

THE ADVENTURES OF ZAHER, OF DAMASCUS, AND HIS SON ALI

ZAHER was a rich merchant who lived at Damascus, and was highly esteemed by his fellow-townsmen for his uprightness and virtuous qualities. He was in the prime of life, and notwithstanding his wealth and popularity, he was still unmarried.

One night Zaher beheld a beautiful girl in a vision. She was fairer than the full moon, her lips were like coral, her teeth when she smiled were like pearls, her hair was as dark as night, her cheeks were like anemones, her eyes like those of a gazelle, and her arched eyebrows were painted with antimony. Zaher was charmed at her appearance, and cried out, "Praise to the Creator of so adorable a being! O beautiful lady, are you one of the daughters of men, or of the genii?" But she replied, "How should the daughters of the genii compare with Princess Farha, the daughter of King Mutar, who rules over the Coral City, on an island of the Black Sea, which adjoins the Green Sea? My father's city abounds in pearls, corals, sapphires, and other precious stones, and many powerful kings and wealthy merchants have sought my hand in marriage, but I found none worthy to become my husband. My father has therefore given me permission to travel through the world, but until I beheld you I saw no one whom I should desire to marry. If you think me as beautiful as you say, you must journey to the palace of my father, King Mutar, in the Coral Islands."

With these words she vanished, and Zaher started from his sleep. He lay awake for the remainder of the night pondering over the vision; but he rose up the moment the dawn appeared, and ordered his servants to pack up merchandise, and to prepare everything necessary for a journey to Bagdad. Zaher completed his preparations with all possible speed, and left part of his property behind in charge of a steward. He reached Bagdad in safety, where he remained for ten days, exchanging his goods for whatever merchandise is most prized in India, and he then took his passage in a vessel bound for the East.

When Zaher left the harbour the wind was favourable, and drove the ship forward like an arrow from a bow for the space of three months, but on the first day of the fourth month the whole sky became suddenly overcast, the sea rose, and the wind seemed to blow from every direction a once. The sailors began to weep and to cry to God for help, when all at once a succession of great waves broke over the ship and crushed her to pieces. All were swallowed up by the furious sea except Zaher, who bound him self to a plank and was driven along by the waves for three days, until the wind and the sea became calmer.

Zaher was completely exhausted, and prayed to God for deliverance, when lo! a fine ship with large sails steered past, and the captain saw him and cried out, "Now we have attained our end! Throw this unfortunate man a rope-ladder." Zaher

caught the ladder and was helped on board, but he was so overcome with fatigue and with joy at his rescue that he fainted, and remained insensible till near sunset. On opening his eyes he found himself in a splendid cabin, lighted by two wax candles of enormous size, while a delicious odour of ambergris and aloes wood arose from a fire burning in a brazier. A youth sat by the couch on which Zaher was lying, clothed in silken robes, embroidered with gold. Round his waist was a golden girdle set with a variety of large and costly jewels, and he held a sceptre of emerald in his hand. Zaher was dazzled by so much splendour, and was about to close his eyes again, when the youth perceived that he was awake, and said, "O Zaher, why is your mind so troubled? Know that we have been searching for you for ten days past, over all mountains and seas; and the powerful King Mutar, the lord of the Coral Islands, has despatched nine other ships besides ours in search of you, and has offered ten thousand dinars to any one who would bring you to him. But praise be to God that we have found you at last!"

Zaher was much surprised, and said, "I entreat you to tell me how you knew that I was coming here, and how you know my name." The youth answered, "Know that I am an officer of King Mutar. He sent me to Syria in search of you, and when I heard that you had gone to Bagdad, I followed you there, but found that you had already sailed for India. I heard afterwards that the ship had been wrecked; and when I informed King Mutar, he immediately despatched ten ships in search of you, and ordered the commanding officers to treat you with marked respect." He then presented Zaher with the robe and girdle which he himself had worn, and ordered a table to be prepared, loaded with the choicest roast and baked meats and sweets.

When Zaher had finished eating he went on deck, and saw a great light in the distance. The officer said, "That must be the ship of King Mutar, who is aware that we have found you, and is anxious to welcome you himself." When they approached the large and brilliantly illuminated vessel of the king, he smiled a friendly greeting, and summoned Zaher to follow him to shore. When they landed, Zaher threw himself at the feet of the king and thanked him for his rescue. The king welcomed him in the most friendly manner, and commanded two noble horses to be brought. They rode side by side through the city, where the inhabitants received them with joyful shouts. On reaching the courtyard of the palace all the officers and attendants dismounted, but the king made Zaher ride by his side up to the very door of the palace itself. Here Zaher saw a splendour and magnificence greater than he had ever seen in his life. The king led the way to a great hall, where a throng of attendants awaited his commands. He sat down on his throne and made Zaher sit beside him, and when a table was set before them covered with various dishes, the king said, "In the name of God!" and picked out the best morsels for Zaher, who kissed his hand in acknowledgment.

When they had eaten, the attendants handed them water in golden basins to wash their hands. Presently the king said, "Do you know, Zaher, why I have brought you here and showed you so much favour? I have a daughter so beautiful

and amiable that the sun has never risen on her equal, and she has become so skilled in magic through the instructions she has received from an old nurse, that if she pleased she could fly through the world from east to west in a single night. Envoys were often sent from distant countries to ask her hand in the name of kings and princes, but she always replied, 'I must first see my future husband with my own eyes.' She would then absent herself for a short time, and when she returned she would say, 'I do not like him, and you can dismiss the messengers with some excuse.' I would then answer, 'Do as you please, my daughter; I will not compel you to marry any one against your will.' One day she went to see a prince residing at Damascus, but as he did not please her she went to the bazaars and into the town, passing from house to house by her magic art, until she met with you. You alone have won her heart, and pleased her so much that she desires to marry you. She was almost able to calculate the moment of your arrival; and praise be to God who has preserved you and brought you here at the appointed time."

Zaher replied: "O mighty king, I am less than one of your servants; but how should I oppose the will of your daughter if it is also pleasing to yourself!"

The king then retired to a private room, and after a time he returned smiling, and called for the kaid and witnesses. The marriage contract was drawn up, gold and silver was scattered about, and presents were made to the attendants, as well as to the kadi and witnesses.

The king then rose up, and all the company with drew, after which he led Zaher through seven passages and seven halls, in each of which stood a thousand pages clothed in silk. At length they reached the innermost hall, in the midst of which a fountain was playing. At the upper end stood an ivory throne set with pearls and jewels, and covered with satin, embroidered with gold. As they approached the throne, two doors opened, one on the right side of the hall, and one on the left, and slave-girls stepped forth, carrying vases of perfume set with jewels, which filled the whole hall with the odour of musk and ambergris, and Zaher thought that the gates of Paradise had opened. Presently a hundred slave-girls, like moons, entered from a side chamber; but there was a maiden who shone like the sun, in the midst, who was so beautiful that no words could describe her; and when Zaher saw her, and recognised the maiden who had appeared to him in a dream, he almost lost his senses with delight. He forgot all the dangers through which he had passed, and praised God, the creator of so beautiful a creature.

When the king saw the impression which she made upon Zaher, he smiled and said, "Take my daughter, and may God bless you!" He then withdrew, and the slave-girls also retired with Farha, but soon brought her back wearing a dress still more splendid than the first. They led her backwards and forwards till they had displayed her to Zaher in seventy-two magnificent costumes, each of which seemed to enhance her incomparable beauty more than the last.

When at length they were left alone, Zaher exclaimed: "O Light of my Eyes,

how little do I regret leaving home and friends, and incurring the danger of death on thy account!"

"I too," replied Farha, "have passed many sleepless nights, and I underwent much trouble and anxiety for your sake. I was compelled to contend against kings of men and kings of the genii in order to obtain news of you every hour until your arrival. But praise be to God who has granted us our present happiness! Let us forget all that we have suffered; but as no one is secure from the reverses of fortune, give me at least the ring on your finger as a token of remembrance." Upon this, Zaher drew off the ring which he had inherited from his father, and gave it her, and she gave him a costly bracelet in return.

Zaher did not awake until the sun was high in the heavens, but what was his consternation to find himself in a horrible desert where no living thing was visible, nor was there even a blade of grass to refresh the eye, and no sound was heard but the howling of ghouls, and the cries of evil genii! He rose up in despair and looked around, but could distinguish nothing but sky and sand, upon which he uttered the sentence which saves from evil him who pronounces it, "There is no strength nor protection but in Almighty God!" He then raised his eyes to heaven and exclaimed, "O Lord, who knowest what is secret as well as what is revealed, pity me for the love of Mohammed, and look upon me with Thine unsleeping eyes!" He had scarcely spoken when he fell senseless, overcome by the burning sun, and remained insensible till evening, when a cool breeze refreshed him. He rose and walked on in darkness, without knowing, where, but soon fell down exhausted with hunger, thirst, and weariness, and fell asleep again, when he heard a voice, in a dream, crying, "Fear not, Zaher, for help is near." He awoke strengthened and comforted, and walked straight on in one direction till daybreak, when he saw something in the distance which looked like fire. As he drew nearer he perceived that it was a lantern, set on the tower of an old, strong, and very lofty monastery. The monastery itself was lit up with a thousand lamps and candles, and appeared to contain a great number of inhabitants. When Zaher came up close to the walls, a very old monk clothed in black opened a window, thrust out his head, and exclaimed, "O Lord, Creator of the seven earths and the seven heavens, the salt dews and the rivers of sweet waters, the darkness and the light! O Thou who makest the dead to live and the living to die; Ruler of this world and the next; O God, blessed be Thy holy name! Thanks be to Thee for Thy protection and help in the trials which Thou hast decreed. In Thee alone is a sure refuge to be found, as when Thou didst restore his son Joseph to Jacob! Thou alone art the true Benefactor, therefore forgive all who have been disobedient to Thee, and send Thy heavenly aid to all the unhappy!"

When Zaher had listened to this prayer, he lay down at the gate of the monastery, and slept again from exhaustion. When he awoke he found himself surrounded by monks whose language he was unable to understand, nor did any one understand his own language, except the old monk who had prayed at the window. He returned Zaher's salutations, and said, in Arabic, "My friend, by the

Messiah, we have all lived in this desert since we were seven years of age, and we are now from seventy to eighty years old; but up to this time we have never seen either a man or a genius here. This island is surrounded on all sides by the sea, and the cliffs are so high that no ship can land. It appears to those at sea like a white cloud, and the mountain which surrounds it is called the Diamond Mountain, but it is as steep and inaccessible as an upturned bowl. How was it possible for you to reach it?"

When Zaher heard this, he said, "By the religion which you profess, I entreat you to tell me how far it is from here to Damascus?"

"Damascus!" replied the astonished monk. "You are now upon an island of the Black Sea, which encompasses all other seas, and flows within Mount Kaf. According to the reports of travellers, it is a ten years' voyage before you arrive at the Blue Sea, and it takes full ten years to traverse this again to reach the Green Sea, after which there is another ten years' voyage before you can reach the Greek Sea, which extends to inhabited countries and islands."

Zaher asked the monk how they could obtain food and drink in so desolate a region. The monk invited him into the monastery; and on entering the courtyard, Zaher beheld a spring of water sweeter than honey and as clear as crystal. Fruit trees were growing on the banks, and birds were warbling in the branches. The monk then led Zaher to the terrace of the monastery, when he was surprised to see the darkness of night all around at about the distance of a day's journey, though the sun was shining brightly overhead. "What you take for night," said the monk, "is the Black Sea; but let us now take some refreshment." The dining-room was a noble hall, where a golden table stood, decorated with pearls and jewels, and more magnificent than any in the palace of the Governor of Damascus. On the table stood four golden dishes filled with meat, fish, confectionery, and delicious barley bread. When the monk thought that Zaher had satisfied his hunger, he offered him fruit, different in appearance, as well as in smell and taste, from any he had ever seen before.

"You tell me yourself," said Zaher, "that this island is inaccessible; how then can you obtain this great variety of meats and fruits?"

"Tell me first how you came here yourself," said the monk, "and then I will answer your question." When Zaher had finished his story, the monk laughed, and said, "Friend, if you were not predestined to something extraordinary, you never could have traversed the distance between Damascus and this place. The island of King Mutar lies between the Green and the Greek Seas, and therefore at an immense distance both from here and from Damascus. As for your question respecting our circumstances, follow me."

He led Zaher back to the courtyard and through a short subterranean passage. When they came out again into the open air, they found themselves treading on a soil which shone like silver, and close to a small lake of delicious water. On the banks grew beautiful flowering shrubs, and the finest fruit trees, in the branches of which the birds were warbling the praises of Almighty God in their

own language. Zaher was bewildered at all this loveliness, and almost intoxicated by the odour of the flowers.

“Have you any such pleasure gardens in your own country?” said the monk.

“No, indeed,” replied Zaher; “there is nothing so beautiful anywhere else in the world.” Looking back, he saw something like a cloud in the sky, and asked what it was.

“That is the mountain on which our monastery stands,” said the monk; “it is so far off that it looks only like a cloud from here, but at night it resembles a star from the number of lamps with which we illuminate it. Our corn and fruit come from this country; and occasionally the sea which surrounds us rises to this height, and when the waters subside they generally leave a quantity of fish behind them, as well as pearls and jewels which abound in this sea. We are now at a distance of ten days’ journey from the monastery by any other route than by the subterranean passage.”

They remained sitting by the lake till evening, when the lights of the monastery began to shine out above them like small stars. They rose up to return, when they were alarmed by a terrific cry which shook the whole island. “By the Messiah!” said the monk, “I have passed many nights here alone and never heard the least noise. Some strange sea-monsters must have landed on the island and attacked the wild animals which inhabit it. Let us climb this high rock by the lake.”

