraction; instead of meats your food will be nothing but rice, and your bread shall be moistened in the fogs that brood over the surface of the lake.”

At this desolating prospect the poor children burst into tears, and prostrated themselves before the dwarfs, who perfectly supported their characters, and delivered an excellent discourse of a customary length upon the sacred camel, which after a thousand years was to convey them to the paradise of the faithful.

The sermon being ended, and ablutions performed, they praised Alla and the prophet, supped very indifferently and retired to their withered leaves. Nour-onihar and her little cousin consoled themselves on finding that, though dead, they yet lay in one cabin. Having slept well before, the remainder of the night was spent in conversation on what had befallen them, and both, from a dread of apparitions, betook themselves for protection to one another's arms.

In the morning, which was lowering and rainy, the dwarfs mounted high poles like minarets, and called them to prayers; the whole congregation, which consisted of Sutlememe, Shaban, the four eunuchs and some storks, were already assembled. The two children came forth from their cabin with a slow and dejected pace; as their minds were in a tender and melancholy mood, their devotions were performed with fer-

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

vor. No sooner were they finished, than Gulchenrouz demanded of Sutlememe and the rest, "how they happened to die so opportunely for his cousin and himself?"

"We killed ourselves," returned Sutlememe, "in despair at your death."

On this, said Nouronihar, who notwithstanding what was past, had not yet forgotten her vision: "And the Caliph! is he also dead of his grief? and will he likewise come hither?"

The dwarfs, who were prepared with an answer, most demurely replied: "Vathek is damned beyond all redemption!"

"I readily believe so," said Gulchenrouz, "and am glad from my heart to hear it; for I am convinced it was his horrible look that sent us hither to listen to sermons and mess upon rice."

One week passed away on the side of the lake unmarked by any variety; Nouronihar ruminating on the grandeur of which death had deprived her, and Gulchenrouz applying to prayers and to panniers, along with the dwarfs, who infinitely pleased him.

Whilst this scene of innocence was exhibiting in the mountains, the Caliph presented himself to the Emir in a new light; the instant he recovered the use of his senses, with a voice that made Bababalouk quake, he thundered out: "Perfidious Giaour! I renounce thee for ever! it is thou who hast slain my beloved Nouronihar! and I supplicate the pardon of Mahomet, who would have preserved her to me had I been more wise; let water be brought to perform my ablutions, and let the pious Fakreddin be called to offer up his prayers with mine, and reconcile me to him; afterwards we will go together and visit the sepulchre of the unfortunate Nouronihar; I am resolved to become a hermit, and

consume the residue of my days on this mountain, in hope of expiating my crimes."

Nouronihar was not altogether so content, for though she felt a fondness for Gulchenrouz, who, to augment the attachment, had been left at full liberty with her, yet she still regarded him as but a bauble, that bore no competition with the carbuncle of Giamschid. At times she indulged doubts on the mode of her being, and scarcely could believe that the dead had all the wants and the whims of the living. To gain satisfaction however on so perplexing a topic, she arose one morning whilst all were asleep, with a breathless caution, from the side of Gulchenrouz, and, after having given him a soft kiss, began to follow the windings of the lake till it terminated with a rock, whose top was accessible though lofty; this she clambered up with considerable toil, and, having reached the summit, set forward in a run, like a doe that unwittingly follows her hunter; though she skipped along with the alertness of an antelope, yet at intervals she was forced to desist and rest beneath the tamarisks to recover her breath. Whilst she, thus reclined, was occupied with her little reflections on the apprehension that she had some knowledge of the place, Vathek, who, finding himself that morning but ill at ease, had gone forth before the dawn, presented himself on a sudden to her view; motionless with surprise, he durst not approach the figure before him, which lay shrouded up in a simar, extended on the ground, trembling and pale, but yet lovely to behold. At length Nouronihar, with a mixture of pleasure and affliction, raising her fine eyes to him, said: "My lord! are you come hither to eat rice and hear sermons with me?"

"Beloved phantom!" cried Vathek; "dost thou speak? hast thou the same graceful form? the same radiant features? art thou palpable likewise?" and, eagerly em-

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

bracing her, added: "Here are limbs and a bosom animated with a gentle warmth! what can such a prodigy mean?"

Nouronihar with diffidence answered: "You know, my lord, that I died on the night you honored me with your visit; my cousin maintains it was from one of your glances, but I cannot believe him; for to me they seem not so dreadful. Gulchenrouz died with me, and we were both brought into a region of desolation, where we are fed with a wretched diet. If you be dead also, and are come hither to join us, I pity your lot; for you will be stunned with the noise of the dwarfs and the storks; besides, it is mortifying in the extreme that you, as well as myself, should have lost the treasures of the subterranean palace."

At the mention of the subterranean palace the Caliph suspended his caresses, which indeed had proceeded pretty far, to seek from Nouronihar an explanation of her meaning. She then recapitulated her vision, what immediately followed, and the history of her pretended death, adding also a description of the place of expiation from whence she had fled, and all in a manner that would have extorted his laughter, had not the thoughts of Vathek been too deeply engaged. No sooner however had she ended than he again clasped her to his bosom and said:

"Light of my eyes! the mystery is unravelled; we both are alive! your father is a cheat, who, for the sake of dividing, hath deluded us both; and the Giaour, whose design, as far as I can discover, is that we shall proceed together, seems scarce a whit better; it shall be some time at least before he finds us in his palace of fire. Your lovely little person in my estimation is far more precious than all the treasures of the pre-adamite Sultans, and I wish to possess it at pleasure, and in open day, for many a moon, before I go to burrow

underground like a mole. Forget this little trifle, Gulchenrouz, and——”

“Ah! my lord!” interposed Nouronihar, “let me entreat that you do him no evil.”

“No, no!” replied Vathek, “I have already bid you forbear to alarm yourself for him; he has been brought up too much on milk and sugar to stimulate my jealousy; we will leave him with the dwarfs, who, by the bye, are my old acquaintances; their company will suit him far better than yours. As to other matters, I will return no more to your father’s; I want not to have my ears dinned by him and his dotards with the violation of the rites of hospitality; as if it were less an honor for you to espouse the Sovereign of the world than a girl dressed up like a boy!”

Nouronihar could find nothing to oppose in a discourse so eloquent; she only wished the amorous Monarch had discovered more ardor for the carbuncle of Giamschid; but flattered herself it would gradually increase, and therefore yielded to his will with the most bewitching submission.

When the Caliph judged it proper he called for Bababalouk, who was asleep in the cave of Meimoune, and dreaming that the phantom of Nouronihar, having mounted him once more on her swing, had just given him such a jerk, that he one moment soared above the mountains, and the next sunk into the abyss; starting from his sleep at the voice of his master, he ran gasping for breath, and had nearly fallen backward at the sight, as he believed, of the spectre by whom he had so lately been haunted in his dream.

“Ah, my lord!” cried he, recoiling ten steps, and covering his eyes with both hands; “do you then perform the office of a goul! ’tis true you have dug up the dead, yet hope not to make her your prey; for after all

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

she hath caused me to suffer she is even wicked enough to prey upon you."

"Cease thy folly," said Vathek, "and thou shalt soon be convinced that it is Nouronihar herself, alive and well, whom I clasp to my breast; go only and pitch my tents in the neighboring valley; there will I fix my abode with this beautiful tulip, whose colors I soon shall restore; there exert thy best endeavors to procure whatever can augment the enjoyments of life, till I shall disclose to thee more of my will."

The news of so unlucky an event soon reached the ears of the Emir, who abandoned himself to grief and despair, and began, as did all his old greybeards, to begrime his visage with ashes. A total supineness ensued, travelers were no longer entertained, no more plasters were spread, and, instead of the charitable activity that had distinguished this asylum, the whole of its inhabitants exhibited only faces of a half cubit long, and uttered groans that accorded with their forlorn situation.

Though Fakreddin bewailed his daughter as lost to him forever, yet Gulchenrouz was not forgotten. He despatched immediate instruction to Sutlememe, Shaban and the dwarfs, enjoining them not to undeceive the child in respect to his state, but, under some pretence, to convey him far from the lofty rock at the extremity of the lake, to a place which he should appoint as safer from danger; for he suspected that Vathek intended him evil.

Gulchenrouz in the meanwhile was filled with amazement at not finding his cousin; nor were the dwarfs at all less surprised; but Sutlememe, who had more penetration, immediately guessed what had happened. Gulchenrouz was amused with the delusive hope of once more embracing Nouronihar in the interior recesses of the mountains, where the ground, strewed over with

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

orange blossoms and jasmines, offered beds much more inviting than the withered leaves in their cabin, where they might accompany with their voices the sounds of their lutes, and chase butterflies in concert. Sutlememe was far gone in this sort of description, when one of the four eunuchs beckoned her aside, to apprise her of the arrival of a messenger from their fraternity, who had explained the secret of the flight of Nouronihar, and brought the commands of the Emir. A council with Shaban and the dwarfs was immediately held; their baggage being stowed in consequence of it, they embarked in a shallop, and quietly sailed with the little one, who acquiesced in all their proposals; their voyage proceeded in the same manner till they came to the place where the lake sinks beneath the hollow of the rock; but as soon as the bark had entered it, and Gulchenrouz found himself surrounded with darkness, he was seized with a dreadful consternation, and incessantly uttered the most piercing outcries; for he now was persuaded he should actually be damned for having taken too many little freedoms in his lifetime with his cousin.

But let us return to the Caliph and her who ruled over his heart. Bababalouk had pitched the tents, and closed up the extremities of the valley with magnificent screens of India cloth, which were guarded by Ethiopian slaves with their drawn sabres; to preserve the verdure of this beautiful enclosure in its natural freshness, the white eunuchs went continually round it with their red water vessels. The waving of fans was heard near the imperial pavilion, where, by the voluptuous light that glowed through the muslins, the Caliph enjoyed at full view all the attractions of Nouronihar. Inebriated with delight, he was all ear to her charming voice which accompanied the lute; while she was not less captivated with his descriptions of Samarah and

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

the tower full of wonders, but especially with his relation of the adventure of the ball, and the chasm of the Giaour with its ebony portal.

In this manner they conversed for a day and a night; they bathed together in a basin of black marble, which admirably relieved the fairness of Nouronihar. Bababalouk, whose good graces this beauty had regained, spared no attention that their repasts might be served up with the minutest exactness; some exquisite rarity was ever placed before them; and he sent even to Schiraz for that fragrant and delicious wine, which had been hoarded up in bottles prior to the birth of Mahomet; he had excavated little ovens in the rock to bake the nice manchets which were prepared by the hands of Nouronihar, from whence they had derived a flavor so grateful to Vathek, that he regarded the ragouts of his other wives as entirely maukish; whilst they would have died at the Emir's of chagrin, at finding themselves so neglected, if Fakreddin, notwithstanding his resentment, had not taken pity upon them.

The Sultana Dilara, who till then had been the favorite, took this dereliction of the Caliph to heart with a vehemence natural to her character; for during her continuance in favor, she had imbibed from Vathek many of his extravagant fancies, and was fired with impatience to behold the superb tombs of Istakar, and the palace of forty columns; besides, having been brought up amongst the Magi, she had fondly cherished the idea of the Caliph's devoting himself to the worship of fire; thus his voluptuous and desultory life with her rival was to her a double source of affliction. The transient piety of Vathek had occasioned her some serious alarms; but the present was an evil of far greater magnitude; she resolved therefore, without hesitation, to write to Carathis, and acquaint her that all things went ill; that they had eaten, slept and revelled

at an old Emir's, whose sanctity was very formidable, and that after all, the prospect of possessing the treasures of the pre-adamite Sultans was no less remote than before. This letter was entrusted to the care of two woodmen, who were at work on one of the great forests of the mountains, and, being acquainted with the shortest cuts arrived in ten days at Samarah.

The Princess Carathis was engaged at chess with Morakanabad, when the arrival of these wood-fellers was announced. She, after some weeks of Vathek's absence, had forsaken the upper regions of her tower, because everything appeared in confusion among the stars, whom she consulted relative to the fate of her son. In vain did she renew her fumigations, and extend herself on the roof to obtain mystic visions; nothing more could she see in her dreams than pieces of brocade, nosegays of flowers, and other unmeaning gewgaws. These disappointments had thrown her into a state of dejection, which no drug in her power was sufficient to remove; her only resource was in Morakanabad, who was a good man, and endowed with a decent share of confidence, yet whilst in her company he never thought himself on roses.

No person knew aught of Vathek, and a thousand ridiculous stories were propagated at his expense. The eagerness of Carathis may be easily guessed at receiving the letter, as well as her rage at reading the dissolute conduct of her son. "Is it so?" said she; "either I will perish, or Vathek shall enter the palace of fire. Let me expire in flames, provided he may reign on the throne of Soliman!" Having said this, and whirled herself round in a magical manner, which struck Morakanabad with such terror as caused him to recoil, she ordered her great camel Alboufaki to be brought, and the hideous Nerkes with the unrelenting Cafour to attend. "I require no other retinue," said she to Mora-

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

kanabad; "I am going on affairs of emergency, a truce therefore to parade! Take you care of the people, fleece them well in my absence, for we shall expend large sums, and one knows not what may betide."

The night was uncommonly dark, and a pestilential blast ravaged the plain of Catoul that would have deterred any other traveler, however urgent the call; but Carathis enjoyed most whatever filled others with dread. Nerkes concurred in opinion with her, and Cafour had a particular predeliction for a pestilence. In the morning this accomplished caravan, with the wood-fellers who directed their route, halted on the edge of an extensive marsh, from whence so noxious a vapor arose as would have destroyed any animal but Alboufaki, who naturally inhaled these malignant fogs. The peasants entreated their convoy not to sleep in this place.

"To sleep," cried Carathis, "what an excellent thought! I never sleep but for visions; and, as to my attendants, their occupations are too many to close the only eye they each have."

The poor peasants, who were not overpleased with their party, remained open-mouthed with surprise.

Carathis alighted, as well as her negresses, and severally stripping off their outer garments, they all ran in their drawers, to cull from those spots where the sun shone fiercest the venomous plants that grew on the marsh; this provision was made for the family of the Emir and whoever might retard the expedition to Istakar. The woodmen were overcome with fear when they beheld these three horrible phantoms run, and, not much relishing the company of Alboufaki, stood aghast at the command of Carathis to set forward, notwithstanding it was noon, and the heat fierce enough to calcine even rocks. In spite however of every remonstrance, they were forced implicitly to submit.

Alboufaki, who delighted in solitude, constantly

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

snorted whenever he perceived himself near a habitation; and Carathis, who was apt to spoil him with indulgence, as constantly turned him aside, so that the peasants were precluded from procuring subsistence; for the milch goats and ewes which Providence had sent towards the district they traversed, to refresh travelers with their milk, all fled at the sight of the hideous animal and his strange riders. As to Carathis, she heeded no common ailment, for her invention had previously furnished her with an opiate to stay her stomach, some of which she imparted to her mutes.

At the fall of night Alboufaki, making a sudden stop, stamped with his foot, which to Carathis, who understood his paces, was a certain indication that she was near the confines of some cemetery. The moon shed a bright light on the spot, which served to discover a long wall, with a large door in it standing ajar, and so high that Alboufaki might easily enter. The miserable guides, who perceived their end approaching, humbly implored Carathis, as she had now so good an opportunity, to inter them, and immediately gave up the ghost. Nerkes and Cafour, whose wit was of a style peculiar to themselves, were by no means parsimonious of it on the folly of these poor people, nor could any thing have been found more suited to their tastes than the site of the burying ground, and the sepulchres which its precincts contained; there were at least two thousand of them on the declivity of a hill; some in the form of pyramids, others like columns, and in short the variety of their shapes was endless. Carathis was too much immersed in her sublime contemplations to stop at the view, charming as it appeared in her eyes; pondering the advantages that might accrue from her present situation, she could not forbear to exclaim:

“So beautiful a cemetery must be haunted by ghouls! and they want not for intelligence; having heedlessly

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

suffered my guides to expire, I will apply for directions to them, and as an inducement will invite them to regale on these fresh corpses."

After this short soliloquy she beckoned to Nerkes and Cafour, and made signs with her fingers, as much as to say, "Go, knock against the sides of the tombs, and strike up your delightful warblings, that are so like to those of the guests whose company I wish to obtain."

The negresses, full of joy at the behests of their mistress, and promising themselves much pleasure from the society of the gouls, went with an air of conquest, and began their knockings at the tombs; as their strokes were repeated a hollow noise was heard in the earth, the surface hove up into heaps, and the gouls on all sides protruded their noses, to inhale the effluvia which the carcasses of the woodmen began to emit.

They assembled before a sarcophagus of white marble, where Carathis was seated between the bodies of her miserable guides; the Princess received her visitants with distinguished politeness, and, when supper was ended, proceeded with them to business. Having soon learnt from them everything she wished to discover, it was her intention to set forward forthwith on her journey, but her negresses, who were forming tender connections with the gouls, importuned her with all their fingers to wait at least till the dawn. Carathis, however, being chastity in the abstract, and an implacable enemy to love and repose, at once rejected their prayer, mounted Alboufaki, and commanded them to take their seats in a moment; four days and four nights she continued her route, without turning to the right hand or left; on the fifth she traversed the mountains and half-burnt forests, and arrived on the sixth before the beautiful screens which concealed from all eyes the voluptuous wanderings of her son.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

It was daybreak, and the guards were snoring on their posts in careless security, when the rough trot of Alboufaki awoke them in consternation. Imagining that a group of spectres ascended from the abyss was approaching, they all without ceremony took to their heels. Vathek was at that instant with Nouronihar in the bath hearing tales, and laughing at Bababalouk, who related them; but no sooner did the outcry of his guards reach him, than he flounced from the water like a carp, and as soon threw himself back at the sight of Carathis, who, advancing with her negresses upon Alboufaki, broke through the muslin awnings and veils of the pavilion; at this sudden apparition Nouronihar (for she was not at all times free from remorse) fancied that the moment of celestial vengeance was come, and clung about the Caliph in amorous despondence.

Carathis, still seated on her camel, foamed with indignation at the spectacle which obtruded itself on her chaste view; she thundered forth without check or mercy: "Thou double-headed and four-legged monster! what means all this winding and writhing? Art thou not ashamed to be seen grasping this limber sapling, in preference to the sceptre of the pre-adamite Sultans? Is it then for this paltry doxy that thou hast violated the conditions in the parchment of our Giaour? Is it on her thou hast lavished thy precious moments? Is this the fruit of the knowledge I have taught thee? Is this the end of thy journey? Tear thyself from the arms of this little simpleton, drown her in the water before me, and instantly follow my guidance."

In the first ebullition of his fury Vathek resolved to make a skeleton of Alboufaki and to stuff the skins of Carathis and her blacks; but the ideas of the Giaour, the palace of Istakar, the sabres and the talismans, flashing before his imagination with the simultaneousness of lightning, he became more moderate, and said to his

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

mother, in a civil but decisive tone: "Dread lady! you shall be obeyed, but I will not drown Nouronihar; she is sweeter to me than a Myrabolan comfit, and is enamored of carbuncles, especially that of Giamschid, which hath also been promised to be conferred upon her; she therefore shall go along with us, for I intend to repose with her beneath the canopies of Soliman; I can sleep no more without her."

"Be it so!" replied Carathis, alighting, and at the same time committing Alboufaki to the charge of her women.

Nouronihar, who had not yet quitted her hold, began to take courage, and said with an accent of fondness to the Caliph: "Dear Sovereign of my soul! I will follow thee, if it be thy will, beyond the Kaf in the land of the Afrits; and I will not hesitate to climb for thee the nest of the Simurgh, who, this lady excepted, is the most awful of created existences."

"We have here then," subjoined Carathis, "a girl both of courage and science!"

Nouronihar had certainly both; but, notwithstanding all her firmness, she could not help casting back a look of regret upon the graces of her little Gulchenrouz, and the days of tenderness she had participated with him; she even dropped a few tears, which Carathis observed, and inadvertently breathed out with a sigh: "Alas! my gentle cousin! what will become of him?"

Vathek at this apostrophe knitted up his brows, and Carathis inquired what it could mean?

"She is preposterously sighing after a stripling with languishing eyes and soft hair, who loves her," said the Caliph.

"Where is he?" asked Carathis. "I must be acquainted with this pretty child; for," added she, lowering her voice, "I design before I depart to regain the favor of the Giaour; there is nothing so delicious in his

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

estimation as the heart of a delicate boy, palpitating with the first tumults of love."

Vathek, as he came from the bath, commanded Babalouk to collect the women and other movables of his harem, embody his troops, and hold himself in readiness to march in three days; whilst Carathis retired alone to a tent, where the Giaour solaced her with encouraging visions; but at length waking, she found at her feet Nerkes and Cafour, who informed her by their signs, that having led Alboufaki to the borders of a lake, to browse on some moss that looked tolerably venomous, they had discovered certain blue fishes of the same kind with those in the reservoir on the top of the tower.

"Ah! ha!" said she, "I will go thither to them; these fish are past doubt of a species that, by a small operation, I can render oracular; they may tell me where this little Gulchenrouz is, whom I am bent upon sacrificing." Having thus spoken, she immediately set out with her swarthy retinue.

It being but seldom that time is lost in the accomplishment of a wicked enterprise, Carathis and her negresses soon arrived at the lake, where, after burning the magical drugs with which they were always provided, they, stripping themselves naked, waded to their chins, Nerkes and Cafour waving torches around them, and Carathis pronouncing her barbarous incantations. The fishes with one accord thrust forth their heads from the water, which was violently rippled by the flutter of their fins, and, at length finding themselves constrained by the potency of the charm, they opened their piteous mouths, and said: "From gills to tail we are yours, what seek ye to know?"

"Fishes," answered she, "I conjure you, by your glittering scales, tell me where now is Gulchenrouz?"

"Beyond the rock," replied the shoal in full chorus;

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

“will this content you? for we do not delight in expanding our mouths.”

“It will,” returned the Princess; “I am not to learn that you like not long conversations; I will leave you, therefore, to repose, though I had other questions to propound.” The instant she had spoken the water became smooth, and the fishes at once disappeared.

Carathis, inflated with the venom of her projects, strode hastily over the rock, and found the amiable Gulchenrouz asleep in an arbor, whilst the two dwarfs were watching at his side, and ruminating their accustomed prayers. These diminutive personages possessed the gift of divining whenever an enemy to good Musulmans approached; thus they anticipated the arrival of Carathis, who, stopping short, said to herself: “How placidly doth he recline his lovely little head! how pale and languishing are his looks! it is just the very child of my wishes!”

The dwarfs interrupted this delectable soliloquy by leaping instantly upon her, and scratching her face with their utmost zeal. But Nerkes and Cafour, betaking themselves to the succor of their mistress, pinched the dwarfs so severely in return that they both gave up the ghost, imploring Mahomet to inflict his sorest vengeance upon this wicked woman and all her household.

At the noise which this strange conflict occasioned in the valley, Gulchenrouz awoke, and, bewildered with terror, sprung impetuously upon an old fig-tree that rose against the acclivity of the rocks; from thence gained their summits, and ran for two hours without once looking back. At last, exhausted with fatigue, he fell as if dead into the arms of a good old Genius, whose fondness for the company of children had made it his sole occupation to protect them, and who, whilst performing his wonted rounds through the air, happening

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

on the cruel Giaour at the instant of his growling in the horrible chasm, rescued the fifty little victims which the impiety of Vathek had devoted to his maw; these the Genius brought up in nests still higher than the clouds, and himself fixed his abode in a nest more capacious than the rest from which he had expelled the possessors that had built it.

These inviolable asylums were defended against the Dives and the Afrits by waving streamers on which were inscribed, in characters of gold that flashed like lightning, the names of Alla and the Prophet. It was there that Gulchenrouz, who as yet remained undeceived with respect to his pretended death, thought himself in the mansions of eternal peace; he admitted without fear the congratulations of his little friends, who were all assembled in the nest of the venerable Genius, and vied with each other in kissing his serene forehead and beautiful eyelids. This he found to be the state congenial to his soul; remote from the inquietudes of earth, the impertinence of harems, the brutality of eunuchs, and the lubricity of women; in this peaceable society his days, months and years glided on; nor was he less happy than the rest of his companions; for the Genius, instead of burthening his pupils with perishable riches and the vain sciences of the world, conferred upon them the boon of perpetual childhood.

Carathis, unaccustomed to the loss of her prey, vented a thousand execrations on her negresses for not seizing the child, instead of amusing themselves with pinching to death the dwarfs, from which they could gain no advantage. She returned into the valley murmuring, and finding that her son was not risen from the arms of Nouronihar, discharged her ill-humor upon both. The idea however of departing next day for Istakar, and cultivating, through the good offices of the Giaour,

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

an intimacy with Eblis himself, at length consoled her chagrin. But Fate had ordained it otherwise.

In the evening, as Carathis was conversing with Dilara, who, through her contrivance, had become of the party, and whose taste resembled her own, Bababalouk came to acquaint her, "that the sky towards Samarah looked of a fiery red, and seemed to portend some alarming disaster." Immediately, recurring to her astrolabes and instruments of magic, she took the altitude of the planets, and discovered by her calculations, to her great mortification, that a formidable revolt had taken place at Samarah; that Motavakel, availing himself of the disgust which was inveterate against his brother, had incited commotions amongst the populace, made himself master of the palace, and actually invested the great tower, to which Morakanabad had retired, with a handful of the few that still remained faithful to Vathek.

"What!" exclaimed she; "must I lose then my tower! my mutes! my negresses! my mummies! and, worse than all, the laboratory in which I have spent so many a night! without knowing at least if my hair-brained son will complete his adventure? No! I will not be the dupe! Immediately will I speed to support Morakanabad; by my formidable art the clouds shall sleet hailstorms in the faces of the assailants, and shafts of red hot iron on their heads; I will spring mines of serpents and torpedoes from beneath them, and we shall soon see the stand they will make against such an explosion!"

Having thus spoken Carathis hastened to her son, who was tranquilly banqueting with Nouronihar in his superb carnation-colored tent.

"Glutton that thou art!" cried she, "were it not for me, thou wouldst soon find thyself the commander only of pies. Thy faithful subjects have abjured the faith

they swore to thee; Motavakel thy brother now reigns on the hill of pied horses, and had I not some slight resources in the tower, would not be easily persuaded to abdicate; but, that time may not be lost, I shall only add four words: Strike tent to-night, set forward, and beware how thou loiterest again by the way; though thou hast forfeited the conditions of the parchment, I am not yet without hope; for it cannot be denied that thou hast violated to admiration the laws of hospitality, by seducing the daughter of the Emir after having partaken of his bread and his salt. Such a conduct cannot but be delightful to the Giaour; and if on thy march thou canst signalize thyself by an additional crime, all will still go well, and thou shalt enter the palace of Soliman in triumph. Adieu! Alboufaki and my negroes are waiting."

The Caliph had nothing to offer in reply; he wished his mother a prosperous journey, and eat on till he had finished his supper. At midnight the camp broke up, amidst the flourishing of trumpets and other martial instruments; but loud indeed must have been the sound of the tymbals to overpower the blubbering of the Emir and his long-beards, who, by an excessive profusion of tears, had so far exhausted the radical moisture, that their eyes shrivelled up in their sockets and their hairs dropped off by the roots. Nouronihar, to whom such a symphony was painful, did not grieve to get out of hearing; she accompanied the Caliph in the imperial litter, where they amused themselves with imagining the splendor which was soon to surround them. The other women, overcome with dejection, were dolefully rocked in their cages, whilst Dilara consoled herself with anticipating the joy of celebrating the rites of fire on the stately terraces of Istakar.

In four days they reached the spacious valley of Rocnabad. The season of spring was in all its vigor, and

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

the grotesque branches of the almond trees in full blossom fantastically chequered the clear blue sky; the earth, variegated with hyacinths and jonquils, breathed forth a fragrance which diffused through the soul a divine repose; myriads of bees and scarce fewer of Santons had there taken up their abode; on the banks of the stream hives and oratories were alternately ranged, and their neatness and whiteness were set off by the deep green of the cypresses that spired up amongst them. These pious personages amused themselves with cultivating little gardens that abounded with flowers and fruits, especially musk-melons of the best flavor that Persia could boast; sometimes dispersed over the meadow, they entertained themselves with feeding peacocks whiter than snow, and turtles more blue than the sapphire; in this manner were they occupied when the harbingers of the imperial procession began to proclaim: "Inhabitants of Rocnabad! prostrate yourselves on the brink of your pure waters, and tender your thanksgivings to heaven that vouchsafed to show you a ray of its glory; for lo! the Commander of the faithful draws near."

The poor Santons, filled with holy energy, having bustled to light up wax torches in their oratories and expand the Koran on their ebony desks, went forth to meet the Caliph with baskets of honeycomb, dates and melons. But, whilst they were advancing in solemn procession and with measured steps, the horses, camels and guards wantoned over their tulips and other flowers and made a terrible havoc amongst them. The Santons could not help casting from one eye a look of pity on the ravages committing around them, whilst the other was fixed upon the Caliph and heaven. Nouronihar, enraptured with the scenery of a place which brought back to her remembrance the pleasing solitudes where her infancy had passed, entreated Vathek

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

to stop; but he, suspecting that each oratory might be deemed by the Giaour a distinct habitation, commanded his pioneers to level them all; the Santons stood motionless with horror at the barbarous mandate, and at last broke out into lamentations; but these were uttered with so ill a grace, that Vathek bade his eunuchs to kick them from his presence. He then descended from the litter with Nouronihar; they sauntered together in the meadow, and amused themselves with culling flowers, and passing a thousand pleasantries on each other. But the bees, who were staunch Mussulmans, thinking it their duty to revenge the insult on their dear masters, the Santons, assembled so zealously to do it with effect, that the Caliph and Nouronihar were glad to find their tents prepared to receive them.

Bababalouk, who in capacity of purveyor had acquitted himself with applause as to peacocks and turtles, lost no time in consigning some dozens to the spit, and as many more to be fricasseed. Whilst they were feasting, laughing, carousing, and blaspheming at pleasure on the banquet so liberally furnished, the Moullahs, the Sheiks, the Cadis and Imans of Schiraz (who seemed not to have met the Santons) arrived, leading by bridles of riband inscribed from the Koran, a train of asses, which were loaded with the choicest fruits the country could boast; having presented their offerings to the Caliph they petitioned him to honor their city and mosques with his presence.

"Fancy not," said Vathek, "that you can detain me; your presents I condescend to accept, but beg you will let me be quiet, for I am not over-fond of resisting temptation; retire then; yet, as it is not decent for personages so reverend to return on foot, and as you have not the appearance of expert riders, my eunuchs shall tie you on your asses, with the precaution that

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

your backs be not turned towards me, for they understand etiquette."

In this deputation were some high-stomached sheiks, who, taking Vathek for a fool, scrupled not to speak their opinion. These Bababalouk girded with double cords, and, having well disciplined their asses with nettles behind, they all started with a preternatural alertness, plunging, kicking and running foul of each other in the most ludicrous manner imaginable.

Nouronihar and the Caliph mutually contended who should most enjoy so degrading a sight; they burst out in volleys of laughter to see the old men and their asses fall into the stream; the leg of one was fractured, the shoulder of another dislocated, the teeth of a third dashed out, and the rest suffered still worse.

Two days more, undisturbed by fresh embassies, having been devoted to the pleasures of Rocnabad, the expedition proceeded, leaving Shiraz on the right, and verging towards a large plain, from whence were discernible on the edge of the horizon the dark summits of the mountains of Istakar.

At this prospect the Caliph and Nouronihar were unable to repress their transports; they bounded from their litter to the ground, and broke forth into such wild exclamations, as amazed all within hearing. Interrogating each other, they shouted, "Are we not approaching the radiant palace of light? or gardens more delightful than those of Sheddad?" Infatuated mortals! they thus indulged delusive conjecture, unable to fathom decrees of the Most High!

The good Genii, who had not totally relinquished the superintendence of Vathek, repairing to Mahomet in the seventh heaven, said: "Merciful Prophet! stretch forth thy propitious arms towards thy viceregent, who is ready to fall irretrievably into the snare which his enemies, the Dives, have prepared to destroy him; the

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

Giaour is awaiting his arrival in the abominable palace of fire, where, if he once set his foot, his perdition will be inevitable."

Mahomet answered with an air of indignation: "He hath too well deserved to be resigned to himself, but I permit you to try if one effort more will be effectual to divert him from pursuing his ruin."

One of these beneficent Genii, assuming without delay the exterior of a shepherd, more renowned for his piety than all the Dervishes and Santons of the region, took his station near a flock of white sheep on the slope of a hill, and began to pour forth from his flute such airs of pathetic melody, as subdued the very soul, and, awakening remorse, drove far from it every frivolous fancy. At these energetic sounds the sun hid himself beneath a gloomy cloud, and the waters of two little lakes, that were naturally clearer than crystal, became of a color like blood. The whole of this superb assembly was involuntarily drawn towards the declivity of the hill; with downcast eyes they all stood abashed, each upbraiding himself with the evil he had done; the heart of Dilara palpitated, and the chief of the eunuchs with a sigh of contrition implored pardon of the women, whom for his own satisfaction he had so often tormented.

Vathek and Nouronihar turned pale in their litter, and, regarding each other with haggard looks, reproached themselves—the one with a thousand of the blackest crimes, a thousand projects of impious ambition—the other with the desolation of her family, and the perdition of the amiable Gulchenrouz. Nouronihar persuaded herself that she heard in the fatal music the groans of her dying father, and Vathek, the sobs of the fifty children he had sacrificed to the Giaour. Amidst these complicated pangs of anguish they perceived themselves impelled towards the shepherd, whose coun-

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

tenance was so commanding, that Vathek for the first time felt overawed, whilst Nouronihar concealed her face with her hands.

The music paused, and the Genius, addressing the Caliph, said: "Deluded Prince! to whom Providence hath confided the care of innumerable subjects, is it thus that thou fulfillest thy mission? Thy crimes are already completed, and art thou now hastening towards thy punishment? Thou knowest that beyond these mountains Eblis and his accursed Dives hold their infernal empire; and, seduced by a malignant phantom, thou art proceeding to surrender thyself to them! This moment is the last of grace allowed thee; abandon thy atrocious purpose; return; give back Nouronihar to her father, who still retains a few sparks of life; destroy thy tower with all its abominations; drive Carathis from thy councils; be just to thy subjects; respect the ministers of the Prophet; compensate for thy impieties by an exemplary life; and, instead of squandering thy days in voluptuous indulgence, lament thy crimes on the sepulchres of thy ancestors. Thou beholdest the clouds that obscure the sun; at the instant he recovers his splendor, if thy heart be not changed, the time of mercy assigned thee will be past for ever."

Vathek, depressed with fear, was on the point of prostrating himself at the feet of the shepherd, whom he perceived to be of a nature superior to man; but, his pride prevailing, he audaciously lifted his head, and, glancing at him one of his terrible looks, said: "Whoever thou art, withhold thy useless admonitions; thou wouldst either delude me, or art thyself deceived. If what I have done be so criminal as thou pretendest, there remains not for me a moment of grace; I have traversed a sea of blood to acquire a power which will make thy equals tremble; deem not that I shall retire when in view of the port, or that I will relinquish her

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

who is dearer to me than either my life or thy mercy. Let the sun appear! let him illumine my career; it matters not where it may end." On uttering these words, which made even the Genius shudder, Vathek threw himself into the arms of Nouronihar, and commanded that his horses should be forced back to the road.

There was no difficulty in obeying these orders, for the attraction had ceased; the sun shone forth in all his glory, and the shepherd vanished with a lamentable scream.

The fatal impression of the music of the Genius remained notwithstanding in the heart of Vathek's attendants; they viewed each other with looks of consternation; at the approach of night almost all of them escaped, and of this numerous assemblage there only remained the chief of the eunuchs, some idolatrous slaves, Dilara and a few other women, who, like herself, were votaries of the religion of the Magi.

The Caliph, fired with the ambition of prescribing laws to the Intelligences of Darkness, was but little embarrassed at this dereliction; the impetuosity of his blood prevented him from sleeping, nor did he encamp any more as before. Nouronihar, whose impatience if possible exceeded his own, importuned him to hasten his march, and lavished on him a thousand caresses to beguile all reflection; she fancied herself already more potent than Balkis, and pictured to her imagination the Genii falling prostrate at the foot of her throne. In this manner they advanced by moonlight, till they came within view of the two towering rocks that form a kind of portal to the valley, at whose extremity rose the vast ruins of Istakar. Aloft on the mountain glimmered the fronts of various royal mausoleums, the horror of which was deepened by the shadows of night. They passed through two villages almost deserted, the only inhabitants remaining being a few feeble old men,

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

who, at the sight of horses and litters, fell upon their knees and cried out:

“O heaven! is it then by these phantoms that we have been for six months tormented? Alas! it was from the terror of these spectres and the noise beneath the mountains, that our people have fled, and left us at the mercy of malicious spirits!”

The Caliph, to whom these complaints were but unpromising auguries, drove over the bodies of these wretched old men, and at length arrived at the foot of the terrace of black marble; there he descended from his litter, handing down Nouronihar; both with beating hearts stared wildly around them, and expected with an apprehensive shudder the approach of the Giaour; but nothing as yet announced his appearance.

A death-like stillness reigned over the mountain and through the air; the moon dilated on a vast platform the shades of the lofty columns, which reached from the terrace almost to the clouds, the gloomy watch-towers, whose numbers could not be counted, were veiled by no roof, and their capitals, of an architecture unknown in the records of the earth, served as an asylum for the birds of darkness, which, alarmed at the approach of such visitants, fled away croaking.

The chief of the eunuchs, trembling with fear, besought Vathek that a fire might be kindled.

“No!” replied he, “there is no time left to think of such trifles; abide where thou art, and expect my commands.”

Having thus spoken he presented his hand to Nouronihar, and, ascending the steps of a vast staircase, reached the terrace, which was flagged with squares of marble, and resembled a smooth expanse of water, upon whose surface not a leaf ever dared to vegetate; on the right rose the watch-towers, ranged before the ruins of an immense palace, whose walls were embossed

with various figures; in front stood forth the colossal forms of four creatures, composed of the leopard and the griffin; and, though but of stone, inspired emotions of terror; near these were distinguished by the splendor of the moon, which streamed full on the place, characters like those on the sabres of the Giaour, that possessed the same virtue of changing every moment; these, after vacillating for some time, at last fixed in Arabic letters, and prescribed to the Caliph the following words:

“Vathek! thou hast violated the conditions of my parchment, and deservest to be sent back; but, in favor to thy companion, and as the meed for what thou hast done to obtain it, Eblis permitteth that the portal of his palace shall be opened, and the subterranean fire will receive thee into the number of its adorers.”

He scarcely had read these words before the mountain against which the terrace was reared trembled, and the watch-towers were ready to topple headlong upon them; the rock yawned, and disclosed within it a staircase of polished marble that seemed to approach the abyss; upon each stair were planted two large torches, like those Nouronihar had seen in her vision, the camphorated vapor ascending from which gathered into a cloud under the hollow of the vault.

This appearance, instead of terrifying, gave new courage to the daughter of Fakreddin. Scarcely deigning to bid adieu to the moon and the firmament, she abandoned without hesitation the pure atmosphere to plunge into these infernal exhalations. The gait of those impious personages was haughty and determined; as they descended by the effulgence of the torches they gazed on each other with mutual admiration, and both appeared so resplendent, that they already esteemed themselves spiritual Intelligences; the only circumstance that perplexed them was their not arriving at the

bottom of the stairs; on hastening their descent with an ardent impetuosity, they felt their steps accelerated to such a degree, that they seemed not walking, but falling from a precipice. Their progress, however, was at length impeded by a vast portal of ebony, which the Caliph without difficulty recognized; here the Giaour awaited them with the key in his hand.

"Ye are welcome," said he to them with a ghastly smile, "in spite of Mahomet and all his dependants. I will now admit you into that palace where you have so highly merited a place."

Whilst he was uttering these words he touched the enamelled lock with his key, and the doors at once expanded, with a noise still louder than the thunder of mountains, and as suddenly recoiled the moment they had entered.

The Caliph and Nouronihar beheld each other with amazement, at finding themselves in a place which, though roofed with a vaulted ceiling, was so spacious and lofty that at first they took it for an immeasurable plain. But their eyes at length growing familiar to the grandeur of the objects at hand, they extended their view to those at a distance, and discovered rows of columns and arcades, which gradually diminished till they terminated in a point, radiant as the sun when he darts his last beams athwart the ocean; the pavement, strewed over with gold dust and saffron, exhaled so subtle an odor as almost overpowered them; they, however, went on, and observed an infinity of censers, in which ambergris and the wood of aloes were continually burning; between the several columns were placed tables, each spread with a profusion of viands, and wines of every species sparkling in vases of crystal. A throng of Genii and other fantastic spirits of each sex danced lasciviously in troops, at the sound of music which issued from beneath.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

In the midst of this immense hall a vast multitude was incessantly passing, who severally kept their right hands on their hearts, without once regarding anything around them; they had all the livid paleness of death; their eyes, deep sunk in their sockets, resembled those phosphoric meteors that glimmer by night in places of interment. Some stalked slowly on, absorbed in profound reverie; some, shrieking with agony, ran furiously about, like tigers wounded with poisoned arrows; whilst others, grinding their teeth in rage, foamed along, more frantic than the wildest maniac. They all avoided each other, and, though surrounded by a multitude that no one could number, each wandered at random, unheeding of the rest, as if alone on a desert which no foot had trodden.

Vathek and Nouronihar, frozen with terror at a sight so baleful, demanded of the Giaour what these appearances might mean, and why these ambulating spectres never withdrew their hands from their hearts.

"Perplex not yourselves," replied he bluntly, "with so much at once, you will soon be acquainted with all; let us haste and present you to Eblis."

They continued their way through the multitude; but, notwithstanding their confidence at first, they were not sufficiently composed to examine with attention the various perspectives of halls and of galleries that opened on the right hand and left, which were all illuminated by torches and braziers whose flames rose in pyramids to the center of the vault. At length they came to a place where long curtains, brocaded with crimson and gold, fell from all parts in striking confusion; here the choirs and dances were heard no longer, the light which glimmered came from afar.

