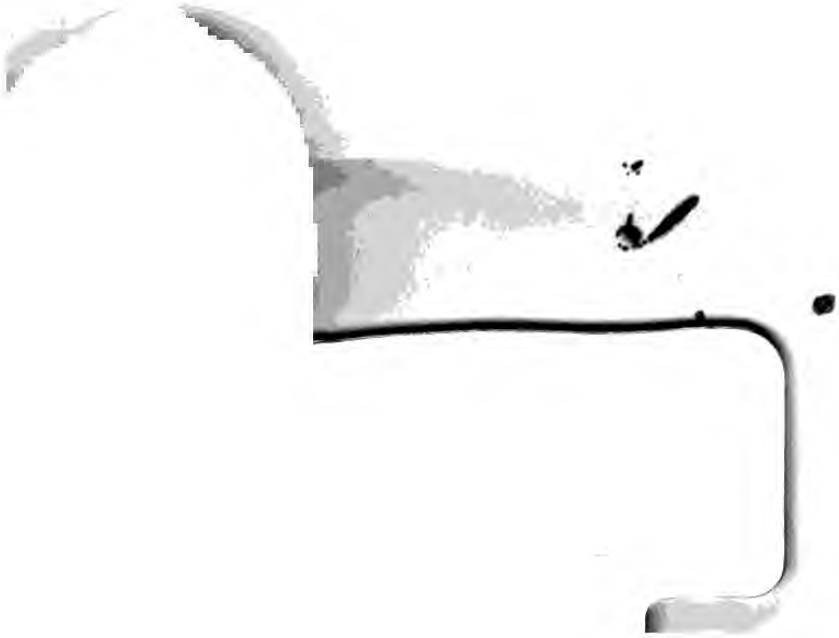
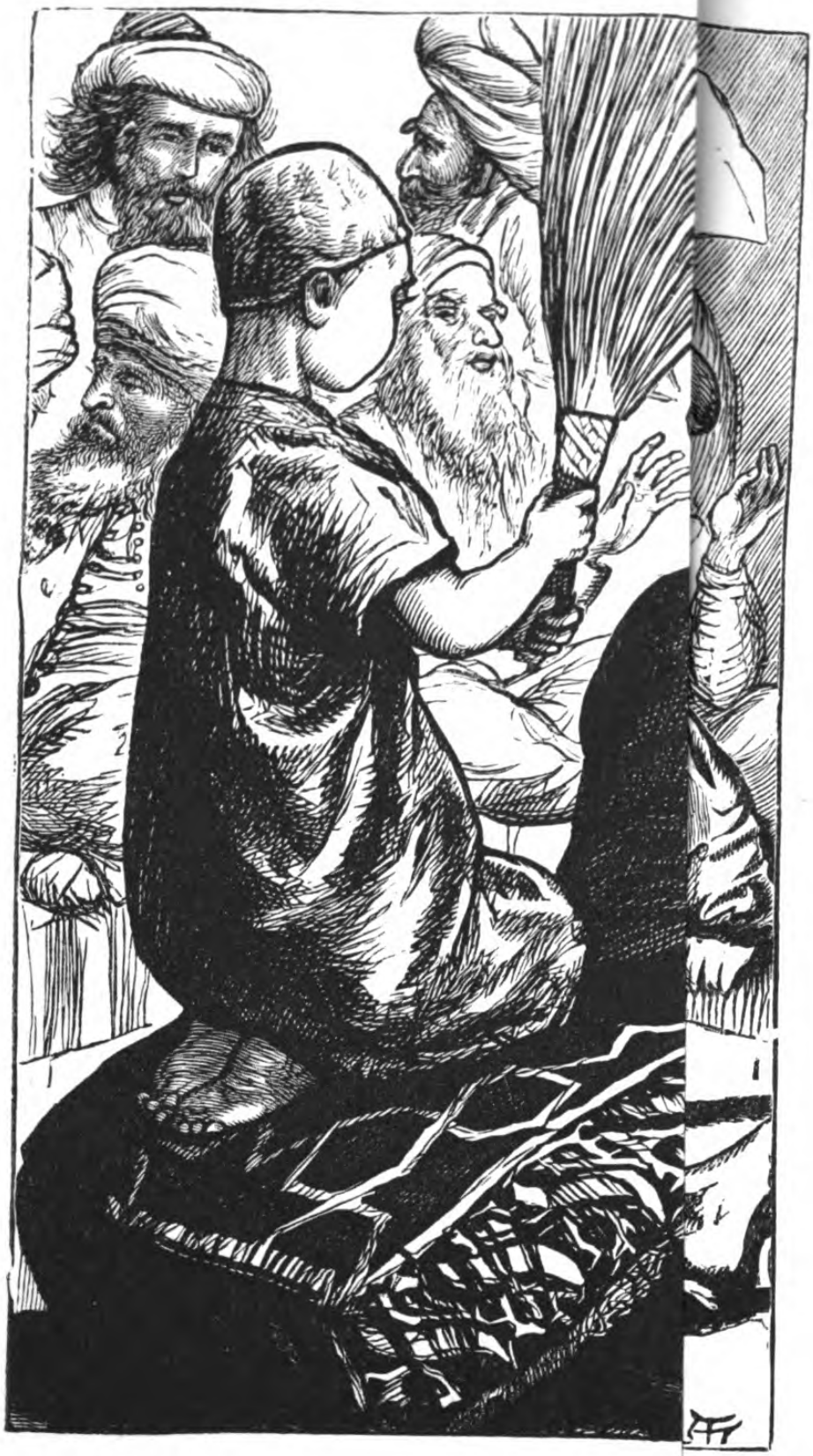
MODELS OF THE WORLD

WILLIAM GILBER





Frontispiece]

MODERN WONDERS OF THE WORLD

Or, The New Sinbad

By WILLIAM GILBERT

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STRAHAN AND COMPANY LIMITED

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I.

A TALE OF A NUMBER OF BOYS AND GIRLS LIVING IN THE HOUSE OF A MAGICIAN IN LONDON, ALL OF WHOM HAD EYES IN THE TIPS OF THEIR FINGERS.

IN a certain suburb of Bagdad, some ten years ago, there stood a long one-storied House of Entertainment. The exact nature of the establishment it would be difficult to describe. It was not a coffee-house, although coffee was sold there. Smoking also was allowed, and further, there were amusements of different kinds occasionally provided, such as tumbling, snake-charming, and reciting of stories. The reader must not imagine that it at all resembled a modern London Music Hall, for humble as the building was, not only in its architecture but in its appointments, it rose immensely superior in point of morals and intelligence to its London rivals, and in nothing more so

perhaps than in the entire absence of intoxicating liquors. These form in the London Music Halls the one great object of attraction; while in the case of our Persian establishment, not one drop of intoxicating fluid ever entered its walls; and, therefore, there were neither drunken squabbles, nor the consequent necessity of a police force to keep order.

Extending from each corner of the front of the building was a low wall some two feet high, consisting of dried clay, forming with the building itself a square of twenty-five or thirty feet on each side. In this enclosure was an opening about three or four feet wide, directly opposite to the entrance door, so as to allow customers to enter the establishment without difficulty. Although I have called this erection by the homely term of a low clay wall, its purposes were of a far more honourable description. It was in point of fact a divan, where the customers used to seat themselves when witnessing the performances of the tumblers and snake-charmers, or listening to the story-tellers. This earthen divan also extended along the front of the house, with the exception of the opening of the door; but unlike the other portions of the enclosure, it had on it some rude cushions to mark it as the place of honour for the guests.

At the time of the opening of this narrative the space enclosed for the performances was empty. Although the sun was fast sinking, evening had not sufficiently advanced for the frequenters of the house to arrive. In fact, there were but two persons present, one of them, standing at the entrance door, being Mustapha, the proprietor of the establishment. He was a tall, well-made man about fifty years of age, clad in a long blue robe or gown, something resembling a smock frock, but reaching to his feet, and had a large white turban on his head. His countenance, which was by no means destitute of manly beauty, wore an anxious expression, and his thoughts were so completely absorbed that he had even allowed the ashes of his pipe to become extinct without his being aware of it.

The other person present was of totally different appearance. He wore a ragged half-European, half-Eastern dress, and in place of a turban, he had a small faded red skull-cap on his head. He could not have been less than sixty years of age; possibly he might have been older, but there remained still a quick, keen expression in his eye which tended to dispel any such impression. Another peculiarity in his appearance also deserves to be noted as it came especially under observation at the

moment. He had lost a leg, and had on him at the time a wooden substitute, which, as he was seated on the broad divan with his back against the wall, stuck out before him in a most obtrusive and ungraceful manner.

Mustapha took no notice of this man, and even appeared unconscious of his presence. Possibly this was because the stranger had ordered no refreshment, and Mustapha, with the true spirit of his business, had but little esteem for guests who omitted that formality. If, however, he were unaware of the stranger's presence, the latter had his sharp black eye fixed on him, and with so much intentness that he appeared absolutely to be reading his thoughts. Having apparently come to some conclusion as to their nature, he broke silence by saying—

"Do you expect many customers to-night?"

"I do, worse luck," replied Mustapha.

"Why worse luck?" inquired the stranger.

"And why do you ask?" said Mustapha, turning sharply on him.

"Mere curiosity," said the stranger.

"If you've no better excuse than that," said Mustapha, sharply, "we may as well drop the conversation."

"I meant no offence, and I'm sorry if I've given any," said the stranger.

Mustapha was silent for a few moments, then suddenly turning his glance on the stranger, and inspecting him narrowly, said, as if struck by the intelligence on the old man's countenance,

"I'll tell you why it's worse luck that I expect many guests to-night. I've neither snake-charmer, tumbler, nor any other performer to amuse them. I had requested Schena, the most celebrated story-teller in Bagdad, to be present to-night; and I have just received a message from him saying he is too ill to attend. What to do I know not; so if you can advise me in the matter I shall be obliged to you."

"I don't know what advice to give you," said the other, "as I am a stranger in Bagdad; but in the absence of a better man, I may possibly be able to render you some assistance."

"In what way?" asked Mustapha.

"You say you expected Schena the story-teller here to-night, and he has disappointed you. Try me in his stead."

"Try you, my good fellow, in Schena's place!" exclaimed Mustapha. "That's a good joke! Why, you don't know what a clever fellow he is, and you are only to be excused for your folly by your being a stranger.

Know then that Schena is the most celebrated story-teller in Bagdad, and crowds always flock to any place in which it is known he is to be present. No man in Persia can relate the adventures of Sinbad the Sailor with half the effect he can. Why," he continued, raising his pipe, and perceiving there was no fire in the bowl, "I've seen him with a crowd of a hundred and fifty people round him, all smoking when he began, who became so absorbed in his narrative that in less than ten minutes every pipe among them had no more fire in it than there is in mine at this moment. I really beg your pardon," continued Mustapha, bursting into a loud laugh, "but there is something so exquisitely droll in the idea of you supplying his place that I really can't help it."

"Pray make no excuse," said the stranger, "I'm not in the least offended. On the contrary, I'm rather pleased than otherwise."

"How so?"

"Why, because it encourages me to think that my tales would be a perfect success. Now, let me ask you how it's possible that you as a man of sense can think I should be afraid of exhibiting before an audience who are content to listen over and over again to those weary, foolish inventions of Sinbad the Sailor? Why, in the

countries I've been in he would be spurned for a mere mountebank if he couldn't relate wonders a thousand times more surprising than those he has given to the world. And by-the-bye not a tenth part of his adventures has the slightest shadow of truth in them."

"Very possibly not," said Mustapha, in a confidential tone; "and I may think so myself. I've great doubts about the Valley of Diamonds, and the Roc's egg, and several other things of the kind. But let me advise you as a friend to keep your opinions on that point to yourself, in Bagdad at any rate; for believe me that here his adventures are considered no less veracious than the Koran itself; and my fellow-citizens when angry are rather dangerous, though good-natured enough at other times."

"Thank you for your advice," said the stranger, "and I'll follow it. I shall be obliged to you, too, if you'll keep secret the foolish remark I made."

Their conversation was now interrupted by other customers coming in, men of grave demeanour, who advanced towards Mustapha and greeted him warmly. They conversed together for some little time, Mustapha appearing to be informing them of some news which interested them greatly, and which was doubtless the

intelligence he had received of the sudden indisposition of Schena. They talked, however, in so low a tone, that the stranger, who occasionally cast shrewd penetrating glances at them, could not hear them.

The fact is, that Mustapha, after explaining his disappointment, told them of the stranger's offer, and asked them to form themselves into a committee of taste. They then, accompanied by Mustapha, advanced towards him; and, saluting him amicably, one of them said—

"Our friend Mustapha informs us that in consequence of the illness of Schena, you propose to take his place. What are your qualifications for the post? Have you ever performed in any city?—for we understand you are a stranger."

"Only among friends," was the reply, "and those perhaps good-natured ones. At the same time I can honestly state that the adventures I should relate to you are as wonderful, if not as well expressed, as those of the venerable Sinbad—and quite as truthful. And this I say with perfect confidence, as I witnessed them myself."

"In what part of the world did you meet with them?"

"In England," replied the stranger; "a country some thousands of miles from here."

"Are there any enchanters there?"

"Wonderful enchanters,—beside whom, I was going to say, the enchanters mentioned by Sinbad were nobodies; but that possibly might be an exaggeration."

"Take care what you say," said one of them. "You remember that a Genie in the Arabian Nights locked a lady up in a glass box, and kept her at the bottom of the sea."

"And in England," said the stranger, "I have known as great a wonder as that. I have seen half a dozen men go down in a glass box and seek for treasure at the bottom of the ocean, stopping there hours at a time, and when they had collected all they wanted, return again to the land. And this they performed with as little difficulty as the Genie had in carrying his glass box about with him."

"Mashallah, that is wonderful, if true!" said one.

"What sort of a country is England?" said another; "are there as many people there as in Bagdad?"

"Millions more."

"Have they horses?"

"Yes."

"Does the land grow rice for the people to eat?"

"No, they send thousands of miles for it, and bring it to the country for the people to eat."

"It must cost them very dear with all that trouble. Only the rich could eat it."

"The rich eat but little of it," said the stranger. "It being the cheapest food they have, the poor chiefly consume it."

"That is very wonderful," remarked one of them. "But do you mean to say, that if we hear you to-night, all you relate to us shall be true?"

"I promise you," replied the stranger, laying his hand first on his heart, then on his forehead, and then on his lips, "that every word shall be as true as those of the illustrious Sinbad himself. But let it be understood," he continued, addressing Mustapha, "that as I am a poor man, having lost all my money, I hope your customers will be liberal."

"They are liberal when they are pleased," said Mustapha; "but very illiberal, except with blows, when displeased. The risk of either you must take upon yourself. What do you propose as your subject for to-night?"

The stranger remained thoughtful for a moment, and then said,

"I will not weary you by giving you a description of my voyage, the adventures I met with by sea and land,

or what induced me to visit England. To say the truth, I met with but little of the wonderful; all my principal adventures took place during the time I was there."

"And what will be the subject of your first tale?" asked Mustapha. "Let me see if it is likely to interest my customers."

"The tale I propose telling them to-night is that of a number of boys and girls living in the house of a magician, all of whom had eyes in the tips of their fingers."

"Do you mean to say they had none in their head?"

"None. When very young, all of them saw as clearly as you do, but by a wicked Genie they had been deprived of their sight, and were miserable and helpless till the good magican took them under his care. But as Allah had not given him the power to repair the mischief done by the wicked Genie, he placed fresh eyes in the tips of their fingers."

"But were they as useful as the eyes in their head, which they had lost?"

"In some cases much less so; in others, on the contrary, much more so."

"But how could they be more so?"

"Because they could see as well in the dark as in the light, which is more than you can do, Mustapha, clever man as you are."

"Wait a moment," said Mustapha, "till we consult together, and we will then tell you whether we will allow you to proceed."

Mustapha and his friends now retired and conversed anxiously together for some time. At last they told the stranger that he might make his first appearance that night, and commence as soon as a sufficient number of guests arrived. By degrees other visitors began to drop in; more followed, and, in a short time, enough had collected to form a very respectable audience.

Mustapha, in a few words, told them of Schena's unfortunate illness, which would deprive them of the pleasure of hearing him that evening; but another, a stranger, had offered to take his place, who had assured him that his own adventures had been as wonderful as those related by Sinbad.

"For my own part," continued Mustapha; "I can offer no opinion as to his abilities; but if you choose to hear him, I'm sure you will give him a fair trial."

The guests promised they would do so, and, lighting

their pipes, the seniors seated themselves on the clay divan, those of most note on the cushions, and the younger on the ground, and all being in readiness, the stranger was requested to commence his narrative of the children with eyes in the tips of their fingers.

"If I betray any little diffidence," the speaker commenced; "you must excuse me, as I have never yet had the honour of relating my adventures before so illustrious and talented an audience as those I see around me. As my stay in Bagdad, however, will extend over twelve nights, I hope any nervousness or hesitation will be excused on this my first appearance, as I feel certain, under your kind approbation, all defects of the kind will have vanished before my last performance."

Here a murmur of assent greeted the ears of the stranger, who, after saluting the audience, continued,—

"I agreed with Mustapha that I would dwell but a short time on my own personal history, so as to commence at once with the wonders I have to relate. And I do this the more willingly as I feel persuaded, kind as your feelings towards me may be, that you will find them immeasurably more interesting. The personal history of so humble an individual as I am must fall into

insignificance when compared with the tales I have to narrate respecting children whose eyes were in the tips of their fingers, and other wonders still more surprising. They all in some manner resemble those of the Arabian Nights, and of that veracious history of Sinbad the Sailor, which, as men of education and profound historical knowledge, you are all so well acquainted with. Our host reminded me of the history of the Genie who kept a lady in a glass case at the bottom of the sea, a feat which you, with great reason, imagine almost too wonderful for belief, were it not inscribed in the indisputable pages of Arabian history. But in the country I have visited, I have seen, as I told Mustapha, men frequently descend in a glass case to the bottom of the ocean, and there pick up treasure, and when sufficiently laden, return again to the air. The veracious Sinbad tells you of his being seized by the talons of an enormous bird called the Roc, and carried away high in the air, a feat which you imagine to be unparalleled; but I can assure you I have myself ridden with others miles in the air, and instead of being carried like Sinbad in the talons of an ugly bird fixed in the waistband of my trousers in a most ungraceful manner, the enchanter's car I rode in was furnished with cushions as soft as those

in the palace of the Shah, to whom be all honour. And now as to the method of travelling in that country, which formerly was no better than our own——"

Here the narrator was interrupted by one of the guests (a very old man), on the divan of honour, asking if there were not horses in that country drawing chariots. He had heard this stated, he said, by his grandfather, who, when a boy, had visited England; but he had told of none of the wonders now being spoken of. In fact, his grandfather had reported that the horses of the country were in no way better than their own, and that the unfortunate wretches had no camels.

"Things have greatly changed there since the time of your grandfather," was the story-teller's reply. "In his time these enchanters did not live; they have all arisen since. Horses they have there, it is true, with speed like yours, nearly as swift as the wind, but these are only used when people have leisure. Those who are in a hurry travel in carriages without horses, whose speed is swifter than the wind."

"My friend," said Mustapha, "let me give you a little advice. Be cautious what you are saying. We can allow for a great deal of exaggeration in a traveller's narrative of his own adventures, and still more in the ideas of

a poet who admits that all he relates is fiction. But let me advise you not to state as simple and unvarnished facts things that have lies stamped on the face of them."

"I call the prophet Mahomet to witness," said the performer, that every word I state is true, and the vengeance of the Cadi be on me if I state one circumstance that is not."

"Continue then," said Mustapha, with a look of doubt on his countenance. "But take my advice as a friend, be careful; or at any rate, should any of your narratives be imaginary, state them to be so at the time, and we will excuse you."

"To begin, then," said the narrator, "with a short description of my family. My name is Hassan, and my father, a follower of the Prophet, resided in Upper Egypt. During the years of my boyhood I assisted my father, who bought and sold slaves brought down from Nubia, and this I did to the best of my ability, especially keeping his books of accounts and correspondence. When I was about twenty, my father died, and I continued the business alone. As years passed on the traffic in slaves became less remunerative; fewer were to be purchased, and those of a bad quality. Even these at last fell off, till a law was passed prohibiting the traffic altogether,

and I was a ruined man. I now descended the Nile to Cairo, where I engaged myself as a scribe, writing letters for the ignorant peasantry, for which I received a remuneration fully sufficient not only to supply me with the necessaries of life, but to place by a trifle as well. Of my domestic establishment I will not trouble you with a description. I dare say it would too much resemble those of the least fortunate among you to be of any interest. The immediate cause of my going to England was this :—

"There were in Cairo at the time many English, and their habits and manners, barbarians as they appeared, had something interesting in them. I succeeded in forming the acquaintance of some of the dragomen who acted as interpreters to the hotels, from whom I learnt that their masters were liberal, that England was a wonderful country, and that, moreover, its rulers had been the cause, to a great extent, of the abolition of slavery, not only in Egypt, but all over the world. This news by no means disposed me in their favour, for, as I mentioned before, the cessation of the slave trade had been my ruin. However, I determined if possible to learn their language, and having a quick ear, and a good deal of capacity for learning, in a few months I succeeded sufficiently to be able to fulfil the duties of dragoman

myself. Indeed so fully had I acquired their tongue, and so well had I made myself acquainted with the history of the pyramids and other curiosities near Cairo, that I easily succeeded in obtaining good appointments during the stay of my masters. Many of them, in fact, were so pleased with me that they even invited me to accompany them to their own land.

"I determined at last to visit England, but resolved to wait till I could find a master of sufficient importance, so that I might bring no degradation on my family by becoming one of his suite. At length I succeeded. A great lord of the country visited Egypt, and I accompanied him up the Nile as far as Thebes. There he was taken ill, and I nursed him through his sickness with so much assiduity that he made me an offer to return with him to England, and at such a liberal salary, that I accepted it without hesitation. With the events of my journey to the capital of the land, I will not trouble you; and although there were many circumstances worthy of remark in it, it would occupy too much of the limited time I am to be in Bagdad were I to relate them to you. Suffice it to say, we reached his lordship's palace in safety. For a few days everything in the palace appeared strange to me, but afterwards the novelty wore

off, and I fell into their way of living. For a week after my arrival I did not leave the house; the weather was bad, and I felt ill and depressed. At length one afternoon my master honoured me with a little conversation, and among other things, he spoke of the number of blind children he had seen in Cairo, and how much it was to be regretted that something was not done for them.

"'May your lordship's shadow never grow less,' I said; 'but it would be difficult to do anything for their benefit. Their eyes are irretrievably lost, and all the enchanters and hakems in the world could not recover them.'

"'That their eyes could not be made to see, I admit,' said his lordship; 'but why do not your magicians, if you have any in Egypt, put eyes in their fingers?'

"'Your lordship jests with his poor slave, I said, trying to smile, though, to say the truth, I felt somewhat offended that he should imagine me so dull as to believe a statement of that kind.

"'Hassan, my good friend,' said his lordship, 'I do not jest, as you may judge for yourself, if you please. I have a friend who is an enchanter of great power and skill, as well as a very benevolent man. He has in his

house more than fifty children who were formerly blind, but in whose fingers he has placed eyes.'

"I thought his lordship must still be joking; but as I looked at him he appeared perfectly serious, and I remained silent not knowing what to say.

"'If you have any doubt as to the truth of what I state,' he said, 'go to-night and visit the enchanter. I will give you a letter to my friend, requesting him to show the wonders of his house to you. And then perhaps you might induce him, if you make yourself agreeable to him, to visit Cairo, and put eyes in the fingers of some of the many poor blind children he would find there.'

"I bowed to his lordship, and muttered something about my gratitude to him, though at the time I could not divest myself of the idea that he was jesting with me. I found, however, he was in sober earnest, for he shortly afterwards said to me,

"'I shall leave home to-day after sunset, as I have to visit a friend. I will then send my carriage back for you with orders to take you to the magician's house, and to wait for you till you wish to return home. Give me the paper and ink you see there, and I will write a letter to him.'

"I obeyed his lordship, who wrote a few lines on the paper, and then presenting it to me said,

"That will be your authority. Hold yourself in readiness to leave the house when the time arrives.'

"During the rest of the day I remained in a state of complete bewilderment, not knowing whether my master was in earnest or not. The idea of finding children with eyes in their fingers appeared to me so absurd that I thought he must be jesting. At the same time he was generally serious in what he stated, and joked but seldom. If anything, he seemed more in earnest than usual. I resolved, however, to obey his orders, and remained quietly till an hour after sunset, when a servant informed me that the carriage was waiting for me.

"We drove rapidly for some miles through the streets of London, and much did I wonder at the appearance they presented. Although it was dark night, yet by the great number of torches and lamps we could see our way as easily as in broad daylight. Houses and palaces innumerable we passed, and crossed over a bridge of such size and beauty, that it must have been built by the Genii. We then continued our road till we passed on dry ground under another bridge, while over our

heads a long string of carriages, drawn apparently by a flaming dragon rushed by; yet, so accustomed to wonders of the kind was the driver, that he took not the slightest notice, but continued on his way till we arrived at the house of the enchanter.

"When introduced into the enchanter's presence, I was so surprised it was some moments before I could collect my thoughts. Fortunately he was at the moment occupied in reading the letter I had placed in his hand, so that he did not notice my embarrassment. I had expected to find a man with long robes reaching to his feet, a white venerable beard, grey hair, and necromantic signs round his room; but, instead, he was a man of scarcely middle age, with no more hair on his chin than on the palm of my hand. He was clad in the ordinary dress of the inhabitants, and appeared in no way whatever different from many of the visitors who had called upon his lordship. After having finished reading the letter, he folded it up and placing it on the table, said to me,

"'And so you scarcely believe in my necromantic skill, and doubt my capability to put eyes in the fingers of the children under my care? Come with me, and I will show you that you are wrong.'

"We now crossed a yard, and entering under the porch of a building, he called to one of the attendants, who accompanied us within. It was a large room, capable of holding from two to three hundred people. The furniture, principally wooden divans and tables, was placed against the walls, on one side. In the centre of the room were about thirty young girls, playing with one another with great mirth and activity. I cannot describe exactly the game, but it seemed to me as if one girl had to touch another, the first she could reach, who, in her turn, had to touch one of the others, and the process was continued till each girl had been touched. Although I for some time found considerable pleasure in watching their sports, I began to think of the object of my visit, and could not help suspecting a joke had been practised on me. The children all appeared to have eyes in their heads, for they played about with no greater difficulty than children in the street. Somewhat annoyed, I said to the magician,

"'But these children can see as well as I can; if not, how can they play in the manner they do? If their eyes, as you state, are in the tips of their fingers, they would hurt them when they touch each other.'

"'I tell you the truth,' said the magician, 'when I

say that the eyes in their heads are not capable of seeing. Nevertheless, they can feel pain in them, and the slightest particle of dust falling into them causes great agony. The eyes in the tips of their fingers are far more obtuse to pain, though in many respects even more susceptible than your own eyes.'

"'But why then is the room lighted?' I asked.

"'Simply that if any of my slaves come in, they may not only see their way about, but the manner in which the children are occupied. The children are insensible to the light, as I will prove to you.'

"The magician then turned to an attendant, and said something I did not catch; and the next moment the room was in utter darkness.

"The children, however, still continued with their game, laughing merrily, and rushing to and fro, evidently touching one another just as rapidly as when the room was lighted.

"Pardon me,' I said to the magician, 'for ever having doubted you; but of all the wonders I have seen this is the greatest.'

"'I will show you still greater,' he said. Then ordering the room to be re-lighted, he spoke to a female attendant, who brought forward a piece of linen, and one

of those English needles, which you all have seen, so sharp and thin, with the eye so small as hardly to be perceived. Then calling to the children, he told them to cease their game, and seat themselves at the side of the room. Each, without touching the others, obeyed him, and in a few minutes the room was in total silence. He now requested me to select one from a certain number of girls to perform a feat he was about to propose. I did so, and chose an intelligent girl about fourteen years of age. Having cut the linen in two, he placed it in her hand, with the needle and some thread, and told her to sew the two pieces together. To my intense astonishment this she did, and in a manner which clearly proved to me that she had an eye in the tip of her forefinger. Taking the needle in her left hand, and holding it up, she threaded it with as much ease as any embroiderer in Bagdad, and perhaps even more. She then placed the two edges of linen together and sewed them with perfect dexterity. After she had sewn a few inches, the magician took it from her hand and called my attention to how much she had done. He then told me to select another girl, which I did, and he gave her another needle and thread, and the linen, and told her to go on with the work. Before threading

the needle, however, the lights were extinguished, and when they were re-lighted, I found her busily employed in the work the other girl had commenced.

"I again apologised to the magician for having doubted him, and he led me out of this room into another, where, he had told me, I should find the boys in whose fingers he had placed eyes. Although the room was well lighted, no boys were there, but I heard the voices of many of them outside the building, playing as merrily as the girls, but more boisterously. We went outside, and in a square place of perhaps some fifty yards each way, found the boys playing. The game, as well as I could perceive, for the night was intensely dark, consisted in a boy stooping down and another jumping over his back, and this continued all round the enclosure, not one boy, by any chance, striking against the other.

"The boys were now called into a lighted room, and several specimens of their workmanship were shown me, all performed in a manner which fully bore out the magician's statement that he had placed eyes in the tips of their fingers. In this room we stayed about a quarter of an hour, I imploring him to visit Cairo and exercise his magical skill on some of the poor blind children in that

city. For some time he refused, but at length promised me he would give the subject his serious consideration.

"On returning into the enchanter's house we passed through a passage, and afterwards a room, both so dark that he was obliged to lead me by the hand. Before entering the room he whispered to me to walk softly. I obeyed him, and presently heard at a short distance from me a female voice apparently reading from a book or paper. I stopped to listen, and found I was right. A girl was evidently reading a portion of their Koran to some one near her. The subject related to the saint of Issa, the son of Joseph, when found by his parents in the Temple. I whispered to the magician that I supposed the girl was reciting from rote.

"'Not at all, she is reading,' said the magician. 'The book is open before her, as I will prove to you,'—so saying he gave an order to a slave behind us, and in a moment the room was lighted up by some magical means I do not understand.

"Seated on a low bench before me were two young girls, apparently about fourteen years of age. One had a book open upon her knees, on which was her forefinger with the eye in it. The other, who was listening to what was being read, had her head upon the shoulder

of her companion. The reader, the moment she heard our voices, stopped, but took no notice of us, nor did she or the other girl turn their heads to us. A sudden doubt struck me, and I said to the enchanter,

"'Tell me how it occurs that these girls with eyes in their fingers, who can see as well in the dark as in the light, were not aware of our approach?'

"'I ought to have explained that to you before,' he said. 'Though they have eyes in their fingers, they can only detect objects close to them. My power of benefiting them goes no further. But in compensation, as you may perceive, Allah,' (or, as he said, God,) 'bountifully gave them the power of seeing in the darkest night as perfectly as in the brightest day.'

"On leaving the room the magician said to the girl, 'Go on, my child, with your reading; we will not interrupt you again.'

"'Tell me,' I said to the magician, as we entered his dwelling, 'who was the child that was reading about the saint of Issa. There was something so gentle about her voice and appearance; she interested me greatly.'

"'If you like, I will tell you her history, and that of her brother, a boy who was born with ears so deaf that

he could not hear a cannon fired by his side, and yet can hear perfectly through his eyes.'

"'Hear through his eyes!' I said. 'Why you are laughing at your poor slave.'

"'I speak seriously,' he said. 'A friend of mine, a powerful enchanter, has many boys and girls born similarly afflicted, who all hear perfectly well through their eyes. But there is one curious feature to be noticed. Although they hear through their eyes the whole of the day, as night comes on they gradually lose the faculty, till at last they can hear nothing; while, with the next morning's light, they regain the power. But apart from this singular fact, the history of these two children is wonderful indeed;' and here he proceeded to relate it to me.

"And now," concluded Hassan, "if you are satisfied with me, I shall be happy to-morrow evening to relate to you the wonderful adventures of this boy and girl, far surpassing those I have already told you. If you do not consider my tale this evening sufficiently interesting to give me another trial, I will take my leave of you at once, and trouble you no further."

Mustapha now put the question to the meeting, whether Hassan should have another trial, and they un-

animously voted he should. And further, they agreed that should his next narrative be as wonderful as the one he had just related, they would allow him to continue his performances till the end of his twelve days' sojourn in Bagdad, or at least till Schena was sufficiently recovered to resume his duties.

II.

KORDICUS THE DEMON.

IT was with some trepidation that Hassan, the following evening, went to the House of Entertainment to continue his narrative. As soon, however, as he came to the dwelling of Mustapha all his terrors vanished. It still wanted some short time before his duties were to commence, and yet double the number of persons had already assembled than were present the evening before; a sure sign that the audience had not only been pleased themselves, but had expressed their pleasure to others.

As Hassan entered the enclosure this conclusion was still further confirmed by the satisfaction visible on the countenances of those assembled. Even Mustapha, who was by no means accustomed to compliment those he employed, advanced towards him, and after saluting him

with great friendship and courtesy, said to him in a low tone of voice so as not to be overheard by the others,—

"Hassan, my brother, your narrative last evening greatly interested all who heard it, but at the same time let me advise you to be careful, for two or three times during the course of the evening, I judged from the features of those present, especially the elder portion, that they had considerable doubts as to the truth of your statements. Take my advice then, and while relating your adventures do not trespass on the bounds of probability as established in the minds of the ignorant, at least not to a greater extent than the narratives of Sinbad, or those of the Arabian Nights."

Hassan promised he would be careful, and Mustapha then told the audience that the narrative was about to be commenced, and advised them to take their places without delay. They now, with great celerity, ranged themselves on the divans till there was not room for another left, while twice as many seated themselves on the ground at the feet of the others. Hassan then advanced to the entrance of the enclosure, when Mustapha, who appeared to act as president, seated himself on a low stool at the entrance of the house, and after

his pipe, graciously made a sign to Hassan that all was in readiness.

"Oh, Mustapha," said Hassan, "and my brothers all, before I proceed with the wonderful narrative of the adventures of the young girl with eyes in the tips of her fingers, and of her brother who heard through his eyes instead of his ears, let me assure you that all I shall state is strictly founded on fact. I wish to impress this particularly on you, for if any among you think my narrative of yesterday evening at all bordering on the fabulous, you will have greater reason to think so to-night.

"When I was seated in the Enchanter's room, in London, he addressed me as follows:—

"Some three or four years before his lordship, your master, visited Egpyt, he went to a large estate he possessed about forty miles from the capital for the purpose of hunting the wild beasts and killing the birds which were there to be found in great numbers. After he had amused himself in this manner for a few days, and had killed a vast number of animals, he and his servants, when following a stag, lost themselves, and were not in any manner able to find their road home.

They looked round for some person of whom they might inquire the way; but not a soul was to be seen. Evening was coming on, and his lordship began to fear they would be obliged to remain out all night, which would have been dangerous, less from the attacks of wild beasts than from the possibility of catching some distemper, as the weather was cold and the season sickly. By way of finding some one to direct them, his lordship collected the seven servants he had with him around a high tree on the top of a small hill, and then told them to go in different directions, and see if they could find any one to point out the way home, but at all events to return to the tree before it was dark.

"The servants each departed on his errand, leaving their master by himself. He remained by the tree for perhaps half an hour, when suddenly he heard a singular sort of cry, apparently of distress or pain, but whether from an animal or a human being he could not discover, so strange was it. Before he could make up his mind on the subject one of his servants appeared, dragging along with him a boy of about ten or eleven years of age, who, in a state of great alarm, was uttering those unearthly cries. Before his master could ask for an explanation, the servant said to him,—

"'I found this boy, my noble master, and when I asked him the way to your castle, instead of answering me intelligibly, as he might have done, as I spoke to him civilly enough, he commenced the most extraordinary antics, pointing different ways, evidently by his manner intending to ridicule me. I asked him who he was, and he pointed into the woods; and when I inquired if he could show us the road to your lordship's castle, he opened his mouth and pointed down his throat. Several other questions I asked him, all quite civilly, but he only grunted, or made some absurd gesture, so I brought him to your lordship to know what I should do with him.'

"After putting some questions to the boy, who appeared terribly frightened, and only answered with unearthly sounds and ridiculous signs, his lordship said to the servant,—

"'You have made a mistake about this poor boy. He evidently cannot speak or hear a word we say, and is now too frightened to make himself understood by signs. I wish I could obtain further intelligence concerning him.'