They then saw that the air was filled with small flying lights, which mutually extinguished another, and armed figures were contending with swords and lances. After this, two bodies of cavalry rushed on each other with such a shout that the earth quaked; and the battle continued for some time. At length the two armies separated, and a venerable old man, blind of one eye, stationed himself between them, and cried in a loud voice, “Spare your blood, you foolish people! Why should you fight about a stranger who is not even a king or a prince, and of no exalted position?” The leader of one of the armies, who was as huge as an elephant, and whose name was Tood, stepped up to the old man, and said,—

“Father, I swear by the seal of our lord, Solomon, the son of David, that our master, King Mutar, is guiltless of this calamitous war. All the mischief has been caused by this accursed devil Shulahek, who invaded our country, violated our sanctuary, and carried away a stranger named Zaher, whom he left on this island. All we desired was to carry this stranger back to the Coral City, by command of Princess Farha, when we were attacked by the army of Shulahek; and you have witnessed the battle which ensued.”

The old man, whose name was Abu Tawaif, replied,—“King Tood, Shulahek is not to be so lightly blamed as you imagine. Princess Farha, who has bewitched so many men and genii with her beauty, drew both Shulahek and his brother Shallook into the snare of her love. They fought together from jealousy, and Shulabek slew his brother after a long struggle. But when he made his suit to Farha, she rejected him, and preferred a stranger from Damascus; so he watched

his opportunity, and carried Zaher away to this desolate island. He did not venture to kill him, lest Farha and her father should avenge his death; but why should you fight about so insignificant a creature?"

"You are right," answered Tood; "but Zaher is altogether innocent, and as a stranger, he deserves our assistance and protection. I only wish to execute the commands of my mistress, Farha, and I should be glad if you could make peace between us; but I ask you all, by the seal of Solomon, the son of David (on whom be peace!), who among you would give up a guest to an enemy?"

On this all exclaimed, "We would never do so; but why should we fight any longer for the sake of one man?"

"True," said Abu Tawaif; "the man has brought much evil upon us, but as his bitterest enemy was unwilling to take his life, it would be doubly wrong for us to kill him; bring him here to me."

Upon this a messenger sprang towards Zaher, and stationed him before Abu Tawaif.

"Are you aware," said Abu Tawaif, "that a whole army of genii has been slaughtered on your account? How could you presume to marry a wife whom so many kings of men and of the genii have sought in vain?" But when he had heard Zaher's story, he exclaimed, "I beseech you, Tood and Shulahek, to desist from strife, and dismiss your armies, for you know the power and artifice of Queen Farha. This poor man is wholly innocent, and I will send one of my servants to carry him to his home."

"I cannot permit this," said Shulahek, "for although I did not like to kill him, my mistress would soon rejoin him if I allowed him to return to his own house. Let us throw him into the sea, and if God pleases He may save him, and if not let him sink. If Queen Farha threatens us with war, we can tell her that he took to flight when he saw the battle, and fell into the sea."

This proposal met with general approval, and was about to be carried into execution, when suddenly innumerable lights appeared in the distance, and a tremendous voice exclaimed, "Forbear, forbear, for Queen Farha is aware of your design, and has sent King Sysam to rescue Zaher!" When Abu Tawaif heard the name of Sysam, the King of the Valley of Idols, he turned pale, and said to Shulahek, trembling, "Did I not tell you that Queen Farha would shrink from nothing to regain her lover? She has now sent my dear son Sysam to his aid, who will slay you all if you do anything to injure him." "Do what you think right," said Shulahek, "but I could not endure that Zaher should return to Farha." Abu Tawaif then advised Sysam to allow Zaher to be carried back to his home; but when they sought for him and could not find him, Sysam said to Shulahek, "You have certainly ordered one of your servants to carry him away, and put him to death secretly!" But Shulahek swore by the seal of Solomon that he did not know what had become of him, and supposed that Sysam himself had sent him back to Queen Farha. This quarrel would have led to another battle, if Abu Tawaif had not besought them to refrain until they could discover what had become of him,

adding, "I will myself punish the offender, though he were my own son!"

While the kings were discussing the fate of Zaher, one of the refractory genii, named Dalhood, who was indignant at his having been the cause of so terrible a war, carried him away to his castle, which was situated on an island in the Sea of Darkness. Here he loaded him with chains, and cast him into the deepest dungeon; and every evening when he was sitting over his wine, he sent for him, and beat him for the amusement of his guests, or compelled him to stand in the corner of the room, exposed to all manner of contumely and insult. But Zaher was not quite comfortless, for his gaoler, Mifraj, pitied him, and instead of putting him to the torture, as Dalhood had commanded, did his best to relieve his sufferings and to comfort him.

One day Mifraj said, "I should like to carry you back to some inhabited region, but we are separated from the world of light by a distance of ten years' journey, which could not be traversed without very great danger; and even then we should never be secure from this infidel king, who would follow us to the ends of the earth."

But at this moment Dalhood suddenly entered the prison, and swore by the Prince of Darkness, that Mifraj should now suffer for Zaher, and immediately sentenced him to receive a thousand lashes. Mifraj pretended to be insensible till Dalhood left the prison, when he started up suddenly, unbound Zaher, and seizing him in his arms, flew with him above the clouds all night, and in the morning he said, "Do you know, Zaher, that we have already traversed a space of ten years' journey?" Zaher was so amazed that he forgot that his guide would be destroyed by the mention of the name of God; and cried out, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet!" He had scarcely uttered the profession of the faith when a fiery arrow flew from heaven, which struck Mifraj and consumed him; but Zaher fell to the ground uninjured.

The unknown country upon which he fell was a desert, but he wandered on in one direction for half a day, when he arrived at a fertile and well-watered district. Here he saw a man on the banks of a stream performing the ablutions preparatory to prayer, upon which Zaher did the same, and prayed by his side, after which he turned to his companion, and asked in what country he had arrived. "Know," replied he, "that this island is inhabited by genii who have been instructed in the Koran by the prophet Khidder. It is called the Diamond Island, and is surrounded by the Green Sea, which extends to Mount Kaf. Here, too, is the meeting-place of the angels who wander through the earth every day, to fulfil the commands of God."

"What is Mount Kaf formed of?" asked Zaher.

"It consists of a single green pearl. The noblest creatures of God dwell there, and it is guarded by mighty angels on every side. No one can pass it without the special permission of God. But let me now introduce you to our king."

Thus speaking, he led Zaher to a magnificent and strongly fortified city. The gates were guarded by angels having genii under their command who paced up

and down with gold and silver arrows in their hands. Zaher expressed his surprise at seeing no minarets, and his guide explained: 'When the time for prayer arrives, a pillar of light rises from the mountain under which the city is built, and a thousand angels proclaim with a loud voice, 'God is great! O creatures of God, bear witness that there is but one God, and that Mohammed is His prophet!'"

Thus conversing, they arrived at the palace of King Amrad, with which nothing that Zaher had yet seen could be compared for a moment. Here his guide left him, but returned immediately, and informed him that the king wished to hear his own account of his arrival in a country which no man had ever visited before. He then ushered Zaher into the presence of King Amrad, who was sitting in full divan, surrounded by his viziers, counsellors, and generals.

Zaher made his obeisance to the king, and commenced his story, but he had not quite finished when a tremendous noise was heard, and an innumerable number of lights and flames appeared in the air. Immediately afterwards one of the king's lieutenants entered, and announced: "O mighty king! a vast army has encamped before the city, whose numbers God only can estimate. I have posted our troops around the city, but would not do more until I received your orders."

"We must first send an envoy to ascertain whether they are friends or foes," replied the king, and he went out on the terrace before his palace. Perceiving that the army was less numerous than he had expected, he ordered his chief vizier, Dilhat, to go on an embassy to the leaders of the army, to discover who they were, and what was their object in invading his dominions. Dilhat mounted his horse and rode out of the city, accompanied by a few attendants, and requested one of the foreign soldiers to lead him to the generals. The soldier answered, "The army before you is headed by the four kings, Shulahek, Tood, Sysam, and Dalhood. Abu Tawaif, the most crafty of all the kings of the genii, is with them, and you will find them at present assembled in his tent, which is pitched in yonder green meadow." Dilhat at once proceeded to the tent, where he was admitted as an envoy from King Amrad.

We must now go back a little in our story, and explain that when Dalhood entered the prison on the day after Zaher's flight, intending to offer him as a sacrifice to the Prince of Darkness, he found no one there, and concluded that Mifraj had attempted to escape with Zaher. He immediately started in pursuit, and flew across all the seas and islands till he reached the Diamond Island, where he heard one of the inhabitants say to another, "I have seen a great marvel to-day. A genius was carrying a man through the air, when he was suddenly consumed to ashes, but the man escaped unhurt, and is now in the king's palace." Dalhood was glad to hear of the death of Mifraj; but as he knew that he could not defy the power of King Amrad, and seize Zaher, he flew back homewards. But he found his castle surrounded by an army as numerous as the sands of the sea, and thought, "By the night and the darkness, something very unusual has happened, for I have never seen so many troops assembled together in my life. I have never seen a genius from the world of light here before, nor has any one previously attempted

to besiege my castle." He then asked a soldier for information, and learned that the army consisted of three divisions, led by Shulahek, Tood, and Sysam, and that Abu Tawaif was also with them.

"How do they know that Zaher was brought here?" asked Dalhood.

"They heard it from the wife of Mifraj," replied the soldier, "who besought King Sysam's protection for her husband and Zaher."

"Well," thought Dalhood, "as Zaher is still alive, I have nothing to fear," and he went straight to Abu Tawaif, whom he thus addressed: "You were rightly informed that I carried Zaher off, hoping to bring your quarrels to an end, and to punish the man who has been the cause of so much evil; but my gaoler betrayed me, and Zaher is now in the Diamond Island, under the protection of King Amrad. But as you attach so much importance to Zaher, I will accompany you thither with my troops." Abu Tawaif accepted his offer, and the united forces encamped before the city of King Amrad, as already related.

When Dilhat entered the tent he saluted the kings respectfully, introduced himself as an envoy from King Amrad, and requested to know their business, adding, "We doubt not that you come with friendly intentions, for even if you should overcome the armies of King Amrad, he could always retreat to Mount Kaf, where the flaming arrows of the angels would prevent you from pursuing him any farther, so that you would have everything to lose and nothing to gain by making war."

"We are anxious to keep on good terms with your master," replied Abu Tawaif, "but we demand that he shall surrender to us a man of Damascus, who is now with him. Queen Farha loves this Zaher, and many genii have already perished on his account."

Dilhat then returned to King Amrad, and informed him of the names of the confederate kings, and the object of their visit. Amrad immediately summoned his council, and laid the whole affair before them, adding, "By the brightness of our Prophet Mohammed! averse as I am to war, I will never surrender a true believer who has sought my protection, to these infidel genii! I will call Zaher, and if he is unwilling to go with them, let them try to carry him off by force, if they dare."

When Zaher was informed of everything, he hung down his head for a while, and after due consideration he replied, "If I should speak truth, great king, I long most for my friends and relatives at Damascus. I should not be displeased to remain here, where the true God is worshipped, whom I also worship; but I have such a horror of these infidel genii, that I would not willingly accompany them, even if they promised to reunite me with Queen Farha."

The king then sent Dilhat back with a positive refusal to surrender Zaher.

When the confederate kings heard this reply they were enraged, and cried out, "What, does King Amrad threaten us with war on account of this miserable fellow? We cannot submit to such an insult; let us sack his city, and kill or make prisoners of all the inhabitants."

But when their first wrath had expended itself, Abu Tawaif thus addressed

them: "Know, my children, that King Amrad is not so easy to over come; he is himself a hero, and his army is like the raging sea. It will be best for us to withdraw from the country, and to tell the king that we only came at the desire of Queen Farha, who was afraid that her husband might meet with further ill-usage; but as the king favours him so much that he is prepared to wage war rather than to surrender him, she need be under no further anxiety on his account. But we will leave some invisible genii behind, with orders to carry Zaher away the moment they find him alone. Thus we shall attain our end without risking a battle."

This proposal was received with acclamation, and a messenger was immediately despatched to King Amrad to inform him of the proposed withdrawal of the troops. But Amrad had already been informed by an angel of the treacherous designs of Abu Tawaif, and having sent for Zaher, he said to him privately, "Your life is in danger here, for you are surrounded by invisible genii, who are ready to carry you away on the first opportunity. I will, therefore, order one of my own servants to carry you back, either to your own home or to Queen Farha, which ever you prefer."

"Gracious King," answered Zaher, "I have suffered so much on her account since I left Damascus, and she has shown herself so little able to protect me from her unruly servants, the evil genii, that, much as I love her, I fear to expose myself to so dangerous and uneasy a life again. I would rather return to a country inhabited by men like myself."

The king immediately called one of the flying genii, and ordered him to carry Zaher to his home, and to give him a sufficiency of wealth to last him for his whole life. The genius flew with him for half the night, and then gave him a bag full of jewels, and left him on the top of a high mountain, saying, "I must return home before daybreak, but you had better remain here till daylight, and when you descend the mountain, you will find a great city, from whence you will easily be able to reach your home." But Zaher would not wait so long. He set off immediately, and wandered farther and farther from the right path until, when morning broke, he found himself among fearful cliffs and precipices, where he could penetrate no farther. He then fell on his face, and prayed to God who had so often preserved him: "O God, who hast delivered me from the hands of the unbelieving genii, if my life is at an end, hasten my death, and let me not wander any longer among these barren mountains; but if Thy mercy grants me a longer life, then show me a way of deliverance, for there is neither a blade of grass nor a drop of water to be seen here." When he raised his head, he saw two sleek foxes near, which convinced him that there must be some fertile district in the neighbourhood. He followed the foxes over the rocks till they disappeared in a cavern. Here Zaher found a flight of stairs hewn in the rock; and as he descended, he soon lost sight of the opening through which he had entered. Although he was now in total darkness, the stairs were so broad that he was able to advance in perfect safety, and he soon saw daylight shining through an opening in the opposite direction to that in which he had entered. When he emerged from the

cavern he found himself overlooking the sea, and in the midst of a most beautiful and fertile country.