After some time Vathek and Nouronihar perceived a gleam brightening through the drapery, and entered a vast tabernacle carpeted with the skins of leopards; an

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

infinity of elders with streaming beards, and Afrits in complete armor, had prostrated themselves before the ascent of a lofty eminence, on the top of which, upon a globe of fire, sat the formidable Eblis. His person was that of a young man, whose noble and regular features seemed to have been tarnished by malignant vapors; in his large eyes appeared both pride and despair; his flowing hair retained some resemblance to that of an angel of light; in his hand, which thunder had blasted, he swayed the iron sceptre that causes the monster Ouranabad, the Afrits, and all the powers of the abyss to tremble; at his presence the heart of the Caliph sunk within him, and for the first time, he fell prostrate on his face. Nouronihar, however, though greatly dismayed, could not help admiring the person of Eblis; for she expected to have seen some stupendous Giant. Eblis, with a voice more mild than might be imagined, but such as transferred through the soul the deepest melancholy, said:

“Creatures of clay, I receive you into mine empire; ye are numbered amongst my adorers; enjoy whatever this palace affords; the treasures of the preadamite Sultans, their bickering sabres, and those talismans that compel the Dives to open the subterranean expanses of the mountain of Kaf, which communicate with these; there, insatiable as your curiosity may be, shall you find sufficient to gratify it; you shall possess the exclusive privilege of entering the fortress of Aherman, and the halls of Argenk, where are portrayed all creatures endowed with intelligence, and the various animals that inhabited the earth prior to the creation of that contemptible being, whom ye denominate the Father of Mankind.”

Vathek and Nouronihar, feeling themselves revived and encouraged by this harangue, eagerly said to the Giaour:

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

"Bring us instantly to the place which contains these precious talismans."

"Come!" answered this wicked Dive, with his malignant grin, "come! and possess all that my Sovereign hath promised, and more."

He then conducted them into a long aisle adjoining the tabernacle, preceding them with hasty steps, and followed by his disciples with the utmost alacrity. They reached, at length, a hall of great extent, and covered with a lofty dome, around which appeared fifty portals of bronze, secured with as many fastenings of iron; a funereal gloom prevailed over the whole scene; here, upon two beds of incorruptible cedar, lay recumbent the fleshless forms of the Preadamite Kings, who had been monarchs of the whole earth; they still possessed enough of life to be conscious of their deplorable condition; their eyes retained a melancholy motion; they regarded each other with looks of the deepest dejection; each holding his right hand motionless on his heart; at their feet were inscribed the events of their several reigns, their power, their pride, and their crimes; Soliman Raad, Soliman Daki, and Soliman Di Gian Ben Gian, who, after having chained up the Dives in the dark caverns of Kaf, became so presumptuous as to doubt of the Supreme Power; all these maintained great state, though not to be compared with the eminence of Soliman Ben Daoud.

This king, so renowned for his wisdom, was on the loftiest elevation, and placed immediately under the dome; he appeared to possess more animation than the rest; though from time to time he labored with profound sighs, and, like his companions, kept his right hand on his heart; yet his countenance was more composed, and he seemed to be listening to the sullen roar of the vast cataract, visible in part through the grated portals; this was the only sound that intruded on the

silence of these doleful mansions. A range of brazen vases surrounded the elevation.

“Remove the covers from these cabalistic depositaries,” said the Giaour to Vathek, “and avail thyself of the talismans, which will break asunder all these gates of bronze; and not only render thee master of the treasures contained within them, but also of the spirits by which they are guarded.”

The Caliph, whom this ominous preliminary had entirely disconcerted, approached the vases with faltering footsteps, and was ready to sink with terror when he heard the groans of Soliman. As he proceeded a voice from the livid lips of the Prophet articulated these words:

“In my life-time I filled a magnificent throne, having on my right hand twelve thousand seats of gold, where the patriarchs and the prophets heard my doctrines; on my left the sages and doctors, upon as many thrones of silver, were present at all my decisions. Whilst I thus administered justice to innumerable multitudes, the birds of the air librating over me served as a canopy from the rays of the sun; my people flourished, and my palace rose to the clouds; I erected a temple to the Most High, which was the wonder of the universe; but I basely suffered myself to be seduced by the love of women, and a curiosity that could not be restrained by sublunary things; I listened to the counsels of Aherman and the daughter of Pharaoh, and adored fire and the hosts of heaven; I forsook the holy city, and commanded the Genii to rear the stupendous palace of Istakar, and the terrace of the watch-towers, each of which was consecrated to a star; there for a while I enjoyed myself in the zenith of glory and pleasure; not only men, but supernatural existences were subject also to my will. I began to think, as these unhappy monarchs around had already thought, that the ven-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

geance of Heaven was asleep; when at once the thunder burst my structures asunder and precipitated me hither; where, however, I do not remain, like the other inhabitants, totally destitute of hope, for an angel of light hath revealed that, in consideration of the piety of my early youth, my woes shall come to an end when this cataract shall forever cease to flow; till then I am in torments, ineffable torments! an unrelenting fire with a convulsive sob:

Having uttered this exclamation Soliman raised his hands towards Heaven, in token of supplication, and the Caliph discerned through his bosom, which was transparent as crystal, his heart enveloped in flames. At a sight so full of horror Nouronihar fell back, like one petrified, into the arms of Vathek, who cried out with a convulsive sob:

“O Giaour! whither hast thou brought us? Allow us to depart, and I will relinquish all thou hast promised. O Mahomet! remains there no more mercy?”

“None! none!” replied the malicious Dive. “Know, miserable prince! thou art now in the abode of vengeance and despair; thy heart also will be kindled, like those of the other votaries of Eblis. A few days are allotted thee previous to this fatal period; employ them as thou wilt; recline on these heaps of gold; command the Infernal Potentates; range at thy pleasure through these immense subterranean domains; no barrier shall be shut against thee; as for me, I have fulfilled my mission; I now leave thee to thyself.” At these words he vanished.

The Caliph and Nouronihar remained in the most abject affliction; their tears unable to flow, scarcely could they support themselves. At length, taking each other despondingly by the hand, they went faltering from this fatal hall, indifferent which way they turned their steps; every portal opened at their approach; the Dives fell

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

prostrate before them; every reservoir of riches was disclosed to their view; but they no longer felt the incentives of curiosity, pride or avarice. With like apathy they heard the chorus of Genii, and saw the stately banquets prepared to regale them; they went wandering on from chamber to chamber, hall to hall, and gallery to gallery, all without bounds or limit, all distinguishable by the same lowering gloom, all adorned with the same awful grandeur, all traversed by persons in search of repose and consolation, but who sought them in vain; for, every one carried within him a heart tormented in flames; shunned by these various sufferers, who seemed by their looks to be upbraiding the partners of their guilt, they withdrew from them to wait in direful suspense the moment which should render them to each other the like objects of terror.

“What!” exclaimed Nouronihar; “will the time come when I shall snatch my hand from thine?”

“Ah!” said Vathek; “and shall my eyes ever cease to drink from thine long draughts of enjoyment! Shall the moments of our reciprocal ecstasies be reflected on with horror! It was not thou that brought me hither; the principles by which Carathis perverted my youth, have been the sole cause of my perdition!” Having given vent to these painful expressions, he called to an Afrit, who was stirring up one of the braziers, and bade him fetch the Princess Carathis from the palace of Samarah.

After issuing these orders, the Caliph and Nouronihar continued walking amidst the silent crowd, till they heard voices at the end of the gallery; presuming them to proceed from some unhappy beings, who, like themselves, were awaiting their final doom, they followed the sound, and found it to come from a small square chamber, where they discovered sitting on sofas five young men of goodly figure, and a lovely female,

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

who were all holding a melancholy conversation by the glimmering of a lonely lamp; each had a gloomy and forlorn air, and two of them were embracing each other with great tenderness. On seeing the Caliph and the daughter of Fakreddin enter, they arose, saluted and gave them place; then he who appeared the most considerable of the group, addressed himself thus to Vathek:

“Strangers! who doubtless are in the same state of suspense with ourselves, as you do not yet bear your hand on your heart, if you are come hither to pass the interval allotted previous to the infliction of our common punishment, condescend to relate the adventures that have brought you to this fatal place, and we in return will acquaint you with ours, which deserve but too well to be heard; we will trace back our crimes to their source, though we are not permitted to repent; this is the only employment suited to wretches like us!”

The Caliph and Nouronihar assented to the proposal, and Vathek began, not without tears and lamentations, a sincere recital of every circumstance that had passed. When the afflicting narrative was closed, the young man entered on his own.* Each person proceeded in order, and when the fourth prince had reached the midst of his adventures, a sudden noise interrupted him, which caused the vault to tremble and to open.

Immediately a cloud descended, which gradually dissipating, discovered Carathis on the back of an Afrit, who grievously complained of his burden. She, in-

*See note to the Author's French preface; Beckford has here added the titles of three stories related in the Hall of Eblis. This is all that he has done, the three titles given being inserted in the third French edition, but not in the English preface, between the paragraphs separated by an asterisk. Beckford does not appear ever to have proceeded further with these tales than the titles.

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

stantly springing to the ground, advanced towards her son and said:

“What dost thou here in this little square chamber? As the Dives are become subject to thy beck, I expected to have found thee on the throne of the Pre-adamite Kings.”

“Execrable woman!” answered the Caliph; “cursed be the day thou gavest me birth! go, follow this Afrit, let him conduct thee to the hall of the Prophet Soliman; there thou wilt learn to what these palaces are destined, and how much I ought to abhor the impious knowledge thou hast taught me.”

“The height of power, to which thou art arrived, has certainly turned thy brain,” answered Carathis; “but I ask no more than permission to show my respect for the Prophet. It is, however, proper that thou shouldst know, that (as the Afrit has informed me neither of us shall return to Samarah) I requested his permission to arrange my affairs, and he politely consented; availing myself, therefore, of the few moments allowed me, I set fire to the tower, and consumed in it the mutes, negresses, and serpents which have rendered me so much good service; nor should I have been less kind to Morakanabad had he not prevented me by deserting at last to thy brother. As for Bababalouk, who had the folly to return to Samarah, and all the good brotherhood to provide husbands for thy wives, I undoubtedly would have put them to torture, could I but have allowed them the time; being, however, in a hurry, I only hung him after having caught him in a snare with thy wives, whilst them I buried alive by the help of my negresses, who thus spent their last moments greatly to their satisfaction. With respect to Dilara, who ever stood high in my favor, she hath evinced the greatness of her mind by fixing herself near in the service of one of the Magi, and I think will soon be our own.”

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

Vathek, too much cast down to express the indignation excited by such a discourse, ordered the Afrit to remove Carathis from his presence, and continued immersed in thought, which his companion durst not disturb.

Carathis, however, eagerly entered the dome of Soliman, and, without regarding in the least the groans of the Prophet, undauntedly removed the covers of the vases, and violently seized on the talismans; then, with a voice more loud than had hitherto been heard within these mansions, she compelled the Dives to disclose to her the most secret treasures, the most profound stores, which the Afrit himself had not seen; she passed by rapid descents known only to Eblis and his most favored potentates, and thus penetrated the very entrails of the earth, where breathes the Sansar, or icy wind of death; nothing appalled her dauntless soul; she perceived, however, in all the inmates who bore their hands on their hearts a little singularity, not much to her taste. As she was emerging from one of the abysses, Eblis stood forth to her view, but, notwithstanding he displayed the full effulgence of his infernal majesty, she preserved her countenance unaltered, and even paid her compliments with considerable firmness.

This superb Monarch thus answered: "Princess, whose knowledge and whose crimes have merited a conspicuous rank in my empire, thou dost well to employ the leisure that remains; for the flames and torments, which are ready to seize on thy heart, will not fail to provide thee with full employment." He said this, and was lost in the curtains of his tabernacle.

Carathis paused for a moment with surprise; but, resolved to follow the advice of Eblis, she assembled all the choirs of Genii, and all the Dives, to pay her homage; thus marched she in triumph through a vapor of perfumes, amidst the acclamations of all the malig-

HISTORY OF THE CALIPH VATHEK.

nant spirits, with most of whom she had formed a previous acquaintance; she even attempted to dethrone one of the Solimans for the purpose of usurping his place, when a voice, proceeding from the abyss of Death, proclaimed "All is accomplished!" Instantaneously the haughty forehead of the intrepid Princess was corrugated with agony; she uttered a tremendous yell, and fixed, no more to be withdrawn, her right hand upon her heart, which was become a receptacle of eternal fire.

In this delirium, forgetting all ambitious projects and her thirst for that knowledge which should ever be hidden from mortals, she overturned the offerings of the Genii, and, having execrated the hour she was begotten and the womb that had borne her, glanced off in a whirl that rendered her invisible, and continued to revolve without intermission.

At almost the same instant the same voice announced to the Caliph, Nouronihar, the five princes, and the princess, the awful and irrevocable decree. Their hearts immediately took fire, and they at once lost the most precious of the gifts of heaven—Hope. These unhappy beings recoiled with looks of the most furious distraction; Vathek beheld in the eyes of Nouronihar nothing but rage and vengeance, nor could she discern aught in his but aversion and despair. The two princes, who were friends, and until that moment had preserved their attachment, shrunk back, gnashing their teeth with mutual and unchangeable hatred. Kalilah and his sister made reciprocal gestures of imprecation, whilst the two other princes testified their horror for each other by the most ghastly convulsions and screams that could not be smothered. All severally plunged themselves into the accursed multitude, there to wander in an eternity of unabating anguish.

Such was, and such should be, the punishment of

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

unrestrained passions and atrocious actions! Such is, and such should be, the chastisement of blind ambition, that would transgress those bounds which the Creator hath prescribed to human knowledge; and, by aiming at discoveries reserved for pure Intelligence, acquire that infatuated pride, which perceives not the condition appointed to man is to be ignorant and humble.

Thus the Caliph Vathek, who, for the sake of empty pomp and forbidden power, had sullied himself with a thousand crimes, became a prey to grief without end, and remorse without mitigation; whilst the humble and despised Gulchenrouz passed whole ages in undisturbed tranquillity, and the pure happiness of childhood.

ALADDIN;
OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP

In the Orient



ALADDIN

OR THE WONDERFUL LAMP

(*Arabian Nights*)

IN one of the large and rich cities of China, there once lived a tailor named Mustapha. He was very poor. He could hardly, by his daily labor, maintain himself and his family, which consisted only of his wife and a son.

His son, who was called Aladdin,* was a very careless and idle fellow. He was disobedient to his father and mother, and would go out early in the morning and stay out all day, playing in the streets and public places with idle children of his own age.

When he was old enough to learn a trade, his father took him into his own shop, and taught him how to use his needle; but all his father's endeavors to keep him to his work were vain, for no sooner was his back turned than he was gone for that day. Mustapha chastised him, but Aladdin was incorrigible, and his father, to his great grief, was forced to abandon him to his idleness; and was so much troubled about him that he fell sick and died in a few months.

Aladdin, who was now no longer restrained by the fear of a father, gave himself entirely over to his idle habits, and was never out of the streets from his com-

* Aladdin signifies "The Nobility of the Religion."—Lane, vol. ii., p. 285.

panions. This course he followed till he was fifteen years old, without giving his mind to any useful pursuit, or the least reflection on what would become of him. As he was one day playing, according to custom, in the street, with his evil associates, a stranger passing by stood to observe him.

This stranger was a sorcerer, known as the African magician, as he had been but two days arrived from Africa, his native country.

The African magician, observing in Aladdin's countenance something which assured him that he was a fit boy for his purpose, inquired his name and history of some of his companions, and when he had learnt all he desired to know, went up to him, and taking him aside from his comrades, said, "Child, was not your father called Mustapha the tailor?" "Yes, sir," answered the boy, "but he has been dead a long time."

At these words the African magician threw his arms about Aladdin's neck, and kissed him several times, with tears in his eyes, and said, "I am your uncle. Your worthy father was my own brother. I knew you at first sight, you are so like him." Then he gave Aladdin a handful of small money, saying, "Go, my son, to your mother, give my love to her, and tell her that I will visit her to-morrow, that I may see where my good brother lived so long, and ended his days."

Aladdin ran to his mother, overjoyed at the money his uncle had given him. "Mother," said he, "have I an uncle?" "No, child," replied his mother, "you have no uncle by your father's side or mine." "I am just now come," said Aladdin, "from a man who says he is my uncle and my father's brother. He cried and kissed me when I told him my father was dead, and gave me money, sending his love to you, and promising to come and pay you a visit, that he may see the house my father lived and died in." "Indeed, child," replied

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

the mother, "your father had no brother, nor have you an uncle."

The next day the magician found Aladdin playing in another part of the town, and embracing him as before, put two pieces of gold into his hand, and said to him, "Carry this, child, to your mother; tell her that I will come and see her to-night, and bid her get us something for supper; but first show me the house where you live."

Aladdin showed the African magician the house, and carried the two pieces of gold to his mother, who went out and bought provisions; and considering she wanted various utensils, borrowed them of her neighbors. She spent the whole day in preparing the supper; and at night, when it was ready, said to her son, "Perhaps the stranger knows not how to find our house; go and bring him, if you meet with him."

Aladdin was just ready to go, when the magician knocked at the door, and came in loaded with wine and all sorts of fruits, which he brought for a dessert. After he had given what he brought into Aladdin's hands, he saluted his mother, and desired her to show him the place where his brother Mustapha used to sit on the sofa; and when she had so done, he fell down, and kissed it several times, crying out, with tears in his eyes, "My poor brother! how unhappy am I, not to have come soon enough to give you one last embrace!" Aladdin's mother desired him to sit down in the same place, but he declined. "No," said he, "I shall not do that; but give me leave to sit opposite to it, that although I see not the master of a family so dear to me, I may at least behold the place where he used to sit."

When the magician had made choice of a place, and sat down, he began to enter into discourse with Aladdin's mother. "My good sister," said he, "do not be surprised at your never having seen me all the time you have been married to my brother Mustapha of

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

happy memory. I have been forty years absent from this country, which is my native place, as well as my late brother's; and during that time have traveled into the Indies, Persia, Arabia, Syria, and Egypt, and afterwards crossed over into Africa, where I took up my abode. At last, as it is natural for a man, I was desirous to see my native country again, and to embrace my dear brother; and finding I had strength enough to undertake so long a journey, I made the necessary preparations, and set out. Nothing ever afflicted me so much as hearing of my brother's death. But God be praised for all things! It is a comfort for me to find, as it were, my brother in a son, who has his most remarkable features."

The African magician, perceiving that the widow wept at the remembrance of her husband, changed the conversation, and turning toward her son, asked him, "What business do you follow? Are you of any trade?"

At this question the youth hung down his head, and was not a little abashed when his mother answered, "Aladdin is an idle fellow. His father, when alive, strove all he could to teach him his trade, but could not succeed; and since his death, notwithstanding all I can say to him, he does nothing but idle away his time in the streets, as you saw him, without considering he is no longer a child; and if you do not make him ashamed of it, I despair of his ever coming to any good. For my part, I am resolved, one of these days, to turn him out of doors, and let him provide for himself."

After these words, Aladdin's mother burst into tears; and the magician said, "This is not well, nephew; you must think of helping yourself, and getting your livelihood. There are many sorts of trades; perhaps you do not like your father's, and would prefer another; I will endeavor to help you. If you have no mind to learn any handicraft, I will take a shop for you, furnish

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

it with all sorts of fine stuffs and linens; and then with the money you make of them you can lay in fresh goods, and live in an honorable way. Tell me freely what you think of my proposal; you shall always find me ready to keep my word."

This plan just suited Aladdin, who hated work. He told the magician he had a greater inclination to that business than to any other, and that he should be much obliged to him for his kindness. "Well, then," said the African magician, "I will carry you with me to-morrow, clothe you as handsomely as the best merchants in the city, and afterwards we will open a shop as I mentioned."

The widow, after his promise of kindness to her son, no longer doubted that the magician was her husband's brother. She thanked him for his good intentions; and after having exhorted Aladdin to render himself worthy of his uncle's favor, served up supper, at which they talked of several indifferent matters, and then the magician took his leave and retired.

He came again the next day, as he had promised, and took Aladdin with him to a merchant, who sold all sorts of clothes for different ages and ranks, ready made, and a variety of fine stuffs, and bade Aladdin choose those he preferred, which he paid for.

When Aladdin found himself so handsomely equipped, he returned his uncle thanks, who thus addressed him: "As you are soon to be a merchant, it is proper you should frequent these shops, and be acquainted with them." He then showed him the largest and finest mosques, carried him to the khans or inns where the merchants and travelers lodged, and afterward to the sultan's palace, where he had free access; and at last brought him to his own kahn, where, meeting with some merchants he had become acquainted with since

his arrival, he gave them a treat, to bring them and his pretended nephew acquainted.

This entertainment lasted till night, when Aladdin would have taken leave of his uncle to go home; the magician would not let him go by himself, but conducted him to his mother, who, as soon as she saw him so well dressed, was transported with joy, and bestowed a thousand blessings upon the magician.

Early the next morning, the magician called again for Aladdin, and said he would take him to spend that day in the country, and on the next he would purchase the shop. He then led him out at one of the gates of the city, to some magnificent palaces, to each of which belonged beautiful gardens, into which anybody might enter. At every building he came to, he asked Aladdin if he did not think it fine; and the youth was ready to answer when any one presented itself, crying out, "Here is a finer house, uncle, than any we have yet seen." By this artifice, the cunning magician led Aladdin some way into the country; and as he meant to carry him farther, to execute his design, he took an opportunity to sit down in one of the gardens, on the brink of a fountain of clear water, which discharged itself by a lion's mouth of bronze into a basin, pretending to be tired. "Come, nephew," said he, "you must be weary as well as I; let us rest ourselves, and we shall be better able to pursue our walk."

The magician next pulled from his girdle a handkerchief with cakes and fruit, and during this short repast he exhorted his nephew to leave off bad company, and to seek that of wise and prudent men, to improve by their conversation; "for," said he, "you will soon be at man's estate, and you cannot too early begin to imitate their example." When they had eaten as much as they liked, they got up, and pursued their walk through gardens separated from one another only by

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

small ditches, which marked out the limits without interrupting the communication; so great was the confidence the inhabitants reposed in each other. By this means the African magician drew Aladdin insensibly beyond the gardens, and crossed the country, till they nearly reached the mountains.

At last they arrived between two mountains of moderate height and equal size, divided by a narrow valley, which was the place where the magician intended to execute the design that had brought him from Africa to China. "We will go no farther now," said he to Aladdin; "I will show you here some extraordinary things, which, when you have seen, you will thank me for; but while I strike a light, gather up all the loose dry sticks you can see, to kindle a fire with."

Aladdin found so many dried sticks, that he soon collected a great heap. The magician presently set them on fire; and when they were in a blaze, threw in some incense, pronouncing several magical words, which Aladdin did not understand.

He had scarcely done so when the earth opened just before the magician, and discovered a stone with a brass ring fixed in it. Aladdin was so frightened that he would have run away, but the magician caught hold of him, and gave him such a box on the ear that he knocked him down. Aladdin got up trembling, and with tears in his eyes, said to the magician, "What have I done, uncle, to be treated in this severe manner?" "I am your uncle," answered the magician; "I supply the place of your father, and you ought to make no reply. But child," added he, softening, "do not be afraid; for I shall not ask anything of you, but that you obey me punctually, if you would reap the advantages which I intend you. Know, then, that under this stone there is hidden a treasure, destined to be yours, and which will make you richer than the greatest monarch in the

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

world. No person but yourself is permitted to lift this stone, or enter the cave; so you must punctually execute what I may command, for it is a matter of great consequence both to you and me."

Aladdin, amazed at all he saw and heard, forgot what was past, and rising, said, "Well, uncle, what is to be done? Command me, I am ready to obey." "I am overjoyed, child," said the African magician, embracing him. "Take hold of the ring and lift up that stone." "Indeed, uncle," replied Aladdin, "I am not strong enough; you must help me." "You have no occasion for my assistance," answered the magician; "if I help you, we shall be able to do nothing. Take hold of the ring, and lift it up; you will find it will come easily." Aladdin did as the magician bade him, raised the stone with ease, and laid it on one side.

When the stone was pulled up, there appeared a staircase about three or four feet deep, leading to a door. "Descend, my son," said the African magician, "those steps, and open that door. It will lead you into a palace, divided into three great halls. In each of these you will see four large brass cisterns placed on each side, full of gold and silver; but take care you do not meddle with them. Before you enter the first hall, be sure to tuck up your robe, wrap it about you, and then pass through the second into the third without stopping. Above all things, have a care that you do not touch the walls so much as with your clothes; for if you do, you will die instantly. At the end of the third hall, you will find a door which opens into a garden, planted with fine trees loaded with fruit. Walk directly across the garden to a terrace, where you will see a niche before you, and in that niche a lighted lamp. Take the lamp down and put it out. When you have thrown away the wick and poured out the liquor, put it in your waistband and bring it to me. Do not be afraid that the

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

liquor will spoil your clothes, for it is not oil, and the lamp will be dry as soon as it is thrown out."

After these words the magician drew a ring off his finger, and put it on one of Aladdin's, saying, "It is a talisman against all evil, so long as you obey me. Go, therefore, boldly, and we shall both be rich all our lives."

Aladdin descended the steps, and, opening the door, found the three halls just as the African magician had described. He went through them with all the precaution the fear of death could inspire, crossed the garden without stopping, took down the lamp from the niche, threw out the wick and the liquor, and, as the magician had desired, put it in his waistband. But as he came down from the terrace, seeing it was perfectly dry, he stopped in the garden to observe the trees, which were loaded with extraordinary fruit of different colors on each tree. Some bore fruit entirely white, and some clear and transparent as crystal; some pale red, and others deeper; some green, blue, and purple, and others yellow; in short, there was fruit of all colors. The white were pearls; the clear and transparent, diamonds; the deep red, rubies; the paler, ballas rubies*; the green, emeralds; the blue, turquoises; the purple, amethysts; and the yellow, sapphires. Aladdin, ignorant of their value, would have preferred figs, or grapes, or pomegranates; but as he had his uncle's permission, he resolved to gather some of every sort. Having filled the two new purses his uncle had bought for him with his clothes, he wrapped some up in the skirts of his vest, and crammed his bosom as full as it could hold.

Aladdin, having thus loaded himself with riches of which he knew not the value, returned through the three halls with the utmost precaution, and soon arrived at the mouth of the cave, where the African magician

* Ballas rubies are rubies of the brightest color.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

awaited him with the utmost impatience. As soon as Aladdin saw him, he cried out, "Pray, uncle, lend me your hand, to help me out." "Give me the lamp first," replied the magician; "it will be troublesome to you." "Indeed, uncle," answered Aladdin, "I cannot now, but I will as soon as I am up." The African magician was determined that he would have the lamp before he would help him up; and Aladdin, who had encumbered himself so much with his fruit that he could not well get at it, refused to give it to him till he was out of the cave. The African magician, provoked at this obstinate refusal, flew into a passion, threw a little of his incense into the fire and pronounced two magical words, when the stone which had closed the mouth of the staircase moved into its place, with the earth over it in the same manner as it lay at the arrival of the magician and Aladdin.

This action of the magician plainly revealed to Aladdin that he was no uncle of his, but one who designed him evil. The truth was that he had learned from his magic books the secret and the value of this wonderful lamp, the owner of which would be made richer than any earthly ruler, and hence his journey to China. His art had also told him that he was not permitted to take it himself, but must receive it as a voluntary gift at the hands of another person. Hence he employed young Aladdin, and hoped by a mixture of kindness and authority to make him obedient to his word and will. When he found that his attempt had failed, he set out to return to Africa, but avoided the town, lest any person who had seen him leave in company with Aladdin should make inquiries after the youth. Aladdin, being suddenly enveloped in darkness, cried, and called out to his uncle to tell him he was ready to give him the lamp; but in vain, since his cries could not be heard. He descended to the bottom of the steps, with

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

a design to get into the palace, but the door, which was opened before by enchantment, was now shut by the same means. He then redoubled his cries and tears, sat down on the steps without any hopes of ever seeing light again, and in an expectation of passing from the present darkness to a speedy death. In this great emergency he said, "There is no strength or power but in the great and high God;" and in joining his hands to pray he rubbed the ring which the magician had put on his finger. Immediately a genie of frightful aspect appeared, and said, "What wouldst thou have? I am ready to obey thee. I serve him who possesses the ring on thy finger; I, and the other slaves of that ring."

At another time Aladdin would have been frightened at the sight of so extraordinary a figure, but the danger he was in made him answer without hesitation, "Whoever thou art, deliver me from this place." He had no sooner spoken these words, than he found himself on the very spot where the magician had last left him, and no sign of cave or opening, nor disturbance of the earth. Returning God thanks to find himself once more in the world, he made the best of his way home. When he got within his mother's door, the joy to see her and his weakness for want of sustenance made him so faint that he remained for a long time as dead. As soon as he recovered, he related to his mother all that had happened to him, and they were both very vehement in their complaints of the cruel magician. Aladdin slept very soundly till late the next morning, when the first thing he said to his mother was, that he wanted something to eat, and wished that she would give him his breakfast. "Alas! child," said she, "I have not a bit of bread to give you; you ate up all the provisions I had in the house yesterday; but I have a little cotton which I have spun; I will go and sell it, and buy bread and something for our dinner." "Mother," replied Aladdin,

"keep your cotton for another time, and give me the lamp I brought home with me yesterday; I will go and sell it, and the money I shall get for it will serve both for breakfast and dinner, and perhaps supper too."

Aladdin's mother took the lamp and said to her son, "Here it is, but it is very dirty; if it were a little cleaner I believe it would bring something more." She took some fine sand and water to clean it; but had no sooner begun to rub it, than in an instant a hideous genie of gigantic size appeared before her, and said to her in a voice of thunder, "What wouldst thou have? I am ready to obey thee as thy slave, and the slave of all those who have that lamp in their hands; I and the other slaves of the lamp."

Aladdin's mother, terrified at the sight of the genie, fainted; when Aladdin, who had seen such a phantom in the cavern, snatched the lamp out of his mother's hand, and said to the genie boldly, "I am hungry, bring me something to eat." The genie disappeared immediately, and in an instant returned with a large silver tray, holding twelve covered dishes of the same metal, which contained the most delicious viands; six large white bread cakes on two plates, two flagons of wine, and two silver cups. All these he placed upon a carpet and disappeared; this was done before Aladdin's mother recovered from her swoon.

Aladdin had fetched some water, and sprinkled it in her face to recover her. Whether that or the smell of the meat effected her cure, it was not long before she came to herself. "Mother," said Aladdin, "be not afraid; get up and eat; here is what will put you in heart, and at the same time satisfy my extreme hunger."

His mother was much surprised to see the great tray, twelve dishes, six loaves and two flagons and cups, and to smell the savory odor which exhaled from the dishes. "Child," said she, "to whom are we obliged

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

for this great plenty and liberality? Has the sultan been made acquainted with our poverty, and had compassion on us?" "It is no matter, mother," said Aladdin, "let us sit down and eat; for you have almost as much need of a good breakfast as myself; when we have done, I will tell you." Accordingly, both mother and son sat down and ate with the better relish as the table was so well furnished. But all the time Aladdin's mother could not forbear looking at and admiring the tray and dishes, though she could not judge whether they were silver or any other metal, and the novelty more than the value attracted her attention.

The mother and son sat at breakfast till it was dinner time, and then they thought it would be best to put the two meals together; yet, after this they found they should have enough left for supper, and two meals for the next day.

When Aladdin's mother had taken away and set by what was left, she went and sat down by her son on the sofa, saying, "I expect now that you should satisfy my impatience, and tell me exactly what passed between the genie and you while I was in a swoon;" which he readily complied with.

She was in as great amazement at what her son told her, as at the appearance of the genie; and said to him, "But, son, what have we to do with genies? I never heard that any of my acquaintance had ever seen one. How came that vile genie to address himself to me, and not to you, to whom he had appeared before in the cave." "Mother," answered Aladdin, "the genie you saw is not the one who appeared to me. If you remember, he that I first saw called himself the slave of the ring on my finger; and this you saw, called himself the slave of the lamp you had in your hand; but I believe you did not hear him, for I think you fainted as soon as he began to speak."

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

“What!” cried the mother, “was your lamp then the occasion of that cursed genie addressing himself rather to me than to you? Ah! my son, take it out of my sight, and put it where you please. I had rather you would sell it than run the risk of being frightened to death again by touching it; and if you would take my advice, you would part also with the ring, and not have anything to do with genies, who, as our prophet has told us, are only devils.”

“With your leave, mother,” replied Aladdin, “I shall now take care how I sell a lamp which may be so serviceable both to you and me. That false and wicked magician would not have undertaken so long a journey to secure this wonderful lamp if he had not known its value to exceed that of gold and silver. And since we have honestly come by it, let us make a profitable use of it without making any great show and exciting the envy and jealousy of our neighbors. However, since the genies frighten you so much, I will take it out of your sight, and put it where I may find it when I want it. The ring I cannot resolve to part with; for without that you had never seen me again; and though I am alive now, perhaps, if it were gone, I might not be so some moments hence; therefore, I hope you will give me leave to keep it, and to wear it always on my finger.” Aladdin’s mother replied that he might do what he pleased; for her part, she would have nothing to do with genies, and never say anything more about them.

By the next night they had eaten all the provisions the genie had brought; and the next day Aladdin, who could not bear the thoughts of hunger, putting one of the silver dishes under his vest, went out early to sell it, and addressing himself to a Jew whom he met in the streets, took him aside, and pulling out the plate, asked him if he would buy it. The cunning Jew took the dish, examined it, and as soon as he found that it was

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

good silver, asked Aladdin at how much he valued it. Aladdin, who had never been used to such traffic, told him he would trust to his judgment and honor. The Jew was somewhat confounded at this plain dealing; and doubting whether Aladdin understood the material or the full value of what he offered to sell, took a piece of gold out of his purse and gave it him, though it was but the sixtieth part of the worth of the plate. Aladdin, taking the money very eagerly, retired with so much haste that the Jew, not content with the exorbitancy of his profit, was vexed he had not penetrated into his ignorance, and was going to run after him, to endeavor to get some change out of the piece of gold; but he ran so fast, and had got so far, that it would have been impossible for him to overtake him.

Before Aladdin went home, he called at a baker's, bought some cakes of bread, changed his money, and on his return gave the rest to his mother, who went and purchased provisions enough to last them some time. After this manner they lived, till Aladdin had sold the twelve dishes singly, as necessity pressed, to the Jew, for the same money: who, after the first time, durst not offer him less, for fear of losing so good a bargain. When he had sold the last dish, he had recourse to the tray, which weighed ten times as much as the dishes, and would have carried it to his old purchaser, but that it was too large and cumbersome; therefore he was obliged to bring him home with him to his mother's, where, after the Jew had examined the weight of the tray, he laid down ten pieces of gold, with which Aladdin was very well satisfied.

When all the money was spent, Aladdin had recourse again to the lamp. He took it in his hands, looked for the part where his mother had rubbed it with the sand, rubbed it also, when the genie immediately appeared, and said, "What wouldst thou have? I am ready to

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

obey thee as thy slave, and the slave of all those who have that lamp in their hands; I, and the other slaves of the lamp." "I am hungry," said Aladdin, "bring me something to eat." The genie disappeared, and presently returned with a tray, the same number of covered dishes as before, set them down, and vanished.

As soon as Aladdin found that their provisions were again expended, he took one of the dishes, and went to look for his Jew chapman; but passing by a goldsmith's shop, the goldsmith perceiving him, called to him, and said, "My lad, I imagine that you have some thing to sell to the Jew, whom I often see you visit; but perhaps you do not know that he is the greatest rogue even among the Jews. I will give you the full worth of what you have to sell, or I will direct you to other merchants who will not cheat you."

This offer induced Aladdin to pull his plate from under his vest and show it to the goldsmith, who at first sight saw that it was made of the finest silver, and asked him if he had sold such as that to the Jew; when Aladdin told him that he had sold him twelve such, for a piece of gold each. "What a villain!" cried the goldsmith. "But," added he, "my son, what is past cannot be recalled. By showing you the value of this plate, which is of the finest silver we use in our shops, I will let you see how much the Jew has cheated you."

The goldsmith took a pair of scales, weighed the dish, and assured him that his plate would fetch by weight sixty pieces of gold, which he offered to pay down immediately.

Aladdin thanked him for his fair dealing, and never after went to any other person.

Though Aladdin and his mother had an inexhaustible treasure in their lamp, and might have had whatever they wished for, yet they lived with the same frugality as before, and it may easily be supposed that the

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

money for which Aladdin had sold the dishes and tray was sufficient to maintain them some time.

During this interval, Aladdin frequented the shops of the principal merchants, where they sold cloth of gold and silver, linens, silk stuffs, and jewelry, and, oftentimes joining in their conversation, acquired a knowledge of the world, and a desire to improve himself. By his acquaintance among the jewelers, he came to know that the fruits which he had gathered when he took the lamp were, instead of colored glass, stones of inestimable value; but he had the prudence not to mention this to anyone, not even to his mother.

One day as Aladdin was walking about the town, he heard an order proclaimed, commanding the people to shut up their shops and houses, and keep within doors while the Princess Buddir al Buddoor, the sultan's daughter, went to the bath and returned.

This proclamation inspired Aladdin with eager desire to see the princess's face, which he determined to gratify, by placing himself behind the door of the bath, so that he could not fail to see her face.

Aladdin had not long concealed himself before the princess came. She was attended by a great crowd of ladies, slaves, and mutes, who walked on each side and behind her. When she came within three or four paces of the door of the bath, she took off her veil, and gave Aladdin an opportunity of a full view of her face.

The princess was a noted beauty; her eyes were large, lively, and sparkling; her smile bewitching; her nose faultless; her mouth small; her lips vermilion. It is not therefore surprising that Aladdin, who had never before seen such a blaze of charms, was dazzled and enchanted.

After the princess had passed by, and entered the bath, Aladdin quitted his hiding-place, and went home. His mother perceived him to be more thoughtful and

melancholy than usual; and asked what had happened to make him so, or if he was ill. He then told his mother all his adventure, and concluded by declaring, "I love the princess more than I can express, and am resolved that I will ask her in marriage of the sultan."

Aladdin's mother listened with surprise to what her son told her; but when he talked of asking the princess in marriage, she laughed aloud. "Alas! child," said she, "what are you thinking of? You must be mad to talk thus."

"I assure you, mother," replied Aladdin, "that I am not mad, but in my right senses. I foresaw that you would reproach me with folly and extravagance; but I must tell you once more, that I am resolved to demand the princess of the sultan in marriage; nor do I despair of success. I have the slaves of the lamp and of the ring to help me, and you know how powerful their aid is. And I have another secret to tell you; those pieces of glass, which I got from the trees in the garden of the subterranean palace, are jewels of inestimable value, and fit for the greatest monarchs. All the precious stones the jewelers have in Bagdad are not to be compared to mine for size or beauty; and I am sure that the offer of them will secure the favor of the sultan. You have a large porcelain dish fit to hold them; fetch it, and let us see how they will look when we have arranged them according to their different colors.

Aladdin's mother brought the china dish, when he took the jewels out of the two purses in which he had kept them, and placed them in order, according to his fancy. But the brightness and luster they emitted in the daytime, and the variety of the colors, so dazzled the eyes of both mother and son, that they were astonished beyond measure. Aladdin's mother, emboldened by the sight of these rich jewels, and fearful lest

her son should be guilty of greater extravagance, complied with his request, and promised to go early in the next morning to the palace of the sultan. Aladdin rose before daybreak, awakened his mother, pressing her to go to the sultan's palace, and to get admittance, if possible, before the grand vizier, the other viziers, and the great officers of state went in to take their seats in the divan, where the sultan always attended in person.

Aladdin's mother took the china dish, in which they had put the jewels the day before, wrapped it in two fine napkins, and set forward for the sultan's palace. When she came to the gates, the grand vizier, the other viziers, and most distinguished lords of the court were just gone in; but notwithstanding the crowd of people was great, she got into the divan, a spacious hall, the entrance into which was very magnificent. She placed herself just before the sultan, grand vizier, and the great lords, who sat in council, on his right and left hand. Several causes were called, according to their order, pleaded and adjudged, until the time the divan generally broke up, when the sultan, rising, returned to his apartment, attended by the grand vizier; the other viziers and ministers of state then retired, as also did all those whose business had called them thither.

Aladdin's mother, seeing the sultan retire, and all the people depart, judged rightly that he would not sit again that day, and resolved to go home; and on her arrival said, with much simplicity, "Son, I have seen the sultan, and am very well persuaded he has seen me, too, for I placed myself just before him; but he was so much taken up with those who attended on all sides of him that I pitied him, and wondered at his patience. At last I believe he was heartily tired, for he rose up suddenly, and would not hear a great many who were ready prepared to speak to him, but went away, at which I was well pleased, for indeed I began to lose all pa-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

tience, and was extremely fatigued with staying so long. But there is no harm done; I will go again to-morrow; perhaps the sultan may not be so busy."

The next morning she repaired to the sultan's palace with the present, as early as the day before; but when she came there she found the gates of the divan shut.* She went six times afterward on the days appointed, placed herself always directly before the sultan, but with as little success as the first morning.

On the sixth day, however, after the divan was broken up, when the sultan returned to his own apartment, he said to his grand vizier: "I have for some time observed a certain woman, who attends constantly every day that I give audience, with something wrapped up in a napkin; she always stands up from the beginning to the breaking up of the audience, and affects to place herself just before me. If this woman comes to our next audience, do not fail to call her, that I may hear what she has to say." The grand vizier made answer by lowering his hand, and then lifting it above his head, signifying his willingness to lose it if he failed.

On the next audience day, when Aladdin's mother went to the divan and placed herself in front of the sultan as usual, the grand vizier immediately called the chief of the mace-bearers, and pointing to her bade him bring her before the sultan. The old woman at once followed the mace-bearer, and when she reached the sultan bowed her head down to the carpet which covered the platform of the throne, and remained in that posture until he bade her rise, which she had no sooner done, than he said to her, "Good woman, I have observed you to stand many days from the beginning to the rising of the divan; what business brings you here?"

After these words, Aladdin's mother prostrated her-

* Sir Paul Ricaut says that the divan is not held on two successive days.

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

self a second time; and when she arose, said, "Monarch of monarchs, I beg of you to pardon the boldness of my petition, and to assure me of your pardon and forgiveness." "Well," replied the sultan, "I will forgive you, be it what it may, and no hurt shall come to you; speak boldly."

