

THE STORY OF MAZIN OF KHORASSAN

In ancient times there resided in the city of Khorassan a youth named Mazin, who was brought up by his mother, a poor widow, to the humble occupation of a dyer. He was so handsome and accomplished that crowds flocked to his shop daily to enjoy the pleasure of his conversation; but he was a steady, virtuous youth, unspoiled by flattery, and he continued his laborious occupation with unceasing industry, and supported himself and his mother with the fruits of his labours. His taste was so correct in the choice of colours that veils, turbans, and vests of Mazin's dyeing were sought after by all the young and gay of Khorassan, and many of his female customers shot a wistful glance at him from behind their veils as they gave him their orders. But it was not his fate always to remain a dyer, for he was destined for higher fortunes and surprising adventures.

One day Mazin was busy at his work as usual, when a foreigner came into his shop, and after looking at him earnestly for a short time, exclaimed,

"Alas, that such a noble youth should be forced to labour at so mean an employment!"

"I thank you, father, for your compassion," replied Mazin, "but honest industry can never be disgraceful."

"True," said the old man; "but if God should offer us affluence and distinction, should we refuse prosperity?"

"By no means," returned Mazin; and presently he added, "If you can show me how I may become prosperous without forfeiting my integrity, I am not so fond of my trade that I would not prefer to live at ease in an honest manner without it; for I would like to enjoy leisure to pursue my studies, which have already brought me some little celebrity."

"Son," said the stranger, "your wishes shall be fulfilled. You have no father, but I will adopt you as my son, and teach you the art of transmuting common metals into gold. Farewell till to-morrow, when I will meet you at your shop early in the morning," and having said this, the old man took his leave.

Mazin's curiosity and ambition were roused. He closed his shop earlier than usual and hastened to his mother to inform her of the attractive offers of the old man. She reflected awhile on the story, and then said, "My son, I fear lest some evil lurks under this kindness, for we live in evil days when men promise more than they intend to perform in order to gain some wicked object. Be cautious, and do not accept his offers until he has given proof of his sincerity. We have all we need at present, and what more would riches give us?"

Mazin saw the propriety of his mother's advice, and promised to be wary. They ate their supper cheerfully, and retired to rest; but the young man could sleep but little, and waited with impatience for the morning, when he was to learn the art of transmuting metals into gold.

When morning came, Mazin hastened impatiently to the shop, and the old man arrived shortly afterwards, bearing a crucible in his hands.

“Welcome, son!” and “Welcome, father!” was their mutual salutation, after which the old man told Mazin to kindle a fire; and then asked him if he had any old metal, iron, brass, copper, etc. Mazin produced some pieces of an old copper pot, which were put into the crucible. As soon as they were melted, the old man, whose name was Bahram, took from his turban a paper containing a yellowish powder, which he threw into the crucible, over which he repeated some cabalistic words as he stirred the melting metal. At length he took it from the fire, when Mazin was astonished to see a large lump of pure gold. Bahram told him to take it to a goldsmith, who paid him a large sum for it, with which he returned to his adopted father.

“Well my son,” said Bahram, “are you now convinced of my skill, and of my sincerity in offering to promote your fortunes?”

“I am,” said Mazin, “and am ready to go with you anywhere, in order to learn this invaluable secret.”

“Good,” returned the old man, “I will sup with you this evening, and when we are quite alone I will give you all necessary instructions.”

Mazin was overjoyed, and immediately closed his shop, and took the stranger to his own house, where he seated him in the best apartment. He then asked his mother to go to spend the night at a neighbour’s, and showed her the money which he had obtained for the broken copper, as a proof of the sincerity of his new friend. His mother was satisfied, and taking leave of her son, went cheerfully to a friend’s house. Mazin then went out, and returned with all kinds of refreshment, nor was wine forgotten, though forbidden to the faithful. They ate and drank heartily, and at length Mazin, who had not been used to drink wine, became intoxicated. As soon as the wily magician perceived this, he threw a powerful drug into the goblet of Mazin, who no sooner drank, it off than he fell back insensible on his cushion. The magician pushed him into a large chest which he locked; after which he filled another chest with everything in the house which was worth having, including the gold. He then fetched in porters, and made them take up the chests, and follow him to the harbour, where a vessel waited his orders, in which he embarked with the unfortunate Mazin and his plunder. The anchor was weighed, and the wind being fair, the ship was soon out of sight of land.

When Mazin’s mother returned to her house early in the morning, she found the door open, her son missing, and the rooms ransacked of all her valuables. She gave a loud shriek, tore her hair, beat her bosom, and threw herself on the ground, crying out for her son, whom she supposed to have been murdered by the treacherous magician, against whose professions she had warned him to be cautious, until the sight of gold had allayed both her own suspicions and those of her son. Some neighbours hearing her cries rushed in, lifted her from the ground, and inquired the cause of her grief. When they had heard the story, they

tried to comfort her by every means in their power; but they were unable to soothe her grief. She commanded a tombstone to be erected in the courtyard, where she sat night and day veiling her son, and scarcely taking sufficient food to preserve her miserable existence.

The infidel Bahram, who was a wicked magician, and a worshipper of fire, hated the true believers, one of whom he inveigled into his power every year by promising to teach him the art of transmuting metals into gold. He first made him subservient to his purposes in procuring the ingredients necessary for his art, and then treacherously put him to death, lest the secret should be divulged. This was now his intention towards the unfortunate Mazin.

On the evening of the second day after the sailing of the vessel, Bahram thought proper to awaken his victim to a sense of his misery. He opened the chest, which had been placed in his cabin, and poured a certain liquid down the throat of Mazin, who instantly sneezed several times and then opened his eyes, and stared wildly around him. At length seeing the magician, observing the sea, and feeling the motion of the ship, he became aware of the misfortune which had befallen him, and he perceived that he had fallen into the snares of the treacherous Bahrain, against whom his mother had warned him in vain. Still, being a devout Muslim, he would not complain against the decrees of Providence, but repeated the following prayer: "There is no support nor refuge but from Almighty God, from whom we proceed, and unto whom we must return. Deal gently with me, O my God, in the dictates of Thy omnipotence, and make me resigned under Thy chastening, O Lord of all being."

Having finished his prayer, Mazin turned humbly towards his accursed betrayer, and said in a supplicating tone: "What have you done, my father? Did you not promise me pleasure and enjoyment?"

Upon this, the magician struck him, and exclaimed with a scowling and malignant sneer: "O dog, and son of a dog, my pleasure is in your destruction. I have already sacrificed nine-and-thirty wretches like yourself, and you shall be the fortieth victim unless you will abjure your faith, and become, like me, a worshipper of the sacred fire, in which case I will adopt you as my son, and teach you the art of making gold."

"Accursed be thou, thy religion, and thy art!" exclaimed the enraged Mazin. "God forbid that for the pleasures of this world I should apostatise from our holy prophet, and give up the glorious rewards reserved in certain store for his faithful disciples! You may indeed destroy my body but my soul despises your threats."