"At that moment another cry of distress was heard, but this time it evidently proceeded from a girl's voice,

and the fact was further confirmed by another of the servants dragging out of the woods a female child about two years younger than the boy.

"'My lord,' said the servant, 'I've brought this child to see if you can understand her. I've asked her the way to your castle, and she says she does not know it, that possibly her father does, whose cottage is but a short distance from here in the centre of a clump of trees. She seems so frightened I brought her to you.'

"'My child,' said the lord, with much kindness in his tone, 'why do you refuse to tell my servant the way to your father's house?'

"'I was afraid,' said the girl, 'as I thought he might be a robber.'

"'Will you take me there?'

"'If you please, I can't find my way, I knew it from the spot where this man found me, but not from here. I don't know where I am, I'm blind.'

"'Do you know who this dumb boy is, my poor child?' said the lord.

"'I suppose he is my brother, and he can show you the way.'

"'Let us go then at once,' said the lord, and the other servants having by this time joined them, they all started

off, the little girl making a sign to her brother to lead them.

"After the party had continued their road for perhaps half-an-hour they reached the woodman's cottage, which was of a very humble, though cleanly appearance. The man himself had just arrived home, and his wife was preparing some supper for him. They seemed somewhat startled at the sight of so many guests; but my lord spoke kindly to them, and soon put them at their ease. He then offered to reward the man handsomely if he would conduct him to the castle. This the woodman readily consented to do, and they started off together, arriving at the castle shortly after sunset.

"The next day the lord made many inquiries respecting the woodman and his family, and found that he was a very honest, civil, and industrious man, but had been very unfortunate. His eldest son was born without the faculty of hearing, in fact he was stone deaf, and could not have heard a gun, if fired close beside him. This was a great misfortune; but a greater perhaps was to follow. A daughter was born to them, who, when a very beautiful child of two years of age, lost her eye-sight, and had since remained incurably blind. They had afterwards three other children, all well and healthy;

but the man's wife was very delicate, and the family so poor they could with difficulty obtain food and clothing. The lord, on hearing this description of the woodman, sent for him, and when he was admitted into his presence, said to him,

"'I have heard a very good report of you, and I much pity the condition of your two poor children. I have two friends—Enchanters—living near me in the City, of great power, and very benevolent. One of these can place eyes in the tips of the fingers of children who are blind, although he cannot put eyes into their heads. At the same time, by way of compensation, the eyes in their fingers can see as well in the night as in the day. The other, although he cannot restore the sense of hearing through the ears, can endow the eyes of your son with the faculty of hearing. At the same time, his power in this respect is somewhat circumscribed, possibly from his not being so great an Enchanter as the other, for those children he protects can only hear in the daylight. As darkness approaches they gradually lose the power of hearing, and when night has set in, it has gone entirely; but it is restored to them the next morning at the rising of the sun. Now if you will trust your children to me, I will place one in the care of each of these

Enchanters. I will also see that they are properly clothed and fed, and shall cost you nothing.'

"The woodman willingly accepted his lordship's offer, and the next morning the two children were placed under his care.

"The children were at first somewhat frightened, but all the slaves in the castle were so kind to them that their alarm soon wore off, and they both seemed quite happy. After a few days the lord determined to return to the City. He and the children were taken in a beautiful chariot to a certain house, where they remained for some little time, when there came up some carriages drawn by a fiery monster, controlled by a swarthy Enchanter. The confidence of the children was so great in their protector that they entered the carriage without fear, and in a few moments the monster started off, and rushing onwards with the rapidity of a flash of lightning, in a short time they had reached the City. The next morning his lordship placed one of the children with me. She is the girl you saw reading in the dark from our Koran, about the saint of Issa. The boy was placed with the other Enchanter, who has several children under his care, to whom he has given the faculty of hearing through their eyes.

"And now," continued the Enchanter, "if you would like to see the girl's brother, he will be here to-morrow at noon. Their mother is dangerously ill, and as she wishes to see her children before her death, I must send them home."

"'Do you not go with children so afflicted?' I inquired. 'It must be dangerous for them to go alone.'

"Not at all," replied the Enchanter. "They are both clever, and the boy is quite old enough to protect his sister. If even they arrive after dark at the place where they start off to walk to their father's cottage, and the boy's faculty of hearing ceases with the sun, he will still be able to conduct his sister. But come here to-morrow and you shall see the boy yourself, and you can converse with him. It will please me much, as you will then see I have told you nothing that is not strictly true.'

"I thanked the magican," Hassan continued "for his kindness, and promised next day I would be punctual. I then entered the carriage, and was driven back. His lordship did not return, however, till near midnight, but I waited up to receive him, in order that I might crave his pardon for the suspicion I had formed in the morning that he had been jesting with me, when he said that the magician had placed eyes in the tips of the children's

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fingers. After his arrival, and I had explained all to him, he said to me,—

"'Hassan, my friend, I readily forgive you the doubt you placed on my veracity. To-morrow I shall accompany you, for I want to see the poor boy who hears through his eyes; and yet I hardly know what good I can do by seeing him, for I have bad news for him, and as he is a very amiable boy, I fear he will be greatly distressed.'

"'Is his mother dead?' I inquired.

"'No; but she will probably shortly die, for there is but little hope of her. The worst of all is the condition of his wretched father, who has fallen into the power, and become the slave of an evil genie named Kordicus.'

"'Pardon me, my lord,' I said, 'though I've heard of many evil genii, I've never heard of one of that name before.'

"'Very possibly not," said his lordship. 'Nor is it much to be wondered at, for he has no power, in your country, and for that you ought to bless Allah with grateful hearts, for you know not the terrible wickedness of that genie, as shown especially in our own land.'

"You surprise me, my lord,' I said. 'In what way does he show his power?'

"'In numerous ways. Although at first the wretched

beings, who afterwards become his slaves, find him all that is amiable and kind, yet it is but a pretence to inflict on them, and their innocent families, terrible miseries. When once a man gets into this genie's power he cannot free himself, but drags on a miserable existence, obliged to sacrifice continually to his tyrant's honour. Sometimes he obliges his slaves to commit the most atrocious crimes. He often places a knife in the hands of a mother and orders her to kill her child, much as she loves it. She has no power to disobey him, for he even guides her hand as she strikes the blow. He sometimes forces a son to murder his mother, or a husband his wife, and all commit the deed against their wills. Sometimes he makes a mother take the shoes from her children's feet, and sell them that she may sacrifice to him. He sometimes makes a man to whom money has been entrusted, and whose integrity had before been irreproachable, to steal it that he may sacrifice to him. In fact, it is hardly possible to name a crime so wicked or unnatural that this demon does not oblige his servants to commit, and he then leaves them to die in misery, or as lunatics, without the pity being bestowed on them which the Prophet Mahomet has ordained should be shown to all distracted persons. Perhaps as good a plan as I

could adopt to make you understand the terrible power of this vile Enchanter would be to give you a description of the manner in which he ensnared the poor woodman, whose children I have placed under the care of the two good Enchanters.

"'One evening when returning from work, fatigued by the labours of the day, and oppressed by sorrow at the misery his wife and children were in, for the money he had received for his week's pay was hardly sufficient to purchase three days' nourishment, ill fortune induced him, without any apparent cause, to diverge, on his road home, from his ordinary path. In doing so he passed a showy, attractive dwelling, in which, at the time, resided the demon Kordicus. Now, one faculty this monster possesses is that of assuming any human form he pleases, and you may naturally suppose that when he wishes to obtain a slave he wears one which shall be most attractive to his victim in his then state of mind. It was so on the present occasion. The woodman was tired with his day's work, and was walking slowly, when Kordicus, seeing him approach, immediately assumed the form of a good-natured, jolly-looking man standing at the door of his house smoking a pipe.

"'You seem tired, my friend,' he said to the woodman.

"'I am,' was the reply. 'So tired that I can hardly drag one leg after the other.'

"'Come in here then and sit down,' said Kordicus. 'Rest yourself for a short time, and when you feel stronger you can continue your road. I shan't charge you anything for that, and even if you wish for something to eat and drink the money I shall demand won't be more than the bare value the things cost me. Now I can't say fairer than that, can I?'

"'No, master,' said the woodman; 'and I'm much obliged to you for the offer, and willingly accept it.' So saying, he threw down the bundles of wood, and seated himself on a bench by the house door, and leaning his elbow on his knee, and his head in the palm of his hand, he remained pensive and melancholy.

"Kordicus watched him attentively for a moment with a bitter satirical smile on his countenance, so bitter, in fact, that his jolly-looking features would hardly have been thought capable of assuming it. Then, suddenly changing his expression to their former good-natured cast, he said to the woodman, in a kind tone of voice :—

"'Come, come, my friend, you seem down-hearted to-night, cheer up. Never say die.'

"'It's hard to be cheerful,' said the man without

looking up, 'when I'm so tired I can hardly move, with a sick wife at home, and my children nearly starving, and not sufficient in my pocket to find them nourishment.'

"The features of Kordicus underwent another change, and this time with nothing satirical in them. It was first a look of triumph, then, as he glanced at his victim, one of contempt. The next moment he assumed the same good-natured expression that his features had worn when the woodman first saw him.

"'Come, come, my good fellow, once more, don't be down-hearted,' said Kordicus. 'Let's see if I can't cheer you up. I'll give you something to drink that shall warm the cockles of your heart and make you go home like a hero; and what's more, I won't charge you anything for it. Only understand me, if you want another glass you must pay for it.'

"'God bless you for your kindness,' said the man; and Kordicus left the door to fetch the drink.

"What is the meaning of the word God?" said Mustapha interrupting Hassan.

"It is the same as Allah with us," said Hassan. "But don't interrupt me again, or you'll break the thread of my narrative.

"Well," Hassan continued, "Kordicus brought the man a beautiful amber-looking fluid in a crystal cup, and said to him :—

"'Drink that, my friend. Swallow it all off, and then tell me how you feel afterwards.'

"Slowly taking the crystal cup from Kordicus, the woodman drank off the fluid it contained, and then returned the cup to the demon. It would be difficult for me to narrate how astonishing was the change which came over the woodman's features in so short a time. Before drinking from the crystal cup, his features were downcast and sad in the extreme. After he had drank they were radiant and beaming as if he were now thoroughly happy. Kordicus noticed the change.

"'Ah! ah! my good fellow,' he said to the woodman, wearing at the time a jovial expression on his countenance, 'what did I tell you would be the effect of the draught I gave you? Talk of the water that Allah has given for his slaves to drink—why if you'd drank all the water in the deep well at the back of my house, it would not have done you as much good as what you have now swallowed."

"And here was noticeable a singular effect of the fluid the man had swallowed. Had it been water he would

have indignantly answered the insult offered to Allah's name, but now he let it pass unobserved.

"'Well,' continued Kordicus, 'do you feel strong enough to go on your road now?'

"'Yes,' said the woodman laughing, 'or at any rate I should be if I had another draught from the crystal mug.'

"'No doubt you would,' said Kordicus. 'I cannot, however, fill it again without being paid for it. Were I to adopt that plan, I should soon be without any of it left in my cellars.'

"'Come,' said the woodman, 'you have been kind and liberal to me, and I'm grateful for it. I'll do you a favour in return, for of course you make a profit by what you sell.'

"'I admit it,' said Kordicus, 'and am not the less an honest man for that.'

"'What would you charge me for the same quantity again?'

"'Two copper coins,' said the demon, 'and it's cheap at the money.'

"'Now the woodman had twenty-four of these copper coins in his pocket, and he argued with himself that two less would not make much difference. Nay, more, he should make a profit by his bargain. If the fluid was worth two coins, and he had had one cupful for nothing, it would

only be one coin for each, and consequently he should be a gainer, to say nothing of the strength he derived from it.

"'It's a bargain,' said the woodman, placing the coin in the outstretched hands of Kordicus, who now retired for a moment, but soon returned with the fluid.

"The woodman drank it off and felt still happier than before, and when he had finished he went on his way home. His poor wife and children had been anxiously expecting him, and could not imagine what had delayed him. She asked what money he had brought home with him, and he told her eighteen coins. The fact was his remembrance of the pleasant interview he had had with Kordicus was such, that he determined to call on him again the next evening, and so he kept back four of the coins without telling his wife what he had done. The poor woman seemed much disappointed at the small sum her husband had brought home, but not wishing to weary him, she merely sighed and said nothing.

"The next evening the woodman again passed by the house where Kordicus resided, and found him as before standing at the door.

"'I thought I should see you again,' he said, with a jovial expression on his countenance. 'Come in, I'm going to

do with you what I never did with any customer before. You shall have another glass for nothing, and the next you'll pay for as you did last night."

"The woodman thanked him, and drank off the contents of the cup. Then by way of showing his gratitude to Kordicus he expended the whole four coins on more drink before he left the house.

"On his return home that evening, the woodman's wife inquired the reason of his being so late, and unlike his usual manner he answered abruptly and crossly, and told her it did not concern her; he was tired.

"'But where have you been working to-day?' she asked.

"'That's my affair,' he replied. 'Don't ask questions. I've got a headache, and don't want to be teased.'

"Finding him in this temper, she said no more, but from time to time glanced anxiously at him as if she suspected there was something he had not told her.

"The next day the woodman called again at the dwelling of Kordicus, whom, as usual, he found standing at the door.

"'Good evening,' he said, 'glad to see you again; I hope you'll pay me a visit in this manner every evening.'

"'But I'm not going to stop to-night,' said the wood-

man, 'glad to see you all the same,' continued he, imitating Kordicus in a clumsy off-hand manner.

"'What's put you in such an unsociable humour?' said Kordicus.

"'Well, I'd have liked a chat with you, and a glass too, but the fact is, I've got no money.'

"'Oh! don't let that annoy you,' said Kordicus. 'I can't afford to give you any more without payment, but rather than such a good fellow as you are should go on his way thirsty you shall have a draught and pay for it to-morrow night.'

"The woodman willingly accepted the offer, which, to say the truth, he had anticipated. After drinking the contents of the crystal cup he conversed with Kordicus for a little time, who was so amiable that evening that the woodman ventured to hint two or three times at the distressed state of his wife and children. Kordicus, however, avoided the subject with singular dexterity, and on being pressed, at last said, somewhat abruptly, that he wasn't bothered himself with a wife and children, and didn't see the use of them, nor did he want to hear anything about them. The woodman, fearing he might have offended Kordicus, changed the conversation, and by way of pleasing him, asked to have another draught of

the same beverage he had had before, and said he would pay for it the next evening without fail. Kordicus immediately smoothed his brow, and brought him the liquor, which he drank off, and after a little more conversation the woodman went home to his family.

"The next morning, on going to his work, he began to reflect on what had taken place the previous evening. He remembered vividly having promised to pay without fail the debt he had incurred, and how to obtain the money that day was a problem too difficult for him to solve. He was naturally exceedingly honest, and did not like breaking his word—still he knew no one who would lend him the money. At length the idea crossed his mind that as he had not got it himself the more honourable way would be to tell the truth to Kordicus, and ask him to give him credit till his wages came due the next week. Although somewhat doubtful as to the reply he should receive he determined to carry out his resolution, and on going home again found Kordicus standing at his door.

"'Well, my dear fellow,' he called out to him, as soon as he was within earshot, 'you can't think how pleased I am to see you. You're an honest fellow, and one after my own heart. I've often tried the experiment before of

allowing men who were strangers to me to drink on their pledge of payment next day, but not one in ten ever kept his word. Come along, sit down, and make yourself comfortable.'

"'I'm sorry to say,' said the woodman, 'that I also am unable to keep my promise this evening, and with shame I ask you to allow my debt to stand over till I receive my wages next week. If you will, it would do me a great favour.'

"'Do you a great favour, my dear fellow,' said Kordicus, slapping him on the back. 'Nothing would give me greater pleasure—I'm almost grateful to you for not having paid me the money, as now I have an opportunity of proving to you the faith I have in your honour and integrity. Not only,' he continued, 'will I give you credit till you receive your wages, but I will also let you have as much more to drink as you like on the same security. Now don't hesitate. If you'd like a glass say so, and I'll fetch it.'

"'Well, really,' said the woodman—his pleasure at the kindness of Kordicus drowning his sense of the debt he was incurring, 'that's very kind of you, and I'll accept a glass with pleasure.'

"The glass was brought and drank, and another

followed, and by way of showing the great faith Kordicus had in him, he said he would let him have a third if he liked, which the man drank and then went home to his wife and family.

"The poor woman saw by the bleared eyes and flushed face of her husband that there was something wrong with him, but he appeared so angry she was afraid to question him on the subject, and many were the tears she shed after he was asleep.

"The next day the woodman passed the house of Kordicus again, and so on till the week expired, and he then owed him more than double the amount he was to receive. After his wages had been paid him he reflected for some time what steps to take, whether to pay Kordicus a portion of the debt and ask him to give him time for the remainder, or whether he would avoid his house until he had arranged in what manner to get out of his difficulty. He adopted the latter course, and took that evening a different path home, congratulating himself on the plan he had decided on. His satisfaction, however, was soon put a stop to, for when a short distance from his home he saw standing before him in his path the figure of a man, and approaching nearer he discovered him to be Kordicus himself. But oh! how different

was his appearance that evening to the jolly-looking figure he presented when standing at the door of his house smoking his pipe. There was something so stern and despotic in the expression of his face that the poor woodman fairly trembled.

"'You've forgotten your promise to me,' he said, in a voice which rang in the man's ears like thunder; 'what's the reason you've not called at my house to pay me the money you owe me?'

"'I'm very sorry,' said the woodman stammering, 'but I really forgot it.'

"'Don't tell me a lie,' said Kordicus, 'you evaded my house purposely.'

"'I'll tell you then candidly the truth,' said the poor woodman, 'my earnings for the week were not half sufficient to pay my debt, and if even I'd paid as much as I had, my wife and family would have been starving.

"'What's your wife and family to me?' said Kordicus. 'I owe them no favour. I dare say you'd tell me your wife's an honest, hardworking woman, and think by that you'd claim my pity. So far to the contrary, there's nothing on earth I detest so much as an honest and industrious woman, and if possible more so when she has a family.'

"'I'll pay you a little on account if you'll let me,' said

the woodman trembling, 'and as much next week as I can afford.'

"'Now that's speaking in a sensible manner,' said Kordicus, assuming his jovial tone. 'I'm not one to be hard on a man at any time, as long as he behaves honestly by me. Pay me something now, and the rest next week, or as soon as convenient. Only,' he continued, frowning as he spoke, 'don't let me find you trying to avoid me again. I've conceived a friendship for you, and nothing annoys or irritates me more than to be deceived in a man in whom I've placed confidence. Pay me something now, and let the rest stay on.'

"The woodman thanked him, and placed in his hands a third of his earnings, promising to pay the remainder as soon as possible, when bidding him good-night, he continued his road home.

"On meeting his wife the poor man, although he felt sorrowful in heart, was obliged to try and feign a stern expression to escape from the reproaches he felt were his due. She endeavoured to prove to him that the money he had given her was insufficient for the expenses of the week, and he harshly told her that if she wanted more she must work for it. She pleaded that, with her ill health, she could not do so; whereupon he, with a

guilty conscience left the house, and waited till he thought they were all in bed before he returned home. He then laid himself down on the floor, and endeavoured, though without much success, to drown his thoughts in sleep.

"The next week passed off, and the woodman, fearing to offend Kordicus, called every evening at his house. He received him with great hospitality, insisted on his drinking, and to encourage him to do so, drank with him, and by the time pay-day came round the poor man found his debt had so much increased from the quantity he had taken, that he was fairly puzzled what to do, and coward-like, determined to return home by another path and again avoid Kordicus. But in the same spot as before, and barring his road home, there stood the demon, with a stern and despotic expression on his countenance.

"'Miserable slave,' he said to the woodman, 'so you've tried to avoid my house again after all the kindness I've shown you.'

"'My master, what was I to do? Pay you I can't, and I dreaded to meet you.'

"'Dreaded to meet me!' exclaimed Kordicus, with so much sternness in his tone, that it completely petrified the woodman. 'Dreaded to meet me, slave! Do I appear more terrible when in my house than I do here?'

"The woodman attempted to mutter some excuse, but Kordicus again interrupted him.

"'I'll hear no explanation of your conduct here—my money I'll have.'

"'But in what manner can I obtain it?' said the woodman. 'I work from early morning till late night, and it will take me many weeks' labour to pay off the debt I owe you.'

"'If you can't obtain the money honestly, then you must do it dishonestly, for I will have it. But first give me half you've got about you, and the rest you may take home.'

"The woodman placed the money in the hand of Kordicus, and then humbly implored him not to insist on his committing any dishonest action. The monster, however, would take no excuse, but insisted that the next evening the woodman should call at his house, and pay the remainder of the debt, which he must obtain by any means he could.

"Wretched indeed was the poor woodman when he arose the next morning. He felt himself in the hands of a despotic monster, from whose power he found it impossible to escape. He worked on during the whole of the day, not knowing what steps to take, not wishing

to commit a dishonest action, and yet dreading to disobey the order of Kordicus, to call at his house with the money on his way home. At last he determined to ask him to forgive him the debt, and started off on the way to his house. Presently he saw a knight on horseback crossing his path, and as he did so, something fell to the ground. The woodman was on the point of calling to the knight to stop, but he did not put his thought into practice; and, on arriving at the spot, he found there a purse, with money in it. Trying to turn a deaf ear to the voice of conscience, that told him the money was not his, he advanced towards the house of Kordicus to pay the debt he owed him. The demon was standing as usual at his door, but with a countenance very different from the day before.

"'Welcome, my dear friend,' he said to the woodman. 'How pleased I am to see you! Come in, and let's have a glass together. I'll stand treat to-night.'

"The woodman entered the house, the fluid was brought, and after each had drank to the other, the woodman pulled out his purse and said to Kordicus,—

"'Now let me pay you the money I owe you.'

"'Why,' said Kordicus seeing the gold in the purse, 'how rich you are! I congratulate you, for you must

have found a treasure. Now what will you do with what's left when you've paid me? I'm sure you'll spend or lose it, or make away with it in some way or other. Take a couple of gold pieces home with you, and leave the rest with me. I'll take care of it for you, and you can have it as you want it. I shall be sure then of seeing you very often, for I love you as I would my own brother.'

"The woodman was so puzzled at the behaviour of Kordicus that he began to doubt whether the interview of the evening before might not have been a dream. Kordicus now brought another glass, and when the man had swallowed its contents he began to feel almost certain it had been a dream, and after taking a third he was convinced of it. He now left his money with Kordicus, with the exception of two gold pieces which he kept, and proceeded homewards. But somehow his path seemed uncertain, the trees moved around him, and he felt dizzy. He thought it was raining hard, but was not certain, and then sinking down on the grass he remembered nothing more till the next morning, when he found he had been lying in a pool of water, and his pillow a tuft of dank grass. He now went home and shortly afterwards felt very ill, and had to remain indoors for some days. He then began to get better, and fear-

ing that Kordicus might think he had deserted him, he called at his house the same evening. Kordicus received him in a most friendly manner, and they sat chatting and drinking together till it was time for the woodman to leave, but as before, he did not arrive home till the next morning. This went on night after night to the terrible grief of his wife. At last he was seized with a serious fit of illness, and thought rats were running over him, and he talked wildly, saying that he saw Kordicus like a demon laughing at him. In the end he got better and went out, and determined not to go near the dwelling of Kordicus; but he found it impossible to avoid it—an attraction too powerful to withstand drew him to it. But now the demon had changed towards him. He allowed him to go to his house and drink when he pleased, the gold remaining being enough to cover his debts; but he treated the woodman in an insolent manner, and ordered him to obey him as if he had been a slave. This continued till all the money was expended, and then the woodman did not go near the house for some days. One evening, when returning home, Kordicus met him at the usual spot, his countenance wearing its natural revolting appearance.

"'Miserable wretch,' he said, 'why have you avoided

me? I will now punish you terribly for your behaviour. The chastisement I shall inflict will be to make you kill your wife whom you love so dearly,' and having uttered these words the fiend vanished.

"The mind of the poor woodman," concluded his lordship, "was haunted by the threat of Kordicus, and the idea of killing his wife appeared so terrible to him that he wandered about for nearly a week, night and day. As time wore on, however, he felt an irresistible attraction to return home and obey the fiend's command. At last he could strive against it no longer, and one night he went home, and taking up a hatchet, struck the poor woman a fearful blow on the shoulder, from which there appear, no probability of her recovery."

"And now," continued Hassan, addressing his audience, "my narrative for this evening is concluded. I had wished to tell you something about the marvellous adventures of the boy who heard through his eyes, and of his sister, which in point of interest and wonder far exceed what I have related to you this evening. I will, however, put this off till we meet to-morrow, and the blessing of the Prophet be on you all."

III.

KORDICUS AND THE WOODMAN.

THE next evening Hassan was true to his appointment; and when he had arrived, he found his audience ready to receive him, Mustapha being in his usual place at the door. Having taken his position near the entrance, Hassan thus commenced,—

"When I left off yesterday evening, you remember that the lord my master had just concluded his narrative about the terrible wickedness of the infamous Kordicus, who, of all the evil genii that infest England, is indisputably the worst. May we never know him in Persia! Though if he did come to this country, the laws of the Prophet Mahomet would be too strong for him.

"For some time after his lordship had concluded I remained silent, struck with dread at the horrible mis-

doings of the monster, and hoping that neither I nor any one dear to me would become his victim. After giving me some little time for reflection, his lordship said,—

"'To-morrow I will go with you to the house of the enchanter in whose care I have placed the blind girl, and shall give to the boy a purse of gold to take to his mother. The girl, who is useful, intelligent, and affectionate, shall go as well, that she may nurse her mother; and let us hope that after all she may recover from her terrible wound. So, Hassan, be ready at noon to-morrow, and then you will see the lad himself, whom my friend the enchanter has endowed with the power of hearing through his eyes.'

"The next day I was ready at the appointed time, and accompanied his lordship to the dwelling of the magician I had seen the day before. He was waiting to receive us, and the poor girl, ready dressed for her journey, was with him, with a little bag containing her clothes by her side. In a short time the other magician arrived, accompanied by a strong, active-looking lad, perhaps about fifteen or sixteen years of age. In appearance there was nothing to distinguish him from other boys. He looked round the room, and having saluted us, waited to be ad-

dressed, glancing at our faces in turn to see who was to begin.

"'Are you quite prepared for your journey?' said his lordship, slowly and distinctly to the boy, looking straight into his eyes as he spoke.

"The boy answered, possibly even more distinctly, but in a somewhat singular manner, each syllable being separated—

"'I—am—re-ady—to—go—when—your—lord-ship—pleases.'

"'Now, Hassan,' said his lordship, addressing me, 'this is the lad of whom I spoke to you, and this is my friend the enchanter. The boy's ears are so deaf he could hear nothing, scream as loud as you might—not even a clap of thunder. He is only capable of hearing through his eyes, and that only, as I before stated, in the daytime.'

"'But why not at night, my lord?' I asked. 'If the enchanter is able to give him the power of hearing, why does he not give it at night as well as in the day?'

"'I cannot do more than God allows me,' said the enchanter. 'He alone can make the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the blind to see in their natural manner.'

"'Would you like to address any question to him yourself?' said the enchanter. 'You must look in his face when you do so, and speak slowly and distinctly.'

"'I am an Egyptian,' I said to the boy; 'did you ever hear of my country?'

"'Yes,' he replied. 'It—was—the—land—of—Jo-seph—and—Pha-raoh.'

"The boy answered so readily, that I said to the enchanter,—

"Are you not joking with your slave? He hears as well as I do.'

"'In some respects better,' said the enchanter, laughing, 'but, at the same time, only through his eyes. Although God has restricted the power of hearing to the daytime, he has enabled me to make it so acute—in conversation, at least, for he can hear nothing else—that words uttered in such low tones as even to be inaudible to others present he hears perfectly well. I will give you an example.'

"The enchanter now turned to the lad, and merely moving his lips three or four times, without a sound escaping them, that I could hear, at least, the boy replied,—

"Ve-ry—much—in-deed.'

"'Now, you see,' said the enchanter, 'I did not deceive you. But as you wear a look of doubt on your countenance, try him yourself.'

"I then looked at the boy for a moment, thinking a sentence to myself, but he returned no answer.

"'How does he know you are speaking to him,' said the enchanter, 'if you do not move your lips? Address any sentence you please to him, without actually emitting the sounds, and he will answer you.'

"I now moved my lips as if saying, 'In what country is Bagdad?'

"'In—Per-sia,' was the reply.

"I had now no right to doubt the enchanter, and I stood by astounded at the wonders I had seen.

"The lord now said to the boy, in a slow emphatic manner,—

"'Tell your mother how grieved I am to hear of her sad condition. And you, my poor boy, make up your mind for the worst; for your father, having become the slave of the demon Kordicus, has, by his instigation, ill-treated her so dreadfully, that it is hardly possible she will survive the attack. Do everything you can for her; and should it be necessary to protect her from your father, do so as well as you can without lifting your hand

against him. Here is a purse with twelve gold pieces in it: expend it judiciously, and I will furnish you with more when you require it. And you, my girl,' he continued, turning to the boy's sister, 'I am sure will do all you can for your poor mother, and assist the little children to the best of your power. I shall expect one of you to write to me, and inform me how you get on.'

"Isaac, the lad, promised he would do so; and shortly afterwards the enchanter whose acquaintance I had made the evening before, accompanied by the boy and girl, started off together to meet the fire-chariot, which was to convey them to within a few miles of their home. It was the first journey the children had ever taken without being accompanied by some protector, and they were naturally a little anxious, though hardly afraid, as everybody, since they had left their father's cottage, had treated them with so much kindness, they scarcely knew what fear was, or that any one could harm them. Their fellow-travellers —and they were many—showed them the greatest kindness when they found how much they were afflicted, and they all wondered greatly, and praised the skill of the enchanters who had done so much to restore to them those powers of which they were by nature deprived.

"It was somewhat late in the afternoon when they

arrived at the place where they were to leave the carriage. It being now some years since they had left their father's house, they had forgotten the road, which, by the way, they were even then imperfectly acquainted with. All they knew was, that they should have a good two hours' walk before they reached home. After having proceeded for about half an hour, they came to a spot where two roads branched off in different directions, and Isaac was fairly puzzled which to take. Presently he saw a countryman advancing, and of him he inquired the way, but in doing so he made use of the same slow, distinct manner of speaking he had been taught by the enchanter.

"'Why don't you speak faster?' said the man angrily. 'Do you mean to make fun of me by speaking in that manner?'

"'No—I—do—not,' replied Isaac.

"'Then speak faster, as other boys do,' said the man.

"'I—can-not. I—have—al-ways—been—taught—to—speak—in—this—man-ner.'

"'Well, then, find some one to answer you who speaks so too,' said the man, turning angrily away from him.

"After having gone a few paces, however, the man

turned round, and, with a broad grin on his countenance, pointed to the road he had not taken himself.

"'That's your way,' he said. 'Keep straight on, and you'll get home in time;' and then, grinning even more than before, he continued his way and left them.

"Now had Isaac been accustomed to the ways of the outer world, and not always dwelt among those who treated him kindly, he would have suspected, from the man's behaviour, that a trick had been played on him; but being incapable of deceit himself, and indeed hardly knowing the meaning of the term, he took all that the fellow said in good faith, and he trudged on with his sister for more than half an hour. He now began to look anxiously about for some landmark which he could remember; but as he found none, he became sorely puzzled what to do. At last he met a woman, and inquired of her the way.

"'Why, my dear creature,' she replied, 'you're coming quite out of your way. Who ever could have told you to take this road? You'd better now go across the country, for to go back again would be too far round, and even now you'll have great difficulty in reaching home before dark. Do you see that tall tree on the top of the hill?' she continued. 'First go there, and then

at some distance before you, you'll see the clump of trees in which your mother's cottage is situated, for I know it very well.'

"They both thanked the woman and proceeded on their way as she had directed. Without much difficulty they reached the tree, and Isaac, to his great joy, now remembered the locality so well that he could easily reach his father's cottage. Onwards they went, but poor Rachel began to be exceedingly tired and could hardly proceed, but felt as if she would drop. Still she did not like to complain, for fear of alarming her brother, and they continued on their way, while darkness began to close around them. At last Rachel's fatigue became so great that she was unable to proceed further, and sank exhausted and fainting on the ground. Isaac inquired whether she felt ill, or had hurt herself, not having noticed her tired look. She told him in reply she felt so exceedingly exhausted that, unless she could rest for a short time, she would be unable to go on. But the sun had set, and, all being dark, poor Isaac's power of hearing through his eyes was gone. He now became terribly alarmed, and looked around for help. He even attempted to call aloud, but in his fright his words became inarticulate, and he obtained nc response. In this

state of bewilderment he remained for some time, till at last Rachel, rising from the ground, made some sign to him that she felt sufficiently recovered to go on her way.

"It was about midnight when the woodman's wife heard some one knocking at the door; then waking one of the younger children, she told her to go and see who was there. The child opened the door, and the brother and sister entered the cottage. Their mother had expected them earlier in the day, but had given up all idea of seeing them that evening. The poor woman was so overjoyed, that at the moment a flush of excitement spread over her face, which was not natural to it in her present state of health. This was, of course, only perceptible to Isaac, and that very indistinctly, as the only light in the cottage arose from a few red embers of wood on the hearth, and these soon faded away. Perceiving both her children were tired and exhausted, their mother begged them to take some rest, and promised she would relate in the morning all that had taken place; so after partaking of some bread and water for their supper, they followed her advice, and were soon asleep.

"The next day the mother told her children all that had occurred with respect to their father and herself; how he had unwarily become the slave of the demon

Kordicus, who had instigated him to kill her. That he had attempted to do so, and very nearly succeeded; but by the skill of a celebrated doctor, or hakim, she was fast recovering from the effects of the wound she had received, and hoped, by the blessing of Allah, to get quite well. Isaac, whose hearing had now returned to him with the sunlight, asked his mother where his father was at that moment.

"'I believe he's now on his road home,' she replied. 'He was seized as a prisoner a short time after he attempted to kill me, but he was to be released early this morning.'"

Here Hassan was interrupted in his narrative by one of his hearers, Achmet, a cavass or officer of the head cadi of Bagdad.

"You don't mean to tell us, O Hassan," he said, "that in England they only punish a man who attempts to murder his wife with a few days' imprisonment? If that be the case, it's lucky for him he's not in Persia."

"The English laws are generally merciful, O Achmet, to all those who attempt to murder their wives, when instigated to the act by the demon Kordicus. It is true, as a rule, they have more than a week's imprisonment;

but in this case the woodman was liberated because his wife would not give evidence against him, and no one else saw him strike the blow, the younger children being from home at the moment; and as there were no witnesses, he was liberated."

"'Twas well indeed for him, then," said Achmet, "that he wasn't in Bagdad, or the cadi, my master, would have had him bastinadoed on the soles of his feet to such an extent that he would have been fain to crawl on his hands and knees for a fortnight after."

A murmur of approbation arose among the audience at Achmet's observation, and when it had subsided Hassan continued his narrative.

"Isaac made no remark on hearing his mother's description of his father's behaviour. His mother perceived, however, that there was a strong expression of anger on his countenance, and she said to him—

"'My dear boy, I must implore you, as a great favour to me, that when your father enters you will receive him affectionately, for he is very penitent; and we must do all we can to prevent him from again falling into the power of the demon Kordicus, although I believe,

from the lesson he has received, there is but little danger of his doing so.'

"The woodman shortly afterwards entered the house, and was received in a most affectionate manner by his family. The poor fellow seemed really touched by the reception they gave him, and he sobbed bitterly. As soon as his sorrow had sufficiently abated, he begged his wife's pardon for his behaviour, and promised in future that, cost what it might, he would refuse any longer to submit to the demon Kordicus.

"They now sat down to a very poor breakfast · indeed, there was no difficulty in judging, from the countenances of the mother and younger children, that they were nearly famished. Shocked at the sight of the misery of his family, the woodman, as soon as the meal was over, took up his axe, and left the cottage, resolved to exert himself, and bring home with him that evening some food for his family. He now went to a part of the forest where he had been employed before he made the terrible attack on his wife, and worked industriously during the whole of the day. The overseer of his lordship saw him when he was about to leave off work for the day, and not only complimented him on his industry, but thinking perhaps he might be in difficulties,

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gave him a few coins for the work he had done. The woodman thanked him, and, with a grateful heart, put the money into his pocket and turned homewards. Before he had reached his cottage he began to think of the plausible manner of the demon Kordicus when first he wished to make an individual his slave, and how different the monster behaved when once he had succeeded. The thought had hardly crossed his mind when he saw, standing in the path before him, the demon himself, wearing his most jolly, good-natured expression of countenance.