When Aladdin's mother had taken all these precautions, for fear of the sultan's anger, she told him faithfully the errand on which her son had sent her, and the event which led to his making so bold a request in spite of all her remonstrances.

The sultan harkened to this discourse without showing the least anger; but before he gave her any answer, asked her what she had brought tied up in the napkin. She took the china dish which she had set down at the foot of the throne, untied it, and presented it to the sultan.

The sultan's amazement and surprise were inexpressible when he saw so many large, beautiful and valuable jewels collected in the dish. He remained for some time lost in admiration. At last, when he had recovered himself, he received the present from Aladdin's mother's hand, saying, "How rich! How beautiful!" After he had admired and handled all the jewels one after another, he turned to his grand vizier, and showing him the dish, said, "Behold, admire, wonder! and confess that your eyes never beheld jewels so rich and beautiful before." The vizier was charmed. "Well," continued the sultan, "what sayest thou to such a present? Is it not worthy of the princess my daughter? And ought I not to bestow her on one who values her at so great a price?" "I cannot but own," replied the grand vizier, "that the present is worthy of the princess; but I beg of your majesty to grant me three months before you come to a final resolution. I hope, before that time, my son, whom you have regarded with

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

your favor, will be able to make a nobler present than this Aladdin, who is an entire stranger to your majesty."

The sultan granted his request, and said to the old woman, "Good woman, go home, and tell your son that I agree to the proposal you have made me; but I cannot marry the princess my daughter for three months; at the expiration of that time, come again."

Aladdin's mother returned home much more gratified than she had expected, and told her son with much joy the condescending answer she had received from the sultan's own mouth; and that she was to come to the divan again that day three months.

Aladdin thought himself the most happy of all men at hearing this news, and thanked his mother for the pains she had taken in the affair, the good success of which was of so great importance to his peace, that he counted every day, week and even hour as it passed. When two of the three months were passed, his mother one evening, having no oil in the house, went out to buy some, and found a general rejoicing—the houses dressed with foliage, silks, and carpeting, and everyone striving to show their joy according to their ability. The streets were crowded with officers in habits of ceremony, mounted on horses richly caparisoned, each attended by a great many footmen. Aladdin's mother asked the oil merchant what was the meaning of all this preparation of a public festivity. "Whence came you, good woman," said he, "that you don't know that the grand vizier's son is to marry the Princess Buddir al Buddoor, the sultan's daughter, to-night? She will presently return from the bath; and these officers whom you see are to assist at the cavalcade to the palace, where the ceremony is to be solemnized."

Aladdin's mother, on hearing this news, ran home very quickly. "Child," cried she, "you are undone! the sultan's fine promises will come to nought. This

night the grand vizier's son is to marry the Princess Buddir al Buddoor."

At this account, Aladdin was thunderstruck, and he bethought himself of the lamp, and of the genie who had promised to obey him; and without indulging in idle words against the sultan, the vizier, or his son, he determined, if possible, to prevent the marriage.

When Aladdin had got into his chamber, he took the lamp, rubbed it in the same place as before, when immediately the genie appeared, and said to him, "What wouldst thou have? I am ready to obey thee as thy slave; I, and the other slaves of the lamp." "Hear me," said Aladdin; "thou hast hitherto obeyed me, but now I am about to impose on thee a harder task. The sultan's daughter, who was promised me as my bride, is this night married to the son of the grand vizier. Bring them both hither to me immediately they retire to their bedchamber."

"Master," replied the genie, "I obey you."

Aladdin supped with his mother as was their wont, and then went to his own apartment, and sat up to await the return of the genie, according to his commands.

In the meantime the festivities in honor of the princess's marriage were conducted in the sultan's palace with great magnificence. The ceremonies were at last brought to a conclusion, and the princess and the son of the vizier retired to the bedchamber prepared for them. No sooner had they entered it, and dismissed their attendants, than the genie, the faithful slave of the lamp, to the great amazement and alarm of the bride and bridegroom, took up the bed, and by an agency invisible to them, transported it in an instant into Aladdin's chamber, where he set it down. "Remove the bridegroom," said Aladdin to the genie, "and keep him a prisoner till to-morrow dawn, and then return with him here." On Aladdin being left alone with the princess,

he endeavored to assuage her fears, and explained to her the treachery practised upon him by the sultan her father. He then laid himself down beside her, putting a drawn scimitar between them, to show that he was determined to secure her safety, and to treat her with the utmost possible respect. At break of day, the genie appeared at the appointed hour, bringing back the bridegroom, whom by breathing upon he had left motionless and entranced at the door of Aladdin's chamber during the night, and at Aladdin's command transported the couch, with the bride and bridegroom on it, by the same invisible agency, into the palace of the sultan.

At the instant that the genie had set down the couch with the bride and bridegroom in their own chamber, the sultan came to the door to offer his good wishes to his daughter. The grand vizier's son, who was almost perished with cold, by standing in his thin under-garment all night, no sooner heard the knocking at the door than he got out of bed, and ran into the robing chamber, where he had undressed himself the night before.

The sultan having opened the door, went to the bedside, kissed the princess on the forehead, but was extremely surprised to see her look so melancholy. She only cast at him a sorrowful look, expressive of great affliction. He suspected there was something extraordinary in this silence, and thereupon went immediately to the sultaness's apartment, told her in what a state he found the princess, and how she had received him. "Sire," said the sultaness, "I will go and see her; she will not receive me in the same manner."

The princess received her mother with sighs and tears, and signs of deep dejection. At last, upon her pressing on her the duty of telling her all her thoughts, she gave to the sultaness a precise description of all that

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

happened to her during the night; on which the sultanness enjoined on her the necessity of silence and discretion, as no one would give credence to so strange a tale. The grand vizier's son, elated with the honor of being the sultan's son-in-law, kept silence on his part, and the events of the night were not allowed to cast the least gloom on the festivities on the following day, in continued celebration of the royal marriage.

When night came, the bride and bridegroom were again attended to their chamber with the same ceremonies as on the preceding evening. Aladdin, knowing that this would be so, had already given his commands to the genie of the lamp; and no sooner were they alone than their bed was removed in the same mysterious manner as on the preceding evening; and having passed the night in the same unpleasant way, they were in the morning conveyed to the palace of the sultan. Scarcely had they been replaced in their apartment, when the sultan came to make his compliments to his daughter, when the princess could no longer conceal from him the unhappy treatment she had been subject to, and told him all that had happened as she had already related it to her mother. The sultan, on hearing these strange tidings, consulted with the grand vizier; and finding from him that his son had been subjected to even worse treatment by an invisible agency, he determined to declare the marriage to be cancelled, and all the festivities, which were yet to last for several days, to be countermanded and terminated.

This sudden change in the mind of the sultan gave rise to various speculations and reports. Nobody but Aladdin knew the secret, and he kept it with the most scrupulous silence; and neither the sultan nor the grand vizier, who had forgotten Aladdin and his request, had the least thought that he had any hand in the strange adventures that befell the bride and bridegroom.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

On the very day that the three months contained in the sultan's promise expired, the mother of Aladdin again went to the palace, and stood in the same place in the divan. The sultan knew her again, and directed his vizier to have her brought before him.

After having prostrated herself, she made answer, in reply to the sultan: "Sire, I come at the end of three months to ask of you the fulfillment of the promise you made to my son." The sultan little thought the request of Aladdin's mother was made to him in earnest, or that he would hear any more of the matter. He therefore took council with his vizier, who suggested that the sultan should attach such conditions to the marriage that no one of the humble condition of Aladdin could possibly fulfill. In accordance with this suggestion of the vizier, the sultan replied to the mother of Aladdin: "Good woman, it is true sultans ought to abide by their word, and I am ready to keep mine, by making your son happy in marriage with the princess my daughter. But as I cannot marry her without some further proof of your son being able to support her in royal state, you may tell him I will fulfill my promise as soon as he shall send me forty trays of massy gold, full of the same sort of jewels you have already made me a present of, and carried by the like number of black slaves, who shall be led by as many young and handsome white slaves, all dressed magnificently. On these conditions I am ready to bestow the princess my daughter upon him; therefore, good woman, go and tell him so, and I will wait till you bring me his answer."

Aladdin's mother prostrated herself a second time before the sultan's throne, and retired. On her way home, she laughed within herself at her son's foolish imagination. "Where," said she, "can he get so many large gold trays, and such precious stones to fill them? It is altogether out of his power, and I believe he will

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

not be much pleased with my embassy this time." When she came home, full of these thoughts, she told Aladdin all of the circumstances of her interview with the sultan, and the conditions on which he consented to the marriage. "The sultan expects your answer immediately," said she; and then added, laughing, "I believe he may wait long enough!"

"Not so long, mother, as you imagine," replied Aladdin. "This demand is a mere trifle, and will prove no bar to my marriage with the princess. I will prepare at once to satisfy his request."

Aladdin retired to his own apartment and summoned the genie of the lamp, and required him to immediately prepare and present the gift, before the sultan closed his morning audience, according to the terms in which it had been prescribed. The genie professed his obedience to the owner of the lamp, and disappeared. Within a very short time, a train of forty black slaves, led by the same number of white slaves, appeared opposite the house in which Aladdin lived. Each black slave carried on his head a basin of massy gold, full of pearls, diamonds, rubies and emeralds. Aladdin then addressed his mother: "Madam, pray lose no time; before the sultan and the divan rise, I would have you return to the palace with this present as the dowry demanded for the princess, that he may judge by my diligence and exactness of the ardent and sincere desire I have to procure myself the honor of this alliance."

As soon as this magnificent procession, with Aladdin's mother at its head, had begun to march from Aladdin's house, the whole city was filled with the crowds of people desirous to see so grand a sight. The graceful bearing, elegant form, and wonderful likeness of each slave; their grave walk at an equal distance from each other, the luster of their jeweled girdles, and the brilliancy of the aigrettes of precious

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

stones in their turbans, excited the greatest admiration in the spectators. As they had to pass through several streets to the palace, the whole length of the way was lined with files of spectators. Nothing, indeed, was ever seen so beautiful and brilliant in the sultan's palace, and the richest robes of the emirs of his court were not to be compared to the costly dresses of these slaves, whom they supposed to be kings.

As the sultan, who had been informed of their approach, had given orders for them to be admitted, they met with no obstacle, but went into the divan in regular order, one part turning to the right and the other to the left. After they were all entered, and had formed a semicircle before the sultan's throne, the black slaves laid the golden trays on the carpet, prostrated themselves, touching the carpet with their foreheads, and at the same time the white slaves did the same. When they rose, the black slaves uncovered the trays, and then all stood with their arms crossed over their breasts.

In the meantime, Aladdin's mother advanced to the foot of the throne, and having prostrated herself, said to the sultan, "Sire, my son knows this present is much below the notice of Princess Buddir al Buddoor; but hopes, nevertheless, that your majesty will accept of it, and make it agreeable to the princess, and with the greater confidence since he has endeavored to conform to the conditions you were pleased to impose."

The sultan, overpowered at the sight of such more than royal magnificence, replied without hesitation to the words of Aladdin's mother: "Go and tell your son that I wait with open arms to embrace him; and the more haste he makes to come and receive the princess my daughter from my hands, the greater pleasure he will do me." As soon as Aladdin's mother had retired, the sultan put an end to the audience; and rising from his throne ordered that the princess's attendants should

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

come and carry the trays into their mistress's apartment, whither he went himself to examine them with her at his leisure. The fourscore slaves were conducted into the palace; and the sultan, telling the princess of their magnificent apparel, ordered them to be brought before her apartment, that she might see through the lattices he had not exaggerated in his account of them.

In the meantime Aladdin's mother reached home, and showed in her air and countenance the good news she brought to her son. "My son," said she, "you may rejoice you are arrived at the height of your desires. The sultan has declared that you shall marry the Princess Buddir al Buddoor. He waits for you with impatience."

Aladdin, enraptured with this news, made his mother very little reply, but retired to his chamber. There he rubbed his lamp, and the obedient genie appeared. "Genie," said Aladdin, "convey me at once to a bath, and supply me with the richest and most magnificent robe ever worn by a monarch." No sooner were the words out of his mouth than the genie rendered him, as well as himself, invisible, and transported him into a hummum* of the finest marbles of all sorts of colors; where he was undressed, without seeing by whom, in a magnificent and spacious hall. He was then well rubbed and washed with various scented waters. After he had passed through several degrees of heat, he came out quite a different man from what he was before. His skin was clear as that of a child's, his body lightsome and free; and when he returned into the hall, he found, instead of his own poor raiment, a robe, the magnificence of which astonished him. The genie

* A Turkish word for a bath. Hence the name of the hotels, the old and new Hummums, situated in Covent Garden; as baths, a new fashion about a hundred years ago, were to be had at those hotels.

helped him to dress, and when he had done, transported him back to his own chamber, where he asked him if he had any other commands. "Yes," answered Aladdin, "bring me a charger that surpasses in beauty and goodness the best in the sultan's stables; with a saddle, bridle, and other caparisons to correspond with his value. Furnish also twenty slaves, as richly clothed as those who carried the present to the sultan, to walk by my side and follow me, and twenty more to go before me in two ranks. Besides these, bring my mother six women slaves to attend her, as richly dressed at least as any of the Princess Buddir al Buddoor's, each carrying a complete dress fit for any sultanness. I want also ten thousand pieces of gold in ten purses; go, and make haste."

As soon as Aladdin had given these orders, the genie disappeared, but presently returned with the horse, the forty slaves, ten of whom each carried a purse containing ten thousand pieces of gold, and six women slaves, each carrying on her head a different dress for Aladdin's mother, wrapt up in a piece of silver tissue, and presented them all to Aladdin.

He presented the six woman slaves to his mother, telling her they were her slaves, and that the dresses they had brought were for her use. Of the ten purses, Aladdin took four, which he gave to his mother, telling her those were to supply her with necessaries; the other six he left in the hands of the slaves who brought them, with an order to throw them by handfuls among the people as they went to the sultan's palace. The six slaves who carried the purses he ordered likewise to march before him, three on the right hand and three on the left.

When Aladdin had thus prepared himself for his first interview with the sultan, he dismissed the genie, and immediately mounting his charger, began his march,

and though he never was on horseback before, appeared with a grace the most experienced horseman might envy. The innumerable concourse of people through whom he passed made the air echo with their acclamations, especially every time the six slaves who carried the purses threw handfuls of gold among the populace.

On Aladdin's arrival at the palace, the sultan was surprised to find him more richly and magnificently robed than he had ever been himself, and was impressed with his good looks and dignity of manner, which were so different from what he expected in the son of one so humble as Aladdin's mother. He embraced him with all the demonstrations of joy, and when he would have fallen at his feet, held him by the hand, and made him sit near his throne. He shortly after led him amidst the sounds of trumpets, hautboys, and all kinds of music, to a magnificent entertainment, at which the sultan and Aladdin ate by themselves, and the great lords of the court, according to their rank and dignity, sat at different tables. After the feast, the sultan sent for the chief *cadi*, and commanded him to draw up a contract of marriage between the Princess *Buddir al Buddoor* and Aladdin. When the contract had been drawn, the sultan asked Aladdin if he would stay in the palace and complete the ceremonies of the marriage that day. "Sire," said Aladdin, "though great is my impatience to enter on the honor granted me by your majesty, yet I beg you to permit me first to build a palace worthy to receive the princess your daughter. I pray you to grant me sufficient ground near your palace, and I will have it completed with the utmost expedition." The sultan granted Aladdin's request, and again embraced him. After which he took his leave with as much politeness as if he had been bred up and had always lived at court.

Aladdin returned home in the order he had come, amidst the acclamations of the people, who wished him all happiness and prosperity. As soon as he dismounted, he retired to his own chamber, took the lamp, and summoned the genie as usual, who professed his allegiance. "Genie," said Aladdin, "build me a palace fit to receive the Princess Buddir al Buddoor. Let its materials be made of nothing less than porphyry, jasper, agate, lapis lazuli, and the finest marble. Let its walls be massive gold and silver bricks and laid alternately. Let each front contain six windows, and let the lattices of these (except one, which must be left unfinished) be enriched with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, so that they shall exceed everything of the kind ever seen in the world. Let there be an inner and an outer court in front of the palace, and a spacious garden; but above all things, provide a safe treasure-house, and fill it with gold and silver. Let there be also kitchens and store-houses, stables full of the finest horses, with their equerries and grooms, and hunting equipage, officers, attendants, and slaves, both men and women, to form a retinue for the princess and myself. Go and execute my wishes."

When Aladdin gave these commands to the genie, the sun was set. The next morning at daybreak the genie presented himself, and, having obtained Aladdin's consent, transported him in a moment to the palace he had made. The genie led him through all the apartments, where he found officers and slaves, habited according to their rank and the services to which they were appointed. The genie then showed him the treasury, which was opened by a treasurer, where Aladdin saw large vases of different sizes, piled up to the top with money, ranged all around the chamber. The genie thence led him to the stables, where were some of the finest horses in the world, and

the grooms busy in dressing them; from thence they went to the storehouses, which were filled with all things necessary, both for food and ornament.

When Aladdin had examined every portion of the palace, and particularly the hall with the four-and-twenty windows, and found it far to exceed his fondest expectations, he said, "Genie, there is one thing wanting, a fine carpet for the princess to walk upon from the sultan's palace to mine. Lay one down immediately." The genie disappeared, and Aladdin saw what he desired executed in an instant. The genie then returned, and carried him to his own home.

When the sultan's porters came to open the gates, they were amazed to find what had been an unoccupied garden filled up with a magnificent palace, and a splendid carpet extending to it all the way from the sultan's palace. They told the strange tidings to the grand vizier, who informed the sultan, who exclaimed, "It must be Aladdin's palace, which I gave him leave to build for my daughter. He has wished to surprise us, and let us see what wonders can be done in only one night."

Aladdin, on his being conveyed by the genie to his own home, requested his mother to go to the Princess Buddir al Buddoor, and tell her that the palace would be ready for her reception in the evening. She went, attended by her women slaves, in the same order as on the preceding day. Shortly after her arrival at the princess's apartment, the sultan himself came in, and was surprised to find her, whom he knew as his suppliant at his divan in such humble guise, to be now more richly and sumptuously attired than his own daughter. This gave him a higher opinion of Aladdin, who took such care of his mother, and made her share his wealth and honors. Shortly after her departure, Aladdin, mounting his horse, and attended by his retinue of

magnificent attendants, left his paternal home forever, and went to the palace in the same pomp as on the day before. Nor did he forget to take with him the wonderful lamp, to which he owed all his good fortune, nor to wear the ring which was given him as a talisman. The sultan entertained Aladdin with the utmost magnificence, and at night, on the conclusion of the marriage ceremonies, the princess took leave of the sultan her father. Bands of music led the procession, followed by a hundred state ushers, and the like number of black mutes, in two files, with their officers at their head. Four hundred of the sultan's young pages carried flambeaux on each side, which, together with the illuminations of the sultan's and Aladdin's palaces, made it as light as day. In this order the princess, conveyed in her litter, and accompanied also by Aladdin's mother, carried in a superb litter and attended by her women slaves, proceeded on the carpet which was spread from the sultan's palace to that of Aladdin. On her arrival Aladdin was ready to receive her at the entrance, and led her into a large hall, illuminated with an infinite number of wax candles, where a noble feast was served up. The dishes were of massy gold, and contained the most delicate viands. The vases, basins, and goblets were gold also, and of exquisite workmanship, and all the other ornaments and embellishments of the hall were answerable to this display. The princess, dazzled to see so much riches collected in one place, said to Aladdin, "I thought, prince, that nothing in the world was so beautiful as the sultan my father's palace, but the sight of this hall alone is sufficient to show I was deceived."

When the supper was ended, there entered a company of female dancers,* who performed, according to the

* These were the "Nautch girls," attached to this day to all Eastern courts.

custom of the country, singing at the same time verses in praise of the bride and bridegroom. About midnight Aladdin's mother conducted the bride to the nuptial apartment, and he soon after retired.

The next morning the attendants of Aladdin presented themselves to dress him, and brought him another habit, as rich and magnificent as that worn the day before. He then ordered one of the horses to be got ready, mounted him, and went in the midst of a large troop of slaves to the sultan's palace to entreat him to take a repast in the princess's palace, attended by his grand vizier and all the lords of his court. The sultan consented with pleasure, rose up immediately, and, preceded by the principal officers of his palace, and followed by all the great lords of his court, accompanied Aladdin.

The nearer the sultan approached Aladdin's palace, the more he was struck with its beauty, but when he entered it, came into the hall, and saw the windows, enriched with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, all large, perfect stones, he was completely surprised, and said to his son-in-law, "This palace is one of the wonders of the world; for where in all the world besides shall we find walls built of massy gold and silver, and diamonds, rubies and emeralds composing the windows? But what most surprises me is, that a hall of this magnificence should be left with one of its windows incomplete and unfinished. "Sire," answered Aladdin, "the omission was by design, since I wished that you should have the glory of finishing this hall." "I take your intention kindly," said the sultan, "and will give orders about it immediately."

After the sultan had finished this magnificent entertainment, provided for him and for his court by Aladdin, he was informed that the jewelers and goldsmiths attended; upon which he returned to the hall, and

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

showed them the window which was unfinished. "I sent for you," said he, "to fit up this window in as great perfection as the rest. Examine them well, and make all the dispatch you can."

The jewelers and goldsmiths examined the three-and-twenty windows with great attention, and after they had consulted together, to know what each could furnish, they returned, and presented themselves before the sultan, whose principal jeweler, undertaking to speak for the rest, said, "Sire, we are all willing to exert our utmost care and industry to obey you; but among us all we cannot furnish jewels enough for so great a work." "I have more than are necessary," said the sultan; "come to my palace, and you shall choose what may answer your purpose."

When the sultan returned to his palace, he ordered his jewels to be brought out, and the jewelers took a great quantity, particularly those Aladdin had made him a present of, which they soon used, without making any great advance in their work. They came again several times for more, and in a month's time had not finished half their work. In short, they used all the jewels the sultan had, and borrowed of the vizier, but yet the work was not half done.

Aladdin, who knew that all the sultan's endeavors to make this window like the rest were in vain, sent for the jewelers and goldsmiths, and not only commanded them to desist from their work, but ordered them to undo what they had begun, and to carry all their jewels back to the sultan and to the vizier. They undid in a few hours what they had been six weeks about, and retired, leaving Aladdin alone in the hall. He took the lamp, which he carried about him, rubbed it, and presently the genie appeared. "Genie," said Aladdin, "I ordered thee to leave one of the four-and-twenty windows of this hall imperfect, and thou hast executed

my commands punctually; now I would have thee make it like the rest." The genie immediately disappeared. Aladdin went out of the hall, and returning soon after, found the window, as he wished it to be, like the others.

In the meantime, the jewelers and goldsmiths repaired to the palace, and were introduced into the sultan's presence; where the chief jeweler presented the precious stones which he had brought back. The sultan asked them if Aladdin had given them any reason for so doing, and they answering that he had given them none, he ordered a horse to be brought, which he mounted, and rode to his son-in-law's palace, with some few attendants on foot, to inquire why he had ordered the completion of the window to be stopped. Aladdin met him at the gate, and without giving any reply to his inquiries, conducted him to the grand saloon, where the sultan, to his great surprise, found the window, which was left imperfect, to correspond exactly with the others. He fancied at first that he was mistaken, and examined the two windows on each side, and afterward all the four-and-twenty; but when he was convinced that the window which several workmen had been so long about was finished in so short a time, he embraced Aladdin and kissed him between his eyes. "My son," said he, "what a man you are to do such surprising things always in the twinkling of an eye! there is not your fellow in the world; the more I know, the more I admire you."

The sultan returned to the palace, and after this went frequently to the window to contemplate and admire the wonderful palace of his son-in-law.

Aladdin did not confine himself in his palace, but went with much state, sometimes to one mosque, and sometimes to another, to prayers, or to visit the grand vizier or the principal lords of the court. Every time he went out, he caused two slaves, who walked by the

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

side of his horse, to throw handfuls of money among the people as he passed through the streets and squares. This generosity gained him the love and blessings of the people, and it was common for them to swear by his head.* Thus Aladdin, while he paid all respect to the sultan, won by his affable behavior and liberality the affections of the people.

Aladdin had conducted himself in this manner several years, when the African magician, who for some years dismissed him from his recollection, determined to inform himself with certainty whether he perished, as he supposed, in the subterranean cave or not. After he had resorted to a long course of magic ceremonies, and had formed a horoscope by which to ascertain Aladdin's fate, what was his surprise to find the appearances to declare that Aladdin, instead of dying in the cave, had made his escape, and was living in royal splendor by the aid of the genie of the wonderful lamp!

On the very next day, the magician set out and traveled with the utmost haste to the capital of China, where, on his arrival, he took up his lodgings in a khan.

He then quickly learnt about the wealth, charities, happiness, and splendid palace of Prince Aladdin. Directly he saw the wonderful fabric, he knew that none but the genies, the slaves of the lamp, could have performed such wonders, and, piqued to the quick at Aladdin's high estate, he returned to the khan.

On his return he had recourse to an operation of geomancy to find out where the lamp was—whether Aladdin carried it about with him, or where he left it. The result of his consultation informed him, to his great joy, that the lamp was in the palace. "Well," said, he, rubbing his hands in glee, "I shall have the

* There is a trace of this custom in Joseph swearing to his brethren, "By the life of Pharaoh, ye are spies!"

lamp, and I shall make Aladdin return to his original mean condition."

The next day the magician learnt, from the chief superintendent of the khan where he lodged, that Aladdin had gone on a hunting expedition,* which was to last for eight days, of which only three had expired. The magician wanted to know no more. He resolved at once on his plans. He went to a coppersmith, and asked for a dozen copper lamps; the master of the shop told him he had not so many by him, but if he would

* "But even in the East, where the qualities of the chetah appear to be best appreciated, and his faculties to be turned to most account, it would seem that he is not employed in hunting by all classes of the people indiscriminately; but, on the contrary, that he is reserved for the especial amusement of the nobles and princes of the land rather than used for purposes of real and general advantage. In this respect, and, indeed, in many others, as will be seen by the following brief account of the mode in which the chase with the hunting leopard is conducted, it bears a close resemblance to the ancient sport of hawking, so prevalent throughout Europe in the days of feudal tyranny, but scarcely practiced at the present day, except by the more splendid slaves of Asiatic despotism. The animal or animals—for occasionally several of them are employed at the same time—are carried to the field on low chariots, on which they are kept chained and hooded, in order to deprive them of the power and temptation to leap forth before the appointed time. When they are thus brought within view of a herd of antelopes, which generally consist of five or six females and a male, they are unchained and their hoods removed, their keepers directing their attention to the prey, which, as they do not hunt by smell, it is necessary that they should have constantly in sight. When this is done, the animal does not at once start toward the object of his pursuit, but, seemingly aware that he would have no chance of overtaking an antelope, winds cautiously along the ground, concealing himself as much as possible; and when he has nearly reached the unsuspecting herd, breaks forth upon them unawares, and after five or six tremendous bounds, which he executes with almost incredible velocity, darts at once upon his terrified victim, strangles him in an instant, and takes his fill of blood. In the mean while the keeper quietly approaches the scene of slaughter, caresses the successful animal, and throws to him pieces of meat to amuse him and keep him quiet, while he blinds him with the hood, and replaces him on the chariot, to which he is again attached by his chain. But if, as is not unfrequently the case, the herd should have taken the alarm, and the chetah should prove unsuccessful, he never attempts to pursue them, but returns to his master with mortified and dejected air, to be again let slip at a fresh quarry whenever a fit opportunity occurs."—*Tower Menagerie*, pp. 66, 67.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

have patience till the next day, he would have them ready. The magician appointed his time, and desired him to take care that they should be handsome and well polished.

The next day the magician called for the twelve lamps, paid the man his full price, put them into a basket hanging on his arm, and went directly to Aladdin's palace. As he approached, he began crying, "Who will exchange old lamps for new ones?" As he went along, a crowd of children collected, who hooted, and thought him, as did all who chanced to be passing by, a madman or a fool, to offer to exchange new lamps for old ones.

The African magician regarded not their scoffs, hootings, or all they could say to him, but still continued crying, "Who will change old lamps for new ones?" He repeated this so often, walking backward and forward in front of the palace, that the princess, who was then in the hall with the four-and-twenty windows, hearing a man cry something, and seeing a great mob crowding about him, sent one of her women slaves to know what he cried.

The slave returned, laughing so heartily that the princess rebuked her. "Madam," answered the slave, laughing still, "who can forbear laughing, to see an old man with a basket on his arm, full of fine new lamps, asking to change them for old ones? The children and mob crowding about him, so that he can hardly stir, make all the noise they can, in derision of him."

Another female slave, hearing this, said, "Now you speak of lamps, I know not whether the princess may have observed it, but there is an old one upon a shelf of the Prince Aladdin's robing-room, and whoever owns it will not be sorry to find a new one in its stead. If the princess chooses, she may have the pleasure of trying if this old man is so silly as to give

a new lamp for an old one, without taking anything for the exchange."

The princess, who knew not the value of the lamp, and the interest that Aladdin had to keep it safe, entered into the pleasantry, and commanded a slave to take it and make the exchange. The slave obeyed, went out of the hall, and no sooner got to the palace gates than he saw the African magician, called to him, and showing him the old lamp, said, "Give me a new lamp for this."

The magician never doubted but this was the lamp he wanted. There could be no other such in this palace, where every utensil was gold or silver. He snatched it eagerly out of the slave's hand, and thrusting it as far as he could into his breast, offered him his basket, and bade him choose which he liked best. The slave picked out one and carried it to the princess; but the change was no sooner made than the place rung with the shouts of the children, deriding the magician's folly.

The African magician stayed no longer near the palace, nor cried any more, "New lamps for old ones," but made the best of his way to his khan. His end was answered, and by his silence he got rid of the children and the mob.

As soon as he was out of sight of the two palaces, he hastened down the least-frequented streets; and having no more occasion for his lamps or basket, set all down in a spot where nobody saw him; then going down another street or two, he walked until he came to one of the city gates, and pursuing his way through the suburbs, which were very extensive, at length reached a lonely spot, where he stopped till the darkness of the night, as the most suitable time for the design he had in contemplation. When it became quite dark, he pulled the lamp out of his breast and rubbed it. At that

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

summons, the genie appeared, and said, "What wouldst thou have? I am ready to obey thee as thy slave, and the slave of all those who have that lamp in their hands; both I and the other slaves of the lamp." "I command thee," replied the magician, "to transport me immediately, and the palace which thou and the other slaves of the lamp have built in this city, with all the people in it, to Africa." The genie made no reply, but with the assistance of the other genies, the slaves of the lamp, immediately transported him and the palace, entire, to the spot whither he had been desired to convey it.

Early the next morning, when the sultan, according to custom, went to contemplate and admire Aladdin's palace, his amazement was unbounded to find that it could nowhere be seen. He could not comprehend how so large a palace, which he had seen plainly every day for some years, should vanish so soon, and not leave the least remains behind. In his perplexity he ordered the grand vizier to be sent for with expedition.

The grand vizier, who, in secret, bore no good will to Aladdin, intimated his suspicion that the palace was built by magic, and that Aladdin had made his hunting excursion an excuse for the removal of his palace with the same suddenness with which it had been erected. He induced the sultan to send a detachment of his guard, and to have Aladdin seized as a prisoner of state. On his son-in-law being brought before him, he would not hear a word from him, but ordered him to be put to death. The decree caused so much discontent among the people, whose affection Aladdin had secured by his largesses and charities, that the sultan, fearful of an insurrection, was obliged to grant him his life. When Aladdin found himself at liberty, he again addressed the sultan: "Sire, I pray you let me know the crime by which I have thus lost the favor of thy coun-

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

tenance." "Your crime!" answered the sultan, "wretched man! do you not know it? Follow me, and I will show you." The sultan then took Aladdin into the apartment from whence he was wont to look at and admire his palace, and said, "You ought to know where your palace stood; look, mind, and tell me what has become of it." Aladdin did so, and being utterly amazed at the loss of his palace, was speechless. At last recovering himself, he said, "It is true, I do not see the palace. It has vanished; but I had no concern in its removal. I beg you to give me forty days, and if in that time I cannot restore it, I will offer my head to be disposed of at your pleasure." "I give you the time you ask, but at the end of the forty days, forget not to present yourself before me."

Aladdin went out of the sultan's palace in a condition of exceeding humiliation. The lords who had courted him in the days of his splendor now declined to have any communication with him. For three days he wandered about the city, exciting the wonder and compassion of the multitude by asking everybody he met if they had seen his palace, or could tell him anything of it. On the third day he wandered into the country, and as he was approaching a river, he fell down the bank with so much violence that he rubbed the ring which the magician had given him so hard by holding on the rock to save himself, that immediately the same genie appeared whom he had seen in the cave where the magician had left him. "What wouldst thou have?" said the genie, "I am ready to obey thee as thy slave, and the slave of all those that have that ring on their finger; both I and the other slaves of the ring."

Aladdin, agreeably surprised at an offer of help so little expected, replied, "Genie, show me where the palace I caused to be built now stands, or transport it back where it first stood." "Your command," an-

swered the genie, "is not wholly in my power; I am only the slave of the ring, and not of the lamp." "I command thee, then," replied Aladdin, "by the power of the ring, to transport me to the spot where my palace stands, in what part of the world soever it may be." These words were no sooner out of his mouth, than the genie transported him into Africa, to the midst of a large plain, where his palace stood, at no great distance from a city, and placing him exactly under the window of the princess's apartment, left him.

Now it so happened that shortly after Aladdin had been transported by the slave of the ring to the neighborhood of his palace, that one of the attendants of the Princess Buddir al Buddoor, looking through the window, perceived him and instantly told her mistress. The princess, who could not believe the joyful tidings, hastened herself to the window, and seeing Aladdin, immediately opened it. The noise of opening the window made Aladdin turn his head that way, and perceiving the princess, he saluted her with an air that expressed his joy. "To lose no time," said she to him, "I have sent to have the private door opened for you; enter and come up."

The private door, which was just under the princess's apartment, was soon opened, and Aladdin conducted up into the chamber. It is impossible to express the joy of both at seeing each other, after so cruel a separation. After embracing and shedding tears of joy, they sat down, and Aladdin said, "I beg of you, princess, to tell me what is become of an old lamp which stood upon a shelf in my robing-chamber?"

"Alas!" answered the princess, "I was afraid our misfortune might be owing to that lamp; and what grieves me most is, that I have been the cause of it. I was foolish enough to change the old lamp for a new

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

one, and the next morning I found myself in this unknown country, which I am told is Africa."

"Princess," said Aladdin, interrupting her, "you have explained all by telling me we are in Africa. I desire you only to tell me if you know where the old lamp now is." "The African magician carries it carefully wrapt up in his bosom," said the princess; "and this I can assure you, because he pulled it out before me, and showed it to me in triumph."

"Princess," said Aladdin, "I think I have found the means to deliver you and to regain possession of the lamp, on which all my prosperity depends; to execute this design, it is necessary for me to go to the town. I shall return by noon, and will then tell you what must be done by you to insure success. In the meantime, I shall disguise myself, and I beg that the private door may be opened at the first knock."

When Aladdin was out of the palace, he looked round him on all sides, and perceiving a peasant going into the country, hastened after him; and when he had overtaken him, made a proposal to him to change clothes, which the man agreed to. When they had made the exchange, the countryman went about his business, and Aladdin entered the neighboring city. After traversing several streets, he came to that part of the town where the merchants and artisans had their particular streets according to their trades.* He went into that of the druggists; and entering one of the largest and best furnished shops, asked the druggist if he had a certain powder, which he named.

The druggist, judging Aladdin by his habit to be very poor, told him he had it, but that it was very dear; upon which Aladdin, penetrating his thoughts, pulled

* This location of persons of one trade in one part of a town was once common in England. Hence the "Draper's Lane" and "Butcher's Row," found in many of the large towns; and the "Old Jewry," "Lombard Street," and "Cheapside," of London.

out his purse, and showing him some gold, asked for half a dram of the powder; which the druggist weighed and gave him, telling him the price was a piece of gold. Aladdin put the money into his hand, and hastened to the palace, which he entered at once by the private door. When he came into the princess's apartment, he said to her, "Princess, you must take your part in the scheme which I propose for our deliverance. You must overcome your aversion to the magician, and assume a most friendly manner toward him, and ask him to oblige you by partaking of an entertainment in your apartments. Before he leaves, ask him to exchange cups with you, which he, gratified at the honor you do him, will gladly do, when you must give him the cup containing this powder. On drinking it he will instantly fall asleep, and we will obtain the lamp, whose slaves will do all our bidding, and restore us and the palace to the capital of China."

The princess obeyed to the utmost her husband's instructions. She assumed a look of pleasure on the next visit of the magician, and asked him to an entertainment, which he most willingly accepted. At the close of the evening, during which the princess had tried all she could to please him, she asked him to exchange cups with her, and giving the signal, had the drugged cup brought to her, which she gave to the magician. He drank it out of compliment to the princess to the very last drop, when he fell backward lifeless on the sofa.

The princess, in anticipation of the success of her scheme, had so placed her women from the great hall to the foot of the staircase, that the word was no sooner given that the African magician was fallen backward, than the door was opened, and Aladdin admitted to the hall. The princess rose from her seat, and ran, overjoyed, to embrace him; but he stopped her, and said,

"Princess, retire to your apartment; and let me be left alone, while I endeavor to transport you back to China as speedily as you were brought from thence."

When the princess, her women, and slaves were gone out of the hall, Aladdin shut the door, and going directly to the dead body of the magician, opened his vest, took out the lamp, which was carefully wrapped up, and rubbing it, the genie immediately appeared. "Genie," said Alladin, "I command thee to transport this palace instantly to the place from whence it was brought hither." The genie bowed his head in token of obedience, and disappeared. Immediately the palace was transported into China, and its removal was only felt by two little shocks, the one when it was lifted up, the other when it was set down, and both in a very short interval of time.

On the morning after the restoration of Aladdin's palace, the sultan was looking out of his window, and mourning over the fate of his daughter, when he thought that he saw the vacancy created by the disappearance of the palace to be again filled up.

On looking more attentively, he was convinced beyond the power of doubt that it was his son-in-law's palace. Joy and gladness succeeded to sorrow and grief. He at once ordered a horse to be saddled, which he mounted that instant, thinking he could not make haste enough to the palace.

Aladdin rose that morning by daybreak, put on one of the most magnificent habits his wardrobe afforded, and went up into the hall of twenty-four windows, from whence he perceived the sultan approaching, and received him at the foot of the great staircase, helping him to dismount.

He led the sultan into the princess's apartment. The happy father embraced her with tears of joy; and the princess, on her side, afforded similar testimonies of

her extreme pleasure. After a short interval, devoted to mutual explanations of all that had happened, the sultan restored Aladdin to his favor, and expressed his regret for the apparent harshness with which he had treated him. "My son," said he, "be not displeased at my proceedings against you; they arose from my paternal love, and therefore you ought to forgive the excesses to which it hurried me." "Sire," replied Aladdin, "I have not the least reason to complain of your conduct, since you did nothing but what your duty required. This infamous magician, the basest of men, was the sole cause of my misfortune."

The African magician, who was thus twice foiled in his endeavor to ruin Aladdin, had a younger brother, who was as skillful a magician as himself, and exceeded him in wickedness and hatred of mankind. By mutual agreement, they communicated with each other once a year, however widely separated might be their place of residence from each other. The younger brother not having received as usual his annual communication, prepared to take a horoscope and ascertain his brother's proceedings. He, as well as his brother, always carried a geomantic square instrument about him; he prepared the sand,* cast the points, and drew the figures. On examining the planetary crystal, he found that his brother was no longer living, but had been poisoned; and by another observation, that he was in the capital of the kingdom of China; also, that the person who had poisoned him was of mean birth, though married to a princess, a sultan's daughter.

When the magician had informed himself of his

* Reml or Raml signifies "sand prepared," or a preparation of sand on which are marked certain figures serving for a kind of divination, which we call Geomancy; and the Arabs and Turks Kikmut al Reml. These disposed in a certain number on many unequal lines, are described also with a pen on paper; and the person who practices divination by this art is called Rammal.—D'Herbelot, art. Raml.

brother's fate, he resolved immediately to revenge his death, and at once departed for China; where, after crossing plains, rivers, mountains, deserts, and a long tract of country without delay, he arrived after incredible fatigues. When he came to the capital of China, he took a lodging at a khan. His magic art soon revealed to him that Aladdin was the person who had been the cause of the death of his brother. He had heard, too, all the persons of repute in the city talking of a woman called Fatima, who was retired from the world, and of the miracles she wrought. As he fancied that this woman might be serviceable to him in the project he had conceived, he made more minute inquiries, and requested to be informed more particularly who that holy woman was, and what sort of miracles she performed.

"What!" said the person whom he addressed, "have you never seen or heard of her? She is the admiration of the whole town, for her fasting, her austerities, and her exemplary life. Except Mondays and Fridays, she never stirs out of her little cell; and on those days on which she comes into the town she does an infinite deal of good; for there is not a person who is diseased but she puts her hand on them and cures them."

Having ascertained the place where the hermitage of this holy woman was, the magician went at night, and plunged a poignard into her heart—killed this good woman. In the morning he dyed his face of the same hue as hers, and arraying himself in her garb, taking her veil, the large necklace she wore round her waist, and her stick, went straight to the palace of Aladdin.

As soon as the people saw the holy woman, as they imagined him to be, they presently gathered about him in a great crowd. Some begged his blessing, others kissed his hand, and others, more reserved, only the hem of his garment; while others, suffering from disease, stooped for him to lay his hands upon them;

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

which he did, muttering some words in form of prayer, and, in short, counterfeiting so well, that everybody took him for the holy woman. He came at last to the square before Aladdin's palace. The crowd and the noise were so great that the princess, who was in the hall of four-and-twenty windows, heard it, and asked what was the matter. One of her women told her it was a great crowd of people collected about the holy woman to be cured of diseases by the imposition of her hands.

The princess, who had long heard of this holy woman, but had never seen her, was very desirous to have some conversation with her; which the chief officer perceiving, told her it was an easy matter to bring her to her, if she desired and commanded it; and the princess expressing her wishes, he immediately sent four slaves for the pretended holy woman.

