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THE  
KING'S TALE



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# THE KING'S TALE

## AND ANOTHER STORY

ADAPTED BY

J. C. ALLEN

FROM

"GARDEN AND SPRING"

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# THE KING'S TALE

ADAPTED FROM "GARDEN AND SPRING"

## INTRODUCTION

THERE was once a great King. His name was Azad-Bakht. His imperial palace was in Constantinople, which is also called Istambol. In his reign the peasant was happy, the army was contented, and the poor lived in peace.

One day, when the King had reached his fortieth year, he was looking in a looking-glass. He there saw a white hair in his whiskers. He heaved a deep sigh. "Alas!" said he, "I have lived all these years to no purpose." At this time the King had no son to inherit his kingdom. The thought of coming age oppressed him. His ministers noticed his melancholy. At last the Wazir, a wise and trusted servant, begged the King to tell him why he grieved.

The King told his faithful friend, and the Wazir said, "If you will follow this slave's advice, a son may be given to you. No one

has yet prayed, and returned from prayer hopeless. Therefore pray at night, and after begging blessings from heaven, seek help from the Darweshes and holy men. Daily bestow food on orphans, widows, and poor people. Doing good will bring joy to the royal mind. Good works are bound to have their reward."

Acting on the good Wazir's advice, the King went out the next night. He dressed himself in mean clothes, and stole silently from the fort. He made his way to the burial-ground, repeating his prayers as he went. Seeing a flame ahead, he went towards it. He came to a house. In it was a Darwesh. He sat on the ground with his head on his knees. The lamp stood on a big stone. The King sat down in a corner. Presently the Darwesh sneezed, and said, "God be praised." He then got up and trimmed the lamp. The flame was burning brightly, so he sat down on a mattress and lit his hookah. At that moment he saw the King.

"O friend," said he, "with dust on my head I wander from door to door. To-morrow I know not what will happen to me. You cannot say where you will be when to-morrow night comes. As we are together, let us tell our histories and while away the time. To-morrow we may be far apart."



The King replied, "O Darwesh, I agree with what you say. First tell me your history. I know that it will be interesting. I will then tell you my history."

The King listened to the story of the Darwesh, and then said, "It is late, friend. I will tell you my story to-morrow night, and will send some one to lead you to my house."

The next day the King sent a servant to the Darwesh to lead him to the palace. When he got there, he gave him a meal, and then said, "I had the pleasure of listening to your history last night. Though I am a King, yet I also have seen adventures, and I will now tell you my story."

The King began.

## I

WHEN my father died, I came to the throne. I was young, and the whole kingdom of Rum was under my rule.

One year, a merchant from Balkh came to my capital. He brought a great deal of merchandise. My spies told me that so rich a merchant had never before come to the city. I sent for him.

He came, and gave me many rich presents. Everything he had was valuable. Above all, he had a ruby in a box, a splendid jewel.

Though I was a King, I had never seen so fine a stone. He offered it to me, and I accepted it. In return, I bestowed on the merchant many honours. I gave him a free pass through all the roads of my empire. He need nowhere pay any duties.

After that, each day, at public audience, I used to send for the ruby.

One day I sent for the jewel. My nobles and officers were in their places near me. The foreign ambassadors were also present. I took the jewel in my hand, and praised it. Then I handed it to the ambassador of the Franks.

On seeing it, he smiled, and praised it. It passed from hand to hand. All praised it, because they knew that they would please me if they did so.

Then my father's Wazir came to me. He was a very wise man. He said, "I wish to whisper in the royal ear, if my life is safe." I said, "Speak." I was very young, but I knew that his advice was always good.

He said, "Mighty Sire, you are a King. It is not becoming in Kings to praise a stone too highly. A King has more important things to think of. This stone is large, and of a fine colour. Yet it is but a stone. The ambassadors from foreign countries are all present. When they go to their own countries



they will say, 'He is a strange King. Each day he brings a ruby to the public audience. He praises it himself, and expects every one else to praise it.' Then the Kings who hear the tale will laugh.

"Great Sire, in Naishapur there is a humble merchant. He has twelve rubies, larger than this one. He has sewn them on a dog's collar. His dog wears them round his neck."

I was much displeased with him. I said to the guards, "Put this Wazir to death."

They seized his arms, and were going to lead him away, when the ambassador from the King of the Franks came to me. He stood before me with joined hands. I asked him what he wanted. He replied, "I hope that I may learn the fault that the Wazir has committed."

I answered, "What greater fault is there than his? He told a lie to me."

The ambassador said, "Perhaps what he said was true. Cannot the truth of his words be tested?"

I replied, "Is his story a likely one? He told me that a poor merchant had twelve rubies, each larger than mine. He said that this merchant sewed them on the collar of his dog. I ask again, is it a likely story?"

The ambassador answered, "Sometimes

the most unlikely things are true. Merchants go into many countries, and find rare stones. It may be true. If Your Majesty imprisoned the Wazir, then, mighty Sire, you could test the truth of his words. The Wazir has been faithful during his whole life. Is this not at least due to him ? ”

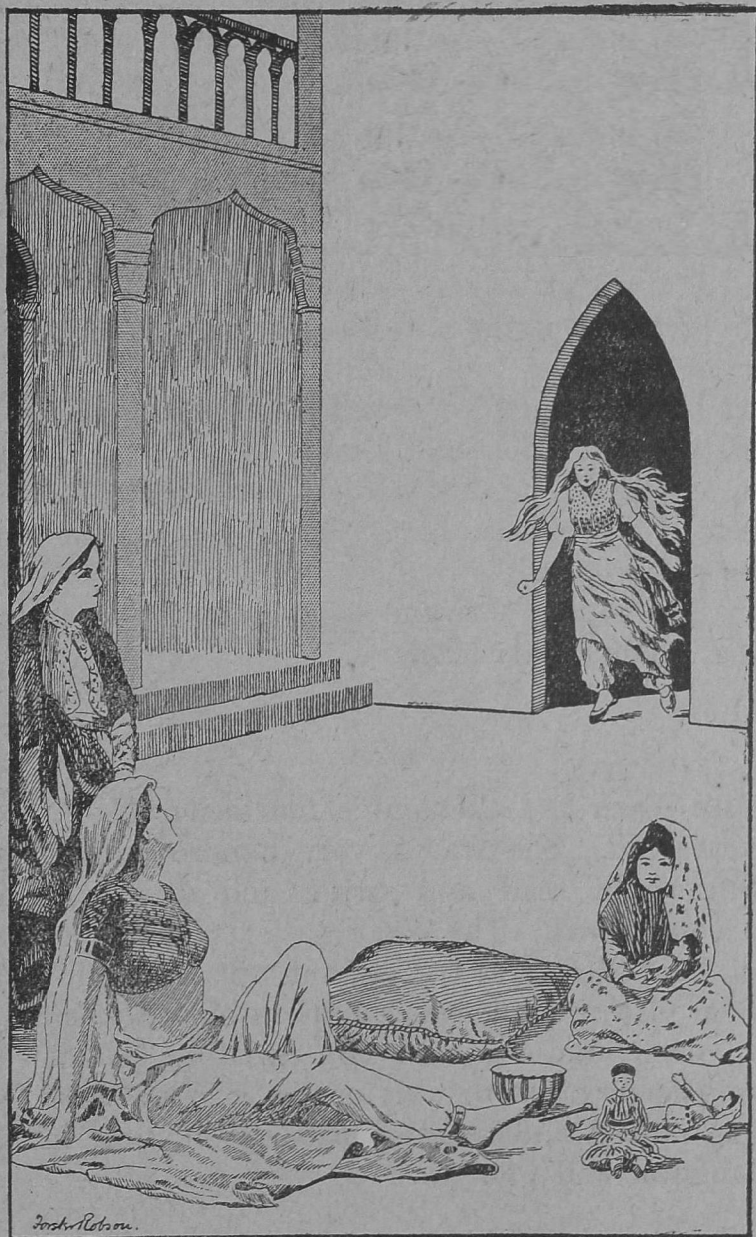
I was very angry. I still wished to have my way. But the ambassador of the Franks gave such just replies that I became silent. At last I said, “ Very well, I will grant him his life. But he shall remain in prison. If, in a year’s time, his words are proved to be true, I will release him. Otherwise, he shall be put to death.”

Thereupon the ambassador bowed low, and resumed his place.

## II

THE Wazir had a daughter, fourteen or fifteen years old. She was a very handsome girl. She could read and write, and was very accomplished. The Wazir was extremely fond of her. He built an elegant apartment for her. He invited the daughters of noblemen to come and see her. He hired handsome female servants to wait on her. With these she played and romped, passing the time in laughter and joy.





Josh. Nelson.

On the day when the Wazir was sent to prison, his daughter was entertaining her friends. She was sitting with her companions, marrying two of her dolls. All the other children were either helping or looking on. She was beating a small drum, when her mother ran into the room. Her mother's feet were bare, her hair was loose. "Such a calamity has befallen us!" she exclaimed. "Your father has gone to prison. He said something which displeased the King."

"What did he say to the King?" asked the daughter.

"Your father said that he knew of a merchant in Naishapur who had twelve splendid rubies, and that he sewed them on the collar of his dog. The King would not believe him. He has sent him to prison for telling falsehoods.

"Oh, if you were a son!" continued the mother, "you would try to find out the truth of the story. If it were true, your father would be released."

"O mother," said the girl, "we cannot fight against fate. When trouble afflicts us we must put our hopes in God. He is merciful. Let no one see our tears. Let us, instead, offer up prayers for the King's welfare. We are his slaves, he is our master. To-day he is wrathful, to-morrow he may be gracious."



