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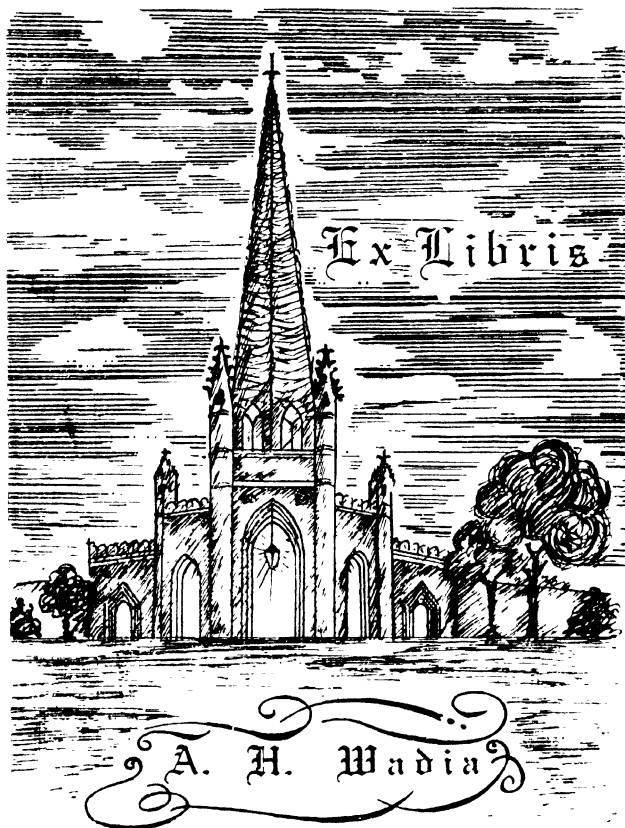
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THE EASTERN ANTHOLOGY

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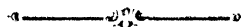
Volume 7
Comrade Loves of
the Samurai and
Songs of the Geishas



EASTERN LOVE



COMRADE LOVES OF THE
SAMURAI BY SAÏKAKU
EBARA AND SONGS OF
THE GEISHAS



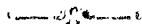
ENGLISH VERSIONS OF
JAPANESE SONGS OF THE GEISHAS
AND OF COMRADE LOVES OF THE
SAMURAI BY
E. POWYS MATHERS



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VOLUME VII

*



JOHN RODKER
FOR SUBSCRIBERS
LONDON ' 1928

for
H. C. S.

MADE IN ENGLAND

THIS EDITION OF COMRADE LOVES OF THE
SAMURAI AND SONGS OF THE GEISHAS,
BEING VOLUME 7 OF "EASTERN LOVE,"
IS HERE TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FOR
THE FIRST TIME, BY E. POWYS MATHERS.
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*Comrade-Loves
of the Samurai
by Saikaku Ebara*

Love Vowed to the Dead

THE SHYÔGUN* YOSHIMASA, A FORMER RULER of Japan, had, beside a passionate general love for all arts and delicate pleasures, a particular love for incense. He had made a collection of the various incense from the trees of every province of Japan, and his sense of smell was so nice that he could appreciate the most subtle difference in their perfume.

One cold autumn evening he was talking with his friends of his dear incense. Night was drawing on, and a breath of air came suddenly into the room carrying a soft and delicious scent. Neither he nor his friends had ever known so tender a perfume. He ordered one of his attendants to search the palace for its origin ; but it could not be found in the palace. Then he sent his favourite, Toshikiyo Tambanokami, to find out where that incense burned, and he immediately set out with his two servants.

The scent was very faint, but, when they had crossed the meadows to the bank of the river Kamo, it became stronger. It floated from the other bank of the river, so Toshikiyo crossed by a ford. This was the evening of the sixth of November, and dark, for there was no moon. They crossed the river by the pale light of the

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stars set high in heaven. On the other bank they found a man seated upon a rock, wearing an old cloak made of straw and a rush hat. In his sleeves he held a censer. He had an air of peace and serenity.

Toshikiyo asked him : ' Dear stranger, why are you alone in such a place so late at night ? ' And while he was speaking, he smelt the perfume for which he sought, rising from the stranger's censer.

The other replied : ' I am watching the flight of the river Kamo's singing plovers. '

Toshikiyo was impressed by this answer. To be able to listen to the plovers of the river on so cold and dark a night, the man must be finely cultured and could not be of low class. He said to him more politely : ' Excuse my curiosity, but I come at the command of my master, the Shyôgun Yoshimasa, to seek the man who diffuses so sweet a perfume. Who are you, stranger ? '

The man answered : ' I am not a priest who has renounced all worldly matters for the love of Buddha. Neither am I an ordinary man. Behold me rather a traveller, with no place to lay my head. I am more than sixty-six years old, but my feet are still firm and I can walk freely. ' And he arose and started toward the pines by the water side.

From the Japanese

It was a plain reply, yet full of mystery. Toshi-kiyo was even more surprised than before ; he held the stranger back and asked him : ‘ I beg you to tell me the name of the incense you burn. My master Yoshimasa would like to know it.’

The man answered : ‘ Are you then so eager to know a trifle ? If your master is thus fond of incense, take him this, although there is not much more of it.’ And, giving him the incense and the censer, he went quickly away.

Toshikiyo came back with the incense and censer to Yoshimasa and told his master every detail of the strange old man. The Shyôgun was greatly intrigued by the stranger’s refinement and had him sought through the whole of Kyoto ; but no trace of the old man was found. The Shyôgun was grieved at this, and kept his gift with the utmost care. He named that incense ‘ The Plover,’ and the strange story soon spread among his attendants.

One of Yoshimasa’s pages, the son of a samurai of an Eastern Province, had so beautiful a face that even the flowers of Kyoto grew pale before him. He was one of the Shyôgun’s favourite lads. When he saw the censer his countenance changed suddenly, and he was seized with great distress. His name was Gorokitji Sakurai. His closest friend asked him why the sight of the censer had so moved him, but Gorokitji would

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not open his heart. Now this friend was his very dear lover.

His distress finally made Gorokitji ill, and, on his bed, he confided at last in his friend, whose name was Muranosuke Higutji. Gorokitji's voice was weak and shook as he told of his past life and how it was concerned with the censor :

‘ The owner of this incense was my lover. We loved each other with unchangeable love. But he thought that our love might be harmful to my career, and therefore he left me in that Eastern land and came to Kyoto. But I could not forget him. I followed him here as a page of our master Yoshimasa, hoping and waiting for a blessing of Providence to let me meet him once again. But fortune was not with me. I have met only the censor ; I have not met him to whom it belonged, him whom I love.’ And Gorokitji wept many bitter tears.

Muranosuke was very sorrowful. He was afraid of losing his friend and lover if Gorokitji should die. And yet Gorokitji grew weaker and weaker, until there was no more hope of his living. Then he called Muranosuke to his bedside and said : ‘ Dear Muranosuke, find that old man after my death and love him in my place. Because you have been my best friend I ask you this unpleasing and indelicate favour.

From the Japanese

I beg you to perform my last wish, for the love of my soul which is about to leave you. If you refuse it this favour, it will not be able to ascend into Heaven.'

This prayer was truly unreasonable, but Gorokitji and Muranosuke were friends and lovers, and were bound to sacrifice their lives for each other. Therefore Muranosuke promised, and Gorokitji could die with a smile. He was mourned and regretted by all his friends, some of whom could not restrain their sobs on seeing his beautiful, lifeless face. His body was burned on the hill Toribe, and only his bones remained as witness to his earthly existence.

After a long and arduous search, Muranosuke at last found the old man, living in a hut with a broken roof and two doors which would hardly shut. It was girt by a low evergreen hedge. On a rainy evening Muranosuke visited him.

It had been a dreary, desolate day, and the man had been thinking of Gorokitji; for his love of the youth was so deep that he could not forget him. Muranosuke told him of his friend's death, and the old man was seized with a great despair. He kept on sobbing: 'I would that this news were many times false.' When he was a little calmer, Muranosuke looked at him to tell him of the promise he had given to his dying friend. The old man's face was

Comrade-Loves of the Samurai

decomposed and wasted. He was more than sixty years old. To love such a man was very repulsive to Muranosuke. But he had sworn at Gorokitji's death-bed to love the creature in his friend's place, and he was bound by the honour of a samurai to fulfill his promise. So he said to the old man :

‘ Dear stranger, when our friend Gorokitji was dying, he prayed me to seek you out and love you in his stead. Love me, then, in place of my friend Gorokitji. Let us be lovers.’

The old man was greatly surprised by this sudden proposal. He raised his tear-bathed face and answered :

‘ Your proposition is quite unexpected. I adore my poor Gorokitji, and cannot accept your love. Also I am too old to be your lover. I am touched by your attachment to Gorokitji ; but excuse me from accepting this offer.’

For a long time he refused, until Muranosuke said to him despairingly : ‘ I must fulfill my promise to my dead friend. If you refuse to perform his last wish, I have only one way to save my honour as a samurai. I must perform Hara-kiri, for I am not so base as to outlive the breach of a promise.’

Then the old man regretfully agreed to accept Muranosuke's love. He was touched by such loyalty, and could not refuse to accomplish the

From the Japanese

last wish of their beloved Gorokitji. So they vowed a lifelong love and friendship to each other, and Muranosuke visited the old man every evening.

When this story became known, everyone praised Muranosuke's conduct and his loyal passion for the old man. He did not love him, but he kept him as his lover solely to fulfill his promise to Gorokitji.

*All Comrade-Lovers die by
Hara-kiri*

THE FAIREST PLANTS AND TREES MEET THEIR death because of the marvel of their flowers. And it is the same with humanity : many men perish because they are too beautiful.

There was a page named Ukyo-Itami, who served a Lord at Yedo. He was cultured and elegant, and so extremely beautiful that he troubled the eyes of those who looked at him. His master had another page named Uneme Mokawa, eighteen years of age, who also had great beauty and a countenance full of graces. Ukyo was so smitten with this other as almost to lose his senses, so moved was he by his virile loveliness. He suffered to such an extent from his love that he fell ill and had to take to his bed, where he sighed and moaned his unheard love in solitude. But he was very popular, and many people had pity on him and came to see him in his illness, to care for him and console him.

One day his fellow-pages came to visit him, and among them was his beloved Uneme. At sight of him, Ukyo betrayed by his expression the sentiments which he felt for him, and the pages then guessed the secret of his illness. Samano-

From the Japanese

suke Shiga, another page who was Uneme's lover, was also present, and was much moved at seeing the suffering of poor Ukyo. He stayed with the invalid when the others went away, knelt down beside him and whispered: 'I am sure, dear Ukyo, that there is a grief in your soul. Open your heart to me who am your friend and love you very much. Do not keep any secret from me: you only torture yourself by keeping it. If you love any of the pages who were here just now, tell me frankly. I shall do my best to help you, Ukyo.'

But the bashful Ukyo could not open his sick heart to him. He simply said: 'You are wrong, my Samanosuke, you are mistaken about me,' and, since Samanosuke insisted, he pretended to be asleep. Samanosuke went away.

They caused two High Priests to pray for Ukyo's recovery, and after they had prayed without ceasing for two days and two nights Ukyo seemed better. Then Samanosuke again went secretly to Ukyo and said: 'Dear friend, write him a love-letter. I will give it to him without fail, and he shall at once send you a kind answer. I know whom you love so desperately, and you need not consider me in your passion. He and I are lovers, but I am quite ready to satisfy your desire, because of our long and sincere friendship, Ukyo.'

Comrade-Loves of the Samurai

Then Ukyo took courage and wrote a letter with trembling hand, and entrusted it to Samanosuke. When Samanosuke reached the palace he met Uneme, who was looking in silence at the flowers in the garden. Uneme saw him, and said: 'Dear friend, I have been very busy every evening amusing my Lord with Nô plays, and this evening I have only come out for a few moments to breathe a little air. I have read my master the ancient classical poem "Seuin Kokin," and was alone and without a friend except for the silent cherry blooms. I am very lonely.' And he looked tenderly at Samanosuke.

'Here is another silent flower, Uneme,' said Samanosuke, and held out the letter to him.

Uneme smiled at him and said: 'This letter cannot be for me, dear friend.' He went behind some thick trees to read it. He was touched by the letter, and kindly replied to Samanosuke: 'I cannot remain unmoved if he suffers so much for me.'

When Ukyo received Uneme's answer, he was filled with joy, and quickly recovered his health. And the three young men loved each other with a loyal and harmonious love.

Now it happened that their master took into his service a new courtier named Shyuzen Hosono. This man was rough, evil, and of a haughty

From the Japanese

temper ; he had no finesse or elegance ; he was continually boasting of his exploits, and no one liked him. When he saw Ukyo he fell in love with him ; but he had not the delicacy to make his love known to him in some charming letter : he had not sufficiently good taste for that. He pursued Ukyo with smiles and tears whenever he saw him alone in the palace or the garden. But Ukyo despised him.

The Lord had a servant with his head shaven, whose duty it was to take care of the utensils belonging to the tea ritual. He was named Shyusai Tushiki, and had become the intimate friend of Shyuzen ; so he undertook to convey a message from him to Ukyo. Accordingly he said one day to Ukyo : ‘I pray you to give Shyuzen a kind answer. He loves you passionately,’ and gave him Shyuzen’s letter.

But Ukyo threw the letter away and said : ‘It is not your business to carry love-letters. Attend to your duty of keeping the master’s house clean for tea matters,’ and went away.

Shyuzen and Shyusai were consumed with rage. They determined to kill Ukyo that same night, and then to run away. They could not endure the insult and humiliation which Ukyo had inflicted upon them, and made ready for their vicious deed. But Ukyo was warned of their plot and decided to kill them both before they

Comrade-Loves of the Samurai

could attack him. He thought of speaking to Uneme about it, but, on reflection, told himself that it was unworthy of a samurai to speak about his business to his lover with the sole object of obtaining his help. Besides, he did not want to make Uneme his accomplice. So he decided to execute his plan by himself.

It was the month of May and very wet. It rained heavily on that night. It was the seventeenth day of the moon in the seventeenth year of Kanyei (A.D. 1641). All the samurai of the guard were in a state of deep fatigue, and were sleeping. Ukyo put on a thin silk garment as white as snow, with a splendid skirt. He perfumed himself more than ordinarily so as to be pure, for he had determined to die after having killed his two enemies. He put two swords in the girdle which encircled his hips, and crossed through the halls of the palace. Since he was in the habit of doing this every evening, the guards let him pass without questioning.

Shyuzen was on guard that night in one of the rooms. He was leaning against a screen pictured with hawks, and was looking at his fan. Ukyo rushed upon him and thrust his sword deep into his right shoulder as far as his breast. But Shyuzen was a brave and strong man. With his left hand he seized his own sword and defended himself bravely. Yet he was losing

From the Japanese

blood and getting weak, and finally he fell, cursing Ukyo. Ukyo finished him with two more sword thrusts ; then he went in search of Shyusai.

But the guards had been aroused by the noise of the struggle, and had lit lamps in the rooms. They arrested Ukyo, and their captain led him before the Lord, who was much disturbed and very angry. He spoke harshly to Ukyo and said to him : ‘ What reason had you for killing Shyuzen ? You deserve severe punishment for having thus troubled my palace in the night with your crime. Confess your reason for having killed him.’ But Ukyo kept silent. He was brought before the Chief Judge, Tonomo Tokumatsu, who examined him ; and Ukyo confessed. When the Lord was informed of this, he grew calm and ordered Ukyo to be kept in a room in the palace, where he was treated with respect.

Shyuzen’s father was one of the Lord’s hereditary courtiers. He was so outraged by the crime committed against his son that he swore to die by Hara-kiri on the same spot where his son had fallen. His mother also was a favourite of the Princess, the Lord’s wife. She used to take part in the Princess’s poetical gatherings. All night, with bare feet, she wept and mourned her son’s death. She besought the Princess to

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punish the murderer, saying: 'If the Lord pardons the murderer, there is no law or justice in the world.'

Accordingly the Lord grudgingly resolved to condemn Ukyo to die by Hara-kiri. Shyusaï, who had carried the message to Shyuzen, contrived his own death also.

Uneme had at that time received leave of absence from his master to visit his mother at Kanagawa, and did not know that Ukyo had been condemned to death. But Samanosuke wrote to him to say that Ukyo was to kill himself next morning at the Keiyoji temple at Asakusa. Uneme sent Samanosuke his thanks, and hastened at daybreak to the temple without even taking time to bid his mother farewell. As he stood in the chief entrance to the temple, which was in the form of a low tower, several people started talking noisily about Hara-kiri. They said: 'Early this morning a young samurai is coming here to kill himself. They say that he is very beautiful. Even an ugly son is dear to his parents; the father and mother of this young samurai will be smitten with despair at realising that so accomplished a son must die. Surely it is a pity to kill such a splendid young man.' Uneme could hardly restrain his tears on hearing these people. The temple quickly filled, and he hid himself behind

From the Japanese

a door and waited for the arrival of his darling Ukyo.

Shortly after, a fine new litter was seen to approach, borne by several men, surrounded by guards. It stopped opposite the door, and Ukyo descended from it with the utmost calmness. He was wearing a white silk garment embroidered with autumn flowers, having pale blue facings* and a skirt. He stopped for a moment and looked about him. On the tombs were some thousands of wooden tablets bearing the names of those who were buried there. Among them rose a wild cherry tree with white blossom on the upper branches only. Ukyo looked at the pale, fading flowers, and softly murmured an old Chinese poem :

*The flowers wait for next Spring,
Trusting that the same hands shall caress them.
But men's hearts will no longer be the same,
And you will only know that everything changes,
O poor lovers.*

The seat destined for the Hara-kiri had been placed in the garden of the temple. Ukyo calmly seated himself on the gold-bordered mats and summoned his attendant, whose duty it was to cut off the condemned man's head to shorten his suffering after he had manipulated the dagger in his belly. This attendant's name

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was Kajuyu Kitji Kawa, and he was a courtier of the same Lord. Ukyo cut off the wonderful locks of his hair, put them in a white paper and gave them to Kajuyu, praying him to send them to his venerable mother at Horikawa in Kyoto as a keepsake. The priest then began to pray for the salvation of Ukyo's soul.

Ukyo said: 'Beauty in this world cannot endure for long. I am glad to die while I am young and beautiful, and before my countenance fades like a flower.' Then he took a green paper from his sleeve and wrote his farewell poem upon it. This was his poem:

*I loved the beauty of flowers in springtime ;
In autumn the glory of the moon
Was my delight ;
But now that I am looking upon death face to my face,
These joys are vanishing ;
They were all dreams.*

Then he thrust the knife into his belly, and Kajuyu at once struck off his head from behind. At that moment Uneme ran to the mats and cried: 'Finish me also,' and pierced himself. Kajuyu struck off his head. Ukyo was sixteen years old, and Uneme eighteen. The tombs of these two young men remained for a long time in the temple, and Ukyo's farewell poem was inscribed on their joint stones. On the seven-

From the Japanese

teenth day after their death, Samanosuke also died by Hara-kiri, leaving a letter to say that he could not survive his lovers' death.

Such was the tragedy of these
young men who died
for love.

*He Followed his Friend into the
Other World, after Tortur-
ing him to Death*

ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE YEAR THE LORD of the Province Iga dreamed that it snowed, and on the next morning snow began to fall. He said to his attendants: 'It is snowing just as I dreamed last night.' One of the pages, named Sasanosuke Yamawaki, went into another room and brought from it a picture of Fuji Yama by the famous painter Tanyo, and hung it in the recess of the room. The Lord was delighted by this tactful and intelligent action; for to dream that one sees the snow upon Fuji is considered by every superstitious person as a sign of happiness. He compared Sasanosuke's action with that of Seishyônagon, an ancient and famous poetess of the Imperial Court. The Emperor Tjijo had one day asked: 'What will be the appearance of Mount Koro under morning snow?' Then Seishyônagon quickly unrolled the bamboo blind before the north door of the palace. For a great Chinese poet says in one of his poems:

*You may hear the bells of temple Taiji
By raising your head from the pillow,
But to see the snows of Mount Koro
You must unroll the blind before the door.*

From the Japanese

Sasanosuke had considerable tact and intelligence, and he gave his master great pleasure by imitating this famous lady. From that time he became one of the Lord's favourites. When the Lord departed for Yedo to pay his respects to the Shyôgun, Sasanosuke stayed in the Province and was free to do as he pleased. One day he went with three other pages to hunt birds in the fields. They walked for a long time without finding even a sparrow for their trouble, and decided to return home. But behind a clump of bamboos there was a hut where the country folk used to shelter their melons from birds and thieves during the summer, and, as the young men passed this, a pheasant flew out from it. With the help of their bamboos the pages caught the bird; and then several more pheasants flew from the hut. The young men were delighted with such a stroke of luck. But one of them was surprised to see so many pheasants, and made his way into the hut. There he saw two men hiding with a big cage full of these birds. He rebuked the men severely. 'You are committing a crime against the Lord's law. Do you not know that it is forbidden by edict for a man of the people to catch birds?'

While he was questioning the men, one of them escaped, hiding his face with his big rush straw

Comrade - Loves of the Samurai
hat. But the other was seized by the pages and stood in some danger, for the youths were very angry. But Sasanosuke interceded for the wretched man, saying: 'Perhaps these poor fellows caught the birds for food. Let us have mercy, and pardon him at least this time.'

They released the man and returned to their houses, rejoicing at this easy capture. And they tied the birds to plum tree branches. But Sasanosuke, pretending that his foot hurt him, stayed behind and, when the others were out of sight, insistently questioned the man: 'I shall not let you go until you tell me why you and your accomplice hid yourselves in this place. Be frank, and confess that something strange underlies the matter.'

The terrified man at once confessed: 'I am the slave of Hayemon Banno. My master escaped before you seized me.'

'I know Hayemon. He is, in fact, known everywhere. Why did he run away? It is very strange.'

The slave answered: 'My master said to me this morning: "To-day Sasanosuke Yamawaki will come this way to hunt birds; but, after all the samurai who have birded here lately, he will find them very scarce and be disappointed. I am going to provide his sport with some of my

From the Japanese

own birds." That is why my master and I loosed these birds for your pleasure.'

'This young man is very fortunate,' said Sasanosuke, 'to be so appreciated by such a man as Hayemon. I should like to be that youth.' And, taking off his robe, he gave it to the slave for a present. But the slave would have preferred the garment to have been a great bottle full of wine.

Afterwards, this fellow became the messenger between Hayemon and Sasanosuke, and enabled them to enjoy their loves, for they were both brave and honourable men.

But one autumn the tree in the garden of the temple Saïmenji on Mount Nayata bloomed for the second time. The samurai assembled at the temple to enjoy this spectacle, and made a noble pleasure party, feasting on delicious foods and wines. This caused them to forget both the flowers and themselves, and they remained till evening. There were among them several of the Lord's pages. Hayemon had also come to see the flowers and to enjoy himself with the other samurai. Itjisaburo Igarashi, one of the pages, gave him a cup of wine to drink, the half of which he had already drained himself. Hayemon thanked him with most flattering compliments, saying: 'You are a truly pretty boy. I delight in your beauty even while I am

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drinking.' And he let Itjisaburo fill the cup again with heady wine. When he was drunk he took his pleasure with Itjisaburo ; but, on going away, he did not forget his two swords. These are the soul of a samurai.

Someone told Sasanosuke of Hayemon's conduct with Itjisaburo, and he was shaken by anger and jealousy. The next day the weather changed suddenly, it grew cold, and a furious gale began to blow. Sasanosuke waited for Hayemon at the door of his house and, when he arrived, impatiently took him by the hand and led him to a little inner court. Then he locked the door and also every way out of the house, and left Hayemon in that yard. Hayemon thought that Sasanosuke was making ready a love meeting, and waited for some time in the court. But the snow, which had begun to fall in the early evening, was getting thicker. At first Hayemon shook the snow from his shoulders and sleeves ; but soon, although he had sheltered under an old paulownia, he began to suffer greatly. In a husky voice he called to his lover : ' Sasanosuke, I shall die of this cold.' But Sasanosuke mockingly answered him from the first-floor room, where he was amusing himself with the servant : ' I am sure that you are still sufficiently warmed by the wine that pretty page poured out for you.'

From the Japanese

Hayemon groaned : ' You are teaching me a lesson this evening. I shall be very discreet in future. I will not look at a single other pretty boy. Forgive me, Sasanosuke.'

But Sasanosuke was unyielding. ' If you are in earnest, pass me your two swords to prove it. Only so shall I believe you.' And Hayemon passed him his two swords.

Then, to avenge his slighted love, Sasanosuke set about making game of Hayemon. He compelled him take off all his clothes. Then he forced the unhappy man, who stood shivering and naked in the cold, to let his hair fall over his face ; and Hayemon obeyed him. Sasanosuke threw him a triangular white paper with characters written on it, and ordered him to place it on his forehead. In burials, according to the Buddhistic rite, the corpse bears a triangular paper with an inscription on its forehead. And Hayemon obeyed.

The air was frozen and the snow fell upon his naked, shuddering, trembling body. He could hardly breathe. He looked like a corpse indeed. He implored Sasanosuke to forgive and save him, raising his frozen and shivering hands to him. But Sasanosuke remained pitiless. Up in his room he sang at the top of a clear and care-free voice, to the rhythm of a drum, this passage from the famous Nô drama : ' I am

Comrade - Loves of the Samurai

delighted with your excellent prayer for the safety of my soul.' Then, after this moment's inattention, he looked back into the court.

Hayemon had fallen down in pain and agony. Sasanosuke was moved and ran to the court, and tried to revive his lover with medicines and warmth. But it was too late ; Hayemon had died. Sasanosuke joined him in death by Hara-kiri.

In his bedroom Sasanosuke had prepared a feast for himself and his dear Hayemon. There were the most delicious meats, and two cushions were on the bed for Hayemon and himself. His

garments were perfumed. He had in-

tended to pardon Hayemon after
punishing him severely ; but he

had gone too far, and had

thereby killed his lover

and himself.

He Died to Save his Lover

THE SEA SUDDENLY BEGAN TO RAGE, AND the waves hurled themselves angrily upon the coast. The sky was covered with big black clouds, and the storm rushed down from Mount Muko. A violent rain began to fall, and people walking were seized with panic. Among these was a certain samurai, the ambassador of the Lord of Akashi to another Lord of a neighbouring Province. He took shelter with his servant under a big tree, and a boy, about thirteen years old, passed by them carrying a paper umbrella. Seeing the samurai under the tree, the lad gave his umbrella to the servant.

The samurai, whose name was Sakon Hori-koshi, said : ‘ Thank you, dear child, for your kindness ; but tell me, do you not need the umbrella yourself ? ’ The boy’s only answer was to start weeping. Sakon asked him the reason of his grief, and, drying his tears, the other replied : ‘ I am the son of Sluyuzen Magasaka, and my name is Korin. My father left his Lord of the Province of Kai, and we came to the Province of Buzen ; but he died suddenly on the boat, and my mother and I buried him in this village. Since then we have lived here in a little house which we built with

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the help of the obliging villagers, and we make umbrellas for a living. But I cannot use this poor umbrella to protect myself from the rain without sorrowfully thinking that my mother made it with her unfortunate, delicate hands.'

Sakon was greatly touched by this sad story, and went to the village and learned from the mother that the boy's tale was true. When he gave his message to the Governor of the Province, he spoke to him also of Korin. The Lord was moved and commanded Sakon to bring the lad before him ; so Sakon very joyfully presented the boy and his mother to that Lord. Korin was very beautiful : his young, untroubled face was like a serene moon in the autumn sky : his black hair was a lotus, and his voice had the love-murmuring of the nightingale amid young peach blossom.

The Lord made Korin his page and loved him greatly. Time passed and, one evening when Korin was on guard, the Lord tenderly caressed him and whispered : ' Dear sweet Korin, I would even give you my life if you desired it.'

But Korin answered : ' Your flatteries give me little pleasure, my Lord, since it is no true love for a samurai to have an affair with a Lord who is all-powerful. It is even a dishonour for one who esteems a selfless and sincere male love. I would rather have a man of some class for my

From the Japanese

lover, it is true, but he would have to be devoted and utterly true ; a man whom I could love all my life. 'That would be my greatest pleasure.'

The Lord said to him : 'Come, you are not serious !' But Korin insisted : 'My Lord, I mean what I say, and it is the vow of my heart. I swear it on my love as a samurai and before all the gods of Japan.'

The Lord was astonished at the bold frankness of this boy.

One evening the Lord arranged a feast in a summer-house, at which his numerous and beautiful pages were present. Suddenly a suffocating breath filled the garden and caused the trees to shudder. A very great monster came down from the roof, thrusting out its horrible head to look at the company. It stretched its mighty paws and began to maul the noses of the terrified onlookers, who at once surrounded their Lord and hurried back into the palace. Then a loud noise was heard in the garden, as if a mountain had fallen. After midnight a slave came and told the Lord that an immense badger had been found with its head cut off in the tea-house in the garden. The beast was still crooking its claws when it was found, although it was dead.