"'Well, my dear friend, I'm delighted to see you,' he said.

"'But I don't wish to see you,' said the woodman, 'I refuse to be any longer your subject, and the dearest wish of my life is that I may never see you again.'

"'That's next to impossible, my dear friend,' said Kordicus. 'You're talking perfect nonsense. Know this, that when once a man has engaged himself to me in the absolute manner you did, whenever he thinks of me I can appear to him if I like. You thought of me only a moment since, and I am here. The only place you are safe from me, except you are at prayers, is when you are in prison.'

"'Appear, then, as often as you like,' said the man; 'I never will be your slave again.'

"'Come now, be reasonable,' said Kordicus, 'and don't talk in that manner to one who loves you. You know nothing would give you greater pleasure at this moment than to have a draught from my crystal cup.'

"'It's false,' said the woodman. 'I'll have nothing further to say to you. You plunder me of all my earnings, and leave my wife and family to starve. No, I'll have nothing further to say to you.'

"'Well, my dear fellow, I don't want you to spend your money if you don't like it. But, you know, if you've no money of your own, you may find some, as you did last time, and if you do, I hope you'll come and see me again. Remember this, if I do not appear to you at other times, I will when you think favourably of me, and that I'm sure you'll do before long. And mind, I hold my right of appearing to you every time you think of me; but not to annoy you, I'll promise not to appear unless you are in a better temper than you are at present.' So saying, the demon vanished.

"During the woodman's absence, the time passed happily indeed in the cottage. The mother and her two afflicted children conversed freely over the circumstances

which had occurred since last they met, and the younger children listened attentively, and from time to time joined in the conversation. They were particularly struck with the wonderful gifts which had been bestowed on Rachel and Isaac, and were highly delighted when the latter answered in his curious manner the questions put to him, and Rachel showed, by threading a needle, how wonderfully perfect was the eye placed in the tip of her finger. At length the subject of their present distress was brought forward by their mother. She related to Isaac and Rachel the great privations they had endured since the imprisonment of their father, and how the doctor had stated that unless she could procure better food it would be a long time before she recovered from the terrible wound she had received.

"'I—am—hap-py—to—tell—you,—my—dear—mother,' said Isaac, 'that—things—have—now—ta-ken—a—bet-ter—turn,—and—that—for—a—long—time—to come—you—and—my—fa-ther—and—the—chil-dren—will—have—am-ple—food—and—rai-ment—and—that with-out—a-ny—ex-tra—ex-er-tion—on—my—fa-ther's—part—or—an-xi-e-ty—on—yours.'

"'How so?' inquired his mother.

"'Be-cause—the—great—lord—who—has—been—so

kind—to—us—since—we—left—home—gave—us—a—purse—of—gold—to—bring—to—you,—so—you—need—lack—no-thing—dur-ing—your—ill-ness—as—you—may—judge—when—I—tell—you—there—are—twelve pieces—in—it.' So saying, Isaac opened the bag, and taking the purse from it, poured out the shining coins on the table.

"The astonishment of the poor mother at the sight of so much gold may easily be conceived. At first she seemed quite puzzled, as if she could hardly believe her eyesight; but presently she realised the truth, and so great was her excitement that, from pure joy, she laughed and cried at the same time. They now began to converse on what was to be done with the gold.

"'I—think—my—de-ar—mo-ther,' said Isaac, 'that—first—we—ought—to—buy—some—food,—and—what-e-ver—o-ther—little—things—are—want-ing,—and—then we—can—talk—more—a-bout—it—afterwards.'

"His mother agreed with him, and Saba, the younger daughter, a pretty, intelligent child of eight years of age, was deputed to make the purchases. Her mother told her to buy some bread, and meat, and eggs, to take a basket to put them in, and a pitcher for some milk.

"'But,—mo-ther,' said Isaac, 'I—want—some-thing—more—to—be—put—in—the bas-ket.'

"'What is that, my dear?'

"'A—fine—fat—fowl—which—I—want—to—be—roast-ed—for—father's—sup-per—when—he—re-turns—home.'

"'But, my dear,' said his mother, 'is not that very extravagant? Why, your poor father will think we've all gone mad when he sees it.'

"'No—mat-ter,—mo-ther,—I—want—the—fowl,' said Isaac, 'and—it—must—be—nice-ly—stuff-ed—and—roast-ed—and—rea-dy—for—him—by—the—time—he—ar-rives—at—home. It—will—be—no—ex-tra-va-gance,—for—you—will—find—in—our—Bible—[the Eng-lish Ko-ran]—that—a—cer-tain—man—had—a—pro-di-gal—son—who—left—him,—but—when—he—re-turn-ed—home—pe-ni-tent—his—fa-ther—kill-ed—a—fat-ted—calf—to—re-ceive—him,—and—sure-ly,—mo-ther,—with—this—mo-ney—we—can-not—do—wrong—in—roast-ing—a—fine—fowl—for—my—fa-ther.'

"The mother admitted the justice of his argument, and Saba, with the basket and pitcher, and taking with her one of the gold pieces, left the cottage to make the purchases.

"After she had gone the others conversed on the way in which the remaining gold pieces should be expended, what should be kept for food and clothing, and what for other necessary expenses to make the cottage more comfortable.

"I must now return," continued Hassan, "to the woodman. After Kordicus had vanished, he went on his way homewards. As soon, however, as the first burst of anger against that evil genie had somewhat subsided, he began to feel greatly fatigued, and then the thought occurred to him how little money he had with him to buy food for his starving family. The remark of Kordicus that he hoped he would find another purse of gold, then came before him, and he began to think of the bad use he had made of the former gold he had found, and which, after all, was not strictly his own. In fact, the money had melted under the influence of the fiend as snow melts in the sun. And then he thought, for a moment, of the crystal glass, and the amber fluid it contained, which, after he had drunk it, had at first so cheering an effect on him. The idea had hardly been formed, when he saw standing a few paces before him the demon Kordicus, wearing his good-natured expression of countenance. Indignant at his presence, the

woodman rushed towards him, but before he could reach him the demon had vanished with the rapidity of a flash of lightning.

"The woodman, now fairly enraged at the manner his movements were watched by the monster, and his anger deadening the sensation of fatigue, he trudged steadily onwards till he reached his cottage. On opening the door he saw before him a sight which struck him with wonder. On the table, which he had expected to find bare, or at best with a small piece of bread on it, there was a fine fat roast fowl, nearly as big as a turkey, some mutton in pillau, with vegetables, some fine white bread and other delicacies, the whole lighted up by a couple of brilliant candles. The scene appeared like a dream to the poor man, and he asked his wife whether any enchanter had visited them since he left home in the morning.

"'No, my dear,' said his wife; 'no stranger has set foot in the cottage.'

"'How came you possessed of all this food, then?' he inquired. 'I hope you haven't incurred any debt?'

"'Not to the thousandth part of a penny,' said his wife.

"'Come, father,' said Saba, taking him by the hand and

leading him to the table, 'do you see that plate turned up the wrong way? I want you to guess what's under it.'

"'Needles?' said her father.

"'No.'

"'Scissors?'

"'No.'

"'Thread?'

"'No.'

"'Knives?'

"'No.'

"'Well, then, I'll give it up, for I can't guess anything else.'

"Saba then lifted up the plate, and showed beneath it eleven pieces of gold, and several silver coins which she had received in change when making the purchases in the morning.

"For a moment the woodman was breathless with surprise, and then recovering himself, inquired anxiously,—

"'How came you possessed of all that gold?'

"'It is a present the great lord sent my mother,' said Rachel.

"'The blessing of God be on him then,' said the

woodman. 'He deserves it for the charity he has always shown to so distressed a family as ours.'

"They now sat down to the table, feasting their bodies with the food, and their eyes (especially the woodman) with the gold. Conversation went on merrily, and a happier family than they were that evening it would be difficult to find. At last the woodman asked Rachel whether it was true she could see with the eye in her finger in the night as well as the day.

"'Quite, father,' she replied.

"'Then I will try you,' he said.

"He now told them to cover the candles over with a large basket, so that the room became quite dark, and Rachel was requested to separate the silver from the gold. This she did without any difficulty, and the basket being removed from the candles, the woodman put the silver again with the gold, complimenting Rachel the while on her dexterity. But while touching the gold the remark of Kordicus returned to him, that he hoped he would find another treasure, and, on raising his eyes, he saw standing in the obscurity of a corner of the room the demon watching him attentively, with considerable archness mixed with the good-humoured expression of his countenance. The demon was no doubt invisible to

the others, and the woodman, at the sight of his tormentor, rose from his seat, and advanced towards the corner of the room; but before he had reached it, Kordicus had again vanished. His family inquired what ailed him, but he merely answered abruptly that nothing was the matter with him, and then took his seat at the table. No sooner, however, did his eye again fall on the gold than the same idea came before him, when he became so annoyed with himself that he requested Rachel to put it in a purse, and place it in the custody of her mother, so that it might not be lost. Rachel obeyed, and the rest of the evening passed off in great happiness.

"Although he had now abundant money at his command, the woodman was determined to keep steadily at his work, and did so for several days. One evening, however, when he was walking home greatly fatigued with the labours of the day, he saw before him, seated on a log of wood, a good-natured looking man of the working class and evidently a stranger in that part of the country. At the time the woodman perceived him he was eating some bread and meat, and apparently highly enjoying his supper. He then placed the knife on his knee, and, taking up a bottle which stood beside him on the ground, nodded to the woodman, and, after the

custom of the country, wished him good health, and took a hearty draught. He then placed the bottle on the ground beside him again, and entering into conversation with the woodman, they talked together for some time in a jolly good-humoured strain. The stranger seemed a man full of information, good temper, and honesty. He said he worked hard for his food, 'as hard as any man living,' and liked to enjoy himself, and was determined to do it. If he paid for what he had, no one had a right to object; and if they did, it would not matter to him, as he should do what he liked with his own. He then took up the bottle again, and, nodding to the woodman, took another hearty draught.

"'You seem to like it,' said the woodman.

"'So would you if you tried it,' replied the stranger; 'and if you doubt what I say, make the experiment. Here's the bottle, so take a good draught, for you're heartily welcome.'

"The woodman obeyed to the letter, and putting the bottle to his lips, swigged at it with great earnestness. He might have continued to drink on, but his attention was called to the stranger, who was at that moment roaring with laughter. The woodman put the bottle from his lips to ask what he was laughing at, when, to

his intense surprise, he found the demon Kordicus seated on the log of wood instead of the stranger, who was nowhere to be seen.

" 'You see, my dear fellow,' said Kordicus, as soon as he had stopped laughing, 'you can't help pledging me, and you know you're very fond of me.. Now, good-by, we shall meet again very soon, I'm sure.' So saying, the demon vanished, leaving the bottle behind him.

" The woodman did not feel half as much annoyed at the apparition of Kordicus as he had done on the other occasions he had appeared to him since he left prison. He now proceeded homewards, when he remembered the bottle was still in his hand, and finding some fluid in it, he thought as the stranger (who was evidently no other than Kordicus himself) had given it to him, he might as well finish it. He then drank off the whole of the contents, and, throwing the bottle away, continued on his road.

" When the woodman entered his cottage, his family rushed forward with joy to meet him. Their pleasure, however, was by no means reciprocated ; the man, whose countenance was flushed far more than his walk could have occasioned, received them with considerable coolness ; in fact, he seemed somewhat impatient with the lengthened embraces they bestowed upon him.

"'There, that will do,' he said. 'Enough of that; I'm hungry, and want my supper. Why, wife,' he continued, 'what's the reason it's not ready? You ought to have known I should arrive about this time.'

"'My dear,' she replied, 'I've been very ill all the afternoon. My shoulder's been paining me dreadfully all the day, and I've not been able to attend to anything; but Rachel and Isaac shall have it ready for you in a few moments'

"'Oh! your shoulder hurts you, does it?' he said sulkily, seating himself by the fire. 'I suppose I shall have that shoulder of yours thrown in my teeth on all occasions.'

"The wife, seeing her husband in this ill-humour, said nothing, but remained seated on the bed, while the two elder children, assisted by Saba, prepared the supper. When the meal was ready, the wife excused herself from coming to the table, saying she had lost all appetite, and the others commenced without her. The woodman, notwithstanding his statement that he was eager for his supper, ate but little, but took a lengthened draught of water, as if suffering from thirst.

"'How bad that water tastes!' he said, putting down

the mug. 'You ought to have provided me some fresher than that.'

"'My dear,' said his wife, 'Saba got that from the well about half an hour before you came in.'

"The woodman shrugged his shoulders, and made no reply; but, after eating a little time longer, he said to Rachel—

"'Haven't you got something else for me to drink than that water?'

"Oh! yes, father; we've some beautiful milk.'

"Saba here filled her father's mug from the pitcher, and the man drank it off, and afterwards seemed to reflect whether he liked it; but before he was decided on the point, he noticed in the obscurity of a corner of the room the figure of Kordicus, wearing his jolly, good-natured countenance, though at the same time there was considerable shrewdness in it, as if reading the woodman's thoughts. He seemed to wink at him, and say, "Ah! my good fellow, that draught you've just taken doesn't suit your taste as well as one out of my bottle. That you know, and you can't deny it.'

"The woodman understood the demon's meaning and smiled. His wife asked what he smiled at, but he gave her a rude answer, and as Kordicus then vanished, the

smile left his countenance, and with a serious expression the man went on with his supper. Presently he said to Rachel—

"'I don't see the purse with the money on the table this evening. What's been done with it?'

"'Oh, it's quite safe, father!' said little Saba. 'Mother's taking charge of it, and has put it under her pillow.'

"'Oh, indeed,' said the woodman, scowling at his wife. 'Well, take care of it, that's all. It will be a long time before we get a gift of the kind again.'

"Supper now being over, preparations for the night were made. The woodman, wrapping himself up in his rough coat, and placing a small faggot near the fire for his pillow, laid his head on it, and was soon fast asleep. Isaac had a bed made up for him in a small room outside; Saba and the younger children lay down in a corner of the room, and Rachel by her mother. The light was then extinguished, and all were soon sound asleep.

"In the middle of the night Rachel was awoke by something moving under her pillow. Somewhat startled she asked who it was, but, receiving no answer, imagined possibly it might be her brother, who, as it was dark, could not hear her. Still, what could his hand be

doing there? Before she could answer her own question she heard the door of the cottage close, and she then called to her father. Receiving no answer, and thinking he was asleep, both she and her mother called to him again—still no reply. Rachel now left her bed, and felt her way to the fireplace, but found he was not there. She was then proceeding to awake her brother, when her foot struck against something on the ground which made a ringing noise. She immediately stooped down, and, with the eye in the tip of her forefinger, perceived a gold coin, and seeking further found another. A horrible suspicion now flashed across her mind as to the way in which the gold pieces came on the floor.

"And now," said Hassan, "my time has expired. I should much like to conclude the adventures of the woodman and Kordicus, but it would occupy too much time this evening. To-morrow I hope, with the blessing of the Prophet, to meet you all again, and not only finish my story about the woodman, but commence another which, in point of wonder, shall far exceed anything I have yet told you."

IV.

OF SOME MAGIC COPPER COINS.

"YOU may remember I left off," said Hassan, when he met his audience the following evening, "at the point where Rachel found the gold pieces lying on the floor. The painful idea had then flashed across her mind that her father must have possessed himself of the purse of money—yet she could hardly believe him capable of such an act. Then again she remembered being disturbed by something like a person's hand moving under her pillow. In an agony of apprehension she inquired of her mother where she had placed the purse.

"'Under the pillow on your side, Rachel,' was the reply.

"There was now no doubt about the matter. The wretched man had been compelled by the demon Kordi-

cus to take the money, and he was doubtless at that moment making his way to the fiend's dwelling to offer him the plunder he had taken from his wife and family. Rachel told her fears to her mother, who concurred too readily in the conclusion she had arrived at. Rachel now went to call her brother, but it being night he could not understand the words she uttered. He seemed, however, to conceive the idea that something was wrong, and hastily dressing himself came into the next room. There a most painful scene occurred. His mother and sisters endeavoured in vain to explain to him, by all the means they could think of, the dishonest action of his father, and that immediate steps must be taken to prevent him from reaching the dwelling of Kordicus. But all was in vain—he could understand nothing. At last Rachel drew him to the spot where he had seen his father lie down to sleep, and when he found he was not there, she led him to the door. Isaac now began to understand that his father had left the house, and he ought to find him. They searched all around the cottage, but there was no trace of the unhappy man. Daylight now began to appear in the east, and Rachel at length was able to make her brother understand that their father had taken the money. Isaac immediately hurried

off to the dwelling of Kordicus, taking Rachel with him, with the intention of expostulating with their father on his folly; but when they arrived, the demon, who then wore his most amiable aspect, told them he had not seen their father, and although Isaac looked into the different rooms in the house, he could neither see him, nor find any trace of his having been there.

"They now returned home, trying in vain to find their unhappy father as they went. Day after day passed, and the country around was searched, but no tidings could be heard of him till nearly a week after his disappearance, when he was found in the wood almost starved to death. They spoke to him, but although life was in him, he could not understand them. He was then taken home, and some food given to him, which he ate ravenously. As soon as he had somewhat recovered his strength, he behaved in a most absurd manner, stating he was a king, and they ought to obey him, and doing many foolish and extravagant things. The poor family hoped that this was merely the effect of the privations he had undergone, but they were in error. The Prophet in his mercy had deprived him of his reason, and being thus an object of pity to all true believers, he was placed in an asylum, where the

fiend had no further power over him. What he had done with the money was never discovered.

"Intelligence of the misfortune which had occurred to the poor woodman's family now reached the lord my master, in a letter addressed to him by Isaac. He informed him of all that had taken place, the conscientious attempts his poor father had made to escape from the thraldom of Kordicus, the different traps the demon had set to catch him, how, for some time, his father had escaped, but at last had fallen into the fiend's power, and again become his victim. He then explained to him how, one dark night, his father had secretly possessed himself of the gold, one or two pieces only of which had been found on the floor and recovered, how that the remainder had been lost, and his poor father had afterwards been discovered a wandering maniac in the woods; and that he had been placed at last in an asylum for the distracted, where the demon could gain no admission. He concluded his letter by asking his lordship what steps he ought to take, whether to return with his sister to the city, or remain where he was. If the former, he hoped his lordship would send him money, as the family was at the time in a state of the deepest distress.

"His lordship, without a moment's hesitation, determined to assist the poor family. He then called his steward before him and said,—

"'I wish you and Hassan to go to the woodman's family, and when there to do all in your power for their benefit. I leave in great part to yourselves to settle the way in which it shall be done. At the same time, bear in mind that I wish the poor woman to be placed in some dwelling near my castle, where she is to receive every attention and comfort. The blind girl will remain with her mother to wait on her, and assist in taking charge of the younger children. The boy Isaac is to return with you, and I shall take him into my service. He is a very clever lad, and through the instruction and learning which has been given him by my friend the Enchanter, I shall be able to make him of great use. As the twelve gold coins were lost, I shall send no more money to the mother, especially as you will arrange so that she will want for nothing that is absolutely necessary; and I wish you to take with you twelve magic copper coins which you will give to little Saba as a present from me. Tell her that each of these copper coins has a genie especially attending on it, who, if she wishes to do any kind act for her mother, or any beneficial work

whatever, will perform it, no matter how enormous may be the labour required, provided only that the work she desires to be accomplished is such as shall carry with it the blessing of the Prophet. Now I have no further instructions to give you. Depart as soon as you please, and after you have done all that is necessary, return to me with the boy Isaac.'

"We left the capital the same afternoon, and arrived late at night at the woodman's cottage. There we found the family in great distress. The gold pieces which they had found on the floor had all been expended in the means used to find the father, and to place him in the asylum where he was safe from the demon Kordicus. In fact, so poor were they, that at the moment of our arrival, with the exception of a small loaf, they had had nothing to eat for the last two days. When we entered the cottage it was in total darkness, for they had not been able to purchase a candle, and the fire on the hearth was all but extinct. The poor mother was so weak from her wound and want of food, that she appeared almost on the point of death; while the children bore on their countenances the traces of the privations they had suffered. Of course we could do nothing for them that night, but the next morning we purchased food and

clothing, in which we were greatly assisted by the intelligent little girl, Saba. We then gave her the purse containing the twelve magic coins, and told her, as his lordship had directed, the wonderful power they possessed, and also his injunctions to use them only on what she considered objects of strict necessity. The child was much pleased with the present, and told us to thank his lordship for his kindness, and also tell him that she promised to carry out his instructions, in carefully disposing of the coins.

"Our next duty was to find an appropriate cottage for the family near his lordship's castle. This we had but little difficulty in doing. Not only did we find one perfectly adapted for the purpose, but every one was well-disposed to carry out the wishes of the lord my master; and in three days time the cottage was not only well furnished, but on the fourth the poor woman and her family were installed in it. We remained with them two days longer, and then returned to the city, accompanied by Isaac. On taking leave of Saba, I said to her,

"'Now do not forget to take great care of the twelve copper coins, and use them judiciously. If you do, I am sure his lordship will be much pleased with you.'

"'I have only six,' said Saba.

"'But I gave you twelve,' I replied, greatly astonished.

"'And I have already used six.'

"'In what way?' I asked, somewhat angrily. 'Remember this, that those coins may be disposed of in an utterly useless manner, but if judiciously applied, the effect will be magical.'

"'And it has been wonderful indeed,' said Saba.

"'What wonderful feat have they accomplished then?' I asked.

"'My mother has a brother,' said Saba, 'living in a town called Sydney, on the other side of the world, some sixteen thousand miles from England. As she believes he is rich, she wished to send him notice of the distress we are in, thinking he will perhaps help us. But,' she continued, pointing to a man who was passing at the moment, in a somewhat peculiar dress, 'this man will tell you all about it.'

"I now called to the man, and asked if he could tell me any news of a letter Saba had written to her uncle living in a town on the other side of the world.

"'I can,' was his reply, 'for it was given to me, and I carried it to a house in a village some miles from here, where I gave it in charge of another man, who placed it

THE MAGIC COPPER COINS.

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in a bag with other letters and sent it to the capital. There it was received in an immense palace, and search made for it by many men from perhaps a million other letters. It was then placed in another bag, and sent to another city in England, where it was placed by sailors on board a ship bound to a kingdom called France. Through the whole of that kingdom the letter will be carried by the chariots drawn by the same sort of fiery dragons as we have turned to use in England. Arrived at the further extremity of France, it will be placed by sailors on another ship, and carried, after several days' journey, to the land of your birth, Egypt. Here it will be taken on shore, and carried through Egypt to another ship, which will be waiting expressly to receive it on the northern part of the Red Sea. It will then be taken charge of by different officers, and guarded with the greatest care and caution till it reaches a town on the most southern part of India, where it will be taken from the ship that brought it, carried on shore, and then placed on board another ship, where equal care will be taken of it by many valiant sailors, who will carry it for some weeks onwards, till it reaches the town of Sydney on the other side of the world. The letter will then be taken from the bag, and a messenger sent with it some distance up

the country, who will not lose sight of it till he delivers it into the hands of Saba's uncle.'

"There was so much apparent truthfulness in the man's statement that I ought to have given him full credit, yet the whole story appeared so wonderful, that in spite of the genuineness of the man's manner, certain doubts took possession of me, and I determined to question the lord my master on the subject. Should the narrative prove correct, I should consider it the most wonderful adventure I had ever heard in my life; certainly not less wonderful than the greater portion of those narrated by the veracious Sinbad himself.

"We now took leave of the woodman's family, and returned to the capital, taking Isaac with us. On our arrival his lordship's steward took the boy under his charge, determining to make him useful in household matters. We gave a full account of all we had done to the lord my master, who, to our great satisfaction, complimented us highly on the way in which we had executed our commissions. The morning after our arrival, while waiting on his lordship in his private room, and finding him disposed to be communicative, I told him of the wonderful narrative I had heard of the extraordinary results obtained by the disposal of Saba's copper coins. His lordship

listened with great gravity to my statement, and then said—

"'What reason have you, Hassan, to doubt the truth of the man's narrative? Do you suspect him to be a dishonourable character? And even if so, what benefit could he expect from playing a trick on you? Even bad men seldom act thus unless for the hope of gain. Gain is the temptation that Eblis, the prince of darkness, generally uses to ensnare his slaves, though, after all, in this respect he does not in our own country obtain half the success which crowns the schemes of the demon Kordicus.'

"'I have no better reason, O my master, for doubting the man's statement, than the extraordinary results which he said had followed the use of such a very small sum.'

"'Then let all doubt vanish from your mind, Hassan, said my master. 'Everything the man told you was perfectly true.'

"'But did he not exaggerate the facts, O my noble master?' I asked.

"'So far to the contrary, he rather underrated them than otherwise. He might have mentioned many other changes of hands, and dangers of loss attending the letter than those he named, had he been pleased to do so.

No, every word he stated is as true as the word of the Prophet himself.'

"I remained silent for some time, struck with surprise at what his lordship had said, for I could not question its truth, so honourable a man was he. At length I said,—

"'It was a most fortunate thing your lordship was possessed of those copper coins, for I can perceive they may be of great use to the poor family. Should I be presuming if I asked your lordship how you became possessed of them?'

"'Not at all,' said his lordship, 'I will answer you candidly, Hassan, that I inherited them from my father.'

"'I trust, my lord, that you have not given all to the girl Saba, for good as she is there are others in the world who are her equal in that respect.'

"'My friend, Hassan,' said his lordship, in a sharper tone than he had ever hitherto made use of to me, 'your question is somewhat free and disrespectful, and not such as should be made use of from a servant to his master. However, as you are ignorant of our manners and customs in England, I will excuse you in the present instance, and to prove to you that I bear you no anger, I will admit that I have many other copper coins of the same description, which I keep for particular occasions.'

"I remained for some moments dumb, wishing to speak, and yet afraid to do so lest I might offend his lordship. He evidently understood my meaning, and, smiling, said to me—

"'Hassan, my friend, I see you wish to make a remark, but are afraid I might not like it. Come now, say what you wish, and I promise you I will not be offended.'

"'Encouraged by your lordship,' I said, 'I will humbly remark that if you have many of these copper coins, capable of performing feats as wonderful as that accomplished by Saba's six, you must have more power in your hands than the greatest magician in the land. You could perform wonders second only to those of the Prophet Mahomet, on whose name be all honour, who rode up to Heaven on the back of a peacock with ten million eyes!'

"'My friend, Hassan, you overrate my abilities,' said his lordship. 'Although certainly I could perform very wonderful feats with my copper coins, I admit none of them can equal your veracious statement about the peacock—still, as I said before, I can accomplish many wonderful things with these coins, and shall do so when I find it necessary.'

"'But surely, my lord,' I said, 'there are works enough in this world to be performed, from which great benefits would accrue to mankind in general. For example, the destruction of the demon Kordicus, who does such awful mischief in this country.'

"His lordship for some moments remained silent, wearing at the time a very grave expression of countenance.

"'Your remark, O Hassan, is a very natural one,' he at length said, 'and certainly it would appear at first sight that the power of these magic coins might be sufficient to destroy all the demons in the world, but the conclusion would be a very erroneous one. Although it is true these copper coins have such wonderful power when used for good, they have, I may tell you in confidence, an almost equal power when used in the cause of Eblis, the prince of darkness; and I regret to say that for one coin used for the purpose of neutralising or destroying the power of Kordicus a thousand are used for supporting it. Still, wonderful effects, and perfectly innocent and beneficial ones, are obtained by means of these enchanted coins. I will give you a specimen, if you please. I wish to-morrow morning at my breakfast to receive news from the principal kingdoms of the

world,—what is done in each; what is done in my own; what policy towards us the kings, potentates, and governments of the different kingdoms and nations are using; what are the movements which have taken place in the different branches of the government of the Sovereign of these islands, and what each legislator said in the council chambers on particular subjects, and many other things which I will not at present describe to you, for I must now leave home. Suffice it to say that to-morrow morning I shall apply one of these coins to obtain the intelligence I require, and if you wait on me in this room after my breakfast, I will give you a short description of the means used, all through the magic power of one copper coin.'

"I gratefully thanked his lordship for his kind offer, and promised the next morning I would wait on him at the hour named.

"The following day I was punctual to my appointment, and was received by his lordship in his usual amiable manner. I noticed, however, on his countenance a serious expression which somewhat alarmed me, making me fear I had perhaps inadvertently been guilty of some action which had displeased him. After a few moments' silence, he said—

"'Well, Hassan, you have come I suppose to learn what are the wonderful results I have obtained by the use of my copper coin. I first wished to know whether any of my acquaintance had married or were dead, without the intelligence having before reached me. A list of those persons known has been sent me this morning, and I am happy to say among the deaths not one has occurred of any either dear or known to me. I then received intelligence from different parts of the kingdom informing me what wicked people had been arrested on charges of theft or murder, those who had been brought before the cadis or judges, and sentence passed on them, as well as different subjects connected with the law, all more or less interesting to me, though but of little interest to you were I to describe them.'

"But your lordship does not mean to say,' I remarked, interrupting him, 'that the news respecting these criminals and their trials have arrived from separate parts of the kingdom?'

"'Certainly, Hassan, from several towns; many very widely apart, in fact, from all where anything of importance connected with the law has taken place. I then wished, as I told you,' he continued, 'to hear what had

occurred during the night among the rulers of the nation in the two different council chambers ; and to supply me with this information several men of great learning, and skilful penmen, listened to the speeches which were made, and taking notes of them, gave them to others who sat up all night transcribing and printing them, so that I might have them ready to my hand when I sat down to breakfast. All of this they accomplished in a most satisfactory manner. Not a detail of any importance was wanting in any of the speeches or decisions arrived at.'

"'But your lordship surely means,' I remarked, 'that you received this information at the expenditure of another copper coin, and not the same which brought the intelligence respecting the law courts?'

"'You are in error, Hassan,' he replied. 'Not only was it the same coin, but also it obtained fifty other different results more wonderful than the two I have mentioned put together. But let me go on. I also wished to know the latest news from different parts of the world. From the immense continent of America, with its many thousand miles in length and breadth, I received various and interesting intelligence. From the northern portion, how they were subsiding into peace

and prosperity after the late terrible wars which had raged among them, the whole drawing a vivid picture between the horrors of war and the blessings of peace and industry. From the southern portion I learnt that a cruel war had broken out in some parts, while great prosperity and peace were dominant in others. I also received from both north and south intelligence of the ships which had arrived there, those that were about to leave, what their cargoes were and their value, and, in fact, every subject worthy of interest has been explicitly furnished me. From all parts of India I have also received intelligence, some good, some bad. How in one part a dreadful famine prevails, while in another the country was bringing forth the richest crops of rice, silk, and other commodities. From China I have received intelligence that the tea plant yielded a large crop. From Turkey that the Sultan was on the point of sending an ambassador to Ispahan about some question connected with the Faithful. From all parts of the world I received intelligence concerning the large money transactions; also the lists of ships which had arrived in England the day before, those which had been lost at sea, and the number of brave sailors who had perished in them. Other intelligence has been sent to me con-

cerning the breed of horses, and the great races which had been run, not only in England, but in other parts of the world. In fact, not only were subjects of great importance transmitted to me, but others of the most trifling description. I received intelligence of an enormous gooseberry having been picked from a bush fifty miles distant; of a cat having been born with three legs; of a large fish which had been thrown ashore many hundreds of miles to the north of our capital. Also that one lord's dog had run faster than another's; how many birds some individual had killed in a day; how the boys at two great public schools had played a match at foot-ball; how a man in some place had lived till he was one hundred and seven years of age; while in another town three-fourths of the children died before they were five years of age. I have also had intelligence sent me as to the state of the weather in all parts of the country; as to the wind, whether strong and stormy, or mild and gentle, as to the weather, if warm or cold, as well as the probable state of the weather to-morrow. In fact, whether on great or small subjects, the amount of intelligence I have received has been truly surprising. But that is not all. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about the whole is the immense number of persons—

many hundreds—who have been employed during the whole of the night finding information, and for whose exertions no higher compensation is required than the one copper coin I spoke about.'

"'Your lordship greatly surprises me,' I said. 'This is indeed a wonderful country. But will your lordship allow me to ask a question? Is the amount of information you receive merely that which you desire to hear, or are other subjects brought under your notice as well?'

"'As you may easily imagine, Hassan, from the details I have given you, a great deal more information is brought under my notice than I am at all interested in. But why do you ask the question?'

"'Because it appears to me very hard that you may occasionally receive bad news as well as good. You may hear of things you don't want to know, as well as those pleasing to you.'

"'There, Hassan, my friend, you are right. And, in fact, I have this morning received intelligence which has caused me great pain and uneasiness. A misunderstanding lately occurred between two potentates on the continent of Europe, both rich and powerful, with many hundred thousands of armed men at the command of each, and the result has been a terrible war, which is

now raging fearfully. One party, the German (of which your country knows but little) has hitherto been the conqueror, success having followed them in almost every action they fought; and gradually they are advancing on their neighbour's capital, which, it is expected, they will soon besiege. Now I have a sister married to a French nobleman, who has been wounded by the enemy and taken prisoner, and she is at present laid on a bed of sickness in the capital of the country, far away from her castle, which, I find from the information I have received, has been attacked, and in great part destroyed. This has caused me great sorrow, not only from the loss her husband has sustained, but the destruction of so beautiful an edifice, for there were few to be found superior to it in the whole country.'

"'Do you mean that the castle has been totally destroyed?' I inquired.

"'No, Hassan,' said his lordship, 'but it has been greatly injured. However, I expect to hear more about it in the course of a few days, for I am now upon the point of writing to France to request that as soon as possible they will catch on paper the shadow of the castle, and send it to me.'

"'Did I understand your lordship to say you were

about to order them to catch the shadow of the castle?'

"'Such is my intention, Hassan,' replied his lordship, 'and as you possibly may doubt what I say, as soon as it arrives I will show it to you, or rather I should say them, for I intend having many shadows caught, as they are thrown from different parts of the building.'

"Seeing I looked puzzled at his statement, his lordship remarked,

"'You seem surprised, Hassan, at what I tell you, but it is a fact. There are genii so wonderful that they will not only catch the form of the castle, with its windows, doors, roofs, and battlements all complete, but the shape of the stones which compose its walls as well. They will do more, for they will catch the trees, and every leaf visible on them. They will also catch on paper the very shadow of a bullet as it passes from a gun through the air, and send it any distance they please. But as I see you still have doubts of the truth of what I tell you, I will say no more, but wait till the shadows arrive, and then you shall judge for yourself.'

"A few days afterwards his lordship sent for me into his private room, and there I found spread on the table before him a number of these shadows which had been

caught, and printed on sheets of paper. His lordship had not in any manner overstated the case. Not only were the large breaches which had been made in the castle perfectly visible, but every slight damage that had been done to the stones in the wall, or the carvings round the windows, and every broken pane of glass as well. The trees surrounding the castle, with every broken branch, and every leaf, were perfectly visible. His lordship also showed me another paper on which was the destroyed dwelling of a labourer, the man lying dead on the ground before his door, and the wife and children weeping beside him. After I had admired the wonderful ingenuity which had produced such great results, his lordship said to me,—

"'You may easily imagine the sorrow my poor sister must be in, with her husband wounded, and a prisoner, and she herself unable to leave her bed in Paris. It is now my duty to afford her what consolation and assistance I can. I propose this evening leaving home for the purpose of visiting her, and offering whatever assistance may be in my power. If, Hassan, you like to accompany me you can. I intend taking Isaac with me and a servant. Now make your preparations at once, for I wish to arrive there as soon as possible.'

"I obeyed his lordship, and, at the time appointed, Isaac and I, attended by the servant, were in readiness to accompany him. In less than two hours, by means of the fiery chariot, we had passed over a greater distance than a camel could perform in four days. We then entered a ship, and although the wind was blowing strongly against us, we passed safely through the raging sea, and having arrived at the opposite shore, we traversed in a few hours a distance exceeding a week's journey of a camel, and reached our destination in safety. The same day his lordship called on his sister, whom he found dangerously ill, and hardly expected to live. She was, as may naturally be supposed, greatly delighted to see her brother, and welcomed him most affectionately. She told him she had received news from her husband, who was recovering, though slowly, from his wound. His lordship asked if he could be of any use to her.