The daughter's good sense quieted her mother. She returned, somewhat comforted, to her own apartments.

That night the daughter sent for her foster-father. When he came, she fell at his feet, saying, "I have made up my mind to clear my father's name. My mother reproached me because I was a daughter and not a son. I will do a son's work. If you will come with me, I will go to Naishapur, and prove the truth of my father's words."

Her foster-father made excuses at first. But at last she persuaded him to help her. Then she said to him, "Make ready for the journey in secret. Buy some merchandise, which we can present to Kings. Procure sufficient slaves and servants. Let no one know what you are doing."

Her foster-father made everything ready. Camels and mules were laden with merchandise. And then the Wazir's daughter put on a man's dress, and joined her foster-father. Together they set off on their errand.

In the morning, the mother discovered that her daughter had gone. Wisely she kept the fact a secret. She pretended that her daughter was keeping to her own apartment.

Meanwhile, the daughter pursued her journey. She called herself "the young

merchant." She went from stage to stage, until at last she reached Naishapur. There she and her foster-father put up at the caravanserai, and unloaded their merchandise.

In the morning, she put on a rich dress. Then she went out to ramble in the city. Passing from street to street, she reached the chauk, the main thoroughfare of the city. She came to a stop where four great streets crossed each other.

On one side was a jeweller's shop. Many jewels were exposed for sale in it, and richly dressed slaves stood about, with arms crossed on their hearts. A man, who was their chief, sat on a stool in the shop. He was about fifty years of age, dressed in a handsome short-sleeved jacket. Round him sat companions, also on stools.

The young merchant's heart began to beat quickly. Could this be the jeweller with the wonderful rubies? How could she make sure?

She approached the shop more closely. Then she saw two large iron cages, hanging from the ceiling. In each cage a man was imprisoned. The two prisoners were very thin. Their uncut hair hung to their feet. Their nails were long. They sat with their chins on their breasts, their eyes gazing on the floors of their cages. Two ugly negroes

stood beside each cage. They had drawn swords in their hands.

“Goodness me!” exclaimed the young merchant. “What does it all mean?” She looked across to the other side of the shop. There another marvel met her eyes.

On a carpet an ivory stool was placed. Upon it was a cushion of crimson velvet. On the cushion sat a dog. Round its neck was a collar, set with precious stones. It was chained to the stool by a golden chain. Two handsome servants waited on the dog. One was fanning away the flies with a gold-handled chowrie. The other held a white handkerchief. Every now and then he wiped the dog's face with it.

The young merchant looked closely at the dog's collar. *She counted twelve large rubies on it.*

When she had made sure of this, she was filled with thankfulness. “But how shall I secure the stones, and carry them to the King?” she asked herself.

While she was thus thinking, the jewel-merchant caught sight of her. He said to one of his slaves, “Outside, there is a handsome young merchant looking at our goods. Beg him to come inside.”

The slave came out and said, “My master much desires to see your honour. Will your honour have the kindness to come in?”



This was exactly what the young merchant wanted. She at once replied, "Very well," and followed the slave into the shop.

The jewel-merchant liked his visitor's face. He said, "Come in. Sit down near me. Tell me where you have come from, and whither you wish to go. I see, by your clothes, that you are a stranger. Perhaps I may be of some service to you."

The young merchant replied, "This humble servant's country is Rum. Constantinople is the birth-place of my ancestors. My father is a merchant. Being now old, and unable to travel, he has sent me abroad to learn the methods of commerce. Your name is so renowned that I came to Naishapur to have the pleasure of meeting you. Now my mission is fulfilled, and I will return to my own country."

The jewel-merchant at once said, "O my son, pray be not so hasty. Stay some days in my humble abode. Tell me, where are your goods, and where are your servants?"

The young merchant pretended to make some excuses. But the jewel-merchant would not be denied. He said, "The serai is no place for a merchant of your standing. Quickly pack your bags and come hither. When you are rested, continue your journey."

If you will use my house as your own you will greatly oblige me."

So the young merchant and her foster-father brought their goods to the house of the kind jewel-merchant. They went to the shop at the hour of closing. One of the two slaves took up the dog, and the other took the stool and carpet. The two negroes placed the two cages on the heads of porters. Then the merchant locked his shop up, and the whole party set off for his house.

### III

THE young merchant saw that the house was a grand one. It was, indeed, fit for a king to live in. A stream of water ran through the court. Carpets were spread by the side of it. On the carpets refreshments were laid.

The jewel-merchant and his guest took their seats. Then a slave placed the ivory stool and cushion near them, and put the dog on it. The slave next put some meat on a dish, and placed a golden cover over it. An embroidered cloth was then laid near the dog, and the dish was placed on it. The dog descended from his stool, and ate till he was satisfied. Then he drank water from a golden bowl, and jumped up again on to his stool.

The slaves wiped his face with a napkin. Then they carried his dish and bowl to the two iron cages. They opened the doors of the cages, and gave the remainder of the food and water to the two prisoners.

The young merchant felt disgusted. He could not eat the food that was set before him. The jewel-merchant pressed him to eat, but he would not.

At last the jewel-merchant asked, "Why do you refuse everything that I offer you?"

The young merchant replied, "Your conduct has taken from me all desire for food. You first feed your dog, and then you feed these men with the dog's leavings. It is horrible. I cannot bear even the thought of food."

The jewel-merchant said, "O son, I know exactly how you feel. Every one blames me as you are doing. The people in this city call me 'dog-worshipper,' but I am none the less a true Musalman."

"If that is so," replied the young merchant, "why do you do this?"

The jewel-merchant answered, "O son, no one knows my reason. I tell it to no one. I pay double taxes, so that I may not publish it abroad. You must also pardon me if I do not tell it to you."

The young merchant thought, "It is his





business, not mine. Therefore why should I press him further ? ” So he said no more on the subject.

Day followed day, and the young merchant still stayed with the jewel-merchant. She could think of no way of obtaining the rubies. Wearing men's clothes, no one suspected that she was a woman. The jewel-merchant regarded his young guest as his own son.

One day the young merchant began to weep. On seeing it, the jewel-merchant asked him the cause of his weeping.

He answered, “ O father, how can I express myself ? You have shown me nothing but kindness. Yet I have a duty to my father to perform. When I set out on this journey, he gave me one year only. The year will shortly expire. How can I disobey the commands of my father ? ”

On hearing this, the jewel-merchant felt very lonely. He said, “ Must you so soon depart ? Do not go yet. The climate of this land of Persia is good, and will benefit your health. Send a message to your parents, and ask them to come and stay with you here.

“ I am getting an old man. I have no son of my own, and I regard you already as a son. If your parents will come and live here with you, I will make you the manager of my business. When I die you shall be my heir.”

The young merchant replied, "It is true that you have been like a father to me. You have been so kind that I nearly forgot my duty to my parents. But my father only gave me one year's leave. If I exceed it, I am sure that he will die. You have been so kind in the past, I know that you will give me leave to go. You would not wish a son to incur his parents' displeasure. I shall never forget the great kindness that you have shown to me."

"Well, if you must go," said the merchant, "so it must be. Yet I am loth to part with you. I am not sure that a journey to Constantinople would not be profitable to me. Indeed, I am greatly tempted to make the journey, and accompany you." So saying, he went to look into his books, and to take stock of his goods. When he returned, he said, "I have made up my mind to accompany you to Constantinople."

Then the young merchant was exceedingly glad. Only two months had gone since her father was imprisoned. If the merchant brought his dog with him, she could prove the truth of her father's words, and save his life.

The jewel-merchant began to make his preparations for the journey. He gathered together gold, jewels, rich carpets, and all



manner of precious things, ready to be packed on the backs of camels.

When the other merchants heard that he was going, they decided to go with him. So they made similar preparations. At last, thousands of camels stood ready, with heavy sacks on their backs. The gold and jewels were put on mules. Thousands of slaves and attendants went with the beasts of burden. Five hundred slaves from the mountains, warriors every one of them, completely armed, rode beside the mules and camels.

In the rear of the caravan were the merchants. They were richly dressed, and were carried in sedan chairs. A litter, on the back of a camel, carried the dog, seated on his cushion. The two cages were slung on either side. Thus they marched onwards.

At last, after many weeks of travelling, they came to Constantinople. They encamped outside the city. The young merchant said to the jewel-merchant, "O father, with your permission, I will now go and see my parents. I will make a house ready for you. If it is agreeable to you, you will be pleased then to enter the city." The young merchant then took his leave.

The Wazir's daughter ran quickly home. Stripping off the turban which she wore on her head, she threw herself into her mother's

arms, and told her the whole story. "O mother, I have carried out your wishes. I have acted as if I was a son. I have brought the merchant with me from Naishapur. Round the neck of his dog are the twelve rubies. Now, if you will let me, I will go away for one more day, and then my father will be set free from prison."

The mother clasped her daughter to her bosom, and kissed her, offering up grateful thanks for her safe return. Then she said, "Do what you think best. You have acted so well that I have the fullest confidence in you."

The daughter then again resumed her man's clothes, and returned to the caravan.

#### IV

I WAS in Constantinople at this time, in fact I very rarely left the city. News was brought to me that a splendid caravan had arrived. The chief merchant had a handsome son, so said my spies. But he was an exceedingly cruel man. I asked them why they thought so. They told me that the inhuman monster carried two men in iron cages wherever he went. He took a dog with him also. This dog had every luxury, a stool of its own, and a soft cushion to sit on.