"Vile dog," roared the furious sorcerer, "I will try your constancy." He then called his slaves, who held Mazin to the floor of the cabin while their master beat him with a knotted whip till he was covered with blood; but the resolute youth, instead of complaining, only uttered prayers to heaven for Divine support under his sufferings, and for sufficient fortitude to acquire the glory of martyrdom. At length the magician, wearied with his cruel exercise, desisted; and making his slaves load his unfortunate victim with heavy fetters, chained him down in a dark

closet, with only a coarse mat to lie upon, and with just sufficient dirty water and coarse bread to keep him alive. But Mazin's courage was invincible. He washed his wounds, and comforted himself with the hope that if he died, he should enjoy the bliss of Paradise; or that if God had decreed his continuance in life, that He would provide some way of relief for his present and future afflictions. In this assurance he took a little of his wretched food and then fell asleep, notwithstanding the agony of his wounds; but only to awaken to fresh misery. In the morning he was again persecuted by his cruel tormentor, who harassed him daily for three months, with blows, revilings, and every sort of insult that malice could invent, or cruelty devise.

Hitherto the wind had been fair, and the vessel had nearly reached the desired haven, when it changed suddenly, and a terrific storm arose. The waves threatened to swallow up the vessel, or dash it to pieces, and all on board gave themselves up for lost. At this crisis, the sailors who believed that the tempest was sent by heaven as a judgment for their suffering the unfortunate Mazin to be so cruelly tormented, went in a body to the accursed Bahram, and accused him of having brought down the wrath of God upon the vessel by his persecution of the young Muslim; and they threatened to cast him overboard if he did not instantly release the youth from his confinement. They then seized upon the slaves who had been the instruments of the magician's cruelty, and flung them into the sea, which so terrified the treacherous Bahram that he immediately released Mazin from his chains, and fell at his feet, entreating him to pardon him for his harsh treatment, and promising if they escaped the storm to take him back to his own country, and to teach him the art of making gold. Wonderful to relate, no sooner was Mazin freed from his fetters than the violence of the tempest decreased, the wind gradually subsided, the waves fell, and the sea no longer threatened to overwhelm them. In a few hours all was calm and security, and a prosperous gale enabled the shattered vessel to resume her course.

The sailors, who now regarded Mazin as a special favourite of heaven, treated him with the greatest respect and attention; and the hypocritical magician, pretending sorrow for his late cruelty, sought to procure his forgiveness and good opinion by every art of flattery, and affected contrition, which had such an effect on the ingenuous youth, that he forgot his treachery, and again believed in his promises and assurances that the torments he had undergone had only been inflicted as trials of his constancy and belief in the true religion, and that this probation was necessary before the great art of transmuting metals could be safely entrusted to his keeping.

The remainder of the voyage was prosperous and happy, and after another three months, the vessel anchored on the wished-for coast, which was rocky and the beach was strewn with pebbles of every colour. The magician gave orders to the captain to wait a month for their return, and he and Mazin disembarked, and proceeded together into the country. As soon as they were out of sight of the ship, the magician sat down, and taking a small drum from his vestband, began to beat

upon it with two sticks, when instantly a whirlwind arose, and a thick column of dust rolled towards them from the desert. Mazin was alarmed, and regretted that he had left the vessel; but the magician, seeing his colour change, assured him that he need be under no apprehensions, and that he had only to obey his orders to be happy. He had scarcely spoken, when the wind ceased, the dust dispersed, and three camels stood before them, one of which was loaded with water and provisions, and the others were bridled and richly caparisoned. Bahram and Mazin then mounted, and travelled for seven days and nights across a wild and sandy desert, only halting for necessary refreshments and repose.

On the eighth morning they reached a beautiful and fertile tract, delightfully watered by clear streams. The ground was verdant with grass, and shaded by spreading trees laden with fruit. Birds warbled melodiously in the branches, and antelopes and other animals sported in the shade. At the end of a thick avenue stood a capacious dome of blue and green enamel, resting upon four columns of solid gold, each pillar exceeding in value the treasures of the sovereigns of Persia and Greece. They approached the dome, stopped the camels, and dismounted, and turned the animals to graze. This splendid building was surrounded by a delightful garden, in which Mazin and the magician rested all that day and night. At some distance from this enchanting spot appeared a stupendous fabric. Its numerous turrets and lofty pinnacles glittered in the sun, and Mazin, perceiving that it must be a palace of uncommon magnificence, asked his companion to whom this superb edifice might belong. But the magician rather abruptly told him to ask no questions at present; for the palace belonged to his bitterest enemies, who were evil genii; and that he would give him their history at a more convenient opportunity. Mazin said nothing; but he began to suspect some new treachery, from the magician's manner.

In the morning Bahram beat his magic drum, and the three camels appeared. He and Mazin then remounted, and pursued their journey in the same manner as before, for seven days; and their speed more resembled the flight of birds than the ordinary rate of travel. On the eighth morning, the magician inquired of Mazin whether he saw any thing unusual on the horizon.

"I behold," said he, "an appearance like a range of black clouds extending from east to west." "They are not clouds," replied Bahram, "but lofty mountains, called the Mountains of the Clouds, from their appearance at a distance. On their summit lies the object of our journey, which we shall soon obtain if you will give me your aid, and then we shall return to the ship richer than all the sovereigns of the world. But you must be sure to obey me in whatever I may command."

Mazin promised to do so, but his heart sank within him when he looked upon the gloomy region before him, and remembered the magician's boast of having sacrificed thirty-nine youthful victims on these mountains, and his threat on board the ship to make him the fortieth. He repented that he had ventured to leave the vessel with Bahram; but it was now too late to recede. He resigned himself to the decrees of God, who had already relieved his sufferings during the

voyage, and concealed his uneasiness as well as he could from the crafty magician, who on his part endeavoured to soothe and flatter him with artful promises and caresses.

They pursued their journey for four days longer, when they arrived at the foot of the black mountains, which formed a wall of inaccessible precipices, as perpendicular as if they had been scarped by art; and their tremendous height cast a dark and gloomy shade to a vast distance. They now dismounted, and turned the camels to graze, when the magician took from his wallet three loaves and a skin of water. He then lit a fire, and beat his drum; and when the camels appeared, he chose the smallest, which he killed, and carefully flayed, washing the inside of the skin with water. When this was done, he said to Mazin, "My son, it now rests with you to crown our labours with success. Enter this skin, taking with you the three loaves, and the skin of water for your sustenance while you remain on the mountain; and fear nothing, for no harm can happen to you. I will sew up the skin, leaving room for the admission of the air; and presently a roc will descend, and carry you in her talons to the level ground on the summit of the mountain. As soon as she alights, rip open the stitches of the skin with your dagger, and the roc will be scared away. Then arise, and gather as much as possible of a black dust which you will find thickly strewed on the ground. Put it into this bag, and throw it down to me, after which I will contrive an easy means for your descent. When you have rejoined me, we will return to the vessel, and I will convey you safely back to your own country. We will share the dust between us, for it has the property of transmuting metals into gold; and we shall each have enough to rival all the treasures on earth."

Mazin finding it in vain to oppose, allowed himself to be sewed up in the skin, recommending himself in prayer to the protection of Allah and the Prophet. When the magician had finished his work, he withdrew to a distance. Presently a monstrous roc, darting from a craggy precipice with the rapidity of lightning, grasped the skin in her vast talons, and soaring swifter than the eagle, soon alighted on the summit of the mountain. When Mazin felt himself on the ground, he ripped open the skin, and when the roc saw him, she uttered a loud cry, and flew away. Mazin arose, and walked upon the summit of the mountain, which he found covered with black dust; but he also beheld the skeletons of the young men whom the accursed Bahram had left to perish, after they had served his purpose. His blood froze with horror as he apprehended the same unhappy fate; but he filled his bag with the black powder, and advanced to the edge of a precipice, from which he beheld the magician eagerly looking out for him below. Mazin called out, and when the hypocrite saw him, he began dancing and capering for joy, and exclaimed, "Welcome, welcome, my son, my best friend, my beloved child! All our dangers are over, throw me down the bag."