'Certainly,' said the Lord, 'this evening's monster, when we were in the tea-house, was

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that great badger.* And the loud noise was made by the beast to frighten us. I wonder who was the brave man who dared to kill this portent.' And he questioned all his courtiers, but none of them had killed the badger.

Seven days after this incident, at about two o'clock in the morning, a maiden was heard crying on the roof of the great hall of the palace : ' Korin has killed my father the badger. He will soon die. He will fulfill his destiny.' The voice repeated this threat three times, and was silent. It was then known that Korin was the hero who had killed the badger. Everyone praised his courage, his modesty, and his heroic deed.

One of the courtiers, who had charge of the maintenance of the palace, begged the Lord to have the roof which the badger had damaged put into repair. But the Lord refused, saying : ' There was once a great Chinese Prince who was full of pride, and boasted, saying : " All my words are true, and let no one dare to act against my orders." Then one of his courtiers, called Sihkyo, who was truly loyal and devoted, struck him with a harp to rebuke him for his unconsidered words. And the Prince was grateful to him for his loyalty. He left the wall, which the harp had injured in striking him, just as it was, without any reparation. And I desire to leave

From the Japanese

the damaged roof, that all may remember and admire Korin's courage for ever.'

This adventure only served to increase the ardour of the Lord's love for Korin. Now the second son of Gyobu-Kamo, one of the Lord's courtiers, greatly admired Korin. His name was Sohatjiro ; and his admiration grew to love. He sent many amorous letters to Korin, and Korin was touched by them. But since they could not meet openly, because of the Lord, they waited for a suitable opportunity.

It was the custom to give the palace a thorough cleaning on the thirteenth of December, and for the courtiers to change their old clothes for new and spotless garments. On that day, following a plan conceived by Korin's servant, Sohatjiro was introduced into the palace in a big bamboo basket, in which Korin had already sent some new soft robes to his mother. They succeeded in carrying Sohatjiro into the room adjoining the Lord's bedroom.

Korin pretended that he had pains in the stomach, and kept the screen doors well oiled so as to be able to open them easily in the night. The first time Korin went out of the room, the Lord complained of the noise he made ; but, as the night advanced, the latter fell into a deep sleep and started to snore very loudly. Then Korin, thinking that the moment had come

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when he might join his love, crept into the next room. The two lovers embraced and swore a faithful and changeless love until their deaths. They spoke very quietly, in a whisper, of their amorous pleasures ; but by ill luck it happened that the Lord was wakened by their voices.

He shouted : ‘ There is someone in the next room, and he shall not escape.’ He grasped a spear, which was resting against his pillow, and rushed upon Sohatajiro as he turned to run away. But Korin seized him by the sleeve and said : ‘ It is not worthy of you, Lord, to agitate yourself in this way. Be calm, I beg you. There was no one here but I. I was only uttering certain complaints because of my pain. Forgive me, Lord, for having disturbed your sleep.’

At that moment Sohatajiro started to climb over the wall by the help of a large branch, and the Lord saw him. He sternly questioned Korin ; but the other denied everything. Then, since he had great love for Korin, the Lord thought that this was perhaps another evil badger haunting the garden, and he calmed himself.

But one of the sentinels, Shinroku Kanaï, came and said to the Lord : ‘ I saw the track of a man in this room, and himself with my own eyes in the garden. His hair was disordered and his actions were strange. It must be Korin’s secret lover.

From the Japanese

I advise the Lord to watch Korin.' But Korin answered bravely : ' My dear one has given me his life. He is my faithful lover. Even if I must die, I will not tell his name. I have already said this many times to my Lord.' He was calm and serene.

Two days later Korin was led into the guard-room of the palace, and the Lord said to him : ' I myself will execute you, Korin, as a warning to my courtiers not to deceive me. Prepare to die.' And he took a halberd in his hands.

Korin smiled at him : ' I thank my Lord for wishing to take my life with his own hands, in memory of our past time. I am quite ready.' And he stood up.

Then the Lord cut off his left hand, and asked : ' How do you feel, Korin ? '

Korin held out his right hand to be cut off also, and said : ' With this hand I caressed and loved my lover. You should hate this hand a great deal also.'

The Lord at once cut that hand off. Then Korin turned his back to his master and said : ' My back is very beautiful. No other page was as attractive as I am. Look at my beauty before I die.' His voice was weak and low through the mortal pain he was enduring. Then the Lord cut off his head and, holding it in his hands, wept bitter tears for the death of his favourite.

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The body was buried in the cemetery of the temple Myofukuji. In this temple there was a little pool called 'Glory of the Morning.' Korin's short life was like a morning glory. Everybody accused and blamed his cowardly lover, who had remained hidden after his friend's death. They despised him as we despise a stray dog.

But next year, on the fifteenth of January, Sohatjiro killed Shinroku, who had betrayed Korin to the Lord. He cut off his two hands, as the Lord had done to Korin, and finished him by piercing his throat with his sword. He sent Korin's mother into a safe place. Then he went to the cemetery, wrote a memoir in which he recounted his love for Korin and his vengeance against Shinroku, and killed himself by Hara-kiri on his lover's tomb. As he opened his belly, he traced with his knife the armorial bearings of his Korin there. For seven days after his death his friends and admirers loaded

his tomb with flowers. Korin and
Sohatjiro became an illustrious
example of the love of
comrades.

*The Soul of a Young Man smitten
with Love follows his Lover
on a Journey*

IN A SPRING MEADOW STUDDED WITH GRACEFUL flowers and fresh grasses were two richly and elegantly clothed persons gathering spring flowers. Their faces were shaded by large hats.

A young man stood watching these two graceful silhouettes. He could not see their faces, and was curious to know what beautiful boys they might be. He had great longing to see their delightful faces. Then an old servant woman came out of the tent, and called to them: 'Dear maidens, dear Ofuji and Oyoshi.' The young man was disappointed to find that the two graceful persons were women and not young men. He went swiftly to the town of Sendai, the capital of that Province.

At the end of one of the streets of this town, called Bashyoja Fsuojji, there was a druggist's shop, the owner of which was a certain Hiusuke Ronishi. As our young man passed the shop, a delicious scent of incense escaped from the black curtains at the back of it, separating the commercial part from the living-rooms. The perfume was sweeter than that famous White

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Chrysanthemum incense which only the Lord of the Province possessed. The young man had a keen taste in incense, and was attracted by the perfume.

So he entered the shop and, after buying some common perfumes, said to the proprietor: 'I should like to buy that incense which you are now burning behind the shop. Its perfume is exquisite. Will you give me a little?' But the proprietor answered: 'That incense is my son's favourite, and we cannot sell it.'

The young man was cast down, and lingered for a moment in the shop; for he could not tear himself from the delicious odour; and it was with regret that he withdrew. His name was Itjikuro Ban, and he was a Guard of the Province of Tsugaru, and immensely rich. He was passionately addicted to pederasty and did not waste a thought on women. He was at that particular time going to Yedo to see a celebrated young actor named Dekijima, whose beauty was attracting many men's admiration. His servant had received a letter from a friend at Yedo, praising Dekijima's beauty, and Itjikuro had at once set out to see him. He was a person of great refinement and dignity, of a rank which is seldom met with in so distant a country.

Jutaro, the druggist's son, had seen Itjikuro and fallen in love with him. He thought:

From the Japanese

‘ My fair youth cannot last for ever, and I shall soon be a grown man. Many men love and admire me for my beauty, and I have received more than a hundred love letters ; but I have not read a single one of them. People say that I have no heart. But none of these men had any allure for me. Only this elegant male has troubled me. If he could but return my love, I should love him all my life long. In truth I love him desperately. His manly beauty has made me lose my head. He has fascinated me.’ His too ardent and youthful blood so inflamed him that his passion threw him to the ground. His eyes became set, and he seemed like a madman. He rushed about, holding his long-cherished spaniel in his right hand, while he brandished a sword with the other. No one could go near him. At last, at the risk of her own life, his nurse managed to seize him. She consoled and cheered him : ‘ My dear young master, calm yourself ! We can recall this traveller and arrange your love. I beg you to take command of yourself, dear master.’ The young man then became a little calmer. His parents engaged a travelling priest to pray for his recovery.

Hiusuke, the young man’s father, had, when thirty-five years of age, married a rich merchant’s daughter ; but he had reached the age of sixty

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without having a child. Then he and his wife prayed Tenjin to grant them a child, and remained in prayer for seven days before the shrine of the god. On the evening of the seventh day they dreamed that a blossom fell from a plum tree into the wife's mouth, and that she became with child. They were very happy and grateful to the god Tenjin. Then Jutaro was born.

He was hardly five years old when he began to write Chinese letters without ever having learned them. At thirteen he wrote a story about a meeting between two young lovers who had to separate after a short time on a summer evening. He called the book: *The Love of a Short Summer Evening*. Such was his genius.

Therefore his sudden illness caused great sorrow to his parents and friends. The priest's prayer had no great effect. Jutaro was in a continuous delirium, and grew weaker every day. His pulse became so faint that all hope of saving him was lost. His parents wove a fair white shroud and made ready a beautiful coffin for his burial; for they expected his death at any moment.

But one day, suddenly, the young man raised his weary head and said in a weak voice to his relations: 'I am happy, for this man whom I



From the Japanese

love will pass along the street to-morrow evening. Stop him, and bring him to me.'

Those who heard him thought that he was speaking in his delirium; but to appease him they sent a man named Biwajutji to wait for the stranger at the town gate. And lo! as the sick man had said, the stranger arrived. They brought him to Hiusuke's house, and the father, overcome with emotion, told him of his son's strange illness.

Itjikuro was touched by this love, and said to the father: 'If your son dies, I shall become a priest, that I may pray all my life for the safety of his soul. But I wish to see him before he dies. I should like to say good-bye to him before he leaves this world.'

They entered the young man's room, and the weakened Jutaro at once sat upright on his bed, as soon as he saw him whom he loved. And he recovered immediately, and became as well as he had been before. Everybody was astonished at this thing.

Jutaro said to Itjikuro: 'My body remained here, but my soul has been with you all the time. Perhaps you have not been aware of it. Lord, I love you. One night when you had gone into the inner room at Hiraizumi, after having visited the historic places of Takadatji, my soul slept with you in the same bed and

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loved you without speaking a word. Then I placed a little of my special incense in your sleeve. Have you it still ? ’

Itjikuro took a piece of incense from his pocket and said : ‘ This is indeed strange. I was glad to find this exquisite incense in my sleeve, but I could not explain whence it had come. Now I understand, and it is a miracle. I did not know that we had made a contract of love together. ’

The young boy replied : ‘ I wish to give you a proof of that contract which will make you believe me. ’ He took a broken piece of incense from his pocket and, putting the two pieces together, showed that they fitted exactly ; also their perfume was the same. Itjikuro was then convinced, and they swore to love each other always, even in future existence. Itjikuro returned to his birth town, taking Jutaro on his horse, and the young boy’s relations gladly agreed to give him to his lover.

. . .

The Tragic Love of Two Enemies

THE LORD OF THE PROVINCE ETJIGO WAS called Jibudayu Mashikura. One day his chief minister, Gyobu Tokuzawa, summoned his master's first page, Senpatji Akanashi, who was in the vestibule with the other pages, whispering: 'I have something to say to you, Akanashi. Come with me.' And, leading him to a secret place behind the trees in the garden, he said to him: 'My master has ordered me to choose someone very strong to kill his courtier Shingokei Dizaki, and I can think of no one better fitted than you for this mission. Go then to Shingokei's house and kill him. I am sure that my master has an excellent reason for having him destroyed.'

Senpatji asked: 'What is the offence which Shingokei must expiate?' But the minister himself did not know. Then Senpatji said to him: 'I have confidence in your word, yet I should like to hear this order from my master's own lips.' So the minister brought Senpatji before the Lord, who, as Senpatji kneeled before him, said: 'Senpatji, you must kill Shingokei, as my minister has told you.'

Senpatji returned to his house very sad at having to kill Shingokei, who was one of his

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best friends. Nevertheless he went to that man's house and, after a short conversation, killed him, saying: 'It is at the command of my master.'

Shingokei's slaves tried to seize the murderer; but Senpatji calmed them by saying: 'I have acted on my master's order, and you must obey him.'

The Lord confiscated all Shingokei's property and his wealth. His widow was inconsolable. She was the daughter of a retired samurai of the neighbouring Province, and had married Shingokei the year before with customary rites, for Shingokei and her father were old friends. They loved each other tenderly, and her husband's death stunned her. She wished to die with him and follow him into the other world; but she was pregnant, and could not kill herself because of the child she carried in her womb. So she left the Province, bitterly bewailing her husband's and her own sad destiny. After a long solitary journey full of hardship she came to another very remote Province in the mountains, and decided to live there. Some time after, quite alone and without assistance, she gave birth to a son. She took infinite care of the child, working with her needle to gain a livelihood; for in all the village there was not a single woman who could sew. The two lived thus together in poverty in that place.

From the Japanese

Time passed, and the son reached his fourteenth year. His features and his manners were gentle and refined, and he recalled to his mother that cherished husband she had lost. She had kept a Corean harp and two swords fashioned by Kunimune, a celebrated ancient Japanese armourer, which her parents had given her when she left them. When she felt sad she used to play on the harp to distract herself and her dear son. In this manner they lived in their secluded hut.

The destiny of man is surely inconstant and full of surprise. Senpatji Akanashi was banished by his master for some trifling offence ; and, after travelling through several Provinces, he settled in a town near the hut in which the mother and son were living. They never met each other, and had no suspicion that they existed at such proximity. But one day Senpatji was invited by his friend Kurobatji Toriyama to hunt birds. On their way back they chanced to pass the widow's cottage, and heard the sound of the Corean harp which the mother was playing. They were charmed by this music and stopped to listen. Slipping through a hole in the hedge, they even peeped through a crack in the bamboo wall. A very beautiful woman of about thirty-five was playing the harp. She seemed to belong to some famous family of the high nobility, and

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to have disguised herself to live in this wretched hovel. Sitting by her side was her son Shynosuke, studying the writing in a book which his mother had written herself. He was extremely handsome. The interested spectators were surprised to find such distinguished persons in this lonely village. They caused the door to be opened, and stood for some minutes at the entrance to apologise for their intrusion. After a short visit they went away.

Senpatji was struck by the beauty of the young boy; he returned to the hut and became the intimate friend of its inhabitants. Little by little Senpatji and Shynosuke conceived a deep love for each other, and Senpatji took both mother and son with him to his town and there maintained them. In this way a year went peacefully.

Then the mother noticed that Senpatji was very like the man who had killed her husband. One day she questioned him concerning his family and past life; then she became certain that he was the assassin of her husband, the father of her son. Next day she said to the boy: 'Senpatji killed your father before you were born. He was compelled to do so by the command of his master, who was also your father's master; but he is none the less your father's murderer. Kill him, and avenge your father.'

Her son was at first dumb with astonishment.

From the Japanese

Then he reasoned with his mother : ‘ Senpatji did not kill my father out of personal enmity. He bore my father no hatred. He could not act otherwise, since the Lord commanded it. He is not really my father’s enemy. If you wish to avenge him, it is the Lord Jibudayu whom I ought to kill, not my friend Senpatji. We owe him much gratitude for his kindness. Think, mother : I cannot kill him. We have no right to kill him.’

But his mother was angry, and cried : ‘ I know that you cannot kill him ; you are too cowardly and soft. If I had known that he was my husband’s murderer I should never have accepted his help. I would rather have starved to death than see you form a friendship with him. But I tell you that you are wrong to abandon your revenge because of your love, and, if you do so, you smirch the honour of a samurai. If you are such a coward I no longer know you. I will avenge him myself.’

And, seizing her dagger, she rushed forth. But her son caught her by the sleeve, and said : ‘ If you are so firmly determined to avenge my father, there is nothing for me to do but obey you. I shall kill him with my own hands. I pray you not to do it yourself, mother. I beg you to be calm.’ And he made ready his vengeance.

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His love with Senpatji had already lasted for more than two years, and yet he was now compelled to destroy that man to whom he had vowed both affection and assistance for ever. He could not, however, kill him without telling him his reason for doing so. So that evening he called Senpatji to his room, but he was pale and weighed down with sorrow. Senpatji at once perceived this, and said to him : ' Dear Shynosuke, you seem very sad this evening. Are you in trouble? Tell it to me, that I may share it.'

Shynosuke sighed, touched by these gentle words ; and Senpatji again urged him to open his heart. Then Shynosuke confessed to him : ' Oh, what a wretched business is this human life ! I am the son of Shingokei Dizaki. You know yourself what you did to my father. I am aware that you could not do otherwise, and that you acted at your master's command. But as the son of a samurai I cannot overlook the matter. At that time I was still in my mother's womb. Truly I am sorry to kill you, for you have been good to my mother and myself. I am in great distress.'

Senpatji sighed : ' Alas, it is indeed a strange world ! I never suspected that you were his son. Yes, I killed your father. But I am happy, O Shynosuke, to die at your hands. Come, kill me,

From the Japanese

and avenge your father.' And he threw away his swords and offered his neck to Shynosuke.

Shynosuke cried : ' No, take your sword and fight with me. I cannot kill you in cold blood, who have been so good to us.' His mother was watching this scene from the next room, and called her son to her, saying : ' I admire both you and Senpatji. Each is a man of honour. Love each other again for this one night. I wish to grant you such an interval. Celebrate your separation, but to-morrow without fail, O Shynosuke, avenge your father.'

Then Shynosuke brought dishes and cups of wine, and the two rejoiced. The mother slept in the next room, and Senpatji and Shynosuke lay down together.

When the woman woke in the morning, they were both silent, lying in the same bed. She called her son : ' Rise up, lazy boy ! ' But there was no answer. She went into the room and turned back the blanket which covered them, and saw that Shynosuke had pierced Senpatji's heart with his sword passed through his own breast and out at his back.

His mother stood there for a long time overwhelmed at the sight of these two lovers' bodies, and then, in her sorrow and distress, killed herself in the same room. Surely
a sad and a tragic tale.

*They Loved Each Other even to
Extreme Old Age*

THERE WAS A LITTLE SHOP IN A STREET OF the Yanaka district of Yedo, with a narrow bill hung in the doorway which read: 'We have a remedy for superfluous hairs. It is equally good for many other ailments.' Copy-books for students were also sold there; but since these were written by the hand of an old man, no one bought them. A bamboo blind hung between the worn and dirty screens. The trade of that shop was negligible, and the proprietor did not make enough out of it to live by. A graceful pine tree rose above the sloping roof; summer chrysanthemums flourished in the garden, and there was a well of pure water and a pail on the end of a pole. Sometimes birds came and perched on the pail.

The owner of the shop was an old samurai, who had abandoned his career as a samurai when he was still young. He lived on the money he had obtained by the sale of his former garments and his precious family heirlooms. He had only one intimate friend, who was of the same age as himself; and they very often played chess together. His only other companion was

From the Japanese

a little dog. He had no other visitors, except his few rare customers. Once, at the end of a hot summer day, he removed his clothes, which were soaked with sweat, and took a bath in his garden. His friend wept at the sight of his worn old body, and tenderly caressed the poor bent back. With his voice full of tears he said, as he washed his friend's wrinkled and bony shoulders : ' A certain great Chinese poet said in one of his poems : " A fine young man proudly sang the beauty of his body, admiring himself in a mirror. But that was yesterday. To-day, alas ! he is no more than a poor old man worn out with wrinkles, and his head is covered with grey hair." That is exactly our own story. We have sung together hand in hand without a care when we were young. But now it is only a distant memory and a dream.' Then the two old men joined hands and wept tears of regret for their past, while the hot water in the little tub grew cold.

These two men were samurais who had been born in the Province of Tjikuzen. The younger's name was Mondo Tamashima, and he had been celebrated for the beauty of his face. Many people took him for a young Princess. The elder was called Hayemon Toyoda, and was a skilful marksman. He fell in love with Mondo, who returned his love

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sincerely. Mondo was sixteen years old and Hayemon nineteen when their love began. They were strongly devoted to each other, and vowed an affection deeper than the sea.

But another samurai loved Mondo. He was jealous of the two friends' love, and contrived all sorts of devices to calumniate them, and tried to separate them by the agency of treacherous persons. But one dark night the two lovers met and killed these persons. Then they fled in a boat and hid themselves for a long time, and finally came to Yedo. There they lived as Guards, concealing their true condition. Mondo was now sixty-three years old, and Hayemon sixty-six; and through all these years their hearts had not changed. They had never taken any interest in a woman. They had been genuine pederasts. Hayemon continued to consider Mondo as his young lover. He arranged his thin hair with his own hands in the style of a page's hair, using much perfumed oil. Mondo's brow was like that of a woman, and he took great care of his person; he polished his nails with aromatic wood, and shaved himself carefully. There is no doubt that these two old men continued their amorous encounters up to an advanced age.

Male love is essentially different from the ordinary love of a man and a woman; and that

From the Japanese

is why a Prince, even when he has married a beautiful Princess, cannot forget his pages. Woman is a creature of absolutely no importance ; but sincere pederastic love is true love. Both of these men detested woman as a vile garden worm. They never associated with their neighbours, and when a near-by husband and wife quarrelled and started breaking the crockery and the doors, these two old men did not try to reconcile them : on the contrary, they encouraged the husband, crying : ' Be brave, O man, and strong ! Kill her, beat her to death ! Drive her from your house, and take a handsome man instead of her ! ' They used to shake their fists at the woman, and thought the man feeble and lacking in courage.

In the spring Mount Uyeno is thronged with visitors who come to see the cherry trees loaded with blossom, and at such time people drink excellent wines, and many get drunk. As the folk passed Hayemon's house, he used to distinguish the women's voices from the men's. When he heard men's voices, he ran out in the hope of seeing some beautiful youth : but when he heard women's voices, he shut his door and remained perfectly indifferent.

One day it started to rain, and several women who were making a pleasure party were caught in the shower. They all ran for shelter beneath

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the eaves of Hayemon's house, and chattered together : ' If we knew who lived here, we could get ourselves invited to tea and rest till the evening ; and perhaps they would lend us umbrellas. They might even invite us to an agreeable supper. It is a great pity that we are not their friends.' One of them, who was older, bolder and less scrupulous than the rest, dared to open the door a little and cast a glance into the house.

Then Hayemon in fury seized a bamboo cane and drove the woman away, crying : ' Get out of here, you vile female ! You witch, you very poisoner, begone ! ' When the terrified woman had run away, he purified the place with salt and clean sand. It is an ancient Japanese custom to spread salt and sand to purify a place which has been polluted. Without doubt there was never in all the great town of Yedo a fiercer enemy of women.

*A Samurai becomes a Beggar
through his Love for a Page*

A YOUNG SAMURAI NAMED GUZAYEMON Toyawa lived in a house by himself in his master's palace near Toranomon. One day, being at liberty, he went out for a walk, as he was tired of his bachelor solitude. When young he had been famous for his manly beauty, and had lived in the town of Matsuyama in the Province of South Shikoku ; but he had at length left his former master and come to Yedo. There he was soon engaged by another Lord at the same salary which he had received at Matsuyama. His house was in the Shibuya district.

Mid-spring had come, and the weather was delightful. He went to visit the shrine of the god Tudo at Meguro. Passing by a little waterfall in the temple garden, he saw a beautiful young man. This youth was wearing a large hat decorated with silk and kept in place by a pale blue ribbon : his wide-sleeved robe was as purple as the glory of morning flowers : he carried at his girdle two swords in wonderfully-ornamented scabbards : he was walking at ease carrying a branch of yellow flowers in his hand. His beauty was such that Guzayemon for a

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moment asked himself if the god Roya had not taken human form, or if a peony had not come to life and was walking in the spring sunlight.

He was fascinated by the young man, who was already accompanied by two shaven courtiers and several servants, and followed him. Guzayemon thought that he must be the favourite page of some noble Prince. He was profoundly disturbed, and followed him.

The two shaven courtiers were singing gay songs, for they were a little drunk. The young boy went towards a palace near the shrine of Koroku, and entered it by a door crowned with violet paulownia leaves. Guzayemon asked a Guard what this palace might be, and learned that the young man's name was Shyume Okuyama, the favourite page of his master.

Guzayemon dreamed of the boy all night. Next day he stood before the palace door, hoping to see the page ; but in vain. Returning to his house, he could not keep his mind on his work. He pretended to be ill, and resigned from his service. He then went to live in a little house in a street in the Kojimachi district. Since his time was all his own, he walked every day before the palace door, from the twenty-third of May till the month of October ; but he never saw the young man again. He had no means of sending him a love-letter, and there-

From the Japanese

fore suffered cruelly from his passion by day and by night.

Then the young page's master received permission from the Shyôgun to return to his own country, and the twenty-fifth day was fixed for his departure. Guzayemon decided to follow the page ; so he sold all the furniture of his house, shut it up, and paid his debts to the grocer, the fishmonger and the wine merchant ; he dismissed his young servant, and followed the train of the Lord.

The train stopped for their first night in the town of Kanayawa, and next day took up their quarters at Oysso. That evening the page went out in a litter to visit historic Shigitatsusawa. He opened the door of his litter a trifle and murmured the famous poem which Saigyô, the Buddhist priest, had written concerning that palace :

*Although I have renounced all human emotion
As a priest of Buddha,
I am seized with deep sadness
When I find myself here at Shigitatsusawa
On an Autumn evening.*

Guzayemon could only behold his love from a distance ; yet the other also perceived him, and their looks crossed. But they were immediately separated, and Guzayemon did not see the

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page again until a day when they were going along a rocky road at the summit of Mount Utsunoyama. Guzayemon was standing behind a big rock at the side of the road, and threw a glance into the young man's litter ; then, in spite of himself, he began to weep with emotion. The young man turned his gracious face to him, and Guzayemon became more than ever inflamed.

He did not see his page again before they reached the town of Tsuyama in the Province of Mimasaka, and there he caught but a bare glimpse of him. That was his last chance, for soon the Lord arrived safely in the Province of Yezumo. There Guzayemon became a labourer to gain his food, for he had spent all his money during the long journey from Yedo to Yezumo.

In the following year the Lord again set out for Yedo, to pay his court to the Shyôgun in April. Guzayemon followed in his train a second time ; but he only beheld the page thrice during the whole journey : once in the ferry at Kuwana, the second time on the steep hill of Shihomizaki, and the last time in the grove of Suzuga, quite close to Yedo. Then the Lord remained for a whole year at Yedo.

Guzayemon went every day to the palace in the hope of seeing his love. With the life that he

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was leading, all his refinement and distinguished appearance had gone from him. He was haggard and miserable. No one could have discerned in him a fallen samurai, whose beauty had once been famous. His health was also affected.

Next year he again followed the Lord from Yedo to his Province. He looked like a beggar, so greatly had he suffered. His clothes had more than one hole in them, and his sleeves were torn. But he kept his two swords, which are the soul of a samurai.

In the outskirts of a town called Kanaya he saw the page's litter. And Shyume saw Guzeyemon from his litter, and understood that Guzeyemon loved him. He was deeply touched by such an attachment, and wished to speak to him. So he descended from his litter, while the train stopped for a short time on Mount Sayono Nakayama, and stood waiting for Guzeyemon to approach. But Guzeyemon was too far off to come near him, and they saw each other no more on that occasion. Guzeyemon did not indeed behold him again during the whole of that journey, though he did not cease to think of him.

His feet were worn and bleeding from his long walking ; he had no more money, and ended by becoming a beggar by the roadside. But he

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clung desperately to his miserable life. He protected his body from rain, snow and wind with a thin reed hat and a garment of woven grass. He shivered when it blew cold. During the day he stayed in a vile thatched hut in a field, and at evening, when Shyume returned home to his master's palace, stood near the palace door and consoled himself by watching the dear lad from a distance.

One rainy evening Shyume called his servant, Kuzayemon, because he felt lonely and very bored after his day's service, and said to him : ' I was born of a family of samurai, and I have not yet killed a living man with my sword. Yet I must have practice in case of a battle. I cannot be a good warrior if I have no exercise in the art of killing. Kuzayemon, I wish to try to kill a living man this evening.'

His servant rebuked him : ' Dear master, you are an excellent swordsman, and very expert with your weapon. You are not inferior to any of the courtiers of this company. You have nothing to fear in this matter, nothing at all. Heaven will punish you if you kill a living man without sufficient reason, merely from caprice. I beg you to wait for a more serious occasion to exercise your skill.'

Shyume explained to him : ' I do not wish to kill an honourable man, dear Kuzayemon.