"'Yes, my dear brother, you can indeed,' was her reply.

"And here the poor lady confided to her brother the nature of the service she wished him to perform for her. To-morrow evening I will not only explain it to you, but the results which followed, and which I assure you are fully as wonderful as anything I have hitherto narrated, if not more so."

V.

OF A SAIL ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

"MY task this evening," said Hassan, as soon as his audience were seated around him, "will be to describe to you some of my adventures in the capital of France, which, as you are aware, is one of the most powerful and civilised nations in Europe, and which, at the time of my visit, was carrying on a fierce war against the Empire of Germany, a country even more powerful, as proved by the result, than France.

"Although his lordship's sister inhabited a beautiful palace near the outskirts of the city, which was fitted up with every luxury that good taste could desire, or unlimited wealth purchase, and although she had many apartments which were at her brother's disposal, yet his

lordship preferred taking up his abode in a caravansary or hotel, as it is called in the language of their country. At the same time you should bear in mind that the hotels of Europe, although they are built for the accommodation of strangers, have but little resemblance to the caravansaries of the East. In fact, they far more frequently resemble the palace of a Sultan or Shah than the unostentatious buildings we have in Persia. What his lordship's reasons were for preferring to reside apart from his sister, I am unable to say, as he did not inform me, and it would have been presumption on my part to have asked the question. Indeed, had I done so it is more than probable I should have incurred his lordship's displeasure, who, although generally kind to me, could, if offended, speak in terms of great severity.

"His lordship frequently saw his sister, in fact, scarcely a day passed without his visiting her, and on these occasions I generally went with the carriage as his servant. Of course in my humble position I had no opportunity of seeing the invalid lady, but remained below in the court-yard enclosed in the centre of the palace. Here I formed acquaintance with many of the servants, and more especially with two—one a Frenchman, who spoke English perfectly, and the other an

English confidential footman. With the other servants I had but little communication, knowing, as I did, only a few words of the French language. Although I became somewhat intimate with Pierre, the Frenchman, and Smith, the English servant, I cannot say I much liked either. To give any reason for my coolness would be difficult, and possibly it arose at first simply from prejudice on my part, for they were both extremely civil to me.

"Occasionally I took the liberty of asking his lordship after his sister's health. He told me he was sorry to say she fell off in strength daily, but this he considered was rather brought about by anxiety for the fate of her husband than any real increase of the disease she was labouring under. One day when his lordship visited his sister he remained longer than usual, and on noticing the fact to Pierre and Smith, they told me her ladyship was much worse that day, in fact, that considerable fears were entertained by the doctors that she would not recover. At length I saw his lordship descending the staircase, carrying with him a somewhat large, handsome leather case or box, with a handle on the top of it. I immediately ran to meet him, but he motioned me away, and taking the box with him, entered the carriage. I

now seated myself beside the coachman, and as the carriage was driving away, I turned round to nod an adieu to the two men I had been talking with. They did not, however, see me, being engaged in most earnest conversation together, each wearing a look of mingled anger and disappointment. I of course paid no attention to them, and the carriage drove on.

"We now heard that the enemy had gained several victories over the French, and that they were rapidly advancing towards Paris with an immense army, intending to besiege it. A few days after our last-mentioned visit to the palace, his lordship informed me that I must prepare to leave Paris, as he had applied for permission from the General of the Germans to pass through their army for the purpose of visiting the nobleman who had married his lordship's sister, and who was then lying wounded, and a prisoner in one of their cities. He expected to leave, he said, in two or three days, and told me I must be ready to accompany him.

"It was more than a week, however, before permission came. During that time a change had taken place in the behaviour of Pierre and Smith towards me. Hitherto they had not called on me at his lordship's hotel, but now, not a day passed without one of them coming to

see me. They pretended they had conceived a great respect for me, and had much pleasure in my society, and asked many questions about Egypt, and other places I had visited. But I remarked, and thought it very curious, that they hardly ever entered into conversation with me without making some remarks about the leather case or box which his lordship had taken away with him. They asked me what he had done with it? where he kept it? and several other questions, none of which I could answer them. They then pressed me to find out where his lordship kept it, and I asked their reason for making the inquiry. At first they passed it off as merely innocent curiosity, and I began to consider the excuse a valid one, when Smith asked me if I knew what was inside the case? I replied that I did not, and that it was to me a matter of no importance. He then informed me, that her ladyship was celebrated for having finer diamonds than any lady in France.

"'And,' he continued, 'they are in the case his lordship took from our palace. To tell you the truth, and between friends, we were very angry at the circumstance, as it seemed to cast a doubt on the integrity of her ladyship's servants. I'm sure he was not justified in any suspicion of the kind, for had we intended to appropriate

them to our own use, we might have done so over and over again. There's temptation enough to excuse us had we been inclined to be dishonest, for do you know,' he said, clapping me expressively on the chest, as he spoke, 'that those diamonds are of sufficient value to make the fortune of three such men as we are, to say nothing of other jewels of great value as well.'

"I had of course no answer to make to these remarks, and the matter dropped. Still Smith and Pierre continued to visit me every day, and attempted to gain my confidence and intimacy, in which to a certain extent they succeeded, but not completely, for the half feeling of dislike I had towards them on our first acquaintance, remained the same, notwithstanding their friendly bearing. Possibly I might have conceived this feeling towards them from a peculiarity in their manner, neither of them, when addressing another individual, looking him in the face, but always turning their eyes on one side, which, as far as my experience goes, is generally a sign of dishonesty.

"At length his lordship began to be surprised at the frequency of the visits of these men to the hotel, and questioned me on the subject. I told him candidly the truth, that they had taken a greater fancy to me than I had to them; but that they had always been extremely

civil to me. His lordship remained silent—reflecting deeply—for a few moments, and then said :—

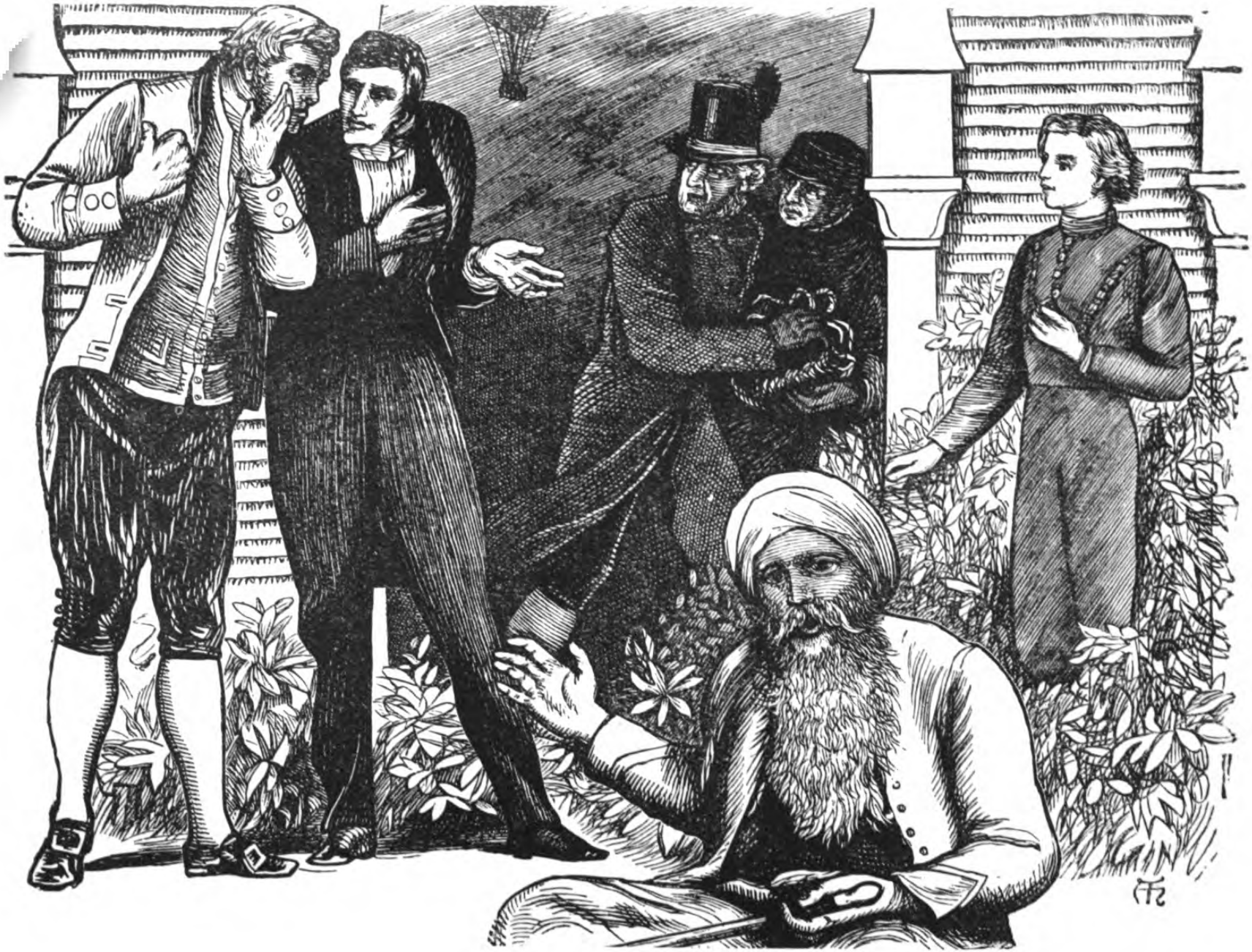
"'Hassan, I leave Paris to-morrow. It was my intention to have taken you with me, but I have since changed my mind, and will go alone. You and Isaac will remain here to take charge of everything I possess, and you will be very careful not to let any one into my room. I should prefer your not receiving visits from those servants of my sister; I don't like them, and have no confidence in them. However, if they call, you will take especial care not to let them enter my apartments, and I shall give the same orders to the master of the hotel, and request he will see them carried out. In case you have any difficulty about it, apply to him, and he will see you righted.'

"I promised his lordship I would obey him to the letter, and the next morning he took his departure, telling me he hoped to return to Paris in a week or ten days at the latest. He also left us instructions to call occasionally at his sister's palace, and take with us any letters which might have been sent from London, and they would be forwarded direct to him.

"For some days afterwards all went on smoothly enough. I called but once at her ladyship's palace, but

her two servants were continually calling on me. Their very strong friendship certainly surprised me, and then my surprise changed into suspicion, which was caused by their perpetually recurring in their conversation to the jewel case, and where his lordship kept it. One time Smith went so far as to speak very ill-temperedly to me because I would not allow him to go into his lordship's room. In fact, very strong words passed between us, and he ended by telling me never to enter the court-yard of the palace again, but to keep out in the street, as if I could not trust him he would not trust me. He said he believed all Egyptians were rogues, and made use of many other insults of the same description, all of which I put up with patiently, determining I would not allow anything he said to make me lose my temper, as I was aware that rashness very frequently accompanies passion, and that in the heat of anger, I might say or do something I should be sorry for afterwards.

"But if the two servants withdrew their friendship from me, their behaviour to Isaac, with whom they had now become acquainted, was very different. They invited him frequently to the palace, pretending to have taken a great fancy to him, and to be much pleased at the way



A SAIL ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

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he heard through his eyes and his singular monotonous method of speaking.

"The enemy's troops had now approached so closely to the capital that there was little doubt that in a short time it would be completely surrounded, and I began to wish earnestly for the return of his lordship. Isaac continued to visit at the palace, and seemed to like better every day his new acquaintances. I did not interfere in the matter beyond insisting that the two men should never enter the hotel, and although Isaac was somewhat displeased at this, it in no way altered my determination. One evening, however, Isaac arrived home before nightfall in a state of anxious excitement. I had some difficulty in getting from him what had occurred, but at length I made out that on going to the palace he had seen in a garden near it, at a distance of a hundred to a hundred and fifty paces from him, Smith and Pierre, talking together in whispers, in a very earnest and cautious manner. At first he deliberated whether he would disturb them, so intent did they appear on the subject of their conversation; but presently, he heard Smith say, in a still lower whisper, 'I will ask the boy Isaac where the jewel case is placed, and I have no doubt he will tell me, for he has conceived a great friend-

ship for me. I'm sure the case is somewhere in his lordship's bedroom, and as Isaac has frequent opportunities of entering it, he could with little difficulty find it.' At that moment Pierre looked up, and seeing from the distance Isaac watching them, he motioned to Smith to be silent, and the pair then advanced to meet him."

Here Hassan's auditors were somewhat surprised by Achmet, the Cadi's officer, rising from his seat, and placing his pipe beside him. He said—

"My brother Hassan, I think you must have made some mistake in your narrative. Either it must be fabulous, or you are grossly exaggerating all the circumstances relating to it."

"In what way have I offended, O Achmet?" said Hassan. "What have I said or done that should allow you to imagine that I have in the most remote manner infringed on the promise I made you that all my statements should be true?"

"Did you not tell us," said Achmet, with the gravity of a cadi examining a witness, "that Pierre and the Englishman were one hundred and fifty paces distant from the boy Isaac, and talking in whispers?"

"I did, Achmet," replied Hassan. "That is to say,

they were between one hundred, and one hundred and fifty paces from him, and I maintain it to be a fact!"

"And talking in whispers?" inquired Achmet.

"Yes, talking in whispers," said Hassan.

"And did you not tell us that when talking of the jewel case they spoke in still lower whispers than before?"

"I did, O Achmet," said Hassan. "Their whispers were scarcely heard above their breath, so low were they."

"And now," said Achmet, putting on a stern expression of countenance, "do you pretend to deny that you have not grossly exaggerated the facts? How is it possible in speaking in as low a whisper as you state they conversed in, that the boy Isaac heard them from a distance of a hundred to a hundred and fifty paces?"

"And I maintain it to be strictly true," said Hassan. "When the enchanter gave the boy the power of hearing through his eyes, as I told you before, he limited it to daylight, and that when night came on the sound of a cannon would be inaudible to him, as he was not able completely to imitate the work of Allah's own hands. To compensate, however, for the defect, he makes the sense of hearing through the eyes so acute that sounds, which would be totally inaudible to a person endowed with the

ordinary gift of hearing, are plainly understood by them. In fact, no matter how low a whisper a person may speak in, if the distance between him and the person who hears through his eyes be not too great for the features to be distinguished, every word will be perfectly understood."

"If that be true," said Achmet with a strong look of doubt on his countenance, "it is wonderful indeed!" —and then re-seating himself, and taking up his pipe, he made a sign to Hassan to proceed with his narrative.

"As soon as Pierre and Smith had reached Isaac, they saluted him in a most friendly manner, and begged he would return with them to her ladyship's palace. This Isaac somewhat coolly agreed to, and they started off together, conversing most amicably on their way. Isaac inquired after her ladyship's health.

"'Ah! poor lady,' said Pierre, 'she is very bad indeed. The doctors hardly expect she will live till to-morrow. By-the-bye, when do you expect your master, the lord, to arrive? Should he delay more than two days longer there is no chance of his seeing his sister again in this world.'

"'I re-al-ly—do—not—know," said Isaac. "We—have—heard—no—in-tel-li-gence—of—him—what—e-ver.'

"'And more than that,' said Smith, 'if he doesn't arrive within the next forty-eight hours he will not be able to enter the city. In that time it will be completely surrounded by the enemy. Should they attack Paris, what immense booty they will be able to obtain. Why, the contents of her ladyship's jewel box, which is now in the possession of your master, would serve for prize-money for a whole regiment. I hope you take great care of it, for it would distress his lordship greatly should it be lost, if only out of respect to the memory of his sister.'

"'Oh—yes,—we—take—great—care—of—it,' said Isaac.

"'Where do you keep it?' asked Smith.

"'I—be-lieve—it—is—kept—in—his—lord-ship's—bed-room,—under—the—charge—of—Has-san;' said Isaac; 'but—as—it—does—not—con-cern—me—I—have—made—no—in-qui-ries—a-bout—it.'

"'But, my dear fellow, you ought to do so,' said Smith. 'Suppose Hassan should be out, and robbers were to enter the house, or the Germans make him a prisoner, you ought to know where the jewels are kept that you may take charge of them yourself; or if you are afraid to do so alone, Pierre and myself will gladly aid you. Now take my advice as a friend, find out where

they are kept, and then let us know, so that in case you and Hassan were both out, or made prisoners, we could protect his lordship's interests.'

"All this was said in such a candid off-hand manner, that Isaac was at first thrown somewhat off his guard, and promised he would follow their advice. Being, however, naturally shrewd and clear-headed, as he walked home he began to compare their remarks and advice with the words he had heard them whisper together when he first met them that afternoon, which words Achmet so severely wounded my feelings by doubting when I reported them to you."

As Hassan said this he cast a somewhat reproachful glance at Achmet, who, however, took no notice of him, but continued smoking his pipe, wearing at the time a stern, judicial expression of countenance, which betokened that he was thinking deeply without giving any clue to the nature of his thoughts.

"The more Isaac thought over the matter," continued Hassan, "the more suspicious, or rather inexplicable did the remarks of the men appear to him, and he determined to consult me on the subject. His statement, added to my own experience, increased the unfavourable opinion I had already conceived of Pierre and Smith, and I deter-

mined resolutely not only to drop the acquaintance myself, but to destroy all further intimacy between them and Isaac.

"The next day we received intelligence that the enemy were making still more complete the investment of the city. No news of his lordship had arrived, and towards night we received a message from the palace stating that her ladyship was on the point of death, and that she wished to see Isaac and myself that she might hear news of her brother before she quitted the world. Although we had no information to give her, we hurried off with all possible haste to the palace. On our arrival we were told by Pierre that her ladyship was insensible, but possibly she might somewhat recover before her death, and that we had better remain there in readiness should she call for us. We promised we would do so, and he then showed us into a comfortable, well-lighted room, and left us. Hour after hour passed without our receiving any intelligence from the sick chamber. Midnight struck—still no message came. About an hour afterwards a female servant entered the room and explained to us, partly by words, and partly by dumb show, that her ladyship was dead. For some time we hardly knew what to do. We now sought for Pierre or Smith to give us some instructions, and about half an hour afterwards

the Frenchman came to us and said it would be no use our waiting any longer, and we could return home as soon as we pleased.

"With heavy hearts we went back to the hotel, for we were thinking of the dreadful shock it would be to his lordship to hear of the death of his dear sister. Little sleep passed over the heads of either of us that night, and when we awoke the next morning sorrow was deeply stamped on the features of both. This, however, soon subsided into surprise and anxiety when we found that his lordship did not arrive, nor was any intelligence received of him. But there was other news which also contributed to our uneasiness. The city was completely surrounded by the enemy, and no one was allowed to enter or leave it. We had now no alternative but to resign ourselves to what might occur. We were amply provided with funds, and the master of the hotel supplied our wants liberally.

"Her ladyship's funeral took place two days afterwards, and Isaac and myself were invited to attend. On arriving at the grave-yard we found congregated there a number of servants, but to my intense surprise neither Smith nor Pierre were among them. I was too much absorbed in the solemnity of the occasion to think much

of their absence at the time, but afterwards I attempted to satisfy myself as to the cause of it. This I was unable to do in any proper manner, for being among the most confidential servants of her ladyship, they would most naturally have been expected to attend her funeral. I then remembered that during the hours I had waited in the palace on the evening of her death, with the exception of meeting Pierre on our entrance, and as we were leaving, I had seen nothing of either of them. Then a terrible suspicion flashed across my mind, and seizing Isaac by the wrist, I hurried home to our hotel with such rapidity, that when I arrived I was hardly able to speak. Again the current of my thoughts was disturbed by the master of the hotel drawing them off on another subject. He told me that his lordship had arrived about ten minutes before I entered the house, having received permission from the General of the Germans to pass through their lines, and that having been informed of the death of his sister he was quite overcome with grief in his room, where I should find him.

"I immediately rushed upstairs, and entered his lordship's bed-chamber, where I found the description I had got of his grief had not been over-coloured. I respectfully endeavoured to console

him, but had great difficulty in withdrawing him from his sorrow.

"'Hassan, my friend,' he said at last, 'you can little appreciate my state, for you know not how fondly I loved my sister, and my terrible grief when I heard of her death. And this grief was the greater as I was bringing with me intelligence that her dear husband was fast recovering from his wounds, and there was every prospect of his soon being set at liberty. It makes my sorrow the greater to think that not only was I unable to be present at her death-bed, but was too late to attend her funeral.'

"Knowing that any attempt on my part to reason with his lordship would be impertinent, I said nothing, but quietly waited till the next day. Several times, however, during the interval did it occur to me to mention my suspicions of Pierre and Smith to his lordship. Before doing so, however, I resolved to visit her ladyship's palace, and inquire the reason of their absence from the funeral. I could gain no information whatever beyond being told that the two men had left Paris together the morning after her ladyship's death, and had not since been heard of.

"Although I had determined to bring the suspicious

behaviour of Smith and Pierre under the notice of his lordship, I deferred doing so till some days had elapsed, inasmuch as he was so overwhelmed with grief, I did not like to mention the subject to him. One evening, however, on returning from a visit he had paid to the palace of his sister, for the purpose of seeing that all was going on well, his lordship said to me,

"'Have you heard, Hassan, of the extraordinary behaviour of the two men in quitting the palace the day after my sister's death, without mentioning their intended departure to any one?'

"'I have already heard of it,' I replied, 'and wished to bring the subject under the notice of your lordship, but hardly had the courage to do so.'

"'Why not?' his lordship asked.

"'Because seeing your lordship so absorbed in your sorrow I did not like to trouble you about any other matter.'

"'I am sorry you did not,' said his lordship, 'although I cannot blame you for your silence. From what I have heard to-day, I am afraid there is reason to doubt the honesty of these men, for several articles of value are missing from the palace, which the servants assured me were all placed under the care of Smith and Pierre.

How fortunate it is that I removed the case of jewels from the palace to take charge of them myself, otherwise they might have disappeared too. This would have been a great loss, as they are of inestimable value, and are still more so in my eyes as memorials of my dear sister.'

"I was now in an embarrassing position. I wished to explain to his lordship my suspicions of the conduct of the two men, which had been roused, not only by their behaviour to me, but from their conversation with Isaac as well; but then the idea occurred to me, that from the manner in which his lordship had spoken of the jewels, he might have seen them since his return. His lordship, at last noticing the look of anxiety on my countenance, said to me,—

"'I perceive, Hassan, there is something you wish to say, and yet are doubtful whether I should be offended; speak boldly, man, and let me know what you mean.'

"'I have no fear of your being offended, oh! my master, but rather that I might, without cause, arouse your suspicions. As you command me to speak, I will do so. First, let me inquire if your lordship has seen the jewel-case since your return?'

"'I have not, Hassan,' his lordship replied. 'On

more than one occasion I wished to do so, but I feared it might arouse very painful remembrances in my mind, so I abstained from opening the cabinet in which I locked it. They are certainly there, for the lock is good. But why do you ask?'

"'I am happy to hear your lordship say they are sure to be safe, for, from certain remarks made by Smith and Pierre to me, as well as from a conversation which took place between them and Isaac, my suspicions as to their integrity were aroused. However, I strictly followed your lordship's orders in allowing no one to enter your room. The evening of her ladyship's death, Isaac and myself were requested to attend at the palace, and the two men absented themselves during the time we were there, and I afterwards found they had visited this hotel, though from the state of confusion, alarm, and excitement, all the inmates were in, I could get no definite explanation of the object of their visit. From what your lordship says, I now feel quite reassured I was wrong in my suspicions that they wished to possess themselves of her ladyship's jewels.'

"'I have no reason to doubt there being safe,' said his lordship, 'but before being positively certain of the fact, let us see them. Come with me into my room, and

assist me in getting the jewel-case from the cabinet in which it was placed.'

"I obeyed his lordship, and we went together to the bed-chamber, where his lordship took from his pocket a key for the purpose of opening the door of the cabinet. Before doing so, however, it struck me that there were some scratches on the keyhole, and I called his attention to the fact.

"'It certainly looks very strange,' his lordship said, trying to wear a calm expression of countenance, though I could perceive the key trembling in his hand. 'Do not let us, however, suspect without reason.'

"Here his lordship attempted to put the key in the lock, but his hand trembled so violently he was unable to do it. Receiving the key in my hand, I opened the door for him, when, to our great joy, we found the jewel-case in its place.

"'Thank God, they are safe,' his lordship exclaimed. 'How wrong of us to suspect hastily the integrity of others! Take out the case, Hassan, and place it on the table; there are some letters in it relating to my poor sister's affairs, which I wish to see.'

"His lordship's joy, however, was of very short duration. for, on taking hold of the handle on the top of the

case to lift it from the shelf of the cabinet, the lid opened in my hand. I hastily placed it on the table, and on examining the box, his lordship, to his intense surprise and disappointment, found it empty,—the whole of the jewels being gone. For some moments we remained breathless with astonishment, neither of us being able to speak a word. I was the first to recover self-possession.

"'Pardon me, my lord,' I said, 'but ought we not to take immediate steps to discover the robbers? Suspicion points so strongly to Pierre and Smith, that there can be little doubt they are the thieves. Let me beg of your lordship to collect yourself, and tell me what course to follow.'

"But the blow had caused so strong an effect on his lordship's mind, that he seemed utterly incapable of giving me an answer. Without waiting for his instructions I rang the bell, and requested the immediate attendance of the master of the hotel. In a few minutes he entered the room, and I explained all to him. He then looked to his lordship for instructions.

"'My good fellow,' his lordship said, 'I am so bewildered, I hardly know what steps ought to be taken. Act for me, I beseech you. Jewels to the value of one

million francs (a silver coin of the country) have been stolen from that box, and suspicion points strongly to two servants of my late sister as the thieves. Pray tell me what I ought to do.'

"'If your lordship will leave the affair in my hands,' said the master of the hotel, 'I will immediately communicate with the police on the subject.'

"'Pray do so,' said his lordship. 'And tell them I will reward them handsomely if they can point out in what manner I can either obtain possession of the jewels, or punish the thieves. Tell them to spare no expense in the matter.'

"I now accompanied the master of the hotel to the cadi or chief of the police, as they are called in that country. He questioned me very minutely on all that that had taken place, and I gave him an exact account of the conversations I had had with the two suspected individuals, as well as that which had occurred between them and Isaac, all of which he noted down in a book. The chief then dismissed us, promising to call on his lordship the next morning, and inform him if he had been able to obtain any information on the subject.

"The chief kept his word, and the next day called on

his lordship, and told him he was sorry to say there was but little hope of his recovering the jewels, for he had no doubt the two men mentioned were the thieves, and he found they had succeeded in leaving Paris, the morning after the death of the countess, and that they were suspected of having taken other valuable property which had been placed in their custody.

"'But what steps do you advise me to take?" said his lordship. 'I cannot leave the city, for it is surrounded on all sides by the enemy; and yet it is extremely painful for me to remain here a prisoner while the villains who have perpetrated so foul a robbery are not only allowed to continue at liberty, but have ample time to dispose of their ill-gotten gain to the best advantage. Can you not advise me in the matter?'

"'I am personally unable to assist your lordship in any way,' said the chief. 'However, I have a friend in the city who is a powerful Enchanter, and he might assist you.'

"'In what way?' asked his lordship.

"'He is able,' said the chief, 'to rise in the air to any height he wishes. He has a magic chariot in which are placed divans, and on which he invites his friends to be seated. At a given signal he rises with them in the air,

and I have known him take as many as four or five persons merely on a voyage of pleasure. I know he has been requested by the general commanding in the city to take some dispatches with him to a friendly army about a hundred leagues distance, and he has agreed to do so. I have no doubt if you apply to him, showing him the great loss you have sustained, he will willingly take you and your two servants along with him. If he consents, it can be done without the slightest danger or difficulty, as all the armies in the world could not stop him in his course. If you will adopt this means to leave the city, I shall have much pleasure in taking your lordship to him.'

"His lordship gratefully agreed to follow the chief's suggestion, and they then left the hotel together to visit the Enchanter. In about an hour his lordship returned and informed me he had seen the Enchanter, and that the next day had been appointed for our leaving Paris.

"The next day we were true to our appointment and were conducted to a large square, where we found the Enchanter preparing his chariot for the flight. When I saw it I was struck with surprise, and could not help thinking, as I told you in opening my tale, how different and luxurious were the means adopted for our journey

from that employed by the roc when flying through the air with the illustrious Sinbad. No vile talons of a monstrous bird were fixed in our clothes, nor was our skin injured by its harsh claws. On the contrary, soft divans were placed for us to sit upon, and the whole journey, if we could escape the enemy, would be one of pleasurable excitement.

"The Enchanter received us with great courtesy and friendship, and invited us to take our seats. We did so, and the next moment we rose triumphantly in the air, and sailed calmly and easily away. The enemy surrounding the city saw us, and an alarm was given. Cannon were pointed at us, and hundreds of bomb-shells fired from mortars of enormous size as we passed over the head of the enemy; but not one reached us, all falling several hundred feet short of our chariot. Then we saw horsemen called out, who followed the chariot to seize us on our descent. The Enchanter who accompanied us looked on all these preparations with contempt, and even burst into fits of laughter at the volley of bomb-shells which were fired at us.

"'Poor fellows!' he exclaimed. 'They little know my power, and how absurd they are making themselves in their attempts to check it.'

"Onward we sailed through the air watching everything that was taking place beneath us. Rivers which were large and deep when near them, began to appear like threads, and huge trees like dwarf plants. Towns and villages we passed without number, till at length we arrived in a part of the country where the inhabitants were friendly to the French cause, and the Enchanter proposed we should descend. Of course we could offer no objection, and we gradually descended to the earth, where friends of the Enchanter were in readiness to receive us, and helped us to set our foot again on land.

"His lordship thanked him warmly for his great kindness, and begged he might be allowed to offer him some recompense or present for the benefits he had rendered him. This, however, the Enchanter declined, and we parted from him with many grateful thanks for the protection he had afforded us. His lordship determined to continue the same evening, without delay or rest of any kind, his journey to the capital of England, and there to take measures for the discovery of the thieves, and, if possible, to recover the jewels. No subject worthy of notice occurred to us on our road either by land or water, and the next evening we arrived safely at his lordship's palace in London.

"And now, my brethren," said Hassan, "my story for this evening is complete. To-morrow I hope to meet you all again, when I shall describe to you the wonderful adventures which took place in London for the discovery of the thieves, and restoration of the jewels, in which I shall relate an adventure I witnessed quite as wonderful as that of the lady whom the genie had shut up in a glass box at the bottom of the sea, as mentioned in the Arabian Nights. Till we meet again may the blessing of the Prophet be on you all."

VI.

OF AN ADVENTURE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

THE next evening Hassan arrived at the house of Mustapha somewhat earlier than usual. In fact, none of the guests had assembled, and even Mustapha himself was absent. Hassan seated himself on the cushioned divan near the house, and waited quietly till the others should arrive. One by one they dropped in, most of them saluting him courteously enough; others, wearing a somewhat stern expression of countenance, took but little notice of him. Hassan remarked these unfavourable symptoms, and attributed all to the interference of the spiteful Achmet, who, he considered, had taken this opportunity to show his legal knowledge and increase his importance in the eyes of the audience. After all, thought Hassan, he is but a

miserable thief-taker, who gives himself the air of a cadi. Why should I annoy myself about him?

Others now dropped in, and the same diversity of demeanour was noticeable among them—some saluting him courteously, others looking at him with suspicion. When the place was tolerably full of guests, Mustapha and Achmet entered the enclosure together. They then separated—Achmet, wearing a severe expression of countenance, seated himself on the divan, while Mustapha advanced towards Hassan.

"My brother," he said to him, "I beg you will take what I am about to say to you in good part. I find that many of the audience yesterday evening left the place with strong doubts on their minds as to the truth of your narrative; and the difference of opinion among them arose from the following cause:—If viewed as a piece of fiction, all would have considered your story highly ingenious, and you would have received nothing but praises. On the other hand, had they believed your adventures to be true, you would have been an object of great interest; even more so than if you had stated your story to be fabulous. But you must take care to avoid all appearance of exaggeration. The fact of the boy Isaac being able to hear through his eyes instead of his

ears was difficult enough for them to believe; but when you stated that he heard the lowest whisper at a distance of a hundred paces, I plainly perceived that grave doubts arose in the minds of your audience, and Achmet called attention to the subject, though, perhaps, in somewhat too harsh a tone. Again, when you told us about the enchanter rising in the air, it was a very difficult fact for us to believe. Now, don't you think your better policy would be to acknowledge the whole of your story to be fiction, and thus do away with the ill-feeling which among certain persons is evidently rising against you?"

"And I, in reply, O Mustapha, maintain that I have not said a word that was not perfectly true," said Hassan, "and I have no doubt, if you question other travellers who have sojourned in England and in Europe generally, they will admit the statements I have made to be perfectly within the range of possibility."

"Travellers proverbially see strange things," said Mustapha, smiling incredulously.

"No matter," said Hassan, "I maintain everything I have said, and everything I shall say, to be perfectly true and within the range of possibility; and I will not admit myself to be a liar, even to gain the favour of so conceited an upstart as Achmet."

"Take your own course, then," said Mustapha. "If anything unpleasant occurs, you will have only yourself to blame for it. You must admit I have given you fair warning." So saying, he lit his pipe, and, taking his accustomed place by the door, made a sign for Hassan to commence.

"When I left off my narrative yesterday evening," said Hassan, "his lordship, Isaac, and myself had just arrived in London. As it was late at night, we could take no steps for the discovery of the thieves till the next day. His lordship then sent to the office of the head of the police, and soon afterwards one of his officials waited on him. His lordship then shortly gave him the history of the robbery, and the persons he suspected of being the robbers, and asked the officer what steps had better be taken for their discovery.

"'Might I ask,' said the officer, 'how long it is since you believe the jewels to have been stolen?'

"'It is now about three weeks since these men surreptitiously quitted the French capital, and I am fully persuaded that they took the diamonds with them.'

"'I am afraid, then,' said the officer, 'there is but little chance of recovering the jewels. No doubt the

stones will have been taken from their settings and disposed of long before this. The thieves would be too wise to leave them as they were, as they might be identified; whereas, the unset jewels alone it would be almost impossible to trace with any certainty. All we can do, I am afraid, is to punish the robbers. At the same time, I will leave no stone unturned in trying to recover the jewels themselves.'

"'What do you propose doing?' said his lordship.

"'We must first offer a liberal reward so as to stimulate the energies of the different officials all over the country.'

"'Name any sum you require,' said his lordship, 'I leave you full scope to act as you please.'

"'In that case,' said the officer, 'if your lordship will give me a description of the jewels, and the personal appearance of the men, I will use every means in my power to give you full satisfaction—at least, so far as the law will go.'

"His lordship now sat down and wrote a description of the jewels, and then of the men, appealing to me from time to time to know whether he was describing their appearance correctly. When he had concluded, he placed the paper in the officer's hand, who

then took his leave, promising to call again the next day.

"The following morning the chief of the police himself called upon his lordship. On entering the room the latter said to him—

"'I sincerely hope you have brought with you good news. If you have not found the jewels I trust you have at least found the robbers, as I should consider it almost a sacred duty to bring such villains to justice.'

"'I am sorry to say, my lord,' said the chief, 'that I have not only not recovered the lost treasure, but up to the present moment I have received no intelligence of the thieves, nor have I the most remote idea where they are to be found. At the same time, I beg to submit to your lordship that I have not been idle. On the contrary, I have made great exertions to carry out your lordship's wishes, as well as to further the ends of justice; and I think your lordship, when I have reported all I have done, wlll admit I have not exaggerated my efforts. Since my subordinate saw you yesterday morning, I have sent out notices of the robbery, not only to every one of the many hundred cities, towns, and villages in England, but to those in Scotland and Ireland as well, and even to the different islands on the coast. The

collective distance of these different towns and villages to which the intelligence of the robbery has been sent, would possibly in the aggregate extend to a length exceeding the circumference of the world.'

"'You certainly have been most energetic,' said his lordship, 'but have you given a full description of the jewels which have been lost?'

"'Every word your lordship gave my officer yesterday has been fully published; besides the description of the men, even to the fact that Pierre had lost the first joint of the little finger of the right hand, and Smith had a small scar of a burn on the forehead.'

'"And in every one of our towns and villages,' said his lordship, 'am I to understand your agents are actively in search of the robbers?'

"'In all, your lordship,' replied the chief; 'the smallest village has one of my officials on the search; the larger ones more. In the principal towns they may be counted by scores, and in large cities by hundreds.'