As soon as the crowd saw the attendants from the palace, they made way; and the magician, perceiving also that they were coming for him, advanced to meet them, overjoyed to find his plot succeed so well. "Holy woman," said one of the slaves, "the princess wants to see you, and has sent us for you." "The princess does me too great an honor," replied the false Fatima; "I am ready to obey her command," and at the same time followed the slaves to the palace.

When the pretended Fatima had made her obeisance, the princess said, "My good mother, I have one thing to request, which you must not refuse me; it is, to stay with me, that you may edify me with your way of living, and that I may learn from your good example." "Princess," said the counterfeit Fatima, "I beg of you not to ask me what I cannot consent to without neglecting my prayers and devotion." "That shall be no hindrance to you," answered the princess; "I have a great many apartments unoccupied; you shall choose

which you like best, and have as much liberty to perform your devotions as if you were in your own cell."

The magician, who really desired nothing more than to introduce himself into the palace, where it would be a much easier matter for him to execute his designs, did not long excuse himself from accepting the obliging offer which the princess made him. "Princess," said he, "whatever resolution a poor wretched woman as I am may have made to renounce the pomp and grandeur of this world, I dare not presume to oppose the will and commands of so pious and charitable a princess."

Upon this the princess, rising up, said, "Come with me, I will show you what vacant apartments I have, that you may make choice of that you like best." The magician followed the princess, and of all the apartments she showed him, made choice of that which was the worst, saying that was too good for him, and that he only accepted it to please her.

Afterward the princess would have brought him back again into the great hall to make him dine with her; but he, considering that he should then be obliged to show his face, which he had always taken care to conceal with Fatima's veil, and fearing that the princess should find out that he was not Fatima, begged of her earnestly to excuse him, telling her that he never ate anything but bread and dried fruits, and desiring to eat that slight repast in his own apartment. The princess granted his request, saying, "You may be as free here, good mother, as if you were in your own cell; I will order you a dinner, but remember I expect you as soon as you have finished your repast."

After the princess had dined, and the false Fatima had been sent for by one of the attendants, he again waited upon her. "My good mother," said the princess, "I am overjoyed to see so holy a woman as yourself, who will confer a blessing upon this palace. But now I

am speaking of the palace, pray how do you like it? And before I show it all to you, tell me first what you think of this hall."

Upon this question, the counterfeit Fatima surveyed the hall from one end to the other. When he had examined it well, he said to the princess, "As far as such a solitary being as I am, who am unacquainted with what the world calls beautiful, can judge, this hall is truly admirable; there wants but one thing." "What is that, good mother?" demanded the princess; "tell me, I conjure you. For my part, I always believed, and have heard say, it wanted nothing; but if it does, it shall be supplied."

"Princess," said the false Fatima, with great dissimulation, "forgive me the liberty I have taken; but my opinion is, if it can be of any importance, that if a roc's egg were hung up in the middle of the dome, this hall would have no parallel in the four quarters of the world, and your palace would be the wonder of the universe."

"My good mother," said the princess, "what is a roc, and where may one get an egg?" "Princess," replied the pretended Fatima, "it is a bird of prodigious size, which inhabits the summit of Mount Caucasus; the architect who built your palace can get you one."

After the princess had thanked the false Fatima for what she believed her good advice, she conversed with her upon other matters; but could not forget the roc's egg, which she resolved to request of Aladdin when next he should visit his apartments. He did so in the course of that evening, and shortly after he entered, the princess thus addressed him: "I always believed that our palace was the most superb, magnificent and complete in the world; but I will tell you now what it wants, and that is a roc's egg hung up in the midst of the dome." "Princess," replied Aladdin, "it is

ALADDIN; OR, THE WONDERFUL LAMP.

enough that you think it wants such an ornament; you shall see by the diligence which I use in obtaining it, that there is nothing which I would not do for your sake."

Aladdin left the Princess Buddir al Buddoor that moment, and went up into the hall of four-and-twenty windows, where, pulling out of his bosom the lamp, which after the danger he had been exposed to he always carried about him, he rubbed it; upon which the genie immediately appeared. "Genie," said Aladdin, "I command thee, in the name of this lamp, bring a roc's egg to be hung up in the middle of the dome of the hall of the palace." Aladdin had no sooner pronounced these words than the hall shook as if ready to fall, and the genie said in a loud and terrible voice, "Is it not enough that I and the other slaves of the lamp have done everything for you, but you, by an unheard of ingratitude, must command me to bring my master, and hang him up in the midst of this dome? This attempt deserves that you, the princess, and the palace, should be immediately reduced to ashes; but you are spared because this request does not come from yourself. Its true author is the brother of the African magician, your enemy whom you have destroyed. He is now in your palace, disguised in the habit of the holy woman Fatima, whom he has murdered; at his suggestion your wife makes this pernicious demand. His design is to kill you, therefore take care of yourself." After these words the genie disappeared.

Aladdin resolved at once what to do. He returned to the princess's apartment, and without mentioning a word of what had happened, sat down, and complained of a great pain which had suddenly seized his head. Upon hearing this, the princess told him how she had invited the holy Fatima to stay with her, and that she

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT

was now in the palace; and at the request of the prince, ordered her to be summoned to her at once.

When the pretended Fatima came, Aladdin said, "Come hither, good mother; I am glad to see you here at so fortunate a time. I am tormented with a violent pain in my head, and request your assistance, and hope you will not refuse me that cure which you impart to afflicted persons." So saying, he arose, but held down his head. The counterfeit Fatima advanced toward him, with his hand all the time on a dagger concealed in his girdle under his gown; which Aladdin, observing, he snatched the weapon from his hand, pierced him to the heart with his own dagger, and then pushed him down on the floor.

"My dear prince, what have you done?" cried the princess, in surprise. "You have killed the holy woman!" "No, my princess," answered Aladdin, with emotion, "I have not killed Fatima, but a villain, who would have assassinated me, if I had not prevented him. This wicked man," added he, uncovering his face, "is the brother of the magician who attempted our ruin. He has strangled the true Fatima, and disguised himself in her clothes with intent to murder me." Aladdin then informed her how the genie had told him these facts, and how narrowly she and the palace had escaped destruction through his treacherous suggestion which had led to her request.

Thus was Aladdin delivered from the persecution of the two brothers, who were magicians. Within a few years afterward, the sultan died in a good old age, and as he left no male children, the Princess Buddir al Buddoor succeeded him, and she and Aladdin reigned together many years, and left a numerous and illustrious posterity.

THE FORTY THIEVES

The Thieves of the Desert



THE FORTY THIEVES

(Arabian Nights)

THERE once lived in a town of Persia two brothers, one named Cassim and the other Ali Baba. Their father divided a small inheritance equally between them. Cassim married a very rich wife, and became a wealthy merchant. Ali Baba married a woman as poor as himself, and lived by cutting wood, and bringing it upon three asses into the town to sell.

One day, when Ali Baba was in the forest, and had just cut wood enough to load his asses, he saw at a distance a great cloud of dust, which seemed to approach him. He observed it with attention, and distinguished soon after a body of horsemen, whom he suspected might be robbers. He determined to leave his asses to save himself. He climbed up a large tree, planted on a high rock, whose branches were thick enough to conceal him, and yet enabled him to see all that passed without being discovered.

The troop, who were to the number of forty, all well mounted and armed, came to the foot of the rock on which the tree stood, and there dismounted. Every man unbridled his horse, tied him to some shrub, and hung about his neck a bag of corn which they had brought behind them. Then each of them took off his saddle-bag which seemed to Ali Baba to be full of gold and silver from its weight. One, whom he took to be

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

their captain, came under the tree in which Ali Baba was concealed; and making his way through some shrubs, pronounced these words: "Open, Sesame!"* As soon as the captain of the robbers had thus spoken, a door opened in the rock; and after he had made all his troop enter before him, he followed them, when the door shut again of itself.

The robbers stayed some time within the rock, during which Ali Baba, fearful of being caught, remained in the tree.

At last the door opened again, and as the captain went in last, so he came out first, and stood to see them all pass by him; when Ali Baba heard him make the door close by pronouncing these words, "Shut, Sesame!" Every man at once went and bridled his horse, fastened his wallet, and mounted again. When the captain saw them all ready, he put himself at their head, and they returned the way they had come.

Ali Baba followed them with his eyes as far as he could see them; and afterward stayed a considerable time before he descended. Remembering the words the captain of the robbers used to cause the door to open and shut, he had the curiosity to try if his pronouncing them would have the same effect. Accordingly, he went among the shrubs, and perceiving the door concealed behind them, stood before it, and said, "Open, Sesame!" The door instantly flew wide open.

Ali Baba, who expected a dark, dismal cavern, was surprised to see a well-lighted and spacious chamber, which received the light from an opening at the top of the rock, and in which were all sorts of provisions, rich bales of silk, stuff, brocade, and valuable carpeting, piled one upon another; gold and silver ingots in great heaps, and money in bags. The sight of all

* "Sesame" is a small grain.

THE FORTY THIEVES.

these riches made him suppose that this cave must have been occupied for ages by robbers, who had succeeded one another.

Ali Baba went boldly into the cave, and collected as much of the gold coin, which was in bags, as he thought his three asses could carry. When he had loaded them with the bags, he laid wood over them in such a manner that they could not be seen. When he had passed in and out as often as he wished, he stood before the door, and pronouncing the words, "Shut, Sesame!" the door closed of itself. He then made the best of his way to town.

When Ali Baba got home, he drove his asses into a little yard, shut the gates very carefully, threw off the wood that covered the panniers, carried the bags into his house, and ranged them in order before his wife. He then emptied the bags, which raised such a great heap of gold as dazzled his wife's eyes, and then he told her the whole adventure from beginning to end, and, above all, recommended her to keep it secret.

The wife rejoiced greatly at their good fortune, and would count all the gold piece by piece. "Wife," replied Ali Baba, "you do not know what you undertake, when you pretend to count the money; you will never have done. I will dig a hole and bury it. There is no time to be lost." "You are in the right, husband," replied she, "but let us know, as nigh as possible, how much we have. I will borrow a small measure and measure it, while you dig the hole."

Away the wife ran to her brother-in-law Cassim, who lived just by, and addressing herself to his wife, desired her to lend her a measure for a little while. Her sister-in-law asked her whether she would have a great or a small one. The other asked for a small one. She bade her stay a little and she would readily fetch one.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

The sister-in-law did so, but as she knew Ali Baba's poverty, she was curious to know what sort of grain his wife wanted to measure, and artfully putting some suet at the bottom of the measure, brought it to her, with an excuse that she was sorry that she had made her stay so long, but that she could not find it sooner.

Ali Baba's wife went home, set the measure upon the heap of gold, filled it, and emptied it often upon the sofa, till she had done, when she was very well satisfied to find the number of measures amounted to so many as they did, and went to tell her husband, who had almost finished digging the hole. When Ali Baba was burying the gold his wife, to show her exactness and diligence to her sister-in-law, carried the measure back again, but without taking notice that a piece of gold had stuck to the bottom. "Sister," said she, giving it to her again, "you see that I have not kept your measure long. I am obliged to you for it, and return it with thanks."

As soon as Ali Baba's wife was gone, Cassim's looked at the bottom of the measure and was in inexpressible surprise to find a piece of gold sticking to it. Envy immediately possessed her breast. "What!" said she, "has Ali Baba gold so plentiful as to measure it? Whence has he all this wealth?"

Cassim, her husband, was at his counting-house. When he came home, his wife said to him, "Cassim, I know you think yourself rich, but Ali Baba is infinitely richer than you. He does not count his money, but measures it." Cassim desired her to explain the riddle, which she did, by telling him the stratagem she had used to make the discovery, and showed him the piece of money, which was so old that they could not tell in what prince's reign it was coined.

Cassim, after he had married the rich widow, had never treated Ali Baba as a brother, but neglected him;

THE FORTY THIEVES.

and now, instead of being pleased, he conceived a base envy at his brother's prosperity. He could not sleep all that night, and went to him in the morning before sunrise. "Ali Baba," said he, "I am surprised at you; you pretend to be miserably poor, and yet you measure gold. My wife found this at the bottom of the measure you borrowed yesterday."

By this discourse Ali Baba perceived that Cassim and his wife, through his own wife's folly, knew what they had so much reason to conceal; but what was done, could not be undone. Therefore, without showing the least surprise or trouble, he confessed all, and offered his brother part of his treasure to keep the secret.

"I expect as much," replied Cassim haughtily; "but I must know exactly where this treasure is, and how I may visit it myself when I choose; otherwise I will go and inform against you, and then you will not only get no more, but will lose all you have, and I shall have a share for my information."

Ali Baba told him all he desired, even to the very words he was to use to gain admission to the cave.

Cassim arose the next morning long before the sun, and set out for the forest with ten mules bearing great chests, which he designed to fill, and followed the road which Ali Baba had pointed out to him. He was not long before he reached the rock, and found out the place, by the tree and other marks which his brother had given him. When he reached the entrance of the cavern, he pronounced the words, "Open, Sesame!" The door immediately opened, and, when he was in, closed upon him. In examining the cave he was in great admiration to find much more riches than he had expected from Ali Baba's relation. He quickly laid as many bags of gold as he could carry at the door of the cavern; but his thoughts were so full of the great

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

riches he should possess, that he could not think of the necessary word to make it open, but instead of "Sesame," said, "Open, Barley!" and was much amazed to find that the door remained fast shut. He named several sorts of grain, but still the door would not open.

Cassim had never expected such an incident, and was so alarmed at the danger he was in, that the more he endeavored to remember the word "Sesame," the more his memory was confounded, and he had as much forgotten it as if he had never heard it mentioned. He threw down the bags he had loaded himself with, and walked distractedly up and down the cave, without having the least regard to the riches that were round him.

About noon the robbers visited their cave. At some distance they saw Cassim's mules straggling about the rock, with great chests on their backs. Alarmed at this, they galloped full speed to the cave. They drove away the mules, who strayed through the forest so far that they were soon out of sight, and went directly, with their naked sabres in their hands, to the door, which, on their captain pronouncing the proper words, immediately opened.

Cassim, who heard the noise of the horses' feet, at once guessed the arrival of the robbers, and resolved to make one effort for his life. He rushed to the door, and no sooner saw the door open, than he ran out and threw the leader down, but could not escape the other robbers, who with their scimitars soon deprived him of life.

The first care of the robbers after this was to examine the cave. They found all the bags which Cassim had brought to the door, to be ready to load his mules, and carried them again to their places, but they did not miss what Ali Baba had taken away before. Then

THE FORTY THIEVES.

holding a council, and deliberating upon this occurrence, they guessed that Cassim, when he was in, could not get out again, but could not imagine how he had learned the secret words by which alone he could enter. They could not deny the fact of his being there; and to terrify any person or accomplice who should attempt the same thing, they agreed to cut Cassim's body into four quarters—to hang two on one side, and two on the other, within the door of the cave. They had no sooner taken this resolution than they put it into execution; and when they had nothing more to detain them, left the place of their hoards well closed. They mounted their horses, went to beat the roads again, and to attack the caravans they might meet.

In the meantime Cassim's wife was very uneasy when night came and her husband was not returned. She ran to Ali Baba in great alarm and said, "I believe, brother-in-law, that you know Cassim is gone to the forest, and upon what account; it is now night and he has not returned; I am afraid some misfortune has happened to him." Ali Baba told her that she need not frighten herself, for that certainly Cassim would not think it proper to come into the town till the night should be pretty far advanced.

Cassim's wife, considering how much it concerned her husband to keep the business secret, was the more easily persuaded to believe her brother-in-law. She went home again, and waited patiently till midnight. Then her fear redoubled, and her grief was the more sensible because she was forced to keep it to herself. She repented of her foolish curiosity, and cursed her desire of prying into the affairs of her brother and sister-in-law. She spent all the night in weeping; and as soon as it was day went to them, telling them, by her tears, the cause of her coming.

Ali Baba did not wait for his sister-in-law to desire

him to go to see what was become of Cassim, but departed immediately with his three asses, begging of her first to moderate her affliction. He went to the forest, and when he came near the rock, having seen neither his brother nor his mules in his way, was seriously alarmed at finding some blood spilt near the door, which he took for an ill omen; but when he had pronounced the word, and the door had opened, he was struck with horror at the dismal sight of his brother's body. He was not long in determining how he should pay the last dues to his brother; but without adverting to the little fraternal affection he had shown him, went into the cave, to find something to enshroud his remains; and having loaded one of his asses with them, covered them over with wood. The other two asses he loaded with bags of gold, covering them with wood also as before; and then, bidding the door shut, came away; but was so cautious as to stop some time at the end of the forest, that he might not go into the town before night. When he came home he drove the two asses loaded with gold into his little yard, and left the care of the unloading them to his wife, while he led the other to his sister-in-law's house.

Ali Baba knocked at the door, which was opened by Morgiana, a clever, intelligent slave, who was fruitful in inventions to meet the most difficult circumstances. When he came into the court he unloaded the ass, and taking Morgiana aside, said to her, "You must observe an inviolable secrecy. Your master's body is contained in these two panniers. We must bury him as if he had died a natural death. Go now and tell your mistress. I leave the matter to your wit and skillful devices."

Ali Baba helped to place the body in Cassim's house, again recommended to Morgiana to act her part well, and then returned with his ass.

THE FORTY THIEVES.

Morgiana went out early the next morning to a druggist and asked for a sort of lozenge which was considered efficacious in the most dangerous disorders. The apothecary inquired who was ill? She replied, with a sigh, "Her good master, Cassim himself; and that he could neither eat nor speak." In the evening Morgiana went to the same druggist's again, and with tears in her eyes, asked for an essence which they used to give to sick people only when in the last extremity. "Alas!" said she, taking it from the apothecary, "I am afraid that this remedy will have no better effect than the lozenges; and that I shall lose my good master."

On the other hand, as Ali Baba and his wife were often seen to go between Cassim's and their own house all that day, and to seem melancholy, nobody was surprised in the evening to hear the lamentable shrieks and cries of Cassim's wife and Morgiana, who gave out everywhere that her master was dead. The next morning at daybreak, Morgiana went to an old cobbler whom she knew to be always ready at his stall, and bidding him good-morrow, put a piece of gold into his hand, saying "Baba Mustapha, you must bring with you your sewing tackle, and come with me; but I must tell you, I shall blindfold you when you come to such a place."

Baba Mustapha seemed to hesitate a little at these words. "Oh! oh!" replied he, "you would have me do something against my conscience, or against my honor?" "God forbid," said Morgiana, putting another piece of gold into his hand, "that I should ask anything that is contrary to your honor! only come along with me and fear nothing."

Baba Mustapha went with Morgiana, who, after she had bound his eyes with a handkerchief at the place she had mentioned, conveyed him to her deceased master's house, and never unloosed his eyes till he had

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

entered the room where she had put the corpse together. "Baba Mustapha," said she, "you must make haste and sew the parts of this body together; and when you have done, I will give you another piece of gold."

After Baba Mustapha had finished his task, she blindfolded him again, gave him the third piece of gold as she had promised, and recommending secrecy to him carried him back to the place where she first bound his eyes, pulled off the bandage, and let him go home, but watched him that he returned toward his stall, till he was quite out of sight, for fear he should have the curiosity to return and dodge her; she then went home. Morgiana, on her return, warmed some water to wash the body and at the same time Ali Baba perfumed it with incense, and wrapped it in the burying clothes with the accustomed ceremonies. Not long after the proper officer brought the bier, and when the attendants of the mosque, whose business it was to wash the dead, offered to perform their duty, she told them it was done already. Shortly after this the imaan and the other ministers of the mosque arrived. Four neighbors carried the corpse to the burying-ground, following the imaan, who recited some prayers. Ali Baba came after with some neighbors, who often relieved the others in carrying the bier to the burying-ground. Morgiana, a slave to the deceased, followed in the procession, weeping, beating her breast, and tearing her hair. Cassim's wife stayed at home mourning, uttering lamentable cries with the women of the neighborhood, who came, according to custom, during the funeral, and joining their lamentations with hers filled the quarter far and near with sounds of sorrow.

In this manner Cassim's melancholy death was concealed and hushed up between Ali Baba, his widow, and Morgiana, his slave, with so much contrivance that

THE FORTY THIEVES.

nobody in the city had the least knowledge or suspicion of the cause of it. Three or four days after the funeral, Ali Baba removed his few goods openly to his sister's house, in which it was agreed that he should in future live; but the money he had taken from the robbers he conveyed thither by night. As for Cassim's warehouse, he entrusted it entirely to the management of his eldest son.

While these things were being done, the forty robbers again visited their retreat in the forest. Great, then, was their surprise to find Cassim's body taken away, with some of their bags of gold. "We are certainly discovered," said the captain. "The removal of the body and the loss of some of our money plainly shows that the man whom we killed had an accomplice; and for our own lives' sake we must try and find him. What say you, my lads?"

All the robbers unanimously approved of the captain's proposal.

"Well," said the captain, "one of you, the boldest and most skillful among you, must go into the town, disguised as a traveler and a stranger, to try if he can hear any talk of the man whom we have killed, and endeavor to find out who he was, and where he lived. This is a matter of the first importance, and for fear of any treachery, I propose that whoever undertakes this business without success, even though the failure arises only from an error of judgment, shall suffer death."

Without waiting for the sentiments of his companions, one of the robbers started up, and said, "I submit to this condition, and think it an honor to expose my life to serve the troop."

After this robber had received great commendations from the captain and his comrades, he disguised himself so that nobody would take him for what he was; and taking his leave of the troop that night, went into the

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

town just at daybreak, and walked up and down, till accidentally he came to Baba Mustapha's stall, which was always open before any of the shops.

Baba Mustapha was seated with an awl in his hand, just going to work. The robber saluted him, bidding him good-morrow; and perceiving that he was old, said, "Honest man, you begin to work very early; is it possible that one of your age can see so well? I question, even if it were somewhat lighter, whether you could see to stitch."

"You do not know me," replied Baba Mustapha: "for old as I am, I have extraordinary good eyes; and you will not doubt it when I tell you that I sewed the body of a dead man together in a place where I had not so much light as I have now."

"A dead body!" exclaimed the robber, with affected amazement. "Yes, yes," answered Baba Mustapha, "I see you want me to speak out, but you shall know no more."

The robber felt sure he had discovered what he sought. He pulled out a piece of gold, and putting it into Baba Mustapha's hand, said to him, "I do not want to learn your secret, though I can assure you you might safely trust me with it. The only thing I desire of you is to show me the house where you stitched up the dead body."

"If I were disposed to do you that favor," replied Baba Mustapha, "I assure you I cannot. I was taken to a certain place, whence I was led blindfold to the house, and afterward brought back in the same manner; you see, therefore, the impossibility of my doing what you desire."

"Well," replied the robber, "you may, however, remember a little of the way that you were led blindfold. Come, let me blind your eyes at the same place. We will walk together; perhaps you may recognize some

THE FORTY THIEVES.

part; and as everybody ought to be paid for their trouble, there is another piece of gold for you; gratify me in what I ask you." So saying, he put another piece of gold into his hand.

The two pieces of gold were great temptations to Baba Mustapha. He looked at them a long time in his hand, without saying a word, but at last he pulled out his purse and put them in. "I cannot promise," said he to the robber, "that I can remember the way exactly; but since you desire, I will try what I can do." At these words Baba Mustapha rose up, to the great joy of the robber, and led him to the place where Morgiana had bound his eyes. "It was here," said Baba Mustapha, "I was blindfolded; and I turned this way." The robber tied his handkerchief over his eyes, and walked by him till he stopped directly at Cassim's house, where Ali Baba then lived. The thief, before he pulled off the band, marked the door with a piece of chalk, which he had ready in his hand, and then asked him if he knew whose house that was; to which Baba Mustapha replied that as he did not live in that neighborhood, he could not tell.

The robber, finding that he could discover no more from Baba Mustapha, thanked him for the trouble he had taken, and left him to go back to his stall, while he returned to the forest, persuaded that he should be very well received.

A little after the robber and Baba Mustapha had parted, Morgiana went out of Ali Baba's house upon some errand, and upon her return, seeing the mark the robber had made, stopped to observe it. "What can be the meaning of this mark?" said she to herself; "somebody intends my master no good; however, with whatever intention it was done, it is advisable to guard against the worst." Accordingly, she fetched a piece of chalk, and marked two or three doors on each side,

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

in the same manner, without saying a word to her master or mistress.

In the meantime, the robber rejoined his troop in the forest, and recounted to them his success; expatiating upon his good fortune in meeting so soon with the only person who could inform him of what he wanted to know. All the robbers listened to him with the utmost satisfaction; when the captain, after commending his diligence, addressing himself to them all, said, "Comrades, we have no time to lose: let us set off well armed, without its appearing who we are; but that we may not excite any suspicion, let only one or two go into the town together, and join at our rendezvous, which shall be the great square. In the meantime, our comrade who brought us the good news and I will go and find out the house, that we may consult what had best be done."

This speech and plan was approved of by all, and they were soon ready. They filed off in parties of two each, after some interval of time, and got into the town without being in the least suspected. The captain, and he who had visited the town in the morning as spy, came in the last. He led the captain into the street where he had marked Ali Baba's residence; and when they came to the first of the houses which Morgiana had marked, he pointed it out. But the captain observed that the next door was chalked in the same manner, and in the same place; and showing it to his guide, asked him which house it was, that, or the first. The guide was so confounded that he knew not what answer to make; but still more puzzled, when he and the captain saw five or six houses similarly marked. He assured the captain, with an oath, that he had marked but one, and could not tell who had chalked the rest, so that he could not distinguish the house which the cobbler had stopped at.

THE FORTY THIEVES.

The captain, finding that their design had proved abortive, went directly to their place of rendezvous, and told his troop that they had lost their labor, and must return to their cave. He himself set them the example, and they all returned as they had come.

When the troop was all got together, the captain told them the reason of their returning; and presently the conductor was declared by all worthy of death. He condemned himself, acknowledging that he ought to have taken better precaution, and prepared to receive the stroke from him who was appointed to cut off his head.

But as the safety of the troop required the discovery of the second intruder into the cave, another of the gang, who promised himself that he should succeed better, presented himself, and his offer being accepted he went and corrupted Baba Mustapha as the other had done; and being shown the house, marked it in a place more remote from sight, with red chalk.

Not long after, Morgiana, whose eyes nothing could escape, went out, and seeing the red chalk, and arguing with herself as she had done before, marked the other neighbors' houses in the same place and manner.

The robber, at his return to his company, valued himself much on the precaution he had taken, which he looked upon as an infallible way of distinguishing Ali Baba's house from the others; and the captain and all of them thought that it must succeed. They conveyed themselves into the town with the same precaution as before; but when the robber and his captain came to the street, they found the same difficulty; at which the captain was enraged and the robber in as great confusion as his predecessor.

Thus the captain and his troop were forced to retire a second time, and much more dissatisfied; while the robber who had been the author of the mistake un-

derwent the same punishment, which he willingly submitted to.

The captain, having lost two brave fellows of his troop, was afraid of diminishing it too much by pursuing this plan to get information of the residence of their plunderer. He found by their example that their heads were not so good as their hands on such occasions, and therefore resolved to take upon himself the important commission.

Accordingly he went and addressed himself to Baba Mustapha, who did him the same service he had done to the other robbers. He did not set any particular mark on the house, but examined and observed it so carefully, by passing often by it, that it was impossible for him to mistake it.

The captain, well satisfied with his attempt, and informed of what he wanted to know, returned to the forest; and when he came into the cave, where the troop waited for him, said, "Now, comrades, nothing can prevent our full révenge, as I am certain of the house; and in my way hither I have thought how to put it into execution, but if anyone can form a better expedient, let him communicate it." He then told them his contrivance; and as they approved it, ordered them to go into the villages about, and buy nineteen mules, with thirty-eight large leather jars, one full of oil, and the others empty.

In two or three days' time the robbers had purchased the mules and jars, and as the mouths of the jars were rather too narrow for his purpose, the captain caused them to be widened, and after having put one of his men into each, with the weapons which he thought fit, leaving open the seam which had been undone to leave them room to breathe, he rubbed the jars on the outside with oil from the full vessel.

Things being thus prepared, when the **nineteen mules**

THE FORTY THIEVES.

were loaded with thirty-seven robbers in jars, and the jar of oil, the captain, as their driver, set out with them, and reached the town by the dusk of the evening, as he had intended. He led them through the streets till he came to Ali Baba's, at whose door he designed to have knocked; but was prevented by his sitting there after supper to take a little fresh air. He stopped his mules, addressed himself to him, and said, "I have brought some oil a great way, to sell at to-morrow's market; and it is now so late that I do not know where to lodge. If I should not be troublesome to you, do me the favor to let me pass the night with you, and I shall be very much obliged by your hospitality."

Though Ali Baba had seen the captain of the robbers in the forest, and had heard him speak, it was impossible to know him in the disguise of an oil merchant. He told him he should be welcome, and immediately opened his gates for the mules to go into the yard. At the same time he called to a slave, and ordered him, when the mules were unloaded, to put them into the stable, and to feed them; and then went to Morgiana, to bid her get a good supper for his guest. After they had finished supper, Ali Baba, charging Morgiana afresh to take care of his guest, said to her, "To-morrow morning I design to go to the bath before day; take care my bathing linen be ready, give them to Abdalla (which was the slave's name), and make me some good broth against I return." After this he went to bed.

In the meantime, the captain of the robbers went into the yard, and took off the lid of each jar, and gave his people orders what to do. Beginning at the first jar, and so on to the last, he said to each man: "As soon as I throw some stones out of the chamber window where I lie, do not fail to come out, and I will immediately join you." After this he returned into the

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

house, when Morgiana, taking up a light, conducted him to his chamber, where she left him; and he, to avoid any suspicion, put the light out soon after, and laid himself down in his clothes, that he might be the more ready to rise.

Morgiana, remembering Ali Baba's orders, got his bathing linen ready, and ordered Abdalla to set on the pot for the broth; but while she was preparing it the light went out, and there was no more oil in the house, nor any candles. What to do she did not know, for the broth must be made. Abdalla, seeing her very uneasy, said, "Do not fret and tease yourself, but go into the yard, and take some oil out of one of the jars."

Morgiana thanked Abdalla for his advice, took the oil-pot, and went into the yard; when, as she came nigh the first jar, the robber within said softly, "Is it time?"

Though naturally much surprised at finding a man in the jar instead of the oil she wanted, she immediately felt the importance of keeping silence, as Ali Baba, his family, and herself were in great danger; and collecting herself, without showing the least emotion, she answered, "Not yet, but presently." She went quietly in this manner to all the jars, giving the same answer, till she came to the jar of oil.

By this means Morgiana found that her master, Ali Baba, had admitted thirty-eight robbers into his house, and that this pretended oil merchant was their captain. She made what haste she could to fill her oil-pot, and returned into the kitchen, where, as soon as she had lighted her lamp, she took a great kettle, went again to the oil-jar, filled the kettle, set it on a large wood fire, and as soon as it boiled, went and poured enough into every jar to stifle and destroy the robber within.

When this action, worthy of the courage of Morgiana, was executed without any noise, as she had pro-

THE FORTY THIEVES.

jected, she returned into the kitchen with the empty kettle; and having put out the great fire she had made to boil the oil, and leaving just enough to make the broth, put out the lamp also, and remained silent, resolving not to go to rest till she had observed what might follow through a window of the kitchen, which opened into the yard.

She had not waited long before the captain of the robbers got up, opened the window, and finding no light, and hearing no noise, or any one stirring in the house, gave the appointed signal by throwing little stones, several of which hit the jars, as he doubted not by the sound they gave. He then listened, but not hearing or perceiving anything whereby he could judge that his companions stirred, he began to grow very uneasy, threw stones again a second and also a third time, and could not comprehend the reason that none of them should answer his signal. Much alarmed, he went softly down into the yard, and going to the first jar, while asking the robber, whom he thought alive, if he were in readiness, smelt the hot boiled oil, which sent forth a steam out of the jar. Hence he suspected that his plot to murder Ali Baba and plunder his house was discovered. Examining all the jars, one after another, he found that all his gang were dead; and, enraged to despair at having failed in his design, he forced the lock of a door that led from the yard to the garden, and climbing over the walls made his escape.

When Morgiana saw him depart, she went to bed, satisfied and pleased to have succeeded so well in saving her master and family.

Ali Baba rose before day, and, followed by his slave, went to the baths, entirely ignorant of the important event which had happened at home.

When he returned from the baths he was very much surprised to see the oil-jars, and that the merchant

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

was not gone with the mules. He asked Morgiana, who opened the door, the reason of it. "My good master," answered she, "God preserve you and all your family. You will be better informed of what you wish to know when you have seen what I have to show you, if you will follow me."

As soon as Morgiana had shut the door, Ali Baba followed her, when she requested him to look into the first jar, and see if there was any oil. Ali Baba did so, and seeing a man, started back in alarm, and cried out.

"Do not be afraid," said Morgiana, "the man you see there can neither do you nor anybody else any harm. He is dead." "Ah, Morgiana," said Ali Baba, "what is it you show me? Explain yourself." "I will," replied Morgiana. "Moderate your astonishment and do not excite the curiosity of your neighbors; for it is of great importance to keep this affair secret. Look into all the other jars."

Ali Baba examined all the other jars, one after another, and when he came to that which had the oil in, found it prodigiously sunk, and stood for some time motionless, sometimes looking at the jars, and sometimes at Morgiana, without saying a word, so great was his surprise. At last, when he had recovered himself, he said, "And what is become of the merchant?"

"Merchant!" answered she; "he is as much one as I am. I will tell you who he is, and what is become of him; but you had better hear the story in your own chamber; for it is time for your health that you had your broth after your bathing."

Morgiana then told him all she had done, from the first observing the mark upon the house, to the destruction of the robbers, and the flight of their captain.

On hearing of these brave deeds from the lips of

THE FORTY THIEVES.

Morgiana, Ali Baba said to her—"God, by your means, has delivered me from the snares of these robbers laid for my destruction. I owe, therefore, my life to you; and, for the first token of my acknowledgment, give you your liberty from this moment, till I can complete your recompense as I intend."

Ali Baba's garden was very long, and shaded at the further end by a great number of large trees. Near these he and the slave Abdalla dug a trench, long and wide enough to hold the bodies of the robbers; and as the earth was light, they were not long in doing it. When this was done, Ali Baba hid the jars and weapons; and as he had no occasion for the mules, he sent them at different times to be sold in the market by his slave.

While Ali Baba took these measures, the captain of the forty robbers returned to the forest with inconceivable mortification. He did not stay long; the loneliness of the gloomy cavern became frightful to him. He determined, however, to avenge the fate of his companions, and to accomplish the death of Ali Baba. For this purpose he returned to the town, and took a lodging in a khan, and disguised himself as a merchant in silks. Under this assumed character he gradually conveyed a great many sorts of rich stuffs and fine linen to his lodging from the cavern, but with all the necessary precautions to conceal the place whence he brought them. In order to dispose of the merchandise, when he had thus amassed them together, he took a warehouse, which happened to be opposite to Cassim's, which Ali Baba's son had occupied since the death of his uncle.

He took the name of Cogia Houssain, and as a newcomer was, according to custom, extremely civil and complaisant to all the merchants his neighbors. Ali Baba's son was, from his vicinity, one of the first to

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

converse with Cogia Houssain, who strove to cultivate his friendship more particularly. Two or three days after he was settled, Ali Baba came to see his son, and the captain of the robbers recognized him at once, and soon learned from his son who he was. After this he increased his assiduities, caressed him in the most engaging manner, made him some small presents, and often asked him to dine and sup with him, when he treated him very handsomely.

Ali Baba's son did not choose to lie under such obligation to Cogia Houssain; but was so much straitened for want of room in his house, that he could not entertain him. He therefore acquainted his father, Ali Baba, with his wish to invite him in return.

Ali Baba with great pleasure took the treat upon himself. "Son," said he, "to-morrow being Friday, which is a day that the shops of such great merchants as Cogia Houssain and yourself are shut, get him to accompany you, and as you pass by my door, call in. I will go and order Morgiana to provide a supper."

The next day Ali Baba's son and Cogia Houssain met by appointment, took their walk, and as they returned, Ali Baba's son led Cogia Houssain through the street where his father lived, and when they came to the house, stopped and knocked at the door. "This, sir," said he, "is my father's house, who, from the account I have given him of your friendship, charged me to procure him the honor of your acquaintance; and I desire you to add this pleasure to those for which I am already indebted to you."

Though it was the sole aim of Cogia Houssain to introduce himself into Ali Baba's house, that he might kill him, without hazarding his own life or making any noise, yet he excused himself, and offered to take his leave; but a slave having opened the door, Ali

THE FORTY THIEVES.

Baba's son took him obligingly by the hand, and, in a manner, forced him in.

Ali Baba received Cogia Houssain with a smiling countenance, and in the most obliging manner he could wish. He thanked him for all the favors he had done his son; adding withal, the obligation was the greater as he was a young man, not much acquainted with the world, and that he might contribute to his information.

Cogia Houssain returned the compliment by assuring Ali Baba that though his son might not have acquired the experience of older men, he had good sense equal to the experience of many others. After a little more conversation on different subjects, he offered again to take his leave, when Ali Baba, stopping him, said, "Where are you going, sir, in so much haste? I beg you would do me the honor to sup with me, though my entertainment may not be worthy of your acceptance, such as it is, I heartily offer it." "Sir," replied Cogia Houssain, "I am thoroughly persuaded of your good-will; but the truth is, I can eat no victuals that have any salt in them; therefore judge how I should feel at your table." "If that is the only reason," said Ali Baba, "it ought not to deprive me of the honor of your company; for, in the first place, there is no salt ever put into my bread and as to the meat we shall have to-night, I promise you there shall be none in that. Therefore, you must do me the favor to stay. I will return immediately."

Ali Baba went into the kitchen, and ordered Morgiana to put no salt to the meat that was to be dressed that night; and to make quickly two or three ragouts besides what he had ordered, but be sure to put no salt in them.

Morgiana, who was always ready to obey her master, could not help being surprised at his strange or-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

der. "Who is this strange man," said she, "who eats no salt with his meat? Your supper will be spoiled if I keep it back so long." "Do not be angry, Morgiana," replied Ali Baba; "he is an honest man, therefore do as I bid you."

Morgiana obeyed, though with no little reluctance, and had a curiosity to see this man who ate no salt. To this end, when she had finished what she had to do in the kitchen, she helped Abdalla to carry up the dishes; and looking at Cogia Houssain knew him at first sight, notwithstanding his disguise, to be the captain of the robbers, and examining him very carefully, perceived that he had a dagger under his garment. "I am not in the least amazed," said she to herself, "that this wicked man, who is my master's greatest enemy, would eat no salt with him, since he intends to assassinate him; but I will prevent him."

Morgiana, while they were at supper, determined in her own mind to execute one of the boldest acts ever meditated. When Abdalla came for the dessert of fruit and had put it with the wine and glasses before Ali Baba, Morgiana retired, dressed herself neatly, with a suitable head-dress like a dancer, girded her waist with a silver-gilt girdle, to which there hung a poniard with a hilt and guard of the same metal, and put a handsome mask on her face. When she had thus disguised herself, she said to Abdalla, "Take your tabor, and let us go and divert our master and his son's friend, as we do sometimes when he is alone."

Abdalla took his tabor and played all the way into the hall before Morgiana, who, when she came to the door, made a low obeisance by way of asking leave to exhibit her skill, while Abdalla left off playing. "Come in, Morgiana," said Ali Baba, "and let Cogia Houssain see what you can do, that he may tell us what he thinks of your performance."

THE FORTY THIEVES.

Cogia Houssain, who did not expect this diversion after supper, began to fear he should not be able to take advantage of the opportunity he thought he had found; but hoped, if he now missed his aim, to secure it another time, by keeping up a friendly correspondence with the father and son; therefore, though he could have wished Ali Baba would have declined the dance, he pretended to be obliged to him for it, and had the complaisance to express his satisfaction at what he saw, which pleased his host.

As soon as Abdalla saw that Ali Baba and Cogia Houssain had done talking, he began to play on the tabor, and accompanied it with an air, to which Morgiana, who was an excellent performer, danced in such a manner as would have created admiration in any company.

After she had danced several dances with much grace she drew the poniard, and holding it in her hand, began a dance in which she outdid herself by the many different figures, light movements, and the surprising leaps and wonderful exertions with which she accompanied it. Sometimes she presented the poniard to one breast, sometimes to another, and oftentimes seemed to strike her own. At last, she snatched the tabor from Abdalla with her left hand, and holding the dagger in her right, presented the other side of the tabor, after the manner of those who get a livelihood by dancing, and solicit the liberality of the spectators.

Ali Baba put a piece of gold into the tabor, as did also his son; and Cogia Houssain, seeing that she was coming to him had pulled his purse out of his bosom to make her a present; but while he was putting his hand into it, Morgiana, with a courage and resolution worthy of herself, plunged the poniard into his heart.

Ali Baba and his son, shocked at this action, cried out aloud. "Unhappy woman!" exclaimed Ali Baba,

"what have you done to ruin me and my family?" "It was to preserve, not to ruin, you," answered Morgiana; "for see here," continued she, opening the pretended Cogia Houssain's garment, and showing the dagger, "what an enemy you had entertained? Look well at him, and you will find him to be both the fictitious oil merchant and the captain of the gang of forty robbers. Remember, too, that he would eat no salt with you; and what would you have more to persuade you of his wicked design? Before I saw him I suspected him, as soon as you told me you had such a guest. I knew him, and you now find that my suspicion was not groundless."

Ali Baba, who immediately felt the new obligation he had to Morgiana for saving his life a second time, embraced her: "Morgiana," said he, "I gave you your liberty, and then promised you that my gratitude should not stop there, but that I would soon give you higher proofs of its sincerity, which I now do by making you my daughter-in-law." Then addressing himself to his son, he said, "I believe you, son, to be so dutiful a child that you will not refuse Morgiana for your wife. You see that Cogia Houssain sought your friendship with a treacherous design to take away my life; and if he had succeeded, there is no doubt but he would have sacrificed you also to his revenge. Consider, that by marrying Morgiana you marry the preserver of my family and your own."