"I will not," replied Mazin, "until you have conveyed me safely from this dangerous place."

"That is out of my power," said Bahram, "until I have the bag; but if you will

throw it down, I swear by the fire which I worship, that I will immediately procure you a safe descent."

Mazin relied on his oath, and as he saw no other chance of escape, he threw down the bag. The accursed magician immediately seized it, and mounted his camel, when the unfortunate Mazin cried out, "Surely you will not forfeit your oath, and leave me here to perish."

"Perish you must, Muslim dog," replied the magician, "that my secret may be kept. Your Prophet cannot help you, for the mountains around are impassable, and below is a fathomless sea. I have obtained my object, and now leave you to your fate." Having said this, he urged his camel on, and was soon out of sight.

Mazin was in an agony of despair, and not a ray of hope comforted his mind. He beat his bosom, and threw himself on the ground amid the mouldering skeletons of the former victims to the treachery of the magician, and lay for a time in a state of insensibility. At length he was aroused by the calls of hunger and thirst, and the love of life, however miserable, made him have recourse to his bread and water. This revived him a little, when his religion came to his aid, and he began to pray for resignation to submit to the decrees of Heaven, however painful. He then walked to the edge of the mountain over hanging the sea, which he perceived to wash the base of the rock without any beach. At this sight, a desperate chance of escape struck his mind, and he resolved to throw himself from the precipice into the ocean, hoping that if he should survive the fall, and rise to the surface, he might reach land. He commended himself to God, shut his eyes, held in his breath, and giving a desperate spring, plunged head long into the dreadful abyss, which providentially received him unhurt, and a friendly wave drove him on shore, where he lay for some minutes insensible, owing to the rapidity of his descent from the brain-sickening precipice.

When he recovered his senses, Mazin looked wildly around him, and was at first scarcely able to bear the light from the recollection of the dizzy eminence from which he had plunged; and an uneasy interval elapsed before he could persuade himself that the certainty of death was past. When he was at length convinced of this, he prostrated himself on the earth, and exclaimed, "In God alone is our refuge and support! I thought I should have perished, but His providence has sustained me." He then wept exceedingly, entreated forgiveness of his offences, read several passages from the Koran, which he had preserved in his vestband, repeated the whole of his rosary, and besought the intercession of the Prophet for his deliverance from future dangers. After this, he walked on till evening; eating the fruit of the forest, drinking the waters of the streams, and resting on the green turf. He proceeded thus for three days, when he reached the spot under the mountains where the roc had taken him up in the camel's skin. He now recognised the road he had come, and after measuring back his steps for nine days, he at length came in sight of the superb palace, concerning which the magician had told him that it was inhabited by evil genii, his bitterest enemies.

Mazin hesitated for some time whether he should approach it or not; but he

reflected that no greater calamity could happen to him than he had already fared, and despising the imaginary danger, he advanced boldly to a grand lodge built of white marble exquisitely polished. He entered, and on one of the raised platforms which skirted the passage into the court he beheld two beautiful maidens playing at chess. One of them caught sight of him and exclaimed: "Surely, sister, this is the young man who passed this way about a month ago with Bahram the magician!"

"I am he," cried Mazin, throwing himself on the ground, "and entreat your hospitable protection."

The lady raised him up saying: "Stranger, you so much resemble a beloved brother whom we have lost, that I feel moved to adopt you as my brother if my sister will consent to do so also." The other lady readily assented, and they seated Mazin between them and made him give them a full account of his adventures.

When Mazin had finished his story the ladies were moved with compassion for his misfortunes, and were highly indignant at the insolence of the magician, who had accused them of being evil genii. They then proceeded to acquaint him with the cause of their residence in this secluded place, saying: "Know, brother, that our father is a powerful king of a race of good genii, who were converted to the true faith by Solomon, the son of David. We are seven daughters by the same mother, but our father being fearful lest some evil might happen to us, has placed us in this solitary spot. This palace was built for us by genii, and it is surrounded by delightful meadows and forests abounding with game, and we often amuse ourselves with field-sports. When we want horses or camels we have only to beat a small magic drum, and they instantly attend our call, ready caparisoned. Our five sisters are at present at the chase but will soon return. Set your heart at rest, for your misfortunes are now at an end, and you shall dwell with us in ease and pleasure."

The five sisters soon returned, and on hearing Mazin's adventures, they also adopted him as their brother, and he remained with them some time, leading a most pleasant life, for they did all in their power to divert him with various amusements both at home and abroad. Mazin soon recovered his health, and was happy to the extent of his wishes. At the end of a year, Mazin was riding out to the enamelled dome, with golden columns, when he perceived under it the accursed magician, accompanied by a youth whom he had inveigled into his snares and devoted to destruction. The rage of Mazin was kindled at the sight, and drawing his sabre he rushed upon the sorcerer, who was in the act of flaying a camel, and seized him by the hair, exclaiming: "Wretch, the judgment of heaven has at length overtaken thee, and thy impure soul shall soon be plunged into that fire thou blasphemously adorest." The magician struggled to escape, and prayed for mercy and forgiveness; but Mazin, convinced by experience that he deserved none, struck off his head at one blow. The young man stood near, gazing with astonishment upon the scene, till Mazin informed him of the wicked arts of the accursed Bahram, and of his own narrow escape from almost certain destruction,

and advised him to remount his camel and return to the spot where he had disembarked from the vessel, which would safely convey him back to his own country. The young man thanked him for his deliverance and took his leave, while Mazin returned to the palace, carrying with him the head of the magician as a trophy of his victory. He was highly applauded for his prowess by the sisters, who rejoiced at the destruction of so cruel an enemy to mankind.

A few days after this, Mazin and the sisters were sitting together in a gallery of the palace when they observed a thick cloud of dust rising from the desert and approaching them. As it came nearer they perceived through it a troop of horsemen, upon which the sisters desired Mazin to retire into an inner chamber, and went to the gateway to inquire the business of the strangers. They proved to be messengers whom their father had sent to escort them to his presence, in order to attend the nuptials of a near relative. Upon this summons the sisters prepared for the journey, and at the end of three days they departed, promising Mazin that they would return in a month. When they took leave of him they gave him the keys of every apartment in the castle, telling him that he might open every door but one, which he had better not open lest some misfortune should happen to him. Mazin promised to obey, and was so well amused for many days in examining the magnificent rooms and curiosities of the palace that he did not feel inclined to disobey, until the forbidden door alone remained unopened. Having then nothing to divert him, he yielded to the impulse of curiosity, and unlocked the door, which led him to a marble staircase, which led to the terrace roof of the palace, where an enchanting prospect met his sight. On one side he perceived an extensive garden, in the centre of which was a basin of clear water, lined with gems of every description and surrounded with shady trees. He wished to examine it more closely, and after descending the staircase, he explored his way through a long arcade which led him at length into the garden, where he amused himself for some time. He then sat down to rest in an alcove near the basin, when he was astonished to perceive a company of damsels, like houris, descending from the sky, whose robes of light green silk floating in the air seemed their only support. Mazin was alarmed at this unexpected sight, and retired to the end of the alcove, from whence he watched their motions. They alighted on the brink of the water, threw off their robes and plunged into it. They swam about for some time sporting in the water and dashing it over each other; but one among them was of such surpassing loveliness that her image became stamped indelibly on the heart of Mazin. When they were tired they came out of the water, reassumed their green robes, and after resting for a few moments on the verdant sward, soared into the air and were soon far beyond the sight of the enamoured Mazin, who followed them with his eyes till he could distinguish them no longer. Despairing of ever again beholding the object of his affections, he fainted on the grass, and did not recover himself for some time. He returned melancholy to the palace, and spent the night in tears and longing.