I was indignant when I heard this. I exclaimed, "The rascally merchant deserves death. Send the executioners to cut off his head. Tell them to bring it here." I was beside myself with rage.

By chance, the Frankish ambassador was present. He smiled, and I became still more angry.

"O disrespectful one," I said, "thus to show your teeth. Such conduct, before a King, is the reverse of good manners."

The ambassador replied, "Mighty sire, an idea came into my mind, and therefore I smiled. Your Majesty says that this merchant has brought a dog. Further, this dog sits on a cushion in luxury. It is possible that the dog has also a collar, on which there may be twelve rubies. The merchant may have good reasons for doing what he does. I was surprised when your Majesty ordered this man to death on the tale of an idle fellow."

When the ambassador thus spoke, I remembered that my Wazir was in prison. I sent messengers to bring the merchant, his son, the dog, and the men in cages to me. The messengers quickly returned, bringing all the persons and the dog with them. I summoned them to come before me.

First came the merchant and his son.



Both of them were richly dressed. Every one was astonished to see the son so good-looking. He carried in his hands a golden tray, loaded high with precious stones. This he laid before my throne, made a low bow, and stood silent out of respect for me. The merchant kissed the ground, and prayed for my prosperity. His voice was full and sweet, and his tones were reasonable.

I was pleased with him, but, assuming a look of anger, I exclaimed—

“O thou monster in human form! What pit hast thou dug for thyself? Of what religion art thou? What sense is there in thy conduct? O thou dog-worshipper, what is thy name; whence comest thou?”

He calmly replied, “May your Majesty’s years and prosperity ever increase. I am called a Musalman. But there is a reason, which I cannot disclose, why I take such care of this dog. There is a reason, also, why I keep these men in cages. Every one condemns me for it, and in my own city I pay double taxes. Yet I submit to this, for I would rather suffer than tell my secret.”

On hearing this lame excuse, anger boiled within me. I said—

“Thou art putting me off with mere words. I will believe nothing of thy secret until thou tellest it to me. If thy reasons are not good,

thy body shall be cut in two. No torment suffices to punish such conduct."

The merchant replied, "O King, put not this unfortunate wretch to death. Take all I have, but let me go, and let my son go also. Spare our lives, O mighty monarch!"

I smiled and said, "O fool! Dost thou try to tempt me with thy wealth? Thou may'st not go, unless thou speakest the truth."

Then tears streamed from the merchant's eyes. He looked towards his son, and heaved a deep sigh, and said—

"I am a criminal in the King's eyes. I shall be put to death."

"Cease, dissembler!" I said. "Thou hast made excuses enough. What thou hast to say, say quickly."

Then the merchant came near the throne, and kissed the foot of it. He poured forth words in praise of me, and said—

"O King, I could bear any torture rather than tell my secret. It concerns the honour of my family. But life is dear to me. If by my silence I must lose my life, I will speak. If such is the royal pleasure, be pleased to hear the story of this feeble old man. First let the two cages, in which the men are confined, be placed before your Majesty. If I speak falsely, let these men say so, and then let justice be done."

The merchant then began his story.

## V

O KING, this man on my right hand is my eldest brother. He on my left hand is my older brother. I am the third, and youngest brother. My father was a merchant in the kingdom of Persia. When I was fourteen years old, he died.

My brothers then said to me, "Let us divide our father's wealth, and go our own ways."

I replied, "I am the youngest brother. I claim no share of our poor father's wealth. I shall be content with a loaf a day if I may remain with you. I am a boy. I know not how to read or write. What use is wealth to me?"

The second day after this, they said, "O brother, we want the room in which you live. You must hire a place of your own, and go and live there." I then saw that they wished to be rid of me.

O protector of the world, I was my father's youngest son. When he returned from his journeys, he always brought with him a present for me. I sold those presents, and raised a small capital of my own. With this money I did a little buying and selling, and made a small profit. After a time I opened a shop, and took a small house. This dog guarded my house when I was at the shop.

Though my brothers had behaved badly to me, yet I now prospered. My business increased rapidly. In three years' time I was a man of substance. I bought rare clothes and dresses, and sold them at a good profit. The noble families used to come to me for their finest clothes.

One day, it was a Friday, I was sitting at home. I had sent a slave to the bazar to buy some things for the house. He returned in tears. I asked him why he wept, and he replied, "What business is that of yours? Sit at your ease and enjoy yourself! What does it matter to you, that your two brothers are in trouble? They are standing in the chauk, with their hands tied behind their backs, and a Jew is beating them. While he beats them, he laughs and says, 'Pay me my money, pay me money.' Such is your brothers' condition, and you sit here in contentment!"

On hearing this from the slave, I jumped up, and ran to the chauk with naked feet. I bade my slaves bring money after me.

I found my brothers tied, as the slave said. The Jew was beating them with a stick.

I went up to the Jew and said, "Why are you thus beating these men? To-day is the Sabbath day."



The Jew replied, "If you wish to take their part, pay me the money they owe me. If you do not, take the nearest road to your own house."

"What is the amount?" I asked.

At this moment my slaves brought two bags of money. I gave a thousand pieces of silver to the Jew, and released my brothers. I took them home, hungry and thirsty as they were. I fed and clothed them. I never asked them what they had done, lest they should feel ashamed.

O King, they are both present. Ask them if I tell the truth or not.

After a time, when their bruises had gone, I said to them, "O brothers, you cannot now do business in this city. It would be better if you travelled."

They were silent, but I saw that they agreed with me. I made preparations for their journey. I bought tents and camels, and I gave them merchandise to sell worth twenty thousand silver pieces. A caravan of merchants was going to Bokhara. I sent them along with it.

The caravan returned, but my brothers were not with it. I made inquiries, and heard that they were in Bokhara. One had gambled, and lost all his money. He was at this time a sweeper in a gambling-house.

The other had squandered his money, and was a waiter in a wine-shop.

From this time I could neither sleep nor eat. My mind was filled with anxiety for my brothers. I feared that they might further disgrace our family. I collected some money and at once set off for Bokhara.

When I got there, I searched for them and found them. I took them to the house in which I was staying. I fed and clothed them. I uttered no word of reproach, they being my elder brothers.

I again set them up as merchants, with goods to sell, and returned home with them. The people of Naishapur thought they were prosperous merchants. No one could say a word against our good name.

They came to my house and squatted in a corner. For three months they remained there. They ate, smoked, and slept. They did not offer to work.

I did not know how to set them up in life. At last I made up my mind to take them on a voyage.

I got together much merchandise and set out. My brothers showed no desire to come, but they accompanied me. A ship was ready in the river. We put our merchandise on it, weighed anchor, and set sail.

This dog was lying on the river bank.

When he saw me depart, he uttered loud cries. Then, determined not to remain behind, he entered the water, and swam after the ship. I lowered a skiff from the ship's side, and rowed to him. I picked up the faithful creature and returned on board.

## VI

ONE day I was asleep in the cabin of the ship. My second brother came in hastily and awakened me. I jumped up and followed him on deck. My eldest brother was leaning over the vessel's side, looking down into the water. I went up to him and asked, "Is all well?" He replied, "Behold this wonderful sight! Mermen are dancing in the water, with pearls, oysters, and coral in their hands."

In ordinary circumstances I should not have believed so strange a story. Fresh from sleep, I put my head and shoulders over the ship's side, and looked down into the water.

While I was thus looking, my second brother came up from behind. He gave me a push, which sent me over the side. I fell into the water. My two brothers at once cried out, "Help, help! our brother has fallen overboard."

The ship went on. It did not shorten

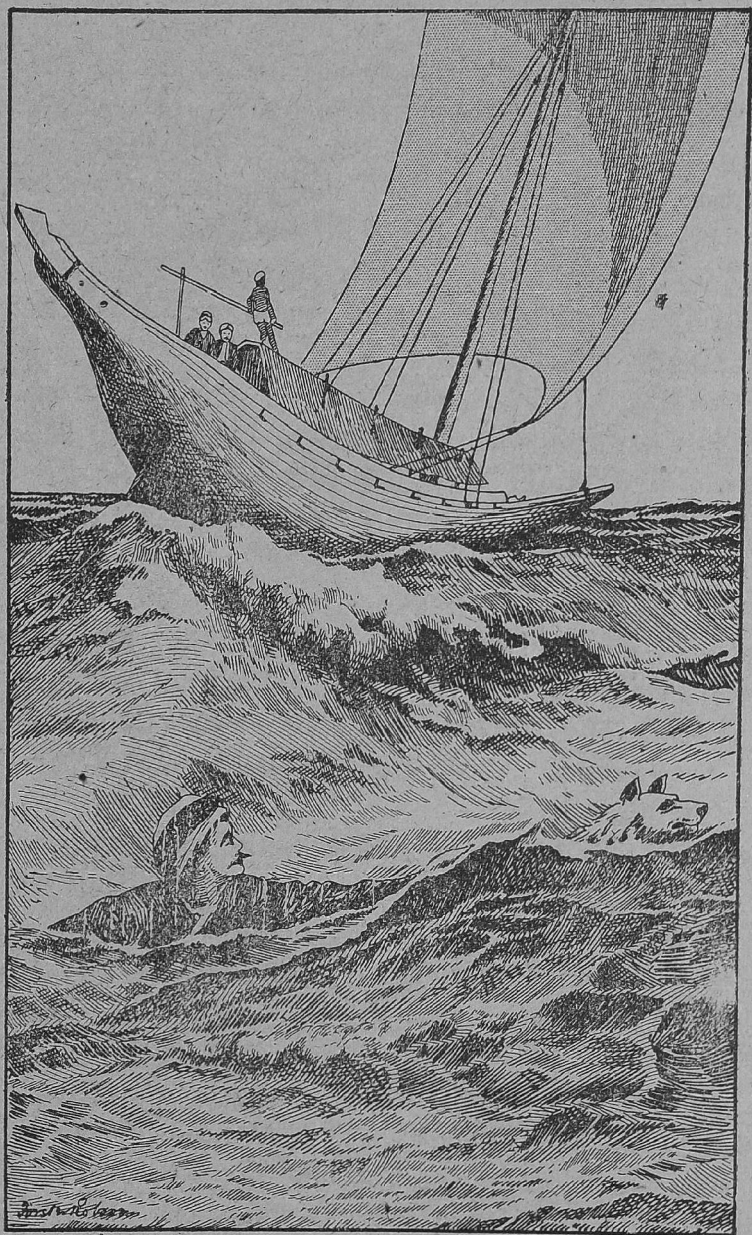
sail or turn round. No one lowered a skiff to pick me up. There was I, alone in the water, tossed about by the waves. I became exhausted. When I was in my last extremity, my hand touched something. It was this faithful dog, who had jumped after me into the water. I took hold of his tail, and he, being a strong swimmer, was the means of saving my life.