After refreshing himself with fruit and water, both of which were abundant here, he went up to a copper statue which he saw near him, which stood on a marble pedestal sixty feet in height. The right hand of the statue was extended, and held a gold tablet bearing the following inscription: "In the name of the most merciful God! If any wanderer should read this, let him know that he is at the extreme limits of the habitable world; here begins the region of the genii. This oceanic island is the base of one of the highest mountains in the world, except Mount Kaf. When Solomon, the son of David (on both of whom be peace!), was travelling through the world, and observed that the summit of this mountain was so barren and desolate, and its lower slopes so fertile and beautiful, he said to his attendant genii, 'Would that there were a path through this mountain, so that if a man lost his way in this desolate region, he might not perish with hunger and thirst!' One of the genii replied, 'O Prophet of God, all mountains have branches and hollow cavities like trees; and this mountain like others has a great cavity which extends from the summit to this island. At thy command, I will enlarge it, and make it a convenient path.' Solomon consented, and the work was executed; and he also caused a large harbour to be constructed in the neighbourhood, where ships may anchor in safety during the most violent storms."

When Zaher read this, he went on his way to the harbour rejoicing; for he reflected that the genii would never have built the harbour unless ships sometimes visited the neighbourhood. He had not long to wait before a ship with sails like the wings of a great bird drew near, and dropped anchor; and the sailors landed. But they were startled at the sight of Zaher, whose long hair, beard, and nails made him look more like a wild beast than a man. At last one, more courageous than the rest, observing that his feet were of human shape, took his sword in his hand, and went boldly up to Zaher, saying, "If you are a genius, I command you to depart in the name of God; but if you are a man, then peace be with you." Zaher returned his salutation, saying, "Why should you fear me? I am a man of Damascus." "Enter the ship, then," said the captain, "and tell us what brought you here." After hearing Zaher's story, the merchants told him that he might return to Syria with them, for they had been driven out of the Mediterranean into the ocean as they were trying to sail from the west towards Latakia. They provided Zaher with everything needful, and he rewarded them liberally from the purse that King Amrad had given him. They reached Latakia without any serious accident, and after amusing himself there for a short time, Zaher returned to his friends and relatives at Damascus, who received him with the greatest joy.

In the meantime Princess Farha had given birth to a son, whom she named Ali, and reared with the utmost care. The king, his grandfather, who loved him as if he had been his own son, chose the best masters to teach him reading, writing, philosophy, history, and astronomy. When Ali was still quite young, he could not

fail to observe the deep distress of his mother, who would often embrace him tenderly, look him in the face, and say with tears in her eyes, "You remind me too much of your father", but when Ali asked who was his father, she always evaded the question.

Ali was one day beating a slave of his mother's, whom he always hated, and was scolding him for not getting out of his way when he saw him coming, when the slave cried out, "I am only a black slave, as you say, but every one knows my parents, who were slaves like myself. But do you know that your father was a fellow who was drawn up out of the sea, and whom nobody knew? May it be your fate to wander comfortless among strange people who have as little compassion on you as you have shown for me." At this the slave fled from Ali, who pursued him with his drawn sword, but could not overtake him, or discover whether he had sunk into the earth or ascended to heaven.

Ali then went to his mother, who received him with joy, but he remained gloomy and thoughtful, and at last exclaimed, "I cannot live longer, without knowing who was my father, and if you will not tell me, I will slay both you and myself with this sword, for I have heard a saying which has turned my hair grey."

The princess wept, and being unable to keep her secret any longer, she answered, "My son, your father was one of the best and noblest of his people. Sheath your sword, and calm yourself, and I will tell you everything." She then related all she knew, up to the time when Zaher sought the protection of King Amrad, adding, "Since that time I have never been able to obtain any tidings of him, for King Amrad is more powerful than I am, and will not permit any of the genii to come near him. I have nothing of his but a seal ring, which he exchanged with me for a bracelet on our wedding evening."

When Ali heard the story he answered, "If such be the case, there is nothing left but for me to go in search of my father. Let me go to Syria immediately."

But Farha said, "My son, I cannot bear to separate from you, and I fear lest some misfortune may happen to you on so long a journey."

Ali was angry at her refusal to let him go, though he was glad to have heard something of his father. He had not left his mother's room long before his grandfather, King Mutar, sent for him, and peremptorily forbade him to think of his proposed voyage. He then returned to his mother, saying, "Could you not see that I was only jesting? I have never seen more of the world than this castle; and how should I venture on a journey to Damascus alone? I only wish to wear my father's seal-ring as a remembrance of him."

"Ask anything that I possess, my son," returned Farha, and gave him the ring. But Ali went immediately to a friend of his, named Zaher, like his father, and told him all that had happened, adding, that he would never rest until he had found his father. Zaher agreed to accompany him, and they went to the port together and engaged a vessel secretly. Ali then sent Zaher on board with some clothes, and a purse of gold and jewels which he had obtained from his mother; and on the following evening they set sail. For the first two days the wind

continued favourable, but on the third day it gradually died away, till there was a complete calm, and the vessel lay as motionless as in the calmest land-locked haven. The captain was greatly alarmed, and said to the crew, "Be on your guard against the terrible marine monsters which abound in these seas, and which sometimes climb on board a vessel, and devour the crew. Station yourselves round the ship, sword in hand, and drive them back." On the following night, while half the crew were sleeping, those on watch saw something like a great mountain approaching the ship, and the captain exclaimed, "We are lost, for neither sword nor lance can pierce the skin of this monster. If they find one of them dead they make shields of his hide." In the meantime Zaher and the others drew their swords, and attempted to terrify the animal by their shouts and gestures. They thought at first that they had succeeded in driving it off; but it returned immediately with more than two hundred of the same kind, whereupon they took leave of each other, and commended themselves to God, being convinced that their last day on earth had arrived. The animals surrounded the ship, and were on the point of leaping on board, when a strong wind suddenly arose, and carried the ship beyond their reach. All on board were amazed at their unhopd for escape, and the captain actually tossed up his turban for joy. The next thirty days passed very pleasantly. The wind was favourable, and some sang, while others composed poetry or told tales. But after this a black spot appeared in the heavens, no bigger than a drachma, and the air became piercingly cold. The black point extended till it covered the heavens, so that they thought the last day had arrived, when a terrific storm of thunder and Lightning broke over the vessel, and the rain poured down as if from a waterspout, while the boiling sea drove the ship round and round in eddies. All were now busy in baling out the ship, when they were driven from the deck by a terrific fall of hail, and four waves, like mountains, overwhelmed the ship from different sides, crushed it to atoms, and everything sank into the abyss of the sea. But Ali contrived to grasp a sack of a peculiar kind of flour, which has the property of floating on the surface of the water for a period of forty days, and was driven about for two days and two nights, sometimes being lifted up to the stars, and sometimes engulfed in the abysses of the sea. On the third day, he was so exhausted with hunger and thirst and cold, that he could no longer retain his hold of the sack. Nevertheless he kept himself afloat till evening, and was just on the point of ceasing his struggles and allowing himself to sink, when he saw something like a great fire in the sea. Ali made fresh efforts to reach it, and he presently perceived that it was not a fire, but a large golden castle, borne by four giant genii, and so brilliantly lighted, and set with such a profusion of dazzling jewels that it shone like the noonday sun. As Ali approached, he heard some cry out, "Help this unfortunate man!" and immediately a genius flew from the castle and carried Ali to it.

Ali immediately fainted, and did not recover his consciousness till the following morning, when he found himself lying on a bed covered with red satin, a gold-embroidered silken robe was placed by his side, and a pan of charcoal

stood on the marble floor, which emitted the fragrant odour of aloes. A table stood near, covered with the choicest viands. As soon as Ali rose up, two servants who were standing at the door came forward, washed him with rose water, and helped him to dress. Ali, who was almost starved, then sat down at the table and ate till he was satisfied, when the servants brought him all kinds of fruits, and sweetmeats, and then water, with perfumed soap. Afterwards four maidens, resembling moons, entered, and inquired who he was; and when they had heard his story, one of them observed, "Thank the Creator, who has sent you here, where there is nothing but peace and joy." Ali then asked where he was, and why this castle had been built in the midst of the sea; and the maiden related as follows:-

"Know, my friend, that you are now on the great ocean which flows round the whole world, and from which all other seas spring. But this sea is also inhabited, and there is a round island near us, which lies between two immense mountains. On their summits rise castles with golden walls, which shine in the sunlight like stars. On this island grows the best aloes-wood; and there is a spring of dark blue perfumed water, which contains fish of many different colours, without bones, but with golden yellow eyes, and sharp-pointed ears, with which they could break the hardest rock. Sometimes a thick scum gathers on this spring, which is driven into the Blue Sea by the wind blowing from the mountains. Here the merchants collect it, and call it ambergris. The town which stands upon this island surpasses all the other cities of the world in wealth and magnificence, and is called Asaf (Alas), for every traveller who beholds it exclaims, 'Alas, how poor is the rest of the world in comparison!' The city is surrounded with walls of gold, and the battlements are of ruby. The horsemen who guard it are armed with long silver lances, pointed with emerald. In the middle of the city is a castle, ornamented within and without with the most precious jewels. Among other wonderful things, it contains a square hall, supported by four golden pillars; and in the midst, a fountain of red coral sheds a sea of perfume around. Many golden cages, with silver locks and emerald keys, hang in this hall, and the birds warble continually in the sweetest tones. At the end of this hall stands a throne covered with green silk, on which sits the most beautiful maiden whom the Lord has created, the powerful Queen Turaia, daughter of King Farkad, surrounded by men and genii.

"But there is another island near, still larger, and very populous, where King Canas rules. He has a daughter called the Blue Queen, who is amazingly proficient in magic. She is very fond of conversing with foreigners, and has stationed spies everywhere on the borders of her dominions, who give her immediate notice of the arrival of any stranger. She then sends one of her genii to bring him to her presence, and she gives him a very friendly reception, and talks with him till she is tired of him, and then she either puts him to death, or changes him into some animal or bird by enchantment. In order to save as many unfortunate travellers as possible from falling into her hands, Queen Turaia has

built this castle on the frontiers of her empire, and God be praised that you have been saved in this manner!”

The slave girls then took Ali in a boat to the city, and brought him to the palace appointed for strangers, which was so magnificently built and furnished that it was fit for the habitation of the most powerful king in the world. It was dark when they arrived, and the interior was lit up with innumerable tapers and fires of aloes wood; and a table covered with the choicest viands stood in front of a very convenient and beautifully decorated divan. The slave girls waited on Ali while he ate, after which they retired, and he lay down on the divan, and slept soundly all night. On waking in the morning, he saw a beautiful maiden, in a gold-embroidered robe set with pearls, sitting near, and asked her if she was Queen Turaia?

“How can you ask such a question?” she replied. “I am the meanest of her slaves, and await your orders, for I am in charge of this apartment. Queen Turaia never comes here herself, but after three days she will send for you, and inquire into your birth and circumstances, and will treat you according to your rank. But beware of concealing anything from her, for the genii inform her of everything before hand, and if you lie to her, you are lost.”

But at this moment four hundred pages entered, clothed in satin, with golden girdles round their waists, and drawn swords in their hands. The foremost saluted Ali respectfully, and said, “My lord, Queen Turaia has sent us to conduct you to her presence.”

The slave girl was astonished, for she had never known the queen send for a stranger till three days after his arrival, and again cautioned Ali respecting his behaviour at court.

Ali then left the palace with the pages, who brought him a mule, the trappings of which were worth a kingdom, and conducted him to the castle through seven courtyards, each guarded by thousands of genii. When Ali entered the hall of audience, the queen welcomed him, and all the viziers and generals rose up to receive him. After Ali had returned her salutation, and prayed for the continuance of her life and prosperity, the queen said, “I know who you are, and know your mother very well, and it is on this account that I desired to see you. Tell me first what has happened to you since you left home.”

After hearing his story, she welcomed Ali still more heartily, and said, “Look upon my empire and people as your own.” Then she rose up, took the hand of Ali, and led him to her father’s castle.

“Why do you visit me so late to-day, dear daughter?” said the king.

And she answered, “The youth whom you behold is the cause of my unusual delay.”

The king, who saw that his daughter took an unusual interest in Ali, made him sit by him, and eat with him. Queen Turaia helped him to the best, and he tucked up his sleeves, and ate with the tips of his fingers till he was satisfied. After they had eaten, and washed their hands in golden basins with rose-water

and scented soap, fresh and dried fruits, with wine and sweetmeats, were placed on the table, and presently the king ordered the singing-girls to be summoned. Upon this, a hundred gorgeously dressed young girls entered, each of whom carried a gold-embroidered satin bag in her hand, with green silk strings, and a diamond key. They ranged themselves round the hall, took out their instruments, and began to play and sing, so that the whole hall seemed to shake. This lasted for some hours, and when they were alone again, the queen asked Ali if he would be her husband. And Ali, who had fallen in love with her at first sight, answered that it was the dearest wish of his heart.

After King Farkad had consented to the marriage, and blessed the betrothed pair, they returned to the queen's castle, when Turaia took a sword and a loaf of bread, and a Koran, and swore never to take another husband than Ali, whether present or absent, or alive or dead; and she required Ali to take the same oath with regard to her.