From the Japanese

Over there by the street gutter there is a beggar, who seems entirely wretched. He cannot love his life. Ask him to give me his life, after I have satisfied all his desires.'

The servant answered : ' Even in that miserable state he will not wish to die.' Yet he went up to the beggar and said : ' Dear friend, I have a favour to beg of you. This human life is, as you know, but a vain thing. It is also as uncertain as one of this evening's showers. We cannot know how long it may last and when it will cease. You have come to a truly lamentable condition, and I think that life does not offer you much pleasure. My young master has commanded me to ask if you would be willing to give him your life to die by his sword, because he wishes to practise his weapons upon a living person. But, before killing you, he will allow you to continue for thirty days, during which time he will cause you to live splendidly. He will engage a priest to perform a fine funeral for you also. What do you think of this ? '

The beggar answered : ' I know that I shall not live until next Spring, and every night I suffer because of the cold air. I have no friends, and none will care what has become of me. I am quite ready to be killed by your master.'

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The servant then led him to Shyume, supporting his weak and trembling body with his hands, and told of the success of his mission. They first made the man take a bath to wash himself; then they gave him clean clothes and a servant's room. They fed him for ten days on the most delicious dishes, according to his desire. On the appointed evening, when it was already late, he was led to a secluded part of Shyume's garden.

Shyume looked at his pale, haggard face, and asked: 'Are you really willing to make me this present of your life?'

The beggar stretched out his neck to receive the mortal wound, saying: 'I am quite ready, Lord. Cut off my head.' Shyume raised his skirt, so as to be more free in his movement, and went up to the other, brandishing his sword. He struck him with it, but it did not wound him at all; for it was quite without an edge. The beggar and the servant were astonished at this. But Shyume dismissed all his attendants and shut the gate of the garden. He was now alone with Guzayemon, whom he led into his apartment, saying: 'I recognise your face: you must have been a samurai.' But the beggar denied it.

Shyume insisted: 'You are lying. I know that you love me passionately. Open your



From the Japanese

heart to me, and do not hide your thought. If you keep your secret now, when will you tell it ; and to whom, if not to me ? Or am I mistaken in thinking that you love me ? ’

The beggar drew from his bosom a little packet wrapped in bamboo bark, and opened it. From it he took a purse of gold silk which he offered to Shyume, saying with tears : ‘ My heart is locked in that.’ Shyume unfastened the purse, and took out sixty leaves of thin paper on which Guzayemon had written the story of his love, from the first day that he saw Shyume near the shrine of the god Tudo, up to that last day when he had waited before the door.

Shyume read five of the leaves, and then replaced them in the purse, putting the latter in his pocket. He summoned his servants and ordered them to guard Guzayemon. Next morning he went to the Lord and said : ‘ Lord, a man is madly in love with me, and I cannot find the cruelty to reject him. But if I accept his love, I disobey you, Lord, and show myself ungrateful towards you. I do not know what to do. I have no idea. Lord, I pray you to kill me with your sword and free me from my dilemma.’

The Lord asked him for the details of this story, and Shyume gave him the papers written by Guzayemon, which the Lord read secretly in

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his room. Then he summoned Shyume and told him to return home and await his orders, until he should have weighed his decision. Shyume answered: 'My lover is in my house, and if you send me back I shall love him. Let me die here by Hara-kiri.'

After a little thought the Lord sentenced Shyume to be confined in his own house, whereupon Shyume quickly returned home and made Guzayemon assume the dress of a true samurai, and gave him two swords. Shyume and Guzayemon then loved each other madly and passionately, expecting every minute to be condemned to death by command of their master. This ardent love, at the price of life itself, was daring and audacious. But after twenty days the Lord pardoned Shyume, and gave him twenty suits of man's clothing and much money, saying to him: 'Send your samurai back to Yedo.'

Shyume was very grateful for his Lord's kindness and generosity. Without delaying until next day, he made ready for Guzayemon's departure.

When he reached the Province of Yedo, Guzayemon sent back all Shyume's men who had accompanied him. Instead of going to Yedo, he climbed up the high mountain of Katsororaju, in the Province of Yamato, and there lived

From the Japanese

as a hermit, remaining on the mountain and
seeing no one. He called himself Mugento, the
priest of dream. He cut off his hair. He
spent all his days watching the cool
springs flow from the rocks
beside his dwelling.

*An Actor loved his Patron, even
as a Flint Seller*

THERE WAS ONCE A CELEBRATED FEMALE-character-actor named Sennojyo. He had made his first appearance on the stage at the age of fourteen, and at forty-two years of age was still so popular that people loved to see him portray feminine characters. His greatest success was in the drama called *While going toward Kawashi to an assignation*, which was performed for three years at Yedo.

But one autumn an epidemic disease of the spinal marrow broke out in Yedo, and to this Sennojyo fell a victim. His back grew bent and deformed, and he altogether lost his grace of body. But he was gifted with high talent and intelligence, and did not lose his popularity because of his disease. Many employers even found it difficult to secure him for their comedies ; for, when he was a little drunk, his cheeks became rosy, giving him such charm that many men fell in love with him. Several well-known priests lost their heads about him, and spent so much money to have him that they were obliged to sell the precious relics of their temples to gain an interview. Some of these were even so mad as to sell the holy trees

From the Japanese

of the sacred forests, for which they were driven from their temples and became beggars. Many clerks also spent their employers' money to see Sennojyo privately, and ruined their masters.

Once, when he was still young, Sennojyo took his diary from a little private chest. Its title was *My experiences with many men*, and it was a very interesting record. He started to read it through. He had noted down in it all his impressions, from the very first day, of widely different people. Sometimes he would go to a samurai's room. By the mere caress of his hand he would soothe a demon in an angry man. He would make men of refinement or priests even out of farmers. In a word, he had treated each of his different patrons in the way most suitable to him. He shut the diary with a smile. But suddenly he thought of one of his patrons who had been most devoted to him. Sennojyo did not know where this man was. That evening a violent gale blew up, and snow began to fall. The mountains to the north of Kyoto were already white. A wretched-looking man was standing under the Gojyo bridge. He lived on the bank of the river Kamo, and there he slept during the night. In the morning he gathered pebbles from the river Kurama and sold them in Kyoto for gun flints. Those that

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he had been unable to sell he threw away in the evening. His life under this bridge was very miserable.

He had formerly been one of the rich men of the Province of Owari. He had been given over to male love. He had written a book in four volumes, called *A Collection of Stories Pure as Crystal*, in which he had recorded in every detail everything that he knew of any of Sennojyo's actions and gestures. In it he mentioned even such a trifling matter as a black mole on the actor's back. He had loved Sennojyo with all his heart from the first day the latter had appeared upon the stage; but some time afterwards he had wearied of all earthly joys and had hidden himself away from society.

Sennojyo had been greatly grieved at not being able to find this man again, and always bitterly regretted his disappearance. Someone informed him that his patron was living miserably on the bank of the Kamo, and he burst into tears, saying: 'Truly the destiny of man is variable. If he had let me know of his situation, I should not have left him in such misery. I have written him many letters to his house in Owari, but he has never answered me. I sorrowfully thought he had forgotten me, as frequently happens with us poor actors.'

From the Japanese

That night Sennojyo received his patrons in the tea-house with the greatest cordiality ; but at dawn he went to the bank of the river Kamo to look for his former patron. He went alone, without a servant, along the gritty and pebbly river bank, with the river flowing at his side. At last he reached the bridge, and called : ‘ Samboku, my dear Owari patron ! ’ But no one answered him. It was the twenty-fourth of November, and not yet very light ; therefore he could not distinguish the faces of the wretched men lying under the bridge. There were many beggars and vagabonds there.

Then he remembered that his patron had a little scar on his neck ; so he started to examine all the sleepers closely, and after a long search found his man. ‘ You are cruel,’ he said. ‘ I have kept calling you, and you never answered.’ And he wept for pity and joy at finding his old lover again, and chatted with him a little of past days and of their former love. The morning air was fresh, and to warm the two of them Sennojyo poured out the wine which he had brought, and they both drank. When the sky grew light in the East he could distinguish his old lover’s features. He had lost all refinement, and Sennojyo was very sorry for this. He tenderly caressed the scurfed feet, and lay down with the old man under the bridge.

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Day came and people began to pass over the bridge; and the time came for the announcement of the theatre programme. Sennojyo was obliged to retire secretly, for he could not stay there in the sight of all. He said to the old man: 'I beg you to wait for me here this evening. I shall come and take you back to my house with me.' But the old man had no wish to accept such a proposal. This meeting with his former lover had, in fact, troubled him. He wished to continue in his simple and serene obscurity. Therefore he disappeared.

Sennojyo sought him through all Kyoto, but in vain. He collected all the gun flints that his lover had left behind, and made a tomb of them among the bamboos, in a corner of the field of Nii-Kamano at Higashiyama. His lover's favourite tree had been the violet paulownia, so he planted one beside the tomb. He

engaged a priest, who lived in a little hut
near the field, to pray for his lover's
and his own soul. People named
this tomb, 'The new tomb
of love.'

*Letter from a Buddhist Priest telling
his Friend that his Lover comes
to him*

DEAR FRIEND IN THE TEACHING OF BUDDHA:
The cherry trees in flower at Kyoto so troubled me that I left the capital last spring. I send you this letter by a man who is going to visit the city. I hope that you are zealous in our religion at your temple, and without disturbance.

My hut must have become the resort of mice and rats since it has been unoccupied ; though there is not a single piece of fish left there for such guests to enjoy. You may laugh at my poverty, dear friend. No one will regret the chrysanthemums when they fade in my garden. But if by chance you should be passing near my hut, enter, and, since I have given you the key, let the weary passers-by come in. I buried some nuts and potatoes under the north door : use them, for otherwise they will be spoiled. Takenaka sent me these provisions, and I do not like to waste them.

And now I shall speak to you of myself. As you know, my eternal and incurable weakness is to fall in love with some pretty boy ; and I confess to you that I have an affair here with

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an entrancing lad, and I hesitate to return to Kyoto.

Last year, on leaving the capital, I went to my friend at Okayama in the Province of Bizen. He received me very hospitably, but I quickly grew weary there; so I went by boat to the Province of Higo, where I have a friend who is a poet and a priest of the temple of Kiyomasa, and I lived with him.

One evening I was in his wonderful garden, enjoying the fresh breeze after a hot day. An artificial stream flowed between fanciful rocks and grass-covered hillocks which had been built up there. The effect was as the dwelling of some mountain hermit, delighting in spiritual beauty and the pure pleasures of the soul. The faint song of a cuckoo rose from the density of the mighty pines behind the temple, so poignantly pure that I thought I had never heard such beautiful song in Kyoto. I thought that a cuckoo, singing in the evening in so sacred a place as the temple of Kiyomasa, would make a fitting subject for a poem. I began to compose a poem in my head, and was thinking out the rhymes and the arrangement of the syllables.

Then there came out of the temple the whole of the High Priest's train. Amongst them walked a very beautiful page, about sixteen years old,

From the Japanese

so lovely that I thought I had never seen such charm and elegance even in the flowering capital. I was indeed surprised to see so beautiful a page in such a remote district as the Western Province of Higo. I was greatly troubled by him. Formerly I had become very weary of the luxurious and artificial life of our capital ; but at that moment, in this distant country, I felt a temptation which disturbed all the peace of my spirit. My soul was quite thrown into confusion, and my heart began to beat violently with desire. When the High Priest left the temple after his prayer, I watched the page from behind a screen, and my love grew with each minute. I asked my friend who this beautiful page was, and he told me that he was the second son of a noble family, whose parents had entrusted him to the High Priest because he wished to become a priest and to renounce the pleasures of this world.

My love became so violent that it seemed to me that my soul was breaking into a thousand pieces ; and it was, indeed, torn. I lost my calm, and in vain gravely reproached myself. I could not forget this beautiful young man. At last in despair, without caring what my friend thought, I wrote the page a love-letter, pleading the cause of my despairing soul. I hoped to gain a little peace if he should only know of my

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love, without going nearly so far as to return it.

This is what I wrote :

‘ DEAR AND ROYAL LORD,

‘ I saw you yesterday evening when you were crossing the garden in the High Priest’s train, and was moved by your beauty. You are so lovely that the most famous beauties of China, such as Taitjio and Token, the fairest young men there, or Hi or the Empress Yo cannot excel you. I am a priest, but, alas ! I have also the passions of a man, and I confess that I love you with all my being. Lord, I am a humble and insignificant priest, passing through this Province : you are of a noble family. To aspire to your love is, for me, as impossible and unfeasible as to climb up a ladder to heaven. I admit that it is impudent of me even to love you ; but I write to you because I hope to win some satisfaction and contentment by simply letting you know that I do so. I am like a fly in a spider’s web, I am helpless. I bring you my heart in these clumsy words.

‘ Since I saw you my heart has not ceased to beat violently. When I am alone, flaming tears run down my cheeks. I am in actual agony ; and my words in this letter are all confused. Your face and your whole person are so refined

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and elegant. I have heard it said that you are the most splendid flower of the Western Provinces ; but to me you seem the most precious jewel in the universe. For indeed your beauty exceeds all the flowers of the world. For me, you are as princely a beauty as the Empress Seishi, or the celebrated poetess Komachi, or the young Yukishira* or the new-born Narihira. I cannot forget you even in my sleep ; and when I awake I am excruciated. I have prayed the god Fuyisaki to have pity on my unhappy love. I wish to drown myself in the river Kikutji, to put an end to my pain. I am ready to sacrifice my life for one evening's love with you. One evening of love with you is more precious than a thousand years of life. I shall gladly do all that you command me. I would rather have half an hour's life than drag out mere miserable existence for a hundred years. From morning to evening, by day and by night, your face does not leave me, and I endure a thousand deaths for love of you. I am wretched. I am cursed by a cruel Karma.'

But, my dear friend, I am blessed rather than cursed. He has read my letter and sent me such a kind answer. Oh, how tender and sympathetic he is ! I am happy and contented ; I am the happiest man under the sun. I cannot

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speaking enough of his kindness, for he is truly good. That is all that I can say now. Presently, as soon as he finds an opportunity, he is coming to spend a whole evening with me. All that troubles me is that the day is not yet fixed. I know that this waiting for the day is an agony which all lovers have to endure ; and I comfort myself by telling myself so.

I wish I could show you this noble young man. His name is Aineme Okayima. When he comes to see me, we shall drink wine together and have a pleasant conversation by ourselves. I should like the night to last for ever, and that the dawn should never come to put an end to our meeting. This is all that I can tell you at present : there is nothing further. I hope to be calmer and more balanced after seeing him.

Till then, farewell, dear comrade,

From your far-distant friend.

At Last Rewarded for his Constancy

WHEN HIDEYOSHI RULED JAPAN AFTER THE Ashikaya dynasty had died out, he lived at Fushimi ; and all the Lords and Princes of all the Provinces of Japan were obliged to live near him.

At that time the Lord of the Province of Izumi had a page named Inosuke Murola who was most beautiful and very brave. He was as graceful and delicate as the cherry flower, but his soul was as fearless as the god of war. At first sight you would have taken him for a charming Princess of royal blood. The Lord preferred him to all his other pages. But another page was jealous of the favours shown to Inosuke, and made a completely false and outrageous accusation against him, which he wrote on paper and left in the hall of the palace. The overseer of the palace found the paper and took it to his master, since it was his duty to report even the most insignificant thing to him ; and the Lord was furious at his favourite's scandalous behaviour. He was so angry that he dismissed Inosuke from his service, without inquiring whether the accusation were well founded, and banished him from Fushimi without giving him any reason for his disgrace.

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He ordered his courtiers to keep a strict watch over him, and not to let him stir one step from his house. Inosuke, the victim of false testimony, was confined in a little cottage with his old mother, and was strictly guarded. The doors were locked, and not even his relatives were allowed to come to see him.

His mother and he were completely ignorant of the cause of their disgrace; therefore Inosuke could not commit Hara-kiri, which would otherwise have been the only expedient for a samurai reduced to such a pass. All the servants, anxious for their own interest, abandoned him one after another, fearing to place themselves in the wrong by remaining with a samurai disgraced.

Then came times of great hardship for Inosuke and his mother. Grieving for her son's sorrow, she cooked his meals, a thing which she had never done. And her son was pained to see his mother compelled to such base and menial labour. He used to go and fetch water from a well in the garden, and help her in the kitchen. In this miserable manner they dragged on their lives. The days passed, and the months; even the years went by and the Spring seasons returned. Mother and son were astonished by the quick passage of time. Then their means of existence grew scant, and they sold their last

From the Japanese

possessions. At last they were at the end of their resources.

One evening the mother said despairingly to her son : ' Dear Inosuke, we have nothing more to live on, and, indeed, to continue this existence is merely to prolong our suffering. I think that it is better to die than to remain in such a pitiable state. If I do not die a beautiful death by committing suicide, it is no shame; for I am an old woman. But you are a young samurai, and you must pass honourably. Be brave, my son, and go first. I shall follow you straightway.'

Inosuke calmly answered : ' Yes, mother.' He did up his hair, bared his breast, and serenely sat down on a mat. He was already holding the knife in his hand and preparing to kill himself, when there crept into the room a little dog which seemed to belong to some good family. It was white with some black spots, and had a collar with a little bell. Tied to its neck were two packets wrapped in paper. It wagged its tail very familiarly, and went up to Inosuke as if it wanted to speak to him.

The astonished mother untied the packets and opened them. One contained some provisions, and a note on which was written this sentence : ' It is easy to die.' In the other packet were some comforts and another note with this

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sentence: 'But it is more difficult to live for honour's sake.'

In this manner someone had sent them help just as they were despairing. Mother and son wondered who in the world this person could have been who wished them well. Someone at least knew of the injustice of their disgrace. They resolved to live a little longer, and delayed their death. They caressed the dog, who was very pleased with this and went out by a hole in the wall. After that, the faithful little beast came every morning and evening, bringing round his neck something for their subsistence.

Two years passed in this way, and it was now five since the Lord had exiled them and confined them to their cottage. Inosuke was grieving to death, and indeed fell ill; but a kindly Heaven was watching over them. The Lord at last relented and delivered them from this long disgrace. Inosuke thanked him, and asked the reason for his punishment. The Lord showed him the paper telling of his scandalous conduct, and Inosuke at once guessed that another page, named Naminojyo Toyura, had plotted to denounce him to his master because he was jealous of him, and that he who had written the false and outrageous accusation was a certain fencing master of the people, named Kenpatji Iwasaka.

From the Japanese

Both of these men were put to a cruel death. The Lord regretted that he had punished Inosuke so long and so unjustly, and made him a samurai and Keeper of the Seals. Thus Inosuke's honour was ensured, and the people loved and honoured him more than before.

He then returned to his Province and called together all his relatives, to ask them who had been the charitable person who had sent the dog to comfort him and his mother when they were in despair. But it was none of them; and Inosuke continued to search for his benefactor. One day, as he was walking in the quarter of the samurai, he saw the dog which had visited him sleeping in front of the door of a house. A passer-by told him that this was the house of Shibeï Okazaki, one of the Lord's chief officers. Then Inosuke remembered that Shibeï had at one time vowed an ardent love for him. Inosuke had not forgotten him, even when he was loved by his Lord, and he thought: 'I must never forget what he did for me during my long disgrace. I could not repay, even by giving my life for him. Should anything happen to him, I swear upon my honour as a samurai that I shall help him with my death.'

That evening Inosuke sent for Shibeï, and, when the latter arrived, thanked him with tears. After his mother had retired to her room, Ino-

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suke and Shibeï had a very pleasant and cordial conversation. Inosuke asked how the dog had known the house and the hole to come in by, and Shibeï answered : ' When you were in this Province with your master, I could not restrain my love for you, and used to walk before your house nearly every night. But I dared not see you, because you were our Lord's favourite. I only stood outside and tried to satisfy my burning love by the sight of you or the sound of your voice. My dog followed me every night, and thus he learned to know your house, and I was able to send him to help you.'

Inosuke blushed with pleasure at Shibeï's devotion, and confessed : ' It grieves me much that I was unable to return your love at that time ; but my Lord loved me. Now I am free to love you ; but I am no longer the pretty page I was when you cared for me so deeply. I am now a faded flower. But why regret the past ? I have become a samurai, and am no longer a page ; but I have the same heart for you. Love me, if you can feel the same ardency as before. I shall be happy to be loved by you.'

And Inosuke put on his old page's dress with long sleeves, although it was not suitable for a grown man, for he wished to recall past days. They spent the night together in his room, and in their love murmurings Inosuke said to Shibeï :

From the Japanese

‘I am only twenty-one years old,’ although he was really twenty-two. A samurai ought never to dissemble, but Inosuke must be excused for his lie, since he was truly in love with his former admirer and could not tell the truth about his age. Even a brave and valiant samurai grows weak when he loves; for love is the greatest power of all and governs this world.

*He Rids himself of his Foes
with the Help of his Lover*

EVERY YEAR THE TREES ARE COVERED WITH blossom as in the years before; but man cannot keep the blossom of his youth. The beauty of boys will vanish when they become men, and when the lock of hair is cut from their foreheads, and they are clothed in short-sleeved robes. The love of boys is, therefore, but a passing dream.

Jinnosuke Kasuda, the second son of a courtier of the Lord of the Province of Izumo, was a beautiful boy. He was an excellent swordsman and had a profound knowledge of classical literature; many men were attracted by his beauty. When they assembled round the shrine of Ooyashiro they spoke of him, and were agreed that there was no more beautiful boy in all the Provinces of Japan. But Jinnosuke had already plighted his troth to one of the Lord's courtiers, and his lover's name was Gonkuro Moriwaki, an excellent samurai of some twenty-eight years of age. He had fallen in love with Jinnosuke when the latter was only thirteen years old.

He had first made the acquaintance of Dengoro, Jinnosuke's servant, and, to prevent people



From the Japanese

talking, had put his love-letter into the mouth of a great fish, and sent it thus to Dengoro. Next morning, when Dengoro was doing his master's hair and Jinnosuke seemed to be in a good humour, Dengoro gave him the letter and told him how much Gonkuro suffered for love of him.

Without opening the letter, Jinnosuke rapidly wrote an answer to Gonkuro and said to his servant: 'It is very hard to wait when one is in love; take this letter at once to Gonkuro.' 'You are indeed worthy to be adored, master,' said the servant, and ran to Gonkuro's house, to give him the letter, telling him that his master wished him well. Gonkuro, with tears of joy, read the letter, which said: 'Your sincere love fills me with gratitude. My servant has told me this morning that you are suffering because of me. I also am amorous of you. Let us be lovers from this day forth, without caring what people think.' That is how the two samurai began to be in love with each other, in the summer of Jinnosuke's fourteenth year.

They kept their love a secret, and no one suspected it, although it lasted until the autumn of Jinnosuke's sixteenth year. But at that time an official samurai of small nobility, named Ibei Hanzawa, fell in love with Jinnosuke and sent him several love-letters by his servant, Suiza-

Comrade-Loves of the Samurai
yemon ; all of which Jinnosuke returned without reading them. This exasperated Ibeï, and he wrote Jinnosuke a furious letter : ‘ You have scorned my love simply because I am a samurai of low position. I am sure that you have a lover. Tell me who he is. If you refuse to impart his name, I shall fight with you wherever I meet you, to avenge my honour as a samurai ; for you have insulted it.’ He could easily have died from pride and spleen. Jinnosuke told the whole story to Gonkuro, although he had till then kept silent about it so as not to trouble his friend to little purpose. He wanted to warn his dear Gonkuro. Now the latter was older and more cautious than Jinnosuke, and advised him : ‘ You ought not to have despised his love, although he is a man of mean condition. We can only love each other because we are alive ; let us not waste our life unprofitably. Be more amiable to Ibeï, and write him a kind letter to appease him, Jinnosuke.’ But this proposal made Jinnosuke furious, and he answered with bloodshot eyes : ‘ I would reject the love even of my Lord, for it is to you that I have pledged my passion.’ He was so angry that he would have killed Gonkuro on the spot ; but he calmed himself and resolved to kill Gonkuro after having got rid of Ibeï. He said farewell to Gonkuro as usual, and returned home. Then

From the Japanese

he wrote to Ibei : ‘ To-night there is no moon. Come this evening to the pine-tree-field of the god Teujin, and fight a duel with me because of your grievance. I will await you there.’ Then, after greeting his parents, he retired to his room and wrote several farewell letters to his friends and relations. He also wrote a letter of reproach to Gonkuro, in which he said :

‘ I pledged my love to you for life, and was ready to defend that love with that life, against every obstacle. I am not afraid of this quarrel with Ibei. I am going to meet him this evening in the pine-tree-field of the god Teujin. If you think of our love years, you will not hesitate to come and die with me. I have much with which to reproach you and, if I cannot tell these things, I feel that I shall not die peacefully. Therefore I wish to tabulate them in this farewell letter.

‘ The distance between your house and mine is too great. I have traversed that long road three hundred and twenty-seven times during the three years in which our love has lasted ; and every evening I encountered some kind of obstacle or difficulty. I had to hide myself from vigilant people, from guards and watchmen. Often I had to disguise myself as a servant, as an adult with a long lantern. At other times I have travestied myself as a priest. It was not

Comrade-Loves of the Samurai

easy for me to perform such humiliating actions, although you may not think so very much of them.

‘ Last year, on the twentieth of November, my mother lingered in my room and I could not come. I was impatient to see you, for life is so uncertain that we do not know whether we shall live till the morrow, and if I could not see you on that night, perhaps I should never see you again. Therefore, in spite of my disordered dress and the late hour, I managed to come out and creep as far as your house. You heard, by the little noise I made, that I was under the window of your room. You were speaking to someone inside, and there was a light in your room. But, as soon as you heard my step, you put out the light and stopped talking. You were cruel to me then. I should like to know who was the person to whom you were talking on that evening.

‘ Last spring I wrote, without taking much trouble, the famous poem, “ My sleeves are ever wet with tears, for my love is hopeless,” on the back of a fan painted with flowers by the celebrated Uneme Kano. You gave me great pleasure by your compliment : “ A lover in pain would easily pass the summer with this fan.” And you also wrote underneath the poem : “ He who inscribed this is waiting

From the Japanese

his lover." But you gave the fan to your servant Kitjisuke.

'You had a lark which you bought from Jiubei the bird-seller. You loved it very much, and when I asked you to give it to me, you refused. But later you gave it to Syohatji Kitamura, the prettiest boy of all our company. I am very jealous because of that.

'On the eleventh of last April, the whole country was called together on horseback by the Lord. Tarozyemon Setsubara then detained me and said: "Your skirt is spotted with mud." And he brushed it. You were just behind me, but pretended to be unconcerned. You even laughed at me with Tarozyemon, instead of drawing my attention to the splashes. I think that you did not act well in this, since you had been my lover for so many years.

'On the eighteenth of May I stayed talking to Kanya Osasawara late in the evening, and you were very angry about it. But, as I explained to you then, I had gone to him with my companions Magosaburo and Tomoya Matsubara for our singing lesson. Kanya is too young to have a love affair with me. Magosaburo is my own age. You know Tomoya well. Even if we were to meet every evening, there could be no scandal or amorous association between us. But you always suspected me, and have made

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frequent insinuations concerning that affair,
which have caused me much suffering. Even
to-day I cannot forget my sorrow at your
unreasonable suspicion.

‘Often, after our meetings, you could have
accompanied me nearly home ; but you always
turned back at the house of Sodayon Murase.
Only twice during all our long love have you
come the full way with me, as far as my house.
I am sure that, if I had really been your true
love, you would have borne me company at
least beyond the field where the tigers and wolves
can be heard howling.

‘I have many other things with which to re-
proach you, but am feeling infinitely sad. And
even now I cannot help loving you. I do
nothing but weep for my unhappy passion. I
beg you to pray, only just once, for the safety of
my soul after my death. This world is vain and
uncertain ; its contents are but a dream ! I
will finish my farewell letter with a poem :

*‘The morning flowers were born in their beauty.
But the wind rose and carried them away
Even before night.*

‘I have still much to write, but evening is
drawing near, and I must cease. To my dear
Gonkuro from his Jinnosuke. May 26th, in
the seventh year of Kuanbun (A.D. 1667).’

From the Japanese

He sealed the letter and gave it to his servant, Dengoro, saying: 'Take this letter to Gonkuro this evening when it is dark.' And, as soon as twilight came, he went to the place fixed for the duel. He dressed himself sumptuously, for he thought that it would be his very last costuming. His under-garments were of white silk, and his over-garment was purple with cherry blossoms embroidered on the hips. His emblem was the Jinko,* and his sleeves were long, as they were worn by pages. He carried two swords of Tadoyoshi Hizen in a grey girdle.