I do not know how long I was in the water. I became insensible, and woke to find myself on dry land. My dog was barking by my side. I stood up and looked round, and saw a city not far off.

I was very weak. I partly walked and partly crawled to the city gates. When I was inside, I felt fearful pangs of hunger. From the bakers' shops came the smell of new bread. But I had no money with which to buy.

I would not beg among these strangers, though my strength was fast failing. I walked along the street, and presently saw two young men, dressed like Persians. "Ha! ha!" I said, "now I shall get help. These are my own countrymen." When they came near, I saw that they were my two brothers. I was filled with joy. I went up and saluted them, thinking that at last my troubles were over. But, instead of showing pleasure,





they began to beat me, crying, "At last we have found you, you scamp." A crowd quickly collected. People asked, "Why do you beat this poor man?"

They replied, "Poor man, indeed. He is our brother's servant. The rascal pushed our brother overboard from the ship. He seized all his treasure and made off with it. We have long searched for him. At last we have found him." They then tore their own clothes and wept with sham grief.

Some soldiers came and said, "Cease beating him. What has he done?"

Then they took me before the governor of the city. My brothers came also. They told the governor the same tale. Then the governor said to me, "Is this story true? What have you got to say for yourself?"

I was so weak and overcome with faintness, I could make no reply.

The governor became convinced then that I was guilty. He ordered soldiers to lead me to the plain, and impale me on the stake.

O, protector of the world, I had been generous to my brothers. This was their gratitude to me. Here they are before you in their cages. If you do not believe me, ask them if I tell the story truly.

Well, they led me to the plain. When I saw the stake, I washed my hands of life.

This dog came with me. Except him, I had no friend. He knew the danger I was in, and barked till the soldiers beat him with sticks. But though he ceased to bark, he would not go from me. I said my prayers, and made ready to die.

By a strange chance, the King of the country was attacked with colic. No medicines did him any good. One holy man said, "The best remedy is this. Give alms to the poor, and let all prisoners go free." Immediately royal messengers set forth north, south, east, and west, urgently crying, "Release all prisoners, the King is ill!"

One came to the plain on which I stood. He galloped up to the stake, and cut the ropes which bound me with his sword.

Said he to the soldiers, "At such a time, when the King is so ill, would you put a fellow creature to death?" He ordered them instantly to release me.

But my two brothers went to the governor. They gave him presents, and he ordered the soldiers to re-arrest me. I escaped the stake, but a fate nearly as dreadful overtook me.

## VII

THE governor dared not impale me. He resolved to put me secretly to death.

About a kos<sup>1</sup> from the city was a mountain. Hundreds of years before a deep well was dug in this mountain. Whoever angered the king was thrown into this well. He died a lingering death from hunger and thirst.

My two brothers and the governor carried me one night to this well. Behind them, I knew, was this faithful dog. Wherever I went he followed. They cast me into the pit, and then returned. My brothers were at last satisfied that I was dead.

O King, this dog, who never left me, lay at the brink of the well. For some time I lay senseless at the bottom. When I returned to my senses, I imagined that I was dead. I thought that I was in a grave.

After a while my senses fully returned. I heard the sound of a man's voice. I heard, also, the chafing sound a rope makes when it rubs against a hard surface. I wondered what it was, and began to feel about me. My hands rested on some bones.

Again, in the darkness I heard a noise. It was the noise of some one eating. I exclaimed, "Who are you? Who are you? Tell me, I pray you. Have you food?"

For an answer some one laughed. Then a voice out of the darkness said, "Peace, friend. Do not ask me who I am. I have

<sup>1</sup> About two miles.



food, but none of it is for you." Then came a noise of further eating. After a while I heard heavy breathing, and knew that my fellow prisoner was asleep.

Each day this was repeated. I heard the chafing of the rope, and the sound of eating. But no food came my way.

My dog never left the brink of the well. His intelligence was almost human. He saw some one come each day, with bread and water in a basket. He saw the basket lowered into the well. How he knew that it did not come to me I do not know. All I know is this: the next day he left the brink of the well, and returned with a loaf in his mouth. He dropped the loaf into my hands.

The next day he dragged an old woman by her skirts to the mouth of the well. In her hand she had a basket and a rope. She lowered this to me. It contained a vessel full of water. The dog then ran off and brought a loaf of bread.

Day after day the dog brought me bread in this way. Day after day also, the woman, out of pity for me, brought me water. The rest of the day, and all night, he lay at the brink of the well.

Six months passed in this manner. I had no looking-glass, but knew that I had changed. I was as thin as a skeleton. My beard hung

down to my waist. Life, under such conditions, was but a torment. Yet I would not give up hope.

## VIII

### MY DELIVERANCE FROM THE PIT

At last a deliverer came. One night I was too sorrowful to sleep. I lay wide awake on the floor of the pit. My fellow prisoner was in deep slumber. A rope came creeping down the wall of the well. A voice said softly, "O unfortunate being, tie this rope tightly to your hands."

I thought my brothers' hearts had at last softened. I thought they were my deliverers. I wound the rope tightly round my arms and waist. Then some one pulled me up.

A young man stood at the top. "Come, be quick," he said. He helped me from the well, and placing one arm round me, he supported me as I tottered down the mountain slope.

At the bottom I saw two horses, ready saddled. He placed me on one of them, and mounted the other himself. Then he went ahead, and led the way across a river. By dawn we were twelve kos from the city.

As the light grew, I was able to see my

deliverer. He was a young man, completely armed. He wore a coat of mail, and his horse was clothed in iron armour.

I was dirty and unkempt. The young man looked at me very hard. He seemed to think that I should recognize him. Suddenly rage seized him. Biting his lips, he drew his sword from its scabbard. Springing from his horse, he made a cut at me. I dodged the blow, and threw myself on the ground before him, crying, "What fault have I done? Why do you deliver me from the pit only to kill me?"

He replied, "Tell me the truth. Who are you?"

I replied, "I am a traveller. I was thrown into the pit through no fault of my own." I then thanked him for delivering me, and begged him to give me my life.

At last he relented. He remounted his horse, and jogged on silently. I rode, also silent, beside him. Behind me came this faithful dog.

At midday we dismounted. We took the saddles off our horses, and allowed them to graze. He then sat down beside me, and said, "Tell me your history, unfortunate one." I told him my story, and when he heard my misfortunes, he wept.

When I had done, I said, "And now, kind

sir, tell me to whom I am indebted for my deliverance."

To this he answered nothing. After a while he said, "Who I am must remain a secret at present. But I will tell you this much. You are not the person I tried to deliver. The rope was for your fellow prisoner." He then gave me some spare clothes which he had brought. I dressed myself in them, and washed myself, and felt much better.

Then my deliverer took out some cakes, some bread, and some pulse, and bade me eat. He dissolved some sugar in a cup of water, added some spirit of musk to it, and gave it to me to drink. Then he drew forth some scissors, and cut my hair and beard. I felt a new man after it.

We travelled day and night, until we entered another kingdom. Then we came to a large city. It was more populous than Constantinople, and the climate was mild and agreeable. We learned that the King was just, and we determined to go no further.

Then my deliverer took off his armour for the first time, and I was able to see his face. What was my surprise when I discovered that he was not a man but a woman! She was extremely beautiful. On beholding her I was more grateful than ever. I begged that



she would be my wife. She consented, and we were married forthwith.

My wife had a little money. With this I bought a small house and set up a shop. I have always been successful in business, and my new business quickly prospered. In three years' time I became the chief merchant in the city.

## IX

AFTER a while, I asked my wife who the other man in the pit was. Then she told me her story.

She said, "My country is the land of Zerbad. I am the daughter of the King of that country. The young man in the prison is the son of my father's prime minister.

"One day my father invited all the kings and nobles to visit him. They were to shoot with bows and arrows, ride on horseback, and compete for prizes. The handsomest, boldest man among them was the prime minister's son. My mother, the queen, and I sat at a latticed window. We saw the princes performing below. I admired the prime minister's son, and told my mother so. She told my father.

"My father hoped that I should some day marry the son of a neighbouring King. When

he heard what I had said, he was very angry. He then ordered his guards to take the prime minister's son and throw him into the pit.