On the following morning the seven sisters returned, and she who had first

welcomed Mazin to their abode, and had ever since retained for him the purest affection, ran eagerly to inquire after his health. Great was her affliction at beholding him stretched upon his bed, pale and worn, after his sleepless and weary night. He returned no answer to her many kind questions; and at length she implored him by the sisterly affection which she bore for him, to inform her of the cause of his dejection, assuring him that she would use every exertion to remove it, and to gratify his wishes, whatever they might be, or what ever difficulties might stand in the way. Upon this Mazin in a feeble voice related his adventure in the garden, and declared that unless he could obtain possession of the beautiful damsel whom he thought must have descended from Paradise, he must die of grief. His sister then comforted him, saying that his desire should soon be granted; and his spirits revived. He accompanied her to meet the other sisters, who met him with their usual kindness, but were much grieved and alarmed at the sad alteration in his appearance. He assured them, however, that it was only the effect of the prolonged absence of his kind friends; and now that they had returned, he would speedily recover his usual health and cheerfulness.

Next morning the ladies went again upon a hunting excursion for ten days, but Mazin's adopted sister remained behind, saying that he was not yet sufficiently recovered to bear the exercise; and that she would stay at home with him. When the others were gone, she informed Mazin that the beautiful damsels he had seen in the garden belonged to a race of genii much more powerful than her own. They inhabited a country surrounded by unapproachable seas and deserts, and belonged to a nation of females who only received occasional visits from the neighbouring tribes, to whom all the male children were sent as soon as they were born. She likewise told him that their silken robes gave them the power of soaring through the air a hundred times swifter than any bird, that they were fond of amusing themselves in verdant spots and bathing in the clearest waters, and that as the garden in which he had seen them was a favourite place of their resort, they would probably soon visit it again. "Perhaps," added she, "they may return to-day. We will be on the watch, and if they appear, you must watch where your favourite places her robes, and seize and conceal them while she is in the water, for she cannot fly away without them. Then you must bring her to the palace, and endeavour to gain her affection by constant tenderness and watchful attentions, that she may consent to a marriage; but when she is in your power, remember to conceal her robes from her, for if she should regain possession of them, she would certainly return to the Flying Islands, and you would see her no more."

Mazin and his sister now repaired to the garden, and seated themselves in the alcove, and they had not been there long when the damsels descended the basin as before, and flinging their robes aside, plunged into the water. As soon as their attention was fully occupied with their own diversion, Mazin cautiously snatched up the robes of his beloved, and conveyed them to the alcove unperceived by the fair bathers, who after sufficiently amusing themselves, left the

water, and prepared to take their departure. But when Mazin's beloved missed her robes, she beat her bosom, tore her hair, and uttered loud shrieks, and big tears rolled down her beautiful cheeks. But her sisters, instead of consoling her, were concerned only for their own safety, and hastily assuming their robes, bade her farewell, mounted into the air, and disappeared. As soon as they were gone, Mazin and his sister approached, and saluting the deserted lady, endeavoured to console her; but for the present in vain, as her mind was intent only on the sad captivity which she thought awaited her, and the loss of her native country and relations. They led her to the palace, and Mazin respectfully retired, leaving her to the care of his sister, who by a thousand endearments and attentions so gained upon her that after two days she began to recover her spirits, and consented to receive Mazin as her husband, when the other sisters should return from the chase. On their arrival at the palace, they were introduced to the fair stranger, who was so diverted by their company and attentions that she almost ceased to regret her captivity. Preparations were now made for the wedding, which was succeeded by a round of festivities, and the seven sisters vied with each other in devising new pleasures for the happy pair.

Mazin at length, however, began to reflect on the anguish which his mother must experience at his long absence, and finally begged leave to return home; and unwilling as his sisters were to part from him, they respected his anxiety for his mother, and fixed a day for his departure. When the time arrived, the sisters beat their magic drum, when several camels appeared at the gate of the palace, heavily laden with the richest stuffs, besides gold, jewels, and refreshments for the journey, and accompanied by a sufficient escort. One camel was richly caparisoned for the use of Mazin, and another carried a splendid litter for the conveyance of his wife. He took an affectionate leave of the sisters, whom he promised to revisit at some future time, and the caravan then set out towards the seashore where Maziu had disembarked with the magician. The journey was prosperous, and on reaching the coast, they found a vessel ready to receive them, and as the wind was favourable, Mazin soon arrived at his home, where he had the satisfaction of finding his mother alive, though greatly wasted with constant grief and lamentation for his loss. To describe the joy of their meeting is impossible; for never was there a more tender affection between parent and child than subsisted between Mazin and his mother. She seemed to gain new life from his return, and to grow young again. His wife, too, appeared quite contented with her lot, and Mazin was happy in the possession of all that he desired; but lest his fellow townsmen should take umbrage at his sudden prosperity, he decided to remove to Bagdad with his family.

Three years passed away in undisturbed happiness; and Mazin's wife had presented him with two sons, when he thought that it would be only an act of gratitude to pay a visit to the sisters to whom he owed all his felicity. After making preparations for his journey, he committed his wife's silken robes to the care of his mother, giving her the key of a secret recess in which he had lodged them; but

with a strict charge to keep them from his wife, lest an irresistible impulse might inspire her to fly away to her own country, for although she generally appeared contented, yet she could not help some times regretting her absence from her home and friends. The mother promised obedience, and Mazin, after taking an affectionate leave of her and of his wife and children, with promises to return soon, embarked on board a vessel, and pursued his voyage. On landing, he found camels awaiting his arrival, for the sisters knew of his coming by their magic arts, and had stationed them ready to convey him to the palace.

Some time after the departure of Mazin, his wife requested her mother-in-law's permission to visit the bath; and the old lady willingly accompanied her and the children to the most celebrated bath in the city, which was frequented by the ladies of the Court. On their arrival, they found some of the principal slaves of Zobeide, the favourite consort of the Caliph Haroun al Rashid, who were so much struck with the uncommon beauty of Mazin's wife, that they not only crowded round to admire her, but even followed her until she entered her own house, when they returned to the palace in apprehension lest their mistress should be displeased at their long absence.

They had not miscalculated; for when they entered her presence, Zobeide exclaimed: "Where have you loitered, and what is the reason of your staying so unusually long at the bath?"

Upon this, they looked at each other in confusion, and remained silent.

The Sultana was angry, and said, "Inform me instantly of the cause of your delay;" when they told her of the wonderful beauty of Mazin's wife, and talked so much about her, that Zobeide was seized with curiosity to behold her.

On the following day she sent for Mazin's mother, who obeyed the summons with fear and trembling, wondering what the caliph's consort could want with a person of her inferior rank.

Mazin's mother prostrated herself before the Sultana, and kissed her feet, but she graciously raised her, saying: "O mother of Mazin, it is my pleasure that you should introduce me to your son's wife, of whose beauty I have heard such extra ordinary accounts, that I long to behold her."

When the old lady heard these words, her heart sank within her, and she trembled with apprehension, but did not dare to disobey the commands of Zobeide; and saying, "To hear is to obey," she took leave, with the usual ceremony of prostration before the throne of the Sultana.