The pine-tree-field of the god Teujin was two miles from the town. Jinnosuke sat down on a moss-covered stone opposite a big camphor tree, and waited for his antagonist. As the darkness grew and the shapes of things became dim, Gonkuro arrived out of breath, crying: 'Are you there, Jinnosuke?' Jinnosuke answered coldly: 'No one so base is a friend of mine.' Gonkuro began to weep, and said: 'I do not try to excuse myself. I shall tell you all my heart when we are in another world, Jinnosuke. Only then will you know me.'

But Jinnosuke answered icily: 'I have no need of your help. I am strong enough to fight alone.' While they were thus becoming heated, Ibeï Hanzawa arrived, seconded by sixteen

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samurai of very vulgar appearance. They meant to fight fiercely, with no thought for their lives. Jinnosuke killed two of them, while Gonkuro struck down four. Seven others were seriously wounded, the rest fled in terror, and Ibei was killed in single combat. Gonkuro's servant, Hitjisuke, died defending his master. Gonkuro had a slight wound on the forehead, and Jinnosuke was also stricken in the left shoulder. The two samurai remained conquerors. There was a little Buddhist temple called Yeianji quite close, to which Gonkuro and Jinnosuke walked, and there asked the priest to bury them, after they had killed themselves by Hara-kiri. But the priest dissuaded them, saying: 'You have both behaved very honourably in this duel. You ought first to report the matter to the Lord's advisers and inspectors; and you would do better to die publicly. Then your honour and glory will endure for ever.'

He persuaded them to follow his advice, and they obeyed him. Then the priest hurried in person to the office of the police, and himself reported the matter. The Lord, through his inspector, ordered these young men to await their punishment. They were imprisoned and guarded during the night, and the Lord ordered their wounds to be tended. The accomplices

From the Japanese

of Ibeï were condemned to death; and the cowards who had fled were later found and executed.

Jinnosuke had really broken the law by his action. But his father was a very loyal and devoted courtier; and also Jinnosuke had always done his duty faithfully. In the duel he had given proof of great courage and valour by fighting against so many assailants. The Lord thought that he deserved admiration rather than punishment. Therefore he was acquitted, and Gonkuro also obtained pardon. They were both ordered to leave their official service from the fifteenth of the month.

The priest buried Ibeï and his companions with considerable piety. When Jinnosuke was examined, it was seen that his left sleeve had been cut off, and that his robe was stained with the blood which he had lost. But he did not specially suffer from his wounds, although he had more than twenty-seven of them on his body. He was greatly admired for his courage and endurance.

Love long Concealed

FOLLOWING A DISPUTE WITH THE COUNSELLOR of the Lord of the Province of Osumi, the samurai Jiuzayemon Fatjibana retired from official life. He lived very comfortably with his wife and son in a remote village. His son, Tamanosuke, was at that time fifteen years old, and so beautiful that people thought it a pity to leave him hidden in this remote village, and not to make him a well-known samurai in some large town.

But when Jiuzayemon thought that his son was old enough to serve a Prince as a page, he sent him to the capital, Yedo. He also caused his servant, Kakubei Kanazawa, to accompany him. This man had served him for many years, and was fifty years old and had great experience of life. Before leaving him, his father gave his son some good advice, telling him to conduct himself bravely and to defend his honour to the death.

But his mother whispered for a moment with Kakubei, asking him to guard and protect her son, and ended by saying : ‘ I beg you to take particular care of my son, especially in this matter.’

When Tamanosuke and Kakubei were some

From the Japanese

distance from the house, Tamanosuke asked : ' Did not my mother tell you not to deliver love-letters to me if a samurai should send me one ? But if you refuse to oblige a man who sends me love-letters, you will act heartlessly. You will be a cruel man. I want to be loved by some great samurai, since that is one of the best things in this life of ours. If no one loves me, I shall hate my beautiful face. Once in Great China, a prevalent poet of the Province of Yoshu said in one of his poems, speaking of a young boy : " A cruel youth without a heart." I wish you to feel sympathy for pederasty, O Kakubei.'

Kakubei answered : ' But of course, young master ! If everybody were as scrupulous as your mother, such a thing as honourable love between samurai would not exist. I shall act quite in accordance with your wishes.' And they laughed together.

After a long and troublesome journey they at last reached Yedo. Tamanosuke was presented by a friend of his father's to the Prince of the Province of Aezu, who was charmed with him and immediately engaged him as a page, and took him to the Province of Aezu with him. Tamanosuke was greatly attached to this Lord, and very polite to the other courtiers, of whom this Lord made him his favourite. Compared

Comrade-Loves of the Samurai
with Tamanosuke's beauty, all the other pages were as flowers hidden behind a fence from the rays of the sun.

One summer evening Tamanosuke was playing ball with the other pages in the palace garden. He was the best player of all, and people watched and admired his grace and skill. Suddenly his eyes grew haggard, his body began to tremble, and he was seized with convulsions in all his limbs. They took off his playing habit, and he seemed to have stopped breathing. When he regained consciousness, they bore him to his house. He grew worse and worse. His death seemed very near, and they despaired of saving him.

There was a certain samurai named Senzayemon Sasamura, a junior officer charged with the defence of the frontiers of the Province. No one took much notice of him. However, he loved Tamanosuke, though he had no means of sending him a message of love. He was waiting a favourable opportunity to declare his passion to him. When he learned of Tamanosuke's serious illness, he felt that he would not survive him if he should die.

Every morning he went to Tamanosuke's house and wrote his name on the register in the vestibule, like all the other samurai. He came again in the afternoon and in the evening after his

From the Japanese

supper to inquire after him. In this way he made three visits every day for six months.

Tamanosuke recovered. He washed himself in a bath and carefully shaved himself. After a meticulous toilet he went to the Lord to announce his recovery, and to thank him for the kindness he had shown to him while he was ill. Then he visited all those who had been good to him, and, after his round of visits, returned home. Finally, he told Kakubei to bring him the register of visitors, and there he saw the name of Senzayemon Sasamura, and noticed that he had been three times a day from the beginning of his illness. He asked Kakubei who this Senzayemon might be, and Kakubei answered: 'He is not very well known. He must be an inferior samurai. He seemed to be really anxious about you. When I told him that my master was better, his face quite brightened; but when I told him that the illness was getting worse, he grew pale and was overcome with distress. He was different from the ordinary visitors.'

Tamanosuke said: 'He is a very faithful individual, although I have never seen him.' And he went at once to Senzayemon's house, although it was far enough away, and said to the servant: 'I have come to thank Senzayemon for his kindness during my illness.'

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Senzayemon ran joyfully to him and said : 'How good you are to have come so far to thank me for my insignificant actions. I am quite confused by your visit, Lord. But your health is not yet strong, and the evening air is fresh. I beg you to return to your house and take care of yourself.'

Tamanosuke answered : 'The world is so vain and uncertain, and man is like the momentary gleam of a light. In the morning we do not know surely if we shall live till the evening. I beg you to let me come in ; I have a private matter to discuss with you.'

Senzayemon led him to his room, and then Tamanosuke said to him : 'I am truly grateful for your devotion during my long illness. Forgive me for saying it frankly, but if you love me, humble as I am, I have come to be loved by you this evening, Senzayemon.'

Senzayemon blushed with pleasure : 'My heart cannot express itself in words. I pray you to go and see it. It is in the shrine of the god Hatjiman, who is the god of war and of soldiers. I consecrated it there, my lover.'

Tamanosuke went to the shrine, and asked the priest what was there. The priest said : 'Senzayemon gave me a box which contained his daily prayer for his friend's recovery.' Tamanosuke, with leave, opened the box and found

From the Japanese

in it a dagger of Sadamune and a fervent prayer for his recovery in a letter addressed to the god. In this manner he discovered that he owed his recovery to Senzayemon's prayer. Then he and Senzayemon became faithful lovers.

Little by little this story spread, and came to the ears of the Lord, who sentenced the two lovers to be confined in their own houses. They were both ready to die for their love, and did not at all fear death. They calmly awaited their severe punishment, and succeeded in finding a secret means of corresponding with each other. A year passed in this way.

Then, on the ninth of March, they sent a petition to the Lord, in which they begged to be allowed an honourable death by Hara-kiri. They awaited their condemnation from moment to moment. But one day a messenger came from the Lord to Tamanosuke and ordered him to become a samurai instead of the page that he had been. Senzayemon was also pardoned. They were very grateful to this Lord, and decided to forgo their meetings until Tamanosuke should have reached the age of twenty-

five. They no longer even spoke to each other when they met in the street. They but continued to serve their Lord faithfully.

NOTES

PAGE

The Author

All these tales are the work of Saikaku Ebara, who lived during the Japanese eleventh century, being born in 1641 and dying in 1693. They are mainly chosen from his *Glorious Tales of Pederasty*, though some are from *Tales of the Samurai Spirit* and *Tales of the Duty of a Samurai*, and one from *Stories in Letters*. I have translated them from the recently published and quite unique French version of Ken Sato. The significance of the tales is discussed in my terminal essay, where further information about their author will also be found.

3 *Shyōgun*

Regent, governor in general.

17 *facings*

The samurai wore a kind of reversed collar, shaped as two triangles, falling like wings on each shoulder. The clothes worn by Ukyo are those prescribed for Hara-kiri.

30 *great badger*

In old Japanese belief the badger had supernatural powers, and pursued men in some horrible shape.

73 *Yukishira*

and Narihira were brothers of noble family, each famous for his beauty and poetic talent.

89 *Jinko*

The name both of a tree and the incense which it furnishes.

*Songs of
the Geishas*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

*
THE following verses are definitely popular ones. They are folk-songs, almost music-hall songs, and are taken solely from the singing repertoire of Geishas. These girls have usually been sold into the trade by their parents, and their one desire is to be released by purchase or marriage. Release is the keynote of all their singing. It should be remembered, too, that practically all the Japanese poems with which we have been made familiar in English are classical and written to one or other of very strict rules, whereas these songs for the samisen are technically free. They have therefore no strict literary justification, and I trust that, even in second-hand translation, they may not seem to need one. I have selected some of my ninety from Le Livre des Geishas of Gaston Morphy, and the rest from Chansons des Geishas by Steinilber-Oberlin and Hidetake-Iwamura. For a further discussion of these songs see the terminal essay in Volume 12.

Songs of the Geishas

1. Campanula.

Eglantine and campanula furtively
Placed in a letter, a moon setting
Beyond the plain, dew on the grass,
I wait.
Matsumushi singing of night, the late night,
Bell far sounds, and the crying of the wild geese,
All these things are love.

2. Cherry.

A horse tied by the bridle
To a flowering cherry.
When he shakes his head
There falls a snow of flowers,
Flower snow,
A snow of flowers.

3. Notes taken in my Bedroom.

Called out by the rushes
I go to my doorstep
And there is dew.

Troubled heart and coloured chrysanthemums,
Their deep scent is troubling
And their gold colour.

Songs of the Geishas

How pleasant is the scent of sake
With a chrysanthemum petal floating.
White frost is on the opened petal
And the frost has
 Coloured and deep
 Transparencies.

4. Do Not Go.

In the morning I hid his overcoat.
Your overcoat is playing hide and seek.
It is raining so. Look at the green rice field
Where the wet frogs are singing.

5. Frog.

I wish to keep him, but he will go to his own.
I call him back, but he goes to his own.
A frog jumps and goes to his own rice field
And the water there.
The world is leaving me. Night rain.

6. Heart.

My heart, a fine rain,
Life is so uncertain,
Drop by drop in the mist.

One is very handsome,
And the other may be more sincere.

From the Japanese

This downfalling of leaves,
I shall never have any luck,
I will always be alone.
A stag cries and tramples the red leaves
Of the red maple. My heart is torn.

7. Joy of Obscurity.

Very little happiness would be enough ;
I see myself walking in a snow storm to her
With a net of new carps on my shoulder.
I would have paper garments
And, on windy Winter nights
When the plovers cry,
Also have my little flaming brazier of pine cones,
My little red portable brazier.
I could not do without that.
It is true, is it not,
That I could not do without that ?

8. Prediction.

A hole in the paper wall,
Who has been so guilty ?
Through it I hear the breaking of a samisen
string,
Meaning bad luck.

Yet the prediction-seller says
That mine is excellent.

Songs of the Geishas

9. *Unstable Love*

Love is unstable. I dream of a drifting
Barque. My body is limited.
My thought is infinite.
Things do not go as I would have them.
I see him in the dream of a light sleep
Or resting on one arm in place of a pillow.
Audible are the bells of Mii.

10. *Tamagava River.*

I bathed my snow skin
In pure Tamagava river.
Our quarrel is loosened slowly,
And he loosens my hair.
I am all uncombed.
I will not remember him,
I will not altogether forget him,
I will wait for Spring.

11. *Katushika.*

At Katushika the river water
Runs gently, and the plum blossom
Bursts out laughing.
The nightingale cannot withstand so many joys
And sings, and we are reconciled.
Our warm bodies touch,
Cane branch and pine branch,
Our boat floats in toward the bank.

From the Japanese

12. *Blackness.*

The night is black
And I am excited about you.
My love climbs in me, and you ask
That I should climb to the higher room.
Things are hidden in a black night.
Even the dream is black
On the black-lacquered pillow,
Even our talk is hidden.

13. *Models.*

Butterfly
Or falling leaf,
Which ought I to imitate
In my dancing?

14. *Ghosts.*

Midnight uncalm shadows
Creaking the willow.
I am afraid.
This firefly
That has come to rest on my sleeve.
How strange it is,
How strange it all is.

Songs of the Geishas

15. *Snow Dance.*

The snow dances endlessly,
The snow falls in a whirlwind
Endlessly.
The wind-screen being put up
Provides our coming together.

Our bed of triple down
With its silk embroidered in butterflies and
peewees,
My young lover.

The perch-bird with the tender bill
Comes back to perch.

16. *Cats.*

With no care for duty or people
Or strange looks or the opinion of other cats,
One striped and the other white
Go on the edge of the roof
Or climb to the ridge of it.

Driven by the need of love
Which is stronger than death.

One day the wind of Autumn shall come
And they will not know each other.
My soul, I envy the love of cats.

From the Japanese

17. *Night Waiting.*

I have waited all night.
It is midnight and I burn for love.
Towards dawn I pillow my head on my folded
arms
In case I may see him in dream.
I hate these blustering birds.

18. *Intimacy.*

Two in their little room
Far from other people and from life.
The silence of boiling water,
And she says : ' Listen to the wind
In the pine tops.'

19. *Small Hours.*

Midnight has passed and she wakes
And looks to left and right,
There is no one.
She only sees the long sleeve of her nightgown
To left and right.

20. *Knots in the Bamboo.*

The nightingale
Climbing a bamboo stem
Sings his love at every knot,
At every knot of it.

Songs of the Geishas

The season of long night is coming
When the leaves of the sainfoin redden.
I weep at every midnight.

21. The Letter.

If there were no moon
I would read it by the Winter snow light,
Or in Summer by the fireflies,
Or if there were no moon or snow or fireflies
I would read it by the light of my heart.

22. Spring all in Flower.

Spring all in flower
And the dark stain of the pine forest
On the watershed of the Sumida.
The gracious cherry trees reflected
In that deep water, which is love.
To-day two Chinese ducks
Float in the thread of the current,
And I too am married.

23. Feast of Kamo.

At the feast of Kamo
I put rose-mallows in my hair ;
He never came back, and I am waiting.
Time has a way of piling long days,
Long days, long days
Into a great hill.

From the Japanese

24. *Return.*

I know she is light and faithless,
But she has come back half repentant
And very pale and very sad.
A butterfly needs somewhere to rest
At evening.

25. *A Single Cry.*

A flight of flying cuckoos
Across the moon, a single cry.
Is the moon crying cuckoo?
Night pales slowly. Men are cruel
And women are not.
They weep and say over sorrow
For a small separation.

26. *The Mat.*

She sulkily pretends to sleep,
Turning her back ;
Suddenly the pretty slender music
Of a samisen delicately fingered.
Reconciliation. Where is her comb ?
But there are dawn bells.
Separation, and always, always separation,
A boat puts out on a lake of the Yoshiwara.

Songs of the Geishas

27. Dead Flower or Living.

Last night a peach petal was wetted by the rain,
And when a girl
After her toilet said :
' Which is the more beautiful,
I or the peach petal ? '
And he said :
' Peach petal wetted by the rain is incom-
parable,'
There were tears and a tearing of flowers.

To taste the living flower
To-night would be quite a good night, my lord,
If so you wish.

28. Alone.

The device of the two copper plums
With silver in them
Slowly and very slowly
Satisfies.
Just as all finishes
Dew falls on my clenched hand.
I would rather the bean flowered yellow
And he were here.

29. Shut In.

Cherry flowers do not touch
The old stones of the wall.

From the Japanese

I am shut in here.

I am very much shut in here.

There is a part of the trap

Where the rat need not touch the curd.

The cherry trees are rose beyond Fuji.

30. *Since.*

What has happened to my thoughts

Since I knew you?

That is easy.

Until I met you I had no thoughts.

31. *After.*

After he left me,

Two pillows,

One body.

Where is he now?

He must be getting on for Komagata.

Damn that cuckoo.

32. *Night Rain.*

Sad night rain, I count the straws in the mat,

He will come, he won't come.

I twist a paper frog. Does it stand?

It falls down.

A vague presentiment.

Songs of the Geishas

The little lamp goes down and up,
Its oil exhausted.
He was always capricious.
Ah, my soul, that is his voice.

33. *Madam Moon.*

The moon is disgustingly modest
Under a great cloud
When I am waiting,
And when he comes
She spitefully breaks forth.
You are jealous, Madam Moon,
But we have had a few black nights
When you were lazy.

34. *Weariness.*

The pale day
Pierces the bamboo blind.
Grief pierces my heart
And I count the bands of light
Not knowing why,
Like that.

35. *Annoyed.*

Really I am annoyed this time
And I have left her.
But the weeping willow wept at my door
And quenched my anger.

From the Japanese

When the Spring rain has ceased
I will go back to her in moonlight,
But discreet moonlight and much veiled
I pray.

36. *Crickets.*

Autumn casts herself carelessly over the earth
In a brocade of many colours,
And yet it is just now
That the crickets begin to change their cry to
'Patch those rags, patch those rags.'
I think they carry economy
Almost too far.

37. *Emotion.*

There is white frost on the pond
And on the grass.
There is light mist.
I walk on frozen leaves that go crack
And my heart beats
And it is delightful.

38. *Moonlight.*

I detest my phantom shadow
In the bright moon.
I look, thinned out by love,
And think, smoothing my hair :
Am I really as thin as that ?

Songs of the Geishas

39. *Quick Hours.*

Wet in the rain of morning.
You are still in my arms.
The hours in bed are quick hours.
See, how delightful I look with this paper on
my brow
As a bride's headdress.
What pet name
Will you give me when we are married?
But you have gone to sleep again
And do not hear the evening bell.

40. *Green Willow.*

The breeze is so light
That when it soothes the green willow
It seems not to touch her.
Indistinct shadow.
We have set our two pillows
Very close in the bed.

Our mornings and our evenings.

And our useless little quarrels
And then our letters.
Is waiting or parting bitterer?

Let us not separate.

From the Japanese

41. His Pretty Gesture.

Because of his pretty gesture
I have fallen completely in love with him.

My letter written in common character
Will be worth more than a verbal message.
But I may not hold him yet.
I am going to drink sake all night
Without bothering to warm it.

I lie down on the floor
Just where I am, and sleep.
I wake with a start
To hear the night watch crying :
' Fire, take care of fire ! '

42. Bamboo.

The sparrow is excellently
At home with the bamboo.
One day the bamboo is shaped into a snare
And catches the sparrow.
Is that not so ?

43. Two Fan Game.

Two thrown fans
Have fallen across each other.
It is a good sign.

Songs of the Geisbas

I see two mortals close in each other's arms
Like two leaves fallen together.

Will he be a fine chrysanthemum ?
I will put him in a vase
And look at him.
He will be plum blossom
Having both scent and colour.

44. *Since this Morning.*

At little day
I am cold.
A maple leaf
Planes down and settles silently.
The things one believes.

I have hated day
Since this morning :
His insensitive glance
Looked at me coldly
Like the pale dawn moon.

45. *Who Loves.*

A body that loves
Is fragile and uncertain,
A floating boat.
The fires in the fishing boats at night
Burn red, my heart burns red.

From the Japanese

Wooden stakes hold up the nets
Against the tide of Uji.

The tide is against me.

46. *Nightingale Sings to Plum Tree.*

How the nightingales sing to the plum trees
And the frogs splash in the water.
That is love.

The call of people and of things
Is everywhere.

Dark clouds,
Fishing boats,
At the will of the tide,
At the will of the wind.

They seem to move their own sails.
The ropes are woven in the old way
Like woman's hair.

Deep down in green reflections.

Ah, back her to the port of love !

47. *Life.*

To the passing dawn ?
To a boat passing ?
To the wake the boat leaves ?
To the froth the wake leaves ?

Songs of the Geishas

48. Hiding Place.

No more grieving.
I hide myself in my happiness
As a firefly
Hides in a moon ray.

49. Rupture.

Steps die on the brittle leaves,
I think of very much.
Evening, a perched crow
On a bare branch.
The end of Autumn.

50. Plum Tree Under Snow.

The plum tree still lives,
Even still blossoms
Under the snow ; my heart,
My most unfortunate heart
Also.

51. Rose Chrysanthemum.

Three butterflies
On a rose chrysanthemum.
The white flies away,
The red flies away,
The black lights on my garment.
Meaning ?

From the Japanese

52. *Firefly.*

This evening I caught a firefly
To light my waiting soul
And for amusement.
My right hand covers the firefly in my left
And both are transparent and rosy
Because of it.
How funny !

53. *In the Spring Rain.*

The nightingale is quite wet
In the Spring rain.
The scent of the flowers of the plum tree
Rises at every beating
Of the wet wing.

Nightingales that play with flowers,
How charming that is.

Some birds do not know
Where they may nest at evening,
But I am a nightingale
And my master is a plum tree.

Soon I shall be free of my body,
Free to love. Is not that so ?
And nothing else matters.

Songs of the Geishas

54. *O Dreams.*

O dreams, do not bring me
The face of my girl in sleep.
My waking and my pain
Would quite unman me.

55. *Flakes of Flowers.*

It is snowing, Winter,
It is snowing.
But the flakes
Are flowers also.
See, it is already Spring
By the cloud way.

56. *Surugi Lake.*

Dew from the lotuses
Of Surugi Lake
Goes up in a light fume.
My hope becomes lighter than air
And disappears.
Yet a voice is saying : ' Who knows ?
Soon he may marry you.'

57. *Maple Leaves.*

Do you know why the Autumn moon
Spreads her desirable brightness
On the hill ?

From the Japanese

It is so that we two may count the leaves of the
maple
Falling
One by one.

58. *Deep Light.*

I have no wish for
A frivolous or coquettish existence,
I want the deep life of love.
I have set up the double screen
Against a wind balmed with the plum trees.
Come to me and I will love you
In the tender light of a veiled moon,
I will love you, far from the plum trees.
Yet afterwards in bed
I know I shall sulk and weep ;
Frogs in the garden pool
All night, all night.

59. *Snow Night.*

There are two in the small room
On this cold snow night.
Pretty half-meanings
As they tease each other,
Hair she has just washed
And cannot manage.
' You get on my nerves,' she says,
' Always chewing your toothpick.'

Songs of the Geishas

60. *Spring Night.*

This dream of a Spring night
Grows complicated.
The smell of his body lies on the air.
The cloudy sky and my ringed eyes
Are veiled.
Are we not a couple
Made of flower and butterfly?
Well, well, I mean to say.

61. *Love Night.*

The cuckoo has sung all night
And at first they did not sleep at all.
There is sweet slumber after love
With a rounded arm for pillow.
The lamp was fetched away
Without their noticing.

62. *Moon and Plum Tree.*

The moon and the plum tree part not
On a very clear night,
But rather lie smiling to the snow.
Not a word is said,
But the scent the plum tree cannot hold
Goes up toward the moon.
And look at the innocent whiteness
Of the plum tree.

From the Japanese

63. Bamboos and Sparrows.

This sparrow lighting
Harmoniously
On the bamboo.
In love things do not go quite so
Harmoniously.
It is I alone who love and suffer.
I hate his beastly face.

64. Sky before Dawn.

Sky just at dawn between the trees
The cuckoo flies and hides. 𐀀
I comb the wet hair on my temples
I am wetted and am happy.
I am so wet.
It rains this morning.

65. Myosotis.

If I clasp my hands, my sleeve :
Dew and perfume and colour.
His picture remains in absence
Myosotis, memory.
If he flowered on a branch
I would plant him,
And love him every
Lonely hour.

Songs of the Geishas

66. Flower of the Cherry.

It is because they fall
That they are admirable.
What is the good of clinging
Without hope ?
Clinging violently to the branches,
Withered on all the branches,
Soiled by the birds.

67. Pillow.

How many nights
We have not come together.
The plovers of Awaji island
Mingle their crying.
I am alone and wretched
In this plank custom's hut,
Alone and lost.
That moonbeam entering to my pillow,
Would it were,
Just for once.

68. The Pine Tree.

The wind in the roof
Is playing on three strings,
Moon, snow and flower.

From the Japanese

Right from the very small
Pushing of the Spring
The green of the green pine
Changes not.
What do the infant cranes cry
Fluttering from the nest
In the green pine top ?
' Long live the King ! ' they cry.
The green pine lives for ever.

69. *Kawai, Kawai.*

(My dear, my dear)

The firefly singing not
Burns in silence ;
She suffers more
Than the loud insect who says :
' Kawai, kawai ! '
Why have I given all my soul
To a man without sincerity ?
I regret it, I rather regret it.

70. *Notes taken in my Bedroom.*

It must be late
Autumn night
The moon falls
Wind is cold.

Songs of the Geishas

My dwarf harp, my little koto
Is by me on the pillow,
Lying lightly.
I flutter a chord
On the seven strings.

I hear the first wild goose crying :
' We have come back, come back.'
It is very late.

71. *Wanting to Write a Letter.*

I want to send him a letter
But do not know what to write.
Tell me something,
White paper.

72. *Heat.*

Noon on feet of felt
Has come into the city.
Not a leaf stirs.
On the rope of the temple bell
A butterfly is sleeping.

73. *Bindweed.*

Every morning
You flower with new colours
And garland the well bucket,
Your petals are eyes
Blinded with dew.

From the Japanese

You are delightful.

Flower long, flower differently,
Emerald cup.

74. *Faith.*

I am the ordinary cherry tree
Whose flower is single.
It blossoms in the plain.
I am not one of those double
Cherry trees.

75. *If you Promise.*

If you promise, do it lightly.
Look at the maple leaves.
The light resist,
The heavy break away
And fall.
Is that not so ?

76. *South-East Quarter.*

Light affairs become frivolous
At Fukagawa,
My body is frivolous.

A thin, uncoloured chord on the samisen.

Songs of the Geisbas

In intimate Nakatcho Street
Affairs are private,
And the news of our love
Spreads gallantly,
The way of the South-East.

Two lovers are in the little room
And the screen has double hinges.

We pretend worldly fidelity,
Painting moles on each other.

Perhaps
We shall know in heaven.

77. *Dew and Rush.*

The dew pretends she
Loves the love of the rush,
The rush that he loves no dew.
But the rush will blossom
And both understand.

78. *Wonder.*

If I think she loves me
The snow is light
On my umbrella.
Crying plovers,
Dishevelled wind.

From the Japanese

79. *Joy.*

Visitor this evening
We run up the long corridor
Clicking of clogs.

Only one man,
Only one person to be loved.

I go back to my room,
Retreat, honour,
Lacquered pillow,
Silence.

I hear the watchman's rattle,
Laughter in the next room.

80. *Under Snow.*

Flowers under the snow
Scarcely betray their colour.
We meet and she smiles and is silent.
'If I must die,' she is thinking,
'I will die of love
As the snow dies.'

81. *Before my Birds.*

I moan for love
Before my birds.
They also are in a cage.

Songs of the Geishas

My small complaints
Are sorry like mouse cries.
The birds hop forward to tease me
And I like it,
Being so shut in.

The sake is cold
Because my torment
Makes me inefficient.
There is such a thing as great grief,
Such a thing as
Being shut in.

82. Getting out of Bed.

He rises and goes. There are
Rather dark clouds.
Shall I be noisy cricket
Or firefly burning in silence,
Dumb grief or tearful parting?

And when I think we might
Never have met,
Been utter strangers.

83. Spring Branches.

Spring flowers at the branch end
Over the water.
Love is very deep,
Their reflection is very deep.

From the Japanese

I had to wet my sleeves
To gather them,
And I want to go on
Wetting, wetting, wetting my sleeves.