"After that I stole out of the palace nightly. I took food and water, and lowered them into the well. You know the rest. When I saw you in the morning, instead of the prime minister's son, I was very angry. I tried to kill you. But I thought better of it. After all, I had saved the life of a fellow creature. The prime minister's son was a stranger to me. It was my pride that prompted me to save him. It was on my account that he suffered. But I dared not return, so I led you into safety, and saved your life instead of his."

The day after my wife told me her story I went into the city. On the plain I saw a great crowd of people. "Why is there such a crowd here?" I asked a looker-on. "Over there are two thieves," he replied. "They are going to be stoned to death."

I at once thought of my own former plight. I imagined myself, an innocent man, again at the stake. Were these two men guilty? I could not rest till I had seen them. Pushing through the crowd, I got near to them. The sight that met my eyes caused me nearly to swoon. The two thieves were being led along, with their hands tied behind their

backs, and their heads were bare. *They were my unhappy brothers!* I pushed my way to the guards, and gave them a handful of gold pieces. "Go slowly," I begged. "Delay the execution as long as you can." They nodded, and I jumped on to a horse and rode to the house of the Governor. I presented him with a ruby of great value, and begged him to delay the execution. He replied, "Their crimes are fully proved; the King's order has gone forth; I am powerless."

At last, after much entreaty, the Governor sent for the plaintiff. For five thousand pieces of silver he agreed to withdraw the charges against my brothers. I gave the money, and then they were released. I took them to my house, welcomed them as before, and gave them dresses and food. For three years they stayed with me. I asked them to do no work. I was content so long as they kept out of mischief. For three years they remained in my house and committed no fault of any kind.

One day they came to me. They said, "We are living on your charity. You are our younger brother. It is not right that two elder brothers should live at their younger brother's expense. Therefore, brother, we beg you once more to set us up in business."

I told my good wife. She said, "Do not

carry out their wishes. They are planning some treachery against you." I did not listen to her wise caution. "They are my brothers," I said. "I have done much for them ; I might as well do this one thing more." So I took a shop for them and set them up in business.

At this time I went a voyage to the island of Sarandip.<sup>1</sup> My wife went with me. Fortune favoured me. The King of that kingdom heard of my arrival and sent for me. He bought all my merchandise, and paid me the money. It happened that the governor of the port at Sarandip died. The King offered the position to me, and I accepted it. A year went by. Under the royal favour, I became more and more pleased with my new office. I heard nothing from my brothers, and concluded that all was well with them. I had left much property in Zerbád, and waited an opportunity to go there, and bring my property away.

And now comes the last act of treachery of my brothers. I thought that they had mended their ways. But it was not so.

A company of merchants came from Zerbád. It was a rule of the port that when merchants came they made a present to me. In this way I collected many rich and rare

<sup>1</sup> Ceylon.

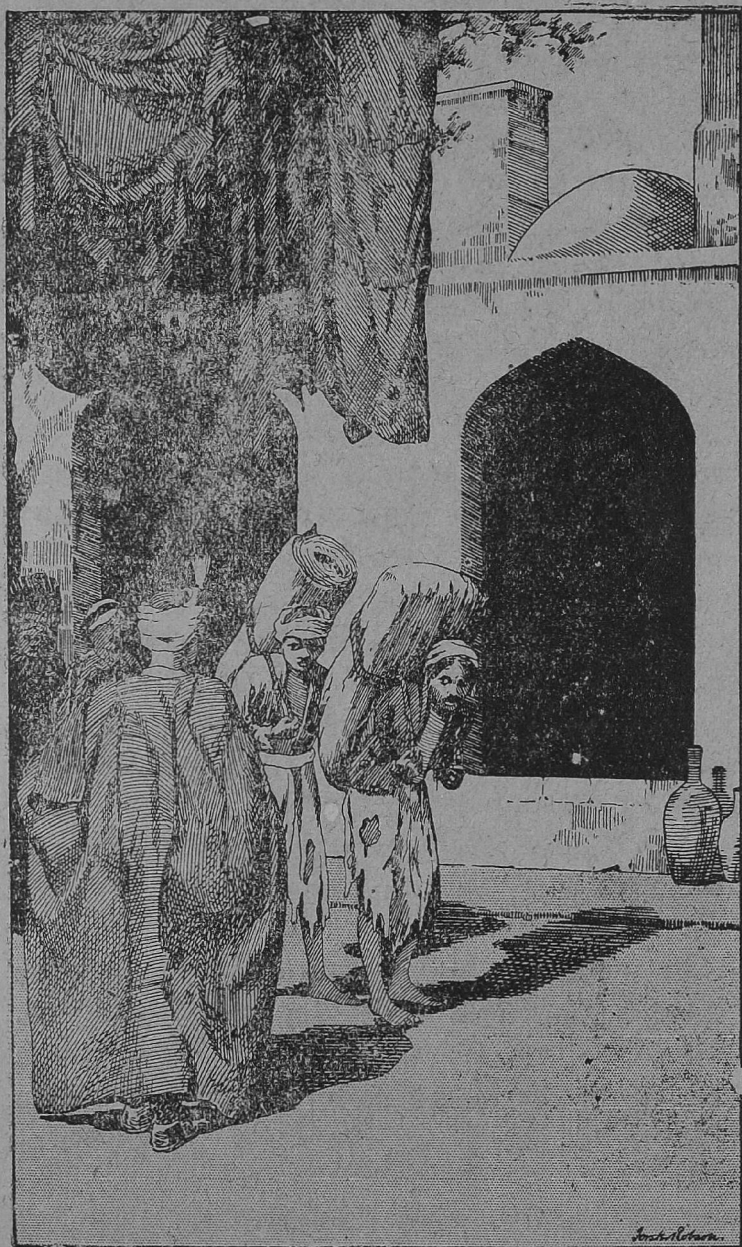


things from foreign countries. The next day I returned the visit. It was my business to take ten per cent. of the value of their goods from them. This was the King's import duty, and went to the royal treasury.

These merchants from Zerbad came to visit me, which was according to custom. The next day I paid a visit to them. Porters brought the merchants' packages and bundles to me on their heads. I estimated their value. There were two porters I particularly noticed. They were very dirty, and were dressed in tattered clothes. I looked at these two men closely, and then I knew that they were my brothers.

My pride forbade me to acknowledge them before the merchants. I sent my servant secretly to them. He brought them to my house. I fed and clothed them and made them welcome. In gratitude those villains tried to murder me. One night they crept like thieves into my bedroom. This faithful dog was sleeping at my bedside. They drew their swords from their scabbards. The noise wakened the dog. His bark awakened me. I saw him flying at one of my brothers, whom he seized by the throat. My servants ran in, and took the murderers' swords from them.

O King, I became alarmed for my life. There is a common saying, "Pardon the



first and second faults, but punish the third." I determined to preserve my life, and confine these two brothers. If I put them in prison who would take care of them? They would die of hunger and thirst. For this reason I put them in these cages. They are always under my own eye, and I see that they have enough to eat and drink. But this dog is nobler than they, and he is treated according to his deserts.

And now, great King, you have heard my story. If you still think that I am acting inhumanly towards these brothers, put me to death. It is for your Majesty to command.

I thought that the man had acted very fairly to his brothers. If they were determined to kill him, what else could he do? So I praised him, and assured him that his life was safe. Then I asked him how he came to Naishapur.

He replied, "May your Majesty live a hundred and twenty years! After my brothers came to Sarandip, I could no longer stay there. I had much wealth. These rubies I collected one by one. They were presents given to me from time to time by merchants visiting the kingdom. I took my jewels and property, and came to Naishapur. There my wife died, but I met this young man who is with me now."

"Is not this young man your son?" I asked.

He answered, "Mighty sire, he is not my son. He is one of your Majesty's subjects. But now he is my heir."

"What merchant's son art thou?" I asked of the youth. "Where do thy parents live?"

He kissed the ground, and begging me to grant him his life, said—

"This slave is the daughter of your Majesty's Wazir. My father incurred the royal anger on account of this merchant's rubies. Your Majesty's orders were, 'If, in one year, the Wazir's words are not proved true, he shall die.' To prove my father's words, I assumed this disguise and went to Naishapur. If your Majesty will look at this dog's collar, you will see the twelve rubies sewn upon it. If they are larger than your Majesty's jewel, I beg that you will set my father free."

When I heard these words, all was clear to me. I sent orders at once to have the Wazir released. I put him again in his high position, and returned his daughter to his arms. I likewise honoured the jewel-merchant.

O Darwesh, I have told you these adventures. They did not occur to me, but they came into my experience.

Thereupon the King rose, put presents into the Darwesh's hands, and retired to his private rooms.



# THE DARWESH'S STORY

## I

### THE KING JOURNEYS TO BANORA

O FRIEND, this humble creature is a prince of the Persian Kingdom. Nowhere is there a kingdom equal to that ancient kingdom. The climate is delightful. The people are refined.

My father, who was King of that country, chose wise tutors for me. They taught me every art and science. When I was fourteen years of age I knew all that a King ought to know. I talked with the learned. I learnt the history of my country, and I heard of the deeds of famous princes.

In course of time my father died. Then I wished to obtain renown. I built a grand palace without the city. In its walls there were forty gates. I dwelt in this splendid palace, and gave silver to the poor from morning until night. I gave to all who asked for charity.

The poor and needy entered the gates all day long. It happened one day that a fakir came in by the front gate. He begged for alms. I gave him a gold piece.

The same fakir then entered through another gate, and asked for alms. I gave him two pieces of gold. The same fakir came through a third gate, and asked for alms. He begged me to give him three pieces of gold. Although I remembered his face, I gave him the three gold pieces.