After this, Mazin's mother returned immediately to her own house, and said to her son's wife, "The Sultana Zobeide has invited you to an entertainment."

The lady was delighted, and instantly arrayed herself in her richest apparel, and dressed her two children in their richest garments and ornaments. She then set out with them, accompanied by her mother-in-law, and a black slave; and when they entered the palace of the Sultana Zobeide, they found her sitting in impatient expectation. They kissed the ground before her, and prayed for her prosperity.

When the Sultana Zobeide beheld the wife of Mazin, her senses were confounded, and her heart fluttered, for she was astonished at her beauty, elegance, graceful stature and blooming complexion, and exclaimed, "Gracious heaven, where could such a form as this have been created?"

Then she seated her guests and ordered a collation to be brought in, which was done immediately, when they ate until they were satisfied; but Zobeide could not keep her eyes from Mazin's wife. She kissed her, and questioned her concerning herself and her husband. Her surprise was much increased when she heard their adventures.

The lady then said, "O princess, if you are thus surprised, though you have not seen me in the dress which I wear in my own country, how much more would you be delighted at my appearance then! If, therefore, you wish to gratify your curiosity by beholding a miracle, you must command my husband's mother to bring my robes of green silk."

Upon this, Zobeide commanded the old lady to fetch them, and as she dared not disobey, she went home, and soon returned with them. Zobeide took them in her own hands, and when she examined them, she was astonished at their fashion and texture. At length she restored them to their original owner.

As soon as Mazin's wife had received the robes she unfolded them, and going into the open court of the palace, arrayed herself in them, and taking her children in her arms, rose suddenly into the air. But before taking her final departure, she called out to her husband's mother, saying, "Dear mother, give my adieu to my husband, and tell him that if he loves me as he pretends, he may come to the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk to find me."

Having said this, she soared towards the clouds till she disappeared from their sight, and returned to her own country.

When the mother of Mazin beheld her in the air, she beat her face, threw dust upon her head, and cried out to the Sultana Zobeide, "This is your mischief!"

But Zobeide was unable to answer, or to reprove her boldness, from the excess of her sorrow and regret, which made her repent, when repentance was of no avail.

The old lady returned in despair to her own habitation.

Meanwhile Mazin continued his journey by land for some time, until he reached the palace of the sisters, who were delighted at his arrival, and inquired after his wife, when he informed them that she was well, and that God had blessed him with two sons; and this good news increased their pleasure. He remained with them for some time, after which he entreated their permission to depart. They took an affectionate leave of him, and he returned to his own country, travelling without ceasing until he reached his home, where he found his mother alone, weeping and lamenting over what had happened in his absence. Seeing her in this state, he inquired the cause, upon which she informed him of everything that had taken place, from first to last.

When Mazin heard the terrible news, he cried out in an agony of distress for

the loss of his wife and children, and fell fainting to the ground, oblivious of his own existence. When his mother saw him in this condition, she slapped his face, and sprinkled water over him till he came to himself, when he wept, and said, "Inform me of what my wife may have spoken on her departure." She repeated her farewell words, upon which his distress, and his ardent longing for his wife and children, redoubled. He remained mournfully at home for ten days, after which he resolved to set out on his way to the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk, which lie at the distance of a hundred and fifty years' journey from Bagdad.

Mazin departed from his mother after taking leave of her, and entreating her prayers for his success; but she was so much afflicted that she ordered her tomb to be prepared, and did nothing but weep night and day for her son, who travelled without halting until he reached the palace of the seven sisters. They were surprised to see him, and said to one another, "There must be some urgent cause for his returning so speedily."

They saluted him, and inquired after his affairs, upon which he told them how his wife had deserted him, after advising him to seek her in the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk.

But they replied, "This expedition is impossible for you or any of your race to attempt; for these islands are distant a hundred and fifty years' journey, so that you cannot live to reach them."

But Mazin exclaimed, "It is incumbent upon me to make the attempt, although I should perish on the road. If God has decreed my reunion with my wife, I shall meet her again; but if not, I shall die, and be received into the mercy of the Almighty."

The sisters did not cease to urge him to abandon the journey, but it was impossible for him to obey them, or to remain at ease; upon which their grief for his situation increased. They knew that he could never traverse the distance by human means, but they pitied and admired his ardent love for his wife and children. After this, they consulted with one another how to assist him on the journey. He remained with them a month, but was unable to repose or to take pleasure in anything.

The sisters had two uncles, one named Abd al Kuddoos, and the other Abd al Sulleeb, who lived at three months' journey from them, and to them they wrote as follows: "The bearer of this letter is our friend Mazin of Khorassan. If you can direct him how to reach the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk, assist him; but if not, prevent him from proceeding, lest he plunge himself into destruction. At present he will not attend to our advice or reproofs, from excess of love to his wife and children; but through you he may finally arrive at safety and success."

When they had sealed this letter, they gave it to Mazin, and furnished him with three months' store of water and provisions laden upon camels, and a steed for his conveyance, upon which he took leave of them with many thanks, fully resolved to pursue his journey to the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk.

He pursued his journey with much pain and difficulty, taking no pleasure

whatever in rest or refreshment during the three months of his pilgrim age. At length he reached a verdant pasturage, covered with flowers, where flocks of sheep and herds of cattle were feeding. It was indeed a paradise upon earth. On one side he perceived a pleasant eminence, where buildings were erected, to which he advanced, and entered a court. Here he beheld a venerable-looking old man, with a beard flowing to his middle. Mazin saluted the sage, who returned his compliments, welcomed him with respectful demeanour, and congratulated him on his arrival. He seated him, and laid a collation before him, of which they both partook.

Mazin lodged with him that night, and in the morning the sage inquired who he was, and what had brought him to such a sequestered spot.

Mazin informed him; and, behold, the sage was Abd al Kuddoos, who when he heard his guest mention particulars of his brother's children, redoubled his attentions to him, and said: "Did they give you any letter?"

Mazin replied, "Yes."

He eagerly exclaimed, "Give it to me."

He gave it him, when he opened it, read it to himself, and considered the contents word by word.

Abd al Kuddoos gazed earnestly at Mazin, reflecting on his astonishing adventures, and how he had plunged himself into difficulty and danger in such a wild pursuit. He then said to him,

"My son, my advice is that you return by the way you came, and no longer vex your soul on account of impossibilities, for you cannot accomplish this affair. I will write to the daughters of my brother to let you live happily with them; and in time you will regain your peace of mind. Therefore return to them, and vex yourself no further, for between this spot and the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk is the distance of a hundred and fifty years' journey. Besides, there are great perils on the way, for you must traverse the abodes of genii, the haunts of wild beasts and monstrous serpents, and long districts where neither food nor water can be procured. Have compassion on yourself, my son, and do not rush upon destruction."

Abd al Kuddoos continued to dissuade Mazin from his resolution during three days, but he would not hear advice or reproof. On the third day Mazin prepared to depart, being sufficiently refreshed, upon which the old man, seeing his firmness, arose and kindled a fire. He cast perfumes into it and uttered some unintelligible words, upon which a genius forty cubits in height suddenly appeared before them. He was one of the genii who were subdued by our lord Solomon, and he muttered and growled saying: "O my master, why have you summoned me here? Shall I tear up this hill by the roots and hurl it beyond Mount Kaf?"

Abd al Kuddoos replied: "God be merciful to thee! I need your aid, and request you to accomplish my bidding in one day."