84. *First Snow.*

This first snow
Is very white
Like first love.
My maid asks from the doorstep :
' Where shall I throw
The tea-leaves ? '

85. *Bed.*

Under the unnecessarily large
Mosquito curtain
My little heart
Is fiercer than a nightlight.

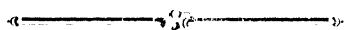
86. *Then.*

The flowers come to blossom, then
We look at the flowers, then
They wither, then——

Volume 8
Ninety Short Tales
of Love and Women
from the Arabic



EASTERN LOVE



NINETY SHORT TALES OF LOVE AND WOMEN FROM THE ARABIC



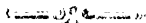
ENGLISH VERSIONS BY
E. POWYS MATHERS



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VOLUME VIII

*



JOHN RODKER
FOR SUBSCRIBERS
LONDON, 1928

for
W. A. E.

MADE IN ENGLAND

THIS EDITION OF NINETY SHORT TALES
OF LOVE AND WOMEN FROM THE
ARABIC, BEING VOLUME 8 OF "EASTERN
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*Ninety Short Tales
of Love and Women
from the Arabic*

An Oath Evaded

IT IS SAID THAT THERE WAS ONCE A VIRTUOUS Israelite and he had married a beautiful woman whom he kept under lock and key. One day she saw a youth and loved him, and he desired her. He had a key made for the door and went in to her as often as he wished. This state of things lasted for some time without the husband suspecting ; but one day he said to his wife : ‘ Your feeling has changed towards me, and I do not know why. I wish you to swear that you have known no other beside myself.’ Now the Israelites had a mountain by which they used to swear, and before which bring their lawsuits; it stood outside the city and near to a river of running water. None might perjure himself before it without dying. ‘ Certainly, I will swear, and whenever you wish,’ answered the woman ; but as soon as the saint had left her, the young man entered. She told him all that had passed between her husband and herself, and added : ‘ It is not possible for me to swear a false oath. Think out a plan for me.’ The lover reflected and remained silent : the woman went on : ‘ Be of good comfort, only do all that I tell you. To-morrow morning dress yourself as a donkey-boy, take an ass with you, and seat

Short Tales of Love and Women

yourself at the city gate. When I pass with my husband, I will ask you if your ass is for hire : you must answer that it is, and come forward and set me upon it.' 'I will do so,' replied the young man. Next morning the saint said to his wife : 'Come to the mountain.' 'I cannot walk.' 'Nevertheless, come forth with me, and if we see an ass we will hire him.' As soon as they reached the gate, she called to the young man : 'Ho ! will you hire out your ass to go to the mountain for half a dirham ?' 'Yes,' he answered, as he stepped forward and helped her to mount the ass. When they came to the mountain, she said : 'Take me down, young man.' But when he approached, she fell to the earth and, in her falling, uncovered her most secret beauties. She cursed the donkey-boy, stretched forth her hand toward the mountain, and swore this oath : 'No man has ever touched me or seen me, except my husband and this donkey-boy.' The mountain was shaken violently and disappeared from that place.

*Abmad al-Sbirwānī,
Hadīkat al-Afrāb.*

The Wazīr Saddled and Bridled

IT IS RELATED THAT A CERTAIN KING WAS passionately fond of women, and that he had a wazīr who ever persuaded him against them. One of his singing girls saw that his feelings toward her had changed, and said to him: 'Master, what is this?' 'My wazīr Such-and-Such has forbidden me to love you,' he answered. 'Give me to him,' said she, 'and see what I make of him.' So he gave her to him. When the wazīr was alone with her, she so well defended herself from his advances that a love for her encompassed his heart. But she said: 'You shall not touch me until I have mounted you and you have carried me a little.' The wazīr consented. Then the girl put a saddle upon him, and bridled him, and mounted upon him, having previously sent to tell the King. The latter hurried to her apartment while she was taking her ride. 'O wazīr, what is this I see?' he cried. 'You forbid me the love of women and then behave like this with them!' 'Prince,' answered the wazīr, 'it was to show you what I feared for you.' The King marvelled at this answer.

*Abmad al-Shirwānī,
Nafhat al-Yaman.*

Marriage Advice

ONE DAY A MAN CAME TO CONSULT DAVID concerning marriage. 'Ask Solomon,' said he, 'and bring me his answer.' The man found a boy of seven years old, playing with his companions and riding cock-horse upon a reed. When he questioned him, the child said: 'I recommend you either red gold or white silver. But see that the mare devils you not.' The man did not understand this, but David said: 'The red gold is a virgin. White silver is a woman who has only been married for a short time. Beyond these there are none but plunging mares.'

*Abmad al-Ibsaihibi,
Kitāb al-Muštataf.*

*The Excuse which was Worse
than the Fault*

ONE DAY THE KHALĪFAH BADE ABŪ NUWĀS furnish him with an excuse which should be worse than the fault it followed. The poet waited for a suitable occasion, and one day, when the Prince was standing in the palace, stole up to him and lifted his clothes behind. The Khalīfah turned in a fury and saw Abū Nuwās. He had forgotten his command by that time. ‘What is the meaning of this?’ he cried. ‘Excuse me, my lord, I took you for the Queen.’ ‘O wretch, and if it had been the Queen, would you have behaved so?’ That is a fine excuse indeed!’ ‘In fact,’ answered Abu Nuwās, ‘it was what you demanded.’ The Khalīfah understood, and burst out laughing. He gave Abū Nuwās a present, and the poet departed in joy.

Nuzhat al-Jallās fi Akhbār Abū Nuwās.

*The Guardian of his Master's
Honour*

AL HĀRITH IBN ʿĀMIR IBN SAʿSAʿAH HAD two friends from whom he was never separated, whom he loved dearly. One day he went toward a certain of his pleasure houses, taking his friends with him. But one of them lagged behind and, finally, returned into the presence of al-Hārith's wife. The two ate and drank and went to bed together. But the husband's dog jumped upon them and killed them. When al-Hārith returned and found them dead, he understood what had happened and improvised these lines :

*It ceased not, though a beast, to guard my honour ;
He ceased not, though my friend, to leap upon her.
Thus to defile my friendship, what a friend !
And what a beast, thus wisely to defend !*

*Ibn al-Jauzī,
Kitāb al-Azkiyah.*

Danger Remembered

IT IS RELATED THAT A YOUNG MAN WAS ONCE present at a meeting of certain learned teachers of old time, and when he heard one of them say : *Ya sattār*, which is an epithet of God, meaning : ‘O Thou Who Veilest,’ he trembled like a leaf. One of them asked the reason for this, and he replied : ‘You must know that I used to go forth disguised as a girl and betake myself to all those places where there was a feast or a marriage or an intimate meeting of women. One day I was present at the marriage of a King’s daughter, and a necklace belonging to the bride was stolen. There was a cry : “Close the doors and search the women !” Thereupon all were searched, one by one, until only a single woman and myself were left. Then I prayed to God with sincere repentance and intention, saying : “If I escape from this with honour, I will never more fall to such practices.” The necklace was found on the other woman, and I was unhanded. I was allowed to depart, and my masquerade remained a secret. But since then, when I hear *sattār*, I remember that He Veiled me, and am taken by such a trembling as you have just now seen.’

*‘Abd Allāb al-Yāfi‘ī,
Raud al-Rayābīn.*

*The Repentance of
Potiphar's Wife*

IN THE YEARS OF THE FAMINE AND DEARTH IN the land of Egypt, Potiphar died and Joseph came into his power. Zulaika, Potiphar's wife, fell to destitution, became blind, and stretched out her hand to the people for charity. Some said to her: 'If you address yourself to the King, perhaps he will have pity on you. He may come to your aid and enrich you, since you had care of him and honoured him for a long time.' But others said: 'Do nothing of the sort, for perhaps he will remember his sufferings and his imprisonment because of your attempts to seduce him. In that case he will punish you.' 'I know his gentleness and generosity,' she answered. She sat upon a little hill above the road on the day of his going forth. He rode on a horse in the midst of a procession of a hundred thousand great ones of his people. When she felt his presence, she rose and cried: 'Glory be to him who has made slaves out of kings because of their disobedience, and, because of his obedience, a king out of a slave!' 'Who are you?' asked Joseph, and she replied: 'I am she who served you and combed your hair with her own hand, who jealously honoured

From the Arabic

your stay among us. Now what has come to me has come. I have tasted the proper chastisement of my conduct. My strength has disappeared. My fortune is lost. My eyes are darkened, and I have become a beggar. Some have pitied me, some have not pitied me. Once I was the envy of all the people of Egypt, and now I have become an object for their compassion, nay, for their abhorrence. Such is the punishment of wickedness.' Joseph wept abundantly, and then said : ' Does any of the love you bore me stay in your heart ? ' ' It does,' she answered. ' I swear by him who took Abraham to be his friend that one sight of you would be dearer to me than possession of all the earth, and that though it were filled with gold and silver.' Joseph rode forward, and sent a messenger to say to her : ' If you are free, we will marry you ; if you already have a husband, we will make you rich.' She answered through the same messenger : ' I understand that Joseph mocks me. He did not wish me in the days of my grace and beauty, how could he take me now that I am old and blind and poor ? ' But Joseph gave his orders. Zulaika made her preparations. He married her, and they led her into the bridal chamber. Then Joseph set his feet, and held himself upright, and began to pray to God, invoking his Name. The Lord

Short Tales of Love and Women
gave back her beauty and grace, her youth and
the sight of her eyes to Zulaika, all as they had
been on the day when she wished to seduce her
husband's slave. Joseph fulfilled the marriage,
and found her a virgin. She gave him two sons,
Ephraim and Menasseh, who lived together
happily in Islām until their death.

*Ahmad al-Ibsaihi,
Kitāb al-Muṣṭatraḥ.*

The Effect of a Song

IT IS RELATED THAT A YOUNG MAN FELL IN love with a woman at Medina. One day he made her promises, and they came together. But a singing-girl who was there sang this :

*She has not dishonoured her brother by her disgrace yet ;
She has not brought a shame to her father's face yet.*

Then the woman had no other wish but to leave the youth and return to her own house. Afterwards she sent him a thousand dīnārs, with this message : ' If you desire me, use this for my dowry, and ask me from my father in marriage.'

*al-Rāghib al-Isbabāni,
Mubādarāt al-Udabā.*

All Women are Alike

CERTAIN CUNNING FOLK CAME TOGETHER in the dwelling of a King and at once plunged into an ocean of wishes. One said : ' If only his treasure were mine ! ' and another : ' Ah, if only all he had were mine ! ' ' If only his wife were mine ! ' exclaimed a third. The King heard their wishes, as they had intended ; so, being a man of wit, he caused ten earthen pots of *sikbāj*, which is a mixture of honey and vinegar, to be prepared and set before the third. Then he said : ' O So-and-So, taste this one. Take a little of that one. Eat a small portion of yonder one,' until the man had tried all ten. Then the King asked : ' How did you find their taste ? ' ' May God prolong the life of the King. They all tasted the same.' Then said the King : ' All women have but the one quality and one taste.' And he covered that man with confusion.

*al-Khwarizmī,
Muḥīd al-'ulūm.*

Virtue Rewarded

IT IS RELATED THAT ONE OF THE ISRAELITISH ascetics served God in his hermitage. He had the handsomest face of all men. He used to weave baskets and sell them in the market at Jerusalem. His name was John. He wore a haircloth for sole garment ; his colouring was that of rubies seen through crystal, so great was his piety ; and a light shone from his eyes. One day he passed before the door of the most strictly guarded woman in all the city. One of her servants saw him, and said to her mistress : ‘ The handsomest young man in the world has passed before our door. He is like a carved gem.’ ‘ Bring him in,’ answered the woman, ‘ that we may see him and buy from him.’ As John walked through each chamber, the door was shut behind him, until at last he came to a hall where a very beautiful young woman sat upon a seat which was crusted with jewels. She was dressed in a tunic as transparent as water. She stayed still in stupefaction as she looked at him ; she could not prevent herself. ‘ Servant of God,’ he said, ‘ will you buy something from me ? If not, I must depart.’ ‘ I only brought you in,’ she answered, ‘ to make you the master of my body.’ Then the young

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man cried : 'Woe, woe upon you ! I have read the Gospel, the Book of God, and he who has read the Book of God shall in no wise disobey it.' 'Come with me into this little room,' she said. He found it filled with precious stones and gold. She said : 'All this is yours if you consent.' 'Bring me water for my ablution,' he replied. When he had finished, she handed him a napkin redolent of musk and amber, in the hope that he might become impregnated with these. But, when he saw that the matter was serious, he said : 'If you do not let me go, I will throw myself from the terrace.' Now the terrace was eighty cubits high. 'Do it with me,' she answered, 'or else throw yourself down.' He leaped over, but God in the Highest ordered the air to save him. The air held him, and he stood up in it by the power of God. Then the Lord said to Gabriel : 'Take my servant John, who was ready to perish because he feared me.' Gabriel took hold of him and set him safely upon the surface of the earth.

*Abmad al-Shīrwānī,
Nafbat al-Yaman.*

The Eyes of a Gazelle

IT IS RELATED THAT MAJNŪN RECEIVED THAT name, which means the Fool, because once, when he passed by some hunters who were following a gazelle, and saw the eyes of the creature, a memory of Lailah came to him suddenly, and he fell in a swoon. When he came to himself, they asked him what had happened, and he answered : ‘ I compared the eyes of that gazelle with the eyes of Lailah.’

*al-Suyūṭī,
Anīs al-Jalīs.*

Rivalry

A MAN, WHO HAD ALREADY ONE WIFE, TOOK to himself a second and much younger. The servant of the latter walked in front of the older woman's door, reciting :

*These legs are not alike. One healthy is,
The other eaten by paralysis.*

Then she walked back, reciting :

*Of these two dresses, one is old and torn,
And one is from the shop and never worn.*

But later the servant of the older woman passed in front of the new wife's door, saying :

*A man has many dwellings, is accursed
With need of change, but only loves the first.*

*Ibn 'Abd Rabīh,
Kitāb al-'ikd al-farīd.*

Nocturnal Confusion

A WOMAN SOUGHT OUT IBN ZUBAIR AND complained to him of the relations which her husband maintained with her female servant. The man was called into the presence and questioned concerning this accusation. 'My wife is black,' he answered, 'the servant is black, and I am short-sighted. When it is dark, I have to take what comes to hand.'

*Ibn 'Abd Rabih,
Kitab al-'ikd al-farid.*

A Quick Child

GOHA MARRIED A BEAUTIFUL WIFE WHO, AT the end of three months, gave birth to a son. The women came together to give the child a name, and each made her proposal; but at length Goha, who was standing by, suggested: 'The best thing would be to call him Speedy.' 'Why?' they asked, and he replied: 'Because he can make a nine months' journey in three.'

Nawādir al-Khoja Nasr al-Dīn.

The Treachery of Woman

IT IS RELATED THAT A CERTAIN ISRAELITE HAD a wife who was among the most beautiful women of her time, and that he loved her dearly. She died, and he did not leave her tomb for a long while. Indeed he was still in that place when our Lord Jesus passed by and, seeing him weep, asked him why he did so. When the other had told his story, Jesus asked : ' Do you wish me to raise her from the dead ? ' and the other answered : ' Yes.' So Jesus called to the inhabitant of the tomb nearest him, and there came forth a black slave, spreading fire from his nostrils, his eyes and the openings of his body. ' There is no God but God,' he said, ' and Jesus is the Breath of God.' ' Prophet of the Lord,' said the man, ' that is not she.' And he pointed to another tomb. Then Jesus said to the negro : ' Return to your place.' And he fell dead and entered again into the earth. Then the prophet turned toward the other grave, crying : ' Let the dweller in this grave rise up through the will of God ! ' The tomb gaped and a woman came forth, shaking the dust from her head. ' O Breath of God,' cried the man, ' that is indeed my wife.' ' Take her,' said Jesus. So the other took her and immediately departed. Later he

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was weighed down by sleep, and said : ' I am worn out with having watched by your tomb. I wish to rest.' ' Very well,' she said. He laid his head on his wife's thigh and slept. Soon a Prince, who was one of the most handsome men of his time, passed by upon a fine horse, and when the woman saw him her heart went out to him. She set down her husband's head upon the earth and rose. And when the Prince saw her he fell in love with her. ' Take me,' she said. He took her behind him on his horse and departed. When he woke and did not find his wife, the husband followed the tracks of the horse and came up with her. ' O Prince, that is my wife,' he said, ' therefore let her down.' But she denied him, saying : ' I belong to the King's son.' And the Prince asked : ' Do you envy me my wife ? ' ' As God lives, she is my wife,' exclaimed the husband. ' Our Lord Jesus raised her from the dead for me.' As these things were going forward, Jesus appeared before them. ' O Breath of God,' cried the man, ' is not this the woman whom you raised from the dead for me ? ' ' It is,' said Jesus. But the woman cried : ' O Breath of God, he is a liar ! I am the wife of this Prince.' ' Did I not raise you from the dead through God's will ? ' asked Jesus. ' No indeed, O Breath of God.' ' Nevertheless you must render me back

From the Arabic

that which I have given.' The woman fell forward, and Jesus said : ' If any would look upon one who died an unbeliever, and was raised from the dead, and believed again, and died in the Faith, let him look upon that black man. If any would look upon one who died a Believer, and was raised from the dead, and became unfaithful and died without the Faith, let him look upon this woman.' Afterwards the man swore that he would never marry. He retired into the desert, and adored God there until his death.

*Abmad al-Kalyūbī,
Nawādir.*

A Virgin Widow

IN A CERTAIN QUARTER OF BAGHDĀD A pleasant woman married an agreeable man. But the latter died at the end of three years without leaving children. Therefore the parents married the widow to the dead man's brother, according to custom, so that he might get heirs upon her for the property. The first night of the marriage passed ill. Next morning the new bridegroom made complaint of it to the woman's people. For three further nights she refused her accommodation to the prayers of her husband, and at last he said to her relations : ' She must be suffering from a spell of witchcraft, or a cold on the kidneys. She has been married for three years, and ought to know well enough what the first night of marriage means, and the implication of the following nights.' Therefore her parents called the widow to them and angrily reproached her, but she burst into tears, and cried : ' O my mother, this evil man wishes to use me in front ! ' Thus it was that the second husband had the virginity of a widow who had been married for three years.

Ahmad ibn Bakr.

The Goods of the Devil

WE READ IN THE KITĀB IBTILĀ'IL AKHYĀR that Jesus once met Iblīs driving five asses before him, and asked him about them. 'They carry the goods for which I am seeking purchasers,' answered the devil. 'And what goods are they?' 'The first is tyranny.' 'Who will buy that?' 'Kings; and the second is pride.' 'Who will buy that?' 'The nobility; and the third is envy.' 'Who will buy that?' 'Scholars; and the fourth is knavery.' 'Who will buy that?' 'Business men; and the fifth is guile.' 'Who will buy that?' 'Women,' answered Iblīs.

al-Damīrī,
Hayāt al-Hayawān.

Hunting for a Man

GOHA'S WIFE WENT OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF the night. Someone met her, and asked : 'Why are you leaving your home at such an hour?' 'I hardly care why,' she answered. 'If I meet a man, that is what I really want. If I meet a devil, he will do.'

Nawādir al-Khoja Nasr al-Dīn.

Hate of Crows

IT IS RELATED THAT LUBNA ORDERED ONE OF her servants to buy her crows. He procured four, and when she saw them she wept and uttered cries ; then she tied them up and beat them with a whip until they were all dead. At the same time she recited at the full of her voice these lines of her cousin :

*My heart has flown on the advice of the crow ;
The crow croaked absence, and that Lubna would go.
May you die quick, race of hoarse crows that lurk
In the near air about no other work,
That have a single and a passionate end,
Glibly to separate dear friend and friend.*

Her husband came in and, seeing her thus occupied, asked her the reason for her behaviour. ' Because my cousin and friend al-Kais told them to perch, and they would not do so. He said to them :

*O crows of separation, you have now
Taken all things. Can you not find a bough ?*

I swore never to have a crow in my power without killing it.' Her husband grew angry,

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and said : ‘ I will send you back.’ ‘ I wish you would,’ she answered, ‘ and I also wish that I were blind. I did not marry you through any liking. I had sworn never to wed any man except al-Kais, but my father was the stronger.’

*Ja'far al-Kāri,
Masāri' al-'ushshak.*

Zubair, the Evil Man

ZUBAIR WAS A PERVERSE AND MEDDLESOME fellow, who did not even take the trouble to hide his vices. He had a very beautiful wife, who was loved by one of her compatriots ; and she repaid that love. It must be remembered that Zubair was full of guile. Next door to him there dwelt a Sage, at whose house the people would collect at evening to hear his discourse and commentary upon history and ethics. Zubair used to be one of this audience, though he only went in order to vaunt himself as a friend of learning. Now the Sage also had a very beautiful wife, and the lover of the wife of Zubair pretended, for his own ends, to be smitten with the Sage's wife, who was, in fact, extremely virtuous and dearly loved her husband. This is how the lover worked his plan : after seeking out Zubair and swearing him to secrecy, he told him that he was in love with the Sage's wife and that his love was returned. Then he asked Zubair to help him in his intrigue. But Zubair thought it his duty to assure him that the woman would never submit. ' Ah,' cried the lover, ' it is impossible for me to renounce the joy of seeing her. She ravishes my soul, and is inclined to me. Also my fortune is

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considerable, and expense is no object. I will give you two ounces of silver every day on condition that you go each evening to listen to your neighbour's lecture and, as soon as he has finished, you turn and speak to him in a loud voice. When I hear you, I will know that the husband has finished.' Zubair agreed, and, while he carried out his duty at the Sage's house, the other joined the woman of his choice, and delighted with her until the end of the lecture. As soon as Zubair began to shout at the Sage, the lover left his mistress, and Zubair did not for a moment suspect that the trouble was in his own home. But after a few evenings the Sage began to think it strange that Zubair should always speak to him so loudly when he was on the point of rising ; so, on one occasion, he brought his discourse to a close much sooner than usual and, leaping upon Zubair, seized him, crying : ' As Allāh lives, if you say a single word, I will break your bones ! ' Then he dragged Zubair into the room of his wife, whom he found quietly and honestly occupied over some domestic task. The Sage reflected for a moment, and then as violently dragged Zubair along the balcony to the neighbouring apartment. His wife followed, and all three, as they entered, saw the wife of Zubair in a fine position with her lover. Then said the Sage :

From the Arabic

‘ O wicked and unhappy Zubair, the dishonour is in your own house, and yourself opened the door for it ! ’ Zubair in shame and anger repudiated his wife, and left the country. He who encourages deceit shall be its victim.

Ahmad ibn Bakr.

Three Women

SĀLIH IBN AHMAD AL-IJLĪ TELLS US THAT he learned the following from his father. Three women came into the presence of Iyās ibn Mu‘āwiyah, and he said : ‘ That one is a nursing mother, this one is a virgin, and yonder is separated from her husband.’ When he was asked how he knew these things, he answered : ‘ The first held her breasts with her hand as she sat down ; when the second came in, she looked at no one ; but the third sent bold glances to right and left.’

*Ibn al-Jawzī,
Kitāb al-Aẓkīyah.*

A Reunion of Lovers

I ONCE HAD A YOUNG SLAVE, SAYS THE saintly Muhammad ibn ‘Ubaid Allāh, and I sold her. Then my passion urged me to follow her ; I sought out her master with certain of my brothers, and these asked him to cancel the sale, taking whatever profit he would. He refused. I left his house under a load of sadness, and passed the next night without sleeping, not knowing what to do. When I realised the full of my pain I wrote the name of the young girl on the palm of each of my hands ; then I turned towards the *kiblah*, and every time that her memory wounded me I lifted my hands to heaven, saying : ‘ Lord, such is my story.’ At dawn on the second day, a man knocked at my door. ‘ Who is there ? ’ I cried, and the answer came : ‘ I am the purchaser of that girl.’ I opened, and the child was there. ‘ Take her, and God bless you ! ’ said the man. ‘ Then receive back your money and a profit,’ I replied. ‘ I will receive neither *dīnār* nor *dirham* from you,’ said he. ‘ And why ? ’ Then he answered : ‘ Last night one came to me in a dream, saying : “ Take back the girl to Ibn ‘Ubaid Allāh, and you shall have Paradise.” ’

*Ibn Kā'im al-Jauziyah,
Akbbār al-Nisā.*

*An Oath which was
Kept*

ONE OF THE KHALĪFAHS ONCE SWORE AN Oath that he would not recite any verses, and that for each line he happened to let fall he would free a slave. One day, while he was circling the Kaabah, he saw a young man chatting there with a very pretty girl. 'O man,' he cried, 'is it in such a place . . .?' 'As Allāh lives, O Commander of the Faithful,' answered the youth, 'there is nothing shameful in our act. This young woman is my cousin and the dearest thing in all the world to me; but her father has refused her to me in marriage because of my destitution. He demands a hundred camels and a hundred ounces of gold from me, and I cannot give them.' Then the Khalīfah called the father to him and paid over all that he had asked from his nephew; also he stayed with those people until the marriage was concluded. Then he returned to his own place, humming a verse. 'O master,' said one of his favourite slaves, 'I think that you have been reciting verses to-day. Have you forgotten your oath, or must we believe that you have fallen in love?' Then the Khalīfah recited these :

From the Arabic

*'You're moved to-day,' remarked my pretty maid.
'And yet 'tis long since your desire was laid.
Has one excited you?' And then I said:
'A lover and his lass to me have prayed,
And once a lover, always, I'm afraid.'*

Afterwards he counted the lines and found that they were five. So he freed the required number of slaves, saying: 'How excellent is my poetry! It has given liberty to five souls.'

*Abmad al-Ibsaihi,
Kitāb al-Mustātraḥ.*

Faithlessness

THERE WAS A VERY BEAUTIFUL ISRAELITISH woman who dwelt in the house of her husband, a scavenger. When he came in at evening, she prepared food and made his bed. The King of that time saw her and sent an old woman to her, who said : ‘What have you to do with scavengers ? If you were with the King, he would dress you in silks and furnish you apartments of brocade.’ On the evening of the day when she had heard these words, her husband returned and found neither food nor bed prepared. ‘What is the meaning of this negligence, O Hintah ?’ he asked. ‘It is as you see,’ she answered. ‘Then I put you away.’ ‘So be it.’ He repudiated her, and the King wedded her ; but, when she was brought into his presence, he looked at her and became blind. Then he groped towards her with his hand, and his hand withered. The prophet of that time submitted the case to God, and received this revelation : ‘If they do not think I am concerned with what is done to a scavenger, they err. I shall not pardon them.’

*Ja'far al-Kāri,
Masāri' al-'ushshak.*

Dogbah's Imbecility

THIS CONCERNS DOGHAH, THE DAUGHTER OF Min'āj. It is told of her great foolishness that when she was pregnant and the moment of her deliverance came, she felt movements in her belly. She sought out a wall and, when she had placed herself in position, brought forth. When she had borne a child, it cried. She rose up in a fright, and ran to her mother, crying : ' Can a motion open its mouth ? ' ' Yes,' answered the older woman, who understood what had happened, ' it surely can when it wants its father.' She asked where the place might be and, when her daughter told her, went to it and found the baby.

*al-Mufaddal,
Kitāb al-Fākhir.*

The Pretended Servant

IT IS RELATED THAT A CERTAIN SHEIKH ASKED for a woman in marriage, but her relations refused to give her to him unless he provided a female slave. Now he had not the means to purchase one. He spoke of the matter to one of his friends, and the man said : ‘ I will take the servant’s place. Go to those people and tell them that you have obtained such a woman as they required, but that she will only work in a place where she may be alone, without either seeing or being seen.’ The man carried this message, and the woman’s people said : ‘ As long as she does all the work required of her we have no need to see her.’ And they gave him the wife he wished. The sheikh fetched his friend and left him alone in a certain part of the house. This friend was dark-coloured and beardless. He covered his face with a veil, and began to grind corn. The bride supposed him to be a female servant. The sheikh left his wife during the night to go and adore God. The woman told her folk of this, and they said : ‘ Perhaps he has gone to find the slave.’ So, when he went out on the next night, his wife followed, to see if he was with the servant. She found the servant praying, while the mill was

From the Arabic

turning by itself. Of the sheikh she saw nothing. She returned in her surprise, and kept silence until her husband came back to her. Then she said : ' I saw the servant praying and the mill turning by itself.' ' That is not a servant but my friend,' he answered. Then the woman cried : ' God pardon me ! I am the servant and will serve you both ! '

*' Abd Allāh al-Yāfi'i,
Raud al-Rayāhīn.*

Origin of the Demons

IT IS RELATED THAT GOD CREATED ALL demons out of the simoom, and that He created a wife for the simoom out of the simoom, as he had created Eve from Adam. The simoom had connection with his wife ; she became pregnant by him and laid thirty eggs. One of these eggs, in breaking, gave birth to the *ḡutrubah*, who was, so to say, the mother of all the *ḡatārib*, those demons which take the bodies of cats. From another egg came forth the *iblis*, among whom we must number al-Hārith Abū Murrah ; these dwell in walls. Another egg produced the *maradah*, who inhabit the isles. Another produced the *aghwāl*, who have a special fondness for ruins and deserts ; another, the *sa'āli*, who go up into high mountains ; another, the *wahāwīs*, who live in the air as winged serpents and fly over the spaces of it. The *dawāsik* came out of another egg ; the *hamāsik* out of another ; the *hamāmīs* from yet another, and so forth and so onward.