He continued to come, and each time he asked for an extra gold piece. Each time he asked I gave the pieces to him. At last he came through the fortieth gate, and asked for forty gold pieces. These I gave to him.

I thought, "Now this man is satisfied, he will not come again."

The next day he came once more through the first gate, and asked for alms. His conduct, I thought, was very impudent. I said, "O greedy one, are you not satisfied? You have come through each of the forty gates. I give only to the poor. How can you still be poor?"

Then he became displeased and angry. He threw down on the ground all the money that I had given to him.

"Enough, sir," said he. "Take back your gifts and keep them; and never utter

the word 'generosity.' You know not what generosity is. I have travelled through many countries, and I have never met a really generous person except one. That was the Princess of Basra. She is a really generous woman. Others pretend to be, and wish to be called generous. She is, in fact, generous."

He made me feel ashamed. I begged him to forget my rebuke, and to take as much as he wanted. But he would take nothing from me. He went away and I saw no more of him.

Now, though I saw no more of the fakir, my mind dwelt on his words. Who was this Princess of Basra? I dearly wanted to know. At last my curiosity exceeded all bounds. I determined to go and seek for her. I called the wazir and nobles to me, and said to them, "I wish to go on a journey. I am going to Basra. Take care of the empire while I am gone. I shall very quickly return."

They did not wish me to go, but I was bent on it. I privately sent for the wazir, whom I could trust. I made him regent during my absence. I then put on the yellow garments of a pilgrim, and took the road alone.

In due course I entered the Basra kingdom. The first night I rested there, a servant from the Princess came to me. He took me to a

well furnished house, gave me a good meal, and waited on me.

The next day I received the same treatment. At night a servant from the Princess met me, and gave me every attention. I journeyed on in the same comfort till I reached the city of Basra. There, a well-dressed young man met me. He said, "I am the servant of pilgrims. It is my duty to conduct visitors to my house. Pray, holy sir, come with me. I will do my best to make you comfortable."

I went with him to his house. It was a grand mansion, fitted up in splendid style. He led me to a beautifully furnished room, made me sit down, and sent for warm water for my feet. Servants washed my feet, and then a meal was spread. There were many dishes, and also fruit and sweets. I could not have wished for more. I ate the meal, and felt well contented.

The servants then brought basins of gold, with scented soap and warm water. I washed my hands, and then took some betel from a box set with precious stones. If I called for water the servants brought it, cooled by ice.

In the evening, candles in glass shades were lit. Then the young man conducted me to a soft bed. Pots of roses stood on each side of it. I lay down and slept soundly.



In the morning all kinds of fruits, and sherbet, were placed before me. It was the height of luxury. In this manner I passed three days and three nights.

On the fourth day, I told the young man that I must go. He, with joined hands, stood before me and said, "Why are you displeased? Is there anything that I have not provided? I pray you to mention it so that I may bring it at once."

I was astonished, and replied, "You have given me everything that heart could desire. I have stayed three days. It would be improper for me to stay longer. Besides, I am a traveller, and must not remain too long in one place. I beg leave to depart. I shall never forget your great kindness."

He then said, "Do as you think best. But wait a moment, while I mention the matter to the princess. All the clothing and bedding, the silver and golden vessels, and the jewels in the guests' room belong to you."

I replied, "I am a poor pilgrim. I could not take such riches."

The young man replied, "If the Princess should hear of your refusal, she will discharge me from my employment. If you will not accept these gifts, pray lock them up and put your seal on the door. I will then keep them safe for you."

I agreed to do this, and put my seal on the door. Then I made ready for my departure.

## II

I WAITED for leave to depart. Presently an official of the Princess's court came to me. He wore jewels on his robes, and in his hand he carried a golden mace, studded with gems. Several other gorgeous officials attended him.

He addressed me in the politest manner. Then he begged me to stay with him. He added, "Perhaps the Princess may hear that a traveller has come, and that I have not placed my house at his disposal. If she heard, I know not what punishment she would inflict on me. She is the soul of generosity."

I declined, but he would take no refusal. In the end I went to his house. It was magnificently furnished. Though dressed as a pilgrim, I was treated like a prince. I had fruits and sherbet, and I was told that all the carpets and gold vessels were mine. These strange manners embarrassed me. I sought an opportunity to escape. On seeing my embarrassment, my host said, "O pilgrim, I pray you tell me your wishes. What can I do for you?" I replied, "You have already done more than enough. I am a poor pilgrim.

Why do you thrust upon me riches which I cannot take ? ”

He was very uneasy at my words. To relieve him from anxiety I said, “ I want nothing. If I may, I will write a note to that effect. You can convey this to the Princess. By so doing, you will please me more than if you offered me all the riches in the world.”

He replied, “ I will do it with pleasure. The Princess will then know that I have done all I could for your comfort.”

I thereupon wrote a note. I said that I had heard of the Princess's generosity, and desired to see her kingdom. Therefore I came. I had met with the greatest attention. I said, “ Your nobles tell me to ask for whatever I want. For this reason I beg to lay before you the desire of my heart. I am not in want of riches, being a king in my own country. I came with the desire of seeing you, of whom I have heard so much. I beg that you will grant me this favour.”

I gave the note to the official with the mace, and he took it to the Princess. He returned soon afterwards, and begged me to follow him to the palace.

I was taken to an elderly lady, who sat on a golden stool. Many servants stood around her. I bowed to her, and the old lady returned my salute very civilly. She asked me

to sit down, and then said, "You are very welcome. If I mistake not, you wrote a note to the Princess. The Princess has sent her salaam to you."

She then called, "Bahrawar, where is Bahrawar?"

Immediately an official came. Gold and silver keys hung down from his waist. He saluted me, and took a seat near me. The old lady said, "O, Bahrawar, tell the stranger what thou hast seen."

Bahrawar then told me the following story. He said, "O friend, our Princess has thousands of slaves, all of whom are merchants. I am one of them. She sends us to various countries with merchandise. We trade on her account, and in this way she becomes yearly more wealthy. When we return from our journeys, she asks us questions about the countries we have seen.

"Once, I made a journey to Nimroz, and there I noticed that all the people wore black clothes. Every one was sighing and weeping. I asked many people, 'Why do you grieve?' but they made no answer.

"At last I discovered the reason. One morning, all the people in the city, big and small, rich and poor, trooped out of the main gate. They went to a plain outside the city. The king of the country was also there. He



rode on horseback, and nobles were all round him. All the people formed into a line, and faced the same way. They were waiting for something to happen. I also waited.

“An hour afterwards, I saw a young man approaching. As he drew near I could see him more clearly. He was a handsome youth of sixteen years or so, and he was mounted on a bull. His steed was strange enough, but still stranger was his face. He was roaring aloud, and foaming at the mouth. In his hand he carried a naked sword.

“When he was in front of the people, he stopped the bull and dismounted. Then he sat on the ground, holding the bull's halter in one hand, and the sword in the other. A slave went to him, and took something from him. The slave then went along the line of people. He showed the thing in his hand to all of them. Each one who saw it wept. Then he returned with it to his master.

“The moment the slave went near him, the young man rose up, the sword in his hand. He cut off the slave's head with it, and then mounted his bull, and rode away.

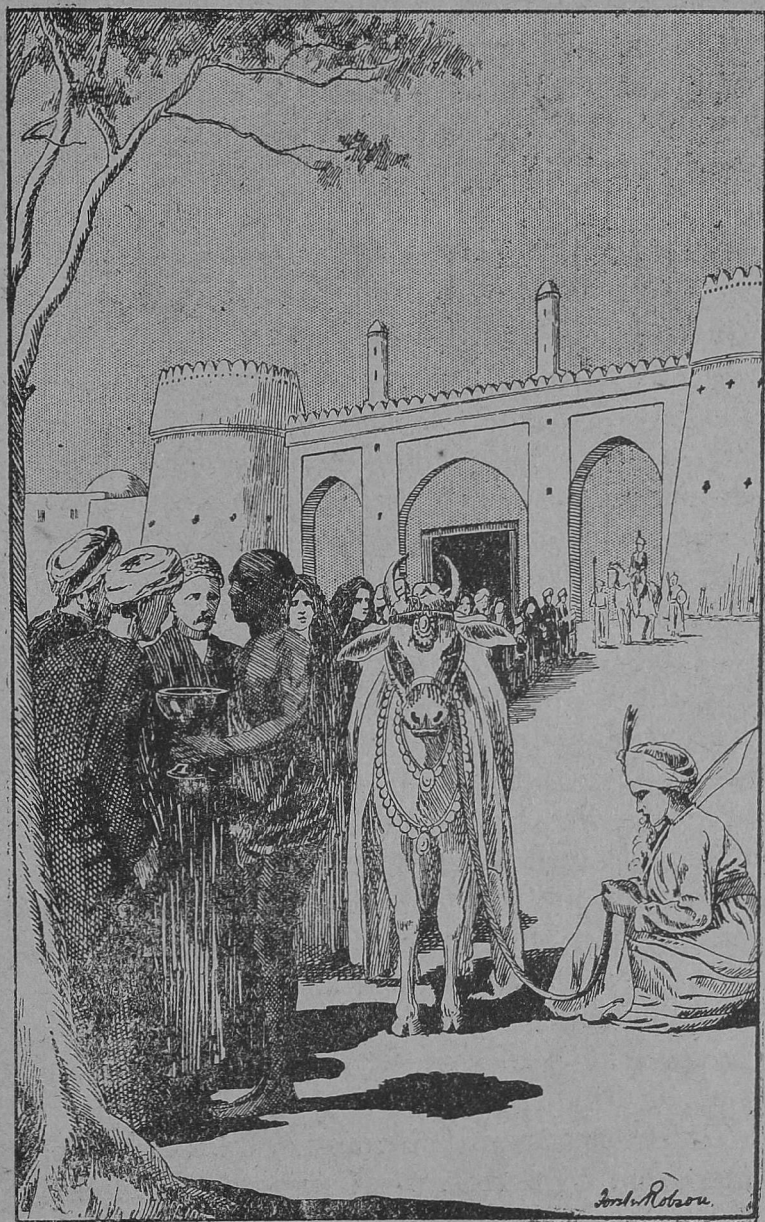
“I asked people to explain the strange event. I even offered money, and flattered them, but it was of no use. No one would tell me a word. I came away, and returned to this country. On my arrival, I told the

Princess about it. Since then the Princess has been very anxious to learn the cause of these strange doings. She has said that she will marry the man who brings her the true reason for it."