Upon this the genius answered: "To hear is to obey."

And Abd al Kuddoos continued: "Take up this young man and convey him to my brother, Abd al Sulleeb."

He consented, although the distance was an ordinary journey of seventy years. The genius immediately took Mazin up and soared with him through the air from morning till sunset, when he descended before Abd al Sulleeb, paid his respects, and informed him of the commands of his brother Abd al Kuddoos. The sage then greeted Mazin, who gave him the letter from the daughters of his brother, which he opened and read. When he had considered its contents he was astonished at the adventures of Mazin, his arrival with him, and his resolve to penetrate to the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk. But he said: "My son, I advise that you should no longer vex yourself with these difficulties and dangers, for you can never attain your object, or reach these islands."

Mazin now began to despair, and when he thought of his wife and children he wept till he fainted; and when Abd al Sulleeb beheld his unhappy condition he pitied him from his heart. He perceived that he would not return from his pursuit or listen to advice and therefore thought it best to assist his progress towards the islands. He went into another room and kindled a fire, over which he sprinkled perfumes and uttered incantations, when lo, ten genii presented themselves before him, and said: "Inform us, O master, of what you desire, and we will bring it in an instant."

He replied: "May God be gracious to you!" and related the story of Mazin and his wife and children.

When the ten genii heard the narrative they exclaimed: "This affair is wonderful and miraculous; however, we will take him with us, and carry him safely over the mountains and deserts to the bounds of our country and dominion, and leave him there. But we cannot promise him further assistance, as we dare not pass a step beyond our own territories, for the land belongs to others. In it are innumerable horrors, and we dread the inhabitants."

When Mazin heard this, he answered: "I accept your offer with gratitude."

The ten genii now took up Mazin and soared with him through the air for a night and a day, till they came to the limits of their territories, and set him down in a country called the Land of Kafoor. They then took leave of him and vanished from his sight. He walked onwards and did not neglect to employ his thoughts in prayer, beseeching God to preserve him, and to grant him the attainment of his desires. Often would he exclaim: "O God, who canst deliver from bondage, and guide in safety over mountains, who feedest the wild beasts of the forest, who decreest life and death, if Thou wilt, Thou canst grant me relief from all my distress and free me from all my sorrows."

He travelled thus for ten days, and on the tenth day he beheld three men engaged in mortal combat, each endeavouring to kill the others. He was astonished at their conduct, but advanced towards them. Upon his approach they ceased the fight, and all exclaimed: "We will be judged before this young man, and whoever contradicts his opinion shall be deemed in the wrong." To this they

agreed, and coming up to Mazin demanded of him a just arbitration in their dispute. They then showed him a cap, a small copper drum, and a wooden ball, saying: "We are three brothers by the same father and mother, who have both been received into the mercy of God, and have left behind them these articles. They are three and we are three; but a dispute has arisen among us respecting their allotment, for each of us said: 'I will have the cap.' Our contention made us proceed to blows, but now we desire that you should arbitrate between us, and allot an article to each as you shall judge best, when we will rest satisfied with your decision; but should either of us contradict it, he shall be judged an offender."

When Mazin heard this he was surprised, and said to himself: "These articles are so paltry and of such trifling value as not to be worth an arbitration, for surely this shabby cap, the drum, and the wooden ball, cannot be worth more altogether than half a dinar, but I will inquire further about them." He then said: "My brethren, wherein lies the virtue of these three articles about which you were contending, for they appear to me of very little value."

They replied: "Dear uncle, each of them has a property worth untold treasures, and to each of them belongs a tale so wonderful that if you were to write it on a table of adamant it would remain an example for those who would be admonished."

Mazin then requested them to relate to him the history of the three articles, when they said: "The eldest brother shall first deliver an account of the properties of one, and what can be gained from them; and we will not conceal anything from you."

"This cap," said the eldest brother, "is called the cap of invisibility, and whosoever possesses it may become sovereign of the world. When he puts it on he may enter where he pleases, for neither men nor genii can perceive him, so that he may convey away whatever he pleases unseen in security. He may enter the cabinets of kings and statesmen, and hear all their conversation respecting political intrigues. If he desires wealth he, may visit the royal treasuries and plunder them at his pleasure; and if he wishes for revenge, he can kill his enemy without being detected. In short, he can act as he pleases, without fear of discovery."

Upon this, Mazin said to himself, "This cap is not suitable for any one but me, to whom it will be most advantageous in the object of my expedition. Perhaps it may conduct me to my wife and children and I may obtain from its possession all that I wish. It is certainly one of the wonders of the world and rarities of the age, and not to be found among the riches of kings at the present day." Having concluded his reflections he said: "I am acquainted with the properties of the cap, but what are those of the drum?"

The second brother then said, "If any one who has this drum in his possession should be involved in a difficult situation, let him take it out of its case and beat gently with the sticks upon the characters engraven on the copper,

when, if his mind be collected and his courage firm, wonderful things will appear to him. The virtue of it consists in the words inscribed upon it, which were written by our Lord Solomon, the son of David, in talismanic characters, each of which has control over certain princes of the genii and a power that cannot be described in speech. Hence, whoever is master of this drum may become superior to all the monarchs of the present day; for on his beating it in the manner already described, when he is pressed for help, all the princes of the genii, with their sons and followers, will appear ready to obey his commands. Whatever he may order them to execute they will perform, by virtue of the talisman of our Lord Solomon, the son of David.”

When Mazin heard this, he said to himself, “This drum is fitting only for me, and I have much more need of it than the brothers. It will protect me from all evil in the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk, if I should reach them, and meet with my wife and children. It is true that if I take only the cap I may be able to enter all places; but this drum will keep injury from me, and with it I shall be secure from all enemies.” He then said: “I have been informed of the virtues of the cap and the properties of the drum. There now only remains the account of the wooden ball, that I may give judgment between you, therefore let the third brother speak.”

The third brother answered: “To hear is to obey. My dear uncle, whoever possesses this ball will find in it wonderful properties; for it brings distant parts near, and makes near distant; it shortens long journeys, and lengthens short ones. If any person wish to perform a journey of two hundred years in two days, let him take it from its case, lay it upon the ground, and mention to what place he desires to go. It will instantly be in motion, and rush over the earth like the blast of the stormy gale. He must then follow it till he arrives at the place desired, which he will have the power to do with ease.”

When the youth had concluded his description of the virtues of the wooden ball, Mazin resolved within himself to take this also from the brothers, and said: “If you wish me to arbitrate between you, I must first prove the virtues of these three articles, and afterwards let each take that which may fall to him by my decision.”

The three brothers exclaimed: “We have heard and we consent. Act as you think best, and may God protect you in your undertakings.”

Mazin then put on the cap, placed the drum under his vestband, took up the ball and placed it on the ground, when it sped before him as quickly as the gale. He followed it till it came to the gate of a building which it entered, and Mazin also went in with it.

The brothers ran till they were tired, and cried out, “You have sufficiently tried them!” but in vain, for by this time there was the distance of ten years’ journey between him and them.

Mazin now rested, took the drum in his hands, and rubbed his fingers over the talismanic characters, hesitating whether he should strike them with the sticks. Then he taboured lightly upon them, when, lo! a voice exclaimed: “Mazin,

you have gained your desires. Nevertheless you will not arrive at your object without much trouble; but take care of the ball in this spot, for you are at present in the land of evil genii."

Upon this Mazin took up the ball and concealed it in his clothes; but he was overcome with astonishment at hearing words without seeing the speaker, and exclaimed: "Who art thou, my lord?"