The son, far from showing any dislike, readily consented to the marriage; not only because he would not disobey his father, but also because it was agreeable to his inclination. After this they thought of burying the captain of the robbers with his comrades, and did it so privately that nobody discovered their bones till many years after, when no one had any concern in the publication of this remarkable history. A few days

THE FORTY THIEVES.

afterward Ali Baba celebrated the nuptials of his son and Morgiana with great solemnity, a sumptuous feast, and the usual dancing and spectacles; and had the satisfaction to see that his friends and neighbors, whom he invited, had no knowledge of the true motives of the marriage; but that those who were not unacquainted with Morgiana's good qualities commended his generosity and goodness of heart. Ali Baba did not visit the robber's cave for a whole year, as he supposed the other two, whom he could get no account of, might be alive.

At the year's end, when he found they had not made any attempt to disturb him, he had the curiosity to make another journey. He mounted his horse, and when he came to the cave he alighted, tied his horse to a tree, then approaching the entrance, and pronouncing the words, "Open, Sesame!" the door opened. He entered the cavern, and by the condition he found things in, judged that nobody had been there since the captain had fetched the goods for his shop. From this time he believed he was the only person in the world who had the secret of opening the cave, and that all the treasure was at his sole disposal. He put as much gold into his saddle-bag as his horse would carry, and returned to town. Some years later he carried his son to the cave and taught him the secret, which he handed down to his posterity, who, using their good fortune with moderation, lived in great honor and splendor.

MURAD THE UNLUCKY

MURAD THE UNLUCKY

Maria Edgeworth

IT is well known that the grand seignior amuses himself by going at night, in disguise, through the streets of Constantinople; as the caliph, Haroun Al-raschid, used formerly to do in Bagdad.

One moonlight night, accompanied by his grand vizier, he traversed several of the principal streets of the city, without seeing anything remarkable. At length, as they were passing a rope-maker's, the sultan recollected the Arabian story of Cogia-Hassan Alhabal, the rope-maker, and his two friends, Saad and Saadi, who differed so much in their opinion concerning the influence of fortune over human affairs.

"What is your opinion on this subject?" said the grand seignior to his vizier.

"I am inclined, please your majesty," replied the vizier, "to think that success in the world depends more upon prudence than upon what is called luck, or fortune."

"And I," said the sultan, "am persuaded that fortune does more for men than prudence. Do you not every day hear of persons who are said to be fortunate or unfortunate? How comes it that this opinion should prevail amongst them, if it be not justified by experience?"

"It is not for me to dispute with your majesty," replied the prudent vizier.

"Speak your mind freely; I desire and command it," said the sultan.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

"Then I am of the opinion," answered the vizier, "that people are often led to believe others fortunate, or unfortunate, merely because they only know the general outline of their histories; and are ignorant of the incidents and events in which they have shown prudence or imprudence. I have heard, for instance, that there are at present in this city two men, who are remarkable for their good and bad fortune: one is called Murad the Unlucky, and the other Saladin the Lucky. Now I am inclined to think, if we could hear their stories, we should find that one is a prudent and the other an imprudent character."

"Where do these men live?" interrupted the sultan. "I will hear their histories from their own lips, before I sleep."

"Murad the Unlucky lives in the next square," said the vizier.

The sultan desired to go thither immediately. Scarcely had they entered the square, when they heard the cry of loud lamentations. They followed the sound till they came to a house of which the door was open, and where there was a man tearing his turban, and weeping bitterly. They asked the cause of his distress, and he pointed to the fragments of a china vase, which lay on the pavement at his door.

"This seems undoubtedly to be beautiful china," said the sultan, taking up one of the broken pieces; "but can the loss of a china vase be the cause of such violent grief and despair?"

"Ah, gentlemen," said the owner of the vase, suspending his lamentations, and looking at the dress of the pretended merchants, "I see that you are strangers; you do not know how much cause I have for grief and despair! You do not know that you are speaking to Murad the Unlucky! Were you to hear all the unfortunate accidents that have happened to me, from the

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

time I was born till this instant, you would perhaps pity me, and acknowledge I have just cause for despair."

Curiosity was strongly expressed by the sultan; and the hope of obtaining sympathy inclined Murad to gratify it, by the recital of his adventures. "Gentlemen," said he, "I scarcely dare invite you into the house of such an unlucky being as I am; but, if you will venture to take a night's lodging under my roof, you shall hear at your leisure the story of my misfortunes."

The sultan and the vizier excused themselves from spending the night with Murad; saying that they were obliged to proceed to their khan, where they should be expected by their companions: but they begged permission to repose themselves for half an hour in his house, and besought him to relate the history of his life, if it would not renew his grief too much to recollect his misfortunes.

Few men are so miserable as not to like to talk of their misfortunes, where they have, or where they think they have, any chance of obtaining compassion. As soon as the pretended merchants were seated, Murad began his story in the following manner:

"My father was a merchant of this city. The night before I was born, he dreamed that I came into the world with the head of a dog and the tail of a dragon; and that, in haste to conceal my deformity, he rolled me up in a piece of linen, which unluckily proved to be the grand seignior's turban; who, enraged at his insolence in touching his turban, commanded that his head should be struck off.

"My father awaked before he lost his head, but not before he had lost half his wits from the terror of his dream. He considered it as a warning sent from above, and consequently determined to avoid the sight of me. He would not stay to see whether I should really be

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

born with the head of a dog and the tail of a dragon; but he set out, the next morning, on a voyage to Aleppo.

“He was absent for upwards of seven years; and during that time my education was totally neglected. One day I inquired from my mother why I had been named Murad the Unlucky. She told me that this name was given to me in consequence of my father’s dream; but she added that perhaps it might be forgotten, if I proved fortunate in my future life. My nurse, a very old woman, who was present, shook her head, with a look which I shall never forget, and whispered to my mother loud enough for me to hear, ‘Unlucky he was, and is, and ever will be. Those that are born to ill luck cannot help themselves; nor can any, but the great prophet Mahomet himself, do anything for them. It is a folly for an unlucky person to strive with his fate; it is better to yield to it at once.’

“This speech made a terrible impression upon me, young as I then was; and every accident that happened to me afterwards confirmed my belief in my nurse’s prognostic. I was in my eighth year when my father returned from abroad. The year after he came home my brother Saladin was born, who was named Saladin the Lucky, because the day he was born a vessel freighted with rich merchandise for my father arrived safely in port.

“I will not weary you with a relation of all the little instances of good fortune by which my brother Saladin was distinguished, even during his childhood. As he grew up, his success in everything he undertook was as remarkable as my ill luck in all that I attempted. From the time the rich vessel arrived, we lived in splendor; and the supposed prosperous state of my father’s affairs was of course attributed to the influence of my brother Saladin’s happy destiny.

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

“When Saladin was about twenty, my father was taken dangerously ill; and as he felt that he should not recover, he sent for my brother to the side of his bed, and, to his great surprise, informed him that the magnificence in which we had lived had exhausted all his wealth; that his affairs were in the greatest disorder; for, having trusted to the hope of continual success, he had embarked in projects beyond his powers.

“The sequel was, he had nothing remaining to leave to his children but two large china vases, remarkable for their beauty, but still more valuable on account of certain verses inscribed upon them in an unknown character, which was supposed to operate as a talisman or charm in favor of their possessors.

“Both these vases my father bequeathed to my brother Saladin; declaring he could not venture to leave either of them to me, because I was so unlucky that I should inevitably break it. After his death, however, my brother Saladin, who was blessed with a generous temper, gave me my choice of the two vases; and endeavored to raise my spirits, by repeating frequently that he had no faith either in good fortune or ill fortune.

“I could not be of his opinion, though I felt and acknowledged his kindness in trying to persuade me out of my settled melancholy. I knew it was in vain for me to exert myself, because I was sure that, do what I would, I should still be Murad the Unlucky. My brother, on the contrary, was nowise cast down, even by the poverty in which my father left us; he said he was sure he should find some means of maintaining himself, and so he did.

“On examining our china vases, he found in them a powder of a bright scarlet color; and it occurred to him that it would make a fine dye. He tried it, and after some trouble, it succeeded to admiration.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

“During my father’s lifetime, my mother had been supplied with rich dresses, by one of the merchants who was employed by the ladies of the grand seignior’s seraglio. My brother had done this merchant some trifling favors; and, upon application to him, he readily engaged to recommend the new scarlet dye. Indeed, it was so beautiful, that, the moment it was seen, it was preferred to every other color. Saladin’s shop was soon crowded with customers; and his winning manners and pleasant conversation were almost as advantageous to him as his scarlet dye. On the contrary, I observed that the first glance at my melancholy countenance was sufficient to disgust every one who saw me, I perceive this plainly; and it only confirmed me the more in my belief in my own evil destiny.

“It happened one day that a lady, richly apparelled and attended by two female slaves, came to my brother’s house to make some purchases. He was out, and I alone was left to attend to the shop. After she had looked over some goods, she chanced to see my china vase, which was in the room. She took a prodigious fancy to it, and offered me any price if I would part with it; but this I declined doing, because I believed that I should draw down upon my head some dreadful calamity, if I voluntarily relinquished the talisman. Irritated by my refusal, the lady, according to the custom of her sex, became more resolute in her purpose; but neither entreaties nor money could change my determination. Provoked beyond measure at my obstinacy, as she called it, she left the house.

“On my brother’s return, I related to him what had happened, and expected that he would have praised me for my prudence; but, on the contrary, he blamed me for the superstitious value I set upon the verses on my vase; and observed that it would be the height of folly to lose a certain means of advancing my fortune, for the

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

uncertain hope of magical protection. I could not bring myself to be of his opinion; I had not the courage to follow the advice he gave. The next day the lady returned, and my brother sold his vase to her for ten thousand pieces of gold. This money he laid out in the most advantageous manner, by purchasing a new stock of merchandise. I repented, when it was too late; but I believe it is part of the fatality attending certain persons, that they cannot decide rightly at the proper moment. When the opportunity has been lost, I have always regretted that I did not do exactly the contrary to what I had previously determined upon. Often, whilst I was hesitating, the favorable moment passed. Now this is what I call being unlucky. But to proceed with my story.

“The lady, who bought my brother Saladin’s vase, was the favorite of the sultan, and all-powerful in the seraglio. Her dislike to me, in consequence of my opposition to her wishes, was so violent, that she refused to return to my brother’s house while I remained there. He was unwilling to part with me; but I could not bear to be the ruin of so good a brother. Without telling him my design, I left his house, careless of what should become of me. Hunger, however, soon compelled me to think of some immediate mode of obtaining relief. I sat down upon a stone, before the door of a baker’s shop; the smell of hot bread tempted me in, and with a feeble voice I demanded charity.

“The master baker gave me as much bread as I could eat, upon condition that I should change dresses with him, and carry the rolls for him through the city that day. To this I readily consented; but I had soon reason to repent of my compliance. Indeed, if my ill luck had not, as usual, deprived me at this critical moment of memory and judgment, I should never have complied with the baker’s treacherous proposal. For some

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

time before, the people of Constantinople had been much dissatisfied with the weight and quality of the bread furnished by the bakers. This species of discontent has often been the sure forerunner of an insurrection; and, in these disturbances, the master bakers frequently lose their lives. All these circumstances I knew; but they did not occur to my memory, when they might have been useful.

"I changed dresses with the baker; but scarcely had I proceeded through the adjoining streets with my rolls, before the mob began to gather round me, with reproaches and execrations. The crowd pursued me even to the gates of the grand seignior's palace; and the grand vizier, alarmed at their violence, sent out an order to have my head struck off; the usual remedy, in such cases, being to strike off the baker's head.

"I now fell upon my knees, and protested I was not the baker for whom they took me; that I had no connection with him; and that I had never furnished the people of Constantinople with bread that was not weight. I declared I had merely changed clothes with a master baker, for this day; and that I should not have done so, but for the evil destiny which governs all my actions. Some of the mob exclaimed that I deserved to lose my head for my folly; but others took pity on me, and whilst the officer, who was sent to execute the vizier's order, turned to speak to some of the noisy rioters, those who were touched by my misfortune opened a passage for me through the crowd, and, thus favored, I effected my escape.

"I quitted Constantinople; my vase I had left in the care of my brother. At some miles' distance from the city, I overtook a party of soldiers. I joined them; and learning that they were going to embark with the rest of the grand seignior's army for Egypt, I resolved to accompany them. If it be, thought I, the will of Ma-

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

homet that I should perish, the sooner I meet my fate the better. The despondency into which I was sunk was attended by so great a degree of indolence, that I scarcely would take the necessary means to preserve my existence. During our passage to Egypt, I sat all day long upon the deck of the vessel, smoking my pipe; and I am convinced that if a storm had risen, as I expected, I should not have taken my pipe from my mouth, nor should I have handled a rope, to save myself from destruction. Such is the effect of that species of resignation or torpor, whichever you please to call it, to which my strong belief in fatality had reduced my mind.

“We landed, however, safely, contrary to my melancholy forebodings. By a trifling accident, not worth relating, I was detained longer than any of my companions in the vessel when we disembarked; and I did not arrive at the camp till late at night. It was moonlight, and I could see the whole scene distinctly. There was a vast number of small tents scattered over a desert of white sand; a few date trees were visible at a distance; all was gloomy and all still; no sound was to be heard but that of the camels feeding near the tents, and as I walked on I met with no human creature.

“My pipe was now out, and I quickened my pace a little towards a fire, which I saw near one of the tents. As I proceeded my eye was caught by something sparkling in the sand; it was a ring. I picked it up and put it on my finger, resolving to give it to the public crier the next morning, who might find out its rightful owner; but by ill luck I put it on my little finger, for which it was much too large, and as I hastened towards the fire to light my pipe, I dropped the ring. I stooped to search for it amongst the provender on which a mule was feeding, and the cursed animal gave me so violent a kick on the head that I could not help roaring aloud.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

“My cries awakened those who slept in the tent near which the mule was feeding. Provoked at being disturbed, the soldiers were ready enough to think ill of me, and they took it for granted that I was a thief, who had stolen the ring I pretended to have just found. The ring was taken from me by force and the next day I was bastinadoed for having found it; the officer persisting in the belief that stripes would make me confess where I had concealed certain other articles of value which had lately been missed in the camp. All this was the consequence of my being in a hurry to light my pipe, and of my having put the ring on a finger that was too little for it, which no one but Murad the Unlucky would have done.

“When I was able to walk again after my wounds were healed, I went into one of the tents distinguished by a red flag, having been told that these were coffee-houses. Whilst I was drinking coffee I heard a stranger near me complaining that he had not been able to recover a valuable ring he had lost, although he had caused his loss to be published for three days by the public crier, offering a reward of two hundred sequins to whoever should restore it. I guessed that this was the very ring which I had unfortunately found. I addressed myself to the stranger and promised to point out to him the person who had forced it from me. The stranger recovered his ring, and, being convinced that I had acted honestly, he made me a present of two hundred sequins, as some amends for the punishment which I had unjustly suffered on his account.

“Now you would imagine that this purse of gold was advantageous to me; far the contrary; it was the cause of new misfortunes.

“One night, when I thought that the soldiers who were in the same tent with me were all fast asleep, I indulged myself in the pleasure of counting my treas-

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

ure. The next day I was invited by my companions to drink sherbet with them. What they mixed with the sherbet which I drank I know not, but I could not resist the drowsiness it brought on. I fell into a profound slumber and when I awoke I found myself lying under a date tree at some distance from the camp.

“The first thing I thought of when I came to my recollection was my purse of sequins. The purse I found still safe in my girdle, but on opening it I perceived that it was filled with pebbles, and not a single sequin was left. I had no doubt that I had been robbed by the soldiers with whom I had drunk sherbet, and I am certain that some of them must have been awake the night I counted my money, otherwise, as I had never trusted the secret of my riches to any one, they could not have suspected me of possessing any property, for ever since I kept company with them I had appeared to be in great indigence.

“I applied in vain to the superior officers for redress; the soldiers protested they were innocent; no positive proof appeared against them and I gained nothing by my complaint but ridicule and ill-will. I called myself, in the first transport of my grief, by that name which, since my arrival in Egypt, I had avoided to pronounce; I called myself Murad the Unlucky! The name and the story ran through the camp and I was accosted afterwards very frequently by this appellation. Some, indeed, varied their wit by calling me Murad with the purse of pebbles.

“All that I had yet suffered is nothing compared to my succeeding misfortunes.

“It was the custom at this time in the Turkish camp for the soldiers to amuse themselves with firing at a mark. The superior officers remonstrated against this dangerous practice, but ineffectually. Sometimes a party of soldiers would stop firing for a few minutes

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

after a message was brought them from their commanders, and then they would begin again, in defiance of all orders. Such was the want of discipline in our army, that this disobedience went unpunished. In the meantime, the frequency of the danger made most men totally regardless of it. I have seen tents pierced with bullets, in which parties were quietly seated smoking their pipes, whilst those without were preparing to take fresh aim at the red flag on the top.

“This apathy proceeded, in some, from unconquerable indolence of body; in others, from the intoxication produced by the fumes of tobacco and of opium, but in most of my brother Turks it arose from the confidence which the belief in predestination inspired. When a bullet killed one of their companions they only observed, scarcely taking the pipes from their mouths, ‘Our hour is not yet come; it is not the will of Mahomet that we should fall.’

“I own that this rash security appeared to me at first surprising, but it soon ceased to strike me with wonder; and it even tended to confirm my favorite opinion, that some were born to good and some to evil fortune. I became almost as careless as my companions, from following the same course of reasoning. It is not, thought I, in the power of human prudence to avert the stroke of destiny. I shall perhaps die to-morrow, let me therefore enjoy to-day.

“I now made it my study every day to procure as much amusement as possible. My poverty, as you will imagine, restricted me from indulgence and excess, but I soon found means to spend what did not actually belong to me. There were certain Jews who were followers of the camp, and who, calculating on the probability of victory for our troops, advanced money to the soldiers, for which they engaged to pay these usurers exorbitant interest. The Jew to whom I applied traded

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

with me also upon the belief that my brother **Saladin**, with whose character and circumstances he was acquainted, would pay my debts if I should fall. With the money I raised from the Jew I continually bought coffee and opium, of which I grew immoderately fond. In the delirium it created I forgot all my misfortunes, all fear of the future.

“One day, when I had raised my spirits by an unusual quantity of opium, I was strolling through the camp, sometimes singing, sometimes dancing, like a madman, and repeating that I was not now Murad the Unlucky. Whilst these words were on my lips a friendly spectator, who was in possession of his sober senses, caught me by the arm and attempted to drag me from the place where I was exposing myself. ‘Do you not see,’ said he, ‘those soldiers, who are firing at a mark? I saw one of them just now deliberately taking aim at your turban, and observe, he is now reloading his piece.’ My ill luck prevailed even at this instant, the only instant in my life when I defied its power. I struggled with my adviser, repeating, ‘I am not the wretch you take me for; I am not Murad the Unlucky.’ He fled from the danger himself; I remained, and in a few seconds afterwards a ball reached me and I fell senseless on the sand.

“The ball was cut out of my body by an awkward surgeon, who gave me ten times more pain than was necessary. He was particularly hurried at this time, because the army had just received orders to march in a few hours and all was confusion in the camp. My wound was excessively painful and the fear of being left behind with those who were deemed incurable added to my torments. Perhaps if I had kept myself quiet I might have escaped some of the evils I afterwards endured, but, as I have repeatedly told you, gentlemen, it was my ill fortune never to be able to

judge what was best to be done till the time for prudence was past.

“During that day, when my fever was at the height, and when my orders were to keep my bed, contrary to my natural habits of indolence, I rose a hundred times and went out of my tent in the very heat of the day, to satisfy my curiosity as to the number of the tents which had not been struck, and of the soldiers who had not yet marched. The orders to march were tardily obeyed and many hours elapsed before our encampment was raised. Had I submitted to my surgeon’s orders, I might have been in a state to accompany the most dilatory of the stragglers; I could have borne, perhaps, the slow motion of a litter, on which some of the sick were transported; but in the evening, when the surgeon came to dress my wounds, he found me in such a situation that it was scarcely possible to remove me.

“He desired a party of soldiers, who were left to bring up the rear, to call for me the next morning. They did so; but they wanted to put me upon the mule which I recollected, by a white streak on its back, to be the cursed animal that had kicked me whilst I was looking for the ring. I could not be prevailed upon to go upon this unlucky animal. I tried to persuade the soldiers to carry me, and they took me a little way, but, soon growing weary of their burden, they laid me down on the sand, pretending that they were going to fill a skin with water at a spring they had discovered, and bade me lie still and wait for their return.

“I waited and waited, longing for the water to moisten my parched lips, but no water came—no soldiers returned, and there I lay, for several hours, expecting every moment to breathe my last. I made no effort to move, for I was now convinced my hour was come,

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

and that it was the will of Mahomet that I should perish in this miserable manner, and lie unburied like a dog; a death, thought I, worthy of Murad the Unlucky.

“My forebodings were not this time just; a detachment of English soldiers passed near the place where I lay: my groans were heard by them, and they humanely came to my assistance. They carried me with them, dressed my wound, and treated me with the utmost tenderness. Christians though they were, I must acknowledge that I had reason to love them better than any of the followers of Mahomet, my good brother only excepted.

“Under their care I recovered; but scarcely had I regained my strength before I fell into new disasters. It was hot weather, and my thirst was excessive. I went out with a party, in hopes of finding a spring of water. The English soldiers began to dig for a well, in a place pointed out to them by one of their men of science. I was not inclined to such hard labor, but preferred sauntering on in search of a spring. I saw at a distance something that looked like a pool of water; and I pointed it out to my companions. Their man of science warned me by his interpreter not to trust to this deceitful appearance; for that such were common in this country, and that, when I came close to the spot, I should find no water there. He added that it was at a greater distance than I imagined; and that I should, in all probability, be lost in the desert, if I attempted to follow this phantom.

“I was so unfortunate as not to attend to his advice; I set out in pursuit of this accursed delusion, which assuredly was the work of evil spirits, who clouded my reason, and allured me into their dominion. I went on, hour after hour, in expectation continually of reaching

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

the object of my wishes; but it fled faster than I pursued, and I discovered at last that the Englishman, who had doubtless gained his information from the people of the country, was right; and that the shining appearance, which I had taken for water, was a mere deception.

"I was now exhausted with fatigue: I looked back in vain after the companions I had left; I could see neither men, animals, nor any trace of vegetation in the sandy desert. I had no resource but, weary as I was, to measure back my footsteps, which were imprinted in the sand.

"I slowly and sorrowfully traced them as my guides in this unknown land. Instead of yielding to my indolent inclinations, I ought, however, to have made the best of my way back, before the evening breeze sprung up. I felt the breeze rising, and, unconscious of my danger, I rejoiced, and opened my bosom to meet it; but what was my dismay when I saw that the wind swept before it all trace of my footsteps in the sand. I knew not which way to proceed; I was struck with despair, tore my garments, threw off my turban, and cried aloud; but neither human voice nor echo answered me. The silence was dreadful. I had tasted no food for many hours, and I now became sick and faint. I recollected that I had put a supply of opium into the folds of my turban; but, alas! when I took my turban up, I found that the opium had fallen out. I searched for it in vain on the sand, where I had thrown the turban.

"I stretched myself out upon the ground, and yielded without further struggle to my evil destiny. What I suffered from thirst, hunger, and heat cannot be described! At last I fell into a sort of trance, during which images of various kinds seemed to flit before my

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

eyes. How long I remained in this state I know not; but I remember that I was brought to my senses by a loud shout, which came from persons belonging to a caravan returning from Mecca. This was a shout of joy for their safe arrival at a certain spring, well known to them in this part of the desert.

"The spring was not a hundred yards from the spot where I lay; yet, such had been the fate of Murad the Unlucky, that he missed the reality, whilst he had been hours in pursuit of the phantom. Feeble and spiritless as I was, I sent forth as loud a cry as I could, in hopes of obtaining assistance; and I endeavored to crawl to the place from which the voices appeared to come. The caravan rested for a considerable time whilst the slaves filled the skins with water, and whilst the camels took in their supply. I worked myself on towards them; yet, notwithstanding my efforts, I was persuaded that, according to my usual misfortune, I should never be able to make them hear my voice. I saw them mount their camels! I took off my turban, unrolled it, and waved it in the air. My signal was seen! The caravan came towards me!

"I had scarcely strength to speak; a slave gave me some water; and, after I had drunk, I explained to them who I was, and how I came into this situation.

"Whilst I was speaking, one of the travellers observed the purse which hung to my girdle: it was the same the merchant, for whom I had recovered the ring, had given to me; I had carefully preserved it, because of the initials of my benefactor's name and a passage from the Koran were worked upon it. When he gave it to me, he said that perhaps we should meet again in some other part of the world, and he should recognize me by this token. The person who now took notice of the purse was his brother; and when I related

to him how I had obtained it, he had the goodness to take me under his protection. He was a merchant, who was now going with the caravan to Grand Cairo: he offered to take me with him, and I willingly accepted the proposal, promising to serve him as faithfully as any of his slaves. The caravan proceeded, and I was carried with it.

CHAPTER II.

“The merchant, who was become my master, treated me with great kindness; but, on hearing me relate the whole series of my unfortunate adventures, he exacted a promise from me that I would do nothing without first consulting him. ‘Since you are so unlucky, Murad,’ said he, ‘that you always choose for the worst when you choose for yourself, you should trust entirely to the judgment of a wiser or more fortunate friend.’

“I fared well in the service of this merchant, who was a man of a mild disposition, and who was so rich that he could afford to be generous to all his dependants. It was my business to see his camels loaded and unloaded at proper places, to count his bales of merchandise, and to take care that they were not mixed with those of his companions. This I carefully did, till the day we arrived at Alexandria; when, unluckily, I neglected to count the bales, taking it for granted that they were all right, as I had found them so the preceding day. However, when we were to go on board the vessel that was to take us to Cairo, I perceived that three bales of cotton were missing.

“I ran to inform my master, who, though a good deal provoked at my negligence, did not reproach me as I deserved. The public crier was immediately sent round the city, to offer a reward for the recovery of

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

the merchandise; and it was restored by one of the merchant's slaves, with whom we had travelled. The vessel was now under sail; my master and I and the bales of cotton were obliged to follow in a boat; and when we were taken on board, the captain declared he was so loaded that he could not tell where to stow the bales of cotton. After much difficulty, he consented to let them remain upon deck; and I promised my master to watch them night and day.

"We had a prosperous voyage, and were actually in sight of shore, which the captain said we could not fail to reach early the next morning. I stayed, as usual, this night upon deck; and solaced myself by smoking my pipe. Ever since I had indulged in this practice at the camp at El Arish, I could not exist without opium and tobacco. I suppose that my reason was this night a little clouded with the dose I took; but, towards midnight, I was sobered by terror. I started up from the deck on which I had stretched myself; my turban was in flames; the bale of cotton on which I had rested was all on fire. I awakened two sailors, who were fast asleep on deck. The consternation became general, and the confusion increased the danger. The captain and my master were the most active, and suffered the most in extinguishing the flames: my master was terribly scorched.

For my part, I was not suffered to do anything; the captain ordered that I should be bound to the mast; and, when at last the flames were extinguished, the passengers, with one accord, besought him to keep me bound hand and foot, lest I should be the cause of some new disaster. All that had happened was, indeed, occasioned by my ill luck. I had laid my pipe down, when I was falling asleep, upon the bale of cotton that was beside me. The fire from my pipe fell out, and set the cotton in flames. Such was the mix-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

ture of rage and terror with which I had inspired the whole crew, that I am sure they would have set me ashore on a desert island, rather than have had me on board for a week longer. Even my humane master, I could perceive, was secretly impatient to get rid of Murad the Unlucky and his evil fortune.

"You may believe that I was heartily glad when we landed, and when I was unbound. My master put a purse containing fifty sequins into my hand, and bade me farewell. 'Use this money prudently, Murad, if you can,' said he, 'and perhaps your fortune may change.' Of this I had little hopes, but determined to lay out my money as prudently as possible.

"As I was walking through the streets of Grand Cairo, considering how I should lay out my fifty sequins to the greatest advantage, I was stopped by one who called me by my name, and asked me if I could pretend to have forgotten his face. I looked steadily at him, and recollected to my sorrow that he was the Jew Rachub, from whom I had borrowed certain sums of money at the camp at El Arish. What brought him to Grand Cairo, except it was my evil destiny, I cannot tell. He would not quit me; he would take no excuses; he said he knew that I had deserted twice, once from the Turkish and once from the English army; that I was not entitled to any pay; and that he could not imagine it possible that my brother Saladin would own me, or pay my debts.

"I replied, for I was vexed by the insolence of this Jewish dog, that I was not, as he imagined, a beggar; that I had the means of paying him my just debt, but that I hoped he would not extort from me all that exorbitant interest which none but a Jew could exact. He smiled, and answered that, if a Turk loved opium better than money, this was no fault of his; that he had supplied me with what I loved best in the world; and that

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

I ought not to complain, when he expected I should return the favor.

“I will not weary you, gentlemen, with all the arguments that passed between me and Rachub. At last we compromised matters; he would take nothing less than the whole debt; but he let me have at a very cheap rate a chest of second-hand clothes, by which he assured me I might make my fortune. He brought them to Grand Cairo, he said, for the purpose of selling them to slave-merchants, who, at this time of the year, were in want of them to supply their slaves; but he was in haste to get home to his wife and family, at Constantinople, and therefore he was willing to make over to a friend the profits of this speculation. I should have distrusted Rachub’s professions of friendship and especially of disinterestedness; but he took me with him to the khan, where his goods were, and unlocked the chest of clothes to show them to me. They were of the richest and finest materials, and had been but little worn. I could not doubt the evidence of my senses; the bargain was concluded, and the Jew sent porters to my inn with the chest.

“The next day I repaired to the public market-place; and, when my business was known, I had choice of customers before night: my chest was empty—and my purse was full. The profit I made, upon the sale of these clothes, was so considerable, that I could not help feeling astonishment at Rachub’s having brought himself so readily to relinquish them.

“A few days after I had disposed of the contents of my chest, a Damascene merchant, who had bought two suits of apparel from me, told me, with a very melancholy face, that both the female slaves who had put on these clothes were sick. I could not conceive that the clothes were the cause of their sickness; but soon afterwards, as I was crossing the market, I was at-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

tacked by a least a dozen merchants, who made similar complaints. They insisted upon knowing how I came by the garments, and demanded whether I had worn any of them myself. This day I had for the first time indulged myself with wearing a pair of yellow slippers, the only finery I had reserved for myself out of all the tempting goods. Convinced by my wearing these slippers that I could have had no insidious designs, since I shared the danger, whatever it might be, the merchants were a little pacified; but what was my terror and remorse the next day, when one of them came to inform me that plague boils had broken out under the arms of all the slaves who had worn this pestilential apparel. On looking carefully into the chest, we found the word Smyrna written, and half effaced, upon the lid. Now, the plague had for some time raged at Smyrna; and, as the merchant suspected, these clothes had certainly belonged to persons who had died of that distemper. This was the reason why the Jew was willing to sell them to me so cheap; and it was for this reason that he would not stay at Grand Cairo himself to reap the profits of his speculation. Indeed, if I had paid attention to it at the proper time, a slight circumstance might have revealed the truth to me. Whilst I was bargaining with the Jew, before he opened the chest, he swallowed a large dram of brandy, and stuffed his nostrils with a sponge dipped in vinegar: this he told me he did to prevent his perceiving the smell of musk, which always threw him into convulsions.

“The horror I felt, when I discovered that I had spread the infection of the plague, and that I had probably caught it myself, overpowered my senses; a cold dew spread over all my limbs, and I fell upon the lid of the fatal chest in a swoon. It is said that fear disposes people to take the infection; however this may be,

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

I sickened that evening, and soon was in a raging fever. It was worse for me whenever the delirium left me, and I could reflect upon the miseries my ill fortune had occasioned. In my first lucid interval, I looked round and saw that I had been removed from the khan to a wretched hut. An old woman, who was smoking her pipe in the farthest corner of my room, informed me that I had been sent out of the town of Grand Cairo by order of the *cadi*, to whom the merchants had made their complaint. The fatal chest was burnt, and the house in which I had lodged razed to the ground. 'And if it had not been for me,' continued the old woman, 'you would have been dead, probably, at this instant; but I have made a vow to our great prophet that I would never neglect an opportunity of doing a good action: therefore, when you were deserted by all the world, I took care of you. Here, too, is your purse, which I saved from the rabble; and, what is more difficult, from the officers of justice: I will account to you for every *para* that I have expended; and will moreover tell you the reason of my making such an extraordinary vow.'

"As I believed that this benevolent old woman took great pleasure in talking, I made an inclination of my head to thank her for her promised history, and she proceeded; but I must confess that I did not listen with all the attention her narrative doubtless deserved. Even curiosity, the strongest passion of us Turks, was dead within me. I have no recollection of the old woman's story. It is as much as I can do to finish my own.

"The weather became excessively hot; it was affirmed by some of the physicians that this heat would prove fatal to their patients; but, contrary to the prognostics of the physicians, it stopped the progress of the plague. I recovered, and found my purse much lightened by

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

my illness. I divided the remainder of my money with my humane nurse, and sent her out into the city, to inquire how matters were going on.

"She brought me word that the fury of the plague had much abated; but that she had met several funerals, and that she had heard many of the merchants cursing the folly of Murad the Unlucky, who, as they said, had brought all this calamity upon the inhabitants of Cairo. Even fools, they say, learn by experience. I took care to burn the bed on which I had lain, and the clothes I had worn: I concealed my real name, which I knew would inspire detestation, and gained admittance, with a crowd of other poor wretches, into a lazaretto, where I performed quarantine, and offered up prayers daily for the sick.

"When I thought it was impossible I could spread the infection, I took my passage home. I was eager to get away from Grand Cairo, where I knew I was an object of execration. I had a strange fancy haunting my mind; I imagined that all my misfortunes, since I left Constantinople, had arisen from my neglect of the talisman upon the beautiful china vase. I dreamed three times, when I was recovering from the plague, that a genius appeared to me, and said, in a reproachful tone, 'Murad, where is the vase that was intrusted to thy care?'

"This dream operated strongly upon my imagination. As soon as we arrived at Constantinople, which we did, to my great surprise, without meeting with any untoward accidents, I went in search of my brother Saladin, to inquire for my vase. He no longer lived in the house in which I left him, and I began to be apprehensive that he was dead; but a porter, hearing my inquiries, exclaimed. 'Who is there in Constantinople that is ignorant of the dwelling of Saladin the Lucky? Come with me, and I will show it to you.'

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

“The mansion to which he conducted me looked so magnificent, that I was almost afraid to enter lest there should be some mistake. But, whilst I was hesitating, the doors opened, and I heard my brother Saladin’s voice. He saw me almost at the same instant that I fixed my eyes on him, and immediately sprang forward to embrace me. He was the same good brother as ever, and I rejoiced in his prosperity with all my heart. ‘Brother Saladin,’ said I, ‘can you now doubt that some men are born to be fortunate, and others to be unfortunate? How often you used to dispute this point with me?’

“‘Let us not dispute it now in the public street,’ said he, smiling, ‘but come in and refresh yourself, and we will consider the question afterwards at leisure.’

“‘No, my dear brother,’ said I, drawing back, ‘you are too good: Murad the Unlucky shall not enter your house, lest he should draw down misfortunes upon you and yours. I come only to ask for my vase.’

“‘It is safe,’ cried he; ‘come in, and you shall see it; but I will not give it up till I have you in my house. I have none of these superstitious fears: pardon me the expression, but I have none of these superstitious fears.’

“I yielded, entered his house, and was astonished at all I saw! My brother did not triumph in his prosperity; but, on the contrary, seemed intent only upon making me forget my misfortunes; he listened to the account of them with kindness, and obliged me by the recital of his history; which was, I must acknowledge, far less wonderful than my own. He seemed, by his own account, to have grown rich in the common course of things; or, rather, by his own prudence. I allowed for his prejudices, and, unwilling to dispute further with him, said, ‘You must remain of your opinion, brother; and I of mine: you are Saladin the Lucky, and I Murad

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

the Unlucky; and so we shall remain to the end of our lives.'

"I had not been in his house four days when an accident happened, which showed how much I was in the right. The favorite of the sultan, to whom he had formerly sold his china vase, though her charms were now somewhat faded by time, still retained her power, and her taste for magnificence. She commissioned my brother to bespeak for her, at Venice, the most splendid looking-glass that money could purchase. The mirror, after many delays and disappointments, at length arrived at my brother's house. He unpacked it, and sent to let the lady know it was in perfect safety. It was late in the evening, and she ordered it should remain where it was that night; and that it should be brought to the seraglio the next morning. It stood in a sort of ante-chamber to the room in which I slept; and with it were left some packages, containing glass chandeliers for an unfinished saloon in my brother's house. Salad-in charged all his domestics to be vigilant this night, because he had money to a great amount by him, and there had been frequent robberies in our neighborhood. Hearing these orders, I resolved to be in readiness at a moment's warning. I laid my scimitar beside me upon a cushion; and left my door half open, that I might hear the slightest noise in the ante-chamber or the great staircase. About midnight I was suddenly awakened by a noise in the ante-chamber. I started up, seized my scimitar, and the instant I got to the door, saw, by the light of the lamp which was burning in the room, a man standing opposite to me, with a drawn sword in his hand. I rushed forward, demanding what he wanted, and received no answer; but, seeing him aim at me with his scimitar, I gave him, as I thought, a deadly blow. At this instant I heard a great crash; and the fragments of the looking-glass, which I had shivered, fell at my feet. At the same moment

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

something black brushed by my shoulder: I pursued it, stumbled over the packages of glass, and rolled over them down the stairs.

“My brother came out of his room, to inquire the cause of all this disturbance; and when he saw the fine mirror broken, and me lying amongst the glass chandeliers at the bottom of the stairs, he could not forbear exclaiming, ‘Well, brother! you are indeed Murad the Unlucky!’

“When the first emotion was over, he could not, however, forbear laughing at my situation. With a degree of goodness, which made me a thousand times more sorry for the accident, he came downstairs to help me up, gave me his hand, and said, ‘Forgive me, if I was angry with you at first. I am sure you did not mean to do me any injury; but tell me how all this has happened.’

“Whilst Saladin was speaking, I heard the same kind of noise which had alarmed me in the ante-chamber; but, on looking back, I saw only a black pigeon, which flew swiftly by me, unconscious of the mischief he had occasioned. This pigeon I had unluckily brought into the house the preceding day; and had been feeding and trying to tame it for my young nephews. I little thought it would be the cause of such disasters. My brother, though he endeavored to conceal his anxiety from me, was much disturbed at the idea of meeting the favorite’s displeasure, who would certainly be grievously disappointed by the loss of her splendid looking-glass. I saw that I should inevitably be his ruin if I continued in his house; and no persuasions could prevail upon me to prolong my stay. My generous brother, seeing me determined to go, said to me, ‘A factor, whom I have employed for some years to sell merchandise for me, died a few days ago. Will you take his place? I am rich enough to bear any little mistakes you may fall into, from ignorance of business; and you

will have a partner who is able and willing to assist you.'

"I was touched to the heart by this kindness, especially at such a time as this. He sent one of his slaves with me to the shop in which you now see me, gentlemen. The slave, by my brother's directions, brought with us my china vase, and delivered it safely to me, with this message: 'The scarlet dye that was found in this vase, and in its fellow, was the first cause of Saladin's making the fortune he now enjoys: he therefore does no more than justice, in sharing that fortune with his brother Murad.'

"I was now placed in as advantageous a situation as possible; but my mind was ill at ease, when I reflected that the broken mirror might be my brother's ruin. The lady by whom it had been bespoken was, I well knew, of a violent temper; and this disappointment was sufficient to provoke her to vengeance. My brother sent me word this morning, however, that, though her displeasure was excessive, it was in my power to prevent any ill consequences that might ensue. 'In my power!' I exclaimed; 'then, indeed, I am happy! Tell my brother there is nothing I will not do to show him my gratitude, and to save him from the consequences of my folly.'

"The slave who was sent by my brother seemed unwilling to name what was required of me, saying that his master was afraid I should not like to grant the request. I urged him to speak freely, and he then told me the favorite declared nothing would make her amends for the loss of the mirror but the fellow vase to that which she had bought from Saladin. It was impossible for me to hesitate; gratitude for my brother's generous kindness overcame my superstitious obstinacy; and I sent him word I would carry the vase to him myself.

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

"I took it down this evening from the shelf on which it stood; it was covered with dust, and I washed it, but unluckily, in endeavoring to clean the inside from the remains of the scarlet powder, I poured hot water into it, and immediately I heard a simmering noise, and my vase, in a few instants, burst asunder with a loud explosion. These fragments, alas! are all that remain. The measure of my misfortunes is now completed. Can you wonder, gentlemen, that I bewail my evil destiny? Am I not justly called Murad the Unlucky? Here end all my hopes in this world! Better would it have been if I had died long ago! Better that I had never been born! Nothing I ever have done or attempted has prospered. Murad the Unlucky is my name, and ill fate has marked me for her own."

CHAPTER III

The lamentations of Murad were interrupted by the entrance of Saladin. Having waited in vain for some hours, he now came to see if any disaster had happened to his brother Murad. He was surprised at the sight of the two pretended merchants, and could not refrain from exclamations on beholding the broken vase. However, with his usual equanimity and good nature, he began to console Murad; and, taking up the fragments, examined them carefully, one by one joined them together again, found that none of the edges of the china were damaged, and declared he could have it mended so as to look as well as ever.

Murad recovered his spirits upon this. "Brother," said he, "I comfort myself for being Murad the Unlucky, when I reflect that you are Saladin the Lucky. See, gentlemen," continued he, turning to the pretended merchants, "scarcely has this most fortunate of men been five minutes in company before he gives a happy

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

turn to affairs. His presence inspires joy: I observe your countenances, which had been saddened by my dismal history, have brightened up since he has made his appearance. Brother, I wish you would make these gentlemen some amends for the time they have wasted in listening to my catalogue of misfortunes, by relating your history, which, I am sure, they will find rather more exhilarating."