On the following morning, the queen left Ali to visit her father, warning him not to quit the castle till her return. When she was gone, he wandered from one room to another, until he arrived at the terrace, which commanded a delightful view of the entire city, and the sea beyond. He was about to return when a large bird pounced upon him, bore him to the clouds in its talons, and flew with him all day. Towards evening, it descended with him upon a very fertile and thickly populated island, and changed into a handsome young man, in royal apparel. Ali was astonished, and asked him what creature he was? and he answered, "I am a man like you. I am Tarad, the son of Anan, the King of the Smoking Mountain; and if you will come with me, I will tell you my whole history." He then led Ali to a castle, before the doors of which stood attendants with golden staves, and pages with Indian swords, who all bowed themselves before the prince. They sat down together on a divan in one of the large rooms of the castle, and Tarad related his history as follows:

"Know, my friend, that my father, the powerful King Anan, has twelve sons besides myself, each of whom rules over a mighty kingdom. But I was always my father's favourite from my youth, and my brothers envied and hated me. As my father was afraid lest my brothers might do me some injury in his absence, he sent for one of the kings of the genii, named Danish, who was subject to him, and who ruled over a vast company of powerful genii, and said, 'After this day you are not to serve me any longer, but my son Tarad. Fulfil all his commands, even if he should order you to tear up a mountain, or to dry up a sea; and protect him from the evil designs of his brothers.' As I was now relieved from all trouble and anxiety by the guardianship of the genii, I gave myself up entirely to the study of magic, of which I had always been exceedingly fond. I made such progress that I thought I was able to contend with the most skilful enchanters. When I had grown to manhood, I called Dahish, and said, "I do not care to live alone any longer, but wish to marry. But I will marry no one but Turaia, the Queen of the Island of Musk; for, according to all that I have heard and read, she surpasses all other

women in beauty, power, wisdom, and learning. Go to her from me, and say, "King Tarad, the son of King Anan, the Lord of the Smoking Mountain, offers you his hand. If you consent, you shall be the happiest queen in the world; but if you refuse, he will lead armies of men and genii against you, who will ravage your country, and make you a prisoner."

"But Dahish answered, 'Do you not know, great king, that Turaia is so powerful that she could overturn Mount Kaf? All the kings of this sea are her allies, and even Abu Tawaif fears and obeys her. How is it possible for me to insult her with such a message?'

"But I answered angrily, 'Do what I command you. I am not afraid of her magic arts; never-the-less you had better take a thousand of the most powerful genii with you as a bodyguard, and return to me with her answer.'

"Dahish refused no longer, and immediately flew to the Island of Musk with his attendants. When Queen Turaia heard of their arrival, she sent one of her attendant genii to inquire their business. The genius flew to Dahish, and saluted him, but Danish did not return his greeting, on which the envoy concluded that the strangers must be infidels. One of them then asked rudely, 'What do you want here?' The genius answered, 'I am an envoy sent by the great Queen Turaia to inquire who you are, and what is your business?' Dahish then said, 'I have come in the name of King Tarad with an offer of marriage to Queen Turaia.' When the messenger returned to the queen, she sent him back to invite Dahish to visit her alone in her castle, to deliver his message more fully.

"But when Dahish received the message, he was enraged, and cried out, 'You dog, how dare you bring me such a message? Who is your mistress, that I should go to her castle unattended, instead of her coming out to receive me herself?' Upon this, he drew his sword, slew the envoy, and then marched against the castle with his troops.

"Dahish already made certain of victory, when Queen Turaia came to meet him, and cast him to the ground by calling on the sacred name of God. Her genii now assembled round her by thousands, and many of the attendants of Dahish were burned, and the others taken prisoners, and put in chains. The queen then seated herself on her throne, and ordered Dahish to be brought before her. He came forward in his chains, trembling, and abasing himself in the dust, when she exclaimed 'Woe to you, why did you slay my envoy? Nevertheless, let me hear your message.'

"Pardon me, O queen," cried Dahish in a trembling voice; "Tarad, the son of Anan, the King of the Smoking Mountain, sent me here to ask if you would deign to grant him your hand.'

"What more?" asked Turaia.

"Dahish bowed his head to the ground, but made no answer.

"Did he say no more?" asked Turaia again, and as Dahish still refused to speak, she ordered his head to be struck off, and all his followers to be put to death. As soon as this was done, she summoned Kharoob, one of her officers, and

said, 'Bring Tarad, the son of King Anan, here.'

"Kharoob immediately assumed the form of a monstrous bird, carried me away from my tower, and brought me before Queen Turaia.

"Welcome to my bridegroom!" said she; 'you shall serve as a warning to all the kings of these islands, so that no one shall dare even to mention my name again! ' She then said to one of her genii, 'Cast him into the dungeon, and guard him well until I return from visiting my father, King Farkad, who will advise me how to treat this dog.'

"But at this moment King Farkad himself entered, and asked his daughter what had hindered her from visiting him at the usual hour, and why she seemed so much agitated. When she told him the story, he exclaimed, 'May God ever grant you the victory over all your enemies! But where is King Tarad? I should like to see him.' When Turaia pointed me out, he added, 'Is that the king who would marry my daughter? Why, he is trembling like an old woman.'

"He then spurned me from the hall with his foot, and called for the executioner. I had already given myself up for lost, when one of the king's officers entered, and announced, 'King Anan, with Abu Tawaif and other powerful kings of the genii, has arrived with an immense army to rescue King Tarad, and have sent an envoy who waits without.'

"Show him in," said Farkad; and an old man entered of such venerable appearance that Farkad gave him a friendly reception, made him sit by him, and then politely inquired his business.

"The old man replied, 'I am a messenger from King Anan, who will soon follow me in company with Abu Tawaif, to beseech your pardon for his thoughtless and foolhardy son, whom he still loves tenderly, in spite of all his faults.'

"Farkad immediately ordered one of his servants to take me into one of the halls of the palace, and also to show the envoy into an elegant apartment, and to appoint two genii to wait upon him.

"When he was alone with Turaia, he said, 'My dear daughter, although King Tarad is well worthy of death, yet we must not forget that he is a king, and the son of a powerful king, and clemency would only exalt us still more in the eyes of our equals; and, moreover, it would be imprudent for us to involve ourselves in a war with King Anan and Abu Tawaif on account of a headstrong youth; don't you think so?'

"I agree with you,' answered Turaia; 'but we will first await the arrival of King Anan, and see how he behaves to us. If he acknowledges his son's guilt, and asks for pardon for him, we will grant it; but if he threatens us with violence, we will stand upon the justice of our cause.'

"A few days after this decision, an officer of King Farkad entered, and announced the arrival of King Anan, accompanied by Abu Tawaif, and other kings of the genii. Farkad and Turaia immediately mounted their horses, and rode to meet them, accompanied by an escort of flying genii, whose wings were as brightly coloured as those of a peacock. They met King Anan at the gate of the city, who

immediately dismounted, and bowed down before Farkad, who was likewise about to dismount, but King Anan would not permit it. Turaia declared that she would not suffer King Anan to walk, and at last he allowed himself to be persuaded to remount, and to ride to the castle between Farkad and Turaia. Every preparation had been already made to receive Anan and Abu Tawaif, and a banquet was set before them such as could only be prepared by the most powerful kings of the genii, who know where to obtain the best of everything which creeps, and runs, and swims, and flies. During the banquet they conversed only on indifferent subjects, and it was not until the dessert that Abu Tawaif rose, and said,–

“The great King Farkad has already been informed by our messenger of the reason which has brought King Anan here; may I have the pleasure of informing the anxious father that his son will be restored to him?”

“Upon this Duha, the vizier of King Farkad, the most able man of his time, rose up, and requested permission to speak. This being granted him, he spoke as follows:–

“It is well known that King Farkad is one of the most peaceably disposed rulers of these islands; but Tarad made a violent attack on Queen Turaia, contrary to all justice, and without a shadow of provocation. He himself has fallen into the pit which he dug for others. He is now the prisoner of the queen whom he thought to carry off by violence; and, although he has been guilty of so great a crime, she would nevertheless be willing to pardon him at the request of his father and the venerable Abu Tawaif. But who will be our security that this foolhardy youth may not attempt to revenge himself upon the queen, and devise new plots against her, as soon as he is set at liberty?”

“Abu Tawaif rose up, and answered, ‘His father and I will both be security for his good behaviour, and we ourselves will undertake to chastise him, if he ever ventures to give the noble Queen Turaia any further annoyance. Bring him here, and I will speak to him myself.’

“I was then brought from my room, and ushered into the hall where my father, Abu Tawaif, Farkad, Turaia, Duha, and several other viziers and kings of the genii were all assembled. I bowed my head to the ground, overwhelmed with remorse, vexation, shame, and love, and would have preferred a thousand deaths. I looked so miserable that all pitied me, but presently Abu Tawaif spoke.

“Do you not know, perverse boy, that good is always rewarded with good, and that it is best for him who takes the initiative; and that evil is likewise rewarded with evil, which falls heaviest on the evil-doer himself? Did you think so little of Queen Turaia, who is feared and respected by all, as to suppose that you could insult her so grossly with impunity? But as you are only a presumptuous boy, she has taken compassion on you. You must, however, swear in our presence, never to annoy her again, nor come near her country, nor even mention her name, for our honour is pledged for your good behaviour. Remember that the invisible God is witness to your oath, and that if you break it, you are lost both in this world and in the next!”

“Upon this I swore by Him who raised the firmament like a tent, and spread out the earth like a carpet, and who clothed the day with light, and the night with darkness, that I would never approach the queen again, nor pronounce her name. I had scarcely uttered this terrible oath when I fainted, and remained insensible all night, and when I recovered my senses in the morning, my father came to me, and commanded me to follow him. I was obliged to return with him, without seeing the queen again, and during the whole journey, he heaped reproaches on me for my folly, which were even harder to bear than the loss of my love. When he left me, I was again compelled to swear that I would completely forget Turaia; but I was no sooner alone than I thought the more of Turaia’s charms, which surpassed all that I had heard reported. I therefore assumed the form of a bird, and flew round her castle every day in hopes of seeing her; and when I saw you on the terrace, I was seized with the desire to take you with me, in hopes of hearing some tidings of my love. I am very anxious to know how you arrived at Queen Turaia’s island, and what brought you to her castle.”

When Ali heard this, he reflected that if he said he was Queen Turaia’s husband, the rash and unprincipled youth would slay him out of jealousy, and he therefore answered that he was the son of Queen Farha, the friend of Queen Turaia, and had come to pay her a short visit at his mother’s request. But when Tarad heard this he said, “Woe to me if Queen Turaia should miss you and discover that I carried you away! She would certainly send to my father and to Abu Tawaif, and denounce me as a perjured king, and not only my honour, but even my life would be in danger! It will be better for me to send you back, and I implore you to beseech her pardon.” But he had scarcely spoken when an officer entered hastily and announced, “A messenger has arrived from Queen Turaia, accompanied by more than a hundred black genii, and he desires to speak with you.” As soon as Queen Turaia’s name was mentioned Tarad began to tremble so much that he was hardly able to stammer out, “Show him in.” When the messenger entered, Tarad rose up before him, saluted him respectfully, and inquired what message he brought. The envoy handed him a sealed letter, which he opened hastily, and when he had read it he broke out into reproaches against Queen Turaia saying, “No one would treat a king in such a manner, no matter how grievously he might have offended!” Ali was afraid that Tarad would discover his secret, so he took this opportunity to escape from his castle, and wandered about in the island without knowing which way to turn. After wandering some distance from the castle he lay down on the ground in despair. He thought of his father, and of the anxiety which his mother and Turaia must suffer on his own account; and he began to weep aloud, and to cry to God for aid. Presently he heard a voice above him saying, “Fear not, Ali, for help is near.” On lifting his eyes he perceived a genius in the form of a great bird, whom he asked to rescue him from his danger, and to tell him to what race of genii he belonged.

The bird flew towards him and replied, “I am one of the genii of King Tarad, flying from the slaughter to which we were exposed by the wrath of Queen Turaia.

Soon after your flight from the castle of King Tarad we perceived a red glow in the atmosphere, which increased till we thought that the whole heaven was wrapped in flames. These were the flaming armies of Queen Turaia, who surrounded the castle like a cloud of locusts or a swarm of ants, and slew or made prisoners of all its inhabitants. The queen herself, who was at their head, rushed on Tarad with her drawn sword, and cried out, ‘Where is Ali, the son of Queen Farha? ‘But Tarad swore that he did not know what had become of him, for he had not seen him since the arrival of the genii, and supposed that he had hidden himself or taken to flight from terror. But Turaia called him a liar and perjurer, spurned him with her foot, and ordered one of her officers to make him a prisoner. God be praised that I have found you! I will take you back to Queen Turaia, who is overwhelmed with anxiety about you, and if you assure her that Tarad has done you no harm, she will no doubt pardon him again.”

“Do so, friend,” said Ali, “and Turaia, Tarad, and myself, will all be greatly indebted to you.”

He then flew up with Ali to within a hand’s breadth of heaven, and descended on the peak of a high mountain, where he shook him off, and assumed the form of a raven, with the head of a lion and the claws of an eagle. Torrents of fire rushed from his mouth, and his eyes, which were cleft in the middle, emitted sparks; his voice sounded like thunder, and a suffocating odour spread around him. “What means this?” cried Ali; but the bird struck him a heavy blow in the face which stunned him, and when he recovered, he found himself alone on the summit of a lofty mountain, with so large a stone resting on his breast that he could not move one way or the other, and could scarcely breathe. Ali lay thus for the whole day, and was forced to cover his face with his hands to protect it from the rays of the sun. But when he looked up towards evening, he saw four maidens before him, whose dress, adornments, and general aspect left no doubt in his mind that they were princesses. Their appearance dazzled him still more than the sun, from whose rays he had previously suffered, and he closed his eyes and pretended to sleep. One of the maidens asked presently, “Who is this handsome youth, and who has brought him to the top of this mountain and laid a great stone upon him?” Another replied, “This youth is Ali, the son of Queen Farha, and the husband of Queen Turaia. King Sarech, who himself passionately loves Turaia, has left Ali here to perish of hunger and thirst, but by the seal of Solomon we will save him, even if Sarech were as powerful as Asaph, the son of Barachia, the vizier of King Solomon, on whom be peace!”