Mas'ūdī,
The Golden Meadows.

A Lover's Scent

WHEN LAILAH DIED, MAJNŪN CAME TO HER tribe and wished to see her tomb; but they refused to lead him to it. Then he began to snuff the earth about each grave until he found that which was about the grave of Lailah. He recognised it for what it was, and improvised this verse :

*They would wickedly hide her tomb from her lover, her
Perfumes spreading into the sand discover her.*

He did not cease from repeating these words, until he died and was buried beside her.

*Bahā al-Dīn al-'Amilī,
al-Kashkūl.*

*The Two Marriages of
Ismā'īl*

ISMĀ'ĪL MARRIED AL-DJADĀ, THE DAUGHTER of Sa'd the Amalekite. So Abraham, after asking and obtaining permission from Sarah to visit Ismā'īl, journeyed to Mecca. Now Ismā'īl was hunting and feeding his flocks with Hagar, his mother. Abraham greeted al-Djadā, wife of Ismā'īl and daughter of Sa'd, but she did not return his greeting. Then he said: 'Is this a place where strangers are received?' 'As God lives, it is not,' she answered. 'What is the master of the house about?' 'He is away.' 'Tell him, when he returns, that Abraham asked news of him and his mother, and that now he counsels him to change the threshold of his house and take another.' Then Abraham took the backward road to Syria. That evening Ismā'īl and Hagar returned and saw that the valley was shining as with the light of dawn, and that the flocks of sheep smelled at certain tracks. Then he asked his wife, the Amalekite: 'Did anything happen after my departure?' 'Yes,' she answered, 'an old man came here.' And she told him all that had passed. 'It was my father, the Friend of God,' he said. 'He has counselled me to send you away. Go back

From the Arabic

to your own people, for there is no good in you at all.' For his second wife, Ismā'il took Sāmāh, the daughter of Muhalhil. Abraham asked Sarah's permission to pay another visit to Ismā'il, but she was tormented by jealousy and made him swear that, when he arrived at the end of his journey, he would not set foot to earth. Men are not in agreement on the question of what beast he rode. Some say that it was Barak, the first of the horses ; others think that it was a she-ass, or perhaps some other animal. When Abraham arrived in the valley, he saluted the Jurhamite, the wife of Ismā'il. She returned his salutation, wished him welcome, and received him very graciously. He asked news of Ismā'il and Hagar, and she gave it, telling him that both were away feeding their flocks. Then she invited him to dismount, but he refused to do so. The Jurhamite begged with insistence that Abraham would enter, but he would not consent ; so she gave him milk and slices of game, and he blessed them. Then she brought out a stone which was in the tent. He leaned sideways from his mount and set his right foot on the stone. The Jurhamite combed and scented his hair on that side, then, carrying the stone round to the left, combed and scented his hair on that side also. After a certain time he departed, saying : ' When Ismā'il returns tell him that

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Abraham greets him and counsels him to preserve the threshold of his house, for he will never find a better.'

*Mas'ūdī,
The Golden Meadows.*

The Lover and the Artichokes

GOHA'S WIFE TELLS THIS STORY: MY husband came one day to the house when my lover was with me ; so I hid the youth in our cellar. Goha had brought thirty artichokes with him, and these he put into the same cellar. My lover ate one of them. Then my husband began to count the artichokes one by one ; my lover gave them to him and he thought it was his own hand lighting upon them in the cellar. When he found that one was missing, he searched the cellar and found my lover. 'Who are you ?' he asked. 'I am an artichoke,' answered the youth. Then Goha cried : 'What a cheat that man was ! He counted this fellow in as an artichoke. No wonder I asked him why the basket was so heavy.' He led my lover to the vegetable-merchant, saying : 'Have you no fear of God ! How did you dare to weigh this in with my artichokes ?' The man was of a facetious turn of mind ; he took my lover by the ear, and cried : 'How often have I told you only to let yourself be counted as a turnip, never as an artichoke ?' Then he gave my husband another artichoke.

Nawādir al-Khoja Nasr al-Dīn.

Violation of Hospitality

IT IS RELATED THAT AN ARAB ONCE FOUND a man in the desert at the last stages of hunger and thirst, of weariness and fear. He had wandered far from his caravan, and for many days had known neither food nor water. The Arab gave him to eat and drink, and promised to lead him back to his caravan when he should have rested for three days and recovered from his fatigue and deprivation. They came to the Arab's tent, and the stranger, as soon as he was fed and rested and freed from fear, finding himself alone with his host's wife, sought to seduce her. She repulsed him and, when her husband returned, told him what had happened. He did not reproach the stranger, but set him on a camel and led him to his own caravan. As they were parting, the other said : ' I wish you would do me the honour of asking something from me.' ' I ask nothing,' answered the Arab, ' except that, when you are once more with your own people, you will tell them how we behaved towards you and how you behaved to us.'

*Bresnier,
Anthologie arabe.*

A Scholar's Slave

THERE WAS ONCE A SCHOLAR WHO LIVED IN Damascus, reading in numerous books; and he was waited upon only by a single female slave, who had come from the country. One day, when this slave brought her master his food, he jested with her in a scholarly way, and she, who was by nature timid, blushed and let fly an impropriety. The scholar cried angrily: 'Do you dare to allow yourself such things in my presence? I am going to chastise you.' He took off one of his long black slippers and, making the girl bend down before him, cleared away her clothes from behind in order to whip her. But when he saw her firm white buttocks, and the youth and freshness of her thighs, he dropped his slipper and, fetching another matter from beneath his robe, gave it to the girl without changing her position. The slave, who had hitherto known nothing of this kind of punishment, suffered it to the end, and then left the apartment. Next morning, while the scholar was deep in his meditation among the books of the ancient Sages, there came a knock at the door and the slave appeared. 'What is it now?' cried the scholar. 'Have I not forbidden you to interrupt my studies?' 'Alas,

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my lord, it is I,' replied the slave. 'And what do you want?' asked the scholar. 'I have let an impropriety,' she answered, 'and come to be chastised.'

Abmad ibn Bakr.

A Woman brought to Reason

I HAD A WIFE, SAID A CERTAIN SHEIKH, OF whom I was exceedingly fond. One night an ecstasy came upon me in my sleep ; my wife heard what I said and saw my state ; it was a violent ecstasy. When I woke, she asked me what the matter was, and bade me tell her of my ecstasy. But I remained silent and at last went out and left her. ‘Fetch my mother and my sister,’ she said to our servants and, when these two had come to her, continued : ‘I will not be his wife any longer ; he is possessed by a devil. I will not stay in the house with him.’ Her relations blamed her for this decision and wished to turn her from it, but she remained obstinate. ‘At least wait till we have seen him,’ they said. When I learned what had passed, I went to my wife and asked her what her intention might be. ‘To leave you,’ she answered. ‘If I do not I shall kill myself, and my blood will be upon your head.’ ‘Give me seven days’ delay,’ I pleaded, and she granted my request. I felt a most lively grief at the thought of being separated from her ; I tried to win her over with many rich presents, but she refused to be won. Her people tried to influence her, but she would not listen to them.

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As soon as I was quite certain that she was resolved to leave me, I felt true desolation ; my bodily condition altered, my soul was troubled, and I could find none to comfort me. When but a single night remained of the week's reprieve, I grew worse, and the earth became too narrow a thing to hold me. I returned to God, I put the business in His hands, and resolved to be satisfied with all He did. Then I made this prayer to Him : ' O God, Who knowest every secret thing, Who fulfillest all prayer, I implore Thy succour. I seek Thine aid, O Protector of all men ! ' I repeated this prayer three times, and then sat down. When midnight came, I turned in the direction of Mecca. Just as I did so, my wife came in to me quickly and embraced my feet, saying : ' I beg you, in the name of Almighty God, to accept me again. I repent of my exigency, I return to God and I ask Him to accept my contrition.' ' I will not receive you back,' I answered, ' unless you tell me what has caused all this.' And she said : ' Yesterday I was resolved to put my plan into execution. But I saw a man come to me in my dreams, holding a whip in his right hand and a knife in his left. " If you do not renounce your project," he said, " I will kill you with this knife." Then he gave me three blows with the whip. I was terrified, and the blows

From the Arabic

hurt me. I waked for an hour and then slept again, and the man came to me, still holding his knife and whip. "Have I not warned and admonished you?" he said. "Have I not given an order?" He lifted his hand to me, and I woke in terror. I have come in all haste to see you, that you may accept my repentance, that you may be satisfied with me and pray God for me.' Then she uncovered her body and I saw three marks of a whip upon her. I said: 'May God inspire us both to repentance! I accept you in this world and the next.' 'I give up my dowry to you,' she replied, 'from gratitude to God. I have twenty dīnārs' worth of jewels; take them for the poor, with my rich clothing, in gratitude to God.' I gave these things to the poor on the next day. Then I examined God's conduct and benevolence towards me in this matter, and saw that He had rewarded me for my resignation to His will. I became sure that all is in His hands. After this I lived with my wife for seven years in the most perfect joy, praising God and accepting all He did. Then my wife died. After her death, I saw her in a dream, at the full height of her beauty, dressed in such sumptuous clothes and wearing such bright jewels that I can in no wise describe them. I said to her: 'How has God treated you and what have you received from your

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Creator ? ' 'These which you see,' she answered, 'and now I am waiting for you to come and find me. May He be as satisfied with you as you with me ! '

*'Abd Allāh al-Yāfi'i,
Raud al-Rayāhīn.*

A Strange Precaution

A SON FOUND HIS MOTHER WITH A MAN, and killed her. He was asked: 'Why did you not kill the man and spare your mother?' 'Oh, then,' he answered, 'I would have had to kill a man each day.'

*Abū Madyān al-Fāsī,
Majmū' al-ḥarf.*

*The Treason and Punishment of
Al-Daizan's Daughter*

AL-DAIZAN, MASTER OF A NUMEROUS ARMY, had allied himself to the Romans and was entirely devoted to them. The ravages of his soldiers in 'Irāk and the Sawād called forth the resentment of Sābūr, King of Persia, who therefore came to besiege him in the fortress of al-Hadr, whither he had retreated. For a month Sābūr attacked without success, and every ruse he could think of remained unfruitful, until one day al-Nadīrah, al-Daizan's daughter, who had climbed upon the ramparts, looked down upon the Persian King. Now he was one of the handsomest and best-built men of his time. She fell in love with him and sent word in secret that, if he would swear to marry her and give her first place among his wives, she would betray the city into his power. When she had obtained his promise, she sent him a second message, bidding him ascend the Tharthar, which was the canal flowing above al-Hadr, and to throw straws into it. Then he was to follow the drift of the straws and see at what place they entered the city, since it was by that secret opening that he should introduce his soldiers. Sābūr followed her advice. Heading the army himself, he pene-

From the Arabic

trated to the heart of the fortress, without being perceived by any of the garrison. Also al-Nadīrah, being impatient to become Sābūr's wife, helped out his plan by making her father drunk. Sābūr cut the throats of al-Daizan and of all his people. Then he razed the citadel to the ground, and finally married al-Nadīrah. One night, as she tossed on her bed without being able to sleep, Sābūr asked her the cause of her restlessness. 'Your bed is torturing my thighs,' she answered. 'Is that possible?' asked Sābūr. 'It is made of ostrich down, and no monarch in all the world has a softer or more delicate couch.' Next morning he found a myrtle leaf beneath al-Nadīrah's shoulder; therefore, since she had complained of being tortured even to bleeding point, he gave her the leaf, saying: 'Ah, wretched woman, on what did your parents feed you?' 'On cream and marrow, on snow and honey, on exquisite wine,' she answered. 'Then my duty is to kill you,' cried Sābūr, 'since you have repaid all those advantages by murdering your father and your kin.' He ordered her to be fastened between two wild stallions; then these were loosed and she was torn to pieces.

*Mas'ūdī,
The Golden Meadows.*

The Marriage of Seth

WHEN ADAM WAS FAR GONE IN THAT illness which was to carry him off, he powerfully desired to eat the fruits of Paradise. Therefore he sent his sons out by every road to bring him the like. Seth was beside him, and Adam said : ' Pray to God to send these fruits to me.' ' Pray to Him yourself,' answered his son. But Adam said : ' I am ashamed before God because of what happened when I ate the fruit of the Tree against His order.' Then Seth prayed to God and went up into the mountain to seek for the fruit. He saw Gabriel coming towards him with a dish of it, and a hūrī of Paradise was carrying the dish upon her head. Adam ate, and then prayed to God to marry this hūrī to his son Seth. The Highest consented, and she was the first woman who spoke Arabic.

*'Ali Dedeh al-Busnāwī,
Muhādarāt al-Awā'il.*

The Dangers of Wine

AN OLD ARAB WOMAN SAT NEAR SOME YOUNG folk who were drinking wine. They insisted on her taking a cup of it, and she was comforted ; they gave her a second ; her face reddened and she laughed. After she had finished a third cup, she said to them : ‘ Do your women drink this thing in ‘Irāk ? ’ And when they answered : ‘ Yes,’ she cried : ‘ Then I swear, by the Master of the Kaabah, that they all whore, and that not one of you knows his father.’

al-Sharīshī,
Commentaire des Séances de Harīrī.

Greetings from the Dead

HAMMĀD AL-RĀWIYAH TELLS THE FOLLOWING story: Passing by the tomb of Taubah during the night, the husband of Lailah al-Akhlayah swore that his wife should dismount, go toward the tomb, and salute it, in order to give the lie to the lines of the dead poet :

*If I were greeted by Lailah, though the tomb
And flat stones parted I would know by whom.
Either I'd joyfully answer, or a bird
Fly from my breast to tell her that I heard.*

At first she refused, but her husband compelled her; so she came down from her camel, with the tears streaming into her breast like a storm of rain. ' Greeting, O Taubah ! ' she said, and had hardly finished when the tomb opened and a bird like a white dove came out of it. It struck Lailah in the breast, and she fell dead. They made her a funeral; they wrapped her in a winding-sheet and buried her by the tomb of Taubah.

*Mas'ūdī,
The Golden Meadows.*

Black and White

AN ABYSSINIAN AND A GREEK WOMAN WERE flyting for supremacy. The second said: 'I am a grain of camphor and you are a sack of charcoal.' 'I am a grain of musk and you are a sack of salt,' the Abyssinian answered.

*Abmad al-Ibshaibī,
Kitāb al-Muṣṭatraḥ.*

A Husband Justified

A WOMAN SOUGHT THE PRESENCE OF 'UBAID Allāh ibn Ziyād. She was covered with fat, big-bellied and very beautiful. She came to complain of her husband, saying that he was black-souled and of a worthless character. The Amīr turned to the man, asking: 'Of what does this woman complain?' 'May God cherish the Amīr!' answered the husband. 'Ask her whether her body and its fat come from my nourishment or that of another.' 'Yours!' cried the woman. 'Are you going to grudge me the very food I eat? Even dogs have to live in some way.' The man answered: 'Oh, Amīr, ask her if her clothes were bought with my money or that of another.' 'Your money, of course!' cried the woman. 'Are you going to grudge me the very clothes I stand up in?' The man continued: 'Ask her, O Amīr, if that which she bears in her body is by me or by another.' 'By you!' cried the woman. 'I would rather it were by a dog!' Then said the husband: 'May God cherish the Amīr! What more does this woman want save to be fed and clothed and ravished?' 'You have right on your side,' said the Amīr. 'Take her away.'

*The pseudo Jābir,
Kitāb al-Mahāsīn.*

Temptation Avoided

ONE DAY AL-HAJJĀJ VISITED HIS PRISON. A certain man was brought before him, and he questioned him about his offences. 'May God protect the Amīr !' answered this prisoner. 'I will tell you my story ; for, if a lie would save me, yet truth is better than salvation. I am the brother of a man whom the Amīr sent into Khorassān. He had a wife who fell in love with me without my being aware. She sent me this message one day : 'A letter has come from your friend. Visit me, and you shall read it.' I went to her house and she kept me in conversation until the time for prayer at middle afternoon. Then she told me what she had in her heart, and invited me to commit that evil. I refused, and she said : 'If you do not do it, I will cry out and say that you are a robber.' As I still refused, she uttered screams. I fled as fast as I could. I would rather have died than betray my brother. The Amīr's guards met me and laid hold of me while I was saying these lines :

*A white, caressing woman pressed and pressed,
But, though unchaste, I'd been her husband's
guest.*

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Al-Hajjāj recognised the truth of this story and
ordered the man to be released.

*I'bn Kā'im al-Jauziyab,
Akḥbār al-Nisā.*

The Road to Advancement

A CERTAIN SHĀH OF PERSIA, BELONGING TO ancient days, once saw from the terrace of his palace a man of grave aspect who, upon that of a neighbouring house, was making the strangest contortions in an endeavour to connect with himself. Surprised at such a proceeding, the Shāh sent one of his guards for the man, and the latter, when he was introduced into the Presence, prostrated himself and waited to be questioned. ‘O strange man,’ said the Shāh, ‘what was the meaning of your extravagant occupation? What result did you hope from it? You have the appearance of a reasonable and even a venerable man, and yet you behave like a lunatic.’ ‘O sacred Majesty,’ the other answered, ‘behold, I am the dust of your feet! But my action was not quite so unreasonable as it may have appeared. I have observed that all those men with whom Your Majesty connects reach to high employment and become tax farmers, governors of provinces, or ministers. I wished to see whether perchance my own property had the same virtue as that of Your Majesty, and whether, by introducing it personally, I could not raise myself up to honour.’ The Shāh laughed consumedly at this

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reply and, perceiving that he had to do with a
man of some wit, gave him an important
position about the court.

Abmad ibn Bakr.

Charity to a Dog

ACCORDING TO MUSLIM, THE PROPHET TOLD this story: 'One day a woman was walking in the desert, and thirst became painful to her. She went down into a well and drank, and then climbed up again. At the top she found a dog who was eating the damp earth in the excess of his desire for water. 'He is in the same state as I was,' she said to herself. She went down into the well, filled her shoe with water, and, holding it between her teeth, climbed forth a second time. She gave the dog to drink, and God congratulated her and pardoned her.' Then some of the people said: 'O Prophet of God, is there then a recompense for service done to animals?' 'Certainly,' he answered, 'for every delicate spirit there is a recompense.'

*al-Damirī,
Hayāt al-Hayawān.*

A Prince's Education

DŪ RIYĀSAHAIN RELATES THAT BAHRĀM Jūr had a son whom he destined to reign after him ; but the child grew up of somewhat feeble intelligence, lacking all manly instinct, bad-mannered, and with no elevation of spirit. This saddened his father, and he entrusted the boy to tutors, astrologers and sages in the hope that he might become fond of them and learn something from them. He used to question them, but all they told him of the lad's lack of application and understanding grieved him sorely. One day a certain tutor said to him : ' It is true that we are afraid for his education, but something has happened which counsels us to patience and gives us some hope of success.' ' What is that ? ' asked the King, and the other answered : ' He has seen the daughter of the Satrap Such-and-Such and has fallen in love with her. She has taken full possession of his mind ; he has no thought or guide beyond her.' ' Then I also am hopeful of success,' said Bah-rām. He called the girl's father and said to him : ' I am about to trust you with a secret. Let it remain with you.' The father promised discretion, and then the King told him of his own son's love for his daughter, and that it was

From the Arabic

his intention that the two should marry. He bade him instruct his daughter to make herself desired of the young man, to enter into correspondence with him, but to deny him all sight of herself. When the Prince's desire had become permanent, she was to remove herself and utterly avoid him. Then, if he wished to know the reason for this, she was to inform him that nothing less than a King would suit her. 'Let me know what passes between them,' continued Bahrām, 'but do not tell your daughter the secret with which I have entrusted you.' The father accepted this charge, and the King said to the tutor who had first reported the affair: 'Excite and encourage him to correspond with this woman.' The man did so, and the girl exactly obeyed her father's instructions. When the time came for her to be distant with the prince, and he understood the reason of her aversion, he at once set himself to study, to seek wisdom, and to learn the arts of equitation, archery and polo, until he had become skilled in all of them. Then his instructors told his father that he had need of horses and weapons, stores and dresses, cup-mates and many another thing. The King rejoiced and ordered him to be given what he wanted. Then he called the tutor to him, and said: 'My son does not understand his position with regard to this woman. Therefore

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go to him and advise him to tell me about
it, and to ask me for my permission to marry
her.' The tutor did as he was told, and the
youth made his petition to his father. The
King summoned the Satrap, and the latter sent
for his daughter in all haste.

*Abmad al-Ibsaihi,
Kitāb al-Mustatraf.*

Jesus and the World

IT IS RELATED THAT THE WORLD APPEARED to Jesus (upon whom be salvation!) as an old woman having grey hair and being covered with ornaments. 'How often have you been married?' he asked her, and she replied: 'I have not counted.' He asked again: 'Have all your husbands died by your side, or have they put you away?' 'I have killed them all,' she answered. Then said Jesus: 'It is sad that the example of some has not served as a warning to others of them. You treated them one after another in the same way, and none were on their guard.'

al-Yāfi'i,
Raud al-Rayāhīn.

The Belly has no Eyes

ABU'L-HĀRITH WAS INVITED TO HIS MISTRESS'S house one day, and she spoke with him for a long while, until he became hungry and asked for food. 'Is not my face sufficient to distract your thoughts from eating?' she asked, and he replied: 'May I be your ransom! If even historical lovers, such as Jamīl and Buthainah, had sat together for an hour without eating, they would have spat in each other's faces and separated for ever.'

*Abmad al-Ibsaibī,
Kitāb al-Mustatraf.*

The Prophetess

THEY BROUGHT A WOMAN WHO PRETENDED prophecy into the presence of al-Mutawakkil. 'You are a prophetess?' he asked, and she answered: 'Yes.' 'Do you believe in Muhammad?' 'Yes.' 'Yet he said: *After me there shall be no more prophets.*' To which the woman replied: 'Yes. But did he say: *After me there shall be no more prophetesses?*' al-Mutawakkil began to laugh and gave her a handsome present.

*Abmad al-Ibsaibī,
Kitāb al-Mustatraf.*

Two Lovers meet again in Death

ABU'L-KĀSIM AL-MĀMŪN IBN ISMĀ'ĪL Ibn 'Abd Allāh told me that he heard the following story from his father. There was once a singing-girl at Medina, incomparable for beauty of face, for education and intelligence. She had read the Korān, could quote the poets, and had wonderful acquaintance with the Arabic tongue. She was indispensable to Yazīd ibn 'Abd al-Malik and had entire dominion over his heart. One day he said to her : ' Have you no relation or someone you love whom I can receive as my guest and cover with my benefits ? ' ' O Prince of Believers, I have no relations at all ; but there are three men in Medina who used to be friends of my first master. I should like them to receive some part of your goodness towards me.' So the Khalifah wrote to the governor of Medina to send for these three men, and to give each of them ten thousand dirhams. When they came to the door of Yazīd's palace, they asked permission to enter in order to thank him. This was allowed, and the Khalifah treated them with great respect and questioned them concerning their further needs. Two of them pointed out their necessities, and these were satisfied. But when the third was



From the Arabic

asked what he desired, he answered : ‘ O Commander of the Faithful, I desire nothing.’ ‘ Is there naught I could do to satisfy you ? ’ ‘ Indeed there is, O Prince of Believers, but my desire is such that I do not think you would grant it.’ ‘ Yet ask, for if it be at all possible you shall have your wish.’ ‘ But have I assurance of safety ? ’ ‘ You have.’ ‘ Then, O Commander of the Faithful, may it please you to order your young slave, for whose sake you have honoured us, to sing three songs, and I, in the meanwhile, will drink three measures of wine.’ The face of the Khalifah changed. He left the hall and, entering the girl’s apartment, reported the matter. ‘ But what have you to fear, O Prince of Believers ? ’ she asked. So he ordered the young man to be brought in, and had three gold seats prepared. He sat down on one of them himself, and caused the girl and the youth to sit upon the two others. Then he called for every sort of flower and perfume, and finally for three cups, which he filled, saying : ‘ O young man, ask what you wish.’ ‘ Tell her to sing these lines, O Prince of Believers :

*I warned my love to flee her, and he fled
And made his burning home with me instead ;
But though he now has done his worst to me
And though I warn again, he will not flee.’*

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So Yazīd bade the girl sing those lines and then he drank, and the youth and the singer drank. He had the three cups filled again, and asked : ‘ What now ? ’ ‘ O Commander of the Faithful, bid her sing this :

*I chose a branch of arak in a garden ;
Carry it quickly, that it does not wither ;
Though Hind's not here, I pray for you God's pardon ;
Carry it quickly, ah, but whither, whither ? ’*

The Khalīfah had this song sung also, then he drank, and the youth and the singer drank. He gave orders that the three cups should be filled again, and then said to the young man : ‘ Ask what you will. ’ ‘ O Prince of Believers, bid her sing this :

*My thought's a wedding, and your thought's disdain.
As Allāh lives, I shall board up this pain
As long as the moon and love shine out again. ’*

Yazīd bade the girl sing this third song, but she had scarcely done so when the young man fell into a swoon. ‘ Rise and see what is the matter with him, ’ said the Prince to the singer. She rose and shook him, and saw that he was dead. ‘ Weep for him, ’ said Yazīd. ‘ I will not weep for him as long as you live, O Commander of

From the Arabic

the Faithful.' 'Yet weep for him ; for, if he had survived, I should not have allowed him to depart without you.' Then she wept, and the Khalifah joined in her weeping. He gave orders for the young man's funeral. At the end of a very few days the singer also died.

*Abmad al-Ibsaibī,
Kitāb al-Mustatraf.*

A Bad Exchange

A MAN HAD A BEAUTIFUL WIFE; BUT ONE OF his friends told him that she was unfaithful. He put her away and married another. 'How are you getting on with the second?' his friend asked, and he replied: 'I used to eat honey with a companion, now I am eating pitch alone.'

*Ibn 'Āsīm,
Hadā'ik al-azābir.*

Scandal Avoided

THE WIFE OF A CERTAIN PRIEST, WHOSE HUSBAND had died, wished to remarry; but she feared what folk might say. She took a little bell and fastened it to the neck of a cock, so that she would always know when the bird moved. People began to talk about the cock and the little bell of the widow of the priest, saying: 'Look, look at the little bell of the priest's wife on the cock's neck.' At the end of three days they ceased to talk about these things. Then she thought: 'They have spoken for three days about the cock and the little bell.' And she remarried.

K. N. Tallqvist.

Not Really Absence of Mind

A MAN BOUGHT A FISH AND TOLD HIS WIFE to make it ready, then he went to sleep. She ate the fish herself and dabbled her husband's hand in the sauce of it. When he woke, he said: 'Bring me the fish.' 'You have eaten it.' 'No, I have not.' 'Smell your hand.' The poor man did so, and then murmured: 'I have certainly eaten it, but I do not feel at all full.'

*Abmad al-Ibsaihi,
Kitāb al-Mustatraf.*

A Call from beyond the Tomb

ABŪ HAMZAH AL KITTĀNĪ RELATES THE following anecdote: I was one of the guards of Khālid ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Kasrī, and he said one day: ‘Who will tell me a story? I feel that it might rest my heart.’ ‘I will,’ I answered. ‘Then do so,’ he said, and I began: It is related that there was once a young man of the Banu Uzrah, married to a woman of the same tribe. He was exceedingly fond of her, and she of him. One day, as he looked upon her face, he began to weep. She also regarded him and shed tears. Then she said: ‘Why do you weep?’ ‘As God lives,’ he answered, ‘if you will tell me the truth, I will tell you the truth also.’ ‘So be it,’ she answered, and he continued: ‘I was reviewing your beauty and your grace and the violence of my love for you, and then I thought that I should one day die and that you would marry another.’ ‘As Allāh lives, was that why you were weeping?’ she asked. And when he had answered that this was the true reason, she said: ‘And I was reviewing your beauty and your grace and the violence of my love for you, and then I thought that I should one day die and you would marry another.’ But the husband cried: ‘All women

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would be forbidden me.' They lived together for a certain time, and then the man died and the woman was heart-broken. Her family feared that she would go mad and therefore, in spite of her repugnance, determined to marry her a second time, to see if this would console her. When the night came on which she should be led to the house of her husband, when all were resting and the women had arranged her hair, she fell into a deep sleep and saw her first husband come in by the door. 'O Such-and-Such,' he said, 'you have broken faith with me. May your life be painful.' She woke in great trouble of spirit, and ran out from the house. Her family sought her, but never heard of her again.