"I am," replied the voice, "one of the slaves of the characters which you see engraved upon the drum, and am constantly in attendance; but the other servants will not appear unless the drum is beaten loudly, when three hundred and sixty chiefs will attend your commands, each of whom has under his authority ten thousand genii, and every individual of them numerous followers."

Mazin now inquired the distance of the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk, to which the voice replied, "Three years' journey." Upon this he struck the ball before him, and followed it till he arrived in a region infested by serpents, dragons, and ravenous beasts; and here, too, there were mines of copper in the mountains. He now taboured gently on the drum, and the voice replied: "I am ready to obey your commands."

"Inform me," said Mazin, "what is the name of this country?"

The voice replied: "It is called the land of dragons and ravenous animals. Be careful here, and make no delay, nor regard fatigue; for these mountains are not to be passed without a chance of trouble from the inhabitants, who are genii; and the caves harbour furious wild beasts."

Upon this he struck the ball afresh, and followed it unceasingly, until at length he reached the sea shore and perceived the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk at a distance, and their mountains appeared of a fiery red, like the sky gilded by the beams of the setting sun. When he beheld them he was struck with awe and dread, but recovering, he said to himself, "Why should I be afraid? Since God has conducted me hither, He will protect me now; or if I die, I shall be relieved from my troubles, and be received into the mercy of God." He then gathered some fruit, which he ate, drank some water, and, having performed his ablutions, laid himself down to sleep, and did not awake till morning.

In the morning Mazin tapped gently upon the drum, when the voice inquired his commands. "How am I to pass the sea and enter the islands?" he inquired.

"That is not to be done," replied the voice, "with out the assistance of a sage who resides in a cell on yonder mountain. It is a day's journey, but the ball will conduct you there in half an hour. When you reach his abode knock gently at the door, when he will appear and inquire whence you came and what you want. When you enter he will receive you kindly, and desire you to relate your adventures from beginning to end. Conceal nothing from him for he alone can assist you to pass the sea."

Mazin then struck the ball, and followed it till he arrived at the abode of the hermit. He found the gate locked, and when he knocked a voice from within replied: "Who is at the gate?"

“A guest,” replied Mazin; upon which the sage arose, opened the door, and admitted him. He entertained him kindly for a whole night and day, after which Mazin ventured to inquire how he could pass the sea.

The sage replied: “What occasions you to seek such an object?”

“My lord,” answered Mazin, “I desire to enter the islands, and have travelled far from my own country for that purpose.”

When the sage heard this he stood up before him, opened a book, and read it to himself for some time, every now and then casting a look of astonishment upon Mazin. At length he raised his head and exclaimed: “Heavens, what troubles, disasters, and afflictions in exile have been decreed to this youth in search of his object!”

Upon this Mazin asked: “Wherefore, my lord, did you look at the book and then at me so earnestly?”

The sage replied: “My son, I will instruct you how to reach the islands, since such is your desire; but you will not obtain your object till after much labour and inconvenience. However, at present relate to me your adventures from first to last.”

“My lord,” returned Mazin, “my story is so surprising, that if it were engraved on tablets of adamant it would be an example for those who would take warning.”

When he had related his story from beginning to end, the sage exclaimed: “God willing, you will attain your wishes”; upon which Mazin inquired respecting the sea surrounding the islands, and how he could overcome such an impediment to his progress. The sage then said: “By God’s permission, we will repair to the mountains in the morning, and I will show you the wonders of the seas.”

When God permitted morning to dawn, the hermit arose, taking Mazin with him, and they ascended the mountains till they reached a structure resembling a fortress, which they entered, and proceeded to the inmost court, in which stood an enormous brazen statue, hollowed into pipes, and having in the midst of it a reservoir lined with marble, the work of magicians. When Mazin beheld this, he was astonished, and began to tremble with fear at the vastness of the statue, and at the idea of the miraculous powers it might contain. The hermit now kindled a fire, threw some perfumes into it, and muttered some unintelligible words, when suddenly dark clouds arose, whence issued violent gusts of wind, lightning, thunder, groans, and frightful noises, and in the midst of the reservoir appeared boiling waves, for it was near the ocean surrounding the islands. The hermit did not cease to utter his incantations until the hurricane and noises had subsided by his authority, for he was more powerful than any of the magicians, and had power over the rebellious genii. He now said to Mazin, “Go out, and look towards the ocean surrounding the islands.” Mazin repaired to the summit of the mountain, and looked towards the sea, but could not distinguish the smallest trace of its existence; upon which he was astonished at the miraculous power of the hermit. He returned to him, exclaiming, “I can behold no remains of the ocean,

and the islands appear joined to the mainland;" when the sage said, "My son, put thy reliance on God, and pursue thy journey," after which he vanished from sight.

Mazin now advanced boldly towards the islands, and did not stop until he reached a verdant spot, watered by clear rivulets, and shaded by lofty trees. It was now sunrise, and among the wonders which he beheld was a tree like the weeping willow, on which hung beautiful damsels instead of fruit, who exclaimed: "Praise to God our Creator, who has formed the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk." They then dropped from the tree and expired.

At sight of this prodigy his senses were confounded, and he exclaimed, "By heavens, this is miraculously surprising!"

When he had recovered himself, he wandered through the groves, and admired the creations of the Almighty till sunset, when he sat down to rest.

He had not rested long before a masculine-looking old woman of disagreeable appearance drew near him; and perceiving that he was alarmed at her approach, reassured him, saying, "What is your name, and what do you desire; do you belong to this country? Tell me truly, and fear nothing, for I will pray to God that I may be the means of forwarding your wishes."

On hearing these words, the heart of Mazin was encouraged, and he related to her his adventures from first to last.

When she had heard his story, she knew that he must be the husband of the sister of her mistress, who was queen of the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk; and she said, "Your object is a difficult one, but I will assist you to the utmost of my power."

The old woman now conducted Mazin through bye paths to the capital of the island; and during the darkness of night, when the inhabitants had ceased to pass through the streets, she led him to her own house. She then offered him refreshments, and he ate and drank with fresh appetite, and praised God for his safe arrival. The old woman then informed Mazin that his wife had endured great troubles and afflictions since her separation, and repented sincerely of her flight.

When Mazin heard this, he wept bitterly, and fainted with anguish. The old woman revived him by her exertions; and after comforting him with promises of the speedy attainment of his wishes, she left him to repose.

Next morning the old woman, desiring Mazin to wait patiently for her return, repaired to the palace, where she found the queen and her sisters in consultation respecting the wife of Mazin, and saying, "This wretch has married a man, instead of a prince of her own race; but now she has returned with her children, we will put her to death after various tortures."

When the old lady entered they rose, saluted her with great respect, and seated her, for she had been their nurse. When she had rested a little, she said, "Were you not conversing about your unfortunate sister? But can you reverse the decrees of God?"

"Dear nurse," replied they, "no one can avoid the will of Heaven; and had

she married one of our own nature, there would have been no disgrace; but she has married a human being, by whom she has had children, and all our race will reproach and despise us on her account. Her death is therefore unavoidable.”

The nurse rejoined, “If you put her to death, your offence will be greater than hers, for she was wedded lawfully; but I wish to see her.”

The eldest sister answered, “She is now confined in a subterranean dungeon;” upon which the nurse again asked leave to see her, which was granted, and one of the sisters conducted her to the prison.