When Bahrawar had finished his story, the Princess sent a message, begging me to go to her room of audience. I entered the room, which was filled with female slaves and servants. There were also armed damsels, drawn up in two lines, dressed in rich jewels. They were all very handsome. By a screen a stool, set with jewels, was placed. A female slave signed to me to sit on this stool. The slave took a sandal-wood chair near me. She then bade me declare the purpose of my visit.

I said, "I am a king in my own country. I heard tales of the Princess's generosity, which so excited my curiosity, that I came to see her country with my own eyes. Everything I have seen has astonished me. I have never before received such generous treatment. At every stopping place a house has been ready for me. In this city the gold bowls I used have been given to me. I am dressed as a poor pilgrim. If pilgrims are treated like this, the question I ask myself is, 'How are princes treated?'

"Thousands of pilgrims visit this country, and each, no doubt, receives presents as rich



as mine. I marvel at the wealth of the Princess. I long to hear how she accumulated her treasure."

At this moment, the Princess's voice broke in, and said, "O youth, if you desire to hear my story, stay in my city this day. When evening comes, I will send for you, and will tell you everything, holding nothing back."

I thereupon retired, and in the evening the Princess sent me food from her own table. When the moon was high, the Princess's nurse came and said, "Come, the Princess has sent me to bring you."

I went along with her. She led me to the Princess's private audience chamber. When I entered, I was struck dumb with amazement. I could not see where the door was, or which were the walls. On every side there were mirrors, of the height of a man. Their frames were set with diamonds and pearls. One was reflected in another, till the whole room seemed to be set with diamonds and pearls. At one end of the room was a curtain. The Princess sat behind this.

The nurse sat herself near the curtain, and motioned me to a seat there also. Then she told me this story—

"The Sultan of this country was a powerful monarch. He had seven daughters. One day



the King held a festival. His seven daughters stood before him, richly dressed. Each wore sixteen jewels, twelve ornaments, and had an elephant pearl in her hair.

"The king looked at his daughters and said, 'If your father were not a king, you would not be princesses. Are you not thankful?'

"Six of his daughters replied, 'Whatever your Majesty says is true.'

"'And what does my youngest daughter think?' asked the King.

"The youngest princess stood silent. She did not join in her sisters' reply, and yet she hardly dared to speak her own thoughts.

"'Well, my lady, will you not speak?' asked the King in an angry voice.

"Then the Princess, twisting her handkerchief in her hands, replied, 'If your Majesty will grant me my life, this humble slave will speak her thoughts.'

"'Speak what you wish to say,' said the King.

"Then the Princess said, 'Mighty King, the voice of truth is bitter. Truth says, "No one can escape Fate. Whether you bruise your feet toiling in the fields, or sit on a soft carpet, if Fate has written it, so it shall be." Fate, mighty Ruler, made you a king. Fate made me a princess. You are my sovereign

and father. Yet it is Fate that made you a king and me a princess.'

" 'What great words issue from a little mouth !' exclaimed the King, in wrath. 'This shall be your punishment. You shall strip from your hands and feet all your jewels. You shall be placed in a palanquin and put down in the desert. Then we shall see what Fate does for you.'

" At midnight—the darkest of hours—the Princess was put down in the desert. She, who had never been outside the palace, was put in this dreary waste, where not even a bird had ever flapped its wings.

" The Princess was in a state of despair. She offered up her prayers in her hour of need, and felt more comforted. She sat down in her litter and waited till the morning.

" In the morning a hermit came, and the light seemed to play around his head. He saw the Princess and said—

" 'O, daughter, thy father is a king, and thou art in sore need. It was so written in your destiny. Regard me as your servant.' He took some food from his wallet, and gave it to the Princess. Suddenly a well appeared in the desert, with a wheel and bucket above it. He drew water from the well, and gave it to the Princess. Then he went to the city to beg for more food.



“The Princess sat in her litter, and undid the plaits of her hair to comb it. As she did so, a pearl and a diamond fell out. When the hermit came, she gave the jewels to him, and asked him to sell them in the city. He brought back a bag of money.

“The Princess combed her hair again, and again two jewels fell from it. The hermit sold these also. She combed her hair many times a day, and each time a pearl and diamond fell out. The Princess soon had enough money to build a palace.

“The hermit brought clever masons and builders, and they built a splendid palace in the desert.

“In time the King heard of this wonderful palace. ‘Who is the owner of this palace?’ he asked. But no one could give the true answer. So the King sent a message to the owner, saying, ‘I wish to come and see you in your new palace.’

“When the Princess received this message, she was very pleased. She gave presents to the nobleman who brought the message, and sent a suitable reply. Then she made preparations for the coming visit. Dishes of every kind were prepared by the best cooks in the country.

“In the evening the King sat himself upon a throne, and was carried to the Princess’s



palace. She advanced with her ladies, and received him, bowing low in homage. With the same respect she led the King to a throne that she had prepared. Beneath it was a platform, made of 125,000 pieces of silver. Under the platform were a hundred and one trays of gold, and an equal number of trays of jewels. She begged the King to accept these as a gift, and also many shawls, silks, and brocades, two elephants and ten horses, their harness gleaming with jewels.

“The King was delighted with these many attentions. While the Princess stood before him, he asked, ‘Of what country are you, Princess?’

“The Princess, bowing low, replied, ‘This slave once offended thee, and thou, in thy wrath, sent her into the wilderness. Fate decreed that she should still be a Princess.’

“Then the King rose from his throne, and pressed the Princess fondly to his bosom, and, taking her hand, he placed her in a chair near the throne. Then he sent for her mother and sisters to come. They were delighted to see her again, and begged her to return with them to the King’s palace. But the Princess would not return. She continued to live in her own palace till the King died. Then she succeeded him on the throne.”

The nurse, having finished her story, said,

"If thou wishest to go to the country of Nimroz, depart soon. No one can marry the Princess unless he discovers the secret."

I replied, "I will set off at once, and I trust that I shall be back very soon." So saying, I took leave of the Princess, and walked out through the chamber of mirrors and diamonds, and returned to my lodgings.

After a year's journey, I arrived at the city of Nimroz. All the people were dressed in black as I expected. On the first day of the month everyone, men, women, and children, trooped out of the city and assembled on the plain. I dressed myself in my pilgrim's dress and went too, to see what would happen.

In an hour, a young man, riding a yellow bull, came out of a wood. He was foaming at the mouth and roaring in a terrible voice. The young man did as he always did, killed a man and returned to the woods.

I was so surprised that I did nothing. So I had to wait a whole month for the thing to happen again.

At last the new moon appeared. On the following morning the King and people again assembled on the plain. I determined to do something this day, and unfold the mystery.

Suddenly the young man appeared. He was, as usual, mounted on a yellow bull. In one hand he held a naked sword, and in the

other he held the bull's halter. He handed a vase to a slave, who showed it to all the people. Each person, on looking inside, began to weep. The slave took the vase to the young man. Thereupon he broke it into pieces, and struck off the slave's head with his sword.

When he remounted the bull, I ran after him. But many people rushed across my path, and held me against my will. "What are you going to do?" they cried. "Do you want to die?" They would not let me go, but bore me back into the city.

I spent another month, anxiously waiting. At the end of that time, the people again assembled on the plain. I rose early in the morning, before the people were astir, and hid myself in the wood. I saw the young man pass by on his bull. After some time he returned, and I set off in pursuit.

The young man heard my steps and turned round. Then he came towards me with arm raised ready to strike. I bent down to the ground before him, and then stood with joined hands. The young man forbore to strike, and said, "O pilgrim, dost thou wish to lose thy life? Get away, lest I kill thee." He then drew a jewelled dagger from his waist, and threw it towards me. It had a tassel set with pearls. "I have no money to give thee," said he; "take this dagger to the King, and

he will give thee anything that thou askest for." I stood tongue-tied with fear before this strange person. He urged his bull onward, and rode away through the woods.

I thought to myself, "I have come so far that I will not turn back." I ran along, following in the tracks of the bull. Then the young man turned on me again in great wrath. I stretched forth my neck, and said, "O hero, strike a straight blow and end my wretched existence."

"Go thy own way, thou with the demon face," he said. "Why dost thou wish to end thy life?"

I took no notice of his words, but continued to follow him. We went on about two kos, and got out of the wood. In the open we came to a square building. The young man rode up to the door, and gave a frightful scream; the door opened, and he entered, leaving me outside.

What was I to do? I stood perplexed. Then the door opened, and a slave came to me and said, "Come in; he has called you to his presence."

"This is good fortune," I replied. I entered with him into the garden, and he led me to the young man, who was sitting on a cushion under a tree. The tools of a goldsmith lay about him. He had just finished a bunch of emeralds.