"'And all these,' said his lordship, 'do I understand were ignorant of the fact of the robbery yesterday morning?'

"'An hour after your lordship had seen my subordinate not a word of the robbery was known to any other

than himself, always excepting your lordship and your servants.'"

Here the attention of the audience was arrested by Achmet rising from his seat, and, taking his pipe from his mouth, saying, with a stern voice—

"How long did you say it took the chief officer of the police to accomplish this tremendous amount of labour?"

"Less than twenty-four hours, O Achmet," replied Hassan.

It would be impossible to describe the indignant sternness visible on Achmet's countenance when he heard the answer, which was given with the most perfect coolness and self-possession.

"Insolent slave!" he said. "What right have you to impose your unblushing falsehoods on those assembled around you? Do you think that one among them is foolish enough to give credence to the statements you have uttered? If you had admitted them to be merely tales of wonder, of your own invention to amuse us, they would even then have been considered as exaggerated and preposterous; but to dare to pass such statements on us as facts is too much, at any rate, for my patience to bear. I, an experienced officer of the cadi, know full

well how difficult and tedious it is to forward important information to other towns, and I also know full well that to have accomplished what you have stated would have taken our cadi at least ten years of his valuable life, even when I was beside him to help him. And yet you dare pretend to say that an unbelieving dog, in a barbarous country like England, would have been capable of performing all these wonders in twenty-four hours. It is an insult to the whole of us, and one that merits severe chastisement."

So much fire and energy did Achmet display in making these remarks, that all his audience appeared electrified by it. They seemed, however, rather terrified at his anger than convinced by his reasoning. Possibly they might have taken Achmet's view of the case, had not their anger been somewhat cooled by the collected, candid, and self-possessed demeanour of Hassan. Nothing whatever abashed at Achmet's accusation, he stood calmly gazing at his accuser with a countenance, if not indicative of contempt, certainly of perfect indifference. Mustapha, with the spirit of a host who wished to keep good humour among his customers, then determined to play the peacemaker. He thought the better plan to screen Hassan from the anger of Achmet would be to

HASSAN CALMLY GAZING AT HIS ACCUSER. *Page* 152.

give him indirectly a hint how to escape it. Stepping forward, he said—

"Hassan, my brother, the anger of Achmet is perfectly natural, although doubtless you are undeserving of it. It has arisen from a fault of your own, for you forgot to say," he continued, looking significantly at Hassan the while, "that the head of the police was a powerful enchanter, and able to perform things far above the range of ordinary mortals."

"I meant nothing of the kind, O Mustapha," said Hassan. "The chief of the police was no more an enchanter than Achmet is a conjuror, and no one who knows him, not even his bitterest enemies, would dare to bring forward against him an accusation of the kind. But there is this difference between the administration of the police in England and Bagdad. In England, men best suited for the work, of perfect integrity and great intelligence, are chosen, which is far from being the case in Persia. I am sorry to be obliged to make this statement, but I have no alternative. You have bound me down to speak the truth, and I only obey your injunctions. Even I, with my wooden leg, from the short education I have had in England, would show ten times as much speed in carrying out the orders of the cadi, as Achmet would be

able to do with his two whole ones, even with his slippers off."

Hassan's answer, which was given with perfect coolness and self-possession, seemed to have a favourable effect on the audience. Although they said nothing they appeared to be rather pleased than otherwise, for Achmet seemed to be more feared among them than liked, and all felt gratified in seeing him so completely snubbed. On Achmet himself, Hassan's remark had a singular effect. It appeared to thrill through him. It is, indeed, no figure of speech to say that it seemed to have put his pipe out, for as soon as Hassan had concluded, he put the mouth-piece to his lips as a means of concentrating his thoughts, when to his intense disgust he found no longer any fire in the bowl. His annoyance was further increased by noticing a smile on the faces of the whole of the audience. He now fairly lost his temper. Advancing towards Hassan, and, clenching the pipe stem in his fist, he shook it in his face. He then endeavoured to speak, but his passion was so great it rendered him dumb, and he could not utter an articulate word. The smile on the countenances of the audience now increased to a laugh, and Achmet's anger became still greater. He made a movement as if to leave the enclosure, but

before fairly quitting it, he turned round, and stooping down seized a handful of sand from the ground, which he threw at Hassan, muttering at the time a Mohammedan malediction, and then turning round, he hurriedly left the enclosure. As soon as the excitement consequent on Achmet's behaviour had fully subsided, Hassan continued his narrative.

"Some days passed over without the chief of the police making his appearance. At last his lordship's patience became exhausted, and he sent me to the dwelling of the chief to ask him if he had received any intelligence of the thieves. He was not, however, in his office, and I left word requesting he would call on his lordship the next morning. He did so, and the lord, my master, asked why he had not called before.

"'My sole reason, your lordship, was that I had nothing to inform you of,' replied the chief. 'I have received no intelligence whatever respecting either the robbers or the jewels; and this without any want of energy or activity on the part of my officials. I firmly believe not one of the many thousands I have employed have neglected any opportunity for detecting the culprits. Altogether, it is one of the most extraordinary cases that

has ever come under my notice, but I strongly suspect the thieves must be still in France, for had they come to England, we should have found them long ere this.'

"'I hardly think they would have remained in France,' said his lordship, 'taking into consideration the desperate war now raging, and the likelihood of their losing the jewels.'

"'It certainly seems more probable they would have preferred England,' said the chief. 'However, as I said before, notwithstanding all our exertions, we have been unsuccessful in tracing them. At the same time, your lordship may rest perfectly assured the search shall be continued as actively as ever.'

"Another week passed over, but no intelligence whatever was received of the robbers, and his lordship began to despair of being able either to recover the jewels or punish the thieves. A second week followed, bnt with no better success, and his lordship now resolved to take no further trouble in the matter. As soon as Isaac heard this, he requested his lordship would allow him a week's holiday, as he wished particularly to visit his mother and sisters. His lordship, without any hesitation, not only granted his request, but gave him a purse containing five gold coins to take with him, which he

was to expend in any manner he considered most useful. Isaac gratefully thanked his lordship for his kindness, and then made preparations to depart the same evening, determining to travel all night so as to be able to arrive at his mother's home early the next morning.

"When Isaac took his seat in the chariot it was dark night, and he could not distinguish the countenances of his travelling companions, nor could he hear their conversation, his faculty of hearing having of course subsided with the daylight. He could, however, perceive that they were anxious to find one of their number who had not arrived, and they evidently began to despair of his joining them before the chariot started. At last, just as it was moving, the missing man arrived, and was received by his fellows with great cordiality He took his seat in a corner, directly opposite to the one in which Isaac was placed. Conversation was now carried on between the different passengers, but, it being night, Isaac was unable to tell what it was that interested them. Onward they went, occasionally stopping to take in other travellers, and then starting on again as rapidly as before. Isaac at last fell asleep, nor did he awake till dawn had begun to appear in the east. He then drowsily cast a glance on his fellow-passengers. All were fast asleep, and he

amused himself by looking round to discover what sort of people they were. He had some difficulty in making out to what class they belonged, except that they all seemed rather common than otherwise. The only one whose profession he could at all guess, was the man who sat opposite to him. He was dressed in the coarse blue shirt and trousers of a sailor, with a handkerchief tied loosely round his neck, and a clasp knife, fastened with a piece of cord, hanging from the waistband of his trousers. Of his face Isaac could judge but little, as the man wore a woollen cap which concealed his features nearly to the mouth.

"Deep as was the slumber of the passengers, this man's appeared still deeper, and it was evidently the result of utter exhaustion. From the little Isaac could see of his countenance, he could judge from its extreme pallor that the man was evidently in ill health, and this was further confirmed by his bursting into a distressing fit of coughing as soon as he awoke. While the cough continued, the sailor remained with his head bent over his knees, and his forehead, with the cap still over it, leaning on the palm of his hand. The noise of the cough awoke the other passengers, and they looked at him with pity marked on their countenances. They said

nothing, however, possibly from the fear that, should he answer them, it would increase his cough. After a time it subsided, and the sailor arose to a full sitting posture again, and, leaning back in the corner, waved with one hand an answer to his companions, who now asked if he were better. He soon after fell asleep again, his cap shading his face, but not to the same extent as before. The thought then occurred to Isaac that the shape of his face, as far as he could see it, was not unknown to him, but he could not bring to mind where he had seen him. He then turned his thoughts on his mother and sisters, and their joyful surprise when he should enter the house, as they had no idea of his intention to visit them. The other passengers, in the meantime, attempted to go to sleep again, and did so for a short time, and then they all woke up. One of them now asked Isaac how far he was going.

"'Not—much—far—ther,' he replied. 'I—have—some—miles—to—walk—when—I—quit—the—char—i—ot, but—I—ex—pect—to ar—rive at—home a—bout—nine o'—clock.'

"The questioner seemed somewhat surprised at Isaac's slow, deliberate way of answering, and seemed half inclined to think he was making fun of him. However, he

made no remark, but looked curiously in the faces of his companions, who also seemed surprised, but said nothing. But the most singular effect of Isaac's answer was upon the sailor who sat opposite to him. He first started, and then quickly pushing the cap from his eyes, drew it the next instant still further over his face than before, and pretended to fall asleep again in the corner. But, rapid as had been his movement, Isaac noticed it—the features, though pale and emaciated to a painful degree, strongly resembled those of the robber Smith.

"For some time Isaac hardly knew what steps to take. The sailor had evidently fallen asleep again, and he feared it would be cruel to awake him. More than once he was on the point of speaking, but this sentiment of humanity restrained him. He reasoned with himself on the folly of his suspicion. Smith had never been a sailor, at least he had never heard of his being at sea; he was a domestic servant, neither more nor less, and therefore could not be the individual now seated before him. He had almost convinced himself of the folly of his suspicions, when one of the passengers near him leant forward, and shaking the sailor by the knee, said to him,

"'Rouse up, old fellow. Here we are.'

"The sailor took no notice, but slept on till the chariot stopped. Another man then said,

"'I say, Smith, old fellow, here we are. If you don't get up we shall leave you behind, and go on without you.'

"Isaac was just getting out of the carriage when the name of Smith was mentioned, and turning round to cast one more glance at the sailor, he noticed one of the passengers snatch off his cap, saying jestingly as he did so,

"'I say, Smith, if you won't get out, you shall go on without your cap.'

"In a moment Isaac perceived on the sailor's forehead a small scar of a burn, and was fully convinced that he was the robber Smith. Not wishing to act precipitately, he stopped till the sailor had alighted, and then advancing to him said,

"'Don't—you—re—mem—ber—me?'

"'Don't make a fool of yourself,' said the sailor, coarsely. 'What do you mean by speaking to me in that stupid manner? Can't you speak properly?'

"This was said in so palpably disguised a tone of voice, that Isaac was now the more convinced of his man, and seizing him by the handkerchief round his neck,

held him a prisoner with all the strength he was master of. Smith (for it was he) in vain attempted to disengage himself, and the crowd looked on with great interest. Smith's companions also came up, and endeavoured to release the hold Isaac had taken of him, but not being able to do so, one of them, a burly ruffian, struck him a violent blow on the face, another tripped him up, and Smith himself, unclasping his knife, cut him across the fingers to a considerable depth. Poor Isaac was now obliged to relinquish his hold, and the ruffians, pushing the other passengers aside, made their way through them and escaped into the country, taking Smith along with them.

"For some time Isaac remained on the spot, faint and silent, and unable to proceed. Some charitable people came to him and wiped the blood from his face, and bandaged up his hand. He now deliberated what steps to take, whether to go back to town, or continue his journey on foot to his mother's house. At last he determined on the former, and for two reasons. First, he considered it his duty to inform his lordship of what had occurred, and in the next place, he feared if he attempted to walk he might faint by the road from the loss of blood. A chariot coming up at that moment

decided him, and paying the amount required for his passage, he returned to London, and shortly afterwards arrived at his lordship's palace.

"As may easily be supposed his lordship was much surprised to see Isaac, and the more so from the wounded condition he appeared in. He anxiously inquired the cause, and Isaac gave a description of all that had taken place. His lordship sent the intelligence to the chief of the police, naming the place where Isaac had parted from Smith, and impressing on him the likelihood of his being found somewhere in the neighbourhood.

"Isaac remained in town another week, his lordship expecting each day he would be called upon to give evidence in the judge's court, as we were all now certain, with the tremendous agency at work, that Smith would soon be taken. No such good fortune, however, attended us. In spite of all the efforts made, Smith was not to be found. On conversing on the subject with the chief of the police, his lordship inquired whether he had formed any conclusion as to the possibility of arresting the robbers, or recovering the jewels.

"'To the best of my belief,' said the chief, 'your lordship will never recover the jewels. There has evidently been a dispute between the two rogues, and they

have separated. Pierre has probably remained in France, while Smith has returned to England. Now it is not likely they would have separated without having divided the jewels between them, and if so, long before this they will have been sold.'

"'But Isaac says that Smith and his associates all seemed poor,' said his lordship.

"'Probably that may only be for appearance' sake on Smith's part,' said the chief, 'and to prevent detection, as none of the others were dressed as sailors. But possibly he may be poor, after all, for those men who are in the habit of swindling and cheating others, almost invariably become dupes of still greater rogues than themselves. But, however, my lord, you may rest assured we will still use all possible vigilance, and in the end I hope we shall succeed in bringing the villains to justice.'

"Another week passed, but Smith still remained at liberty. All efforts of the police to capture him were unsuccessful, and his lordship now again began to despair. Thinking it would be useless to keep Isaac any longer in town, and as his wounds were now healing, his lordship told him he could take his week's holiday if he pleased. Isaac gratefully accepted the offer, and having packed up his slight wardrobe, he started this time in the

morning, on his journey to his mother's house. To our surprise, however, about six hours afterwards he returned again, and with much excitement on his countenance, requested to speak to his lordship.

"'Well, Isaac, my boy,' said his lordship, in a tone of surprise, 'what brings you back again?'

"Isaac then gave his lordship a description of the adventures he had met with since he had left home. After he had arrived at the place the chariot started from, a poor woman, in breathless haste, rushed up to him, and asked whether he was not Isaac, the servant of his lordship.

"'I am,' was his reply. 'Why do you ask?"

"'Oh, I want you very particularly,' she replied. 'I saw you leave his lordship's house just before I reached it, and I've run after you here all the way. I come from a hospital for sick people, where a poor man much wishes to speak to you.'

"'What—po—or man?' asked Isaac.

"'The name he gave at the hospital,' said the woman, looking suspiciously at Isaac, 'was Johnson.'

"'What—does—he—want—me—for?' said Isaac.

"'He says he has a great secret to communicate to you, and hopes you'll come as quickly as you can, or he

may die before you arrive. I'm his sister. Now pray come with me, and do not delay. It will be an act of charity if you come, and God will bless you for it—' and here the poor woman wept so bitterly, that Isaac had not the courage to refuse her, and throwing over his intention to visit his mother, he accompanied the woman to the hospital.

"When he arrived at the hospital he was led to the bed-side of a man who was evidently dying, and whom, though with great difficulty, he recognised to be no other than Smith himself.

"'Isaac,' he said, when he saw him, 'I'm very glad you've come, for I have but a short time to live, and I wish before my death to make restitution for my offences as far as I can. Pierre and I stole the jewels from his lordship's cabinet, the night of his sister's death, during the time you were in her palace. Next morning we succeeded in leaving Paris, and two days afterwards arrived at a town called Havre. There we took our passage on board a ship about sailing for England, determining as soon as we arrived to sell the jewels, and divide the proceeds between us. However, Heaven was against us, and we did not succeed. All went on smoothly enough till the ship in the night had nearly

arrived in England, and when but a short distance from the shore, a large powerful ship sailing the contrary way ran against us with such a force, that it split our own almost asunder, and she filled with water and sank so rapidly that the greater part of the crew and passengers had hardly time to leap upon the other vessel to save their lives, the rest being drowned in the sinking ship. Pierre was among them, and as he had charge of the jewels, they sank too. I can now give you no further information on the subject, for I know nothing more. On my arrival in England, fearing his lordship would have found out the robbery, I bought some sailor's clothes as a disguise, having formerly been a sailor myself, and then joining some bad characters, we roamed about the country, cheating and robbing where we could. It was during one of these expeditions that I met you in the chariot, and you detected me. And now,' continued Smith, 'I can tell you no more. You must leave me, for I feel I shall soon die.'

"His lordship again sent to inform the chief of the police of what had taken place, who, after making inquiries, told him all Smith had stated was perfectly true as regarded the ship which had been lost, and that a magician had promised to go down to the

bottom of the sea, and inspect the sunken ship. Afterwards, he would send down his slaves, and take from it whatever was valuable. He would not, however, be able to do this for some few weeks, as he was then very unwell.

"His lordship immediately wrote to the Enchanter asking him whether I might accompany him on his descent, or whether he and his slaves were able to perform the feat alone. The Enchanter sent him a letter in reply telling him that he would allow his lordship or any friend of his to descend with him, but at the same time the visit, though unattended with danger, might prove very far from an agreeable one.

"As soon as his lordship had received this reply he called me to him, and said,

"'Hassan, my friend, I know you wished to see everything that is wonderful in our country, and if you please you may accompany me. The Enchanter is a good and powerful man, and can work many wonders, this among others. Now say, would you like to try the experiment?'

"'I should be most grateful for the opportunity, oh my master. You could not do your slave a greater favour.'

"'Then,' said his lordship, 'that is decided on. To-morrow I shall go down to the sea-coast, and wait till the Enchanter arrives. Make all necessary preparations for our journey, for we may have to remain there some time before all preparations are ready to descend to the bottom of the sea.'

"The following day we started for the sea-port, where the Enchanter was to join us. There we remained for some days, and during our stay his lordship was informed that the steward, or principal servant, of the sunken ship, whose duty it was to wait on the passengers, had arrived for the purpose of identifying, if possible, any dead bodies that might be taken from the ship, and to give directions as to where the different valuables were placed. His lordship requested to see him, and inquired if he remembered anything of two passengers, a Frenchman named Pierre, and an Englishman named Smith, who had been on board the ship. He replied that he remembered them well, his attention having first been called to them in consequence of a dispute they had before joining the ship, one accusing the other of wishing to leave him, and the other denying it. At last the Englishman, taking his companion by the arm, said, 'I suspect you intend to play me false, and I won't allow

it, so come on board with me you shall.' The Frenchman, seeing it was useless to resist, accompanied the other on board, and two beds were selected for them where they could lie down if they pleased. He remarked also that they had very little luggage, and that the Frenchman carried under his arm a package enveloped in oilskin, of which he seemed to take great care, and which, when he went to sleep, he noticed he placed under his pillow. The Englishman he knew had escaped, but he believed the Frenchman was drowned, at least he had seen nothing more of him.

"His lordship now asked the steward in what part of the ship the beds were placed, and several other questions tending to facilitate the discovery of the jewels, to all of which he gave a most satisfactory answer.

"The Enchanter now arrived. Before I was introduced to him I confess I felt some trepidation, but the moment I had seen him it entirely vanished, so kind and affable was his manner. There was no pretence of gravity about him, but on the contrary, it would be impossible for a person to be more inartificial and courteous than he was. He told us he proposed the next day to descend into the sea, to examine the condition of the sunken ship. His lordship also wished to

descend and inspect the wreck; but he happened at the time to be slightly indisposed, and therefore determined not to do so. He told me, however, that I could go down if I pleased, and I gratefully accepted the offer.

"We now left the shore in a large barge, and proceeded to the spot where the ship had sank. On our way I looked round for the glass bell in which I understood we were to descend, but not seeing it I ventured to ask the Enchanter how he could descend without it. 'I have no occasion to use it,' he replied; 'I am quite able to descend without it, and so will you be after I have visited the wreck. All I have to do is to wear a magic cap over my head, and I can move about at the bottom of the sea as securely as you can on the land.'

"We had now arrived at our destination, and the sunken vessel was directly beneath us. The Enchanter at once put on his magic head-dress and descended without difficulty. In a quarter of an hour he ascended again and told us that the vessel could easily be inspected, and there would be no danger.

"I now put on the magic cap and descended. After some little time I could perceive beneath me a form, which, the lower I descended, began more and more to

assume the appearance of the deck of a ship. At last I reached it, and a fearful sight met my eyes. Not only had the fine ship separated in two, but entangled in the cordage were several dead bodies, and among them that of a woman clasping a child in her arms. I looked especially for the body of Pierre, but it was nowhere to be seen. After inspecting the deck somewhat minutely, I ascended to the barge, and the two servants descended to search for the jewels, having been instructed by the steward in what part of the ship they were likely to be found. In less than a quarter of an hour, one of the men rose from the water, bringing with him a small package enveloped in oilskin.

"This was given to his lordship, who hurriedly opened it, and to his intense joy discovered it to be the jewels which had belonged to his sister. The man was now ordered to descend again and search in the cabin for the body of Pierre. He did so, and this time remained longer than before. At length both men made their appearance, and told us that they had been to every part of the ship below, and although several dead bodies were there, they could see none answering the description of Pierre. We now arrived at the conclusion that Pierre must have been washed away, and as Smith also was

dead, all further trouble or anxiety concerning the robbery was at an end.

"And now, my friends," said Hassan, "I shall wish you all good evening. I trust the little misunderstanding which took place between Achmet and myself will not in any way whatever alter the good feeling you have towards me. I assure you every word I have stated is true; were it not I should only have to own it as fiction, and I am sure your kindness would receive it good-humouredly. I have however, no inventive faculty, so that even were I inclined to impose on you, it would be useless to make the attempt. I hope to meet you all to-morrow in good health, and the adventure I shall have to tell you will be quite as surprising as the one just concluded."

VII.

OF ENCHANTED COTTON.

THE next evening Hassan, on his way to the house of Mustapha, began to feel considerable uneasiness lest he should have another misunderstanding with Achmet, whom he suspected to be a very vindictive and tyrannical character. The idea first crossed his mind whether it would be possible to pacify the man by making an apology; but on reflection he thought such a course would be derogatory, and he determined conscientiously to go on with his duty, and take no more notice of him than of any of the others present. The nearer he approached the house, the stronger became his nervous trepidation. When he reached it, there were but few persons present, but afterwards the others one by one dropped in. They all saluted him in so courteous and affable a manner as to

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show they evidently bore him no ill-will. However, neither Mustapha nor Achmet were present, and their absence presented a new source of anxiety to Hassan. Were they plotting together some plan to undo him, or was Mustapha attempting to pacify the intemperate Achmet? At last Mustapha entered the enclosure, and, with a look more of sorrow than of anger on his countenance, approached Hassan, and after saluting him with great cordiality, told him there would be no danger of his being interrupted by Achmet that evening, as he had refused to be present.

"I tried all I could to make friends between you," continued Mustapha; "but it was impossible. I have just left him, and he is still boiling over with rage, so let him stay till he cools down. You can begin now as soon as you please."

The intelligence that there was no probability of Achmet's being present that evening took a great weight off Hassan's mind. He was further supported by the glances of good humour those present cast on him after hearing of Achmet's absence. The fact was, Achmet was by no means a favourite with any of them, and his not being present was rather a satisfaction than otherwise. Mustapha's good humour also increased when he

noticed the friendly glances of his customers, for he was one of those who used the happy system so frequently adopted by innkeepers of harmonising their tempers with those of the majority of their customers. In fact, everything promised that evening to pass off pleasantly enough, and fortunately the promise was kept to the letter, not a circumstance occurring during the whole time to mar the pleasure of the meeting. On a sign from Mustapha, Hassan took his usual seat, and commenced his narrative as follows:—

"About a week after the adventures related last evening his lordship one day said to me: 'Now, Hassan, I have some news for you. A few mornings ago I received a letter from my poor brother-in-law, who I told you had been wounded and taken prisoner by the Germans. In his letter he informed me that he was now in great part cured, and that the commander of the army had kindly given him permission to return to Paris under condition that he did not again bear arms against them. On his arrival in Paris, his first effort was to visit his poor wife's tomb, and afterwards he made inquiries about the palace and effects left in it. The loss of the jewels he was well acquainted with, although when he wrote to me he

was not aware that I had succeeded in recovering them. He further told me he feared the dishonesty which had been practised on him was not confined to the jewels, as some valuable documents relating to his affairs were also missing. He considered it most probable that Pierre alone was guilty, as he was the only one who knew of the escritoire in which they were kept. He requested me to make every effort in my power to recover them, as they were of great value, and he should sustain a heavy loss unless he succeeded.

"'And I quite agree with him,' continued his lordship, 'that Pierre alone is concerned in the robbery of the documents, for if Smith had been mixed up in it, he would probably have confessed it on his death-bed, whereas he said nothing on the subject. How to assist my brother-in-law I know not. The only thing I can suggest is again to visit the ship, and if the men are still at work they may possibly be able to find some of the documents alluded to by my brother-in-law, as it is by no means likely Pierre left them in Paris. And I wish, Hassan, that you would accompany me in the visit to the Enchanter, as not only will you be useful to me, but I think you will be much interested in the proceedings carried on, and you will have another object of

wonder to relate to your countrymen on your return to Egypt.'

"I thanked his lordship for his offer, and then told him that wonders had succeeded each other with such rapidity since I had left my own country, that if they continued at the same rate I should have much difficulty in remembering them all, though each in its turn might possess as much interest as those in the history of Sinbad the Sailor.

"'Well,' said his lordship, 'I think I may venture to say that the proceedings which are at present taking place at the wreck are quite as wonderful as anything you have yet seen.'

"'But are they more so than any I have seen?' I said.

"'Yes, far more wonderful,' his lordship replied. 'Some of the feats which will be performed by the Enchanter will surpass the power he gave you of descending to the bottom of the sea without difficulty, and looking, without danger or impediment of any kind, around you. But to proceed to the business which calls me there. I wish more diligent search to be made for the documents which Pierre is imagined to have secreted, and which I was ignorant of at the time we recovered

the jewels. And now make all preparations, Hassan, for at noon we shall start on our journey.'

"Without any impediment we reached our destination at the seaport near the spot where the ship had sunk. Our first inquiry was whether the Enchanter was still there, and to his lordship's great satisfaction he found that he had not yet quitted the place, but was at that moment in the hotel. We immediately sought him, and his lordship, after telling him the object of his visit, asked how he had progressed since last we had seen him.

"'Somewhat unsatisfactorily,' was his reply. 'The fact is, since I have been away my servants have been idle, and neglected their work. We have suffered also from a great storm, which has disturbed the sand at the bottom of the sea to such an extent as not only to fill the ship, but threatens to impede navigation as well.'

"'Then,' said his lordship, 'I am afraid there is little chance of finding anything likely to throw light on the object of my visit.'

"'On that subject,' said the Enchanter; 'I will pass no opinion before hearing more of the matter. The steward of the ship has remained here for the purpose of identifying, if possible, any of the objects saved from the wreck. We had better ask him if he can tell us

anything on the subject. He will know, perhaps, whether the Frenchman had any luggage, as we have not yet brought up anything which appears to have belonged either to him or to his comrade. We have, however, been more occupied in saving the heavier portions of the cargo, and have already succeeded in landing more than fifty bales of cotton, which are now placed for safety in the stables at the back of the inn. We will at once see the steward and question him on the subject.'

"The steward presently arrived, and his lordship asked him whether Pierre the Frenchman or Smith the Englishman had any luggage with them.

"'The Englishman had none that I know of,' he replied; 'but now that you mention the circumstance I remember that the Frenchman had. At the time of his dispute with his comrade, when Smith accused him of wishing to leave the ship and separate from him, and the Frenchman insisted that he would not leave France, Smith said to him, "It is folly your attempting to go, for you will lose your box, and I'm sure there's something valuable in it." "My box is safe at the inn," said Pierre. "Nonsense," said Smith. "Half suspecting you intended playing me some trick, I determined to be beforehand with you, and gave an order to send your

box on board. And now you may leave me if you please, but you will first give me that parcel under your arm, for you don't take that with you." The Frenchman seemed stunned by the information that his box was on board, and made no further attempt to leave the ship, but told his companion he had no right to be suspicious of him, as he intended fair play, and would go to England if he wished it. I now left them, but presently some one touched me on the arm, and on looking round I saw it was the Frenchman. "I wish," he said to me, "you would get out that box, as I want to go on shore." "I'm too busy to attend to anything but my own work just now," I replied. "Look here," he said; "if you will help me to get that box so that I can go on shore, I will give you two gold pieces." Not liking to lose the offer, I said to the seaman who had charge of the hold that if he would get the box he should have one of the gold pieces the Frenchman had promised me. "Impossible," he replied. "I remember the box perfectly well. It is placed at the bottom of the hold, and it would take at least twenty minutes to get at it, and the ship is to sail in five. I'm sorry I can't assist you for my own sake as well as yours, but it's useless trying to do so." I told the Frenchman the reply I had received,

who, finding the box could not be obtained, sat down on one of the seats, and I did not again speak to him during the whole of the voyage.'

"His lordship now asked the Enchanter whether there would be any possibility of getting at the Frenchman's box.

"'I am afraid none whatever,' he replied. 'Even if we get the box it would be so completely destroyed by the tremendous power I am about to use against the ship, that in all probability the box and its contents would be annihilated. However, you had better remain till the operation is over, and see what the result may be.'

"'What steps do you intend taking?' asked his lordship.

"'I intend to blow up the whole of the wreck, and am making preparations for that purpose.'

"Noticing a look of surprise on my countenance, the Enchanter asked the cause.

"'I think I could hardly have understood you,' I said. 'Did you say you intended to blow up the ship?'

"'Certainly I did,' he replied.

"'But how do you know that the gunpowder it contains is not spoilt by the sea-water?' I said.

"'I am not aware,' the Enchanter replied, 'that the

ship has any gunpowder in it. And if it has, as you very justly suspect, it would all be spoilt by the sea-water.'

"'But supposing you put fresh gunpowder into the ship you would not be able to fire it,' I said. 'You cannot take a light below.'

"'On that point there may not be so much difficulty as you imagine,' he replied.

"'Have you the gunpowder here?' I asked.

"'No, I have not,' he said. 'But I intend using other materials.'

"'What materials have you in hand,' I asked, 'for such an operation?'

"'There are many at my choice,' he replied. 'I told you that there were several bales of cotton saved from the wreck, and in the inner parts they have not been damaged by the sea water, so I think I shall blow up the ship with some of that.'

"'You must be joking with your slave,' I said. 'How could you blow up the ship with cotton? Why of all things on earth I should consider nothing worse adapted for the purpose. When we want anything soft and smooth to the touch we use cotton, as it is more simple and inoffensive than other material. How is it then

possible that so great a power can be obtained from it as to burst a large ship, and that too with three parts of it buried in the sand?'

"'It's a fact for all that,' he replied laughing.

"'Then, doubtless,' I said, 'it is some material also called by the name of cotton, which bears no resemblance to that I am speaking of.'

"'So far to the contrary,' he said, 'it is identically the same. See it, and judge for yourself. There is a bale of it open in the yard, and you can perceive that it is the same cotton of which your shirt is made, nothing more or less.'

"'And do I understand then,' I said, laughing, 'that it would be possible to blow me to pieces with my own shirt?'

"'Possible, my dear fellow!' he replied, 'quite possible. I could tear your shirt into the finest pieces, and by my art endue them with such property that if you seated yourself on the little heap it would blow you to pieces.'

"Doubtless I looked very much surprised, for what he had told me seemed incredible. In fact, much as I respected him, I should not have given the slightest credit to the statement had I not encountered so many

wonders since I left Egypt, as almost to make me admit the possibility of this. Before I recovered my surprise one of his servants came into the room bringing with him something in a box.

"'In that box,' said the Enchanter, 'is the cotton with which my first attempt to blow up the ship will be made. We are now going off in a barge, and if you like to accompany us you will see the result.'

"Of course I accepted the invitation. We went on board the barge, and a short time afterwards rowed to the spot where was the sunken ship. Some men went down with the cotton, and remained beneath the water for perhaps half an hour, and then coming again to the surface they entered the barge, which put off for a short distance.

"'Now tell me, Hassan,' said the Enchanter, 'have you any further doubt on the matter?'

"'It is not for me,' I replied, 'to cast a doubt on your statement, but still it appears incredible. And even supposing the cotton has power to explode and burst the ship to pieces, I don't see how it is you can do it. It must be a very difficult thing to set it on fire.'

"'The easiest thing in the world,' he replied. 'Any child might do it.'

"I shook my head, but said nothing.

"'Nay, I mean what I say,' he continued, 'and to prove it, Hassan, you may do it yourself if you like.'

"'I don't see in what way,' I said, 'for I am neither enchanter nor conjurer.'

"'You may be in this instance,' he said, 'and I will give you a proof of it. When you wish the powder to explode, just touch that little piece of brass. Do it either this moment, or any time within a quarter of an hour, so that you may be certain no one knows when you intend to touch it, and at that moment the explosion will take place.'

"Breathless with anxiety, I stood beside the little brass instrument, and remained so for about five minutes, when I suddenly touched it, and the next moment a violent commotion took place in the water as if rushing up from one common centre, and then large masses of wood and fragments of boxes and casks were seen floating about, all proving that a terrible explosion had taken place, which had been caused solely by my gently pressing with my finger the little piece of brass pointed out to me. I looked with astonishment and fear at the Enchanter.

"'What did I tell you, Hassan?' he said. 'You see

the effect you have produced. I will now send a man down to see the state the ship is in, but I suspect it is pretty well blown to pieces. At least there cannot be much of it left.'

"'Will you not send some one to inspect it?' I asked.

"'It would be useless now,' he replied, 'for the water will be so thickly mixed with the sand just blown up, that it would be difficult for any one to see. We must wait a little while before sending any one to inspect it.'"

Here a man in the audience, putting down his pipe, inquired whether there were any other enchanters in England who could do such great feats as the one Hassan had conversed with.

"I made inquiry of his lordship," replied Hassan, "and he told me there were many; and that the feat was so common among them they considered it was nothing extraordinary. Their power was so great they could ignite gunpowder at a mile's distance, and that the people in that country were so accustomed to these wonders, that they considered them as circumstances of everyday occurrence."

"Mashallah! that is wonderful if true," said the man.

Mustapha was on the point of saying something to

support Hassan's statement, but it seemed to him so improbable he hardly knew what remark to make, and wisely held his tongue.

"In consequence of the turbid state of the water," said Hassan, continuing his narrative, "his lordship and the Enchanter determined to return to land, the latter leaving some of his servants to carry on the operations as soon as the sand had settled, and with orders that should they find anything that seemed to belong to the luggage of Pierre they were to send it on shore. Quitting the barge used by the servants, we entered another and returned to the shore. I seated myself in the prow, his lordship and the Enchanter in the stern. For a considerable portion of the way my mind was so preoccupied with the wonders I had seen, that I was totally oblivious to all passing around me. How it was possible that such great effects could have been obtained with so slight trouble puzzled me exceedingly. That the Enchanter was possessed with magic spells of enormous power there could be no doubt; but I could not help asking myself whether he might not be in league with good or evil genii. It seemed impossible that Allah would have placed such wondrous power in the hands of a mortal if the power did not come

from Him. But how was it obtained? Then my own share in the proceedings came vividly before me, and troubled my conscience exceedingly. I had by merely a slight movement of my finger created an explosion as strong as could have been produced by a flash of lightning—nay more, for lightning could not have struck as deep down into the water, and produced such fearful effects. Could I in any manner be under the influence of an evil genie? If so, what would be my fate? Then, on the other hand, I asked myself to what purpose is the power of the Enchanter used? Is it for good or evil? It was for good, there could be no doubt. All that he was doing was to benefit his neighbours, and thus he could not be acting under the influence of an evil genie, nor could the act I had committed in causing the tremendous eruption have been a wicked one.

"This train of thought continued till we were near land, when lifting up my eyes I noticed his lordship and the Enchanter watching me attentively, and with a slight smile on their countenances. They said nothing however, and I, dreading to appear ridiculous, threw off, by an effort, my fit of abstraction, and conversed the remainder of the way with the boatmen on ordinary subjects.