The nurse found the wife of Mazin in great distress from the cruelty of her sisters. The children were playing round her, but very pallid from the closeness of their confinement. As the nurse entered, she stood up, made her obeisance, and began to weep, saying, “My dear nurse, I have been long in this dungeon, and know not what may be my fate at last.”

The old woman kissed her cheeks, and said, “My dear daughter, God will send you relief, per chance this very day.”

When the wife of Mazin heard this, she said, “Good heavens, my dear nurse, your words recall a gleam of comfort which last night came into my mind from a voice which said: ‘Be comforted, oh wife of Mazin, for help is near.’”

Upon this, the old woman replied: “Comfort indeed awaits you, for your husband is at my house, and will speedily release you.”

The unfortunate prisoner fainted with joy, but was soon revived by the nurse sprinkling water in her face, when she said: “I conjure you by heaven, my dear nurse, to tell me whether you speak the truth, or whether you are dissembling.”

“I not only speak truth,” answered the nurse but with God’s help you shall meet your husband this day.”

After this she left her and returned home, when she asked Mazin if he was able to take his wife away, provided he was admitted into the dungeon at night. He replied “Yes.” When night set in she conducted him to the spot where his wife was imprisoned, and left him near the gate alone. He then put on his cap of invisibility and remained there all night unperceived by any one. Early in the morning the queen, his wife’s eldest sister, came and opened the gate of the prison and entered, when Mazin followed unseen behind her, and seated himself in a corner of the apartment. The queen went up to her sister and beat her cruelly with a whip till she was covered with blood, while the children wept around her. At last she went out, leaving her hanging by her hair from a pillar, and locked the door of the dungeon. Mazin now arose, unloosed his wife’s hair, and pulling off the cap appeared before her, when she exclaimed: “From whence did you come?”

They fell into each other’s arms, and he said: “Ah, why did you act thus, and leave me in such affliction, and plunge yourself into such distress, which, indeed, your conduct almost deserved?”

“It is true,” replied she;” but what is past is past, and reproach will not avail unless you can effect our escape.”

Upon this he asked: "Does your inclination really lead you to accompany me to my own country?"

And she replied: "Yes, deal with me as you think best."

They remained conversing until evening, when the keeper of the prison approached, and Mazin put on his cap of invisibility. The keeper, who had brought provisions for the night, retired into a recess of the dungeon and fell asleep, when Mazin and his family sat down and refreshed themselves. Mazin then tried the door and found it unlocked, upon which he and his wife and children left the prison and travelled as quickly as possible all night. When the queen was informed of her sister's escape in the morning, she was enraged, and summoned an army of seven thousand genii, with whom she marched out, resolved to cut the fugitives to pieces.

Mazin, looking behind him, perceived a cloud of dust, from whence emerged the forces of his wife's sister, crying out with terrible voices: "Whither will ye fly, ye wretches? Where can you hide your selves?"

Upon this Mazin took out his drum and beat it violently, when lo, there appeared before him countless legions of genii, who fought with the armies of the queen, who was taken prisoner with her principal attendants.

When the wife of Mazin beheld her sister in this distress, her compassion was moved towards her, and she said to her husband: "Hurt not my sister, nor use her ill, for she is older than I;" upon which he treated her respectfully, and commanded tents to be pitched for her and her court.

Peace being established, the sisters took an affectionate leave; and Mazin, with his family, departed for the residence of Abd al Sulleeb, which they speedily reached with the assistance of the genii, and the directing ball. The old man received him kindly and inquired his adventures. When he related them to him, he was surprised, especially at the account of the cap, the drum, and the ball, of which last Mazin begged his acceptance, as he was now near home and had no further occasion for its use. Abd al Sulleeb was much pleased, and entertained him magnificently for three days, after which Mazin wished to depart, when the old man presented him with rich gifts, and took leave of him.

Mazin was continuing his journey, when suddenly a company of a hundred banditti advanced towards him with the intention of putting him and his companions to death and plundering the caravan. Mazin cried out to them: "Brother Arabs, let the covenant of God be between you and me, and keep at a distance from me."

When they heard this they increased their insolence, and surrounded him, supposing they could easily seize all that he had, and they said one to another: "Let us put him to death and not suffer him to live."

When Mazin saw that they were bent upon attacking him, he took out the drum and beat it gently, when behold ten genii appeared before him, and inquired his commands. He replied: "I desire the dispersal of yonder horsemen." Upon which one of the ten advanced among the hundred banditti and uttered such a

tremendous yell that the mountains re-echoed the sound. The banditti were instantly struck with terror, and fled among the rocks, while such as fell from their horses' backs escaped on foot, so that they lost their reputation, and were ridiculed among the chiefs of the Abbasside tribes. Mazin now pursued his journey, and did not halt until he reached the abode of Abd al Kuddocs, who advanced to meet him, and saluted him, but was astonished when he beheld his company and the wealth he had attained. Mazin related the dangers that had befallen him, and his sufferings from hunger and thirst, his safe arrival in the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk, the deliverance of his wife from prison, and the defeat of the army sent to oppose his return. He mentioned also the reconciliation between his wife and her sister, and all that had happened to him from first to last.

Abd al Kuddocs was greatly astonished at his adventures, and said to Mazin: "Truly, my son, these events are most surprising, and can never have occurred to any one else."

Mazin rested there for three days, and was treated with hospitality and respect until the fourth, when he resolved to continue his journey, and took his leave. He proceeded towards his own country, and did not halt on the way until he arrived at the palace of the seven sisters, who had so much befriended him.

When Mazin drew near, the sisters came out to meet him, and saluted him and his wife, and conducted them to the palace; but they were astonished at his return, and at first could hardly believe that he had succeeded, wondering that he had not perished on the road or been torn in pieces by the wild beasts of the desert, for they had regarded it as impossible that he should ever reach the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk.

When they were seated and had heard his extraordinary adventures, they were even more astonished; after which refreshments were brought in and they all ate together. They then wrote a letter and despatched it to the mother of Mazin, congratulating her on the health of her son, and his safe return with his wife and children.

Mazin remained with the sisters a month, enjoying himself in feasting and amusements; after which he begged permission to depart to his own country, for he was anxious about his mother. They took leave of him and he travelled unceasingly till he arrived at Bagdad. He entered the city at sunset and proceeded to his own house, when his mother came out and saluted and embraced him. She had erected her tomb in the court of the house, and wept night and day till she became blind; but when the letter arrived from the sisters her sight returned to her again from the rapture of her joy. She beheld the children of her son and embraced them, and that night was as a holy festival to her.

When God caused the morning to dawn, the chief personages of the city visited Mazin to congratulate him on his return, and the principal ladies came to visit his mother, and rejoiced with her on the safety of her son. At length the news reached the Caliph Haroun al Rashid, who summoned Mazin to his presence.

Having entered the hall of audience, he made his obeisance, when the Caliph returned his salute and commanded him to sit down. When he was seated, the Caliph demanded that he should inform him of all that had befallen him, to which he answered: "To hear is to obey."

Mazin then related how he had been decoyed away from home by the fire-worshipper, the mode of his coming to the palace of the seven sisters, the manner in which he had entrapped his wife, her flight from the palace of the Sultana Zobeide, his journey to the islands of Wauk-al-Wauk, and the dangers and difficulties which he had encountered on the way.

The Caliph was astonished, and said: "The substance of these adventures must not be lost or concealed, but must be recorded in writing." He then sent for an amanuensis, and seated Mazin by him until he had taken down his adventures from beginning to end.



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