On this, the maiden went up to Ali and lifted the stone from his breast. He opened his eyes, and as soon as he had recovered himself a little he thanked his preserver, and asked how she had been able to climb this inaccessible mountain, and who she was? She answered, “My name is Johara, and I am the daughter of the Blue Queen, who rules over the White City. The other three maidens are my sisters. Samarda is my own sister, and Marjana and Yakuta are my half-sisters. No land is too distant, no mountain too high, and no sea too deep for us to

explore, for we fly like birds in the air, and dive like fish in the abysses of the sea. But we came to this mountain only on your account, seeing you lying helpless as we were passing by. Come with us, and refresh yourself a little after all that you have suffered, and afterwards you may return to Queen Turaia.”

She then took the arm of Ali and flew with him like lightning to a majestic city lying in a beautiful valley. She descended on the terrace of a castle, and led Ali down a marble staircase to a hall which was as large and splendid as that of Queen Turaia. Night had already fallen, but the hall was more brilliantly illuminated than if the sun had been shining. Johara presently ordered the slave girls who were in attendance to prepare supper, and they immediately brought in some elegant little tables laid out with golden dishes, crystal plates, and silver spoons. The viands were quite strange to Ali, but he thought them delicious; and after supper wine was placed on the table, with a great variety of fresh and dried fruits. The wine was poured out by a hideous old housekeeper, who looked like a speckled snake, and whose name was Firusad. After this she called the singing-girls, who came in and accompanied themselves on all manner of instruments.

Presently Johara and Samarda began to talk over the adventures of the day, and Samarda claimed to have saved Ali's life because she had seen him first.

“No, indeed,” cried Johara, “I rolled the stone off his breast, and carried him here; and I alone saved his life.” This led to a quarrel, and then to a fight, and in the meantime the other sisters warned Ali that he had better escape with them, lest the infuriated combatants should turn upon him. As soon as they were in the open air, Marjana took him on her shoulders and flew to her own castle, followed by Yakuta.

But presently the old woman, Firusad, arrived, and informed them that having separated Johara and Samarda with difficulty, and reconciled them to each other, they had missed Ali and their sisters, and were about to lead an army against Marjana's castle, when Firusad persuaded them to wait while she demanded the surrender of Ali, whom they would not permit to leave them without saying adieu. Both Marjana and Yakuta declared that they would never consent to his return, for he had thrown himself upon their protection, and bitterly reproached the old woman for bringing them such a message. Firusad excused herself, and promised to do her best to avert a war; but she thought that cunning would serve her purpose best, and after acquainting Johara with her sister's reply, she washed herself with the decoction of a root which made her appear like a born negress. Then she dressed herself like one of Marjana's slaves and returned to her castle, where she mixed unperceived with the negresses who were in attendance.

Soon afterwards, Ali went out into the courtyard, when she followed him, and muttered a spell, upon which a frightful genius rose from the ground, whom she ordered to carry Ali to Johara's castle. But when Ali was half way between the two castles, he cried out, “There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet!” The genius was instantly consumed to ashes by a fiery dart, and Ali fell into the

sea. He sank deep, but the sea was so rough that he was soon cast up to the surface, and was able to keep himself afloat for a whole day. Towards evening he was so exhausted that he could scarcely move his arms, and he was about to sink into the abyss of the ocean, where neither men nor genii would ever have found his grave, when a large dead fish floated past upon which he scrambled, and was thus driven along by the waves for the first portion of the night. But about midnight, sea-monsters rose from the deep, many of them larger than an elephant. They surrounded the fish, and began to devour it, until at last only the part on which Ali sat was left. Ali was afraid of being eaten too, so he leaped off, and swam for some distance till he touched something hard, to which he clung till morning, when he found he was clinging to a rock, not far from a great city, and a fine harbour where ships were lying at anchor. Ali thanked God for his deliverance, and hoped that someone would see him from the shore, and bring him to land. He was not mistaken, for a fishing boat soon left the harbour, sailed towards him, and took him on board. Ali thanked the fisherman, and asked where he was? The fisherman answered, "This is the White City, which is also called the Kingdom of Pillars, because so many private houses, as well as the royal castle, are supported by pillars. The city and the island on which it stands are ruled over by the Blue Queen. She is one of the most powerful queens in the world, and rules her subjects with great harshness, but is very hospitable to strangers." The fisherman then gave Ali a piece of bread, and a draught of fresh water; and they sailed about together all day, till the boat was filled with beautiful fish. As they were approaching the harbour in the evening, the fisherman said, "I must take the fish to the queen to-morrow, for I am her favourite fisherman, and will tell her that a young foreigner, whom I found clinging to a rock, helped me to catch them; and I will ask leave to present you to her." But they had scarcely landed, when some of the queen's servants came up, and said to the fisherman, "Let us have the fish which you have caught at once, for they are wanted for a banquet to-night." The fisherman handed over the fish to the servants, and accompanied them to the queen, to inform her of his meeting with Ali, and she immediately commanded him to bring him to the palace.

When Ali entered the palace, he bowed himself to the ground, and remained standing, but the queen received him in a friendly manner, and invited him to sk down. Ali replied that his respect for the queen would not allow him to remain seated in her presence, whereupon she pretended sickness, and excused her self to all her other guests. When she was alone with Ali, she made him relate his adventures, and then said, "Poor fellow, you have suffered enough to turn the hair of a child white; but be of good cheer, for you are now in a house of peace and comfort." After a magnificent supper, Ali was shown into a splendid sleeping apartment, such as he had never seen in his life. He lay down on a soft, silken divan, and slept soundly till the sun was high in the heavens; and after he had completed his ablutions and devotions, four slaves came to his chamber, and said, "Will it please our lord to enter the bath." Ali rose up, and followed them into a

splendid bathroom, and after washing him till his skin shone like silver, they arrayed him in a magnificent robe, put a girdle set with jewels round his waist, and placed a golden crown on his head, adorned with all manner of precious stones. They then led him into the presence of the Blue Queen, who made him sit by her on the divan, and asked how he had passed the night. Ali kissed her hand, saluted her and the viziers who were around her, and thanked her for her kindness. They sat conversing till noon; and Ali overheard the queen say to one of the ladies of the court, "I have never seen such a handsome young man in my life." After the midday prayer they sat down to table; but when the wine was brought, and the other guests had departed, the queen confessed her love to Ali, and asked him to marry her, and to remain with her forever. But the image of Turaia floated before his eyes, and he remembered the great oath which he had sworn to her, and met the queen's advances with coldness. She was highly indignant, and exclaimed, "What, should a queen like myself stoop to your love, and you despise her!" Then she murmured some unintelligible words, and thrust Ali out of the room, saying, "Quit this shape, and assume that of a toothless dog of miserable appearance!" When Ali heard the words, he began to shake and tremble, and instantly found himself changed into an ugly toothless dog, and unable to speak a word. He then ran about the streets, but the other dogs perceived something strange in him, and pursued him, barking at him, and worrying him, and driving him from street to street, till he fled at last into a small passage which had no outlet. More than a hundred dogs rushed upon him and began to worry him, but he howled so pitifully that a woman who lived in the lane took compassion on him, and fetching a stick drove the other dogs away. Then she looked into Ali's eyes, and said, "This is not a dog, but an enchanted man." She then took him by the ear, and led him into the house. The woman's name was Diarda, and she was more skilled in magic than even the Blue Queen. As soon as she came into the house, she ordered her slaves to bring her a pan of coals and a bowl of water; and after fumigating and sprinkling Ali, she pronounced some magic words, and said, "By virtue of these holy names, return to your original form!" She had scarcely spoken when Ali became a man as before, and she led him to her daughters, who covered their faces with their sleeves, and asked, "Where does this young man come from, for the house door is closed?"

"I found him in the street in the shape of a dog," said Jarda, "and we will take him to the queen to morrow; but now give him something to eat, for he must be very hungry."

The daughters then spread a plentiful meal, and afterwards Diarda fetched wine, and they drank together for a time. At length Ali reflected that he was in just as much danger from these people as from the queen, since they proposed to take him back to the palace in the morning. He therefore made the excuse that he wished for a little fresh air, and fled from the house. He wandered about the town for some time, until he found a convenient stone bench covered with a mat, in front of a handsome house, and he laid down and fell asleep. But he had scarcely

closed his eyes when he was roused by a handsome young man of aristocratic appearance, who said, "Why do you sleep on this hard bench? Come into the house with me." Ali found the house beautifully constructed, and elegantly furnished and decorated; and after passing through many large halls where fountains were playing, they arrived in a small and neatly furnished room, where the young man made Ali sit by him on a silken divan, and then inquired into his history. When he had heard all, he exclaimed, "Thank God that you have escaped from the Blue Queen, and from the yet more dangerous and malicious Diarda! You must remain concealed in my house for a few days, for I am expecting some foreign merchants from the neighbourhood of the Smoking Mountain. They will perhaps bring us some news of King Anan and Queen Turaia, and we shall then be able to decide on what is best to be done."

Ali remained three days with this young man, who treated him with the greatest kindness and consideration. On the fourth day a venerable old man arrived, and the youth gave him a hearty welcome, saying, "I have been expecting you a long time, Maher, and your wares are all ready; what has delayed you?"

"Our whole country is so full of soldiers," replied Maher, "that travelling is very dangerous. King Anan and many allies are marching against Queen Turaia, who will not release his son Tarad, until she finds her husband, a certain Ali, the son of Princess Farha."

"If so," said the master of the house, "go quickly to Queen Turaia with this young man, who is Ali himself. Perhaps you may arrive in time to avert the impending war."

"I will set out early to-morrow," replied Maher.

On the following morning, before sunrise, the young man presented Ali with a purse filled with gold and jewels, four slaves, two mules loaded with provisions, and a horse whose trappings were worth half a kingdom. He accompanied Ali beyond the limits of the city, where Maher was waiting for them, with a numerous company of mounted men. He then again commended Ali to Maher, took leave of them, and returned to the city. Ali and Maher rode on for three days through a barren and desolate country, but on the fourth day they reached a pleasant valley, with beautiful flowers, murmuring brooks, and singing birds. Ali proposed to Maher to pitch a tent, and to rest here for the day. He immediately dismounted from his mule, and ordered his servants to pitch a large silken tent by the side of a stream, the water of which resembled the tears of a despairing lover. Here they spread carpets on the ground, and arranged divans of ostrich feathers. After Ali had rested awhile, he went into the valley to praise the Creator of the World, who knows both the number of the rain drops and the number of the grains of sand. The cooing of the doves sounded like the sighing of home-sick wanderers, and the branches of the trees waved towards each other like friends who meet after a long absence. All nature seemed alive, and everything was so delightful that Ali wandered on without knowing where, till he was surprised by the shades of evening. He sought in vain to retrace his steps, and, when the night grew darker,

he climbed a tree, thinking that he would thus be safe from wild beasts, and that he could find his way back in the morning, or his companions would search for him. While Ali was in the tree he saw two men approaching, one of them riding an elephant and the other a lion, and many servants followed, mounted on horses and camels. They halted near the tree, and one said to the other,–

“Shall we pass the night here, Madyad?”

“If you please, Khydar,” answered the other, “for we are safe from further pursuit.”

“What means the royal tent which we passed just now?”

“I saw it too; we will send one of our servants to spy out to whom it belongs. Perhaps we may find something to our advantage there.”

Ali, hearing this, trembled like the leaves of the tree on which he sat, and held his breath lest he should be discovered.

Khydar then sent one of his servants to find out everything about the tent in the most cautious manner. He soon returned, and reported, “The tent belongs to a man from the country of the Smoking Mountain, who is escorting Ali, the son of Farha, to Queen Turaia; but Ali has been missing all the evening, and is supposed to be somewhere in this valley.”

When Madyad heard this, he cried out, “What an extraordinary event! God grant that we may discover Ali!”

As he spoke, he raised his eyes to heaven, and saw Ali in the tree, behind which the moon was shining. Ali was so frightened that he almost fell from the tree, but Madyad called out, “Come down, Ali, and fear nothing. Praised be God, who has spared us any further trouble and danger on your account.”

Ali then descended, and asked them who they were and what they wanted, and begged them to lead him back to the tent. They called the servant who had brought the news, and they accompanied him to Maher’s tent. When they arrived, Ali again asked who they were, and Madyad answered,–

“We are the sons of King Anan, and the brothers of Tarad, who carried you away from the castle of Queen Turaia. As soon as she missed you, she led a great army against Tarad, and took him prisoner. When my father demanded his release, she answered, ‘I will not release him until Ali is restored to me.’ It was useless for my father and Tarad to swear that they knew nothing of you. She only answered, ‘I require you to restore him to me, even if he were beneath the ground.’ My father and we all have been seeking for you everywhere, and have sent messengers to every part of our kingdom; but as all search was vain, my father wrote to Queen Turaia, that if she would not release the innocent Tarad, he would march against her with all his allies. But the winged genius who carried the letter did not return; and all at once my father saw nothing but wings in heaven and feet on earth. They were the flying genii and other troops of Queen Turaia, who attacked his castle at once, both from above and from below, took him prisoner, and carried him away. I and my brothers were just returning from a journey when this happened, and we were obliged to take to flight. But God be praised that we

have met with you so unexpectedly, for we will now go together to Queen Turaia, and when she is convinced of the innocence of my father and brother, she will set them at liberty.”