*Ibn Kā'im al-Jauziyah,
Akḥbār al-Nisā.*

Accepted Counsel

AL-ASMA'Ī TELLS US OF THIS INCIDENT. While I once made my ritual circlings about the Kaabah, I saw a young man performing the same duty with a basket on his back. 'You make your circlings with a basket?' I asked, and he answered: 'This is my mother; she carried me for nine months, now I am doing the same by her.' 'Shall I counsel you how to make acquittance with her?' 'How?' 'Connect with her.' 'Enemy of God,' he answered, 'how dare you give me such advice concerning my own mother?' But the old woman lifted her hand and gave her son a slap on the neck, saying: 'Why do you fly into a rage when people give you good advice?'

*Abmad al-Shirwānī,
Nafbat al-Yaman.*

Requests of the Devil

IT IS RELATED THAT IBLĪS ADDRESSED HIMSELF to God, saying: 'Lord, you have sent me upon earth, you have driven me away, you have made a stoned one of me; give me now a dwelling.' 'Your dwelling shall be among the markets.' 'Ordain a food for me.' 'All over which men do not say My name.' 'What drink shall I have?' 'Anything which can intoxicate.' 'What muezzin shall be mine?' 'Flutes.' 'What game shall I hunt?' 'Women.'

*Ahmad al-Ibshaiḥī,
Kitāb al-Muṣṭatraḥ.*

He Loved a Fancy

THE FOLLOWING TALE IS TOLD OF JĀHIZAH. He said: I once composed a book on the amusing defects in schoolmasters. Then, before it was finished, I abandoned and determined to suppress it. One day I entered a certain city and found a school there which had a master with excellent good looks. I greeted him, and he answered in the most polished style, bidding me welcome. I sat down beside him and examined him on the Korān. He showed himself word-perfect in it. Then I took him through law and grammar, metaphysics and the earliest poetic literature of the Arabs. His instruction was perfect in all these. 'By Allāh,' I said to myself, 'this confirms me in my resolution to suppress that book.' And from that time forth I saw much of the man at his school. But one day I went to see him and found the place shut. When I asked after him, I was told he was mourning for someone and had stayed at home to receive condolence. I went to his house and knocked at the door. When the servant received my name, she bade me enter. I found my friend seated upon the ground, and said to him: 'May God increase your reward in this! But there is one tender consolation which we

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have from the Prophet : *There is no soul that shall escape the taste of death.* I counsel you to patience, my friend. Is it your son who has died ? ' No. ' ' Your father ? ' ' No. ' ' Your brother ? ' ' No. ' ' Your wife ? ' ' No. ' ' Then what was the dead to you ? ' I asked, and he answered : ' She was my mistress. ' ' This is the beginning of difficulties, ' I said to myself, and then aloud : ' Thanks be to God, there are many women, and you will find another. ' ' Do you imagine that I have seen her ? ' Then I thought : ' Here is the second difficulty. ' ' But how did you fall in love with her, if you never saw her ? ' I asked, and he replied : ' I was sitting where I am now, looking out of the window. A man in a mantle passed, murmuring :

*May God, Umm 'Amr, teach you clemency.
Give back my heart, wherever it may be ;
Man as a toy for woman is not fit,
You should not take my heart and play with it.*

Then I said to myself : ' If this Umm 'Amr were not the most beautiful woman in the world, they would not have made these verses about her. ' So I fell in love with her. And two days ago the same man passed the window, murmuring :

From the Arabic

*The ass has carried away Umm 'Amr, and she has
Never returned, and neither has the ass.*

Therefore I knew that she was dead, and put on mourning for her. I have shut the school and am now sitting in my own house to receive condolence.' 'O Such-and-Such,' I answered, 'I once composed a book concerning the pleasant deficiencies in the breed of school-masters. When I grew to be your friend, I resolved to suppress it. But now I am more than ever resolved to complete it. And I shall begin with you, if Allāh pleases.'

*Abmad al-Ibsaihi.
Kitāb al-Muṣṭatraḥ.*

*The Woman whose Lamp
went Out*

IT IS RELATED THAT A MAN, WHO WAS THE most handsome of all men and whose face was a splendour, sat in the court of his house one day and saw a woman passing. She halted to look at him. 'Why do you halt, God pity you?' he asked, and she replied: 'Our lamp is out at home, but I have relighted it.'

*Abmad al-Ibsaihi,
Kitāb al-Mustatraf.*

*The Death of Two
Lovers*

KĀMIL IBN AL-RADIN FELL IN LOVE WITH Asmā, the daughter of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Musāfir the Thākifite, who was his cousin. Love lived in him until he became even as a worn waterskin. His passion increased, his father spoke to the girl’s father, and the two were married. Then the dying husband was carried to Asmā’s dwelling, when he had but a single breath remaining in his body. As soon as he was brought in, he asked: ‘Am I in a place where she can hear my words?’ And when they told him that he was, he gave one sigh and died. ‘He is dead, Asmā,’ they said, and she answered: ‘As Allāh lives, I also will die. I could have gone to visit him, but a fear of my motive being suspected and of all the ugliness of slander prevented me.’ Then she fell ill and, when she was far gone, bade one of her familiar women draw the young man’s portrait, since she wished to see it before she died. This was done; and, when Asmā beheld the portrait, she hugged it, and sighed and died. They buried her in one tomb with the youth, and wrote upon it:

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*They were so shy of rapture that they went
Among the tombs to practise their content.
She came too late to him, and he to her;
Joy of the tomb, that they can visit there.*

*Ibn Kā-'īm al-Jauziyah,
Akḥbār al-Nisā.*

*Check to the Pursuits of
the Jinn*

‘**T**HERE WAS ONCE A JINNI WHO USED TO pursue me,’ says Fātimah bint al-Nu‘mān. ‘When he came, he used to hurl himself violently into the house. One day he arrived as usual, but halted on top of the wall without molesting me further. “Why are you not behaving as you used?” I asked him, and he replied: “To-day He has sent forth a Prophet, one Muhammad, and he forbids fornication.”’

*al-Damīrī,
Hayāt al-Hayawān.*

A Shameless Answer

IT IS RELATED THAT A CERTAIN MAN OF Morocco discovered his large and lusty son in commerce with his own minion. He went forth, without saying anything to the guilty parties, and spent the day in silence, lost in deep meditation. That evening, as the two were at supper, he said to his son : ‘ My child, you have read the Book ; surely you know that God has said : *Do not connect with those with whom your fathers have connected ?* ’ ‘ I beg pardon of you, O Sidi,’ answered the boy. ‘ God said : *Do not connect with women with whom your fathers have connected.* He said nothing about men.’

Abmad ibn Bakr.



A Gallant Foiled

A CERTAIN BEAUTIFUL AND VIRTUOUS woman went out one day to go to a bath, called the bath of Manjāb. She did not know the road and therefore, when she became weary of walking and saw a man standing at the door of his house, she asked him where the bath might be. 'It is here,' he answered, and pointed out the door to her. When she had gone in, he shut the door behind her, and immediately she understood his trick. So she showed great joy and a consuming passion. 'Go and buy us perfumes and food,' she said, 'and above all hasten to return, my dear.' When he had gone forth, confident in his victory and her desire, she left the house and thus got rid of the man for ever.

*Babā al-Dīn al-‘Āmilī,
al-Kashkūl.*

Adultery Detected

IT IS RELATED THAT AL-MANSŪR WAS SITTING one day in one of the *kubbahs* of his capital when he saw a man wandering in great affliction about the roads. He sent for him and learned, by interrogation, that he had made a successful business venture and gained a certain amount of money. He had returned home and given the gold into his wife's charge, and she had afterwards told him that it had been stolen by a thief, though he could find neither hole nor footprint. 'How long have you been married?' asked al-Mansūr. 'For a year.' 'Was she a virgin when you wed her? Had she a child by any other man?' 'No.' 'Is she young or old?' 'She is young.' al-Mansūr called for a flask of the perfume which was reserved for his own use; its scent was most exquisite and it was hard to come by. He handed the flask to the man, saying: 'Use this perfume. It will alleviate your cares.' When the husband left the Khalīfah's presence, the latter called four of his confidential police and bade them take up their positions, one at each of the four gates of the city. He made them smell a sample of the perfume, and then said: 'If any person at all passes by your post and you recognise this scent

From the Arabic

upon him, bring him to me.' Now the man had returned home and given the flask to his wife, saying : ' The Commander of the Faithful made me a present of it.' When she had sniffed at it, she sent for her lover, the man to whom she had given her husband's gold. ' Scent yourself with this,' she said. ' It is used by none but the Prince of Believers.' The man used the perfume, and then passed, in the course of time, by one of the city gates. The watcher smelt the odour upon him, arrested him, and led him into the presence of al-Mansūr, who asked : ' Where did you get that scent ? The smell is exquisite.' ' I bought it.' ' Tell me where you bought it.' Then the man began to stammer and contradict himself. Finally he betrayed himself, and was forced to restore the gold to its rightful owner.

*Ibn al-Jauzī,
Kitāb al-Aẓkīyah.*

*The Birth of al-Iskandar
and al-Khidr*

IT IS RELATED THAT THE FATHER OF AL-Iskandar (Alexander) was the most learned of all men in the science of the stars ; none had observed the heavenly vault as he had. And God postponed his death. One night he said to his wife : ‘ Insomnia is killing me. Let me rest for an hour and do you keep watch on the sky. When you see a star rising in that spot ’ —and he pointed out the place of its ascension — ‘ wake me that I may have connection with you. You will become pregnant of a son who shall live until the end of time.’ Now the woman had a sister who heard these words. al-Iskandar’s father went to sleep, and his wife’s sister watched for the star. As soon as it rose, she went and told her husband what she had heard. He had connection with her, and she became pregnant with al-Khidr, who was the maternal cousin of al-Iskandar, and his wazīr. When the astronomer woke and saw the star setting elsewhere than in the sign he had watched, he said to his wife : ‘ Why did you not wake me ? ’ ‘ As Allāh lives,’ she answered, ‘ I was ashamed.’ ‘ Do you not know that I have watched that star for forty years ? ’ said

From the Arabic

he. ' By Allāh, my life is wasted and fruitless. But, when another star rises on the track of that one, I shall have connection with you, and you will at least become pregnant with a son who shall reign over the two halves of the world.' Soon that other star rose, and the astronomer had connection with his wife. She became pregnant with al-Iskandar, who was born on the same night as his cousin al-Khidr.

*al-Damirī,
Hayāt al-Hayawān.*

Children Held Responsible

IT IS RELATED OF ABŪ YAZĪD AL-BISTĀMĪ THAT he adored God for numberless years without finding taste or pleasure in his devotion. He went to his mother, and said to her : ‘ O mother, I find no sweetness in adoring and obeying God. Think back and see if you did not take some forbidden food while I was in your breast or you were nursing me.’ She reflected for a long time, and then answered : ‘ My son, when I was great with you, I went up on to a certain terrace and saw a tub with curdled milk in it. I felt a desire and, without the owner’s permission, ate a portion as big as an ant.’ ‘ That is the cause,’ said Abū Yazīd. ‘ Go, I pray you, to the owner of the curdled milk and tell him what you did.’ She went to the man and told him. ‘ I give you permission to eat my curdled milk,’ said the man. She returned and told this to her son, who thenceforward tasted all sweetness in obeying God.

*Abmad al-Kalyūbī,
Nawādir.*

A Woman's Two Husbands

IT IS RELATED THAT A MAN WAS SITTING AT meat one day with his wife, and that there was a roast fowl before them. A beggar stopped at the door, and the man went out and drove him away. It happened that the man who had sat at meat fell into misfortune ; his prosperity altogether left him. He put away his wife, and she married another. One day this other was sitting with her, and there was a roast fowl before them. A beggar knocked at the door, and the man said to his wife : ' Take him this fowl.' She carried the fowl to the beggar and, lo, he was her first husband. She gave him the fowl and went back weeping into the house. When her husband asked the cause of her tears, she told him that the beggar was her first husband, and recounted the story of that other beggar whom he had driven away. ' And I,' said her second husband, ' I was that beggar.'

Abmad al-Ibshaihi,
Kitāb al-Mustatraf.

Excessive Discretion of a Lover

AL-ASMA'Ī TELLS US THE FOLLOWING. THERE was a young man among the Thākifites who, though dowered with all fine qualities and very well educated, carried modesty to an insensate length. One day, as he was seated in some place, a very beautiful woman passed before him, and he could not but rise to find out who she was and where she might be going. He was taken by her, and felt a violent love rising within him. He followed her until she entered the house of his brother, whose wife she was. This thing was painful to him. He did not know what to do, and concealed his condition. His sorrow increased and he grew thinner every day. His brother and all his people were concerned about this, and questioned him, but he would tell them nothing. The brother had doctors to him and they treated him, but to no effect. At length, after all others had been unavailing against his sickness, and it increased rather than diminished, al-Hārith ibn Kaldah, an Arab physician, was called to him. He examined him and could only conjecture that the young man was in love. He took him on one side and questioned him, but the youth refused to admit

From the Arabic

anything. So the doctor, having failed in all else, began to question him concerning the names of the men and women of the tribe. The young man lay in front of al-Hārith, and every time that he spoke the name of a woman the physician glanced at his face. When he came to the name of his brother's wife, he grew stronger, he sighed; he trembled and shed tears. So al-Hārith almost learned the truth, and said to the brother: 'Go now and bring before me all the folk of your house, without forgetting a single woman or man, for I have diagnosed his sickness.' The brother went out and fetched all his people. They were assembled in a dwelling to which the invalid had been carried. 'Let not one of you, either male or female, leave this place,' said the doctor. When the young man saw his sister-in-law, his trouble lifted and al-Hārith noticed this. He called for a sheep and, after cutting its throat, drew forth the liver. This he set on the fire and afterwards gave it to the youth to eat. Then he prepared a light drink and made his patient drink of it. He continued thus for several days, increasing the amount of solid and liquid refreshment every day. The young man's condition improved, and some of his strength returned to him. When he was half-cured, al-Hārith prepared a drinking feast, and caused

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both the youth and his brother to be present. As they ate and drank, the doctor companioned the brother, leaving his patient with one whom he had instructed to chant poetry to him and make him drink. 'Remember all that he says to you,' he had instructed this man. 'Tell him what you know concerning love, repeat verses to him and many tales of lovers.' When the wine began to work in the young man, he sang :

*O you whom I love, stay now and speak with me,
You have in my heart the fine and favoured place,
My cares and I are the slaves of ecstasy,
The body of him who loves is a fever case.*

In the morning al-Hārith called the man to whom he had entrusted his patient. The other told all their conversation, and recited the lines which the love-sick youth had sung to him. Then the physician summoned the brother and told him that the invalid was in love with his sister-in-law. 'Dear brother,' said the husband, 'I will separate my wife from me and you shall wed her.' Hearing this, the lover was seized with shame ; he fled, and no one thereafter heard tell of him. They call him the Disappearing Thākifite.

*Ibn Kā'im al-Jauziyah,
Akbbār al-Nūsā.*

A Long Shopping

GOHA GAVE THREE DIRHAMS TO HIS WIFE, saying: 'Buy some meat, and do not let the cat eat it as you did before.' She went out on this errand and met one of her lovers. He brought her to his home, but the neighbours saw them and led them before the judge. The judge ordered the woman to be mounted on a bull and led throughout all the city, as a publication of her shame. Goha at last noticed the length of her absence; he went out to look for her, and found her being led upon the bull. 'What is all this, you wretch?' he asked, and she replied: 'Go back to the house. I have now only to look through the market of the perfume-sellers and the market of the silk-merchants, then I will buy the meat and come straight home.'

Nawādir al-Khoja Nasr al-Dīn.

Ibn al-Dalū and the Two Mice

WE ARE TOLD THAT ABŪ TĀLIB, SURNAMED Ibn al-Dalū, was seated one night copying certain pages of traditions. An hour had passed since midnight. 'My hand was becoming tired,' he says, 'when a large mouse came forth and began to run about the room. After a moment another appeared, and the two played in front of me and leapt emulously, until they came into the lamplight. Then one of them dared to approach even nearer. I had a cup in front of me. Turning this over, I imprisoned the mouse inside it. Her companion came forward, smelled at the cup and then began to go round and round it, bumping against it from time to time. I, for my part, kept silence and pretended to be occupied with my copying. The free mouse then went back to its hole and soon returned, carrying a perfectly good dīnār in its mouth. This it set down in front of me. I watched in silence and then went on with my copying. The animal sat down for a short time before me and examined me closely, then it retired and fetched me another dīnār. Again it sat in front of me, and again I silently went on with my work. So the beast began a series of goings and comings until it had brought me

From the Arabic

four or five dīnārs, I do not remember which. Then it stayed looking at me for longer than before. Finally, it returned and brought me a fragment of leather, which had been the purse of the money, and left it upon the coins, as a sign that there were no more. I lifted the cup, and the two mice ran together to their hole. I took the gold pieces and spent them on some matter or other. Each of them was worth a dīnār and a quarter.'

*Abmad al-Shirwānī,
Nafhat al-Yaman.*

A Recompense

ACCORDING TO IBN ‘ABBĀS THERE WAS A great famine and dearth at Medina. Uthmān received an ass loaded with grain from Syria, and the merchants of Medina came to him in order to buy it. ‘What profit will you give me?’ he asked, and they replied: ‘Two dirhams in ten.’ ‘Go higher than that.’ ‘Four dirhams in ten.’ ‘Higher.’ Then they said: ‘We represent all the merchants of Medina. Who could go higher?’ ‘God in the Highest goes higher. He gives me ten in one. I mean this food for the poor.’ Ibn ‘Abbās goes on to say: That night I saw the Prophet of God mounted upon a piebald horse, dressed in a mantle woven of silk and light. He was pre-occupied. ‘I desire to see you,’ I said, and he replied: ‘O Ibn ‘Abbās, Uthmān has made an alms acceptable to God. God has married him to a girl in Paradise, and we are all invited to the wedding.’

*Abmad al-Kalyūbī,
Nawādir.*

Death through Love

AFTER 'URWAH IBN HIZĀM HAD LEFT 'AFRA bint 'Ikāl, he gave way to his regret and died of his love for her. A troop of riders passed by the place and recognized him ; therefore, when they came to the encampment of 'Afrā, one of them chanted in a mournful voice :

*O dwelling of indifferent people,
I tell the death of 'Urwāh ibn Hizām.*

'Afrā heard this, and showed herself upon a height above the caravan, crying :

*O riders urging the speed of your
horses,
Woe upon you and woe upon you !
Do you say truth
Of the death of 'Urwāh ibn Hizām ?*

One of the horsemen answered :

*We left him in a far country, a lonely
place,
A plain and great hills.*

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‘Afrā replied :

*He who is dead was the star of the darkness ;
Let no young man henceforth esteem love,
Nor let the absent return in safety.
Let women forget the joys of bearing.
And as for you, O riders,
I pray you come not to the end of your journey
And that your food be savourless.*

She asked them concerning the place of ‘Ur-wāh’s burial and, when they had pointed it out to her, made her way towards it. When she came near, she asked to be helped down, pretending that she wished to satisfy a need. They helped her down, and she ran and prostrated herself above the tomb. Soon she gave a shrill cry, and it startled her companions ; they hurried about her and found her stretched dead over the stone of the tomb. They buried her beside her lover.

*Mas‘ūdī,
The Golden Meadows.*

The Afflicted Palm Tree

I SAW IN A CERTAIN LAND TWO PALM TREES, and one of them was dead. The other groaned and wept for a long time, so that the caravans that passed drank of its tears and watered their beasts with them, thinking that they came from some hidden spring.

Nuzhat al-Udabā.

The Sheikh-al-Islām

A CERTAIN MOLLAH WAS APPOINTED SHEIKH-al-Islām in his old age, and, after the ceremony of installation, he returned home towards evening. The woman in charge of his house led him into the harīm, where, lying in a circle side by side, he found many young girls who had been sent as presents to him, according to custom, to celebrate his advancement to that holy post. ‘This one comes from the Sultān,’ said the old woman, ‘this from the Wazīr, that from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the rest from So-and-So and Such-and-Such.’ The old man admired them each in turn, then heaved a deep sigh and, producing his property, turned aside and let a stream. ‘There is nothing to be done,’ he murmured, ‘with happiness which comes after the age of sixty except to piss on it.’ This expression has passed into a proverb.

Traditional.

Punishment of a She-Monkey

A MAN OF SANĀ RELATES THAT HE ONCE passed over a mountain peak and saw a monkey sleeping there with his head in the lap of his female. The animal was deeply unconscious, and another male came and sat down in front of the two. Then the she-monkey gently set down her husband's head upon the earth and, rising, went to the other, who embraced her after the fashion of men. As soon as the first male woke and did not see his wife, he followed her tracks until he came up with her. When he was near, he smelt at her and recognised that she had committed adultery. Then he gave a great cry, and at once a crowd of other monkeys hurried about him. He let them know what the female had done. They dug a grave for her and stoned her until she was dead.

*al-Kaṣwīnī,
Ajā'ib al-Mablūkāt.*

The Forbidding of Wine

ONE DAY KAIKUBĀD, THE KING OF PERSIA, was regarding, from the terrace of one of his palaces, the green fields which lay about him, and his glance however far it journeyed met nothing but greenness. Charmed by this visible proof of plenty, he was rejoicing and feasting his eyes upon it, when he saw far off something of black upon white marring the green. The King sent a man in all haste to find an explanation of this sight, and the messenger returned, saying that a certain young man, while walking in a state of complete drunkenness from one village to another, had fallen in the field as if dead, and that a crow, lighting upon him, had torn out his eyes. Moved in the extreme by this incident, Kaikubād made a proclamation forbidding the drinking of wine and promising severest penalties to any drinker. So the people abstained from wine for a certain period. Now there came a day when a lion escaped from the menagerie, and no man might stop it or bring it back, until a certain young man passed by that way, seized the beast by the ears, mounted it as if it were an ass, and, riding it gently back, left it in charge of its keepers. This adventure was related to Kaikubād, who



From the Arabic

was extremely astonished and exclaimed : ‘ This young man must be either mad or drunk.’ Then he summoned him and said : ‘ Let me know without lying how you became brave enough to mount that lion, and you shall be free from all blame.’ ‘ Know, O King,’ answered the youth, ‘ that I love one of my cousins, and that she is all the world to me. I had my uncle’s promise that she should be my wife, but he broke his word and married her to another, because of my poverty and low position. When I heard of this, I utterly despaired and was on the point of killing myself. Then my mother, who sorrowed to see me thus, said to me : “ My son, yours is a grief which could hardly be conquered by less than three cups of wine.” “ How could I drink wine,” I answered, “ now that the King has put a ban upon it ? ” Then she said : “ Drink secretly. Necessity makes the unlawful lawful. Besides, who is there to denounce you ? ” So I drank a few cups, and ate some roast meat. Then I went forth under the full impulsion of wine and youth and love, and accomplished my exploit with the lion.’ The King was astonished. He sent for the uncle and made him break his daughter’s marriage and wed her to his nephew. He attached the young man to his person, and helped him to combat his ill fortune. Then he

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addressed this proclamation to his people :
' Drink wine to such an extent that you can
ride lions ; but beware of drinking it to such
an extent that crows tear out your eyes.' The
people returned to their habit of drinking wine,
but avoided going as far as absolute drunkenness.

al-Tha'ālibī.

Amorous Schoolchildren

IT IS RELATED THAT A BOY AND A GIRL STUDIED at the same school, and that the boy fell in love with the girl and at last conceived a great passion for her. Both were exceedingly beautiful. The boy was unwearied in his attentions, so that at last he became dear to her also. One day he wrote these lines on his slate :

*What do you say to him the wind
Of this forbidden love has thinned ?*

The girl took the slate, read what was written upon it, and added beneath :

*If that most passionate wind strike for our sake
We give the goal, and what comes after take.*

The master entered at that moment and read what had been written on the slate. His heart was softened, and he wrote also :

*Love forbids punishment, go to your bliss ;
I too have felt it, very like to this.*

At that minute the girl's owner came into the

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classroom, found the slate, and read what all three had written upon it. Then he added these further lines :

*God, in the hardness of Your time, ah, part them not !
May he who lies about them fall and limp !
As for your venerable master, Allāh wot,
He is a very perfect gentle pimp !*

Afterwards he sent for the kādī and witnesses, and had the marriage contract of the boy and girl written at the school itself. He assigned them a pension and showered benefits upon them.

*Ahmad al-Kalyūbī,
Nawādir.*

Authorised Murder

A MAN CAME TO SEEK 'ALĪ IBN ABŪ TĀLIB AND said to him: 'I have a wife, and every time I connect she says that I am killing her.' 'Go on with your murder,' answered 'Ālī, 'I will take all responsibility.'

*Ahmad al-Ibsaihi,
Kitāb al-Mustatraf.*

Virtue protected by Heaven

THERE WAS A CERTAIN ROBBER AMONG THE Israelites whose name was Bazin al-Manākib. He repented, and one day told men the reason for this. 'I was astounded by a woman in the outskirts of Kufah. I took my sabre and went forth at dawn. I met a water-carrier's camel and cut at its neck. Then I went towards the house of a certain woman, and climbed into her presence. I wrestled with her and could not overcome her. She refused to sin with me. So I seized my sabre with both hands and cut down with all my force upon the middle of her head and then departed. Later I told myself that I must look upon my sword work. I returned to the spot where I had stricken the camel, and it lay there with its head beside it. Then I returned to the woman's house, and heard her saying to certain others: "As Allāh lives, he struck me in the middle of the head, and not a single hair is missing."'

*Ja'far al-Kāri,
Masāri' al-'ushshak.*

An Old Woman's Thrust

A CERTAIN GREAT PERSONAGE OF BASRĀH built himself a dwelling, and in its neighbourhood stood a house worth twenty dīnārs belonging to an old woman. As he had need to enlarge his property, he offered her two hundred dīnārs for the little building. The old woman refused, and folk said to her: 'The kādī will unsuit you because of your foolishness. It is imbecile to refuse two hundred dīnārs for something worth twenty.' The old woman answered: 'Why would not the kādī unsuit a man who wished to pay two hundred dīnārs for something worth twenty?' This answer closed the kādī's mouth, and the mouths of all who were with him, and he left the old woman in possession of her house until her death.

*Bahā al-Dīn al-ʿĀmilī,
al-Kashkūl.*

The Confident Husband

AT A PLACE WHERE CERTAIN FRIENDS HAD met to drink wine, one of them boasted of his wife's virtue. 'She is a cause for pride,' he said. 'She would turn aside from a male flea, and, when she gives grain to our poultry, she covers her face and breasts for fear that our cock shall see her.' 'That is too much!' cried one of his hearers, a genial man, and one much given to women. 'Will you wager that you can prove what you say?' 'I will wager that what I say is true.' 'Then let us also bet that, even if what you say is true, I will cuckold you before your very eyes.' This double wager was accepted by both and the stakes given in charge of a third party, as is the way of honest folk. Then the husband said: 'It is just time for my wife to feed the poultry. Let us go to my garden and watch through the hedge. I will prove to you that I have not lied.' So all that company, young and old, white beards and black, followed the confident husband stealthily, and soon saw the lady appear. She was veiled from head to foot, showed one eye only, and turned even that aside when the cock came up to peck at the grain about her feet. Thus the husband won the first wager. Next day, at the

From the Arabic

time of the afternoon sleep, the other party to the bet returned to that garden with two friends, carrying shovels and picks, four stakes, some cushions and a plank about the size of a coffin lid, but having a hole pierced in the centre. They neatly shovelled away a square of parsley exactly opposite the place where the woman used to come to feed the fowls. Then they dug a hole the size of the plank, planted a stake at each corner, and lined the grave with cushions. The gallant lay down and was covered with the plank ; then he pushed his most precious possession out through the hole which had been made for it. His friends carefully replaced the parsley, so that nothing of their work should appear. Then they carried away the superfluous soil, and went to keep an appointment which they had made with the confident husband. They recalled to his mind the bet of the day before and, when the time arrived for feeding the fowls, invited him to come and watch through the hedge with them. Soon the chaste matron came out of the house and began to scatter grain to right and left, with but a single eye uncovered. Yet this single eye was sufficient to let her see the gigantic circumstance which showed up so bright a red against the green of the parsley. At sight of it she advanced to the centre of the bed, lifted her clothes and sat

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down, saying : ‘ God has grown this as recompense for my great chastity. Let us not despise the gifts of the Lord.’ Thus the confident husband lost the second wager.