Saladin consented, on condition that the strangers would accompany him home, and partake of a social banquet. They at first repeated the former excuse of their being obliged to return to their inn; but at length the sultan's curiosity prevailed, and he and his vizier went home with Saladin the Lucky, who, after supper, related his history in the following manner:

"My being called Saladin the Lucky first inspired me with confidence in myself; though I own that I cannot remember any extraordinary instances of good luck in my childhood. An old nurse of my mother's, indeed, repeated to me, twenty times a day, that nothing I undertook could fail to succeed, because I was Saladin the Lucky. I became presumptuous and rash; and my nurse's prognostics might have effectually prevented their accomplishment, had I not, when I was about fifteen, been roused to reflection during a long confinement, which was the consequence of my youthful conceit and imprudence.

"At this time there was at the Porte a Frenchman, an ingenious engineer, who was employed and favored by the sultan, to the great astonishment of many of my prejudiced countrymen. On the grand seignior's birthday he exhibited some extraordinarily fine fireworks; and I, with numbers of the inhabitants of Constantinople, crowded to see them. I happened to stand near the place where the Frenchman was stationed; the crowd pressed upon him, and I amongst the rest; he

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

begged we would, for our own sakes, keep at a greater distance, and warned us that we might be much hurt by the combustibles which he was using. I, relying upon my good fortune, disregarded all these cautions; and the consequence was, that as I touched some of the materials prepared for the fireworks, they exploded, dashed me upon the ground with great violence, and I was terribly burnt.

“This accident, gentlemen, I consider as one of the most fortunate circumstances of my life; for it checked and corrected the presumption of my temper. During the time I was confined to my bed, the French gentleman came frequently to see me. He was a very sensible man; and the conversations he had with me enlarged my mind, and cured me of many foolish prejudices, especially of that which I had been taught to entertain, concerning the predominance of what is called luck, or fortune, in human affairs. ‘Though you are called Saladin the Lucky,’ said he, ‘you find that your neglect of prudence has nearly brought you to the grave even in the bloom of youth. Take my advice, and henceforward trust more to prudence than to fortune. Let the multitude, if they will, call you Saladin the Lucky; but call yourself, and make yourself, Saladin the Prudent.’

“These words left an indelible impression on my mind, and gave a new turn to my thoughts and character. My brother, Murad, has doubtless told you that our difference of opinion, on the subject of predestination, produced between us frequent arguments; but we could never convince one another, and we each have acted, through life, in consequence of our different beliefs. To this I attribute my success and his misfortunes.

“The first rise of my fortune, as you have probably heard from Murad, was owing to the scarlet dye, which

I brought to perfection with infinite difficulty. The powder, it is true, was accidentally found by me in our china vases; but there it might have remained to this instant, useless, if I had not taken the pains to make it useful. I grant that we can only partially foresee and command events; yet on the use we make of our own powers, I think, depends our destiny. But, gentlemen, you would rather hear my adventures, perhaps, than my reflections; and I am truly concerned, for your sakes, that I have no wonderful events to relate. I am sorry I cannot tell you of my having been lost in a sandy desert. I have never had the plague, nor even been shipwrecked; I have been all my life an inhabitant of Constantinople, and have passed my time in a very quiet and uniform manner.

“The money I received from the sultan’s favorite for my china vase, as my brother may have told you, enabled me to trade on a more extensive scale. I went on steadily with my business; and made it my whole study to please my employers, by all fair and honorable means. This industry and civility succeeded beyond my expectations; in a few years, I was rich for a man in my way of business.

“I will not proceed to trouble you with the journal of a petty merchant’s life; I pass on to the incident which made a considerable change in my affairs.

“A terrible fire broke out near the walls of the grand seignior’s seraglio: as you are strangers, gentlemen, you may not have heard of this event, though it produced so great a sensation in Constantinople. The vizier’s superb palace was utterly consumed; and the melted lead poured from the roof of the mosque of St. Sophia. Various were the opinions formed by my neighbors respecting the cause of the conflagration. Some supposed it to be a punishment for the sultan’s having neglected, one Friday, to appear at the mosque

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

of St. Sophia; others considered it as a warning sent by Mahomet, to dissuade the Porte from persisting in a war in which we were just engaged. The generality, however, of the coffee-house politicians contented themselves with observing that it was the will of Mahomet that the palace should be consumed. Satisfied by this supposition, they took no precaution to prevent similar accidents in their own houses. Never were fires so common in the city as at this period; scarcely a night passed without our being wakened by the cry of fire.

“These frequent fires were rendered still more dreadful by villains, who were continually on the watch to increase the confusion by which they profited, and to pillage the houses of the sufferers. It was discovered that these incendiaries frequently skulked, towards evening, in the neighborhood of the bezestein, where the richest merchants store their goods; some of these wretches were detected in throwing coundaks, or matches, into the windows; and if these combustibles remained a sufficient time, they could not fail to set the house on fire.

“Notwithstanding all these circumstances, many even of those who had property to preserve continued to repeat, ‘It is the will of Mahomet,’ and consequently to neglect all means of preservation. I, on the contrary, recollecting the lesson I had learned from the sensible foreigner, neither suffered my spirits to sink with superstitious fears of ill luck, nor did I trust presumptuously to my good fortune. I took every possible means to secure myself. I never went to bed without having seen that all the lights and fires in the house were extinguished, and that I had a supply of water in the cistern. I had likewise learned from my Frenchman that wet mortar was the most effectual thing for stopping the progress of flames; I therefore had a quantity of mortar

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

made up in one of my outhouses, which I could use at a moment's warning. These precautions were all useful to me: my own house, indeed, was never actually on fire, but the houses of my next-door neighbors were no less than five times in flames, in the course of one winter. By my exertions, or rather by my precautions, they suffered but little damage; and all my neighbors looked upon me as their deliverer and friend: they loaded me with presents, and offered more, indeed, than I would accept. All repeated that I was Saladin the Lucky. This compliment I disclaimed, feeling more ambitious of being called Saladin the Prudent. It is thus that what we call modesty is often only a more refined species of pride. But to proceed with my story.

"One night I had been later than usual at supper, at a friend's house: none but the watch were in the streets, and even they, I believe, were asleep.

"As I passed one of the conduits, which convey water to the city, I heard a trickling noise; and, upon examination, I found that the cock of the water-spout was half turned, so that the water was running out. I turned it back to its proper place, thought it had been left unturned by accident, and walked on; but I had not proceeded far before I came to another spout and another, which were in the same condition. I was convinced that this could not be the effect merely of accident, and suspected that some ill-intentioned persons designed to let out and waste the water of the city, that there might be none to extinguish any fire that should break out in the course of the night.

"I stood still for a few moments, to consider how it would be most prudent to act. It would be impossible for me to run to all parts of the city, that I might stop the pipes that were running to waste. I first thought of waking the watch and the firemen, who were most of them slumbering at their stations; but I reflected that

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

they were perhaps not to be trusted, and that they were in a confederacy with the incendiaries; otherwise, they would certainly, before this hour, have observed and stopped the running of the sewers in their neighborhood. I determined to waken a rich merchant, called Damat Zade, who lived near me, and who had a number of slaves whom he could send to different parts of the city, to prevent mischief, and give notice to the inhabitants of their danger.

He was a very sensible, active man, and one that could easily be awakened; he was not, like some Turks, an hour in recovering their lethargic senses. He was quick in decision and action; and his slaves resembled their master. He despatched a messenger immediately to the grand vizier, that the sultan's safety might be secured; and sent others to the magistrates, in each quarter of Constantinople. The large drums in the janissary aga's tower beat to rouse the inhabitants; and scarcely had this been heard to beat half an hour before the fire broke out in the lower apartments of Damat Zade's house, owing to a coundak, which had been left behind one of the doors.

"The wretches who had prepared the mischief came to enjoy it, and to pillage; but they were disappointed. Astonished to find themselves taken into custody, they could not comprehend how their designs had been frustrated. By timely exertions, the fire in my friend's house was extinguished; and though fires broke out, during the night, in many parts of the city, but little damage was sustained, because there was time for precautions; and by the stopping of the spouts, sufficient water was preserved. People were awakened, and warned of the danger, and they consequently escaped unhurt.

"The next day, as soon as I made my appearance at the bezestein, the merchants crowded round, called me

their benefactor, and the preserver of their lives and fortunes. Damat Zade, the merchant whom I had awakened the preceding night, presented to me a heavy purse of gold, and put upon my finger a diamond ring of considerable value; each of the merchants followed his example, in making me rich presents: the magistrates also sent me tokens of their approbation; and the grand vizier sent me a diamond of the first water, with a line written by his own hand: 'To the man who has saved Constantinople.' Excuse me, gentlemen, for the vanity I seem to show in mentioning these circumstances. You desired to hear my history, and I cannot therefore omit the principal circumstance of my life. In the course of four and twenty hours, I found myself raised, by the munificent gratitude of the inhabitants of this city, to a state of affluence far beyond what I had ever dreamed of obtaining.

"I now took a house suited to my circumstances, and bought a few slaves. As I was carrying my slaves home, I was met by a Jew, who stopped me, saying, in his language, 'My lord, I see, has been purchasing slaves: I could clothe them cheaply.' There was something mysterious in the manner of this Jew, and I did not like his countenance; but I considered that I ought not to be governed by caprice in my dealings, and that, if this man could really clothe my slaves more cheaply than another, I ought not to neglect his offer merely because I took a dislike to the cut of his beard, the turn of his eye, or the tone of his voice. I therefore bade the Jew follow me home, saying that I would consider his proposal.

"When we came to talk over the matter, I was surprised to find him so reasonable in his demands. On one point, indeed, he appeared unwilling to comply. I required not only to see the clothes I was offered, but also to know how they came into his possession. On

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

this subject he equivocated; I therefore suspected there must be something wrong. I reflected what it could be, and judged that the goods had been stolen, or that they had been the apparel of persons who had died of some contagious distemper. The Jew showed me a chest, from which he said I might choose whatever suited me best. I observed that, as he was going to unlock the chest, he stuffed his nose with some aromatic herbs. He told me that he did so to prevent his smelling the musk with which the chest was perfumed: musk, he said, had an extraordinary effect upon his nerves. I begged to have some of the herbs which he used himself; declaring that musk was likewise offensive to me.

“The Jew, either struck by his own conscience, or observing my suspicions, turned as pale as death. He pretended he had not the right key, and could not unlock the chest; said he must go in search of it, and that he would call on me again.

“After he had left me, I examined some writing upon the lid of the chest, that had been nearly effaced. I made out the word Smyrna, and this was sufficient to confirm all my suspicions. The Jew returned no more: he sent some porters to carry away the chest, and I heard nothing of him for some time, till one day, when I was at the house of Damat Zade, I saw a glimpse of the Jew passing hastily through one of the courts, as if he wished to avoid me. ‘My friend,’ said I to Damat Zade, ‘do not attribute my question to impertinent curiosity, or to a desire to intermeddle with your affairs, if I venture to ask the nature of your business with the Jew, who has just now crossed your court.’

“‘He has engaged to supply me with clothing for my slaves,’ replied my friend, ‘cheaper than I can purchase it elsewhere. I have a design to surprise my daughter,

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

Fatima, on her birthday, with an entertainment in the pavilion in the garden; and all her female slaves shall appear in new dresses on the occasion.'

"I interrupted my friend, to tell him what I suspected relative to this Jew and his chest of clothes. It is certain that the infection of the plague can be communicated by clothes, not only after months, but after years have elapsed. The merchant resolved to have nothing more to do with this wretch, who could thus hazard the lives of thousands of his fellow-creatures for a few pieces of gold; we sent notice of the circumstance to the *cadi*, but the *cadi* was slow in his operations; and, before he could take the Jew into custody, the cunning fellow had effected his escape. When his house was searched, he and his chest had disappeared: we discovered that he sailed for Egypt, and rejoiced that we had driven him from Constantinople.

"My friend, *Damat Zade*, expressed the warmest gratitude to me. 'You formerly saved my fortune: you have now saved my life; and a life yet dearer than my own, that of my daughter *Fatima*.'

"At the sound of that name I could not, I believe, avoid showing some emotion. I had accidentally seen this lady, and I had been captivated by her beauty, and by the sweetness of her countenance; but as I knew she was destined to be the wife of another. I suppressed my feeling, and determined to banish the recollection of the fair *Fatima* forever from my imagination. Her father, however, at this instant, threw into my way a temptation which it required all my fortitude to resist. '*Saladin*,' continued he, 'it is but just that you, who have saved our lives, should share our festivity. Come here on the birthday of my *Fatima*: I will place you in a balcony, which overlooks the garden, and you shall see the whole spectacle. We shall have a feast of tulips, in imitation of that which, as you know, is held in the

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

grand seignior's gardens. I assure you, the sight will be worth seeing; and besides, you will have a chance of beholding my Fatima, for a moment, without her veil.'

"'That,' interrupted I, 'is the thing I most wish to avoid. I dare not indulge myself in a pleasure which might cost me the happiness of my life. I will conceal nothing from you, who treat me with so much confidence. I have already beheld the charming countenance of your Fatima, but I know that she is destined to be the wife of a happier man.'

"Damat Zade seemed much pleased by the frankness with which I explained myself; but he would not give up the idea of my sitting with him, in the balcony, on the day of the feast of tulips, and I, on my part, could not consent to expose myself to another view of the charming Fatima. My friend used every argument, or rather, every sort of persuasion he could imagine, to prevail upon me: he then tried to laugh me out of my resolution; and, when all failed, he said, in a voice of anger, 'Go, then, Saladin; I am sure you are deceiving me: you have a passion for some other woman, and you would conceal it from me, and persuade me you refuse the favor I offer you from prudence, when, in fact, it is from indifference and contempt. Why could you not speak the truth of your heart to me with that frankness with which one friend should treat another?'

"Astonished at this unexpected charge, and at the anger which flashed from the eyes of Damat Zade, who till this moment had always appeared to me a man of a mild and reasonable temper, I was for an instant tempted to fly into a passion and leave him: but friends, once lost, are not easily regained. This consideration had power sufficient to make me command my temper. 'My friend,' replied I, 'we will talk over this affair to-morrow: you are now angry, and cannot do me justice; but to-morrow you will be cool: you will then be con-

vinced that I have not deceived you; and that I have no design but to secure my own happiness by the most prudent means in my power, by avoiding the sight of the dangerous Fatima. I have no passion for any other woman.'

"'Then,' said my friend, embracing me, and quitting the tone of anger which he had assumed only to try my resolution to the utmost—'then, Saladin, Fatima is yours.'

"I scarcely dared to believe my senses! I could not express my joy! 'Yes, my friend,' continued the merchant, 'I have tried your prudence to the utmost; it has been victorious, and I resign my Fatima to you, certain that you will make her happy. It is true, I had a greater alliance in view for her: the pacha of Maksoud has demanded her from me; but I have found, upon private inquiry, he is addicted to the intemperate use of opium: and my daughter shall never be the wife of one who is a violent madman one half the day, and a melancholy idiot during the remainder. I have nothing to apprehend from the pacha's resentment, because I have powerful friends with the grand vizier who will oblige him to listen to reason, and to submit quietly to a disappointment which he so justly merits. And now, Saladin, have you any objection to seeing the feast of tulips?'

"I replied only by falling at the merchant's feet, and embracing his knees. The feast of tulips came, and on that day I was married to the charming Fatima! The charming Fatima I continue still to think her, though she has now been my wife some years. She is the joy and pride of my heart; and, from our mutual affection, I have experienced more felicity than from all the other circumstances of my life, which are called so fortunate. Her father gave me the house in which I now live, and joined his possessions to ours; so that I have more

MURAD THE UNLUCKY.

wealth even than I desire. My riches, however, give me continually the means of relieving the wants of others; and therefore I cannot affect to despise them. I must persuade my brother Murad to share them with me, and to forget his misfortunes: I shall then think myself completely happy. As to the sultana's looking-glass, and your broken vase, my dear brother," continued Saladin, "we must think of some means—"

"Think no more of the sultana's looking-glass, or of the broken vase," exclaimed the sultan, throwing aside his merchant's habit, and showing beneath it his own imperial vest. "Saladin, I rejoice to have heard, from your own lips, the history of your life. I acknowledge, vizier, I have been in the wrong, in our argument," continued the sultan, turning to his vizier. "I acknowledge that the histories of Saladin the Lucky and Murad the Unlucky favor your opinion, that prudence has more influence than chance in human affairs. The success and happiness of Saladin seem to me to have arisen from his prudence: by that prudence, Constantinople has been saved from flames, and from the plague. Had Murad possessed his brother's discretion, he would not have been on the point of losing his head, for selling rolls which he did not bake: he would not have been kicked by a mule, or bastinadoed for finding a ring: he would not have been robbed by one party of soldiers, or shot by another: he would not have been lost in a desert, or cheated by a Jew; he would not have set a ship on fire; nor would he have caught the plague, and spread it through Grand Cairo: he would not have run my sultana's looking-glass through the body, instead of a robber: he would not have believed that the fate of his life depended on certain verses on a china vase: nor would he, at last, have broken this precious talisman, by washing it with hot water. Henceforward, let Murad the Unlucky be named Murad the Impru-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

dent: let Saladin preserve the surname he merits, and be henceforth called Saladin the Prudent."

So spake the sultan, who, unlike the generality of monarchs, could bear to find himself in the wrong; and could discover his vizier to be in the right, without cutting off his head. History further informs us that the sultan offered to make Saladin a pacha, and to commit to him the government of a province; but Saladin the Prudent declined this honor, saying he had no ambition, was perfectly happy in his present situation, and that, when this was the case, it would be folly to change, because no one can be more than happy. What further adventures befell Murad the Imprudent are not recorded; it is known only that he became a daily visitor to the Teriaky; and that he died a martyr to the immoderate use of opium.

THE THREE CALENDERS

Scheherazade (An Arab Song)



THE THREE CALENDERS

(*Arabian Nights*)

IN the reign of Caliph Haroun al Raschid, there was at Bagdad a porter, who was a fellow of infinite wit and humor. One morning as he was at the place where he usually waited for employment, with a great basket before him, a handsome lady, covered with a great muslin veil, accosted him, and said, with a pleasant air, "Hark you, porter, take your basket¹ and follow me." The delighted porter took his basket immediately, set it on his head, and followed the lady, exclaiming, "Oh, happy day, oh, day of good luck!"

In a short time the lady stopped before a gate and knocked: a Christian, with a venerable long white beard, opened it, and she put money into his hand without speaking; but the Christian, who knew what she wanted, went in, and shortly after brought out a large jar of excellent wine. "Take this jar," said the lady to the porter, "and put it into the basket." This being done she desired him to follow her, and walked on; the porter still exclaiming, "Oh, day of happiness! Oh, day of agreeable surprise and joy!"

The lady stopped at a fruit shop, where she bought some apples, apricots, peaches, lemons, citrons, or-

¹ Baskets, panniers made of leaves of palm, used in conveying fruits and bread, while heavier articles are carried in bags of leather or skin.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

anges, myrtles, sweet basil, lilies, jassamine, and some other plants. She told the porter to put all those things into his basket and follow her. Passing by a butcher's shop, she ordered five and twenty pounds of his finest meat to be weighed, which was also put into the porter's basket.

At another shop she bought capers, small cucumbers, parsley and other herbs; at another some pistachios, walnuts, hazlenuts, almonds, kernels of the pine, and other similar fruits; at a third, she purchased all sorts of almond patties. The porter, in putting all these things into his basket, said, "My good lady, you should have told me that you intended buying so many things, and I would have provided a camel to carry them, for if you buy ever so little more I shall not be able to bear it." The lady laughed at the fellow's pleasant humor, and ordered him still to follow her.

Then she went to a druggist's, where she furnished herself with all manner of sweet-scented waters, cloves, musk, pepper, ginger, and a great piece of ambergris, and several other Indian spices; this quite filled the porter's basket and she ordered him to follow her. They walked till they came to a magnificent house, whose front was adorned with fine columns, and had a gate of ivory. There they stopped and the lady knocked softly. Another lady soon came to open the gate, and all three, after passing through a handsome vestibule, crossed a spacious court, surrounded by an open gallery, which communicated with many magnificent apartments, all on the same floor. At the end of this court there was a dais richly furnished, with a couch in the middle, supported by four columns of ebony, enriched with diamonds and pearls of an extraordinary size, and covered with red satin, relieved by a bordering of Indian gold. In the middle of the court there was a large basin lined with white marble,

THE THREE CALENDERS.

and full of the finest transparent water, which rushed from the mouth of a lion of gilt bronze.

But what principally attracted the attention of the porter was a third most beautiful lady, and who was seated on the couch before mentioned. This lady was called Zobeide, she who opened the door was called Safie, and the name of the one who had been for the provisions was Amina. Then said Zobeide, accosting the other two, "Sisters, do not you see that this honest man is ready to sink under his burden; why do not you ease him of it?" Then Amina and Safie took the basket, the one before and the other behind; Zobeide also assisted, and all three together set it on the ground, then emptied it; and when they had done, the beautiful Amina took out money, and paid the porter liberally.

The porter was well satisfied, but when he ought to have departed, he was chained to the spot by the pleasure of beholding three such beauties, who appeared to him equally charming; for Amina, having now laid aside her veil, proved to be as handsome as either of the others. What surprised him most was, that he saw no man about the house, yet most of the provisions he had brought in, as the dry fruits, and the several sorts of cakes and confections, were adapted chiefly for those who could drink and make merry.

"Madam," said he, addressing Zobeide, "I am sensible that I act rudely in staying longer than I ought, but I hope you will have the goodness to pardon me, when I tell you that I am astonished not to see a man with three ladies of such extraordinary beauty; and you know that a company of women without men is as melancholy as a company of men without women." To this he added some pleasantries in proof of what he advanced; and did not forget the Bagdad proverb, "That the table is not completely furnished, ex-

cept there be four in company;" so concluded, that since they were but three, they wanted another.

The ladies fell a laughing at the porter's reasoning; after which Zobeide gravely addressed him, "Friend, you presume rather too much; and though you do not deserve it, I have no objection to inform you that we are three sisters, who transact our affairs with so much secrecy that no one knows anything of them. A good author says, 'Keep thy own secret, and do not reveal it to anyone. He that maketh his secret known is no longer its master. If thy own breast cannot keep thy counsel, how canst thou expect the breast of another to be more faithful?'"

"Permit me, I entreat thee, to say, that I also have read in another maxim, which I have always happily practiced: 'Conceal thy secret,' he says, 'only from such as are known to be indiscreet, and who will abuse thy confidence; but make no difficulty in discovering it to prudent men, because they know how to keep it.' The secret, then, with me, is as safe as if locked up in a cabinet, the key of which is lost, and the door sealed."

The porter, notwithstanding his rhetoric, must, in all probability, have retired in confusion, if Amina had not taken his part, and said to Zobeide and Safie, "My dear sisters, I conjure you to let him remain; he will afford us some diversion. Were I to repeat to you all the amusing things he addressed to me by the way, you would not feel surprised at my taking his part."

At these words of Amina, the porter fell on his knees, kissed the ground at her feet, and raising himself up, said, "Most beautiful lady, you began my good fortune to-day, and now you complete it by this generous conduct; I cannot adequately express my acknowledgments. As to the rest, ladies," said he, addressing himself to all the three sisters, "since you do me so great an honor, I shall always look upon myself as one of

THE THREE CALENDERS.

your most humble slaves." When he had spoken these words he would have returned the money he had received, but Zobeide ordered him to keep it. "What we have once given," said she, "we never take back. We are willing too, to allow you to stay on one condition that you keep secret and do not ask the reason for anything you may see us do. To show you," said Zobeide, with a serious countenance, "that what we demand of you is not a new thing among us, read what is written over our gate on the inside."

The porter read these words, written in large characters of gold, "He who speaks of things that do not concern him, shall hear things that will not please him." "Ladies," said he, "I swear to you that you shall never hear me utter a word respecting what does not relate to me, or wherein you may have any concern."

These preliminaries being settled, Amina brought in supper, and after she had lighted up the room with tapers made of aloewood and ambergris, which yield a most agreeable perfume as well as a delicate light, she sat down with her sisters and the porter. They began again to eat and drink, to sing, and repeat verses. The ladies diverted themselves in intoxicating the porter, under pretext of making him drink their healths, and the repast was enlivened by reciprocal sallies of wit. When they were all as merry as possible, they suddenly heard a knocking at the gate. Safie, whose office it was, went to the porch, and quickly returning, told them thus: "There are three calenders¹ at the door, all blind of the right eye, and have their heads, beards and eyebrows shaved. They say that they

¹ Calenders, a sort of privileged beggar or fakir among the Mohammedans, who wore a dress of sheepskin, with a leathern girdle about their loins, and collected alms. Dervish, a poor man, who is not bound by any vow of poverty to abstain from meat, and may relinquish his profession at will.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

are only just arrived at Bagdad, where they have never been before; and, as it is dark, and they know not where to lodge, they knocked at our door by chance; and pray us to show compassion, and to take them in. They care not where we put them, provided they obtain shelter. They are young and handsome; but I cannot, without laughing, think of their amusing and exact likeness to each other. My dear sisters, pray permit them to come in; they will afford us diversion enough, and put us to little charge, because they desire shelter only for this night, and resolve to leave us as soon as day appears."

"Go, then," said Zobeide, "and bring them in, but make them read what is written over the gate." Safie ran out with joy, and in a little time after returned with the three calenders.

At their entrance they made a profound obeisance to the ladies, who rose up to receive them, and told them courteously that they were welcome, that they were glad of the opportunity to oblige them, and to contribute toward relieving the fatigues of their journey, and at last invited them to sit down with them.

The magnificence of the place, and the civility they received, inspired the calenders with high respect for the ladies; but before they sat down, having by chance cast their eyes upon the porter, whom they saw clad almost like those devotees with whom they have continual disputes respecting several points of discipline, because they never shave their beards nor eyebrows,¹

¹ This may probably be an allusion to the two great divisions prevailing among the Mohammedans, viz., the Soonnis and the Shiites. The former upheld the legitimacy of the three first successions of Mohammed; the latter maintained the right of his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, and his descendants, called Fateimites or Ismaelites. They both received the Koran, but the one added to it the Sonna or certain oral traditions attributed to Mohammed, which the other rejected.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

one of them said, "I believe we have got here one of our revolted Arabian brethren."

The porter, having his head warm with wine, took offense at these words, and with a fierce look, without stirring from his place, answered, "Sit you down, and do not meddle with what does not concern you: have you not read the inscription over the gate? Do not pretend to make people live after your fashion, but follow ours."

"Honest man," said the calender, "do not put yourself in a passion; we should be sorry to give you the least occasion; on the contrary, we are ready to receive your commands." Upon which, to put an end to the dispute, the ladies interposed, and pacified them. When the calenders were seated, the ladies served them with meat; and Safie, being highly pleased with them, did not let them want for wine.

When the calenders had finished their repast, they signified to the ladies that they wished to entertain them with a concert of music, if they had any instruments in the house and would cause them to be brought: they willingly accepted the proposal, and Safie went to fetch them. Each man took the instrument he liked and all three together began to play a tune. The ladies, who knew the words of a merry song that suited the air, joined the concert with their voices; but the words of the song made them now and then stop, and fall into excessive laughter. While their amusement was at its height, there was a knock of unwonted loudness at their gate.

Now it was the custom of the sultan Haroun al Raschid to go sometimes during the night through the city, in disguise, in order to discover whether everything was quiet. On this evening he set out from his palace, accompanied by Giafar, his grand vizier, and Mesrour, chief of the household, all three disguised as

merchants; and he it was who, in passing through the street, and attracted by the noise of the music and of the peals of loud laughter, had desired his grand vizier to knock at the gate, and to demand shelter and admittance as for three strangers who knew not where to seek shelter for the night. Safie, who had opened the door, came back and obtained permission of her sisters to admit the newly arrived strangers.

The caliph and his attendants, upon their entrance, most courteously made obeisance to the ladies and to the calenders. The ladies returned their salutations, supposing them to be merchants. Zobeide, as the chief, addressed them with a grave and serious countenance, and said, "You are welcome. But while you are here, you must have eyes, but no tongues; you must not ask the reason of anything you may see, nor speak of anything that does not concern you lest you hear and see what will by no means please you."

"Madam," replied the vizier, "you shall be obeyed. It is enough for us to attend to our own business, without meddling with what does not concern us." After this, each seated himself, and the conversation became general, and they drank to the health of the new guests.

While the vizier Giafar entertained them, the caliph ceased not from admiring the beauty, elegance, and lively disposition of the ladies; while the appearance of the three calenders, all blind of the right eye, surprised him very much. He anxiously wished to learn the cause of this singularity, but the conditions they had imposed upon him and his companions prevented any inquiry. Besides all this when he reflected upon the richness of the services and furniture, with the regularity and arrangement everywhere apparent, he could hardly persuade himself it was not the effect of enchantment.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

The guests continued their conversation, when, after an interval, Zobeide rose up, and taking Amina by the hand, said to her, "Come, sister, the company shall not prevent us from doing as we have always been accustomed." Amina, who perfectly understood what her sister meant, got up, and took away the dishes, tables, bottles, glasses, and also the instruments on which the calenders had played. Nor did Safie remain idle; she snuffed the candles, and added more aloe-wood and ambergris. Having done this she requested the three calenders to sit on a sofa on one side, and the caliph and his company on the other. "Get up," said she then to the porter, looking at him, "and be ready to assist in whatever we want you." A little while after, Amina came in with a sort of seat, which she placed in the middle of the room. She then went to the door of a closet, and having opened it, she made a sign for the porter to approach. "Come and assist me," she cried. He did so, and went in with her, and returned a moment after, followed by two black dogs, each of them secured by a collar and chain; they appeared as if they had been severely whipped with rods, and he brought them into the middle of the apartment.

Zobeide, rising from her seat between the calenders and the caliph, moved very gravely toward the porter. "Come," said she, heaving a deep sigh, "let us perform our duty." She then tucked up her sleeves above her elbows, and receiving a rod from Safie, "Porter," said she, "deliver one of the dogs to my sister Amina, and bring the other to me."

The porter did as he was commanded. Upon this the dog that he held in his hand began to howl, and, turning toward Zobeide, held her head up in a supplicating posture; but Zobeide, having no regard to the sad countenance of the animal, which would have moved pity, nor to its cries that resounded through the

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

house, whipped her with the rod till she was out of breath; and having spent her strength, threw down the rod, and taking the chain from the porter, lifted up the dog by her paws, and looking upon her with a sad and pitiful countenance, they both wept; after which, Zobeide, with her handkerchief, wiped the tears from the dog's eyes, kissed her, returned the chain to the porter, desired him to carry her to the place whence he took her, and to bring the other. Then taking the whip, she served this in the same manner; she then wept with it, dried its tears, kissed it, and returned it to the porter.

The three calenders, with the caliph and his companions, were extremely surprised at this exhibition, and could not comprehend why Zobeide, after having so furiously beaten those two dogs, that by the Mussulman religion were reckoned unclean¹ animals, should weep with them, wipe off their tears, and kiss them. They muttered among themselves; and the caliph, who, being more impatient than the rest, longed exceedingly to be informed of the cause of so strange a proceeding, could not forbear making signs to the vizier to ask the question. The vizier turned his head another way; but being pressed by repeated signs, he answered by others, that it was not yet time for the caliph to satisfy his curiosity.

Zobeide sat still some time in the middle of the room, where she had whipped the two dogs, to recover herself of her fatigue; and Safie called to her, "Dear sister, will you not be pleased to return to your place, that

¹ The dog is in great disrepute among the Mohammedans. Mohammed is reported to have said, "No angel enters where a dog is." Cats, on the contrary, are great favorites, and sometimes accompany their masters when they go to their mosque. The Mohammedans are under certain restrictions in food; they are forbidden to eat the hare, wolf, the cat, and all animals forbidden by the law of Moses. The shrimp is forbidden among fish.—Bernard Picard.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

I may also act my part?" "Yes, sister," replied Zobeide; and then went and sat down upon the sofa, having the caliph, Giafar, and Mesrour, on her right hand, and the three calenders, with the porter, on her left.

The whole company remained silent for some time. At last Safie, sitting on a chair in the middle of the room, spoke to her sister Amina: "Dear sister, I conjure you to rise; you know what I would say." Amina rose, and went into another closet near to that where the dogs were, and brought out a case covered with yellow satin, richly embroidered with gold and green silk. She went toward Safie and opened the case, from whence she took a lute, and presented it to her; and after some time spent in tuning it, Safie began to play, and, accompanying the instrument with her voice, sang a song about the torments that absence creates to lovers. Having sung with much passion and action, she said to Amina, "Pray, take it, sister, for my voice fails me; oblige the company with a tune and a song in my stead." "Very willingly," replied Amina, who, taking the lute from her sister Safie, sat down in her place. Having sung most delightfully, the caliph expressed his admiration. While he was doing so Amina fainted away; and on opening her robe to give her air, they discovered that her breast had been covered with fearful scars.

When Zobeide and Safie ran to assist their sister, the caliph inquired of the calender, "Cannot you inform me about these two black dogs, and this lady, who appears to have been so ill treated?" "Sir," said the calender, "we never were in this house before now, and entered it only a few minutes sooner than you did." This increased the astonishment of the caliph. "Perhaps," said he, "the man who is with you can give you some information?" The calender made signs to the porter to draw near, and asked him if he knew why

the black dogs had been beaten, and why the bosom of Amina was so scarred. "Sir," replied the porter, "if you know nothing of the matter, I know as little as you do. I never was in the house until now; and if you are surprised to see me here, I am as much so to find myself in your company."

The caliph, more and more perplexed at all he heard, determined that he would have the information he required for the explaining these mysterious proceedings. But the question was, who should first make the inquiry? The caliph endeavored to persuade the calenders to speak first, but they excused themselves. At last they all agreed that the porter should be the man. While they were consulting how to put the question, Zobeide herself, as Amina had recovered from her fainting, approached them and inquired, "What are you talking of?—what is your contest about?"

The porter then addressed her as follows: "These gentlemen, madam, entreat you to explain why you wept with those dogs, after having treated them so ill, and how it has happened that the lady who fainted has her bosom covered with scars?"

At these words Zobeide put on a stern look, and turning toward the caliph and the rest of the company: "Is it true, gentlemen," said she, "that you desired him to ask me these questions?" All of them, except the vizier Giafar, who spoke not a word, answered "Yes." On which she exclaimed, in a tone of resentment: "Before we granted you the favor of receiving you into our house, and to prevent all occasion of inquiry from you, we imposed the condition that you should not speak of anything that did not concern you, lest you might hear that which would not please you; and yet, after having received our entertainment, you make no scruple to break your promise. Our easy compliance with your wishes may have occasioned this, but that

THE THREE CALENDERS.

shall not excuse your rudeness. As she spoke these words, she gave three stamps with her foot, and clapping¹ her hands as often together, cried, "Come quickly!" Upon this a door flew open, and seven black slaves² rushed in; each one seized a man, threw him on the ground, and dragged him into the middle of the room, brandishing a scimitar over his head.

We may easily conceive the alarm of the caliph. He repented, but too late, that he had not taken the advice of his vizier, who, with Mesrour, the calenders, and porter, were, from his ill-timed curiosity, on the point of forfeiting their lives. Before they gave the fatal stroke, one of the slaves said to Zobeide and her sisters, "Would it not be right to interrogate them first?" On which Zobeide, with a grave voice, said: "Answer me, and say who you are, otherwise you shall not live one moment longer. I cannot believe you to be honest men, or persons of authority or distinction in your own countries; for, if you were, you would have been more modest and more respectful to us."

The caliph, naturally warm, was infinitely more indignant than the rest, to find his life depending upon the command of a woman: but he began to conceive some hopes, when he found she wished to know who they all were; for he imagined that she would by no means take away his life when she should be informed of his rank. He whispered to his vizier, who was near him, instantly to declare who he was. But this wise vizier, being more prudent, resolved to save his master's honor, and not let the world know the affront he had brought upon himself by his own imprudence; and therefore answered: "We have what we deserve." But if he had intended to speak as the caliph com-

¹ This is the ordinary mode in the East of calling the attendants in waiting,

² In this manner the apartments of ladies were constantly guarded.—Beckford's *Vathek*, Notes to p. 204.

manded him, Zobeide would not have allowed him time, for having turned to the calenders, and seeing them all blind with one eye, she asked if they were brothers. One of them answered "No, madam, no otherwise than as we are calenders; that is to say, as we observe the same rules." "Were you born blind of the right eye?" continued she. "No, madam," answered he; "I lost my eye in such a surprising adventure that it would be instructive to every one to hear it." Zobeide put the same question to the others in their turn, when the last she addressed replied, "Pray, madam, show some pity on us, for we are all the sons of kings. Although we have never seen each other before this evening, we have had sufficient time to become acquainted with this circumstance; and I can assure you that the kings who have given us birth have made some noise in the world!"

During this speech Zobeide became less angry, and said to the slaves, "Give them their liberty awhile, but remain where you are. Those who tell us their history, and the occasion of their coming, do them no hurt, let them go where they please; but do not spare those who refuse to give us that satisfaction."

The three calenders, the caliph, the grand vizier Giafar, the captain of his guards, and the porter were all in the middle of the hall, seated upon a carpet, in the presence of the three ladies, who reclined upon a sofa, and the slaves stood ready to do whatever their mistresses should command.

The porter spoke first, and briefly related the adventures of the morning with Amina, and the kind favors to him of herself and her fair sisters in the evening, which he declared to be the whole of his history.

When the porter had concluded, Zobeide said, "Save thyself and begone, nor ever let us see thee again." "I beg of you, madam," replied he, "to let me remain

THE THREE CALENDERS.

a little longer. It would be unfair that I should not hear their histories, after they have had the pleasure of hearing mine." In saying this he took his place at the end of the sofa, truly delighted at finding himself free from danger which so much alarmed him. One of the calenders, addressing himself to Zobeide, next spoke.

THE HISTORY OF THE FIRST CALENDER.

Madam, I am the son of a sultan. My father had a brother, who reigned over a neighboring kingdom. His son, my cousin, and I were nearly of the same age. I went regularly every year to see my uncle, at whose court I amused myself for a month or two, and then returned home. On one occasion I arrived at my father's capital, where, contrary to custom, I found a numerous guard at the gate of the palace. They surrounded me as I entered. The commanding officer said, "Prince, the army has proclaimed the grand vizier sultan, instead of your father, who is dead, and I take you prisoner in the name of the new sultan."

This rebel vizier had long entertained a mortal hatred against me. When I was a boy I loved to shoot with a cross-bow; and being one day upon the terrace of the palace, a bird happened to come by; I shot but missed him, and the ball by misfortune hit the vizier, who was taking the air upon the terrace of his own house, and put out one of his eyes. He never forgave me, and, as opportunity offered, made me sensible of his resentment. But now that he had me in his power, he came to me like a madman, and thrusting his finger into my right eye, pulled it out, and thus I became blind of one eye.

His cruelty did not stop here; he commanded the executioner to cut off my head, and leave me to be de-

voured by birds of prey. The executioner conveyed me to the place of execution to complete this barbarous sentence; but by my prayers and tears I moved the man's compassion. "Go," said he to me, "get you speedily out of the kingdom, and never return, or you will destroy yourself and me." I thanked him, and as soon as I was left alone, comforted myself for the loss of my eye, by considering that I had very narrowly escaped a much greater evil.

Being thus surrounded with sorrows and persecuted by fortune, I had recourse to a stratagem, which was the only means left me to save my life: I caused my beard and eyebrows to be shaved, and putting on a calender's habit, I passed, unknown by any, out of the city. I avoided the towns till I arrived in the empire of the commander of the faithful, the renowned caliph Haroun al Raschid, when I ceased to fear. I resolved to come to Bagdad and throw myself at the feet of this great monarch. I shall move him to compassion, said I to myself, by the relation of my uncommon misfortunes, and without doubt he will take pity on a persecuted prince, and not suffer me to implore his assistance in vain.

In short, after a journey of several months, I arrived yesterday at the gate of this city, into which I entered at dusk: and as I entered, another calender came up; he saluted me, and I him. "You appear," said I, "to be a stranger, as I am." "You are not mistaken," replied he. He had no sooner returned this answer than a third calender overtook us. He saluted us, and told us he was a stranger newly come to Bagdad; so that as brethren we joined together, resolving not to separate from one another.

It was now late, and we knew not where to seek a lodging in the city, where we had never been before. But good fortune having brought us to your gate, we

THE THREE CALENDERS

made bold to knock, when you received us with so much kindness that we are incapable of rendering suitable thanks. This, madam, said he, is, in obedience to your commands, the account I was to give how I lost my right eye, wherefore my beard and eyebrows are shaved, and how I came to be with you at this time.

"It is enough," said Zobeide; "you may retire to what place you think fit." The calender begged the ladies' permission to stay till he had heard the revelations of his two comrades, "whom I cannot," said he, "leave with honor;" and that he might also hear those of the three other persons in company.

The history of the first calender appeared very surprising to the whole company, and particularly to the caliph. The presence of the slaves, armed with their scimitars, did not prevent him from saying in a whisper to the vizier, "As long as I can remember, I never heard anything to compare with this history of the calender, though I have been all my life in the habit of hearing similar narratives." He had no sooner finished than the second calender began, and addressing himself to Zobeide, spoke as follows:

THE HISTORY OF THE SECOND CALENDER

Madam, said he, to obey your commands, and to show you by what strange accident I became blind of the right eye, I must give you the account of my life. I was yet a youth, when the sultan, my father (for you must know I am a prince by birth), perceived that I was endowed with good natural ability, and spared nothing proper for improving it. No sooner was I able to read and write, but I learned the Koran from beginning to end by heart, all the traditions collected from the mouth of our prophet, and the works of poets.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

I applied myself to geography, chronology, and to speak the Arabian language in its purity; not forgetting in the mean time all such exercises as were proper for a prince to understand. But one thing which I was fond of, and succeeded in, was penmanship; wherein I surpassed all the celebrated scribes of our kingdom.

The fame of my learning reached the emperor of Hindostan, who sent an embassy with rich presents to my father and invited me to his court. I returned with the ambassador.

We had been about a month on our journey, when we saw in the distance an immense cloud of dust, and soon after we discovered fifty fierce horsemen, sons of the desert, well armed.