I made a low bow, and he beckoned me to sit down. He did not speak to me, but worked silently with his tools. At last he rose. In a moment all the servants hid themselves. I did likewise. The young man went to his bull and began to beat it. The roars of the animal made me quake with fear. After beating it, he threw aside his club and unlocked the door of a house. He went inside and came out with grain and grass in his hands, and he gave this to the bull. Then he stroked the bull's back, and came towards me. I ran off as quickly as my legs would carry me. He went into the house and called for water in a basin. After he had washed his hands and face, he said, "Where is the pilgrim?"

On hearing my name, I ran out and stood before him. He bade me sit down, which I did, first making a salaam. I watched him eat his dinner, and he gave me some, which I ate. Then he dismissed the slaves, and I was left alone with him.

He said to me, "O friend, why do you come seeking death?"

I told him my story, and begged him to explain his mysterious acts to me.

Thereupon he sighed, and then he went raving mad. He roared and screamed and foamed at the mouth. "A man who has never suffered," he cried, "what can he know

of pain?" A moment after he came to himself, and said, "I will help you as much as I can." Then he told me the following strange story:—

"I am the son of the King of Nimroz. When I was born, the King, my father, called the astrologers to him. He bade them cast my horoscope. They all consulted together, and then said, 'The prince was born at a lucky moment. He should be the equal of Alexander as a conqueror. He should be learned and resolute. He should be as brave as Rustam and as generous as Hatim. But, till he is fourteen years of age, he must see neither the sun nor the moon. If he does, he will become a maniac, and will fly to the woods, and mix with birds and beasts. If fourteen years pass without mishap, he will live in peace and security.'"

"Thereupon my father made this garden. He built many houses in it, and a vault. I lived my boyhood in this vault, and not a ray of light came into it. I was well looked after, a tutor taught me, and servants waited on me. The King asked after me every day. The place was to me the world, for I had never known anything else. Delicious sweets and flowers were brought to me. I amused myself all day with toys and my lessons. But one day, the roof of my vault opened, and



a beam of sunlight shone through. In this beam was a beautiful fairy who hovered above me. Directly I saw her I loved her dearly, and begged her to be my wife. But she said; 'Alas, I cannot; I am a jinn's daughter. I cannot wed a human being without the Fairy King's permission.' Then she vanished.

"Her words drove me mad. Since I saw her I have had no rest. Wherever I look, I see my fairy princess. And I know that it is of no avail. Have I not a right to be mad?

"The doctors gave me medicines to strengthen my brain, but it was all in vain. My father came, and wept when he saw my wretched condition. He clasped me to his breast and bade the astrologers cure me.

"It was of no use. I was doomed to be mad for the rest of my life. I remain in this garden built for me by my father. But, lest I may be forgotten, once a month I issue forth with a sword, and a vase in my hands. My father sends me a slave who carries the vase from person to person. At the bottom of it I put a golden image of myself. When the slave brings back the vase to me, I slay him. No one can then forget that I live, though I may be mad."

The young man rose when he had finished and went to his sleeping chamber. No sooner was he gone than the servant who had let me



in came to me and said, "Follow me, and I will let you out." I followed him to the door, and then I said—

"What men does your master kill every new moon? He has told me his history, so you need not fear." The man replied, "The King, my master's father, sends a criminal to him each month. By so doing he allays my master's wrath. If he did not kill a man once a month, no one knows what crime he would commit." So saying, he closed the door, and left me in the dark.

I am now on my way, continued the Darwesh to the King, to claim the Princess of Basra as my bride. When I left Nimroz I took a passage in a vessel, which encountered a great storm. I was thrown into the water, and was tossed about for two days, holding on to a piece of wreckage. Then a ship came by, and picked me up. She was bound for Constantinople, and your Majesty found me sitting by the burial ground.

The King treated the Darwesh as an honoured guest. He gave him good clothes and good food, and made him welcome. The next night, as they sat together in the palace, a servant came running into the room. He began to speak almost before he had made his salaam, informing the King that a son was born to him.

The King was overcome with joy. His most anxious wish was at last fulfilled. The Darwesh blessed him, and said, "May thy house be ever happy, and may thy son prosper."

The King replied, "Your coming has brought about this happy event. If you will excuse my absence, I will now go and see my son."

The King went to the seraglio, and took the child on his knees. He then brought the infant to the Darwesh and laid it at his feet, and they both blessed it. The King commanded a festival to be held. The royal musicians struck up a tune, and the door of the treasury was opened. The King gave riches to the poor, and bestowed lands and higher titles on all the officers of his Court. He gave five years' pay to the army, and pensions to holy and learned men.

Throughout the whole city, in all the houses, there was dancing and rejoicing.

In the midst of the rejoicing, sounds of wailing came from the seraglio. What could it mean? The servants ran out, throwing dust on their heads, and said to the King, "When we had washed and bathed the prince, and delivered him to the nurse, a cloud came down from the sky and hid the young prince from our sight. A moment after we saw the

nurse lying upon the ground. She was alone ; the baby had gone ! ”

The King was thunderstruck at this unexpected news. The whole country mourned the sad event. For two days no one ate a morsel of food, grieving for the King's misfortune.

On the third day the same cloud appeared, and a cradle studded with jewels descended into the seraglio. Over the cradle was a silken coverlet set with pearls, and below lay the baby prince sucking his thumb. By his side was a rattle filled with nine tiny balls of gold. Once more there was rejoicing in the city, and the King rejoiced more than any one else.

He ordered a new palace to be built, and he put his friend the Darwesh in it. When he had no business to do, he often went to the Darwesh, and sat with him and talked, and waited on him. He was never so happy in all his life.

But on the first Thursday of the following month the same thing happened. The cloud descended and the prince disappeared, and two days afterwards reappeared to every one's joy.

This occurred month after month, till every one regarded it as an ordinary occurrence. Each time there were rare toys in the baby's cradle.

The King said to the Darwesh, "O holy one, who carries away the prince, and brings him back in this wonderful way?"

The Darwesh advised the King to write a letter and put it in the baby's cradle. He said, "Let the note be friendly; say that you would like to see the mighty being who takes an interest in your son."

The King wrote a letter on paper sprinkled with gold, and put it in the child's cradle.

The prince, in due course, disappeared. The King was sitting with the Darwesh, when a folded paper fell at his feet. He opened it and read it. It was an answer to his letter. This was the answer: "I should also like to see you. A throne will descend on which you may come to me."

At that moment a throne did descend, and the King and his friend the Darwesh seated themselves on it. Immediately it rose into the sky. Some one rubbed the King's eyes and the eyes of the Darwesh with ointment, and they saw fairies all round them. The fairies held bowls of rose water in their hands.

Azad-Bakht advanced between two rows of dazzling fairies, up to an emerald throne. On this throne, leaning on pillows, was the King of the Fairies. On seats below the throne the fairy nobles were seated round their King.





The Fairy King rose as Azad-Bakht came near, and walked to meet him. Then, taking his hand, he led him to a seat by his side on the emerald throne. They began to talk with much friendliness. There was much music and dancing, and every one was very happy.

The next day, the Fairy King asked Azad-Bakht who his friend the Darwesh was. Azad-Bakht told the tale of his adventures, and begged the Fairy King to help him. The Fairy King at once replied, "Most willingly, I will carry out your wishes." As he spoke, he looked sternly at the fairies and bade some of them make ready for a journey. Then he wrote letters to the fairy chiefs. He bade them come quickly to his presence. With these written instructions many of the fairies set off in different directions.

The two Kings became very friendly after this. The Fairy King said to Azad-Bakht, "I recently had a daughter born to me. I wished to marry her to a prince of the human race. I sent my fairies to every corner of the earth to search for a king's son born about the same time. I bade them bring the child to me. After some delay, they brought your son. I was delighted with him, and took the child on my knees. I was loth to let him go, but I knew how anxious his parents would be while he was away. So I contented myself

with seeing him once in every month. If the prince's father is willing, when the time comes, I will marry him to my daughter."

Azad-Bakht expressed his delight, and so the matter was arranged.

Within ten days *jinn*s from all over the world collected round the King of the Fairies. The King ordered one of them to produce his daughter, for whom the buffalo rider went mad. He made excuses, but at last produced her. Another *jinn* brought the mad prince, who recovered from his madness when he saw the princess. Another *jinn* brought the *wazir's* daughter, and the prince whom she wished to wed.

None of the *jinn*s could bring the Princess of Basra. They told the King that a haughty *jinn* stood guard over her country. He had shut himself in his castle, and refused to come at the King's command. So the King ordered many *jinn*s and fairies to go and bring him. If he would not come, they were to subdue him, tie him by the neck and heels, raze his fort to the ground, and plough a furrow across it. *Jinn*s at once flew off, and returned in two days, dragging the rebellious haughty chief with them.

The King asked him where the princess was. He would give no reply. At last the King became angry, and ordered him to be

cut into pieces ; and then the chief gave in and brought her. The palace was lit up, and preparations for the marriages were made.

One day, at a happy hour, the Darwesh, who was the Prince of Persia, was married to the Princess of Basra, and the Prince of Nimroz was married to the *jinn's* beautiful daughter. The wazir's daughter, who had saved her father's life, was married to the man of her choice, who was a poor but noble prince. Then every one danced and sang, and gave themselves up to gaiety for forty nights.

At last the King of the Fairies dismissed his guests to their own countries, giving them rich presents. All were pleased and satisfied and reached their various homes in safety.

**THE END**