"The boat at last reached the land, and we proceeded to the inn, where I shut myself in my bedroom, there to conjure up again the current of thought which had occupied my mind during the time I was in the boat. I was now completely convinced that the Enchanter was a good man, and consequently I need not fear further investigating and taking part in his operations. Still, could he have deceived me, if only for the sake of jest (for I believed him to be too honourable a man to have deceived me in any serious manner), in saying that the material which had exploded in so mysterious a manner was nothing more than cotton such as my shirt was made of, yet by some process of his own endowed with miraculous powers? Possibly, I thought, after all, the cotton is of some peculiar quality, grown in some part of the world I am unacquainted with, and has the power of igniting spontaneously, almost at the will of man. True, I had never heard of any material of the kind, but since I had left Egypt I had experienced many things which taught me how circumscribed was my knowledge before I commenced my travels, and how much existed in this world, which I should have imagined to have been impossible.

"At last I remembered the Enchanter had stated there

were several bales of cotton in the stables at the back of the inn, and I determined to proceed thither at once, and bring some of the cotton away and try experiments with it in my own room. I then went to the stables, and saw two of the bales had been opened and a quantity of cotton extracted from the interior. This seemed to corroborate the Enchanter's statement that the cotton which had been saved from the wreck had been used for the explosion. Taking up a handful I returned to my room, and, having produced a light, I took a few threads of the cotton, and holding it with a pair of tongs as far distant from my person as possible, held it to the candle, expecting to be startled by a smart explosion. None, however, took place. The cotton burnt as quietly and inoffensively as in a common lamp. I now took a greater quantity, but the same result followed. I then increased the quantity, this time taking the whole of what I had brought from the stable, but nothing extraordinary occurred—it burnt and smouldered away without producing the least interesting or surprising effect.

"I was now fairly puzzled: the thing was altogether above my comprehension, so at last I determined to defer all further consideration till I returned to London,

when I would make inquiries of his lordship, whose kindness and patience I knew to be inexhaustible.

"The next morning his lordship told me they intended again to visit the vessel. As the water was now getting clearer the boatmen had descended, and recovered from the wreck some portion of the luggage and different articles they had found. Among the latter were some parchments in the French language, and evidently relating to legal subjects, but they were not sufficiently explicit to allow his lordship to arrive at any decided conclusion whether they belonged to his brother-in-law or not.

"We now left the shore in company with the Enchanter, and shortly afterwards arrived at the spot where the servants were at work. They had recovered several other relics, but none of any great importance, nothing, in fact, likely to clear up the doubt which existed in his lordship's mind. I questioned the Enchanter respecting the effects of the explosion, but he answered my queries in what I believed to be a half joking sort of way which somewhat annoyed me. He said the explosion had been a very violent one, and that the whole ship had been nearly destroyed; that I was a wonderful man to accomplish such feats by merely

moving my finger, and several other remarks of the kind. Judging from my features that I was rather annoyed at his manner, he said, still joking with me in a kind manner,—

"'Hassan, my dear fellow, I begin to suspect you are yourself a conjurer, as from what my servants tell me they have never seen effects so terrible as those produced yesterday by so slight a cause. Sinbad himself never did anything to equal it. If you doubt what I say I will lend you my magic cap, and you can again descend to the bottom of the sea and judge for yourself the wonderful enchanter you really are.'

"Although somewhat nettled at his tone and manner I accepted his offer. I put on the cap, and descended to the bottom of the sea. Certainly I was greatly surprised at what I saw. An earthquake could not have shattered more completely the huge hull of the ship than I had done—for I felt convinced I had performed the feat myself, although I had received the power from the Enchanter. There were great masses of iron broken into pieces, great beams of wood and passengers' luggage crushed to splinters, the sides of the ship driven out, and the sand which had collected round the hull of the ship so completely dispersed that the remains of the ship

seemed to lie almost as if in a basin. I looked round for some time to see if I could bring any article away with me, and at length found a piece of parchment which I took with me into the boat and presented it to his lordship, who, before examining it, placed it in the sun to dry.

"'And now, friend Hassan,' said the Enchanter to me, 'are you not convinced what a wonderful man you are? Why, you are as great an enchanter as I am, and possibly may become greater when you have had my experience.'

"'But I am afraid you cannot give me your power,' I said. 'How would it be possible for a poor man like me to work such wonders as you can perform?'

"'I gave you the power in your hand,' he replied; 'and you performed it with the greatest facility. All you had to do was merely to touch the piece of brass, and it was done. Could anything be simpler or more wonderful?'

"'And was my wish all that was required to create such tremendous effects?' I asked.

"'All, with the exception of touching the piece of brass,' he replied.

"'Then I now wish the ship should be restored whole

and sound as she was when she left France,' I said—and immediately touched the brass.

"The vessel, however, did not rise to the surface, nor was there the slightest disturbance in the water.

"'Have I not now proved you are jesting with your poor slave?' I said. 'You have not given me the power you stated; but only allowed me to use a limited portion of your own. And that even without permitting me to know how it was accomplished.'

"'Hassan,' said the Enchanter seriously, 'you are a cleverer fellow than I took you to be, and not easily imposed upon. I admire you for your shrewd common sense, and practical turn of mind. But in return for the jest I have passed on you I will teach you some of my secrets, and those so powerful that the wonders performed by the most eminent genie mentioned by Sinbad, shall appear trifling and contemptible beside them. Now, remember I am not joking with you at present. I mean to the letter what I say, and when you return to Egypt you shall be possessed with knowledge of a more wonderful description than any man who has lived there since the days of the Prophet. I see you appear incredulous; but I am serious, and his lordship will tell you I am not a man to make a promise and then fail to keep it.'

"'You need be in no doubt on the subject, Hassan,' said his lordship. 'The lessons, however, cannot be given you at present, for I must return to London to-morrow. My friend the Enchanter has promised to pay me a visit, and then you will be able to profit by his instructions.'

"I thanked his lordship for his kindness, and no more was said on the subject.

"And now," said Hassan to the audience, "I will defer till to-morrow evening the wonderful secrets which the Enchanter taught me, which are greater than any of the wonders mentioned in the history of Sinbad the Sailor, or in the other parts of the Arabian Nights."

VIII.

OF BOTTLED LIGHTNING.

WHEN Hassan, the following evening, arrived at the enclosure, he found it already filled with an interested and intelligent audience. This, at first, pleased him much, but upon looking round his pleasure was somewhat modified, as he perceived among them his enemy, Achmet, wearing on his countenance a sullen and vindictive scowl. Hassan, determining, if possible, to make friends with him, advanced towards him, and addressed him in a friendly manner.

"It gives me great pleasure to see you here, O Achmet! for I was afraid I might have offended you the last time you were present."

"Oh dear no!" said Achmet, spitefully. "I have too much self-respect to feel any personal offence at a mere story-teller, no matter how talented he may be."

"I trust it is not indisposition then that has kept you away?" said Hassan.

"Oh, no!" replied Achmet. "I have never been better in my life than since I last saw you. I kept away solely from the annoyance I felt at having such trivial and impossible tales as those you have narrated palmed on me. Others possessed of greater simplicity than me may believe you as much as they please; I, on the contrary, have sufficient ability and experience to estimate you at your true value."

"If you hold me in such contempt, then," said Hassan, "why are you here to-night?"

"Because from what I have heard I judge that the tale you narrated yesterday evening exceeded in monstrous improbability anything you have hitherto had the impudence to utter. I came this evening, as I hear you have promised to narrate an adventure even more improbable than the one you told yesterday. I should have thought that to have been the summit of impudence, as far as lying was concerned; but my curiosity has been aroused at the idea that you could surpass it."

Hassan's good-nature gave way under this insult.

"You may apply any opprobrious name you please to

my narrative of yesterday. For all that, I maintain every word I uttered was not only within the range of probability, but perfectly true. Nay, more, I will this evening, in the course of my narrative, relate wonders even still more surprising, and which, in their turn, shall be indisputable facts."

"Might I ask," said Achmet, with a sneer, "what those wonderful facts may be?"

"Merely," said Hassan, in an indifferent tone, "that I went out in the fields with a kite, and seeing a thunder-cloud come over my head, I amused myself by catching a flash of lightning and bottling it, so as to be able to keep it handy till I should find a use for it."

"Impudent wretch!" exclaimed Achmet, "such a statement passes the bounds of human patience. My brothers," he continued, addressing the audience, "how is it posssible you can sit quietly by and hear such outrageous improbabilities offered as stern facts? Why it's an insult to your common sense, and if you had half my spirit you would all fall on the wretch and drive him out of the city. I am sorry to say the Cadi is indisposed, so that it will be impossible to bring the subject under his notice at present, but I will do so the first opportunity."

Here Achmet paused for a few moments, to see whether the audience would take any steps in the matter. Finding, however, that their curiosity was greater than the offence (if any) that they had received, he rapidly turned round, and left the enclosure. Mustapha saw, however, or at least thought he saw, that Achmet's words had not been without a certain effect on the audience, and by way of smoothing anything like ill-feeling which might arise, he said—

"I think it very possible Achmet may have misunderstood our friend Hassan. The wonderful feat he imagined he performed was done by the Enchanter, not by himself, and as enchanters have indisputably the power of doing things impossible to ordinary mortals, we have no right to doubt his word."

"I mean to say," said Hassan, calmly and clearly, "that although I acted under the instructions of the Enchanter, I caught the flash of lightning and bottled it myself; so let there be no mistake about the matter."

Poor Mustapha, finding he had done no good, retreated to his old spot at the door, and Hassan, taking his accustomed place, commenced his narrative.

"The day after the adventure I related last evening,

I returned with his lordship to London. On our arrival we found a letter from Isaac awaiting us. In it he expressed great gratitude to his lordship for the kindness he had shown to his family. He had already commenced preparations, he said, for their departure, having found a tenant for the cottage, who agreed to pay them liberally for the furniture, as well as for the vegetables and flowers in the garden. They hoped therefore at the end of the week to arrive in London, where they would profit by his lordship's kind offer, and take up their abode in his palace till the departure of the ship.

"Nothing worthy of notice passed during the week, and, on the appointed day the widow and her family arrived in London. Their first wish was to visit the ship in which they were to reside for so many months. Feeling great curiosity to know in what manner they would be provided for, I asked his lordship's permission to accompany them.

"This he readily agreed to; and the next day we all went down to a large harbour, or dock as it is called in that country, to inspect the ship. It was of immense size; in fact, one of the largest I had ever seen in my life. Everything on board, however, seemed in a state of bustle and confusion; yet, after watching the movements

of the crew and other persons engaged, perfect order and system was to be traced everywhere. The cabins, which were being fitted up (for his lordship had already given orders on the subject) appeared very small, but a little consideration taught me they were sufficient for the purpose, and from the handy arrangements made, the inconvenience arising from want of space had been greatly diminished. Isaac and Saba seemed delighted with all they saw. It was curious to observe Rachel's behaviour on the occasion, and the clever manner in which she made herself acquainted with everything in the cabin, and where all the different articles were placed. In fact, I am convinced that when we left the ship there was no one among us to whom the arrangements for their accommodation were better known than herself.

"Our inspection of the ship over, we deliberated whether we would go at once to the house of the merchant, who sold the articles required for the voyage, or return to the palace. Isaac was for making the purchases at once, but his mother, with great good sense, proposed deferring it until we had informed his lordship of what had taken place. Although I admired her delicacy of feeling, I proposed to make some alteration in her suggestion, and advised that we should go to the

merchant's house, not to buy, but merely to ask if he would give us a list of what things would be necessary for the voyage. We could then show it to his lordship, and take his opinion on the subject. The list was given us, but so numerous were the articles it contained, that I began to suspect their cost would far exceed what his lordship had anticipated. At the same time it was for him to make what exceptions he thought fit.

"The next morning his lordship sent for me to give him an account of what had taken place the day before. I told him we had seen the ship, and much admired all its arrangements, and that the poor widow and her family were in high spirits at the idea of the voyage they were so soon to undertake. I also gave him the list of things which would be required. He merely glanced at it, and placed it on the table without making any remark. He now asked me my opinion of the ship, and the accommodation it offered, and whether I thought the passengers would be happy on board. In answering his question I spoke so enthusiastically in favour of all I had seen, that it almcst seemed as if I wished it had been my good fortune to be one of the passengers. His lordship noticed it, and said,—

"'Why, Hassan, you speak so warmly about it, I am

almost inclined to think you would like to make one of the party; is that the case?'

"'Pardon me, my lord,' I said, 'but I acknowledge that were it not for certain reasons, the idea of a voyage of the kind would possess great attractions for me. As it is, I have greater inducements to keep me in England.'

"'And what may they be, Hassan?' asked his lordship.

"'Gratitude for the many favours I have received from your lordship,' I replied, 'as well as the wish that I may be able to prove my gratitude by being of further service to you."

"'That's very prettily said, Hassan,' he replied, 'and I am obliged to you for your good feeling. At the same time, tell me candidly whether, in case I could spare you, or that you could be of any use to me by undertaking the voyage, you would object to go?'

"His lordship's question corresponded so well with my feelings that I was on the point of replying, possibly, with too much enthusiasm. Restraining myself, however, I said:

"'I candidly confess that did I know I could in any manner benefit or please your lordship by the voyage, I would go readily, and the more so, as I acknowledge

the idea of visiting a country on the other side of the world has great charms for me.'

"'Then, Hassan, we may as well consider the matter settled. I have this morning received intelligence that makes me believe you might be of great use to me, greater perhaps than any other person I could employ on a mission of the kind. The Enchanter has sent me some scraps of parchment saved from the wreck, which evidently formed part of the papers lost by my brother-in-law. Although they may be valueless in themselves, it proves, at any rate, that the villain Pierre has not got them in his possession, and can therefore make no use of them. I have also received a visit from the chief of the police, who has brought me some information respecting Pierre. He tells me that a Frenchman strongly resembling his description took passage on board a ship at Liverpool, which sailed for the town Isaac and his family are going to. Now it appears to me that if you were to go by the same ship, you might be of great use to the widow and her family on the voyage, and when you arrive you could make inquiries respecting Pierre.'

"'Your lordship does not then consider that Pierre was drowned?' I said.

"'From what I tell you,' he replied, 'it would appear

not. We know perfectly well that although several dead bodies were found in the ship, not one in any manner resembled Pierre; and as Smith and others contrived to save themselves, it is possible Pierre did so as well. The head of the police seems almost certain on that point; and, if he is alive, I am determined to spare no expense or trouble to bring the villain to justice. Now if you would like to make the voyage, you can go with Isaac and his family. But give me an answer at once.'

"Without any hesitation I accepted his lordship's offer. He then took up the list of things required for the voyage, and told me not only to purchase in his name all the things mentioned in it, but as many as I should require for myself.

"During the next four or five days the widow's family and myself were busy in making preparations for our voyage. In fact, so fully were our minds occupied, that I had quite forgotten the promise of the Enchanter to teach me how to perform the wonderful feat I have mentioned. Possibly my forgetfulness might, in part, have arisen from the fact that I had seen nothing of him from the time of my last visit to the wreck. One morning, however, about a week after that date, his lordship informed me that the next day he expected a visit from

the Enchanter, and that he would then remind him of the promise he had made to teach me some of the wonderful feats he was able to perform.

"'But does your lordship really believe so learned a man will take the trouble to teach so ignorant an individual as myself?' I said.

"'As he made you the promise,' he replied, 'I am fully persuaded he will perform it. I know him well, and a more honourable man it would be difficult to meet with. So on that subject make yourself perfectly secure, Hassan.'

"'But will he be able to teach me before I leave England?' I asked. 'Your lordship must remember the time is rapidly drawing near.'

"'True, Hassan,' he replied. 'But I have not the slightest doubt he will have time to keep his promise, and when you return to your native country you will be able to tell them you have performed a feat which all the most wonderful enchanters of Arabia and Persia and China put together, have never been able to perform.'

"'Does your lordship then know what the feat is?' I inquired—for at that time I was not aware what it was.

"'I believe,' replied his lordship, 'the power he intends to put into your hand, is to catch a flash of lightning and

keep it in a bottle till all is in readiness for you to ignite a mine, charged with fragments of some old shirts, beneath a large rock.'

"'Is your lordship not joking with me?' I said.

"'No, Hassan, nothing can be farther from my thoughts,' he replied.

"'And is such a feat possible?' I asked.

"'Not only possible,' he replied; 'but when you exploded the mine, charged with cotton, in a wreck, it was lightning you used for the purpose.'

"I stared at his lordship, open-mouthed, thinking he must be making a fool of me; but there was an appearance of such perfect gravity on his countenance as to negative the supposition. Finding I made no remark he said,—

"'You seem surprised, Hassan; but what I tell you is perfectly true. When you touched the little brass nob you liberated the lightning the Enchanter had prepared, and it immediately, obeying his instructions, exploded the cotton, and you know with what effect.'

"'When did he catch the lightning?' I asked. 'There were no thunder-clouds about that I remember for some time before that explosion took place.'

"'He did not catch the lightning in the cloud, Has-

san,' his lordship replied. 'He prepared it himself the morning of the explosion.'

"'Made the lightning himself!' I stammered rather than said. So puzzled was I at his lordship's words that I could hardly believe them; and yet, knowing what an honourable and intelligent man he was, to disbelieve him seemed almost an act of folly. 'Do I understand you,' I continued, 'that he has the power of making lightning?'

"'That is what I mean,' he replied. 'Although occasionally it is called by a different name, it is neither more nor less than lightning—the same lightning that you will, under his directions, draw from the cloud, and keep bottled up till it is wanted for use.'

"'Might I ask,' I said, 'in what way I shall be able to draw it from the cloud? I shall never have the courage to do it. Why, it seems positively warring against the laws of the Prophet even to contemplate it. An operation of the kind must also be attended with terrible danger, and if Allah were to be displeased with us for making the attempt, my experiment might bring destruction on us all.'

"'My dear fellow,' said his lordship, 'nothing in the world is easier or more simple. Any child might do it; that is to say, aided by the instructions of the Enchanter.

He will go with me the day after to-morrow to my castle in the country, and you shall accompany us, when, if the weather is as hot there as it is here, there will, no doubt, be thunder-clouds about. When we find one well charged with lightning, we will take some simple instrument, in all probability a boy's kite, which will answer the purpose better than anything else.'

"'A boy's kite, my lord?' I said. 'Surely not one of those playthings with which boys amuse themselves by flying them in the air?'

"'That is exactly what I mean, Hassan,' he replied. 'And as you seem to throw some doubt on my words, the experiment shall be performed with one. The Enchanter will give the kite the power, not only to catch the lightning, but to send it down the string used for raising it, which shall be attached to a bottle standing near you. But I perceive it is of no use talking to you, Hassan,' he continued, 'for you appear bewildered, and as I am busy, you had better now leave me. When the Enchanter arrives we will go down to my castle together, where I hope in the course of a few days we shall be able to try the experiment.'

"With my mind but little at ease, I left his lordship, and endeavoured to occupy myself in considering what I

should require for the voyage to Australia, and where I should make my purchases. But try all I would, my thoughts incessantly reverted to the subject of my conversation with his lordship. Great as was the faith I had in his honour, I could hardly realize the truth of the promise he had made me. It seemed too stupendous a feat for human agency to accomplish, for you must remember it was not the Enchanter who was to perform it, but that he was to place the power in my hands after he had instructed how it was to be done. I argued with myself that his lordship had never yet promised anything he had not performed, and I had no right to doubt his word on the present occasion. Still doubts, in spite of all I could do, continued to rise thickly in my mind. The following day I went with Isaac to inspect the manner the carpenters were fitting up the cabin of the ship for his mother and sisters, and also to give instructions for my own accommodation. But during the whole of the time I was on board the ship, so perpetually did my anxiety respecting the feat I was about to perform occupy my mind, that when I left, had I been asked what had been the conversation which had passed between me and the ship's carpenter, I should have been unable to give a satisfactory reply.

"The next day my mind continued equally ill at ease, and, on the third, my anxiety had increased to such an extent that I resolved again to address his lordship on the subject. And this required no little courage on my part, for it was a rule in the establishment that no servant should disturb him, or approach him unless sent for. Fortunately, however, this disagreeable alternative did not arise, for in the morning, just as I was trying to summon up my courage, a message was brought me that his lordship wished to see me, which I immediately obeyed. On entering his room, he said to me,—

"'I have sent for you, Hassan, to inquire how the preparations for the voyage of the poor widow and her family are progressing, for remember that on your shoulders I place all the responsibility for their being satisfactorily carried out, and that nothing is left wanting that can contribute to their comfort.'

"'I believe all things are progressing in the manner your lordship would wish,' I replied.

"'But why are you not certain on the subject, Hassan?' his lordship asked.

"'Candidly, my lord, I have no better authority for saying so than the statement of Isaac and his mother on the subject.'

"'And why not?' said his lordship.

"'I trust your lordship will forgive his poor servant, when he says that his mind has been so occupied with the promise your lordship made him, that he should be taught how to catch and bottle up a flash of lightning, that he has been unable to think of anything else.'

"'You are very impatient, my friend,' said his lordship, laughing; 'but I trust in a few days your anxiety will vanish, for the Enchanter is about to return to town, and when he arrives, as soon as he hears of the probability of a thunder-cloud being in the neighbourhood of my castle, we will all go down together, and you shall have the power placed in your hands, so as to be able to say you performed the feat yourself.'

"So far from his lordship's remarks in any manner smoothing away my anxiety, they rather tended to confirm it.

"'Did I understand your lordship to say,' I inquired, 'that when the Enchanter receives notice that a thunder-cloud would be likely to appear in the neighbourhood of your castle, we shall visit it the following day?'

"'That is what I stated, Hassan,' his lordship replied. 'Have you any remark to make on the subject?'

"'Truly, your lordship, there are two points connected

with it which appear obscure to me. In the first place, is it possible that the Enchanter by any means can receive information when a thunder-cloud is likely to be in the neighbourhood of your castle, and that in time to meet it on your arrival?'

"'That is what I said, Hassan,' his lordship replied. 'At the same time I should make a little reservation, and admit that sometimes he is disappointed. However, this so rarely happens that you may take it almost as a certainty that we shall arrive at the castle in time to meet it. And now, what is the other question you wish to ask, for I see you have something on your mind?'

"'If,' I replied, 'the Enchanter was capable of making the lightning that burst the sunken ship at the bottom of the sea, how is it that he is unable to make lightning on the present occasion?'

"'He would be quite able to do it,' said his lordship, 'but that was not altogether the question. You remember that he was to teach you, or to give you the power to catch a flash of lightning from the cloud, and carry it about in a bottle where you please. If you still wish to perform the feat, say so; if not, we need have no further conversation on the subject.'

"As his lordship pronounced these last words in a

somewhat angry tone, I thought it better to change the conversation, and I inquired if he had any particular instructions to give with respect to Isaac, or on any other matter. He told me he had none whatever, except that I was to see no time was lost in getting everything ready for the voyage.

"On the third day after my last-mentioned interview with his lordship, he sent for me. On entering the room he said, kindly,—

"'I have, at last, some good news for you, Hassan. My friend the Enchanter, who returned to town yesterday, has this morning called on me, to tell me, that in all probability a cloud charged with lightning will pass near my castle to-morrow, and that we had better leave London to-night. He told me more. He says, that having heard when he was last at the castle that I had expressed a wish that a rock about a mile from it, which overhung a road, should be destroyed, he has ordered a mine to be prepared so as to blow it up.'

"'Will he use gunpowder on the present occasion?' I inquired.

"'No, Hassan, he will use no gunpowder,' his lordship replied. 'Having heard that you doubted whether the cotton he employed, which blew up the sunken ship, was

not of a particular description, carrying with it explosive powers, he has made that which he will now use from some old cotton garments which have been torn into small filaments for the purpose.

"'And with such material as that he expects to be able to burst the rock asunder?' I asked.

"'No,' his lordship replied, 'for he intends to allow you to do that. After you have bottled the lightning, you will have to carry it to a sheltered spot near the rock, and from thence direct it to a material placed in the mine, and the result will be, if I do not very much mistake, that the rock will fly in pieces as certainly as if I dashed yon glass goblet on the ground. But, however, Hassan, I cannot talk longer with you now. Make preparations for our departure this evening, that we may arrive in good time at my castle.'

"In the evening, all things being ready, we started on our journey to the castle. From the time of our quitting his lordship's palace till we arrived at our destination nothing occurred worthy of especial remark. His lordship being somewhat fatigued with the journey, retired to bed; while I, as it was broad daylight, amused myself by strolling about the fields, admiring the beauty of the scenery. The object of our visit then came across my

mind, and the idea, in spite of myself, continually recurred that the Enchanter was jesting with me. This possibly arose from the fact that not a cloud was to be seen, and therefore it would be impossible to catch the lightning which he had promised me I should have the power of putting into a bottle. I had never, in fact, seen, since I had been in England, a more calm or beautiful day. Presently I met one of the servants of the castle, and I asked him how long the Enchanter had been there.

"'He is not here at all,' was the man's reply, 'nor have we received any intelligence of his arrival.'

"Now again the idea occurred to me that the feat could not be performed, and the Enchanter, being aware of the impossibility, was afraid to present himself. I was on the point of questioning the man further, when I received a message from his lordship desiring my immediate attendance. I found he had left his chamber after a sleep of two hours, and was about seating himself at the breakfast table. After receiving from him a few instructions respecting my ordinary duties, his lordship said to me,—

"'Well, Hassan, does your courage hold good? You are not alarmed at the feat you are about to perform?

"'Pardon me, my lord,' I replied, 'I have no fear, nor do I think there is occasion for any, for I suspect nothing of the kind spoken of will be attempted.'

"'What do you mean, Hassan?' his lordship said.

"'Simply, my lord, that there appears to be no possibility of performing it,' I replied. 'In the first place the Enchanter is not here, and if he were, it would be useless, as there is not a cloud to be seen in the sky, nor any appearance of one rising. In fact, I never remember calmer or more beautiful weather.'

"'And to what do you attribute the Enchanter's absence?' his lordship asked.

"'To the fact that he is now aware he has promised more than he can perform, and does not like to appear ridiculous,' I said.

"'Hassan, you are in error,' said his lordship laughing. 'A few minutes before I sent for you, I received a message from the Enchanter telling me he would be here without fail this evening, and that he proposed performing the operation to-morrow morning. He has, moreover, requested me to see that the old shirts which were torn up and prepared by him are placed in holes in the rock, so that after you have bottled the lightning you can carry it to the spot, and then, as you did at the

wrecked vessel, blow up the projecting masses so as to leave the road they encumber clear. And now, Hassan, tell my grooms to prepare my chariot, as I intend to visit the spot where the rock is to be blasted, and see that everything is prepared for the operation. You can, if you like, accompany me, and then you will be better able to understand in what way you are to act when all is ready for the experiment.'

"I did as I was commanded, and the chariot being prepared, we drove to the rock. There we found some men at work under a superintendent. They had drilled holes in the solid rock nearly the length of my arm, and into these they were inserting, at the time of our arrival, a quantity of cotton, possibly somewhat coarser looking than that which had been employed at the wreck. His lordship told me it was made from the old rags spoken of, and possessed tremendous powers. In these holes long copper wires had been inserted in readiness for the explosion the next morning.

"Having minutely inspected the works, we returned home, his lordship remarking that in all probability we should find the Enchanter at the castle. And here I noticed a circumstance which began to prove to me that I was in error in doubting the Enchanter's capabilities

and tremendous power. As I before stated the morning was clear and beautiful; but on our return from the rock, the weather was close and sultry, and I noticed clouds arising and forming in one part of heaven without any wind to impel them. They were dark, and had very much the appearance of clouds which carry lightning: still, they were too far off for me to form any definite opinion on the subject. I must say when I noticed them I felt a certain sort of sensation of awe at the wonderful power of the Enchanter, for I began to believe they were a symptom of his presence, that he had arrived at the castle, and was conjuring up the clouds from which I was to draw the lightning. As the carriage rolled on the clouds became darker and heavier, and the atmosphere more oppressive. This continued to increase till we reached the castle, when who should we see standing at the door but the Enchanter himself?

"After a little conversation with his lordship, the Enchanter turned round and accosted me most cordially.

"'Well, Hassan,' he said, 'are you ready for the tremendous feat you have promised to perform?'

"This he said in so jeering a manner as rather to annoy me, and I almost began to think he was jesting. I was on the point of telling him so, when, casting

my eyes round the horizon, I noticed the dusky, threatening clouds gathering together, portending at some little distance of time a thunder-storm. This again convinced me he was in earnest, so I told him I was quite ready to do anything he might advise, and was fully persuaded he would give me no task it was not possible for me to perform. He seemed pleased with my answer, and we all three entered the house together, when I quitted his lordship and the Enchanter till it was time for me to wait on them at their evening meal.

"After the meal was over, impelled by curiosity, I went out of the castle to see in what condition were the clouds. Although night had almost set in I could see that all the clouds had vanished, and from the appearance of the sky it promised to be a clear starlight night. Still, there was a sultriness in the air which was exceedingly oppressive, though this might have been attributed to the heat of the weather.

"While strolling about I received an order from the Enchanter to attend him in his room, where I found him standing in the centre, leaning on a large kite, such as boys use in England as a plaything, to which was attached a quantity of string.

"'I sent for you, Hassan,' he said, 'for the double

purpose of showing you the magic spells you will have to work with to-morrow, and also to give you warning that you had better not undress yourself to-night, as when you are called you must get up at a moment's notice.'

"'Why so?' I asked.

"'Because when I see a cloud advancing charged with lightning you must rise at once and draw it away, or the cloud may pass over our heads,' he replied.

"'But there is no cloud to be seen in the sky,' I remarked.

"'No matter,' he said, 'there is plenty of lightning about, and before morning in all probability thunder-clouds will arise. And now,' he continued, 'let me show you the instruments you are to use. One is this kite, the other that bottle standing on the table. Examine it carefully, and see what you can make of it.'

"I did so, and found it to be a large bottle, somewhat resembling a jar, made of crystal, the inside lined with long strips of metal, like silver, which crossed each other in a strange cabalistic manner. The stopper was of brass, with a nob rising from it.

"'This, Hassan,' said the Enchanter, 'with the exception of a small table with crystal legs, is all the

apparatus you will have to use. Now, good-night. You shall be called as soon as you are wanted.'

"'As day was breaking the next morning, some one tapped at my door. I arose immediately, and on hurrying downstairs I found the Enchanter and his lordship standing at the door of the castle waiting for me. I then perceived that the sky was covered with clouds, fulfilling to the letter the prediction of the Enchanter. We now proceeded to the top of a small hill near the castle, followed by two servants carrying the small table with the crystal legs, the bottle and kite. On reaching the hill the table was placed on the ground, and the bottle put on it. The stopper of the bottle was then attached to the end of the string, and I was directed by the Enchanter to fly the kite. This I did, and it rose gradually into the air till it had fairly entered the cloud. For some minutes, however, no effect seemed to be produced, and then I heard a slight click in the bottle.

"'You can let the kite fall now, Hassan,' said the Enchanter. 'You have already caught the lightning.'

"'But there was no thunder,' I said. 'You must surely be jesting with me.'

"'I am not jesting, Hassan,' the Enchanter replied, 'and I will prove it.'

"Then turning to the servants he told them to take up the table with the bottle on it just as it was, and to follow us.

"We now proceeded to the spot where the mine had been placed, charged with the cotton made from the old shirts. Placing ourselves in such a position as not to be injured by the explosion, the Enchanter put into my hands a singular sort of instrument with two branches ending in a brass nob. With one of these he directed me to touch the copper wire, and with the other the brass nob of the bottle. Immediately I had done so a violent explosion took place. We hurried to the spot and found that immense masses of rock had been thrown into the road, which, when removed, would leave the way clear of the impediment they had caused before the explosion.

"And now," said Hassan to the audience, "I have finished my narrative for this evening. To-morrow I hope, by the blessing of the Prophet, to meet you all here again."

BOTTLED LIGHTNING.

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IX.

OF DIAMOND FIELDS.

WHEN Hassan, the following evening, arrived at the house of Mustapha, he found the guests already assembled. Flattering as the circumstance at first sight appeared, he could not disguise from himself that there was a certain look of distrust on the faces of all, which in some cases was mixed with positive anger. Even Mustapha, although in his heart not displeased at the number of customers who had flocked to his house, out of compliment to them received Hassan in a somewhat cool manner. So marked, in fact, was the expression of discontent on the countenances of those present that Hassan could not help fearing some sinister event was about to take place, possibly brought about by his old enemy Achmet. But as Achmet was not present, Hassan determined to

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address himself to his audience to know in what manner he had displeased them.

"I judge, from the expression of your faces," he said, "that you are angry with me. If so, tell me the cause, and I assure you that every explanation and apology in my power shall be offered you."

For some moments none of them replied. At last Mustapha, who considered that as host the onus was thrown on him, said,—

"I will not disguise from you, O Hassan, that the unanimous opinion of those who heard the adventures you related last night, is, that you greatly exceeded the bounds of probability. Let me hope you will acknowledge that you exaggerated somewhat in your description, for you know that all here are friends and willing to forgive you. Let me beg of you to admit that, stimulated by your poetical imagination, you coloured the events rather too highly."

"I should be grieved to displease my audience," said Hassan, "but I have kept strictly to the truth. Remember, others have stated facts equally wonderful, and you have believed them; then why should you not believe me?"

"If you allude to Sinbad," said one of the audience,

"you are in error. I know the whole of his adventures by heart, and can safely say, that not only in those in which he took part, but also in the wonders in the history of the Arabian Nights, there is nothing so wonderful as what you have related."

"Do you not consider," said Hassan, "that carrying away a palace from one part of the world and placing it in another has less right to credence than my story?"

"Certainly not," said Mustapha. "It sinks into insignificance when compared with what you have related. The idea of a miserable infidel Enchanter teaching you to bottle a flash of lightning and carry it away has something quite wicked in it. I wonder you are not afraid of raising the anger of the Prophet, and bringing it down on your head by making such a statement."

"Let it rest then between the Prophet and myself," said Hassan, "I call for his vengeance on my head if I have uttered one single word contrary to what was performed by the English Enchanter."

"In the hands of the Prophet then we leave you," said Mustapha. "Continue your narrative."

"On our return to the castle," began Hassan, "I complimented the Enchanter on his wonderful power,

and thanked him for allowing me to be his agent in the feat he had performed, for my modesty would not allow me for one moment to believe that personally I had been any more than part of his machinery in carrying it out.

"'I could tell you many other wonderful feats, Hassan, that I can do,' said the Enchanter, 'if you would like to listen to them.'

"'I should be much pleased with your condescension,' I replied.

"'Then,' he said, 'as we are about to return to London together' (his lordship intended to remain a few days longer at his castle), 'I will relate to you some other wonderful feats I am able to perform.'

"On our way to the city the Enchanter fully kept his word, mentioning to me wonders, which, had I not seen him catch lightning, would have appeared to me incredible; but as you, my brethren, appear to cast doubts on my veracity, I will omit to mention them, and merely content myself by giving you a description of my voyage to the other side of the world, and the different adventures I there met with.

"After we had returned to town I commenced my preparations for the voyage, spoken of last night, with great earnestness, for I had no time to lose, the ship

being advertised to sail in a few days. As the day drew near I began to feel anxious; why, I can hardly say, but it was a fact. Possibly it may have arisen from my regret at leaving his lordship, who had been so kind to me since I left my own country. The anxious feeling increased till the day of my departure, when I really think, if I had had the opportunity offered me of relinquishing the voyage, I should have done so. When all was in readiness his lordship accompanied us to the ship, and minutely inspected all the arrangements, in which he appeared to take great interest. He talked over with us the different adventures and incidents we were likely to meet with during our voyage, placing all in as pleasant a light as possible,—for he evidently perceived a feeling of melancholy coming over us all.

"At last a bell was rung, and a sailor (an officer of the ship) gave notice that she was on the point of starting, and that all who were not passengers must immediately leave. Our parting with his lordship was a very affecting one. Indeed, there was not one among us who did not shed tears, and I noticed, as his lordship went over the side of the ship, that his own eyes were full to overflowing. Our sail down the river was very pleasant. The day was fine, and we were much interested in all we saw. After

quitting the river the pilot left us, and we continued our course onward. During the time the pilot was on board a certain sort of feeling seemed to connect me with England, but this was now completely broken. For a few days the weather continued very fine, and we enjoyed our sail immensely till we arrived at a place in the ocean called the Bay of Biscay, noted for its terrible storms and hurricanes. From the fine weather we had experienced at starting we hoped to sail through this much-dreaded bay with impunity; but we were doomed to be disappointed, for we had hardly entered it when a terrible storm arose. To say that any of us saw much of it would be untrue, though all our party felt its effects very severely. We were now so dreadfully sea-sick in our cabins that we could hardly hold up our heads; and when the sickness ceased our terror became greater, as we were then aware, by the movement of the ship, how terrible must be the force of the waves.