Not being able to repel force by force, we told them we were the ambassadors of the sultan of India; but the sons of the desert insolently answered, "Why do you wish us to respect the sultan, your master! We are not his subjects, nor even within his realm." They attacked us on all sides. I defended myself as long as I could, but finding that I was wounded, and that the ambassador and all our attendants were overthrown, I took advantage of the remaining strength of my horse, and escaped. My horse was wounded and suddenly fell dead under me. Alone, wounded, and a stranger, I bound up my own wound and walked on the rest of the day, and arrived at the foot of a mountain, where I perceived, as the sun set, a cave; I went in, and stayed there that night, after I had eaten some fruits that I gathered by the way. I continued my journey for several successive days without finding any place of abode; but after a month's time I came to a large town, well inhabited—it was surrounded by several streams, so that it seemed to enjoy perpetual spring.

My face, hands, and feet were black and sunburnt; and by my long journey, my boots were quite worn out,

THE THREE CALENDERS.

so that I was forced to walk barefooted; and my clothes were all in rags. I entered the town to inform myself where I was, and addressed myself to a tailor that was at work in his shop; who made me sit down by him, and asked me who I was, from whence I came, and what had brought me thither. I did not conceal anything that had befallen me, nor made I any scruple to reveal to him my rank. The tailor listened to me with attention; and brought me something to eat, and offered me an apartment at his house, which I accepted.

Some days after my arrival, the tailor asked me if I knew anything by which I could acquire a livelihood. I told him that I was well versed in the science of laws, both human and divine; that I was a grammarian, a poet, and, above all, that I wrote remarkably well. "None of these things will avail you here. If you will follow my advice," he added, "you will procure a short jacket, and as you are strong and in good health, you may go into the neighboring forest and cut wood for fuel. You may then go and expose it for sale in the market. By these means you will be enabled to wait till the cloud which hangs over you, and obliges you to conceal your birth, shall have blown over. I will furnish you with a cord and hatchet."

The next day the tailor brought me a rope, a hatchet, and a short jacket, and recommended me to some poor people who gained their bread after the same manner, that they might take me into their company. They conducted me to the wood, and the first day I brought in as much upon my head as procured me half a piece of gold of the money of that country; for though the wood was not far distant from the town, yet it was very scarce, by reason that few would be at the trouble of fetching it for themselves. I gained a good sum of money in a short time, and repaid my tailor what he had lent me.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

I continued this way of living for a whole year. One day, having by chance penetrated farther into the wood than usual, I happened to light on a pleasant spot, where I began to cut; and in pulling up the root of a tree I espied an iron ring, fastened to a trap door of the same metal. I took away the earth that covered it, and having lifted it up, discovered a flight of stairs, which I descended with my axe in my hand.

When I had reached the bottom I found myself in a palace, which was as well lighted as if it had been above ground in the open air. I went forward along a gallery supported by pillars of jasper, the base and capitals being of massy gold; when I saw a lady of noble and graceful air, and extremely beautiful, coming toward me. I hastened to meet her; and as I was making a low obeisance, she asked me, "Are you a man, or a genie?" "A man, madam," said I. "By what adventure," said she (fetching a deep sigh), "are you come hither? I have lived here twenty-five years, and you are the first man I have beheld in that time."

Her great beauty, and the sweetness and civility wherewith she received me, emboldened me to say, "Madam, before I satisfy your curiosity, give me leave to say, that I am infinitely gratified with this unexpected meeting, which offers me an occasion of consolation in the midst of my affliction; and perhaps it may give me an opportunity of making you also more happy than you are." I then related my story to her from beginning to end. "Alas! prince," she replied, sighing, "the most enchanting spots cannot afford delight when we are there against our wills. But hear now my history. I am a princess, the daughter of a sultan, the king of the Ebony Island, to which the precious wood found in it has given its name.

"The king, my father, had chosen for my husband a

THE THREE CALENDERS.

prince, who was my cousin; but on the very night of the bridal festivities, in the midst of the rejoicings of the court, a genie took me away. I fainted with alarm, and when I recovered I found myself in this place. I was long inconsolable; but time and necessity have reconciled me to see the genie. Twenty-five years I have passed in this place, in which I have everything necessary for life and splendor.

"Every ten days," continued the princess, "the genie visits me. In the mean time, if I have any occasion for him, I have only to touch a talisman, and he appears. It is now four days since he was here, and I have therefore to wait six days more before he again makes his appearance. You, therefore, may remain five with me, if it be agreeable to you, in order to keep me company; and I will endeavor to regale and entertain you equal to your merit and dignity."

The princess then conducted me to a bath, the most commodious, and the most sumptuous imaginable; and when I came forth, instead of my own clothes I found another costly robe, which I did not esteem so much for its richness, as because it made me appear worthy to be in her company. We sat down on a sofa covered with rich tapestry, with cushions of the rarest Indian brocade; and some time after she covered a table with several dishes of delicate meats. We ate, and passed the remaining part of the day, as also the evening, together very pleasantly.

The next day I said to her, "Fair princess, you have been too long buried alive in this subterranean palace; pray rise—follow me and enjoy the light of day, of which you have been deprived so many years." "Prince," replied she, with a smile, "if you out of ten days will grant me nine, and resign the tenth to the genie, the light of day would be nothing to me."

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

"Princess," said I, "fear of the genie makes you speak thus; for my part I regard him so little that I will break in pieces his talisman with the spell that is written about it. Let him come; and how brave or powerful he be, I will defy him." On saying this I gave the talisman a kick with my foot, and broke it in pieces.

The talisman was no sooner broken than the whole palace shook as if ready to fall to atoms, and the walls opened to afford a passage to the genie. I had no sooner felt the shock than, at the earnest request of the princess, I took to flight. Having hastily put on my own robe, I ascended the stairs leading to the forest, and reached the town in safety. My landlord, the tailor, was very glad to see me. I had, however, in my haste, left my hatchet and cord in the princess's chamber. Shortly after my return, while brooding over this loss, and lamenting the cruel treatment to which the princess would be exposed, the tailor came in and said, "An old man, whom I do not know, brings your hatchet and cords, and wishes to speak to you, for he will deliver them to none but yourself."

At these words I changed color, and fell a-trembling. While the tailor was asking me the reason, my chamber door opened, and the old man, having no patience to stay, appeared with my hatchet and cords. "I am a genie," said he, speaking to me, "a grandson of Eblis,¹ prince of genies. Is not this your hatchet and are not these your cords?"

After the genie had put these questions to me he gave me no time to answer. He grasped me by the middle, dragged me out of the chamber, and mounting into the air, carried me up to the skies with extra-

¹ Eblis, or Degial, the evil spirit, who, according to the Koran, betrayed Adam to transgression, and yet seeks to inflict injury on his race.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

ordinary swiftness. He descended again in like manner to the earth, which on a sudden he caused to open with a stroke of his foot, when I found myself in the enchanted palace, before the fair princess of the Isle of Ebony. But, alas! what a spectacle was there! I saw what pierced me to the heart; this poor princess was weltering in her blood, and laid upon the ground, more like one dead than alive, with her cheeks bathed in tears.

The genie having loaded us both with many insults and reproaches, drew his scimitar and declared that he would give life and liberty to either of us who would with his scimitar cut off the head of the other. We both resolutely declined to purchase freedom at such a price, and asserted our choice to be to die rather in the presence of each other. "I see," said the genie, "that you both outbrave me, but both of you shall know by my treatment of you of what I am capable." At these words the monster took up the scimitar and cut off one of her hands, which left her only so much life as to give me a token with the other that she bade me forever adieu; and then she died. I fainted at the sight. When I was come to myself again I cried, "Strike, for I am ready to die, and await death as the greatest favor you can show me." But instead of killing me, he said, "Behold how genies revenge themselves on those who offend them. Thou art the least to blame, and I will content myself with transforming thee into a dog, ape, lion, or bird; take thy choice of any of these, I will leave it to thyself." These words gave me some hopes of being able to appease him. "O genie," said I, "restrain your rage, and since you will not take away my life, pardon me freely, as a good dervish pardoned one who envied him." "And how was that?" said he. I answered as follows:

THE HISTORY OF THE ENVIOUS MAN AND
OF HIM WHO WAS ENVIED

In a certain town there were two men, neighbors, who lived next door to each other. One of them was so excessively envious of the other that the latter resolved to change his abode and go and reside at some distance from him. He therefore sold his house, and went to another city at no great distance, and bought a convenient house. It had a good garden and a moderate court, in which there was a deep well, that was not now used.

The good man having made this purchase, put on the habit of a dervish, and in a short time he established a numerous society of dervishes.¹ He soon came to be known by his virtues, through which he acquired the esteem of many people, as well of the com-

¹ Sir Paul Ricaut gives this account of the dress of the dervish: "Their shirts are of coarse linen, with a white plaid or mantle about their shoulders. Their caps are like the crown of a hat of the largest size. Their legs are always bare, and their breasts open, which some of them burn or scar in token of greater devotion. They wear a leathern girdle, with some shining stone upon the buckle before. They always carry a string of beads, which they call *Tesbe*, and oftener run them over than our friars do their rosary, at every bead repeating the name of God."—*History of Ottoman Empire*, p. 263.

"Their order has few rules, except of performing their fantastic rites every Tuesday and Friday. They meet in a large hall, where they all stand with their eyes fixed on the ground, and their arms crossed, while the *imaun* or preacher reads part of the Koran from a pulpit, and after a short exposition on what he has read, they stand around their superior, and tying their robe, which is very wide, round their waist, begin to turn round with an amazing swiftness, moving fast or slow as the music is played. This lasts above an hour, without any of them showing the least appearance of giddiness, which is not to be wondered at when it is considered they are used to it from their infancy. There were among them some little dervishes, of six or seven years old, who seemed no more disordered by that exercise than the others. At the end of the ceremony they shout out: 'There is no other god but God, and Mohammed is his prophet;' after which they kiss the superior's hand and retire. The whole is performed with the most solemn gravity."—*Lady M. W. Montague's Letters*, vol. ii., p. 43.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

monalty as of the chief of the city. In short, he was much honored and courted by all ranks. People came from afar to recommend themselves to his prayers; and all who visited him, published what blessings they received through his means.

The great reputation of this honest man having spread to the town from whence he had come, it touched the envious man so much to the quick, that he left his own house and affairs with a resolution to ruin him. With this intent he went to the new convent of dervishes, of which his former neighbor was the head, who received him with all imaginable tokens of friendship. The envious man told him that he was come to communicate a business of importance, which he could not do but in private; "and that nobody may hear us," he said, "let us take a walk in your court; and seeing night begins to draw on, command your dervishes to retire to their cells." The chief of the dervishes did as he was requested.

When the envious man saw that he was alone with this good man, he began to tell him his errand, walking side by side in the court, till he saw his opportunity; and getting the good man near the brink of the well, he gave him a thrust and pushed him into it.

This old well was inhabited by peris¹ and genies, which happened luckily for the relief of the head of the convent; for they received and supported him, and carried him to the bottom, so that he got no hurt. He perceived that there was something extraordinary in his fall, which must otherwise have cost him his life; but he neither saw nor felt anything. He soon heard a voice, however, which said, "Do you know what honest man this is, to whom we have done this piece of

¹ The word *peri*, in the Persian language, signifies that beautiful race of creatures which constitutes the link between angels and men.

service?" Another voice answered, "No." To which the first replied, "Then I will tell you. This man, out of charity, left the town he lived in, and has established himself in this place, in hopes to cure one of his neighbors of the envy he had conceived against him; he had acquired such a general esteem that the envious man, not able to endure it, came hither on purpose to ruin him; and he would have accomplished his design had it not been for the assistance we have given this honest man, whose reputation is so great that the sultan, who keeps his residence in the neighboring city, was to pay him a visit to-morrow, to recommend the princess his daughter to his prayers."

Another voice asked, "What need had the princess of the dervish's prayers?" To which the first answered, "You do not know, it seems, that she is possessed by a genie. But I well know how this good dervish may cure her. He has a black cat in his convent, with a white spot at the end of her tail, about the bigness of a small piece of Arabian money; let him only pull seven hairs out of the white spot, burn them, and smoke the princess's head with the fume, she will not only be immediately cured, but be so safely delivered from the genie, that he will never dare to approach her again."

The head of the dervishes remembered every word of the conversation between the fairies and the genies, who remained silent the remainder of the night. The next morning, as soon as daylight appeared, and he could discern the nature of his situation, the well being broken down in several places, he saw a hole, by which he crept out with ease.

The other dervishes, who had been seeking for him, were rejoiced to see him; he gave them a brief account of the wickedness of the man to whom he had given so kind a reception the day before, and retired into his cell. Shortly after the black cat which the fairies and

THE THREE CALENDERS.

genies had mentioned the night before came to fawn upon her master, as she was accustomed to do; he took her up and pulled seven hairs from the white spot that was upon her tail and laid them aside for his use when occasion should serve.

Soon after sunrise the sultan, who would leave no means untried that he thought likely to restore the princess to perfect health, arrived at the gate of the convent. He commanded his guards to halt, while he with his principal officers went in. The dervishes received him with profound respect.

The sultan called their chief aside and said, "Good Sheik,¹ you may probably be already acquainted with the cause of my visit." "Yes, sir," replied he gravely, "if I do not mistake, it is the disease of the princess which procures me this unmerited honor." "That is the real case," replied the sultan. "You will give me new life if your prayers, as I hope they may, restore my daughter's health." "Sir," said the good man, "if your majesty will be pleased to let her come hither, I am in hopes, through God's assistance and favor, that she will be effectually cured."

The prince, transported with joy, sent immediately for his daughter, who soon appeared with a numerous train of ladies and attendants, veiled, so that her face was not seen. The chief of the dervishes caused a carpet to be held over her head, and he had no sooner thrown the seven hairs upon the burning coals, than the genie uttered a great cry and, without being seen, left the princess at liberty; upon which she took the veil from her face and rose up to see where she was, saying, "Where am I, and who brought me hither?" At these words, the sultan, overcome with excess of joy, embraced his daughter and kissed her eyes; he

¹ Sheiks are the chiefs of the societies of dervishes; cadis, the magistrates of a town or city.—Notes on Vathek, p. 322.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

also kissed the sheik's hands and said to his officers, "What reward does he deserve that has thus cured my daughter?" They all cried, "He deserves her in marriage." "That is what I had in my thoughts," said the sultan; "and I make him my son-in-law from this moment." Some time after the prime vizier died and the sultan conferred the place on the dervish. The sultan himself also died without heirs male; upon which the religious orders and the army consulted together and the good man was declared and acknowledged sultan by general consent.

The honest dervish having ascended the throne of his father-in-law, as he was one day in the midst of his courtiers on a march, espied the envious man among the crowd that stood as he passed along; and calling one of the viziers that attended him, whispered in his ear, "Go bring me that man you see there; but take care you do not frighten him." The vizier obeyed, and when the envious man was brought into his presence, the sultan said, "Friend, I am extremely glad to see you." Upon which he called an officer. "Go immediately," said he, "and cause to be paid to this man out of my treasury,¹ one hundred pieces of gold; let him have also twenty loads of the richest merchandise in my storehouses, and a sufficient guard to conduct him to his house." After he had given this charge to the officer he bade the envious man farewell and proceeded on his march.

When I had finished the recital of this story to the

¹ A favorite story is related of the benevolence of one of the sons of Ali. In serving at table, a slave had inadvertently dropped a dish of scalding broth on his master. The heedless wretch fell prostrate to deprecate his punishment, and repeated a verse of the Koran: "Paradise is for those who command their anger." "I am not angry." "And for those who pardon offenses." "I pardon your offense." "And for those who return good for evil." "I give you your liberty and four hundred pieces of silver."—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

genie I employed all my eloquence to persuade him to imitate so good an example, and to grant me pardon; but it was impossible to move his compassion.

“All that I can do for thee,” said he, “is to grant thee they life, but I must place thee under enchantments.” So saying, he seized me violently and carried me through the arched roof of the subterraneous palace, which opened to give him passage. He ascended with me into the air to such a height that the earth appeared like a little white cloud. He then descended again like lightning and alighted upon the summit of a mountain.

Here he took up a handful of earth, and, muttering some words which I did not understand, threw it upon me. “Quit,” said he, “the form of a man and take that of an ape.” He instantly disappeared and left me alone, transformed into an ape and overwhelmed with sorrow, in a strange country, not knowing whether I was near or far from my father’s dominions.

I descended the mountain and entered a plain, level country, which took me a month to travel over, and then I came to the seaside. It happened at the time to be perfectly calm, and I espied a vessel about half a league from the shore. Unwilling to lose so good an opportunity, I broke off a large branch from a tree, carried it into the sea, and placed myself astride upon it, with a stick in each hand, to serve me for oars.

I launched out on this frail bark and rowed toward the ship. When I had approached sufficiently near to be seen, the seamen and passengers on the deck regarded me with astonishment. In the mean time I got on board, and laying hold of a rope, jumped upon the deck, but having lost my speech, I found myself in great perplexity; and indeed the risk I ran was not less than when I was at the mercy of the genie.

The merchants, being both superstitious and scrupu-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

lous, thought if they received me on board I should be the occasion of some misfortune to them during their voyage. On this account they said, "Let us throw him into the sea." Some one of them would not have failed to carry this threat into execution, had I not gone to the captain, thrown myself at his feet and taken hold of his skirt in a supplicating posture. This action, together with the tears which he saw gush from my eyes, moved his compassion. He took me under his protection and loaded me with a thousand caresses. On my part, though I had not power to speak, I showed by my gestures every mark of gratitude in my power.

The wind that succeeded the calm continued to blow in the same direction for fifty days, and brought us safe to the port of a city, well peopled, and of great trade, where we cast anchor.

Our vessel was instantly surrounded with multitudes of boats full of people. Among the rest, some officers of the sultan came on board, and said, "Our master rejoices in your safe arrival, and he beseeches each of you to write a few lines upon this roll. The prime vizier, who, besides possessing great abilities for the management of public affairs, could write in the highest perfection, died a few days since, and the sultan has made a solemn vow not to give the place to any one who cannot write equally well. No one in the empire has been judged worthy to supply the vizier's place."

Those of the merchants who thought they could write well enough to aspire to this high dignity wrote one after another what they thought fit. After they had done, I advanced, and took the roll, but all the people cried out that I would tear it or throw it into the sea, till they saw how properly I held the roll and made a sign that I would write in my turn. Their apprehensions then changed into wonder. However as

THE THREE CALENDERS.

they had never seen an ape that could write, and could not be persuaded that I was more ingenious than others of my kind, they wished to take the roll out of my hand; but the captain took my part once more. "Let him alone," said he; "allow him to write." Perceiving that no one opposed my design, I took the pen and wrote six sorts of hands used among the Arabians, and each specimen contained an extemporary distich or quatrain (a stanza of four lines) in praise of the sultan. When I had done the officers took the roll and carried it to the sultan.

The sultan took little notice of any of the writings except mine, which pleased him so much that he said to the officers, "Take the finest horse in my stable, with the richest trappings, and a robe of the most sumptuous brocade to put on the person who wrote the six hands, and bring him hither." At this command the officers could not forbear laughing. The sultan was incensed at their rudeness, and would have punished them had they not explained. "Sir," said they, "we humbly beg your majesty's pardon. These hands were not written by a man, but by an ape." "What do you say?" exclaimed the sultan. "Those admirable characters, are they not written by the hands of a man?" "No, sir," replied the officers; "we assure your majesty that it was an ape who wrote them in our presence." The sultan was too much surprised at this account not to desire a sight of me, and therefore said, "Do what I command you, and bring me speedily that wonderful ape."

The officers returned to the vessel and showed the captain their order, who answered, "The sultan's command must be obeyed." Whereupon they clothed me with the rich brocade robe, and carried me ashore, where they set me on horseback, while the sultan waited for me at his palace with a great number of courtiers.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

The procession commenced; the harbor, the streets, the public places, windows, terraces, palaces and houses were filled with an infinite number of people of all ranks, who flocked from every part of the city to see me; for the rumor was spread in a moment that the sultan had chosen an ape to be his grand vizier; and after having served for a spectacle to the people, who could not forbear to express their surprise by redoubling their shouts and cries, I arrived at the sultan's palace.

I found the prince on his throne in the midst of the grandees; I made my obeisance three times very low, and at last kneeled and kissed the ground before him, and afterward took my seat in the posture of an ape. The whole assembly viewed me with admiration, and could not comprehend how it was possible that an ape should so well understand how to pay the sultan his due respect; and he himself was more astonished than any. In short, the usual ceremony of the audience would have been complete, could I have added speech to my behavior.

The sultan dismissed his courtiers and none remained by him but the chief of the attendants of the palace, a little young slave, and myself. He went from his chamber of audience into his own apartment, where he ordered dinner to be brought. As he sat at table, he made me a sign to approach and eat with them; to show my obedience, I kissed the ground, arose, and placed myself at the table and ate.

Before the table was cleared, I espied a standish, which I made a sign to have brought me; having got it, I wrote upon a large peach some verses expressive of my acknowledgment to the sultan; who, having read them, after I had presented the peach to him, was still more astonished. When the things were removed, they brought him a particular liquor, of which he

THE THREE CALENDERS.

caused them to give me a glass. I drank and wrote upon the glass some new verses, which explained the state of happiness I was now in, after many sufferings. The sultan read these likewise, and said, "A man that was capable of composing such poetry would rank among the greatest of men."

The sultan caused to be brought to him a chess-board,¹ and asked me by a sign if I understood that game, and would play with him. I kissed the ground, and laying my hand upon my head, signified that I was ready to receive that honor. He won the first game; but I won the second and third; and perceiving he was somewhat displeased at my success, I made a stanza to pacify him, in which I told him that two potent armies had been fighting furiously all day, but that they concluded a peace toward the evening and passed the remaining part of the night very amicably together upon the field of battle.

So many circumstances appearing to the sultan beyond what had ever either been seen or known of apes, he determined not to be the only witness of these prodigies himself, but having a daughter, called the Lady of Beauty, sent for her, that she should share his pleasure.

The princess, who had her face unveiled, no sooner came into the room than she put on her veil, and said to the sultan, "Sir, I am surprised that you have sent for me to appear before men. That seeming ape is a young prince, son of a powerful sultan, and has been metamorphosed into an ape by enchantment. When I was just out of the nursery an old lady who waited on me was a most expert magician, and taught me seventy rules of magic. By this science I know all enchanted persons at first sight; I know who they are, and by

¹ Chess is said to have had its origin in the East, and to have been introduced into Europe after the Crusades.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

whom they have been enchanted; therefore do not be surprised if I should forthwith restore this prince, in spite of the enchantments, to his own form." "Do so, then," interrupted the sultan, "for you cannot give me greater pleasure, as I wish to have him for my grand vizier, and bestow you upon him for a wife." "I am ready, sire," answered the princess, "to obey you in all things you please to command."

The princess, the Lady of Beauty, went into her apartment and brought thence a knife, which had some Hebrew words engraven on the blade; she made the sultan, the little slave and myself, descend into a private court of the palace and there left us under a gallery that went round it. She placed herself in the middle of the court, where she made a great circle, and within it she wrote several words in ancient Arabian characters.

When she had finished and prepared the circle, she placed herself in the center of it, where she began incantations and repeated verses of the Koran. The air grew insensibly dark, as if it had been night; we found ourselves struck with consternation, and our fear increased when we saw the genie appear suddenly in the shape of a lion¹ of gigantic size.

"Thou shalt pay dearly," said the lion, "for the trouble thou hast given me in coming here." In saying this he opened his horrible jaws and advanced for-

¹ This same power of changing the form has found a place in ancient and modern story. The Proteus of heathen mythology ever found means of safety and protection by his sudden assumption of some new form and shape.

"Quo teneam vultus mutantem Protea nodo?"

One of Walter Scott's happiest delineations is the "Goblin Page," described in "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," who in every new freak of mischief escaped alike retribution and discovery by his power of change and transmutation:

"For, at a word, be it understood,
He was always for ill, and never for good;

THE THREE CALENDERS.

ward to devour her; but she, being on her guard, jumped back, and had just time to pluck out a hair; and pronouncing two or three words, she changed it into a sharp scythe, with which she immediately cut the lion in two pieces, through the middle.

The two parts of the lion directly disappeared and the head changed into a large scorpion. The princess then took the form of a serpent and fought the scorpion, which, finding itself defeated, changed into an eagle and flew away. But the serpent then became another eagle, black and very large, and went in pursuit of it. We now lost sight of them for some time.

Shortly after they had disappeared the earth opened before us and a black and white cat appeared, the hairs of which stood quite on end, and which made a most horrible mewing. A black wolf directly followed after her and gave her no time to rest. The cat, being thus hard pressed, changed into a worm and hid itself in a pomegranate which lay by accident on the ground; but the pomegranate swelled immediately and became as big as a gourd, which, lifting itself up to the roof of the gallery, rolled there for some time backward and forward; it then fell down again into the court and broke into several pieces.

The wolf had in the meanwhile transformed itself into

Seem'd to the boy some comrade gay,
Led him forth to the woods to play;
On the drawbridge the warders stout
Saw a terrier and lurcher passing out."

Milton attributes the same power to Comus:

"Soon as the potion works, their human countenance,
The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
Into some brutish form of wolf or bear,
Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat—
All other parts remaining as they were;
And they, so perfect in their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget."

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

a cock and now fell to picking up the seeds of the pomegranate one after another; but finding no more, he came toward us with his wings spread, making a great noise, as if he would ask us whether there were any more seed. There was one lying on the brink of the canal, which the cock perceiving as he went back, ran speedily thither; but just as he was going to pick it up the seed rolled into a fountain and turned into a little fish.

The cock flying toward the fountain, turned into a pike and pursued the small fish; they continued both under water above two hours, and we knew not what was become of them; but suddenly we heard terrible cries, which made us tremble, and a little while after we saw the genie and princess all in flames. They threw ashes of fire out of their mouths at each other, till they came to close combat; then the two fires increased, with a thick, burning smoke, which mounted so high that we had reason to apprehend it would set the palace on fire. But we very soon had a more pressing occasion of fear, for the genie having got loose from the princess, came to the gallery where we stood and blew flames of fire upon us. We must all have perished had not the princess, running to our assistance, forced him to retire, and defend himself against her; yet, notwithstanding all her exertions, she could not hinder the sultan's beard from being burned and his face scorched, and a spark from entering my right eye and making it blind. The sultan and I expected nothing but death, when we heard a cry of "Victory, victory!" and instantly the princess appeared in her natural shape; but the genie was reduced to a heap of ashes.

The princess approached us and hastily called for a cupful of water, which the young slave, who had received no hurt, brought her. She took it, and after

THE THREE CALENDERS.

pronouncing some words over it, threw it upon me, saying, "If thou art become an ape by enchantment, change thy shape and take that of a man, which thou hadst before." These words were hardly uttered when I again became a man in every respect as I was before my transformation, excepting the loss of my eye.

I was preparing to return the princess my thanks, but she prevented me by addressing herself to her father: "Sire, I have gained the victory over the genie; but it is a victory that costs me dear. I have but a few minutes to live; the fire has pierced me during the terrible combat, and I find it is gradually consuming me. This would not have happened had I perceived the last of the pomegranate seeds and swallowed it as I did the others when I was changed into a cock; the genie had fled thither as to his last intrenchment, and upon that the success of the combat depended. This oversight obliged me to have recourse to fire, and to fight with those mighty arms as I did, between heaven and earth, in your presence; for in spite of all, I made the genie know that I understood more than he; I have conquered and reduced him to ashes, but I cannot escape death, which is approaching."

Suddenly the princess exclaimed, "I burn, I burn!" She found that the fire had at last seized upon her vital parts, which made her still cry, "I burn!" until death had put an end to her intolerable pains. The effect of that fire was so extraordinary that in a few moments she was wholly reduced to ashes, as the genie had been.

I cannot tell you, madam, how much I was grieved at so dismal a spectacle; I had rather all my life have continued an ape or a dog than to have seen my benefactress thus miserably perish. The sultan cried piteously and beat himself on his head and breast, until, being quite overcome with grief, he fainted away. In the mean time, the attendants and officers came run-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

ning at the sultan's lamentations, and with much difficulty brought him to himself.

When the knowledge of the death of the princess had spread through the palace and the city, all the people greatly bewailed. Public mourning was observed for seven days and many ceremonies were performed. The ashes of the genie were thrown into the air; but those of the princess were collected into a precious urn, to be preserved; and the urn was deposited in a superb mausoleum¹ constructed for that purpose on the spot where the princess had been consumed.

The grief of the sultan for the loss of his daughter confined him to his chamber for a whole month. Before he had fully recovered his strength he sent for me and said, "You are the cause of all these misfortunes; depart hence therefore in peace without further delay and take care never to appear again in my dominions on penalty of thy life."

I was obliged to quit the palace again cast down to a low estate and an outcast from the world. Before I left the city I went into a bagnio, where I caused my beard and eyebrows to be shaved and put on a calender's robe. I passed through many countries without

¹ The erection of these tombs over the supposed effigy, or the real remains, of the deceased, is often mentioned in these tales. The same type of tomb, with its dome or cupola, prevails throughout. A structure of a similar fashion is celebrated in history as the Taj Mahal at Agra, erected by the Shah Jehar, in memory of his queen, Mumtaz Mahal. It stands on a marble terrace over the Jumna, and is surrounded by extensive gardens. The building itself on the outside is of white marble, with a high cupola and four minarets. In the center of the inside is a lofty hall of a circular form under a dome, in the middle of which is the tomb, inclosed within an open screen of elaborate tracery formed of marble and mosaics. The materials are lapis lazuli, jasper, blood stone, a sort of golden stone (not well understood), agates, cornelian, jade, and various other stones. A single flower in the screen contains a hundred stones; "and yet," says Bishop Heber; "though everything is finished like an ornament for a drawing-room chimney piece, the general effect is rather solemn and impressive than gaudy."—Elphinstone's *India*, p. 528; and *Asiatic Researches*, vol. v. p. 434.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

making myself known; at last I resolved to visit Bagdad, in hopes of meeting with the Commander of the Faithful, to move his compassion by relating to him my unfortunate adventures. I arrived this evening and the first man I met was this calender, our brother, who spoke before me. You know the remaining part, madam, and the cause of my having the honor to be here.

When the second calender had concluded his story, Zobeide, to whom he had addressed his speech, said, "It is well; you are at liberty;" but instead of departing he also petitioned the lady to show him the same favor vouchsafed to the first calender, and went and sat down by him.

Then the third calender, knowing it was his turn to speak, addressed himself, like the others, to Zobeide, and began his history as follows:

THE HISTORY OF THE THIRD CALENDER.

My story, O honorable lady, differs from those you have already heard. The two princes who have spoken before me have each lost an eye by events beyond their own control; but I lost mine through my own fault.

My name is Agib. I am the son of a sultan. After his death I took possession of his dominions and continued in the city where he had resided. My kingdom is composed of several fine provinces upon the mainland, besides a number of valuable islands. My first object was to visit the provinces; I afterward caused my whole fleet to be fitted out and went to my islands to gain the hearts of my subjects by my presence and to confirm them in their loyalty. These voyages gave me some taste for navigation, in which I took so much pleasure that I resolved to make some discoveries be-

yond my own territories; to which end I caused ten ships to be fitted out, embarked and set sail.

Our voyage was very pleasant for forty days successively; but on the forty-first night the wind became contrary, and so boisterous that we were nearly lost. I gave orders to steer back to my own coast; but I perceived at the same time that my pilot knew not where we were. Upon the tenth day a seaman being sent to look out for land from the masthead, gave notice that he could see nothing but sky and sea, but that right ahead he perceived a great blackness.

The pilot changed color at this account, and throwing his turban on the deck with one hand, and beating his breast with the other, cried, "O, sir, we are all lost; not one of us can escape; and with all my skill it is not in my power to effect our deliverance." I asked him what reason he had thus to despair. He exclaimed, "The tempest has brought us so far out of our course that to-morrow about noon we shall be near the black mountain, or mine of adamant, which at this very minute draws all your feet toward it by virtue of the iron in your ships; and when we approach within a certain distance the attraction of the adamant will have such force that all the nails will be drawn out of the sides and bottoms of the ships and fasten to the mountain, so that your vessels will fall to pieces and sink. This mountain," continued the pilot, "is inaccessible. On the summit there is a dome of fine brass, supported by pillars of the same metal, and on the top of that dome stands a horse, likewise of brass, with a rider on his back, who has a plate of lead fixed to his breast, upon which some talismanic characters are engraven. Sir, the tradition is, that this statue is the chief cause why so many ships and men have been lost and sunk in this place, and that it will ever continue to be fatal to

THE THREE CALENDERS.

all those who have the misfortune to approach, until it shall be thrown down."

The pilot having finished his discourse, began to weep afresh, and all the rest of the ship's company did the same, and they took farewell of each other.

The next morning we distinctly perceived the black mountain. About noon we were so near that we found what the pilot had foretold to be true; for all the nails and iron in the ships flew toward the mountain, where they fixed, by the violence of the attraction, with a horrible noise; the ships split asunder and their cargoes sunk into the sea. All my people were drowned, but God had mercy on me and permitted me to save myself by means of a plank, which the wind drove ashore just at the foot of the mountain. I did not receive the least hurt and my good fortune brought me to a landing place, where there were steps that led up to the summit of the mountain.

At last I reached the top without accident. I went into the dome, and, kneeling on the ground, gave God thanks for His mercies.

I passed the night under the dome. In my sleep an old grave man appeared to me and said, "Hearken, Agib, as soon as thou art awake dig up the ground under thy feet; thou wilt find a bow of brass and three arrows of lead. Shoot the three arrows at the statue and the rider and his horse will fall into the sea; this being done, the sea will swell and rise to the foot of the dome. When it has come so high thou wilt perceive a boat with one man holding an oar in each hand; this man is also of metal, but different from that thou hast thrown down; step on board, but without mentioning the name of God, and let him conduct thee. He will in ten days' time bring thee into another sea, where thou shalt find an opportunity to return to thy coun-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

try, provided, as I have told thee, thou dost not mention the name of God during the whole voyage."

When I awoke I felt much comforted by the vision and did not fail to observe everything that the old man had commanded me. I took the bow and arrows out of the ground, shot at the horseman, and with the third arrow I overthrew him and the horse. In the mean time, the sea swelled and rose by degrees. When it came as high as the foot of the dome upon the top of the mountain, I saw, afar off, a boat rowing toward me, and I returned God thanks.

When the boat made land, I stepped aboard and took great heed not to pronounce the name of God, neither spoke I one word. I sat down and the man of metal began to row off from the mountain. He rowed without ceasing till the ninth day, when I saw some islands, which gave me hopes that I should escape all the danger that I feared. The excess of my joy made me forget what I was forbidden: "God is great, God be praised!" said I.

I had no sooner spoken than the boat and man sunk, casting me upon the sea. I swam until night, when, as my strength began to fail, a wave vast as a mountain threw me on the land. The first thing I did was to strip and to dry my clothes.

On the next morning I went forward to discover what sort of country I was in. I had not walked far before I found I was upon a desert, though a very pleasant island, abounding with trees and wild shrubs bearing fruit. I recommended myself to God and prayed Him to dispose of me according to His will. Immediately after I saw a vessel coming from the mainland before the wind, directly toward the island. I got up into a very thick tree, from whence, though unseen, I might safely view them. The vessel came into a little creek, where ten slaves landed, carrying a spade and

THE THREE CALENDERS.

other instruments for digging up the ground. They went toward the middle of the island, where they dug for a considerable time, after which they lifted up a trap-door. They returned again to the vessel and unloaded several sorts of provisions and furniture, which they carried to the place where they had been digging; they then descended into a subterraneous dwelling.

I saw them once more go to the ship and return soon after with an old man, who led in his hand a handsome lad of about fifteen years of age. They all descended when the trap-door had been opened. After they had again come up they let down the trap-door, covered it over with earth and returned to the creek where the ship lay; but I saw not the young man in their company. This made me believe that he had stayed behind in the subterraneous cavern.

The old man and the slaves went on board and steered their course toward the mainland. When I perceived they had proceeded to such a distance that I could not be seen by them I came down from the tree and went directly to the place where I had seen the ground broken. I removed the earth by degrees till I came to a stone two or three feet square. I lifted it up and found that it covered the head of a flight of stairs, also of stone. I descended, and at the bottom found myself in a large room, brilliantly lighted, and furnished with a carpet, a couch covered with tapestry and cushions of rich stuff, upon which the young man sat. The young man, when he perceived me, was considerably alarmed; but I made a low obeisance and said to him, "Sir, do not fear. I am a king and I will do you no harm. On the contrary, it is probable that your good destiny may have brought me hither to deliver you out of this tomb, where it seems you have been buried alive. But what surprises me (for you

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

must know that I have seen all that hath passed since your coming into this island) is, that you suffered yourself to be entombed in this place without any resistance."

The young man, much assured at these words, with a smiling countenance requested me to seat myself by him. As soon as I was seated he said, "Prince, my story will surprise you. My father is a jeweler. He has many slaves, and also agents at the several courts, which he furnishes with precious stones. He had been long married without having issue when he dreamt that he should have a son, though his life would be but short. Some time after I was born, which occasioned great joy in the family. My father, who had observed the very moment of my birth, consulted astrologers about my nativity, and was answered, 'Your son shall live happily till the age of fifteen, when his life will be exposed to a danger, which he will hardly be able to escape. But if his good destiny preserve him beyond that time he will live to a great age. It will be,' said they, 'when the statue of brass, that stands upon the summit of the mountain of adamant, shall be thrown into the sea by Prince Agib, and, as the stars prognosticate, your son will be killed fifty days afterward by that prince.'

"My father took all imaginable care of my education until the year, which is the fifteenth of my age. He had notice given him yesterday that the statue of brass had been thrown into the sea about ten days ago. This news alarmed him much; and, in consequence of the prediction of the astrologers, he took the precaution to form this subterranean habitation to hide me in during the fifty days after the throwing down of the statue; and therefore, as it is ten days since this happened, he came hastily hither to conceal me, and promised at the end of forty days to return and fetch me away. For

THE THREE CALENDERS.

my own part, I am sanguine in my hopes, and cannot believe that Prince Agib will seek for me in a place under ground, in the midst of a desert island."

He had scarcely done speaking when I told him with great joy, "Dear sir, trust in the goodness of God, and fear nothing. I will not leave you till the forty days have expired, of which the foolish astrologers have made you apprehensive; and in the meanwhile I will do you all the service in my power; after which, with leave of your father and yourself, I shall have the benefit of getting to the mainland in your vessel; and when I am returned into my kingdom I will remember the obligations I owe you and endeavor to demonstrate my gratitude by suitable acknowledgments."

This discourse encouraged the jeweler's son and inspired him with confidence. I took care not to inform him I was the very Agib whom he dreaded, lest I should alarm his fears. I found the young man of ready wit and partook with him of his provisions, of which he had enough to have lasted beyond the forty days, though he had had more guests than myself. In short, madam, we spent thirty-nine days in the pleasantest manner possible in this subterraneous abode.

The fortieth day appeared; and in the morning when the young man awoke, he said to me, with a transport of joy that he could not restrain, "Prince, this is the fortieth day and I am not dead, thanks to God and your good company. My father will not fail to make you, very shortly, every acknowledgment of his gratitude for your attentions, and will furnish you with every necessary for your return to your kingdom. But," continued he, "while we are waiting his arrival, dear prince, pray do me the favor to fetch me a melon and some sugar,¹ that I may eat some to refresh me."

¹ Sugar has been traced to the Arabic "sucar," which is the Persian "shachar." The sugar cane is a jointed reed, crowned

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

Out of several melons that remained I took the best and laid it on a plate; and as I could not find a knife to cut it with, I asked the young man if he knew where there was one? "There is one," said he, "upon this cornice over my head." I accordingly saw it there, and made so much haste to reach it, that, while I had it in my hand, my foot being entangled in the carpet, I fell most unhappily upon the young man, and the knife pierced his heart.

At this spectacle I cried out with agony. I beat my head, my face, my breast; I tore my clothes; I threw myself on the ground with unspeakable sorrow and grief. I would have embraced death without any reluctance, had it presented itself to me. "But what we wish, whether it be good or evil, will not always happen according to our desire." Nevertheless, considering that all my tears and sorrows would not restore the young man to life, and, the forty days being expired, I might be surprised by his father, I quitted the subterranean dwelling, laid down the great stone upon the entrance and covered it with earth. I again ascended into the tree which had previously sheltered me, when I saw the expected vessel approaching the shore.

The old man with his slaves landed immediately, and advanced toward the subterranean dwelling, with a countenance that showed some hope; but when they saw the earth had been newly removed, they changed color, particularly the old man. They lifted up the stone and descended the stairs. They called the young man by his name, but no answer was returned. Their fears redoubled. They searched about and at last

with leaves or blades; it contains a soft, pithy substance, full of sweet juice. The people of Egypt eat a great quantity of the green sugar canes, and make a coarse loaf-sugar, and also sugar candy and some very fine sugar, sent to Constantinople to the Grand Signor, which is very dear, being made only for that purpose.—Dr. Richard Pocock, Travels, vol. i. p. 204.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

found him stretched on his couch with the knife through his heart, for I had not had the courage to draw it out. On seeing this, they uttered such lamentable cries that my tears flowed afresh. The unfortunate father continued a long while insensible and made them more than once despair of his life; but at last he came to himself. The slaves then brought up his son's body, dressed in his best apparel, and when they had made a grave they buried it. The old man, supported by two slaves, and his face covered with tears, threw the first earth upon the body, after which the slaves filled up the grave.

This being done, all the furniture was brought up, and, with the remaining provisions, put on board the vessel. The old man, overcome with sorrow, was carried upon a litter to the ship, which stood out to sea, and in a short time was out of sight.

After the old man and his slaves were gone I was left alone upon the island. I lay that night in the subterranean dwelling, which they had shut up, and when the day came I walked round the island.

I led this wearisome life for a whole month. At the expiration of this time I perceived that the sea sunk so low that there remained between me and the continent but a small stream, which I crossed, and the water did not reach above the middle of my leg. At last I got upon more firm ground; and when I had proceeded some distance from the sea I saw a good way before me something that resembled a great fire, which afforded me some comfort, for I said to myself, I shall here find some persons, it not being possible that this fire should kindle of itself. As I drew nearer, however, I found my error, and discovered that what I had taken for a fire was a castle of red copper, which the beams of the sun made to appear at a distance like flames. As I wondered at this magnificent building I saw ten

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

handsome young men coming along; but what surprised me was that they were all blind of the right eye. They were accompanied by an old man, very tall, and of a venerable aspect.