On the following morning Ali took leave of Maher, and travelled on with the brothers of Tarad to the Smoking Mountain, where Turaia still occupied the castle of Anan. On the road they had several severe combats with robbers, and also with genii, sent in pursuit of Ali by the Blue Queen and the enchantress Diarda, and if some genii of Queen Turaia’s army had not come to their assistance they would have been overpowered; but on the eighth day after parting with Maher they reached the castle of King Anan in safety. Turaia was beside herself with joy at Ali’s return, and he also forgot all the dangers he had suffered since their separation, and sank fainting in her arms. When Ali recovered, Madyad said to Turaia,—

“You see now, great Queen, that neither my father nor my brother have done your husband any harm. Let him tell you himself how Tarad treated him, and how he was carried away from you for so long a time, and then act justly towards my father, and mercifully towards Tarad.”

Turaia then took Ali into a room by themselves, and begged him to relate all that had happened since their separation, and to conceal nothing.

After Turaia had heard the whole story related several times, she went to her father, and having told him the story, inquired what should be done with Tarad and Anan. King Farkad immediately sent for Anan, Tarad, and Abu Tawaif, and said to Anan,

“As you are wholly guiltless of the troubles which have come upon the unfortunate Ali, we can only regret that the folly of your son has involved you in such a calamitous war. We can not undo the past, but everything which we have taken from you shall be restored to you. As for Tarad, although he himself has done Ali no harm, yet he has been the cause of all the misfortunes which have come upon these countries. Besides, he broke his oath by coming to the terrace of my daughter’s castle, and carrying away her guest. We cannot overlook his offences a second time, nor can we accept any pledge from you and Abu Tawaif for his good behaviour. I will keep him in honourable confinement, and treat him other wise like a king. I will also keep the Blue Queen and her daughters in prison, for they pursued Ali with their armies almost to our own territories.”

Farkad then sought to persuade Turaia to return home with him; but she could not make up her mind to leave this beautiful country, for all travellers agree that the Island of the Smoking Mountain is the most delightful country in the world; and Solomon himself stayed here for a time when he was on his travels, and called it the Island of Paradise. Turaia therefore allowed her father to return with his prisoners and the greater part of the army, and promised to follow in a short time with Ali.

A few days afterwards, as Turaia, Ali, and Anan were walking together in the country, they suddenly saw something like a white cloud descending from the sky,

and encompassing them on all sides. As it approached, they perceived that it consisted of an army of more than two thousand white-winged genii, headed by the Blue Queen, King Tarad, the old woman, Firusad, and the enchantress, Diarda.

As soon as Firusad and Diarda heard that the Blue Queen was taken prisoner, they hastily assembled an army in the White City, and fell upon the rear guard of King Farkad's army by night, which consisted of only a few hundred soldiers who were guarding the prisoners. They slew the guard to a man, without any intelligence reaching Farkad, and then returned to the island of the Smoking Mountain and fell upon Turaia.

When Turaia saw herself thus surrounded with enemies, she fought like a lioness, and slew more than a hundred with her own hand; but at length she was enclosed by genii, like a finger by a ring, and was compelled to surrender. Anan, who attempted to defend her, was made prisoner, and carried off by his son, Tarad, while Ali was seized upon by Firusad, who carried him to the top of a high mountain, and said, "Lest you should cause dissension between the Blue Queen and her daughters, O destroyer of populous cities, assume a form which shall mislead no one." She then took a little earth, murmured something over it, and threw it in Ali's face, saying, "Quit this form, and assume that of a hideous raven, which wanders about the peaks of the mountains; and let no one pity thee till the day of resurrection." She had scarcely spoken, when Ali found himself transformed into a raven, as black as night, and he spread his wings and flew away.

When Queen Turaia was brought before the Blue Queen, the latter said to her, "Woe to you, impudent woman, to choose for your husband the handsomest youth in the world, and to lay waste whole kingdoms on his account! If I had yielded to my just resentment, you would have been slain on the spot; but you will not find it very pleasant in my capital!"

She then ordered some of the genii to bind Turaia and carry her to the White City, whither she would follow immediately. As soon as the Blue Queen reached home, she entered the bath, and seated her self on a golden divan in the greatest splendour, with her daughters and nobles around her, and ordered Queen Turaia to be brought before her in chains.

Turaia bent her head to the ground with shame, for this was the first reverse which she had ever experienced in her life; but then she stood up haughtily before the Blue Queen, and said, "Truly great monarchs are compassionate after war, and you cannot boast of your victory, for you attacked me suddenly with an overwhelming army. Your victory is neither due to your strength nor to my weakness; nevertheless, God has so ordained it, and no one can strive against His decrees. But, remember, that as soon as my father learns that I am a prisoner here, he will come upon you with an army which you will be unable to resist. If my hands and feet were only free from these chains, I myself would fight out my quarrel with you!"

When the Blue Queen heard this, she said to her daughters, "I think Turaia must have lost her reason, or she would not dare to speak to me in her present condition. Take her chains off; I am not afraid of her, and would like to see what she means to do."

Johara had scarcely unfastened her chains, when she stamped with her foot, and instantly wings appeared upon her, and she flew homewards through an open window. But the Blue Queen also assumed the form of a great bird, and followed her until she seized her feet, and cried out, "Woe to you, false woman, did you think it was so easy to escape me? I will now put you into a cage from which you will have no further desire to escape."

But Turaia instantly changed herself into an ant, fell to the ground, and crept into a hole. The Blue Queen immediately took the form of a cock with a large beak, and turned up the earth till she found the ant. But just as she was about to pick up the ant, it changed into a flash of fire, which burned the wings of the cock, and then rose into the air and fled away. The Blue Queen then called her daughters and friends, assembled her army again, and pursued Turaia until she overtook her.

Turaia was fighting with Firusad and Johara, when she suddenly saw herself surrounded by enemies, among whom was the Blue Queen, with cheeks as red as fire with delight, who exclaimed, "Woe to you, base woman, for your last hour has arrived!"

But Turaia cried out with a loud voice, "There is no strength nor power but in Almighty God!" and, behold, her father, King Farkad, came up with a great army to rescue her from the hands of her enemies; for after waiting some days in vain for the arrival of the troops who should have followed him with the prisoners, he returned, and found his troops slaughtered, and the prisoners escaped.

This made him tremble for his daughter's safety, and he returned with all speed to the Smoking Moun tain to protect her.

When Turaia saw her father she fell on his neck, and exclaimed, "Praise be to God that you have arrived; for if you had come a little later, I should no longer have been among the living!"

They then urged on their army to the battle, and the genii of the Blue Queen were speedily slain or taken prisoners. The queen herself was pursued by Turaia to her capital and slain, but her dominions were given to King Anan, for Turaia said, "I will only remain here till I have found Ali, and we will then return home together."

In the meantime, Ali was flying about in the shape of a raven, without knowing which way to turn, or where to obtain food and drink. After three days he was so exhausted that he fluttered wildly about among the trees and rocks, and at length fell senseless to the earth. Upon this, more than a thousand ravens assembled round him, who beat him with their wings, and pecked him, and pulled his feathers out, while he lay as helpless as a sparrow in the claws of an eagle. After thus torturing him to their heart's content, one of the ravens, thinking Ali

was dead, flung him into a fowler's net, and flew away. Ali thought he was now out of danger, and endeavoured to free himself from the net, but was unable, and when the fowler returned, he seized him by the legs, saying, "Here is a hideous raven, the friend of desolation and separation, who frightens the other birds away from my nets!" He then took a pair of shears from his pocket, cut his wings, tied his legs with a string, and carried him away. But he soon found that he had made a good catch, for Ali enticed many birds around them as they went along, which fell into the fowler's nets. When they arrived at an inn in the evening, he stroked Ali's feathers, saying, "You have been very useful to me, for I have caught more birds to-day than I ever caught before in a whole week."

On the following day, seeing that Ali was exhausted, the fowler took him on his camel, and as often as the camel stopped, Ali pecked him with his beak till he went on again. The fowler laughed very much, and said, "You are a very clever bird."

In the evening they arrived at the city of Nishran, where the fowler lived. It was a large city, surrounded with beautiful gardens. The king was named Rihan, and his three daughters were more skilled in magic than the angels, Harut and Marut.

When the fowler entered his house, his wife was astonished to see him come back so soon. However, he only said, "My speedy return is due to this raven, who has helped me to great success. Take good care of him, while I go to the bird-dealer's and sell what I have brought."

The fowler's wife brought Ali into a large room, and gave him food and water. He ate and drank, hopped about the room, and played with the woman and her daughters, until the return of the fowler, when Ali bowed to him, and remained standing respectfully before him. The fowler and his family soon became so fond of him that they would not go out without him. Ali's chief amusement in the streets was to tease the dogs. Sometimes he beat their faces with his wings, and sometimes he pecked them on the back, and when they barked and turned round to seize him, he jumped away. He teased the cats, too, till at last they all kept out of his way. He soon became the talk of the whole town, and many people visited the fowler to see him and play with him; and everybody brought him something good to eat. In the course of time, the king heard so much of his performances, that he sent one of his servants to ask the fowler to bring him to his castle. The fowler then took him under his arm, and carried him to the castle. Ali bowed three times before the king, as subjects are accustomed to do, and all the viziers and officers exclaimed, "By Allah! this is a wonderful bird!"

When the king stretched out his hand to Ali, Ali kissed it with his beak, but remained sitting respectfully at his feet till the king lifted him up on his lap, stroked his feathers, and ordered some sweetmeats to be brought, saying, "Now, clever bird, eat with me." Ali shook his head to imply that he was unworthy of such an honour, but the king said again, "Eat away, friendly raven." Ali then ate till he had had enough, when he wiped his beak on his feathers. The king was so

delighted that he bought the raven, wishing to keep it always near him.

One day the king went to his harem rather later than usual, and the queen asked why he had left her alone so long.

The king answered, "I have a raven which is the cleverest bird that I have ever seen, and he amused me so much to-day that I quite forget the time."

The queen replied, "Why don't you show me the bird? I have heard so much about him that I should like to see him very much; but I did not wish to ask you till you mentioned him yourself."

The king ordered a slave-girl to fetch Ali, and when she returned, he said to Ali, "Will you not amuse these ladies a little?" Ali then began to play all sorts of tricks, he kissed the cheek of one, pulled away the ribbons from the neck of another, shook the curls of a third, and danced on the knee of a fourth, till they could scarcely sit upright for laughing at his antics. The queen was so pleased that she sent a slave to call her daughters to see the fun. In a short time three beautiful and majestic maidens entered, and the eldest had no sooner caught sight of the raven than she said to the two others, "By Allah, this raven is an enchanted man!"

The maidens looked sharply into Ali's eyes, and answered, "You are right, dear sister; but this is a strange thing!" They then asked their mother to allow them to take Ali to their own room, and when she gave them permission, the eldest princess said, "Follow me, and I will show you something worth seeing, that ought not to be forgotten to the day of resurrection!" They led Ali to their old nurse, who was of the race of the Amalekites, and who had instructed them in magic, and said to her, "Venerable mother, we bring you a raven whom some evil-disposed person has enchanted; will you not try to help him?" The old woman asked them to light some candles, as her sight was failing, and it was already growing dusk. She then pulled out some of Ali's feathers, examined his skin, and cried out, "I recognise the work of old Firusad, who taught magic to the Blue Queen. There is no doubt that the queen loved him, and ordered him to be enchanted because he rejected her." She then took Ali into an adjacent room where she kept her magic apparatus, poured some yellow water out of a sealed flask into a copper basin, and murmured some unintelligible words over it, upon which it began to boil up and to foam. She then said "Stop!" and the water, which was about to over flow, sunk below the edge of the basin. She then set the basin on the ground, and a green plant with yellow flowers sprang up from the floor around it. She gathered a handful of the flowers, and rubbed Ali's feet and beak with it. She next sprinkled his head with the water from the basin, and uttered a fearful cry, upon which Ali recovered his shape, when the old woman asked him with a friendly smile what was his name, and whether he did not know the Blue Queen? Ali begged her to tell him if he was far from the Island of Musk. "What do you mean?" answered she; "you are now close to the regions of darkness, where lies the sea of the two-horned Alexander, and the Fountain of Life. I should advise you to stay here under my protection. I will introduce you to the king as my

nephew; and after my death, you may inherit my property, and travel where you please." Ali knew from bitter experience that he could do nothing against the will of an enchantress, and although he was most anxious to return to his wife, notwithstanding the distance, and the danger, he thanked the old woman for her kind offer, and consented to remain with her, secretly hoping that God would open a way of escape for him. He was not wrong in his decision, for she only observed, "If you had opposed my request, you might have fallen into a worse misfortune than before." She then led him into her own room, from which there was a pleasant view over the city and harbour, and ordered her servants to prepare a feast for him, and she herself brought him a bottle of wine, which restored his health and spirits. He then entered the bath, and put on the rich clothing provided for him, and when he returned to her afterwards, his appearance was so much improved that she hardly knew him again.

In the evening, the princesses came to see what had become of Ali. They admired him very much; one said that he was like one of the kings of the genii; and another that he was handsomer than Joseph. He was about to rise up when they entered, but the old woman would not allow it, and said, "A prince like you need not rise before any one. Ladies, this is Ali, the son of my friend Farha, the daughter of King Mutar. Remain here, and converse with him." The princesses sat down, and talked for some time, till the old woman said, "You had better go now, for your father would be angry if he knew that you had passed the whole evening in company with this stranger."