"This state of things continued for nearly a fortnight, when we again entered into fine weather, and our voyage was pleasant enough. The widow and Saba were perfectly delighted with all they saw. The blind girl, Rachel, had become a great favourite with all, and Isaac had made himself so useful to us, that through his agency

we wanted for nothing. The widow, who was a very amiable woman, excited the sympathy of all, from the fact of her having two children labouring under such severe misfortunes; for although their calamities had been greatly ameliorated by the enchanters under whose care they had been placed, they were still to be much pitied. As for myself, I believe, from the fact of my being a foreigner, a kind feeling was created in the breast of the sailors towards me.

"Most travellers, when they leave England on a long journey, determine to keep a record of the events of the voyage. I had also resolved to do the same; but in travelling by sea, the adventures of one day, as a rule, resemble so much the following, that most people cease to do so after they have been on their way for two or three weeks: and it was so in my own case. I threw aside my pencil and paper as soon as I began to feel sea-sick, and never resumed them again during the voyage; so you must understand that the few adventures I met with at sea, I record from memory. One subject, trifling in itself, I may mention, as it tends to my own discredit; and I wish to be candid in everything I state, neither hiding my faults nor exaggerating the few good qualities I have.

"There was among the passengers on board the

ship a man with a wooden leg. Now a wooden leg is never graceful, or to be admired in any way, as you may judge from my own; but it should always excite sympathy in the minds of beholders. It excited, however, no feeling of sympathy in my breast, and the fact now weighs heavily on my conscience. I am occasionally apt to think the misfortune I am labouring under a just punishment for my inhumanity. At the same time I have some little excuse. The passenger I am alluding to, was a fat, sulky, disagreeable fellow, and made himself disliked by all. This man, when the sea was a little rough, and the ship rolled, used to tumble about in a very ridiculous manner. One day he fell down, and in doing so broke his wooden leg off close under the knee. A boy whom he had offended, seeing him prostrate on the deck, determined to be revenged for a thrashing he had received the day before, and took up the lower part of the leg, and threw it into the sea. What was now to be done? It was not possible for the man to walk with only half a wooden leg, and there was no one on board skilful enough to make a new one. True, we had a ship's carpenter with us, but he was only used to the coarser kind of work, and was unable to undertake so neat a job. However, something must be done,

and at last a new leg was made, though in a somewhat clumsy manner, which rendered the old fat man's movements so ridiculous that he became a greater butt among the passengers than ever, and, I am sorry to say, myself among the number.

"Another circumstance also should be mentioned—a very singular ceremony which takes place on board English ships when they have arrived half-way between one end of the world and the other, which they call 'crossing the line,' though I don't understand the significance of the expression, as I saw no line whatever.

"One fine morning, shortly after daybreak, a gruff voice, evidently some one using a speaking-trumpet, was heard under one of the bows, inquiring what ship it was. The captain, who evidently was aware of everything about to take place, answered that it was the ship Bagdad, from London to Sydney, and then said,—

"'Who asks the question?'

"'I am Neptune, the god of the sea,' was the reply.

"'Pray walk on board, Mr. Neptune,' said the captain; and a few moments after, the boatswain, a sailor who had the care of the ropes, dressed out in a most ridiculous manner, and accompanied by another

sailor, who was equally ridiculously dressed as a woman, came on board, and advanced towards the captain.

"After some few compliments had passed between the captain and Neptune, the former asked his visitor if he could serve him in any way.

"'I want to know,' said Neptune, 'if you have any people on board your ship who have never passed the line before; if so, call them up.'

"'What for?' said the captain.

"'That I may shave them,' replied Neptune.

"The captain immediately ordered all the passengers to come aft, and, of course, the widow's family and myself among the rest.

"The ceremony of shaving was a very simple one. The razor was a coarse thing, made out of an iron hoop, and instead of soap, tar and grease were rubbed on the face. I noticed that many of the passengers were not submitted to this operation, and on inquiring the reason, I was told that by a trifling present in money to Neptune it might be avoided. As his lordship had so liberally supplied us with money for our voyage, I took the hint, and the whole of our party passed without molestation. The whole affair seemed altogether to be a very silly and childish one. On stating my

impression to the captain, he perfectly agreed with me; but said it had been in practice so many years, no captain liked to be the first to stop it, although all would willingly see it abolished.

"We continued our voyage, and for nearly three weeks everything went on comfortably and smoothly, when we had another taste of the capricious temper of the sea. We had almost reached the southern extremity of Africa, when a furious storm came on, which lasted for more than ten days, and the captain himself admitted we were in great danger. The sails were torn from the masts one after the other, till at last we had hardly one left; and then one mast fell over the side, then another, leaving the foremast only erect. So terrible, in fact, was the sea from the storm, that we all took leave of each other, expecting every moment we should be engulfed. Fortunately the storm at last gradually subsided, till nothing but a slight breeze remained, which was favourable for us to reach that part of Africa called Cape Town, which at last we succeeded in doing, though in a very shattered condition.

"The day after our arrival, we were requested to leave the ship and take up our abode on shore, till she could be put into repair. To say the truth, I was not

altogether sorry for the circumstance, for it gave me an opportunity of seeing something of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the district. The greater portion of them were certainly of English descent, though some were Dutch, and still spoke the language of their country. There were also a great many negroes or black people, who were the real natives of the country, but in point of intellect these appeared far inferior to the natives of European descent. I wandered about the town for several days, sometimes with Isaac, and sometimes with the other passengers, and at last was getting rather tired of the sameness of the place, when one day I saw a loaded waggon to which some bullocks were attached, and a number of men, some on horseback, some on foot, standing near it. I asked a man whither all these people were going.

"'To the diamond fields,' he replied.

"'To the diamond fields?' I said. 'Why what do you mean? surely you're joking with me.'

'"Why should I joke with you?' said the man; 'I should get no good by that.'

"'But are there really fields of diamonds?' I asked.

"'That's not altogether the way of putting it,' replied the man. 'I didn't say fields of diamonds, but fields

where there are diamonds. Why where could you have come from that you didn't know that?'

"'I come from Egypt,' I replied, 'and I certainly have heard of diamond fields. We formerly had in our country a great traveller whose name was Sinbad, and he found out some diamond fields; but unfortunately he did not leave a correct description of the locality, and we have never been able to find them since.'

"'Well, my dear fellow, you'll have no difficulty in finding them now. All you've got to do is to go and see them for yourself.'

"'But will they allow me to go?' I asked.

"'Certainly,' replied the man. 'You've as much right to go as another. But I see the bullocks are ready, and we shall be going off directly. Perhaps,' he continued, 'we may meet there. If so, as you are a foreigner, I will show you all worth seeing: good-bye.'

"I thanked him, and the cart drove on.

"In the evening I told the captain of our ship all I had heard, and how much I should like, if possible, to see these diamond fields.

"'And what is to hinder you, Hassan?' he said: 'if you wish it, pray go and see them. We shall not be ready to put to sea again under three months, so you

will have plenty of time to go and come back again if you like. Only remember this, I shall expect you to bring back with you a beautiful necklace for my wife; you can easily do that, you know. All you have to do is to pick up the diamonds and put them in your pocket when you find them; that is, if you don't trespass on any other man's ground.'

"Although I was somewhat nettled at the captain's manner, for he seemed to be concealing something, or rather he spoke in such a jeering, jesting sort of way, I determined to make the attempt; so I inquired when another bullock-cart would be starting, and having packed up a few things necessary for the journey, I started off for the diamond fields.

"My companions in the waggon were a good-natured set of fellows, although they did joke me about the enormous amount of treasure I should find in the fields. This certainly annoyed me at first, but in time I got used to it, and took it as a matter of course, and all went on smoothly enough. Well, we continued our journey onwards day after day, till I thought we should never arrive. Fortunately, the weather was fine, and the climate delightful, so we put up without difficulty with the hardships and inconveniences of the road.

"When within about three days of the diamond fields I noticed two or three persons with sore eyes, and I asked one of my companions the cause of the malady.

"'I am glad you have mentioned the subject, as I shall now be able to put you on your guard,' he replied. 'People, when they come suddenly on the fields, are sometimes struck almost blind by the glare which arises from the rays of the sun shining on the diamonds. It dazzles them dreadfully, and it is a long time before they get used to it. I intend myself to put a handkerchief over my eyes when we get near.'

"This appeared to me wonderful indeed, and I determined to take every precaution. However, three days afterwards, I found his statement, like many others he had made, if not fabulous, to have been grossly exaggerated.

"One evening, after a very long and hard day's journey through a most uninteresting country, we saw before us a number of tents and huts spread at different distances on a space of ground ample enough for a large city. I inquired of my friend what place it was.

"'Well, Hassan,' he said, 'now I'll tell you candidly, those are the diamond fields.'

"'You don't mean to say,' I exclaimed, 'that people pick up diamonds here?'

"'It's a fact, I assure you, Hassan; they have no other occupation,' he said; 'all the industry and trade of the place, with the exception of a few shops and stores, is comprised in searching for, and selling, diamonds.'

"'Do you know anybody who ever found one?' I inquired.

"'Yes, my own brother has found a great many, and sent them off to Cape Town for sale,' he replied. 'And you may do the same if you have luck.'

"'Can I begin searching for them on any spot I please?' I asked.

"'Not exactly,' was his reply. 'People are somewhat prejudiced here, and when they've bought of the Government a piece of ground they consider they've as much right to the diamonds found on it as any farmer would have to the crops growing on his own estate.'

"'I suppose,' I remarked, 'that the cost of a piece of ground would be very high?'

"'On the contrary,' he replied, 'it would be very little indeed. A piece of ground so large that you could not search the whole in less than a month, would cost you a

few gold pieces. But you must understand that if you happen to hit on a spot where there are no diamonds you lose the money you paid for the ground.'

"'But can I sell the diamonds when I have found them?' I asked.

"'Oh, yes; without any difficulty,' was his reply. 'There are several dealers in the fields who will purchase for ready money any quantity you may bring them.'

"'Can you tell me where I should apply for a piece of ground?' I then asked. 'I should much like to commence the search at once, and then return to the ship.'

"'I cannot tell you the dwelling of the officer of whom the land is to be bought,' he replied; 'but to-morrow I will introduce you to my brother, and, as a friend of mine, I'm sure he'll give you every information in his power.'

"That evening we slept under a small tent, and the next morning my friend introduced me to his brother, who received me in a very kind manner, and at once offered to conduct me to the official who had the marking out of the ground. On our way to the Government office he said to me,—

"'Come in with me to this store, Hassan. I have a

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little business to transact, but I shall not be more than a few minutes.'

"I entered the store with him, where I found a man seated at a table, on which were a pair of scales. He seemed to be on very good terms with my friend.

"'Well,' he said to him, 'what can I do for you?'

"'I've brought you a few more diamonds, which I want you to buy,' was the reply of my friend, who drew from his pocket a soft leather purse, from which he took some seven or eight diamonds, more than one among them being of considerable size.

The man at the table weighed them carefully, and then said,—

"'I will give for them two hundred and fifty pieces of gold.'

"'I take your offer,' said my friend. 'That's not bad pay for a week's work.'

"The man now drew out an order on the banker for the amount, and we then continued our road to the dwelling of the officer who allotted ground for the diamond diggers. Here I found that all in the immediate neighbourhood was already occupied; but, at a spot about three days' journey from the place we were then in, he allotted me a piece of ground. He told me I could hold it as

my own, and all the diamonds I found on it would be my own property.

"'And,' he continued, laughing, 'I can assure you that some spots of ground no larger than the one I have assigned to you, have produced more diamonds than all those obtained by your friend Sinbad, in the celebrated valley he wrote so much about.'

"I thanked the officer for his kindness, and with my credentials in my hand I left the house, or rather shed, for it was little better.

"I now purchased a bullock and cart, some mining tools, and a spade, and, taking with me a small stock of provisions, started off on my journey to my newly acquired territory. So elated was I with this prospect of wealth which seemed before me that I began making some of the most extravagant calculations that could enter the brain of man. First, I determined to return to England, and purchase a large territory near his lordship's castle, so that I might always be near him when he visited the country. But then I reflected, that although his lordship had always been very kind to me, it was the kindness of a good master to a faithful servant, and not such as existed between equals. On reflecting well over the matter, I soon came to the conclusion that while his

lordship would receive me with an amiable welcome if I returned as a servant, he would decline my acquaintance as a friend, so I gave over the idea. I then remembered that when I left Egypt it was in contemplation to make a great canal through which ships might pass to the Indies without going all round Africa, and I thought how happy I should be if I could only find sufficient diamonds to pay for the formation of the canal myself, and make every ship that passed through pay me tribute. Why in that way I should become the richest man in the world. All people would envy me, and respect me for having done such a useful work. The thought then entered my head, whether, after I had collected sufficient diamonds to pay for the formation of the canal, I should still work on? Knowing my own weakness, I began to fear I might not even then be content, but would continue working on, always conjuring up some new feat I should like to accomplish. So painful did this idea become, that at last I begged the Prophet would allow me to be satisfied and content when I had obtained a sufficient quantity to make the canal, and that, without grudging, I might leave to others as an inheritance the piece of ground I had purchased.

"So perfectly was I satisfied with the resolution I had

come to that I trudged on steadily for the next three days, and at length arrived at the spot assigned me. I must say I was dreadfully fatigued, and my poor bullock too. However, I was thankful to be at the end of my journey, and soon forgot the difficulties of the road. So anxious was I to commence work, that I could hardly refrain from taking out my spade and doing so at once; but I contented myself with simply examining the ground, which certainly looked unpromising enough. I could discover no more appearance of diamonds than in a sandy desert. I had, however, been informed that they were rarely to be seen on the surface, but must be dug for, and like most other good things in this world, could not be obtained without labour. I could not help laughing at the description given me of the diamond fields, and the warning to take care of my eyes lest the sun's rays would be too dazzling, and compare it with the dull, sandy look of the ground around me. At last, overcome by fatigue, I offered up my prayers to the Prophet, and throwing myself on the ground, and covering myself with a blanket, was soon fast asleep.

"The next morning I commenced work with great energy. I continued my labour during the whole of the day, examining every morsel of earth I turned up, but

not a diamond did I find. The following day I had no better success; a third followed with the same result; and I continued steadily working for a whole fortnight without finding a single stone. At the end of that time my poor bullock died, and finding my provisions were getting very low, I began to be greatly alarmed for the future. And not without reason, for I had expended all the money I brought with me in the purchase of the bullock and cart, mining tools and provisions, and now I had scarcely enough food to last me till I could reach the principal diamond fields from which I started. What to do I hardly knew, so I put up a prayer to Allah to aid me: I then felt my mind somewhat relieved, and started off on my road to the principal station, carrying my spade on my shoulder. Before, however, leaving the ground my eye fell on something shining on a heap of earth I had dug out, and on stooping down to examine what it was, I found it to be a diamond of considerable size. I was consoled by it for more reasons than one. In the first place, I felt convinced I could sell it for as much as would pay my journey back to Cape Town; in the next, it gave me a better opinion of the local authorities, for I had begun to suspect they had sent me to a locality where no diamonds were to be found, on purpose to rid

themselves of the danger that I, as a foreigner, might take away some diamonds which belonged to their country.

"On arriving at the principal station I found no difficulty in converting my diamond into money. Then, thoroughly tired of diamond digging, I took my place on a bullock waggon bound to Cape Town, where I arrived without meeting with any adventure worthy of particular notice.

"The day after my arrival I called on the captain of the ship to know how things were progressing.

"'Why, Hassan,' he said, 'I understood you had gone to the diamond fields, and thought we should never see you again. Here's your friend, the widow, been in a dreadful state about you, and Saba and Rachel have done nothing but cry, thinking they might never meet you again. Were they not surprised to see you?'

"I told the captain they had received me in a very friendly manner, and that I was very pleased to see it.

"'Well, Hassan, have you made your fortune?' he then asked.

"'Very far from it,' I replied. 'On the contrary, I have spent every farthing I had economised since I left Egypt.'

"'And you've got no diamonds?' he said.

"'Yes, I found one,' I replied; 'but that I was obliged to sell in order to return to Cape Town.'

"'Well, never mind, Hassan, he said; 'you're a clever fellow, and if you have luck, I dare say you'll be all right again. But now let's talk about our affairs. The repairs of the ship will be finished in about a week's time, so you must be ready to start by then. I daresay you will not be sorry to leave Cape Town.'

"'No, indeed,' I replied; 'I shall be delighted to be at sea again, notwithstanding the dangers we have undergone.'

"'Very well,' said the captain, 'I hope in about six weeks or two months time to land you all safely in Sydney.'

"Exactly on that day week we left Cape Town to proceed on our voyage, sailing almost in a southerly direction. The further we went, the colder it became, and I began to miss the beautiful climate of Africa, and the diamond fields, great as my losses had been there. The weather became colder each day, and at the end of a week the cold was so intense we were obliged to wrap ourselves up in the warmest clothing we could get——"

"Stop, Hassan," said one of the audience, an intimate

friend of Achmet. "I think I could hardly have understood you. Did you not say you had been sailing in a southerly direction?"

"Not quite southerly, but nearly so," Hassan replied. "It was south and east at the same time— about half way between each."

"And did you not say," continued the man, "that the farther you went the colder it became?"

"That is exactly what I meant to imply."

"And how can you be so impudent as to utter such an absurdity?" he said. "Why, my brethren," he continued, turning round, and addressing the assembly, "there cannot be a man among you so ignorant as not to know that the farther you go south, the hotter the weather becomes."

"That I deny," said Hassan. "In my case certainly it was very different. The farther we got the colder it became, and so cold that I had never before experienced anything like it, nor could I have supported it if I had not been used to some very cold weather in England."

Here Mustapha interfered, and not before it was time, for Hassan's audience began to show unmistakeable signs of anger at what they considered the preposterous idea of weather becoming colder the farther you went

south, which was quite contrary not only to the experience of all other travellers, but offensive to the good sense of every well-educated man.

"Of course," said Mustapha, "Hassan means to say that the cold was the work of some spiteful Enchanter, and not that really in the southern part of the world the weather is really cold."

"I won't take upon myself to state from what source the cold came," said Hassan. "I can only say that, if it was not from Allah himself, I cannot explain it. Nay, more, so terrible did it at last become, that we found ourselves entangled in some ice-fields, which occasionally threatened to crush the ship to pieces in a moment."

"Another proof that it must have been the work of an Enchanter," said Mustapha. "You know they cannot injure the faithful, and if the ship escaped such terrible dangers during the storm you spoke of, it is a proof that these ice-fields were the work of an Enchanter, and not Allah, whatever you may state to the contrary. But don't let me interrupt you; go on with your narrative."

"Think what you please," said Hassan; "I have my own opinion, and shall not change it." And he then continued his narrative.

"After being in the vicinity of these fearful ice-

mountains for several days, expecting each moment the ship would be crushed, one fine morning a warm north wind sprung up which blew the ice-fields away."

Here Achmet's friend broke into a loud laugh, and said, in a sneering manner,—

"A warm north wind, indeed! Why every one knows cold comes from the north as much as heat does from the south."

Hassan took no notice of his remark, but continued what he was saying.

"Gradually these ice-mountains began to disappear, and as the ship went onwards we at last got out of their dangerous vicinity and found ourselves in a genial climate. Anything more delicious than the change from the bitter cold we had been enduring can hardly be imagined. It seemed to imbue us all with fresh life, and the near approach to the termination of our long voyage placed us all in the best possible spirits. At length a man on one of the mast-heads gave notice that land was in sight, and all rushed forward to indulge our eyes with what had been so long hoped for. It was, however, so faint we could hardly perceive it,—just like a little cloud in the western horizon. I even doubted the truth of the man's statement that it was land, and told the captain so.

"'Nonsense, Hassan,' he said, 'do not be alarmed; it's land sure enough. In less than twenty-four hours you will be on shore, and, if I'm not mistaken, before a week's over, I can pretty well tell the work you'll be occupied in.'

"'And what may that be?' I asked.

"'That as soon as you've seen the widow and her family comfortably settled, which will not take you long, you will start off to the gold fields, as you did in Africa to the diamond fields.'

"Nor was the captain mistaken, for a short time after my arrival I visited the gold fields far distant from the town, but the description of the wonderful things I there met with I must put off till we meet again to-morrow evening."

X.

OF SEVERAL CURIOUS INSECTS, BIRDS, AND FLOWERS.

THE next evening, on arriving at the enclosure, Hassan not only found a larger audience than he had addressed the night before, but somewhat to his annoyance Achmet was among them, wearing a stern judicial expression of countenance. But what made the matter still more serious, was that he was accompanied by two Ulemas, or priests; grave, dignified-looking men, of a very venerable aspect. These last caused Hassan more anxiety than he had hitherto felt, for he easily guessed that Achmet imagined that probably he would make some statement contrary to the faith of the Prophet, and in that case he might be severely punished if he did so in the presence of the Ulemas. He determined therefore to be very careful in what he said, so as not in the slightest manner to wound their susceptibilities.

"I concluded my narrative last evening," Hassan began, "by telling you that we had just arrived at Sydney. My first anxiety, on landing, was to see the widow and her family safely lodged in her brother's house, before I made any attempt to search for Pierre. This occupied some days, as we found that the widow's brother, instead of residing in the city of Sydney, was at least a day's journey up the country. No sooner had we received this intelligence, than we engaged a bullock cart, and immediately started for his house. He received his sister and her family, in a very affectionate manner. After conversing with her for a long time on the events of the voyage, he told us how anxious he had been because we did not arrive sooner.

"'I had expected you,' he continued, 'at least three or four months ago; but not having received any intelligence of you, I began to fear some accident had occurred to the ship, for, had you remained in England, I felt sure you would have written to me.'

"We told him of the dangers we had been exposed to, and the delay of three months for the ship to be repaired at the Cape of Good Hope.

"'Well, thank Heaven, all that's past now, and I hope for the future, my dear sister, you will remain with

me,' said her brother. 'And you, Hassan,' he continued, addressing me, 'I am very much obliged to you for all the kindness you have shown my poor sister and her children. Any service I can render you in this country you have merely to name, and if it be in my power it shall be done.'

"I then explained to him the double object of my journey—the one, acting under the orders of his lordship, to show the widow and her family all the attention I could during our voyage, the other to find a villain of a Frenchman, named Pierre, who had robbed his lordship's sister, and her husband, not only of a great quantity of jewels, but also of some valuable papers.

"'Well, I know intimately the chief of the police in Sydney,' he replied, 'and when you return there, I'm sure if the villain should still be in this country, he will detect him. I cannot, however, allow you to depart for some days yet. It would be inhospitable indeed if I did not first show you some attention, and besides that, there are many things worth studying in this country. You have already been a great traveller, and have doubtless seen many wonders, but I think it not impossible you will admit that, before you have been here a week, you

will have seen other curiosities equal to those you have already met with.'

"I told him I would willingly accept his hospitality for a few days.

"'That's right, Hassan,' he said, 'and during that time, pray consider this house as your home.'

"I shall never forget the calm delights of the first evening I spent at the house of the widow's brother. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and the quiet around us was something exceedingly refreshing after the noise and bustle of the ship. My host gave me a short description of his adventures in the country; how he had arrived, a poor boy without a shilling, and had engaged himself as a shepherd with a farmer, whom he had served for two years, and then having earned enough money, he had purchased a flock of sheep of his own; how these had rapidly increased, their number doubling every two years, till at last he was a man of considerable wealth. And then there came a drought, and his sheep died off one by one till he was as poor as he was the first day he landed in the country. He then related to me his manner of life, in the house of a tradesman in Sydney, and that after he had earned a little money he had started on his own account, and was again unfortunate.

He had then determined to relinquish business, and a second time engaged himself as shepherd, from which time he had worked his way upward, built himself a house, purchased a flock of sheep and several cows, a good poultry-yard and garden; and at last found himself with every comfort around him. He then asked me many questions respecting Egypt, and the manner in which we lived there; and we sat chatting in a friendly way together, till it was past midnight, when I retired to bed.

"The next morning, I rose early, and strolled into the country. Presently I saw a little boy who was running about, evidently to catch some insects, of which there appeared to be many. I inquired of him what they were, and he told me they were bees, and that he wanted them for their honey.

"'But, my dear boy,' I said, 'take care what you are about; they will sting you dreadfully, if you don't mind.'

"'Oh, no fear of that,' he said; 'the bees in this country have no stings. I can show you their nests if you like, and you can put your hand in and judge for yourself.'

"'Where are the nests?' I asked.

"'Generally in the trees about here,' was the boy's

reply. 'If you like, we'll find one. You needn't be afraid; I assure you they can't hurt you.'

"Being curious to see how he would find a bee's nest, I told him I should much like to see one, whereupon he caught a bee in his hand as you would a fly, and sticking on it a little bit of feather, he let it go, telling it to show us the way home. The bee immediately flew off; and following the feather, for the bee itself was too small to be seen when it rose in the air, it conducted us to a tree, where we found a considerable quantity of beautiful honey. At first, I must confess, I was rather afraid to put in my hand, fearing it would be dreadfully stung; but seeing the boy do so, I followed his example, without experiencing any inconvenience.

"I now returned to the house, where I found breakfast prepared. I narrated to my host what I had seen, and he told me that stingless bees were one of the peculiarities of the land.

"'After breakfast,' he continued, 'I will show you some other curiosities in the garden.'

"We continued to converse in a very friendly manner during our meal, and we then proceeded to the garden. Presently my host stopped at a tree, and took some cherries from it.

"'Now here is a peculiarity you ought to notice,' he said. 'The stones grow outside the fruit instead of inside, as in other countries.'"

Here Achmet half rose from his seat, and whispered something earnestly to the Ulemas, who, however, appeared to reply in a manner which calmed him, and he again seated himself, glaring at Hassan with a ferocious expression of countenance. Hassan took no notice but went on with his narrative.

"'Another curiosity among the garden fruit,' said my host, 'is to be noticed in these pears. The largest end grows nearest the stalk, and the smallest end farthest from it. I dare say you have never met with this before in any country you have visited.'

"Presently we heard a great noise in the air, and on looking up at a distance before us, and at a great elevation, we saw a number of parrots seated on the branch of a tree, chattering together in a very animated manner. Indeed, judging from the noise they made, they were evidently disputing on some subject which interested their whole community.

"'And now,' said my host, 'I will show you another

curiosity in this country.' Then turning to a boy near him, he said, 'Go in and fetch my boomerang.'

"The boy obeyed, and in a few minutes returned, carrying with him what looked like a crooked wooden sword, about as ungainly and useless-looking a weapon as can well be imagined.

"'You surely can never expect,' I said, 'to kill any of those birds at the distance and height they are with such a clumsy weapon as that?'

"'I don't mean to say I can do it,' he replied; 'not, however, from any fault of the weapon, but because I am a bad shot. At any rate, I can try. At the same time you must not think ill of the weapon itself, for I can assure you it possesses a qualification that neither the best-made gun nor any piece of artillery in the world can boast of.'

"'And what may that be?' I asked.

"'Why,' he said, 'you see those birds chattering there on the tree. I will cast this weapon at them, and, if it misses, it will return to me of its own accord, so that I can pick it up, and throw it at them again should I desire it.'

"Of course I thought he was joking, although I had too much civility to say so. I contented myself therefore

with merely saying how much he would oblige me if he would make the weapon perform the feat. Without making further remark, he swung it backwards and forwards two or three times, and then casting it from him, it flew through the air with great velocity, turning rapidly round and round the while. I watched it in its course, till it passed the branch of the tree on which the parrots were seated. My host had taken a bad aim, and had not hit the birds; but I found I had done him an injustice in imagining he had overrated the capabilities of the weapon, for no sooner had it failed in its mission, than it quietly came back again, and fell at his feet. I was naturally much astonished at this feat, which was doubless shown by the expression on my countenance, for my host said to me,—

"'I can see you didn't believe me, Hassan, but I told you the truth after all.'

"'And would the weapon obey me in a similar manner?' I asked.

"'Certainly,' he replied. 'All you have to do is to throw it in the same way I did, and to tell it to come back to you, and it will do so. Now, try the experiment.'

"I took up the weapon, and throwing it into the air

in the same manner in which my host had done, it flew off to a considerable height, and then quietly returned to my feet. This I did two or three times, and each one it was as obedient to me as the first.

"Presently I heard a slight noise near me on the ground, and on looking down I saw a creature moving about as large as a duck. Seeing my eyes fixed on it, my host said to me,—

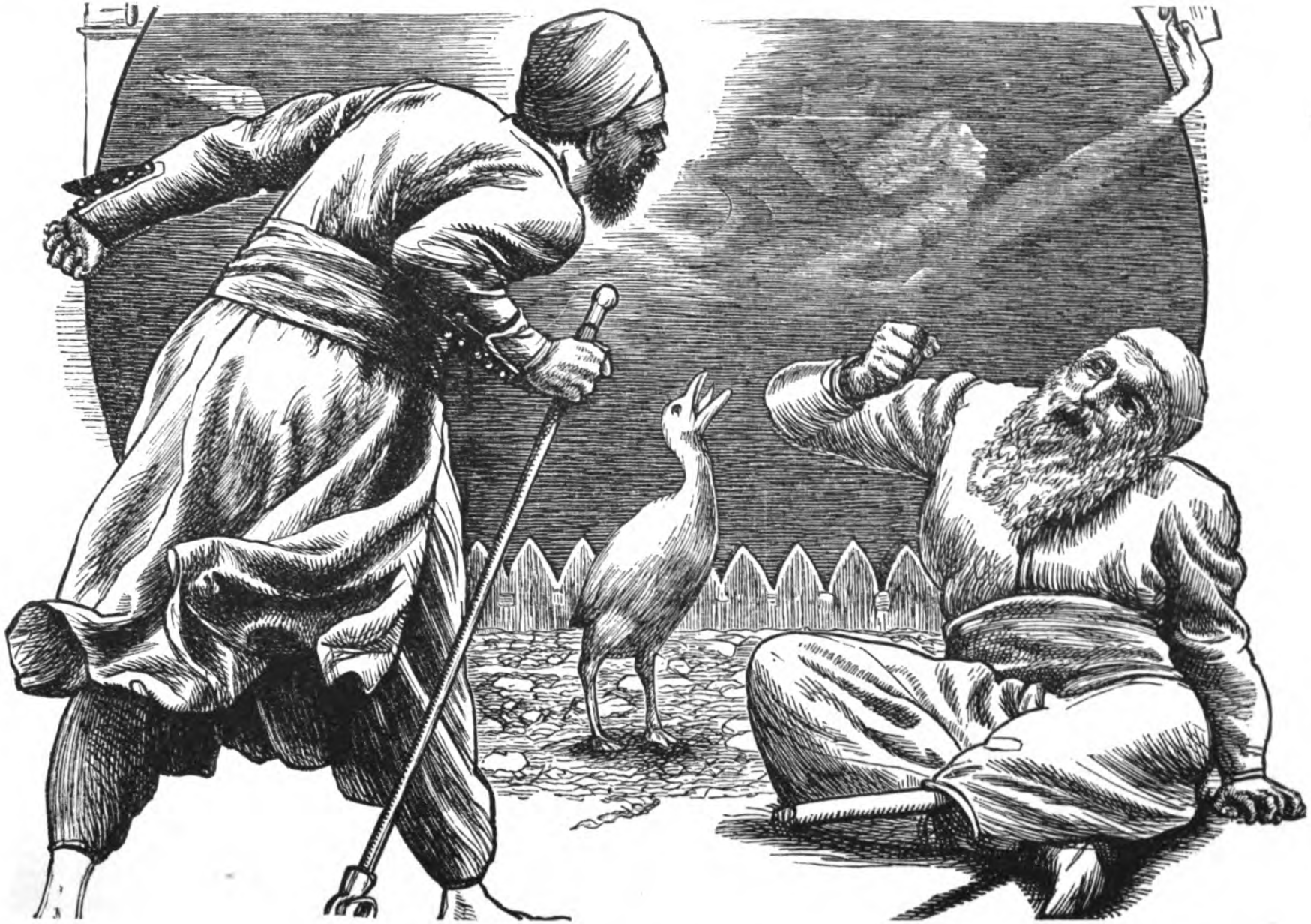
"'There's another curiosity of this country, Hassan —a bird without wings.'

"'But you're joking with me,' I said.

"'No, I'm not,' was his reply. 'Examine it, and you'll find what I have stated is the truth.'

"I did so, and found the bird had no wings."

"A bird without wings!" roared Achmet, jumping up on his feet. "A bird without wings! How dare you attempt to impose upon us such a monstrous improbability; and that, too, in the presence of these holy men, who hardly know the meaning of the word lie, or they would not sit so quietly as they now do and listen to your statement? If they had had as much experience in the police court as I have had, they would have been horrified at your falsehood. A bird without



FISH THAT CAN FLY.

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wings, indeed! Why, what difference is there between a bird and other animals except its wings? To say that a bird has no wings is as gross an absurdity as to say that a fish can fly. The one would not be more absurd than the other."

"And I not only maintain," Hassan replied, "that the bird had no wings, but that fish can fly."

"That fish can fly!" roared Achmet.

"Not only can but do fly," repeated Hassan. "I've seen them myself by thousands flying through the air, and therefore maintain it is true."

Hassan's statement seemed to have a singular effect on Achmet. He first looked at the Ulemas, as if appealing to them. Nothing, however, appeared to move the stolid gravity of their countenances. Achmet, finding he could obtain no consolation from them, gave three violent gasps, and again seated himself between them. Hassan proceeded with his narrative.

"I will not detain you with the description of any other of the natural curiosities I discovered in this strange land, but go on to more stern adventures. I remembered what the captain of the ship had told me

respecting the gold fields, and questioned my host on the subject. He told me it was quite true, and that a few days' journey up the country there were prolific gold-fields, and that I could visit them if I pleased. Remembering the stories which had been palmed on me about the diamond fields, I begged my host to give me some particulars of these gold-fields. He told me that I, or any one, could take a portion of the land which produced the gold, on payment of a certain rent, by no means excessive; but that the work was very laborious, and exceedingly uncertain in its results. Some days a man might find a considerable quantity of gold, and then a week might pass, and he would find barely sufficient to cover the expenses of his living.

"'However, Hassan,' he continued, 'the gold-fields are well worth seeing, especially to a man like you travelling for information. Again, it's possible if you should come across a gold field in your own country, you would know it when you saw it.'

"'But can there be any difficulty in recognising a gold field?' I asked.

"'Very great indeed,' was his reply. 'Why you cannot imagine that you find lumps of gold lying about as you do stones in the desert. As I told you before,

the pieces of gold are few and far between. But take my advice, go for a few days, and judge for yourself. You could go there and back in a fortnight, and if you want money for your journey I will provide it.'

"I told him I was very much obliged for his offer, but that his lordship had given me a credit in Sydney for any amount I might require. If he knew any one going there, I said, I would send a request for some gold pieces, and then I could start on my journey.

"A day or two afterwards, my host had himself occasion to visit Sydney, and brought back the money with him, and the following day I set off for the gold fields.

"The gold fields, my dear brethren, had as little to recommend them in appearance as the diamond fields. I stayed there for a week or ten days, working with a friend of the widow's brother, to whom he had given me a letter of introduction. The work itself was most laborious, and the quantity of gold obtained but very small. It is true that occasionally a digger would find a prize, but I often met with men who had been there for months, and had hardly in any day obtained more than the average amount they might have earned had they been at any other sort of honest labour. I was told, however, that

there were other fields of a more lucrative description, but at a considerable distance. These I determined to see on another occasion, for, to tell the truth, some compunctions of conscience were coming over me that, to indulge my own curiosity, I was neglecting the mission his lordship had sent me on. I resolved therefore to return at once to the widow's brother, and ask him for the letter he had promised me to the chief of the police in the capital town of Sydney.

"The widow and her family were all pleased to see me on my return. I remained, however, but a day with them, and then, with the letter of introduction, started off for Sydney. The same evening I had an interview with the chief of the police, and, after fully explaining to him my errand, he said,—

"'I know that rascal well. When first he arrived here, he was in a state of great distress; in fact, we were obliged to supply him with food from a mere feeling of charity. He then asked us to obtain some employment for him, if we could, as managing and confidential servant to a gentleman. "To tell you the truth," he added, "my constitution is rather delicate, and I cannot stand my hard work. I am not a sufficient man of business to take a situation as clerk; in fact, I won't disguise from you, I

have been a servant during the whole of my life." I asked him if he had any proofs of character, and he told me he was well provided with certificates, which he then took from a bag he carried. He showed me a number of letters of recommendation both in French and English, all speaking of him in the highest possible manner. I also noticed in the bag what appeared to me to be some parchment documents. It was a large carpet bag, partially filled with clothes and sundry other things.