As I was conjecturing by what adventure these men could come together, they approached, and seemed glad to see me. After we had made our salutations, they inquired what had brought me thither. I told them my story, which filled them with great astonishment.

After I had concluded my account the young men prayed me to accompany them into the palace and brought me into a spacious hall, where there were ten small blue sofas set round, separate from one another. In the middle of this circle stood an eleventh sofa, not so high as the rest, but of the same color, upon which the old man before mentioned sat down, and the young men occupied the other ten. But as each sofa could only contain one man, one of the young men said to me, "Sit down, friend, upon that carpet in the middle of the room and do not inquire into anything that concerns us, nor the reason why we are all blind of the right eye."

The old man, having sat a short time, arose and went out; but he returned in a minute or two, brought in supper, distributed to each man separately his proportion, and likewise brought me mine, which I ate apart, as the rest did; and when supper was almost ended, he presented to each of us a cup of wine.

One of the young men observing that it was late, said to the old man, "You do not bring us that with which we may acquit ourselves of our duty." At these words the old man arose and went into a closet and brought out thence upon his head ten basons, one after another, all covered with black stuff; he placed one before every gentleman, together with a light.

They uncovered their basons, which contained ashes

THE THREE CALENDERS.

and powdered charcoal; they mixed all together and rubbed and bedaubed their faces with it; and having thus blackened themselves, they wept and lamented, beating their heads and breasts and crying continually, "This is the fruit of our idleness and curiosity."

They continued this strange employment nearly the whole of the night. I wished a thousand times to break the silence which had been imposed upon me, and to ask the reason of their strange proceedings. The next day, soon after we had arisen, we went out to walk, and then I said to them, "I cannot forbear asking why you bedaubed your faces with black—how it has happened that each of you has but one eye. I conjure you to satisfy my curiosity."

One of the young men answered on behalf of the rest, "Once more we advise you to restrain your curiosity; it will cost you the loss of your right eye." "No matter," I replied; "be assured that if such a misfortune befall me, I will not impute it to you, but to myself."

He further represented to me that when I had lost an eye I must not hope to remain with them, if I were so disposed, because their number was complete, and no addition could be made to it. I begged them, let it cost what it would, to grant my request.

The ten young men, perceiving that I was so fixed in my resolution, took a sheep, killed it, and after they had taken off the skin, presented me with a knife, telling me it would be useful to me on an occasion which they would soon explain. "We must sew you in this skin," said they, "and then leave you; upon which a bird of a monstrous size, called a roc, will appear in the air, and, taking you for a sheep, will pounce upon you and soar with you to the sky. But let not that alarm you; he will descend with you again, and lay you on the top of a mountain. When you find yourself on the ground, cut the skin with your knife and throw it off. As soon

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

as the roc sees you he will fly away for fear and leave you at liberty. Do not stay, but walk on till you come to a spacious palace, covered with plates of gold, large emeralds and other precious stones. Go up to the gate, which always stands open, and walk in. We have each of us been in that castle, but will tell you nothing of what we saw, or what befell us there; you will learn by your own experience. All that we can inform you is, that it has cost each of us our right eye; and the penance which you have been witness to, is what we are obliged to observe in consequence of having been there; but we cannot explain ourselves further."

When the young man had thus spoken I wrapt myself in the sheep's skin, held fast the knife which was given me, and after the young men had been at the trouble to sew the skin about me, they retired into the hall and left me alone. The roc they spoke of soon arrived; he pounced upon me, took me in his talons like a sheep and carried me up to the summit of the mountain.

When I found myself on the ground I cut the skin with the knife, and throwing it off, the roc at the sight of me flew away. This roc is a white bird of a monstrous size; his strength is such that he can lift up elephants from the plains and carry them to the tops of mountains, where he feeds upon them.

Being impatient to reach the palace, I lost no time, but made so much haste that I got thither in half a day's journey, and I must say that I found it surpassed the description they had given me of its magnificence.

The gate being open, I entered a square court, so large that there were round it ninety-nine gates of wood of sanders and aloes, and one of gold, without reckoning those of several superb staircases, that led to apartments above, besides many more which I could not see.

I saw a door standing open just before me, through which I entered into a large hall. Here I found forty

THE THREE CALENDERS.

young women, of such perfect beauty as imagination could not surpass; they were all most sumptuously appareled. As soon as they saw me they arose, and without waiting my salutations, said to me, with tones of joy, "Welcome! welcome! We have long expected you. You are at present our lord, master and judge, and we are your slaves, ready to obey your commands."

After these words were spoken, these ladies vied with each other in their eager solicitude to do me all possible service. One brought hot water to wash my feet; a second poured sweet-scented water on my hands; others brought me all kinds of necessaries and change of apparel; others again brought in a magnificent collation; and the rest came with glasses in their hands, to fill me delicious wines, all in good order, and in the most charming manner possible. Some of the ladies brought in musical instruments and sang most delightful songs; while others danced before me, two and two, with admirable grace. In short, honored madam, I must tell you that I passed a whole year of most pleasurable life with these forty ladies. At the end of that time I was greatly surprised to see these ladies with great sorrow impressed upon their countenances, and to hear them all say, "Adieu, dear prince, adieu! for we must leave you." After they had spoken these words they began to weep bitterly. "My dear ladies," said I, "have the kindness not to keep me any longer in suspense; tell me the cause of your sorrow." "Well," said one of them, "to satisfy you, we must acquaint you that we are all princesses, daughters of kings. We live here together in the manner you have seen; but at the end of every year we are obliged to be absent forty days, for reasons we are not permitted to reveal; and afterward we return again to this palace. Before we depart we will leave you the keys of everything, especially those of the hundred doors, where you will find enough to

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

satisfy your curiosity, and to relieve your solitude during our absence. But we entreat you to forbear opening the golden door; for if you do, we shall never see you again; and the apprehension of this augments our grief." We separated with much tenderness; and after I had embraced them all, they departed, and I remained alone in the castle.

I determined not to forget the important advice they had given me, not to open the golden door; but as I was permitted to satisfy my curiosity in everything else, I took the first of the keys of the other doors, which were hung in regular order.

I opened the first door and entered an orchard, which I believe the universe could not equal. I could not imagine anything to surpass it. The symmetry, the neatness, the admirable order of the trees, the abundance and diversity of unknown fruits, their freshness and beauty, delighted me. Nor must I neglect to inform you that this delightful garden was watered in a most singular manner; small channels, cut out with great art and regularity and of different lengths, carried water in considerable quantities to the roots of such trees as required much moisture. Others conveyed it in smaller quantities to those whose fruits were already formed; some carried still less to those whose fruits were swelling, and others carried only so much as was just requisite to water those which had their fruits come to perfection, and only wanted to be ripened. They far exceeded in size the ordinary fruits in our gardens. I shut the door and opened the next.

Instead of an orchard I found here a flower garden, which was no less extraordinary in its kind. The roses, jessamines, violets, daffodils, hyacinths, anemones, tulips, pinks, lilies and an infinite number of flowers, which do not grow in other places but at certain times, were there flourishing all at once. and nothing could

THE THREE CALENDERS.

be more delicious than the fragrant smell which they emitted.

I opened the third door and found a large aviary, paved with marble of several fine and uncommon colors. The trellis-work was made of sandal-wood and wood of aloes. It contained a vast number of nightingales, goldfinches, canarybirds, larks and other rare singing birds, and the vessels that held their seed were of the most sparkling jasper or agate. The sun went down and I retired, charmed with the chirping notes of the multitude of birds, who then began to perch upon such places as suited them for repose during the night. I went to my chamber, resolving on the following days to open all the rest of the doors, excepting that of gold.

The next day I opened the fourth door. I entered a large court, surrounded with forty gates, all open, and through each of them was an entrance into a treasury. The first was stored with heaps of pearls; and, what is almost incredible, the number of those stones which are most precious, and as large as pigeon's eggs, exceeded the number of those of the ordinary size. In the second treasury¹ there were diamonds, carbuncles and rubies; in the third, emeralds; in the fourth, ingots of gold; in the fifth, money; in the sixth, ingots of silver; and in the two following, money. The rest contained amethysts, chrysolites, topazes, opals, turquoises, agate, jasper, cornelian and coral, of which there was a storehouse filled, not only with branches, but whole trees.

¹ These tales were written shortly after the conquest of Persia, the riches of which country may be reflected in these narratives. "The naked robbers of the desert were suddenly enriched, beyond the measure of their hope and knowledge. Each chamber revealed a new chamber secreted with art, or ostentatiously displayed; the gold and silver, the various wardrobes and precious furniture, surpassed (says Abulfeda) the estimate of fancy or numbers, and another historian defines the untold and almost infinite mass by the fabulous computation of thousands of thousands of pieces of gold."—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

Thus I went through, day by day, these various wonders. Thirty-nine days afforded me but just as much time as was necessary to open ninety-nine doors, and to admire all that presented itself to my view, so that there was only the hundredth door left, which I was forbidden to open.

The fortieth day after the departure of those charming princesses arrived, and had I but retained so much self-command as I ought to have had, I should have been this day the happiest of all mankind, whereas now I am the most unfortunate. But through my weakness, which I shall ever repent, and the temptations of an evil spirit, I opened that fatal door! But before I had moved my foot to enter, a smell, pleasant enough, but too powerful for my senses, made me faint away. However, I soon recovered; but instead of taking warning from this accident to close the door and restrain my curiosity, I entered, and found myself in a spacious vaulted apartment, illuminated by several large tapers placed in candlesticks of solid gold.

Among the many objects that attracted my attention was a black horse, of the most perfect symmetry and beauty. I approached in order the better to observe him, and found he had on a saddle and bridle of massive gold, curiously wrought. One part of his manger was filled with clean barley and the other with rose water. I laid hold of his bridle and led him out to view him by daylight. I mounted and endeavored to make him move; but finding he did not stir, I struck him with a switch I had taken up in his magnificent stable. He had no sooner felt the whip than he began to neigh in a most horrible manner, and extending wings, which I had not before perceived, flew up with me into the air. My thoughts were fully occupied in keeping my seat; and, considering the fear that had seized me, I sat well. At length he directed his course toward the earth, and

THE THREE CALENDERS.

lighting upon the terrace of a palace, and, without giving me time to dismount, shook me out of the saddle with such force as to throw me behind him, and with the end of his tail he struck out my eye.

Thus it was I became blind of one eye. I then recollected the predictions of the ten young gentlemen. The horse again took wing and soon disappeared. I got up much vexed at the misfortune I had brought upon myself. I walked upon the terrace, covering my eye with one of my hands, for it pained me exceedingly, and then descended, and entered into a hall. I soon discovered by the ten sofas in a circle and the eleventh in the middle, lower than the rest, that I was in the castle whence I had been carried by the roc.

The ten young men seemed not at all surprised to see me, nor at the loss of my eye; but said, "We are sorry that we cannot congratulate you on your return, as we could wish; but we are not the cause of your misfortune." "I should do you wrong," I replied, "to lay it to your charge; I have only myself to accuse." "If," said they, "it be a subject of consolation to the afflicted to know that others share their sufferings, you have in us this alleviation of your misfortune. All that has happened to you we have also endured; we each of us tasted the same pleasure during a year; and we had still continued to enjoy them, had we not opened the golden door when the princesses were absent. You have been no wiser than we, and have incurred the same punishment. We would gladly receive you into our company, to join with us in the penance to which we are bound, and the duration of which we know not, but we have already stated to you the reasons that render this impossible; depart, therefore, and proceed to the court of Bagdad,¹ where you will meet with the per-

¹ Bagdad was founded in the 145th year of the Hejira or flight of Mohammed to Medina, 767. It was destroyed by Hulakoo,

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

son who is to decide your destiny." After they had explained to me the road I was to travel, I departed.

On the road I caused my beard and eyebrows to be shaven, and assumed a calender's habit. I have had a long journey, but at last I arrived this evening, and met these my brother calenders at the gate, being strangers as well as myself. We were mutually surprised at one another to see that we were all blind of the same eye; but we had not leisure to converse long on the subject of our misfortunes. We have only had time enough to bring us hither, to implore those favors which you have been generously pleased to grant us.

The third calender having finished this relation of his adventures, Zobeide addressed him and his fellow-calenders thus: "Go wherever you think proper; you are at liberty." But one of them answered, "Madam, we beg you to pardon our curiosity, and permit us to hear the stories of your other guests who have not yet spoken." Then the lady turned to the caliph, the vizier Giafar, and Mesrour, and said to them, "It is now your turn to relate your adventures, therefore speak."

The grand vizier, who had all along been the spokesman, answered Zobeide: "Madam, in order to obey you, we need only repeat what we have already said to the fair lady who opened for us the door. We are merchants come to Bagdad to sell our merchandise, which lies in the khan¹ where we lodge. We dined to-day with several other persons of our condition, at a mer-

grandson of Gengis Khan, in the 656th of the Hejira, A. D. 1277, when the dynasty of the Abbassides was terminated.

¹"Kahn, or caravansery, a large building of a quadrangular form, being one story in height. The ground floor serves for warehouses and stables, while the upper is used for lodgings. They always contain a fountain, and have cook shops and other conveniences attached to them in town. The erection of them is considered meritorious both among Hindoos and Mussulmans. They are erected on the sides of public highways, and are then only a set of bare rooms and out houses."—Popular Cyclopaedia, vol. ii., p. 108.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

chant's house of this city, who, after he had treated us with choice dainties and excellent wines, sent for men and women dancers and musicians. The great noise we made brought in the watch, who arrested some of the company, and we had the good fortune to escape; but it being already late, and the door of our khan shut up, we knew not whither to retire. We chanced, as we passed along this street, to hear music at your house, which made us determine to knock at your gate. This is all the account that we can give you, in obedience to your commands."

"Well, then," said Zobeide, "you shall all be equally obliged to me; I pardon you all, provided you immediately depart!"

Zobeide having given this command, the caliph, the vizier, Mesrour, the three calenders and the porter departed, for the presence of the seven slaves with their weapons awed them into silence. As soon as they had quitted the house and the gate was closed after them the caliph said to the calenders without making himself known, "You, gentlemen, who are newly come to town, which way do you design to go, since it is not yet day?" "It is this," they replied, "that perplexes us." "Follow us," resumed the caliph, "and we will convey you out of danger." He then whispered to the vizier: "Take them along with you and to-morrow morning bring them to me."

The vizier Giafar took the three calenders along with him; the porter went to his quarters and the caliph and Mesrour returned to the palace.

On the following morning, as the day dawned, the sultan Haroun al Raschid arose, and went to his council-chamber, and sat upon his throne. The grand vizier entered soon after, and made his obeisance. "Vizier," said the caliph, "go, bring those ladies and the

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

calenders at the same time; make haste, and remember that I impatiently expect your return."

The vizier, who knew his master's quick and fiery temper, hastened to obey, and conducted them to the palace with so much expedition that the caliph was much pleased.

When the ladies were arrived the caliph turned toward them and said, "I was last night in your house, disguised in a merchant's habit; but I am at present Haroun al Raschid, the fifth caliph of the glorious house of Abbas, and hold the place of our great prophet. I have only sent for you to know who you are and to ask for what reason one of you, after severely whipping the two black dogs, wept with them. And I am no less curious to know why another of you has her bosom so full of scars."

Upon hearing these words, Zobeide thus related her story:

THE STORY OF ZOBEIDE.

Commander of the Faithful, my story is truly wonderful. The two black dogs and myself are sisters by the same father and mother. The two ladies who are now here are also my sisters, but by another mother. After our father's death, the property that he left was equally divided among us. My two half sisters left me, that they might live with their mother. My two sisters and myself resided with our own mother. At her death she left us three thousand sequins each. Shortly after my sisters had received their portions they married; but their husbands, having spent all their fortunes, found some pretext for divorcing them and put them away. I received them into my house and gave them¹

¹ "The giving of alms is commanded in the Koran. Hasan, the son of Ali, grandson of Mohammed, is related to have thrice in his life divided his substance equally between himself and the poor."—Sale's Preliminary Dissertation, p. 110.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

a share of all my goods. At the end of a twelvemonth my sisters again resolved to marry and did so. After some months were passed they returned again in the same sad condition, and as they accused themselves a thousand times, I again forgave them, and admitted them to live with me as before, and we dwelt together for the space of a year. After this I determined to engage in a commercial speculation. For this purpose I went with my two sisters to Bussorah,¹ where I bought a ship ready fitted for sea, and laded her with such merchandise² as I had carried with me from Bagdad. We set sail with a fair wind and soon cleared the Persian Gulf; when we had reached the open sea we steered our course to the Indies, and the twentieth day saw land. It was a very high mountain, at the bottom of which we perceived a great town; having a fresh gale, we soon reached the harbor and cast anchor.

I had not patience to wait till my sisters were dressed to go along with me, but went ashore alone in the boat. Making directly to the gate of the town, I saw

¹“At the distance of four score miles from the Persian Gulf, the Euphrates and Tigris unite in a broad and direct current. In the midway, between the junction and the mouth of these famous streams, the new settlement of Bussorah was planted on the western bank; the first colony was composed of eight hundred Moslems; but the influence of the situation soon reared a flourishing and populous capital. The air, though excessively hot, is pure and healthy; the meadows are filled with palm trees and cattle; and one of the adjacent valleys has been celebrated among the four paradises or gardens of Asia. Under the first caliphs, the jurisdiction of this Arab colony extended over the southern provinces of Persia; the city has been sanctified by the tombs of the companions and martyrs, and the vessels of Europe still frequent the port of Bussorah, as a convenient station and passage of the Indian trade.”—Gibbon’s *Decline and Fall*, 47, C.

²Bussorah was built by the caliph Omar. The city has four kinds of inhabitants—Jews, Persians, Mohammedans, and Christians. It is looked upon by the Arabs as one of the most delightful spots in Asia. The commerce of Bussorah consisted in the interchange of rice, sugar, spices from Ceylon, coarse white and blue cottons from Coromandel, cardamon, pepper, sandal wood from Malabar, gold and silver stuffs, brocades, turbans, shawls, indigo from Surat, pearls from Bahara, coffee from Mocha, iron, lead, woolen cloths, etc.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

there a great number of men upon guard, some sitting and others standing with weapons in their hands; and they had all such dreadful countenances that I was greatly alarmed; but perceiving they remained stationary and did not so much as move their eyes, I took courage and went nearer, when I found they were all turned into stones. I entered the town and passed through several streets, where at different intervals stood men in various attitudes, but all motionless and petrified. In the quarter inhabited by the merchants I found most of the shops open; I likewise found the people petrified.

Having reached a vast square in the heart of the city, I perceived a large folding gate, covered with plates of gold, which stood open; a curtain of silk stuff seemed to be drawn before it; a lamp hung over the entrance. After I had surveyed the building, I made no doubt but it was the palace of the prince who reigned over that country; and being much astonished that I had not met with one living creature, I approached in hopes to find some. I lifted up the curtain and was surprised at beholding no one but the guards in the vestibule, all petrified.¹

I came to a large court. I went from thence into a room richly furnished, where I perceived a lady turned into a statue of stone. The crown of gold on her head and a necklace of pearls about her neck, each of them

¹“There is a city in Upper Egypt (Ishmonie) called the petrified city, on account of a great number of statues of men, women, and children, and other animals, which are said to be seen there at this day; all which, as it is believed by the inhabitants, were once animated beings, but were miraculously changed into stone in all the various positions of falling, standing, eating, sitting, which they acted at the instant of their supposed transubstantiation. We did not fail to inquire about these things, and desired to have a sight of them; but they told us they were in a certain part, pointing westward, but were too sacred to be seen by any except believers.”—Perry's View of the Levant.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

as large as a nut, proclaimed her to be the queen. I quitted the chamber where the petrified queen was, and passed through several other apartments richly furnished, and at last came into a large room, where there was a throne of massy gold, raised several steps above the floor, and enriched with large incised emeralds, and upon the throne there was a bed of rich stuff embroidered with pearls. What surprised me most was a sparkling light which came from above the bed. Being curious to know whence it proceeded, I ascended the steps, and lifting up my head, saw a diamond as large as the egg of an ostrich, lying upon a low stool; it was so pure that I could not find the least blemish in it, and it sparkled with so much brilliancy that when I saw it by daylight I could not endure its luster.

At the head of the bed there stood on each side a lighted flambeau, but for what use I could not comprehend; however, it made me imagine that there must be some one living in the place; for I could not believe that the torches continued thus burning of themselves.

The doors being all open, I surveyed some other apartments that were as beautiful as those I had already seen. In short, the wonders that everywhere appeared so wholly engrossed my attention that I forgot my ship and my sisters and thought of nothing but gratifying my curiosity. In the meantime night came on and I tried to return by the way I had entered, but I could not find it; I lost myself among the apartments; and perceiving I was come back again to the large room, where the throne, the couch, the large diamond and the torches stood, I resolved to take my night's lodging there and to depart the next morning early to get aboard my ship. I laid myself down upon a costly couch, not without some dread to be alone in a desolate place, and this fear hindered my sleep.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

About midnight I heard a man reading the Koran¹ in the same tone as it is read in our mosques. I immediately arose, and taking a torch in my hand passed from one chamber to another on that side from whence the voice proceeded, until looking through a window, I found it to be an oratory. It had, as we have in our mosques, a niche,² to direct us whither we are to turn to say our prayers; there were also lamps hung up and two candlesticks with large tapers of white wax burning.

I saw a little carpet laid down like those we have to kneel upon when we say our prayers, and a comely young man sat on this carpet reading with great devotion the Koran, which lay before him on a desk. At this sight I was transported with admiration. I wondered how it came to pass that he should be the only living creature in a town where all the people were

¹ Koran (derived from the word Karaa, to read) signifies "the Reading—that which ought to be read." It is the collection of revelations supposed to be given from heaven to Mohammed during a period of twenty-three years. Some were given at Mecca, and some at Medina. Each was regarded by some as a mystery full of divine meaning. It is divided into thirty parts; and as each mosque has thirty readers, it is read through once a day. These readers chant it in long lines with rhythmical ending, and in the absence of definite vowels, they alone know the right pronunciation of the Koran.—Sale's Preliminary Dissertation, p. 56.

² This is the kaaba or kebla, a sacred stone in the center of the temple at Mecca, over which is a lofty building, from which the name is by some said to be derived—Caaba, high. Mr. Ferguson, in his lately published account of "The Holy Sepulcher," thus describes it: "The precept of the Koran is, that all men, when they pray, shall turn toward the kaaba, or holy house, at Mecca; and consequently throughout the Moslem world, indicators have been put up to enable the faithful to fulfill this condition. In India they face west, in Barbary east, in Syria south. It is true that when rich men, or kings, build mosques, they frequently covered the face of this wall with arcades, to shelter the worshiper from the sun or rain. They inclosed it in a court that his meditations might not be disturbed by the noises of the outside world. They provided it with fountains, that he might perform the required ablutions before prayer. But still the essential part of the mosques is the mihrab or niche, which points toward Mecca, and toward which, when he bows, the worshiper knows that the kaaba also is before him." The holy house erected over the kaaba was decorated annually with rich tapestries and a deep golden band, at the cost of the caliphs.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

turned into stones, and I do not doubt but there was something in the circumstance very extraordinary.

The door being only half shut I opened it, went in, and standing upright before the niche, I exclaimed, "Bismillah! Praise be to God." The young man turned toward me, and, having saluted me, inquired what had brought me to this desolate city. I told him in a few words my history, and I prayed him to tell me why he alone was left alive in the midst of such terrible desolation. At these words he shut the Koran, put it into a rich case and laid it in the niche, and thus addressed me: "Know that this city was the metropolis of a mighty kingdom, over which the sultan, who was my father, reigned. That prince, his whole court, the inhabitants of the city and all his other subjects, were magi, worshipers of fire instead of God.

"But though I was born of an idolatrous father and mother, I had the good fortune in my youth to have a nurse who was a good Mussulman, believing in God and in His prophet. 'Dear Prince,' would she oftentimes say, 'there is but one true God; take heed that you do not acknowledge and adore any other.' She taught me to read Arabic, and the book she gave me to study was the Koran. As soon as I was capable of understanding it, she explained to me all the passages of this excellent book, unknown to my father or any other person. She died, but not before she had perfectly instructed me in the Mussulman religion. After her death I persisted in worshiping according to its directions, and I abhor the adoration of fire.

"About three years and some months ago a thundering voice was suddenly sounded so distinctly through the whole city that nobody could miss hearing it. The

¹ Bismillah. All the chapters of the Koran, except nine, begin with this word. Its meaning is, "In the name of the merciful God." It is said to be frequently used in conversation by the Arabs.—Sale's Preliminary Dissertation, p. 153.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

words were these: 'Inhabitants, abandon the worship of fire and worship the only God who shows mercy.' This voice was heard three years successively, but no one was converted. On the last day of that year, at the break of day, all the inhabitants were changed in an instant into stone, every one in the condition and posture they happened to be in. The sultan, my father, and the queen, my mother, shared the same fate.

"I am the only person who did not suffer under that heavy judgment, and ever since I have continued to serve God with more fervency than before. I am persuaded, dear lady, that He has sent you hither for my comfort, for which I render Him infinite thanks, for I must own that I have become weary of this solitary life."

On hearing these words I said, "Prince, who can doubt that Providence has brought me into your port to afford you an opportunity of withdrawing from this dismal place. I am a lady at Bagdad, where I have considerable property, and I dare engage to promise you sanctuary there until the mighty Commander of the Faithful, caliph of our prophet, whom you acknowledge, shows you the honor that is due to your merit. This renowned prince lives at Bagdad, and as soon as he is informed of your arrival in his capital you will find it not in vain to implore his assistance. Stay no longer in a city where you can only renew your grief; my vessel is at your service, where you may absolutely command as you shall think fit." He accepted the offer, and as soon as it was day we left the palace and went aboard my ship, where we found my sisters, the captain and the slaves all much troubled at my absence. After I had presented my sisters to the prince I told them what had hindered my return the day before, how I had met with the young prince, his story and the cause of the desolation of so fine a city.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

The seamen were taken up several days in unlading the merchandise I brought with me and embarking in its stead many of the precious things in the palace, especially jewels, gold and money. We left the furniture and goods, which consisted of an infinite quantity of silver vessels, because our vessel could not carry it, for it would have required several vessels more to convey to Bagdad all the riches that we might have taken with us.

After we had laden the vessel with what we thought most desirable, we took such provisions and water aboard as were necessary for our voyage; at last we set sail with a favorable wind.

The young prince, my sisters and myself passed our time very agreeably. But, alas! this good understanding did not last long, for my sisters grew jealous of the friendship between the prince and myself, and maliciously asked me one day what we should do with him when we came to Bagdad. Resolving to put this question off with a joke, I answered, "I will take him for my husband;" and upon that, turning myself to the prince, said, "Sir, I humbly beg of you to give your consent, for as soon as we come to Bagdad I design to offer you my person to be your slave, to do you all the service that is in my power, and to resign myself wholly to your commands."

The prince replied, "I know not, madam, whether you be in jest or no; but for my part I seriously declare before these ladies, your sisters, that from this moment I heartily accept your offer, not with any intention to have you as a slave, but as my lady and wife." At these words my sisters changed color, and I could perceive afterward that they did not love me as before.

We entered the Persian Gulf, and had come within a short distance of Bussorah (where I hoped, considering the fair wind, we might have arrived the day fol-

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

lowing), when, in the night, while I was asleep, my sisters watched their opportunity and threw me overboard. They did the same to the prince, who was drowned. I floated some minutes on the water, and by some good fortune, or rather miracle, I felt ground. I went toward a dark spot, that, by what I could discern, seemed to be land, and which, when day appeared, I found to be a desert island, lying about twenty miles from Bussorah. I soon dried my clothes in the sun, and as I walked along found several kinds of fruit and likewise fresh water, which gave me some hopes of preserving my life.

I had just laid myself down to rest in a shade, when I perceived a very large winged serpent coming toward me with an irregular waving movement, and hanging out its tongue, which induced me to conclude it had received some injury. I instantly arose and perceived that it was pursued by a larger serpent which had hold of its tail and was endeavoring to devour it. This perilous situation of the first serpent excited my pity; and instead of retreating, I took up a stone that lay near me and threw it with all my strength at its pursuer, whom I hit upon the head and killed. The other, finding itself at liberty, took wing and flew away. I looked after it for some time till it disappeared. I then sought another shady spot for repose and fell asleep.

Judge what was my surprise when I awoke to see standing by me a black woman of lively and agreeable features, who held in her hand two dogs of the same color, fastened together. I sat up and asked her who she was. "I am," said she, "the serpent whom you lately delivered from my mortal enemy, and I wish to requite the important services you have rendered me. These two black dogs are your sisters, whom I have transformed into this shape. But this punishment will

THE THREE CALENDERS.

not suffice, and my will is that you treat them hereafter in the way I shall direct."

As soon as she had thus spoken the fairy took me under one of her arms and the two black dogs under the other and conveyed us to my house in Bagdad, where I found in my storehouses all the riches with which my vessel had been laden. Before she left me she delivered to me the two dogs and said, "If you would not be changed into a similar form I command you to give each of your sisters every night one hundred lashes with a rod, as the punishment of the crime they have committed against yourself and the young prince, whom they have drowned." I was forced to promise obedience. Since that time I have whipped them every night, though with regret, whereof your majesty has been a witness. My tears testify with how much sorrow and reluctance I perform this painful duty. If there be anything else relating to myself that you desire to know, my sister Amina will give you full information in the relation of her story.

After the caliph had heard Zobeide with much astonishment, he desired his grand vizier to request Amina to acquaint him wherefore her breast was disfigured with so many scars.

THE HISTORY OF AMINA.

Commander of the Faithful, that I may not repeat those things which your majesty has already been informed of by my sister, I will only mention that my mother, having taken a house to pass her widowhood in private, first bestowed me in marriage on the heir of one of the richest men in this city.

I had not been married quite a year before my husband died. I thus became a widow, and was in possession of all his property, which amounted to above

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

ninety thousand sequins. When the first six months of my mourning was over I caused to be made for me ten different dresses, of such magnificence that each came to a thousand sequins, and at the end of the year I began to wear them.

One day, while I was alone, a lady¹ desired to speak to me. I gave orders that she should be admitted. She was a very old woman. She saluted me by kissing the ground and said to me, kneeling, "Dear lady, the confidence I have in your charity makes me thus bold. I have an orphan daughter, whose wedding is on this night. She and I are both strangers, and have no acquaintance in this town, which much perplexes me. Therefore, most beautiful lady, if you would vouchsafe to honor the wedding with your presence we shall be infinitely obliged, because the family with whom we shall be allied will then know that we are not regarded here as unworthy and despised persons. But, alas, madam, if you refuse this request, how great will be our mortification!—we know not where else to apply."

This poor woman's address, which she spoke with tears, moved my compassion. "Good woman," said I, "do not afflict yourself; I will grant you the favor you desire. Tell me whither I must go, and I will meet you as soon as I am dressed." The old woman was so transported with joy at my answer that she kissed my feet before I had time to prevent her. "Compassionate lady," said she, rising, "God will reward the kindness you have showed to your servants and make your heart as joyful as you have made theirs. You need not at present trouble yourself; I will call for you in the evening."

¹ For the choice of a wife a man generally relies on his mother, or some other near relation, or a professional female betrother (who is called "khatebeh"), for there are women who perform this office for hire.—Lane's Notes to the Arabian Nights, vol. i., c. iv., p. 285.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

As soon as she was gone I took the suit I liked best, with a necklace of large pearls, bracelets, pendants for my ears and rings set with the finest and most sparkling diamonds, and prepared to attend the ceremony.

When the night closed in the old woman called upon me with a countenance full of joy, and said, "Dear lady, the relations of my son-in-law, who are the principal ladies of the city, are now met together. You may come when you please; I am ready to conduct you." We immediately set out; she walked before me, and I was followed by a number of my women and slaves, richly robed for the occasion. We stopped in a wide street, newly swept and watered, at a spacious gate with a lamp, by the light of which I read this inscription in golden letters over the entrance: "This is the continual abode of pleasure and joy." The old woman knocked and the gate was opened immediately.

I was conducted toward the lower end of the court into a large hall, where I was received by a young lady of exceeding beauty. She drew near, and after having embraced me, made me sit down by her upon a sofa, on which was raised a throne of precious wood set with diamonds. "Madam," said she, "you are brought hither to assist at a wedding; but I hope it will be a different wedding from what you expected. I have a brother, one of the handsomest men in the world; his fate depends wholly upon you, and he will be the unhappiest of men if you do not take pity on him. If my prayers, madam, can prevail, I shall join them with his, and humbly beg you will not refuse the proposal of being his wife."

After the death of my husband I had not thought of marrying again; but I had no power to refuse the solicitation of so charming a lady. As soon as I had given consent by my silence, accompanied with a blush, the young lady clapped her hands, and immediately

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

a curtain was withdrawn, from which came a young man of so majestic an air and so graceful a countenance that I thought myself happy to have made such a choice. He sat down by me and I found from his conversation that his merits far exceeded the account of him given by his sister.

When she perceived that we were satisfied with one another, she clapped her hands a second time and a *cadi*¹ with four witnesses entered, who wrote and signed our contract of marriage.

There was only one condition that my new husband imposed upon me, that I should not be seen by nor speak to any other man but himself, and he vowed to me that, if I complied in this respect I should have no reason to complain of him. Our marriage was concluded and finished after this manner; so I became the principal actress in a wedding to which I had only been invited as a guest.

About a month after our marriage, having occasion for some stuffs, I asked my husband's permission to go out to buy them, which he granted, and I took with me the old woman of whom I spoke before, she being one of the family, and two of my own female slaves.

When we came to the street where the merchants reside the old woman said, "Dear mistress, since you want silk stuffs, I must take you to a young merchant of my acquaintance, who has a great variety; and that you may not fatigue yourself by running from shop to shop, I can assure you that you will find in his what no other can furnish." I was easily persuaded, and we entered a shop belonging to a young merchant. I sat down and bade the old woman desire him to show me the finest silk stuffs he had. The woman desired me to

¹ Marriage among the Mohammedans is an exclusively civil ceremony; and therefore the *cadi*, a civil judge, and not an *imaun*, or minister of religion, was summoned.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

speaking myself; but I told her it was one of the articles of my marriage contract not to speak to any man but my husband, which I ought to keep.

The merchant showed me several stuffs, of which one pleased me better than the rest; and I bade her ask the price. He answered the old woman: "I will not sell it for gold or money; but I will make her a present of it if she will give me leave to kiss her cheek." I ordered the old woman to tell him that he was very rude to propose such a freedom. But instead of obeying me, she said, "What the merchant desires of you is no such great matter; you need not speak, but only present him your cheek." The stuff pleased me so much that I was foolish enough to take her advice. The old woman and my slaves stood up, that nobody might see, and I put up my veil;¹ but instead of kissing me, the merchant bit me so violently as to draw blood.

The pain and my surprise were so great that I fell down in a swoon and continued insensible so long that the merchant had time to escape. When I came to myself I found my cheek covered with blood. The old woman and my slaves took care to cover it with my veil and the people who came about us could not perceive it, but supposed I had only had a fainting fit.

The old woman who accompanied me being extremely troubled at this accident, endeavored to comfort me. "My dear mistress," said she, "I beg your pardon, for I am the cause of this misfortune, having brought you to this merchant, because he is my coun-

¹ "No woman, of what rank soever, is permitted to go into the streets without two muslins; one that covers her face all but her eyes, and another that hides the whole dress of her head, and hangs half-way down her back. Their shapes are also wholly concealed by a thing they call a ferigee, which no woman appears without. This has straight sleeves, that reach to their finger ends, and it laps all round them, not unlike a riding-hood. In winter it is of cloth, and in summer, of plain stuff or silk."—Lady M. W. Montague's Letters, vol. vii., p. 373.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

tryman; but I never thought he would be guilty of such a villainous action. But do not grieve; let us hasten home, I will apply a remedy that shall in three days so perfectly cure you that not the least mark shall be visible."

The fit had made me so weak that I was scarcely able to walk. But at last I got home, where I again fainted, as I went into my chamber. Meanwhile, the old woman applied her remedy. I came to myself and went to bed.

My husband came to me at night, and seeing my head bound up, asked me the reason. I told him I had the headache, which I hoped would have satisfied him, but he took a candle and saw my cheek was hurt. "How comes this wound?" he said. Though I did not consider myself as guilty of any great offense, yet I could not think of owning the truth. Besides, to make such an avowal to a husband I considered as somewhat indecorous. I therefore said, "That as I was going, under his permission, to purchase a silk stuff, a camel,¹ carrying a load of wood, came so near to me in a narrow street that one of the sticks grazed my cheek, but had not done me much hurt." "If that is the case," said my husband, "to-morrow morning, before sunrise, the grand vizier Giafar shall be informed of this insolence and cause all the camel drivers to be put to death." "Pray, sir," said I, "let me beg of you to pardon them, for they are not guilty." "How, madam," he demanded, "what, then, am I to believe? Speak, for I am resolved to know the truth from your own mouth." "Sir," I replied, "I was taken with a giddiness and fell down, and that is the whole matter."

¹ The streets of Eastern cities are often so narrow as to be blocked up with a wide camel load, or to prevent two horsemen riding abreast. This is the cause of those footmen who run before great men to prepare the way for them.

THE THREE CALENDERS.

At these words my husband lost all patience. "I have," said he, "too long listened to your tales." As he spoke he clapped his hands and in came three slaves. "Strike," said he; "cut her in two and then throw her into the Tigris. This is the punishment I inflict on those to whom I have given my heart when they falsify their promise."

I had recourse to entreaties and prayers; but I supplicated in vain, when the old woman, who had been his nurse, coming in just at that moment, fell down upon her knees and endeavored to appease his wrath. "My son," said she, "since I have been your nurse and brought you up, let me beg you to consider, 'he who kills shall be killed,' and that you will stain your reputation and forfeit the esteem of mankind." She spoke these words in such an affecting manner, accompanied with tears, that she prevailed upon him at last to abandon his purpose.

"Well, then," said he to his nurse, "for your sake I will spare her life; but she shall bear about her person some marks to make her remember her offense." When he had thus spoken one of the slaves, by his order, gave me upon my sides and breast so many blows with a little cane that he tore away¹ both skin and flesh, which threw me into a swoon. In this state he caused the same slaves, the executioners of his will, to carry me into the house, where the old woman took care of me. I kept my bed for four months. At last I recovered. The scars which, contrary to my wish, you saw yesterday, have remained ever since.

As soon as I was able to walk and go abroad I re-

¹ The Mussulmans are allowed by the Koran to beat their wives, so long as they do not make a bruise. The husband on this occasion must have broken the law.

Some such permission was given by an English judge, Sir John Buller; who declared the stick used must not be thicker than his thumb, and from whence he obtained the sobriquet of "Thumb Buller."

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

solved to retire to the house which was left me by my first husband, but I could not find the site whereon it stood, as my second husband had caused it to be leveled with the ground.

Being thus left destitute and helpless I had recourse to my dear sister Zobeide. She received me with her accustomed goodness, and advised me to bear with patience my affliction, from which, she said, none are free. In confirmation of her remark, she gave me an account of the loss of the young prince her husband, occasioned by the jealousy of her two sisters. She told me also by what accident they were transformed into dogs, and in the last place, after a thousand testimonials of her love toward me, she introduced me to my youngest sister, who had likewise taken sanctuary with her after the death of her mother, and we have continued to live together in the house in which we received the guests whom your highness found assembled on your visit last night.

The caliph publicly expressed his admiration of what he had heard and inquired of Zobeide, "Madam, did not this fairy whom you delivered, and who imposed such a rigorous command upon you, tell you where her place of abode was? or that she would restore your sisters to their natural shape."

"Commander of the Faithful," answered Zobeide, "the fairy did leave with me a bundle of hair, saying that her presence would one day be of use to me; and then, if I only burned two tufts of this hair, she would be with me in a moment." "Madam," demanded the caliph, "where is the bundle of hair?" She answered, "Ever since that time I have been so careful of it that I always carry it about me." Upon which she pulled it out of the case which contained it and showed it to him. "Well, then," said the caliph, "let us bring the fairy

THE THREE CALENDERS.

hither; you could not call her in a better time, for I long to see her."

Zobeide having consented, fire was brought in, and she threw the whole bundle of hair into it. The palace at that instant began to shake, and the fairy appeared before the caliph in the form of a lady very richly dressed.

"Commander of the Faithful," said she to the prince, "you see I am ready to receive your commands. At your wish I will not only restore these two sisters to their former shape, but I will also cure this lady of her scars and tell you who it was that abused her."

The caliph sent for the two dogs from Zobeide's house, and when they came a glass of water was brought to the fairy by her desire. She pronounced over it some words, which nobody understood; then throwing some part of it upon Amina and the rest upon the dogs, the latter became two ladies of surprising beauty, and the scars that were upon Amina disappeared. After which the fairy said to the caliph, "Commander of the Faithful, I must now discover to you the unknown husband you inquire after. He is Prince Amin, your eldest son, who by stratagem brought this lady to his house, where he married her. As to the blows he caused to be given her, he is in some measure excusable; for this lady, his spouse, by the excuses she made, led him to believe she was more faulty than she really was." At these words she saluted the caliph and vanished.

The caliph, much satisfied with the changes that had happened through his means, acted in such a manner as will perpetuate his memory to all ages. First, he sent for his son Amin, told him that he was informed of his secret marriage, and how he had ill-treated Amina upon a very slight cause. Upon this the prince, upon his father's commands, received her again immediately.

FAMOUS TALES OF THE ORIENT.

After which Haroun al Raschid declared that he would give his own heart and hand to Zobeide, and offered the other three sisters to the calenders, sons of sultans, who accepted them for their brides with much joy. The caliph assigned each of them a magnificent palace in the city of Bagdad, promoted them to the highest dignities of his empire, and admitted them to his councils.

The chief cadí of Bagdad being called, with witnesses, wrote the contracts of marriage, and the caliph, in promoting by his patronage the happiness of many persons who had suffered such incredible calamities, drew a thousand blessings upon himself.

THE END.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

Los Angeles

This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

Form L9-32m-8,'57(C8680s4)444



PN De Berard -
6013 Classic tales
D35 by famous auth-
v.12 ors.

PN
6013
D35
v.12

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



AA 001 092 051 0