The princesses then retired, and Ali, feeling weary, asked permission to rest. He was shown to a comfortable room, where he soon fell asleep. He dreamed that Turaia appeared to him, as slender as a swaying willow, and with eyes like a young gazelle. Tears ran down her cheeks, like dewdrops on a rose; she tore her hair, and exclaimed in a broken voice, "Art thou like other men, Ali, and canst thou forget me so soon? Do not rejoice our enemies by allowing an old witch to keep you back from me. Thou knowest what I have suffered on thy account; break away from the obstacles which surround you, and strive to meet me again! "

Ali started up, and went back into the other room, where he saw the old woman asleep. He opened the door quietly, and escaped through an outer door into the city. He ran all night, heedless whither, and when morning dawned he found him self in a vast desert, where there was not a blade of grass nor a drop of water. The sun soon became so hot to his head, and the earth became so hot under his feet, that he was unable to go farther; and was obliged to lie down on the ground. He lay thus for the whole day, but when the sun set, a cool breeze sprang up, and Ali ran on again all night in the darkness. On the following morning, he saw before him a mountain so lofty that no bird could fly to its summit. Fruit-trees clothed its sides, and the most beautiful birds sang their morning song in the branches, and many brooks meandered round, or fell in cascades from vast precipices. Ali bathed in the waters of a brook which was whiter than milk, cooler than snow, and sweeter than honey, and sat down under

a lofty tree, with such thick foliage that the rays of the sun could not pierce through. Ali was so exhausted that he soon fell asleep, but the old woman appeared to him in a dream, with a drawn sword in her hand, and looking still more hideous than she was in reality. She raised the sword to kill him, when he started up in terror, and as he found it impossible to sleep again, he walked on, and began to climb the mountain, when he suddenly saw two hideous and gigantic forms before him. Their eyes were in the middle of their faces, and divided longitudinally, and they had projecting teeth like the tusks of an elephant.

Ali stood still, and heard one say to the other, "Misham, did you see the young man who was sleeping here just now? What can have become of him? I never saw any human creature on this mountain until to-day."

"Yes, Barari, I saw him," said Misham: "he is a young man as beautiful as the full moon, and whoever sees him, loves him."

"He is Ali, the son of Farha," observed Barari.

"If so," returned Misham, "I am at the end of my troubles, for know, my friend, that I am sent here by Queen Turaia to seek for Ali, and have sworn not to return without news of him. I have been wandering for a long time through all inhabited and desert countries, through towns and villages, and among mountains and valleys everywhere asking men and genii if they had seen him. At last I heard that the nurse of the princesses in the neighbouring city had restored a raven, who was an enchanted man, to his proper shape. I inquired at the castle after the stranger, but was informed that he had departed secretly, none knew whither. Let us hasten to find him lest he should escape us again."

Ali then cried out, "Stay where you are, for I am Ali, the son of Farha, whom you seek. Will you take me back to my loved one, Queen Turaia?"

"Not yet," replied Misham, "for this would impede my flight, and I must take news of you to the queen as quickly as possible, lest she should die of grief and anxiety. Stay here with my friend Barari. I will hasten to Turaia, and will soon return with her."

As he spoke, he spread his wings, and disappeared in an instant. When he was gone, Barari told Ali not to go far from the spot, and flew away too. In the evening he came back, bringing some provisions with him. On the following morning he again left Ali alone. Soon afterwards, one of the flying genii descended, took Ali on his back, and flew up into the air with him. Ali fainted with fear; and when he recovered, he found himself in a royal castle, where a lady was seated on a throne of gold and jewels; and attendants stood all around.

The lady said softly to a friend, "This youth is certainly not worth the furious wars which my sister Turaia wages with the kings of the genii on his account. Look how dull are his eyes, and how pale his cheeks, and how insignificant his whole appearance! If I had known that this was the famous Ali, I would never have troubled myself to bring him here; but as he is now in my power, he may aid in effecting a reconciliation between myself and my sister." She then said aloud to her attendants, "Which of you will fly quickest to my sister Turaia, who is still in

the White City with the daughters of the Blue Queen, and inform her that Ali, the son of Farha, is with me here?"

Upon this a hideous and gigantic genius named Humarik rose up and answered, "Great queen, I only await your orders to fly to her like the wind."

She immediately called for paper and ink, and wrote a letter to her sister, which she gave to Humarik, who kissed her hand, and set out on his journey.

But the queen soon repented that she had written to her sister, and sought an occasion to quarrel with Ali, that she might put him out of the way. She therefore entertained him royally for that day; and on the following morning, after Ali had performed his ablutions, and prayed, an attendant entered his room, who announced,–

"The queen wishes to speak with you, and is waiting for you outside the city."

Ali left the castle with his guide, and found a mule waiting. He rode out of the city, and presently found the queen sitting with an old woman on a Greek carpet, under the shade of a tree. She asked Ali to sit down, and gave him something to eat and drink which she had brought with her, and then said, "Come with me a little way, for the old woman will take care of everything for us."

The queen guided Ali to a green valley, where they heard nothing but rippling brooks, singing birds, and rustling branches.

"What a beautiful valley!" he exclaimed, "let us rest here awhile, great queen."

"If the valley pleases you so much, you need not leave it very soon," she replied, and when Ali dismounted, and sat down, she also got down from her mule, and sat near him. Then she turned to Ali, and exclaimed, "Are you not ashamed, Ali, to eat my food, and drink my wine, and yet to desire to leave my court immediately, to return to my sister?" She then struck him in the face, and breathed on him, saying, "Ali, son of Farha, become a marble statue, speechless and incapable of showing any signs of life!"

Ali fainted; and when he recovered his senses, he heard the old woman say, "Great queen, it rests entirely with you whether Ali shall remain a statue till the day of resurrection; but what will you say to your sister, Queen Turaia, when she comes?"

"What have I to fear from Queen Turaia?" answered she, haughtily. "Is not my army like the grains of sand in the desert, or as the raindrops that fall from heaven for multitude; and are not the most powerful kings of the genii in the island my allies?"

The old woman saw that her words made no impression, and only said, "You know better than I, mighty queen; do what you think right."

Then the queen ordered two of her servants to carry the statue to a part of the valley where the trees grew so thick that not a ray of light could pierce through the shade; and forbade them on pain of death to mention the affair to any one. "If Turaia asks after him," she said to the old woman, "we must say that he went out

alone against our wishes, and did not return.”

In the meantime Queen Turaia was on the point of starting with Misham to the place where he had left Ali, when Humarik arrived with the letter from Queen Shuba. She opened it hastily, and immediately asked the messenger if he had seen Ali with his own eyes? He swore solemnly that he had seen Ali himself at the court of Queen Shuba. She then gave him a friendly reception, and commanded her troops to prepare to accompany her to the neighbouring island where Queen Shuba reigned, as she wished to visit her sister. This amazed every one, as there had been bitter enmity between Turaia and Shuba from their earliest youth. They were their father’s only children, and each wished to be his favourite. Each of them, too, aspired to be most proficient in magic, in which they had been instructed by his orders. Their mutual jealousy at length resulted in a duel, in which Shuba was severely wounded, and carried senseless into the castle. Farkad, who had just returned from a journey, sent hastily for the best physicians, who scattered a powder over the wound, and administered wine. This revived Shuba; and after a few weeks she perfectly recovered. But the thought that every one knew that she had been defeated by the sister whom she hated, preyed so much upon her mind that she could neither endure to appear in public, or to remain at home. She therefore begged her tutor to seek for a distant island, where she and her adherents could found a new kingdom. The tutor immediately summoned the kings of the genii who were subject to him, and they traversed the whole world without finding any suitable uninhabited island, but one, which they called the Island of Perfection, from its fertility and its charming situation. When they brought this news to the tutor, he ordered them to prepare their troops for a journey, and he went to King Farkad, and said, “If the life of your daughter Shuba is dear to you, you must permit her to leave the country. You can perceive that her health and strength are gradually failing; she requires change of air, and I have already found a place of abode for her where, if God wills, she may recover her health.”

The king answered, “You know, revered Professor, that my daughter Shuba is my life and my soul, and that it would be very painful for me to part with her; yet I love her so well that I would rather hear that she was well and happy at a distance than see her sick and suffering. I will therefore put no difficulty in the way of her departure.”

He immediately sent for his treasurer, and gave the tutor as much money as he required; and he ordered the admiral to prepare the best ships for his daughter.

On the deck of the ship chosen for Shuba herself, he erected a tent of aloes wood, and spread the floor with rich carpets. When all was ready, he summoned the captain, and begged him to use every effort to secure his daughter a safe and comfortable voyage, and not to allow the sailors to make any unnecessary noise, lest they might disturb her. He then took leave of his daughter, and the ships set sail. The captain only spread the smaller sails as long as the ships were in sight

of the harbour, and the king was still looking after them; but after wards he spread the main-sail, and the wind was so favourable that they soon arrived safely at the Island of Perfection. Shuba was delighted with her tutor's choice, for she thought the island a real paradise. She then selected the most beautiful spot in the whole island for her castle, and her tutor designed the plan. A city soon sprang up around it, for the fertility of the island, and the abundance of precious stones which it contained, attracted emigrants from all parts of the world, and Shuba became a mighty queen, whose power continually increased, until she thought herself the equal of Turaia.

When Turaia arrived, she sought for Ali every where in the palace, but in vain, and she did not like to ask her sister about him. She passed a sleepless night, and when the great men of the empire and the captains of the army assembled to do her honour, she was so exhausted that she was scarcely able to reply to them. When she was again alone with Shuba, she asked her to take a walk; and as soon as they had left the city she said, "My dear sister, although this island is incomparably beautiful, and I would like much to stay longer with you, yet my own imperial duties forbid it, nor must I leave our father too long alone. I must therefore ask you where is Ali, the beloved of my heart, whose arrival at your court was announced to me by your messenger? I long to see him very much, and desire to return home with him."

"Dear sister," replied Shuba; "a few days after the departure of my messenger, Ali rode out, and has never returned. I have made inquiries about him throughout the whole island, but no one has discovered any trace of him. I was then sorry that I had despatched my messenger, but I could not call him back."

"Do not reproach yourself, dear sister," said Turaia; "it seems that Ali's troubles are not yet ended, or he would have remained here. Perhaps he has missed his way in the forest, and will soon return. I will wait here for him a few days longer."

On the following day Turaia rose. up early, and went into the mountains to search for Ali herself, but she rode about all day calling his name with out receiving any answer. In the evening she was quite exhausted, and fell on the ground, and cried, weeping, "O God, Thou hast decreed that Ali and I should suffer from this unhappy love, and that so many troubles should befall us. This has separated me from my home and my father; but I have no hope now. I seek Thy aid, for nothing in heaven or on earth is hidden from Thee. I implore Thee, for the sake of Thy messenger Mohammed (peace be with him!) to show me the place where my beloved Ali is concealed, and reunite us." As soon as she had finished her prayer, she heard a voice reply, "You will soon meet you husband again. Queen Shuba has changed him into a marble statue, which lies in this valley. When she sent for him first she thought to have effected a reconciliation with you through his means; but after she had written to you, she repented of what she had done, so she changed him into a statue, which she ordered to be thrown into the wood where the trees are most thickly interlaced."

Turaia then plunged deeper into the wood, where she heard two genii contending for the possession of her beloved. One was Sader, whom she herself had sent in search of Ali; and the other was Duha, a friend of Queen Farha.

Now Sader had searched the hills and valleys from east to west, for several weeks; and when he arrived at the Island of Perfection, he had lost all hope of finding Ali, and was about to return to Turaia, when he saw Duha, who appeared very much agitated, looking all about her, and running first one way and then another, and she was so much heated that fire flew from her nose.

Sader stopped her, and asked her who she was, and where she was going?

She answered, "I am Duha, the daughter of a great king who lives near the Coral Island. I left my father because he wished to marry me against my will to an ugly prince from the Island of Lions, and I fled to Queen Farha. I found her in great trouble, and when I asked her the reason, she said, 'I am grieving for the loss of my only son. I do not know if he is alive or dead, and I dare not inquire after him, because my father swore when he heard of his flight that he would cease to acknowledge me as his daughter if I ever mentioned my son's name again. I have mourned for him in secret for a whole year, and dare not speak of my grief to any one, for every one here fears my father, and would probably betray me to him. The Lord be praised who sent you here, for I feel sure that you will take pity on me, and bring me news of my son!' She then wept bitterly, and fainted, and I pitied her so much that, as soon as she recovered, I promised her that I would set out immediately in search of Ali, and would not return until I brought him back, or brought news of him. I flew from one island to another till I arrived in this island, where I heard that Ali had been changed into a statue by Queen Shuba. I searched the whole forest in hopes of finding the statue, in order to take it back to Queen Farha, who could easily restore her son to his former shape, but two genii, whom I take to be the guards of the statue, rushed upon me in such a threatening manner that I was obliged to take to flight, and I am still in terror lest they should overtake me."

When Duha had ended her story, Sader observed, "By Allah, our meeting here is a wonderful coincidence! We are both seeking the same object; for Queen Farha is lamenting the loss of her son; and Queen Turaia, who is mourning for the loss of her husband, has sent me in search of him. As we are engaged in the same quest, we had better remain together, for we may be useful to each other; and when we have once found Ali, we can set the minds of both queens at rest."

"We may attain our end at once by an easy stratagem," said Duha; "bind me with cords, and lead me back to the two genii who are pursuing me. Then greet them in a friendly manner, and say, 'Brothers, here is the fugitive who has just escaped you. She seems to have some evil design, for she tried to avoid me also, and refused to answer my questions; but I struck her in the face with my wings, and felled her to the ground, and now I bring her back to you, to be dealt with as she deserves.' Thus you will gain their confidence, and it will be easy for you, if needful, to protect me from any excessive punishment."