"'Well, we supplied the fellow with some money to put an advertisement in the papers, and a short time afterwards a French gentleman, of rather eccentric character, who resided in the country, wrote to Sydney to say he required a servant of that description, and thought that Pierre would exactly suit him. He said he should be in Sydney in the course of a few days and would engage him if his testimonials were satisfactory. He did so, and Pierre returned with him into the country. I heard nothing more of him for two or three months, when one day it struck me I met him well dressed in the streets. I was not, however, certain of this, for although he looked at me, he evidently did not recognise me. About a week afterwards I received information that my presence was required in the country, at the house of the

French gentleman who had engaged Pierre as a servant. I started off with one of my men immediately, and on our arrival found the house in possession of some neighbours. On making inquiries, we learned that the other servants of the establishment were a farming man and a woman, who acted as cook; that the cook had left the house shortly after Pierre's arrival, to be married; and the farming man had told his master he knew of an excellent one, who resided about three days' journey off, and that if he liked he would fetch her. Pierre also proposed he should go, adding that as he was himself a good cook, his master would be put to no inconvenience till the man's return. This being determined on, the farming man started on his journey, leaving Pierre and his master at home.

"'The man, however, was detained for more than a fortnight, and on his return with the new cook he found his master's house closed. Thinking that he and Pierre might have gone on a visit to Sydney, he and the cook went to a farm-house in the neighbourhood to await their return. More than a week passed, and, as they did not come, they became uneasy, and determined to try if they could not enter the house. After searching carefully round, they found one window insecure. By this they

entered, and in a short time discovered the murdered body of the Frenchman in one of the rooms in the front of the house.

"'On my arrival I immediately commenced the inspection of the house, and found several boxes had been broken open. My suspicions naturally fell on that fellow Pierre. I returned to Sydney, leaving my man in possession of the house, and, after making many inquiries, discovered that Pierre had been the man whom I had met in the street, and that, after having lived in a hotel about a week, he had left Sydney in an American ship. Of course I sent off word at once to New York, stating the circumstances of the case, but have had no reply as yet.'

"I had great difficulty in deciding what I should now do respecting Pierre: whether to write to his lordship and inform him of the villain's escape to New York, and the frightful crime and robbery he had committed; or, instead of writing, return myself to England, and personally explain all to him, as, in the latter case, should he require me to start for New York, I could do so immediately. This also would be rendered the more easy, as there was a ship which was to leave at the end of the week by the new route, instead of going round Africa, to pass by the eastern side, and crossing the desert near Cairo,

proceed that way to England, which would not occupy half the time I had taken to arrive in Australia, without counting on the unfortunate delay at the Cape of Good Hope. Certainly, a passage by the new route would be far more expensive, but I knew his lordship's spirit too well not to be certain that I might expend any money I pleased if only with the probability of obtaining justice. Then, again, the idea occurred to me that it would be better to write, and in this view of the matter I was supported by the chief of the police.

"I remained in a state of indecision, however, which course I should pursue till the Friday morning, and the ship was to start the next day—Saturday. I went down to the shore and stood gazing at the ship as she stood in the offing, one moment thinking I would return and pack up my clothes for the voyage, and the next that I would remain quietly where I was and write to his lordship for further instructions. I was at length aroused from my reverie by some one touching me on the shoulder, and on turning round I discovered a man who had been my fellow-passenger to Australia, and with whom I had formed a considerable intimacy. We talked on indifferent matters for some time, but at length our conversation turned on the murder of the French gentleman.

"'Ah! that was a shocking affair indeed,' said my friend. 'What a pity it is that villain has contrived to escape! He was a cunning fellow, I must admit; I never knew his match. Why, I never heard anything in my life more ingenious than the way he managed to escape, completely puzzling, as he did, the whole of our staff of police, who, by-the-bye, are as shrewd a set of fellows as it is possible to meet with in this world.'

"'Well,' I said, 'I can't see anything particularly ingenious in his method of escape. It was a bold thing to do certainly, but I suppose the fine clothes he purchased when he arrived in Sydney would sufficiently disguise him, and that he would escape with impunity. I know it, in fact, to be the case, for the chief of the police told me he had met him in Sydney, but finding him so handsomely dressed, he thought he must have been mistaken. Of course, from his being so well disguised, he was able to take his place on board the ship, and make his escape to New York, where he thinks it will be impossible to find him.'

"My friend stared at me for some time, and then said, 'Well, but he didn't go to New York.'

"'Yes, he did,' I replied, 'and paid for his passage.'

"'That he paid for his passage I admit, and that too in

his right name,' said my friend; 'but it appears that a few days afterwards he met a friend of his, also a Frenchman, and very poor, who wanted to go to New York. The day before the ship was to sail, Pierre paid his bill at the hotel, and sent some boxes on board, saying he would follow them in a few hours. In the meantime he went to the house of his friend and told him that as he had just got a valuable appointment at the gold fields, he did not intend sailing for New York, and that if he would give him his note of hand for the amount of passage-money, to be forwarded to Sydney, he would let him have his place. This was agreed on, and the Frenchman in the night went on board instead of Pierre, who took himself off to the lodgings he had already prepared outside the town, where he had left the whole of his valuables. He remained there concealed for more than six weeks, and then took his place, under a false name, on board a ship bound for London.'

"I need hardly say this intelligence caused me great anxiety, and I rushed off to the chief of the police to ask what steps I had better take.

"'In emergencies of this kind,' he said, 'you should act energetically. A ship leaves for London to-morrow by the new passage. Now I have a friend who is a

powerful Enchanter, and he, if you wish it, would send one of his genii to Englaad with a message to his lordship asking what you are to do. And when you have received his reply, you can take what steps you please.'

"'But how long will the genie take in getting there?' I asked.

"'Oh! he will arrive in a very short time,' he replied. 'I can't exactly say how long; but if you come with me I will introduce the Enchanter to you, and he can send off his sprite at once should you consent to adopt that course.'

"I thankfully accepted his proposal, and we started off together to the dwelling of the Enchanter. After he had listened to my statement with great patience, he said to me,—

"'I think I can assist you. I have now a genie, invisible to you, waiting in this house, and I will despatch him at once if you wish it.'

"I gratefully thanked him, and a few minutes afterwards the genie, bearing my message to his lordship asking what steps I should take with regard to Pierre, with one stride flew from the city of Sydney to another named Melbourne, some six or seven hundred miles distant, which occupied him but a few moments. At Melbourne

he was rather puzzled what course to take, and applied to a friend of the Enchanter for directions, who ordered him to start immediately for another city, equally distant, called Adelaide, and there to inquire for the Enchanter's correspondent, who would tell him what to do. The genie's journey to Adelaide was far more difficult than the one to Melbourne; in fact it occupied as much time in going as it would take a man to walk a league. At Adelaide was the most powerful Enchanter in Australia, who received the genie with a stern angry manner.

"'Why,' he said to him, 'I find an ordinary mortal could have walked from one end of the city to the other while you have been travelling a small space of six hundred miles from Melbourne here. It's disgraceful of you, and if I don't find you far more diligent in obeying my orders than those of the Enchanter in Melbourne, my friend, your master, shall punish you severely on your return.'

"The genie appeared terribly frightened at the Enchanter's threat, and assured him if he would forgive him that once, he should have no more occasion to be angry with him for want of diligence.

"'Well, then,' said the Enchanter, 'I will give you another trial. At a distance of two thousand miles from

this house is a locality known as Port Darwin. Start off immediately, without resting on the way even for a moment, and then seek out the house of my correspondent, who will give you further instructions.'

"The genie, after having respectfully saluted the Enchanter, flew off on his journey to Port Darwin, and so rapidly did he go, that he accomplished the journey of two thousand miles in less than half an hour. At Port Darwin the genie found the Enchanter's correspondent, and having delivered his message, he said to him,—

"'My poor friend, you have a difficult task before you. There will be no longer land to guide you; but you must fly for more than two thousand miles under the sea to a place called Batavia.'

"The instructions had hardly been given before the genie darted into the sea, nor did he stop till he had accomplished the distance to Batavia, where he arrived in little more than two hours from the time he had left Adelaide. Here another Enchanter told him he was to start again immediately for a town called Singapore; but on no account must he be longer than nine minutes on his journey. The genie, without uttering a word, darted into the sea, and completed the journey in the time stated. He was then sent to a place called Penang; but

although the journey was less distant than the last, it took him more than double the time to accomplish it, so fatigued was he by the exertions he had made. From Penang he started to a city called Madras, and during the passage the genie's fatigue appeared to increase, for he was at least an hour and a half in accomplishing it. From Madras with one leap he reached Bombay. He was then directed northward to a place called Aden, his fatigue increasing to such an extent that he was four times as long in going there as from Adelaide to Port Darwin. From Aden he was sent to Suez in Africa, and from there to Alexandria. By the time he had reached this town he had been more than seven hours on his journey. Utterly fatigued as he was, his courage still held good, and at Alexandria he plunged into the sea, and rose again many miles distant at an island called Malta. From Malta he was again ordered to fling himself into the sea and not rise till he reached a place in Europe called Gibraltar. There the Enchanter, who resided in the city, scolded him severely for his tardiness.

"'You have been more than nine hours coming from Adelaide here,' he said. 'It is perfectly infamous of you to occupy so much time in a journey which is less than half round the world. I am quite ashamed of you. Be

more diligent for the future, or dread my anger. Now start off immediately by Lisbon to London, and if I find you occupy only one minute on the road, terrible indeed shall be your punishment.'

"So alarmed was the genie at this threat, that the eight hundred miles from Lisbon to London were passed in less than a minute, and ten hours after he had started from Sydney the message he took from me to his lordship was delivered at his palace, the genie having traversed more than half the circumference of the world.

"I can easily perceive, my friends," continued Hassan, "that you hardly believe my adventure. Pray do not come to such a conclusion; otherwise you will hold what I shall tell you to-morrow to be utterly unworthy of being listened to, or as the mere dreams of a madman. Wondrous as were the exploits of the genie, I assure you they sink into utter insignificance in comparison with those you have yet to hear. And now, hoping the Prophet will watch over you, I take my leave."

XI.

OF SOME THINGS TOO WONDERFUL FOR EVEN HASSAN'S AUDIENCE.

NEARLY an hour before Hassan's arrival at the enclosure the following evening, many of the principal personages who had hitherto composed his audience had already assembled. Nor was it merely by chance they had met together. It had, on the contrary, been arranged between them that they should do so to consult what steps should be taken with regard to Hassan. The fact is they were divided into two different parties, each holding its own opinion. Neither of them were particularly complimentary to our hero—the one considering him to be a harmless madman; the other an arrant impostor. Although in the eyes of the European reader there may seem but little to choose between the two conclusions, in the eyes of a Mahomme-

dan, it is very different. Whilst they would willingly punish a impostor with every possible severity, they hold that insanity ought to be respected, and a madman considered as an object of sympathy, not aversion. Of those who held that Hassan was a madman, and ought to be pitied, the two Ulemas were the leaders; of the section that considered him an impostor, Achmet was the head. Mustapha sided neither with one nor the other. The fact was, that never during the whole time he had been in business had he made so much money as he had done since Hassan had been engaged. Although Mustapha had the selfish conscience generally possessed by tavern-keepers, he was not a bad fellow at heart, and really liked Hassan, and felt grateful to him for the benefits he had brought to his establishment. He therefore, both from interest and friendship, sided with the Ulemas' party, though in his heart believing that Achmet and his followers were not far wrong in saying that Hassan was an impostor.

Achmet was the first to open the debate, Mustapha being what is called in England chairman.

"I hold," said Achmet, "that this fellow has shown no symptom of insanity whatever, but he is neither more nor less than an incorrigible liar and impostor, and well

worthy of punishment. I appeal to you, my friends, if there has not been a certain continuity or thread running through the whole of the fellow's tales which could hardly have been the work of a madman; and if he is not a madman, what else can he be but an impostor? Without going back so far as the earlier portion of his narrative, can anything be more absurd than the latter? The very fact of his having stated that the farther they went south the colder it became, is an evident proof that the scoundrel had never been there, or he never could have made such a preposterous assertion. The plausibility of his manner too, and the way he carried it off, as I am told, for you know I was not then present, is a further proof of his rascality. And then again let me ask you to analyse the statements he made to you yesterday evening. There was really something in them so impudent, that had it not been for the respect I have for my two reverend friends, I should have started from my seat and seized him by the throat. The idea of birds without wings! Why, it's an insult to the common sense of us all! Then the audacious lie with which he supported it, that he had seen thousands of fish flying like birds, added insult to the imposition he was practising on us; and also of that miserable genie whom he pretended had performed such a wonderful

feat! Why, my friends, a moment's reflection ought to teach you the utter impossibility of it. If the genie, with a hop, step, and a jump could complete the distance between Adelaide and Port Darwin, why could he not have done a less distance without stopping? Again, my friends, if, when he was so fatigued, he performed the distance between Lisbon and London in less than a minute, three minutes ought to have sufficed him to go half round the world. There can be no doubt an Enchanter who had such power in his hands could have despatched his genie from Sydney to London without resting anywhere, had he pleased. No, believe me, the fellow is an arrant impostor, and if we did our duty we should at once take him off to the cadi."

"And now hear me," said the elder of the two Ulemas. "Although Achmet speaks with a great deal of earnestness, he lacks both reason and charity in his arguments. Nothing is more common than to find a madman tell a connected tale, and although I admit that many of the wonders which have been narrated may appear to carry with them the appearance of imposition, remember it is our duty as faithful followers of the Prophet to commit an error in favour of the weak, rather than run the risk of committing an act of injustice. Depend upon it, my friends,

the man is no impostor; he is a madman, and worthy of our sympathy and protection."

Others now took up the argument, and the debate became very warm. At last Mustapha, as president, thought right to interfere.

"My brethren," he said, "I think, in justice to this stranger, we ought to give him another trial, and let this, if you please, be the last. You may remember, after informing us of the adventures of the genie last night, he said he would narrate this evening others which would far exceed them. Let us hear what he has to say, for it appears to me nothing could be more wonderful than what he then told us. If he succeeds, it is a clear proof he is a madman and ought to be pitied. If less wonderful, there will then be some reason to investigate more fully the charge Achmet has brought against him of being an impostor. But you must decide at once, for I see him coming, and in a few minutes he will be here."

Mustapha's address had an excellent effect on the audience. They agreed to hear Hassan that evening, and when his narrative was concluded, to decide what further steps should be taken. And this conclusion had hardly been arrived at when Hassan entered the enclosure.

"And now, my friends," commenced Hassan, "I have come prepared to keep my promise of narrating to you this evening a far more wonderful adventure than that performed by the genie who took the Enchanter's message to England. In fact, when compared with it, I may say it sinks into insignificance.

"At the time my message was delivered to his lordship in London he was seated at table in his palace with his friend the Enchanter. After having deliberated a few minutes on the purport of my words, he despatched one of his servants for the chief of the police, requesting him to attend immediately, as he had something of great importance to consult him about. The servant started off on his errand, and his lordship and the Enchanter continued their conversation, although somewhat changing the subject.

"'Why,' said his lordship, 'this Enchanter at Sydney seems to surpass, in point of power and intelligence, all the Enchanters in the world. Excuse my saying so,' he continued, 'but it appears to be a fact. I have hitherto considered you to be without equal, but the most wonderful feats you ever performed were trifles in comparison to that which has just come under our notice.'

"'To what do you allude?' asked the Enchanter.

"'I mean,' replied his lordship, 'that he has in his service a genie possessed with such power as to be able to fly half round the world in little more than ten hours; and this is the more wonderful from the fact of the numerous impediments and difficulties he met with on the road.'

"'And does your lordship call a feat of that kind wonderful?' said the Enchanter, laughing outright.

"'I should say wonderful indeed,' replied his lordship. 'I consider it even more so than yours of catching the flash of lightning and playing with it as a child would with fireworks.'

"'I grant you,' said the Enchanter, 'that the feat itself surpasses the one you saw me perform with the lightning; but at the same time do not imagine that was the acme of my power. I can go far beyond that. Yes, I assure you that I have a genie of such wonderful power as to reduce the feat performed by my brother Enchanter in Sydney to comparative insignificance.'

"'I should be curious then to see a proof of his power,' said his lordship with something like a sneer.

"'If you wish it I shall be most happy to oblige you,' said the Enchanter, politely.

"Their conversation was here interrupted by the

arrival of the chief of the police, with whom his lordship entered into a lengthened conversation relative to the message he had just received from Sydney.

"'The ship has not yet arrived in England,' said the chief of the police.

"'Are you certain of that?' asked his lordship.

"'Quite certain,' was his reply. 'On my way hither I called at the merchant's office and was told that the ship was not expected to arrive for another two months.'

"'What a pity,' said his lordship, 'that Hassan is not in England so as to be enabled to point out the fellow the moment he arrives. Hassan tells me that a ship would leave Sydney in twenty-four hours from the date of his message, and that he had deliberated whether he would not take his passage in her and come direct to England. How I wish he had done so!'

"'And he may do so yet, and that easily,' said the Enchanter.

"'Such a thing would be utterly impossible,' exclaimed his lordship. 'By this time thirteen of the twenty-four hours have passed away, and the time required to send back the genie, especially in his present fatigued condition, would take possibly twelve hours more, and the ship would have started before his arrival.'

"The Enchanter here burst into a loud laugh, and his lordship inquired rather angrily what he was laughing at.

"'The idea of your sending such a clumsy, heavy-heeled sprite as the one who brought the message from Sydney! Why, I should be ashamed to have such a fellow in my employ. I wouldn't keep him a week. No, if you wish Hassan to receive your message, I will despatch one of my sprites, who will be able to tell a very different tale.'

"'Do you mean to say your sprite would arrive in time for Hassan to receive my message before the ship starts?'

"'Certainly, and with some hours to spare,' replied the Enchanter. 'You must, however, make up your mind at once, as the message will only reach him a few hours before the ship leaves, and the less that time is, the greater the danger of your message not finding him.'

"'Let us start immediately then,' said his lordship; and he and the Enchanter left the palace to proceed to the latter's dwelling.

"And now," continued Hassan, "let me ask if you can imagine that Sinbad ever witnessed anything more

wonderful than the feat performed by the sprite who brought me the message to Sydney. No sooner did he receive it than he started off immediately for Lisbon. It was noon when he left London, and to say the truth he commenced his journey badly, for he was more than half an hour longer in going from London to Lisbon than the genie of the Sydney Enchanter took to perform the same distance. For his tardiness he met with a severe rebuke from the Enchanter's agent at Lisbon, who told him he most make more speed to Gibraltar. This distance he accomplished in five minutes less than no time, for which he received the compliments of the Enchanter in that city. Encouraged by the Enchanter's praise the genie leaped into the sea, and started off for Malta, where he arrived more than an hour earlier than the time he had left London. Again plunging into the depths of the ocean, he came up on land to breathe at Alexandria, where he arrived exactly two hours by the clock before he had started from London. He then went on to Suez, Bombay, and Madras, reaching the latter city at daybreak of the same day he started at noon. By the time he had arrived at Singapore, morning of the same day had not yet broken, and so on through the other towns till at last he arrived in Sydney,

having performed the journey in ten hours less than no time.'

Here Hassan was interrupted by Achmet leaping to his feet, and exclaiming in a loud voice,

"Oh! my brethren, how can you suffer that impudent dog to insult you in the manner he does? Were I not an officer of justice, I would ask you to tear him to pieces on the spot, but my respect for the law prevents me. Let us, however, immediately seize him, and take him to the cadi, when, without doubt, he will receive the punishment he so richly deserves."

It is only just to say that the audience seemed puzzled in what manner to act. They certainly did not place the slightest belief in Hassan's statement, but at the same time they by no means appeared willing to adopt the energetic measures proposed by Achmet. Mustapha was about to speak and claim the patience of the audience, when the elder of the two Ulemas rose, and interrupting him said,

"My brethren, do not follow the advice of Achmet, although he means well. From what has lately fallen from the lips of Hassan, it is evident he is under the protection of the Prophet, and in that condition of mind

which ought to render him an object of sympathy to all. Let him continue his narrative without interruption. It amuses us, and as the poor man cannot be accountable for his actions, the statements he makes are not falsehoods and therefore no sins on his part. A falsehood, my brethren, is a deliberate perversion of the truth, and therefore a sin. Hassan's are merely harmless delusions and nothing more.'

"I maintain that what I have said is true," said Hassan, indignantly. "I would almost sooner receive the treatment proposed by Achmet, than be spoken of in the insulting manner you have just spoken of me."

The Ulema smiled serenely, but made no answer, and Hassan, after a moment's pause, continued his narrative.

"The message was delivered to me in Sydney about three hours before the ship started. Finding there was room on board, I immediately secured a cabin, and rushing off to the hotel, packed up what luggage I had there. Preparatory to leaving the house it was my intention to have written to the widow and her family, but as the idea occurred to me that I might possibly be too late for the ship if I did so, I determined to wait till I had reached the first land, and then to despatch a letter to

her. It was well I did so, for I had hardly set foot on the ship and placed my luggage on board, than the signal to sail was given, and a few minutes later we were steaming out to sea.

"I will not detain you with any lengthy description of the passage, which was very favourable. My companions were a gentlemanly well-educated body of men, who treated me with great civility and kindness. Still, the voyage was somewhat wearisome, and it was with no little pleasure we at last reached Ceylon, an island on the southern coast of India. Here we stopped a few days, seeing during the time many curiosities, not least among them the fishing for pearls, which are there found in great quantities, although, like the diamonds in Africa, and the gold in Australia, they are not obtained without great difficulty and trouble. Another object of great interest pointed out to me was a lofty peak, on which, it is stated, Adam stood; but this is mere tradition, and therefore I will not press it further on the attention of the reverend priests whom I see before me. There were several other curiosities in the island, which abounded in natural products. Elephants were more numerous there than in any other part of the world.

"I whiled away the time in Ceylon for some days in

the best way I could, when a ship arrived bound for Bombay, in the northern part of India, and the next stage on my journey home. And here, as we went northward, a most singular sensation came over me. I knew that after leaving Bombay we should proceed to Suez, and from thence traverse a portion of Egypt till we arrived at Alexandria. The more I thought of this fact, the more did the fear come over me that possibly I might be induced to remain there instead of returning to England. That it would be an act of ingratitude to his lordship I admitted, and even dishonest; but the love of country was strong within me, and although I should doubtless have continued my journey, the temptation not to quit my beloved Nile required all my powers of resistance to withstand, and earnestly did I pray to the Prophet that nothing might occur to change my determination. My prayer was but too well answered, for not only did I not remain in Egypt, but I must admit that the impediment thrown in my way was a just punishment for my wickedness in entertaining for a moment the thought, or even the possibility, of treating his lordship so ungratefully after all the benefits I had received from him.

"To continue my narrative. The ship proceeded

steadily onward, till one evening, somewhat after dark, we reached the harbour of Bombay. In consequence of the obscurity around us, the captain had some doubts as to the propriety of entering the harbour without a pilot. At length, he decided on firing a signal, to let those on shore know of the vicinity of the ship, so that a pilot might be sent to us. The gun was ordered to be loaded, and I went forward with others to inspect the operation. I noticed a circumstance which I highly disapproved of, for the sailor who was loading the gun was more than three parts intoxicated, and it struck me that a work of the kind ought not to be placed in the hands of any but a sober man. However, the order had been given, and when all was ready, the captain gave the word to fire. A tremendous explosion then took place. The fellow had not noticed that the gun was already charged when he put in the other cartridge, which caused the explosion. All standing near, or who were seated on the deck, were more or less injured. As soon as I had somewhat recovered my senses, I attempted to rise, but could not, and puting my hand down on my leg, I found it damp, evidently with blood. I immediately called for aid, and was carried aft, and placed under the care of the surgeon. After examining my leg, he said to me,—

"'Hassan, my dear fellow, you must be taken on shore, for you are dangerously hurt. This is a very severe compound fracture of the thigh a little above the knee-joint, and it will require the greatest skill and caution before you are cured. I don't like to be a prophet of evil, but much fear you will lose your leg.'

"'I would rather die first,' I said, 'than submit to an operation of the kind. Death would be preferable to crawling about the earth with a wooden leg.' And then the idea of the fat passenger on board the ship to Sydney, and his clumsy antics, came before me so vividly, that I burst into tears.

"'My dear friend,' said the surgeon, kindly, 'pray don't give way in that manner, for you will only do yourself harm. We will do all we can to save your leg, and in case we don't succeed, you must put up with a wooden one. Dying is no joke, my friend, and I trust before long you will come to a better frame of mind.'

"I made him no answer, and he proceeded to place a tourniquet on my leg, and I was sent on shore in a boat to a hotel. Here I remained for several days, suffering great torture. The surgeons who attended me treated me with much kindness, but the pain was so great, that whenever they touched my leg, although they did it with

great gentleness, I screamed out terribly. Some days passed on without any alteration in my misery, and I could not conceal from myself the fact that my leg was getting into a very dangerous condition.

"One morning, three surgeons visited me at the same time, and afterwards retired for consultation. Presently the principal of them returned and said to me,—

"'Hassan, it is no use disguising the fact from you. You must submit to amputation or die. Now, which do you say?'

"'I prefer dying,' I replied.

"'Well,' said the surgeon, 'have your own way;' and he then left me.

"It struck me afterwards, that as he left me there was a peculiar smile on his countenance, but the pain I was suffering kept me from paying any attention to it at the time. The pain increased rather than diminished, and at last I cried aloud. The principal surgeon then returned to my bedside, and said to me,—

"'Hassan, I have brought something to ease your pain. It is a wonderful odour sent to me as a present for the benefit of my poor patients. Its effects are perfectly magical. Great as is the pain you are now suffering, it

will not only cease, but you will immediately afterwards fall into a sweet slumber.'

"I gratefully thanked him, and he placed some on a handkerchief, and told me to hold it to my nose and breathe it. I did so, and after a few inspirations the pain gradually ceased, and my thoughts then turned to Cairo and its Nile and alligators, and I was really happy. I saw my father in my dreams, and remembered the hotel in which I first acted as interpreter when I met his lordship, and in these delightful dreams I remained I don't know how long. At last I awoke, and on glancing my eyes around I found I was still in the room of the inn at Bombay. So vivid had been my visions that I could hardly believe the reality around me, and began almost to suspect I was still in a dream. However, the truth was here brought to my mind by a very respectable-looking woman advancing towards the bedside and saying,

"'Well, Hassan, are you better? You've had a very comfortable sleep, and I didn't like to awake you. However, I must leave you now, as the doctors wished to know as soon as you awoke.'

"'When did they leave me?' I asked.

"'About half an hour since,' she replied.

"'Have you any more of that wonderful odour,

in case the pain in my leg should come on again?' I asked.

"'Your leg will never trouble you more, Hassan,' she replied.

"'How so?' I said.

"'Because the doctors cut it off about half an hour since,' she replied, 'when you were fast asleep, and I didn't like to awake you to tell you of it, as you were sleeping so soundly.'

"For the moment I could hardly believe my ears, and I still thought I must be dreaming. To ascertain the fact correctly, however, I placed my hand under the clothes and found the statement perfectly true—my leg was gone!"

Here Hassan suddenly became silent, and gazed with something like terror around him. Nor was he without good cause for his alarm. He found that with the rapidity of an electric shock the whole of his audience had sprung to their feet, and were advancing angrily towards him, abusing him by every opprobrious term their imagination could supply. Achmet was the most furious of them all.

"And now let me ask you, my brethren," he said,

"whether you will allow yourselves any longer to be insulted by having offered to you as facts the lies invented by this miscreant. And you, reverend fathers," he continued, addressing the Ulemas, "let me ask if you can now say one word in his defence."

The elder of the Ulemas now made a signal to the others to be silent, which however he had great difficulty in obtaining. When the tumult had subsided sufficiently for him to be heard, without the slightest appearance of anger he addressed them.

"My brethren," he said, "I will not utter one word in defence of this man Hassan; but pray listen calmly to me, that you may do nothing in haste, but like good and true men place him in the hands of justice, where his case may be calmly deliberated on. I promise you that when before the cadi I will myself bear witness against him. I have endeavoured, somewhat against my own reason, to close my eyes to the suspicions which rose before me as to his real character, and out of kind feeling towards him to believe he was simply a lunatic. The statements he had hitherto made were for the most part utterly preposterous, and I may be fairly excused in having come to an erroneous conclusion. Now, however, the affair is different. He points to his wooden leg

as a proof that he has told the truth. That he has lost his leg is certain, as we can see by the wooden one he now wears. On that point there is no doubt; but the manner in which he states the operation to have been performed, is as equally, to the minds of all men, an utter impossibility. Why, if the pain was so great before the leg was cut off as to prevent him sleeping, how could it be possible for him to have slept through the still greater pain of amputation? No, my brethren, no matter how efficacious the odour which had been placed on the handkerchief might have been, it stands to common sense its effects could not have been as miraculous as he asserts. I therefore propose that he be at once placed in the custody of Achmet, and taken to the presence of the cadi, who shall pass judgment on his case."

Here Mustapha stepped forward on Hassan's behalf.

"Pause, dear brethren," he said, "before you act precipitately. Remember you have yet to learn what were his adventures after the amputation of his leg and his reaching England. Very likely," he continued, glancing at Hassan as he spoke, "some circumstances may be brought to light, which may tend greatly to modify the conclusion you have arrived at. Nay more, as

Hassan's adventures have progressed, they became more and more wonderful, and those he has yet to relate may diminish, by comparison, those he has already narrated into insignificance. Let me implore you to be patient, and consider well what you are about."

"No consideration," said Achmet, "shall hinder me from performing my duty. Come, my brethren, let us conduct him to prison, and to-morrow he shall be brought before the cadi, who will pass judgment upon him, and punish him severely. I hope that as many of you as can conveniently attend on the occasion will be present, so that the case may not break down for lack of evidence."

All promised to attend, and Hassan was dragged off to the dungeon, where he remained the whole night.

The next morning the door of the prison was opened, and Achmet, accompanied by some officers of the police, entered, and seizing Hassan, took him off to the presence of the cadi. Terrified indeed did he appear, poor fellow, when he looked round, and found angry glances poured on him from all sides. There was, however, one exception present, although Hassan did not see him, and that was Mustapha. From a corner of the room he watched his poor friend unobserved, willing to assist him, yet

totally unable to be of the least benefit to him. The cadi himself wore on his countenance a look of stern severity, which made poor Hassan shudder, while in a corner of the room were the three executioners, one armed with a scimitar, another with a bow-string, and the third with long powerful canes, to be used for the bastinado in case the cadi should decide on a punishment of the kind. Poor Hassan, with his hands fastened, now stood before the cadi, who asked the particulars of the crime of which he was accused. Achmet was the first witness examined. He gave a long and exaggerated account of the false statements made by Hassan. He dwelt on the frequent opportunities given him by Mustapha to correct the assertions he had made, but that on every occasion he had enlarged the form of his crime by maintaining that everything he uttered was true, and within the bounds of possibility. The cadi asked the nature of the impositions the prisoner had attempted to practise on the audience, and what things he had stated as facts which were utterly false.

Achmet narrated glibly enough the feat performed by the Enchanter of placing old cotton in the hold of a ship at the bottom of the sea, and sending down a light which the water could not extinguish, which burst the hull of

the ship to pieces. He detailed all the feats of the Enchanter, who carried Hassan through the air in a car from the city of Paris over the heads of a besieging army; how the Enchanter had lent him a cap which allowed him to go to the bottom of the sea, and remain there without difficulty; that he had blasphemously stated that he had bottled a flash of lightning, and afterwards made use of it. Then he told the story about the genie who could fly round half the world in less then ten hours, and the other who accomplished the same distance in ten hours less than no time.

"And these preposterous statements," continued Achmet, "the audience, contrary to my advice, put up with calmly enough; but yesterday evening he perpetrated so infamous a falsehood, that it broke down the patience of the audience, and aroused the indignation of the two reverend Ulemas whom you now see before you, and who had hitherto stood his friend, treating him rather as an object of compassion than as a miscreant who had attempted to palm off impossibilities as facts on the minds of his too credulous audience."

The two Ulemas now came forward and gave evidence as far as they were cognisant of the facts of the case. It is only justice to these reverend gentlemen to state, that

unlike Achmet's evidence their statement was totally devoid of any expression of personal feeling. They gave it steadily and calmly, and admitted they had to the last moment considered Hassan simply as a madman, but that their patience had broken down at the statement he had made concerning the amputation of his leg, and they now considered him a vagabond and impostor.

Several other witnesses were called, whose evidence tended in the same direction; not a voice among them was lifted up in Hassan's favour.

The Cadi then asked Hassan what he had to say in his defence.

"Only," replied Hassan, "that all I have stated, is not only within the range of possibility, but positively true."

Here a shout of execration was hurled at him from all sides, which the Cadi had great difficulty in quelling. When silence had been obtained, the Cadi said to Hassan,—

"There is but one verdict I can give. You have been guilty of imposition, and that to an extent which has never before come under my knowledge, and it is now for me to determine what punishment shall be meted out to you. Fortunately for you, the crime you have been guilty of cannot be punished by death, otherwise it would

indisputably have been your fate. The utmost penalty the law allows me to give you shall have, and that is two hundred bastindoes on the soles of your feet."

"Pardon me O Cadi!" said Hassan, in an imploring voice, "but are you sure you've made no mistake?"

"I have made no mistake, prisoner," said the Cadi. "Judge for yourself." Then turning to an officer of the court he continued: "Take him the book, and point out the place in which his punishment is ordered."

The order was immediately obeyed, and Hassan read the passage attentively, and then, after reflecting a moment, said,—

"Your statement, O Cadi! is perfectly true. At the same time allow me to call your attention to one point in the law. It says,—'The prisoner shall receive two hundred blows on the soles of his feet,' the word being in the plural. Now I have but one foot, and I submit I am exempt from the punishment."

All seemed surprised at this profound legal objection on the part of the prisoner. Even the Cadi himself hardly knew what reply to make. The law stated imperatively the nature of the punishment the prisoner was to receive, and he (the Cadi) had no power to alter it.

Achmet suggested that the legal difficulty might be

obviated by giving Hassan four hundred blows on his one foot; but this, as the Cadi very justly remarked, the proper interpretation of the law would hardly admit of. Another officer in court then suggested that one hundred blows should be given on the one foot. To this Hassan objected, as the law said "feet," not "foot," and he maintained that he had a right to the benefit of the doubt.

The Cadi, who at heart was an upright man, could not deny the validity of his reasoning. At the same time it must not be supposed he could release him without punishment. After conversing with the two Ulemas for some moments, the Cadi said,—

"I have now decided on my verdict. You shall be banished the city of Bagdad for ever, and if you return to it again, you shall be bow-strung. A placard shall be fixed on your back on which shall be painted these words,—'This is Hassan, the greatest liar in the world.' With this on your back you shall be conducted through the city, and then liberated at the eastern gate, and you know the penalty if ever you set foot within these walls again."

Hassan made no remark, but was led back to prison, where he remained an hour or two while the placard was

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being prepared. When it was finished, and fixed on his back, he was led through the city, followed by a band of ruffians, whom the police with difficulty prevented from assaulting him.

It was late in the afternoon when Hassan's punishment was over, and he now trudged wearily onward for some miles. He then began to feel very fatigued, and almost inclined to throw himself on the sand and trust to chance what might befall him. On going a little farther he thought he saw some object before him, which, on approaching nearer, he found to be a man holding a donkey, and, to his great joy, discovered the man to be no other than his old friend Mustapha.

"Hassan, my poor friend," he said, in a kind tone, "you can hardly conceive how much sorrow your fate has caused me, for candidly I have a great affection for you. However, every man must submit to his fate, and there can be no exception in your case. You are banished the city and may not return to it. It is only a duty I owe you, from the benefits which have accrued to me by your performances, to make your punishment as light as possible. I therefore beg you will accept this donkey as a present, and the purse of money as a token of my regard. On the back of the donkey are two bags

filled with meal to serve for food during the way. And now the blessing of the Prophet be on you. Don't speak or I may burst into tears, and that would be unmanly."

Mustapha without another word left Hassan in solitude, and the latter, mounting his donkey, continued his road eastward, a richer if not a wiser man than on the day of his first arrival in Bagdad.

THE END.

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