Sader admired the trick, and immediately threw a rope round the neck of Duha, and led her to the hill where the two genii were standing. As soon as he saw them, he cried out, "Dear brothers, I bring you here the suspicious character who has just fled from you. She wished to avoid me, and refused to tell me who she was, so I knocked her down, and bound her fast"

"We had ceased to concern ourselves about her," said one of the genii; "but as you have taken the trouble to bring her back, she shall be punished as she deserves; come with us to the caravansera."

Sader followed them, leading Duha by the rope, until they reached a very magnificent castle, with innumerable apartments; it lay between two high mountains. When they arrived, the two genii ordered food and wine, and ate and drank with Sader. In the course of their conversation, Sader ascertained that they had really been stationed there by Shuba to prevent any one from approaching the statue. This gave him an opportunity to ask to accompany them next day. Duha was still bound, but she presently began to weep, and knelt down before the two genii, saying, "If you wish well to Shuba, you must not treat me as an enemy, for I am one of her friends whom she desired to send to her father that he might protect her against Turaia, if she heard of what she had done to Ali; but if you will send another messenger, I would gladly stay with you, and serve you."

The genii, who were now in a good humour, believed Duha's story, took the cord from her neck, and allowed her to accompany them to the wood next day. When they sat down near the statue, Sader said, "What can the poor fellow have done, that Queen Shuba should have changed him into a stone, which still feels heat and cold and hunger and thirst but is incapable of movement?"

"I don't know his offence," answered one of the guards; "perhaps he forgot his station, and made love to the queen."

"That is absurd," said Duha, "for Ali loves Queen Turaia, and has suffered the greatest dangers on her account; it is more likely that Shuba was jealous of Queen Turaia, for Ali is said to be the handsomest man in the world."

"If so," said the guard, who was himself in love with Shuba, "Shuba may keep watch on him herself, if she likes," and he and his companion walked off.

Sader immediately went to the statue, took it on his back, and was about to carry it to Turaia to disenchant, but Duha interposed, saying, "Not so; I must bring him to his mother Farha, for Ali was rescued by my artifice. Besides, the sorrow of an unhappy mother for a lost son is more bitter than that of a wife for her husband."

"I think you must have lost your senses," answered Sader; "do you suppose that after I have sought for Ali so long through all countries, I am going to give him up to you, when I have found him? Come with me to Turaia, and afterwards we will all visit his mother Farha together."

But when Duha saw that Sader would not yield, she rushed upon him like lightning, struck him a blow in the eye with her wing, which knocked him down, and exclaimed, "Woe to you, you dog; I will teach you not to behave like this to a

lady!"

She snatched the statue out of his hand, and was about to fly to Queen Farha, when Turaia arrived on the scene, and cried out, "Halt there, or die!"

Duha turned round, and seeing Queen Turaia, answered, "Pardon, gracious queen! By the seal of Solomon, I would have done Ali no harm, but only wished to fulfil my oath by taking him to his mother Farha. Forgive me, and remember that I have only done my duty as the servant and friend of Queen Farha."

"You have done your duty," said Turaia, "but now give Sader the statue, that he may carry it to some place where we may be safe from interruption; and you may either go at once to take Queen Farha news of her son; or you may come with me, until Ali is restored to his former shape."

"Mighty queen," said Duha, "I will send a messenger to my mistress immediately; but I myself will remain with you for the present."

They then went to a cavern, whither Sader had already carried the statue. Turaia stroked her hand over its face, took a little earth which was sticking to it, pronounced some sacred names, and scattered the soil on the ground; whereupon a green plant with a red flower sprang up immediately. Turaia gathered the flower, and squeezed an oily juice from it, which she rubbed over the statue, and said, "By the power of these holy names, and the influence of this wonderful plant, return to your former shape!"

Upon this, Ali's tongue was loosed, and he cried out, "There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet! God is Almighty, and He raises the dead again by His will!"

When Turaia saw that her husband had regained his proper form, she ordered Sader to carry him to her apartments, whither she and Duha followed. They spent the greater part of the night in feasting and rejoicing, and in relating their mutual adventures; and it was long past midnight when Sader and Duha withdrew, and they retired to rest. But when Ali awoke, he found himself between heaven and earth on the shoulders of one of the flying genii. He immediately pronounced the sentence which protects all who use it: "There is no strength nor power but in Almighty God!" and then asked his bearer, "Who are you, and whither are you carrying me?"

She answered, "Fear nothing, I am Duha, the friend of your mother Farha, to whom I am carrying you. I only followed Queen Turaia from policy, that I might seize the first favourable opportunity of stealing you from her again; for your mother suffers too much from your absence. But as soon as we are in safety, I will send a messenger to Queen Turaia, to ask her to follow us."

When Ali recognised Duha, he was satisfied, and allowed her to proceed on her journey without opposition. He was already rejoicing in the idea of soon seeing his mother again, and at the approaching end of all his troubles, when they came to the Island of Lions, above which they were obliged to pass. Suddenly a host of flying genii, with King Jahak at their head, surrounded them as closely as a ring surrounds a finger.

“We are lost!” exclaimed Duha, “for this is the prince to whom I was betrothed, and from whom I fled to your mother. We are alone and unarmed, and cannot escape him. May God take pity on us and on your mother!”

She had scarcely spoken when two genii, as large as the highest mountains, rushed upon her, and bound her hands behind her back with a heavy chain. Then they seized on Ali, and asked, “Who are you?”

“I am Ali, the son of Farha,” he answered.

“If you are Ali,” said they, “it is on your account that so many countries have been devastated, so many kings dethroned, and so many genii slain! By the seal of Solomon, you shall pay dearly for the mischief which you have wrought!”

A genius from Mount Kaf, at a nod from King Jahak, was already on the point of putting Ali and Duha to death, when suddenly a terrific tumult arose. Two officers rushed forward to reconnoitre, and then exclaimed to the king, “Fly this instant, or you are lost; your best troops are already slain or made prisoners, for Queen Farha has fallen upon them as suddenly as the lightning from heaven, to rescue her son!”

But before Jahak could resolve on anything, Farha herself appeared, surrounded by numerous kings of the genii. Jahak was led into his capital, loaded with the same chains with which Duha had been bound, and Farha carried her son thither in her own arms.

The unexpected arrival of Farha happened in the following manner. When Duha’s messenger informed her that Ali was with Queen Turaia, she feared that he would be so strongly guarded that Duha would have no opportunity of carrying him away. So without informing her father, she set out on the road to the Island of Perfection with an escort of several thousand genii; and she came near the Island of Lions just at the time that Jahak and his followers had seized Ali and Duha.

When they arrived at King Jahak’s palace, Queen Farha made Ali sit by her side in full court, and relate all his adventures. But before he had finished, Duha entered, and announced the arrival of Queen Turaia, with an army of genii. When Turaia awoke in the morning, and missed Ali, she thought at first that her sister Shuba had played her another trick; but when she found that Duha had also disappeared, she concluded that she had carried Ali away to his mother. Apart from this, she found her stay with her sister was disagreeable, so she summoned her followers who had escorted her, and commanded them to accompany her to the Coral Island. When she heard that Farha had rescued Ali and Duha from King Jahak, she followed to Jahak’s palace, and announced her arrival. Farha sent Ali to welcome Turaia, and he rushed out to meet her, and introduced her to his mother as his wife. They all praised God for this wonderful meeting; and they rewarded Duha for her faithful service by presenting her with the throne of King Jahak.

They remained together all day, but towards evening, Ali, who wished to be alone with Turaia, asked her to walk with him a short distance from the town;

leaving Farha and Duha behind. They were so happy together that they wandered a great distance through the gardens surrounding the town, and the moon had long been shining in the heavens before they thought of returning. In endeavouring to return to the town in the darkness, they lost their way, and wandered about till they saw a magnificent tent pitched, but no one near. Ali then said,–

“Let us pass the night in this tent rather than in the open air, for we shall not easily find our way back to the town in this darkness.”

Turaia agreed, and they entered the tent, which they found beautifully furnished with carpets and divans. It was illuminated with perfumed wax-lights, and the tables were loaded with delicate food and choice wines; in short, everything was fitted to rejoice the heart of a weary traveller. But they had scarcely sat down when two men entered; accompanied by four flying genii. They were Jahak’s brothers, who had fled from the town after the defeat in the morning, and had pitched their tent here, intending to fly farther on the following day. As soon as they recognised Turaia and Ali, they laid hands upon them, exclaiming, “Now we can avenge our brother.” Ali was handed over to one of the genii, with the words, “This fellow brings ruin and desolation wherever he goes. Carry him beyond Mount Kaf, that the curse of God may fall upon him!”

The genius took Ali on his back, and flew with him so high that the smallest stars seemed like great mountains, and he heard the angels singing the praises of God in heaven. Upon this, he cried out, “There is but one God, and Mohammed is His prophet!” He had scarcely spoken when a fiery arrow struck the genius, and reduced him to ashes. Ali was driven about in the air by the winds for a long time, but at length he fell on the terrace of a house in Damascus. The noise of his fall awakened the master of the house, and as his premises had lately been broken into, he roused his servants, who accompanied him to the terrace. When they saw Ali, they supposed him to be a thief, so two on each side rushed upon him at once, and they bound him with cords, and left him in the courtyard till morning.

“We have certainly caught the thief who robbed me the other day,” said the master. The police sergeant asked Ali who he was, and when he answered that he was Ali, the son of Farha, the Queen of the Coral Island, he laughed, and ordered him to be beaten until he should confess his real name, and should restore the property which he had stolen. But at this moment Zaher himself entered, and recognising the seal ring which he had given to Farha on his wedding night, he started, and inquired, “Who is this young man?”

“He is a thief,” answered the police sergeant, “who was seized in the act of breaking into this man’s house.”

“But the young man does not look like a thief,” persisted Zaher; “have you asked him his name, and residence?”

“He calls himself Ali, the son of Farha, the Queen of the Coral Island,” said the sergeant, laughing. At this, Zaher fell on Ali’s neck, exclaiming, “He has spoken truth, and he is my son; I know him by his seal ring.” Zaher then asked

Ali to inform the police how he came upon the terrace. He narrated the history of his life; and Zaher reproached the sergeant for his hasty sentence, and took Ali to his own house.

On the following day, Zaher introduced his son to the king, who took such a fancy to him that he immediately offered him an important post. Shortly afterwards, Ali was out riding with the king and talking about the genii, when the king said, "I should like to see them very much; what are they like?"

"My lord," replied Ali, "they are of different forms; some are like wild beasts, others like birds, and others again like men."

Ali had scarcely spoken when the king exclaimed,—

"Look, Ali, what a dark cloud has suddenly appeared in the distance, and the sun is already hidden behind it!"

Ali looked, and replied, "That is no cloud, great king, but an army of the flying genii which is approaching!"

Presently the army separated, and surrounded the city, and a company of about a hundred approached the gate. Ali went up to the leader, and asked him what he wanted in Damascus? He answered,—

"I desire to announce the arrival of Queen Farha and Queen Turaia to the king."

"Here is the king," said Ali, and he then asked permission to go to meet the queens.

The king consented, and rode back alone to the city, when Ali was conducted to the queens. They both fainted with joy, when they saw him again, and after he had revived them by sprinkling them with rose-water, he asked how they had come to Damascus to search for him.

"Know," replied Farha, "that when you and Turaia remained out so late at night on the Island of Lions, I asked Duha to take some powerful genii, and go to look for you in the direction in which you had gone. She flew about in the gardens for a long time, till at last a pitiful cry guided her to a handsome tent where Jahak's brothers were beating Turaia. Duha immediately overthrew the brothers, and her companions bound them fast, and brought them to me. I then heard that they had ordered you to be carried beyond Mount Kaf. I had little hope of ever seeing you again, but I begged the faithful Duha to follow you at once, in case she might possibly overtake you before you reached your destined place of imprisonment. She obeyed, and flew with all her speed in the direction of Mount Kaf. As she was passing over Syria, she met an old friend who asked her what brought her so far from home?"

"I am pursuing a genius," replied Duha, "who is carrying Ali, the son of Farha, beyond Mount Kaf."

"If that is your quest," said her friend, "you need not go farther, for a genius who was carrying a man has just been burned by a fiery arrow, and the man fell into Damascus. Go and inquire after him there, for it is probably this Ali of whom you are in search."

“Duha immediately went to Damascus in a human form, and passed by a coffee-house, where she heard the people talking of the arrival of the son of Zaher from the Coral Island. She immediately returned to us with the joyful news, and we resolved to follow you here.”

Ali then related to his mother how the wonderful arrival of his father had rescued him from the beating, under which he would certainly have died. After this, they went to the king, who had already informed Zaher of the arrival of his wife, and had invited him to his palace. Zaher burst into tears, when he saw Farha again, and lamented that they had been separated so long; but she reproached him bitterly for never making any attempt to return to her. The king gave them all a magnificent reception, and sympathised heartily in their happiness. He succeeded in reconciling Farha to her husband, and she consented to remain three days at Damascus, but was unwilling to stay longer, on account of her father’s anxiety. But Turaia determined to stay permanently, and contented herself with sending a messenger to King Farkad to inform him of her intention. She lived with Ali in the greatest happiness, until death took her from him.

When Ali related this story to the Caliph Ab-delmelik, the son of Merwan, the Caliph asked if Turaia had left him any family; upon which he introduced his two sons to the court. The Caliph gave each of them a costly robe; and to Ali he gave a robe of honour, and an important office, and sent for him to tell him stories whenever he felt dull.

This is all which has been related to us concerning the history of Zaher, of Damascus, and his son Ali. Praise be to the only God, and honour to our Lord, His apostle Mohammed, with his relations and companions, until the Day of Judgment!



[Previous](#) 

[Home](#)

 [Next](#)