Abmad ibn Bakr.

A Suitable Couple

AL-SHARKĪ TELLS THE FOLLOWING: AMONG the most subtle and intelligent Arabs of his time was a man called Shann. 'By Allāh,' he said, 'I will wander until I have found my equal for a wife.' As he was on his journey, he met a man and asked him where he was going. The other replied that he was going to such and such a place, naming a village to which Shann himself was making. So the two travelled together; and, as they went, Shann said: 'Will you carry me, or shall I carry you?' 'You are a fool,' the other replied. 'I am mounted and so are you; how then can I carry you or you me?' Shann fell silent, and they went on until they saw a harvest ripe for the reapers. Then said Shann: 'Do you think this harvest has been eaten or not eaten?' 'Fool,' answered the other, 'you see a harvest ripe for the reapers; how then could it be already eaten?' Shann remained silent until they were at the entrance of the village and met a funeral procession. Then he asked: 'Do you think the corpse is dead or not dead?' 'I have never in all my life met anyone as foolish as you are,' answered the man. 'You see them taking a corpse to burial and ask whether it is dead or not.' Shann fell silent and would have left his companion, but the man insisted on entertaining

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him at his own house. Now Shann's host had a daughter named Tabakah, and she questioned him concerning their guest. Her father told her how they had journeyed together and, after repeating their conversation, complained of Shann's great foolishness. 'O father,' said the girl, 'this is no fool. When he asked whether he should carry you or you him, he meant would you tell him a story to shorten the way, or should he tell you one. When he asked you whether you thought the harvest had been eaten or not, he meant to ask whether or no the owners had already sold it standing and eaten the price of it. And when he spoke to you about the funeral, he meant to ask whether or no the dead man had left a posterity to keep his memory alive.' The man went out and sat down beside Shann; after chatting of this and that, he said; 'Would you like me to explain your questions?' And when Shann begged him to do so, he gave the correct explanation. 'That is none of yours,' said Shann. 'Who is the author?' 'A daughter that I have.' Then Shann asked for her hand in marriage, the man consented; and Shann took the girl into his family. When folks saw them, they used to say: 'A Tabakah for a Shann.' The expression passed into a proverb.

*al-Mufaddal,
Kitāb al-Fākhir.*

The Two Masters

ONE DAY THE DESCRIPTION OF A CERTAIN saint was given to a king of the Israelites. The latter sought out the holy man, and required that he should live at Court and keep him company. 'That is a very agreeable invitation,' answered the saint, 'but supposing you should enter the palace some day and find me enjoying myself with your daughter, what would you do?' The King flew into a rage, and cried: 'O wretch, you insult me by even saying such a thing!' To this the saint made answer: 'I already have a generous master. When he sees me commit seventy offences, he is not moved against me, he does not repulse me, he does not refuse me my daily bread. Why should I leave his Court to live in the Court of a king who is moved against me before I have committed one offence?' Then he left that king and went his way.

*Abmad al-Kalyūbī,
Nawādir.*

The Hermit's Temptation

THERE WAS A PIOUS MAN AMONG THE SONS of Israel whose name was Barsīsa. His neighbour had a daughter who fell ill, and one of his friends said to him: 'Carry her to Barsīsa, and let him pray for her!' But Iblīs went to the holy man, whispering: 'Your neighbour has surely certain rights? His daughter is ill. Would there be any harm if she were carried near to your dwelling? You could pray God for her, and, as a reward for your long piety, who knows but that she might be cured.' When his neighbour brought the girl, Barsīsa said: 'Leave her here and return home.' So the father left her until she should be made better. Iblīs returned and insinuated to the hermit that he should have connection with her. She became with child. Then the devil—may he be accursed!—came again and said to Barsīsa: 'Kill her, for otherwise you will be shamed.' He killed and buried her. Then Iblīs went and sought out the parents of the victim and told them what had happened. They ran to the holy man's dwelling, found proof of his crime, and, seizing him, dragged him with them that he might perish. Iblīs showed himself upon the road, saying: 'If you bow down

From the Arabic

before me, I will save you.' Barsīsa obeyed, but Iblīs then departed from him, and the unhappy man died in his infidelity. May God of His mercy preserve us from all the wiles of the devil.

*Abmad al-Ibshaiḥī,
Kitāb al-Muṣṭatraḥ.*

Two Victims of Love

THE FOLK OF THE BANŪ HANĪFAH WENT TO divert themselves upon a certain mountain in their lands, and one of their young men saw a girl by the way, at whom he timidly glanced. Then he said to his companions: 'As Allāh lives, I will not depart from this place until I have sent her a message of love.' They wished to dissuade him, but he refused to be turned from his purpose. Therefore the others went forward, and he stayed upon the mountain. He girt himself with his sword and walked to find the girl, whom he discovered sleeping between her two brothers. He waked her, and she said: 'Depart quickly, for if my brothers are roused they will kill you.' 'Death would be preferable to my present state,' he answered. 'But if you give me your hand to place upon my heart, I will go away.' She gave him her hand, and he placed it upon his heart and went away. Next night he came to her again, and, when he had woken her, she said: 'Who made these lines:

*If you visit the folk of the girl who entrances,
Will not their gifts be daggers and sabres and
lances?*

From the Arabic

By this she meant to intimidate him, but he answered : ‘ It was the same man who said :

*Parting is the greatest murderer I have met ;
I who am so drowned, why should I fear to be
wet ? ’*

Then he added : ‘ If you let me have your lips to kiss, I will go away.’ She gave him her lips, and he kissed them for a moment and went away. Then the girl’s heart felt the same love that burned in his. A rumour of this adventure spread among her tribe, and her relations said to each other : ‘ Why has this debauched young man stayed in the mountains ? Let us march out against him.’ When evening came, he sat upon a little hill with his bow and arrows beside him. At nightfall rain fell upon the tribe, and they concerned themselves with him no longer. But before dawn the clouds had rolled away and the moon risen. The girl was full of passion, so she took one of her friends with her, in whom she had confidence, and went forth to seek her lover. The youth saw them coming, and thought that these were men of the tribe bent upon his destruction. He shot an arrow into the heart of the girl, and she fell dead. Her companion began to scream. So he ran down the hill and found his mistress

Short Tales of Love and Women
stricken, with the other girl near her head. He wept as a mother whose child has been taken away from her, and said these lines :

*My one chrysanthemum has been torn away by force ;
She was my society when I loathed the world and its
ways ;
She was my orchard and I abode there, she my water-
course ;
She was my hand and my strength ; my hand is weak
these days.*

The friend, who had stayed near the dead girl, then said :

*The crow with his cawing announced a thing,
He brought a destined horror on his wing.
You weep, and yet you are her murderer ;
Be patient, or else kill yourself for her.*

The young man struck himself with a knife which he had with him, and died. The folk of that tribe came up and found them, and buried them in the same tomb.

*al-Shirwānī,
Nafbat al-Yaman.*

Repugnance to Marriage

SOMEONE SAID TO A PHILOSOPHER: 'YOUR
Senemy is dead.' 'I had much rather you
had reported,' answered the philosopher, 'that
he was married.'

al-Damīrī,
Hayāt al-Hayawān.

Lukmān's Wife

THE BANŪ KARKAR TOOK REFUGE WITH LUK-mān, King of Yamen, and he married a wife from among them who was called Saudah bint Umāmah, and who was beautiful. Lukmān was jealous and established her in a great cave in the top of a high rock which none might climb. Lukmān adored God in this cave, and had a slave to fetch the people to pray there every year. He fetched the Banū Karkar to pray there, and all the men and women were grouped about him. Now al-Humaisa', who was the son of al-Sumaida, King of that tribe, saw Lukmān's wife and lusted after her. He said to his people : ' O 'Ādites, if you do not find a way for me to get what I wish from the wife of Lukmān, I shall kill him, and then the Himyarites will stamp you out to the last man.' He was audacious and fearless. When the Banū Karkar realised that he would carry out his threat if they did not comply with his wishes, they came together to think out some plan by which the lovers might meet without Lukmān's knowledge. But one of them, called 'Amr ibn Malik, addressed them, saying : ' You are ill requiring the protection you have received. You are breaking your

From the Arabic

treaty of alliance. The end will be as the beginning! There can be no safety after faithlessness, no excuse after treason, no fidelity after betrayal. If you obey this young adulterer you break down your own defences.' But they would not listen to him and continued to walk in the way of evil. 'O sons of Karkar, kill that man,' cried al-Sumaida. So they killed 'Amr ibn Malik. Then they sought Lukmān, and said to him: 'We fear that a war may be about to break out among us. If you agree, we will shut up all our weapons in this cave with you. Then, if discord arises, we will have no means of shedding blood or breaking those ties of relationship which bind us together.' 'Do so,' answered Lukmān. They wove their arms together in a pile, after setting al-Humaisa' in the midst and covering him on every side. Then they carried the whole to Lukmān, and he had it transported to his cave. As soon as he had gone forth, the lover spoke to Saudah, saying: 'I am al-Humaisa'.' She released him from where he was, and he had his will of her. She gave him to eat and drink, and then covered him again in the midst of the weapons. She continued to behave in this way until one day her lover, as he lay with her on Lukmān's bed, was compelled to spit. He shot his spit on to the roof of the cave, where it hung in two parts.

Short Tales of Love and Women

Lukmān came in almost as soon as his wife had hidden her lover, and lay down on the bed. His glance dwelt upon the roof, he saw the spit, and asked : ‘Who did that ?’ ‘I did.’ ‘Then spit !’ She spat, but did not reach the place. ‘I was sitting, not lying,’ she said. ‘Then sit !’ She sat up and spat, but with no greater success. ‘I was standing.’ ‘Then stand !’ She stood up and spat, but fell far short. ‘This came from the weapons,’ said Lukmān. He went over to the sheaf of arms, opened it up and dragged forth the adulterer. He called the Himyarites together, asking : ‘What is your advice ?’ ‘Drive the Banū Karkar from the land of Himyar, for they are a perfidious and treasonable folk. Beware lest they sow their own deceit among us, lest they infect us with their hate, lest they make us the heir of their hostilities.’ So Lukmān said to the Banū Karkar : ‘Leave my protection !’ He climbed up again to the cave and, binding Saudah and al-Humaisa‘ together, hurled them from the top of the rock. Then, as they lay below, he and his people stoned them.

René Basset.
Vie de Loqmān.

Causes of Scandal

IT IS RELATED THAT A MAN BOUGHT A YOUNG girl for a thousand dīnārs. One day he looked upon her and began to weep. She asked him the reason for this, and he replied : ‘ You have exquisite eyes which make me forget to adore my God.’ When he had left the house, she tore out her eyes and threw them from her. As soon as the man returned and saw her in this state, he became sorrowful and said : ‘ Why have you treated yourself thus ? You have greatly decreased your value.’ ‘ I did not wish there to be anything about me,’ she answered, ‘ which could turn you away from worshipping your Lord.’ When night came, the man heard a voice speaking to him in sleep and saying : ‘ She has decreased her value in your sight, but she has raised it in ours, and we have taken her.’ He woke, and found the girl dead, and the price he had paid for her under the pillow.

*Abmad al-Shirwānī,
Hadīkat al-Afrāb.*

Feigned Quotation

IKRIMAH TELLS US THAT ‘ABD ALLĀH IBN Rawāhah was lying beside his wife one night. He rose up to go to the privy, and there he had intercourse with one of his slaves. But his wife woke and, not finding him by her, also went out and saw him on the slave. She returned to fetch a knife, and, as he was himself returning, he met her holding it in her hand. ‘What was your object?’ he asked, and she replied: ‘My object was to kill you with this if I found you where I did find you.’ ‘And where was that?’ ‘On the slave.’ ‘I was not.’ ‘Yes, you were.’ ‘I will prove that I was not. You know that the Prophet of God has forbidden us to recite the Korān when we are in a state of legal impurity.’ ‘Then recite,’ she said, and he began:

*He has brought us the recitation of his Book,
As a dawn which rises and brings forth its light;
He has shown a straight way to our blindness,
Our hearts are assured of him;
He turns unquietly upon his bed,
His pillows are heavy with unbelievers.*

‘As Allāh lives, now I believe you,’ said his

From the Arabic

wife. 'Now I know that my eyes betrayed me.' Next day, continues ibn Rawāhah, I sought out the Prophet and told him this tale. He laughed until he showed his molars, for those verses have nothing whatever to do with the Korān.

Ibn al-Jauzī.

An Intelligent Woman

A MAN SAW HIS WIFE CLIMBING A LADDER, and cried to her: 'You are divorced if you climb up; you are divorced if you climb down; you are divorced if you stay where you are.' The woman jumped. 'May my father and my mother be your ransom!' the man exclaimed. 'If the Imām Mālik were dead, the folk of Medina should come to you for judgment.'

*Abmad al-Ibshaiḥī,
Kitāb al-Muṣṭatraf.*

The Magic Tree

A WOMAN HAD A LOVER WHO SWORE THIS Oath: 'If you do not find some way for me to couple with you in your husband's presence, I will never speak to you again.' The woman promised to compass it, and they agreed upon a day. There was a high palm tree near the house, and the woman said to her husband: 'I want to climb that tree and pluck the fruits myself.' When she was at the top of the palm, she looked down on her husband, and cried: 'O adulterer, who is that woman with you? Woe, woe! Are you not ashamed to couple with her before my eyes?' She began to scream and curse at him, while he protested that there was no one with him and that he was alone. Then she climbed down and continued her reproaches, while he swore by the oath of divorce that there had been none there but himself. Then he said: 'Sit here while I climb up.' When he was at the top of the tree, she called to her lover and he coupled with her. 'May I be your ransom!' called down the husband. 'You are no more guilty than I was. Whoever climbs this palm would see what I see.'

*Ibn al-Jauzī,
Kitāb al-Aẓkīyah.*

*A Woman's Character In-
fluences that of her
Husband*

THERE LIVED AT THAT TIME A MAN WHO WAS five hundred years old; his son was four hundred, and his grandson three hundred. We sought out this last, telling ourselves that his wit and intelligence would be the greatest, but we found him entirely obtuse, knowing neither good nor evil. So we said: 'If it is thus with the youngest, what will be the condition of the father and the grandfather?' We went to the man who was four hundred years old, and found him somewhat nearer to intelligence than his son. Then we visited the old man of five hundred, and found that his wit and power of thought were perfectly healthy. We questioned him concerning his son and his grandson, and he replied: 'The young one had a wife of most unpleasing character; she never agreed with him in anything. Her narrow outlook and the long time he had to put up with her influenced my grandson for the worse. My son's wife was sometimes in agreement with him, sometimes in disagreement; that is why he is a little more intelligent than the other. I myself have a wife who

From the Arabic

agrees with me and helps me in everything.
'That is why my powers of thought are quite
intact.'

*al-Kazwīnī,
Athār al-bilād.*

A Strange Reason for Love

‘WHY ARE YOU SO FOND OF YOUR HUSBAND?’ a woman asked her daughter. ‘Once,’ answered the girl, ‘he returned from a journey and, still dressed in his travelling clothes, opened my door and came in and began upon the act of love. I was suffering from a fever at the time, my body was burning and my hair quite in disorder; I had had no time to scent myself. Yet, in spite of all this, I saw him come to me in a full ardour of passion and attack me violently. It was because of that proof of love that I so grew to care for him.’

Abmad ibn Bakr.

NOTE

THESE tales are collected and translated from various European sources, but my introduction to a great many of them I owe to M. René Basset's unique anthology, *Mille et un Contes, Récits et Légendes Arabes*, which is still appearing. Though I have, even when using M. Basset, gone back wherever possible to the first European versions, I have also in several instances translated from his own agreeable French. His eclectic volumes are a rich treasury. These tales and traits and anecdotes are discussed in my terminal essay, and to it I must refer any reader who objects to the difference in tone between the various items. They will be found, I think, to be embraced by somewhat of a sexual synthesis.

Volume 9
The Loves of Dāsīn
and Musa-ag-Amāstān
from the Tamashek and
Camel-Boy Rhythms
from the Arabic



EASTERN LOVE



THE LOVES OF DĀSĪN AND
MUSA-AG-AMĀSTĀN FROM THE
TAMASHEK AND CAMEL-BOY
RHYTHMS FROM THE ARABIC



ENGLISH VERSIONS BY
E. POWYS MATHERS



*

VOLUME IX

*



JOHN RODKER
FOR SUBSCRIBERS
LONDON / 1929

for
E. R. M.

MADE IN ENGLAND

THIS EDITION OF THE LOVES OF DĀSIN AND
MUSA-AG-AMĀSTĀN FROM THE TAMASHEK
AND CAMEL-BOY RHYTHMS FROM THE
ARABIC, BEING VOLUME 9 OF "EASTERN
LOVE," IS HERE TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH FOR THE FIRST TIME, BY E.
POWYS MATHERS. THE EDITION OF 1,000
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THIS SET SEE VOLUME I

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THIS volume combines with III, IV and VIII, and The Garden of Caresses and some few literary poems and prose pieces which will be found in the Anthology, to complete my examples of the Islamic conception of sex in art. This conception is discussed in the Terminal Essay.

The Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān, the first instance, as far as I know, of Tamasbek literature to be translated into English, are interesting as being a compression of the orally transmitted songs of a mystical Tuareg fighter and nobleman, who was actually living them as he sang them, and which yet, in their least personal aspect, are founded on infinitely older traditional poems. Musa-ag-Amāstān died at Tamanr'asset on the 13th December, 1920, in the fashion, and after the happenings, told by the poem; and he was already a figure of legend. But the facts which are mingled with his vision may be taken as historical.

Camel-Boy Rhythms are examples of purely popular, as opposed to literary, verse. And though some are obviously modern the majority would be no easier to date than any other folk-songs. They derive from the chants of the camel driver leading the caravan, and the four heavy steps of the animal supply the measure, though the songs themselves, of course, are as likely to be heard now at a café as on the march. I

have chosen out of rather a large quantity of material only such poems as seem to me to give the spontaneous imagery of the Bedouin at its freshest and most startling.

*In this volume I have selected and translated from
'Chants du Hoggar' by A. Maraval-Berthoin, 'Les
Chants du Sable' by Émile Aicard, 'Chants
de la Caravane' by S. Oudiane, and
'Une Chamelée Rithmique'
by H. F. Bertnay.*

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*The Loves of Dāsīn
and Musa-ag-Amāstān*

*Glory be to the Sole God,
for none but He continues!*

BOOK I

The Asking and Refusal

I.

DĀSĪN AMONG THE WOMEN IS A VINE
plant among wild plum trees,

Dāsīn among the women is a date tree among
fan palms,

Dāsīn among the women is a king's shield with
daily shields,

Dāsīn among the women is a bride's tunic with
common tunics,

Dāsīn among the women is a javelin between
lances.

O Dāsīn-ult-Yema, it is your cousin, the son of
the sister of your mother, it is Musa-ag-
Amāstān who sends this message :

He is as young as the new rice, as
noble as his fighting sword, because you love
him.

He has a beard of black silk, and none has seen
it. It is under his black veil, because you
love him.

Will you receive him at your gallant party ?

2.

Because my head was fated to rise above others,
my mother bound strong cords about my
brow.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

You will know me, as a royal palm above all
palm trees, at your gallant party,
O you whose brow rises above the brows of
women.

3.

This is the gallant party of my beloved.
And the swords of the men are more golden, the
women more fairly painted.
Hers is the most noted of gallant parties, be it
under a royal tent with decorated pegs, or
beneath the tent of a tree, its leaves kissing her
forehead, or below the tent of a mountain,
its rocks bowing before her.

4.

I say to all women :
If a man hide himself in the time of combat,
spread curses upon him.
At morning there was given a gallant party, the
thrown javelins wove a tent of steel above
us.
My enemies fled and I struck their limbs with
my sabre ; they flew into the air like grass
stems.

From the Tamashek

5.

O women who put blue between your lips and nostrils, I tell you their blood clothed me to the wrists in purple.

You have not heard it said that I hid in the rocks.

O young women coming together at the sound of the violin, fainting in three charges I was lifted and bound with cords upon my camel.

6.

I made ready for your gallant party, O Dāsīn.

I folded my blue gandourah over my white gandourah, in the way of a swallow's wings.

My boots of black leather and red leather seemed to be crushing poppies below my feet.

My collar of dark stone carries the words of safety.

My bracelets bind the strength of my naked arms.

My turban of tinted silks is bound by a cord with two dark tassels, and my black veil is holding the secret of my mouth.

I have taken the most glorious of all my lances.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musā-ag-Amāstān

7.

My shield is made to my height with double antelope skin, and my lance is barbed with black steel.

My sabre served the father of my father. It has *Death for Death* upon its blade in letters of red combat.

O Dāsīn in your gallant party, riches and nobility and unbound strength lie at your feet. Behold me also !

I am the son of your mother's sister, and my blood runs in your body. But I have waited to tell you that I love you until the day of my harka chieftainship.

8.

With what proof will you try us, O Dāsīn ?

The learned must bring forth from the oasis of his thought, as from a precious box, words to caress like the red fig tree,

Words having the sugar of the grapes of the Tihoq,

The colour of rose trees,

The colour of the white bells of the desert broom and the gold scapes of the plum tree.

From the Tamashek

You have compared the mind of a fool to a man clad in a single tunic, to a beggar whose body may be seen through rags.

I ask God to breathe one breath of His spirit into my spirit, I beseech Him to clothe it in colour.

To-day will you find me rich in many tunics ?

9.

My most grave voice has not the sound to sing of pleasant things ; it rolls as a war drum or murmurs as a violin for pain, Dāsīn.

If you had asked me : *Which do you love the better, God or myself?* I would have looked and been silent.

But you would not question me ; you broke the bright snares of your wit because you loved me.

10.

Will you rule at my side, O daughter of him who ruled before me ?

Do not fear that I would make you a prisoner in my love, or keep you as a sand deer behind my fences.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

Walk free in the garden of my heart, Dāsīn.

I put my faith in you, O rose of my people, my
blue mountain. I put my faith in you, O
carpet of white wool, O my brown water jar.

I put my faith in her I love, my green river.

You are the perfumed of the proudest, you are
the coolest of the beautiful.

And I am greater than the greatest who was
your father, because I marry you.

II.

Those who are jealous say to me :

Dāsīn is the rose and the bird of our Spring-
time, how shall you hinder the rose from
giving her perfume to the people, or the bird
her song ?

And I say to those who are jealous :

I shall be the Kādī of the Kādī of the Summer
for the rose of the Springtime.

I shall be Sidi of Happiness, seeing the grass
flower, seeing the grass flower under the green
hoofs of my white horse.

12.

I shall be the nest of the sun for the bird of my
people.

From the Tamashek

A stranger passing through our land sees you
but once, yet he does not forget you ; he
departs and engenders children like you, and
they say your name in their first murmuring.

O Dāsīn-ult-Yema, you put heat into my heart
as God does, and you embrace it ; you are the
mother of the children of the thought of the
men who love you.

I have loved you since the bellies of our mothers
ripened. I loved you when you were the
president of little gallant parties and I led
small battalions.

Dāsīn is my lover, and all that I see in her is
pleasant.

A man beholding her cannot turn away his head ;
a foe may wound a man who looks at her and
yet draw no blood.

When you say : *I am noble*, she answers in the
words of her sister : *God is not God at night*.

13.

The neck of Dāsīn is more pliant than the neck
of a foal tied in a field of corn and barley.

God has made her to be a harmony, and full of
seemliness.

No woman may find the poorest of husbands
while my beloved strays free in the lanes of
gallantry.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

14.

Dāsīn gives herself fine colours of ochre and indigo, like the yellow and blue mountain that dominates all men.

She walks with a tossing head. Her uncle is worn with answering the men who ask for her.

Your voice to your violin climbs in the sky and then falls back to my heart.

Your voice to your violin is a jet of water lifting to the sky among cypresses.

Your voice to your violin is silver, a river falling among the rocks.

15.

O you who listen to all voices and make them sing thereafter upon your violin, as the wind makes joy and sorrow chant in the grass of the rice-field,

Now hear the heart of Musa-ag-Amāstān to answer for my heart,

Now hear the voice of his father to vouch for his quality :

We die by gunpowder, not by disdain.

From the Tamashek

16.

When my father set me on his right hand for the combat, he said to me :

‘ Let not your love for any woman transcend your love for fighting.’

Therefore I, yet being your slave, must be strong to love you less than I love the combat.

I am climbing to the sky, like the peak Ilaman.

When my father set me on his right hand for prayer, he said to me :

‘ Let not your love for a woman transcend your love for love. If she seek another, tell her farewell and ride to forget her in the mosque with the sand carpet.’

Must I carry my prayers to the mosque with the sand carpet, Dāsīn-ult-Yema ?

When my father set me on his right hand for grief, he said to me :

‘ Even if a man such as I displease a woman, even if a man such as this eagle my son displease a woman, let him be held apart, a camel that has not been chosen for the journey, a dog that has been driven from the feast.

‘ But if a woman cannot leave you with her eyes, take her without remorse and kill for her.’

If your eyes cling to mine, Dāsīn, and cannot look away, I shall know how to pour you the

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān
red wine of men and women to drink it with
you, for vengeance is whiter and sweeter than
the milk of camels.

17.

You are as free as the moon in the sky to hide
or show yourself, Dāsīn. If you answer me as
the moon answers the sun, I can be forgotten.
You may change your love as your feet change
their sandals.

But you must take a husband at the marriage
time of the seed and the furrow, when our
women sow their fields ; and they say there
are but three men to your liking.

Suri-ag-Shika will come to you in a cloak
of words, Aflān in majesty and Musa with a
sword.

Will it be wit or pride or love, Dāsīn ?

18.

The sun has risen upon the day of your choosing,
O Dāsīn, and the stars of our lance-heads
answer him.

Great Tamār'asset is too small for the zebus
bearing gifts to you ; they move with diffi-
culty to the singing of the tribes, under the
glance of the terraces.

From the Tamasbek

19.

O daughter of the star who pastures his gold camel on the black grass of the night, you have not wished one jewel on your white flesh to-day.

Your negress wears all the coloured moons of your coffer, and walks perfumed in oil. She casts a glittering shadow within your shadow, and knows your secret.

But you are sweeter before your dwelling than sugar bread, being as unadorned as God.

20.

We were ranged about you as the crescent moon is ranged at the feet of Allāh.

You chose Aflān superb on his white camel, and my red camel is crying beneath my blows.

BOOK II

Exile and Combat

I.

I NO LONGER RECKON THE STAGES OF MY caravan, and yet my grief still tastes of blood, and I am killing Aflān in my dreams. A lie gives to drink once, it cannot give to drink a second time. Let yours be a joy that lies not, and may God pardon me. He who is inconstant as the froth of milk builds nothing durable ; may the oath of Aflān be a sure support to you.

2.

I use my sword against my jealousy. Engraved on the black stone bracelet constraining my great strength, you may read that Hell herself cowers from dishonour. You may set up a new tent among the tents with Aflān the golden, and not fear my grief. But let him not be as the sweet date whose heart is bitter, or as one of whom it is said *He has eaten gazelle*, because he bounds from oasis to oasis after women.

3.

Aflān is the husband of your flesh.
As locusts upon the rice-field, as falcons above

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān
the herd, as vultures disarranging a mound of
corpses, so are my griefs to me.

Aflān is the husband of your flesh.

I carry the rice-field of my learning, the herd of
my desires, and the green corpses of my hope.
I shall be faithful.

I am the bridegroom of your thought, and dare
to journey away and away from you.

4.

My white camel forgets at will the perfumed
berries of the gum tree. He will only eat
bitter herb and teasels when he has no she-
camel.

I wish to forget the days shaded by gum trees, or
days caressed by the deep-scented terebinth.

5.

Last night we made our camels kneel at the foot
of a wall looking upon space, and, behold,
Suri-ag-Shika came to me, and saluted my
grief.

Now we have talked late, and have agreed to
twine the thorns of our desolation together,
our emptiness of Dāsīn.

From the Tamashek

He has been banished from his people for the murder of the beautiful camel of Afān. His anguish has overflowed the torrent of his heart, but my heart is a ravine of granite to control my grief.

I shall be a man blinded by Dāsīn, and Suri shall be my stick; we will drink the forgetful poppy of the blood of man.

6.

We marched eternally, and once by a well we crossed our Brothers of the proud Veil. They had sold arms among the blacks, and a song guided their camels.

They were jinking gold and silver in their hands, and would see Dāsīn. The humps of their camels were full of fat, and the bellies of their sheep were moons. And they were laughing. The blacks seem to have nothing but vermin in their heads, our brothers say, but their charges for grass pass understanding.

7.

They joyfully played the war game, and I looked upon their play and their playing was beautiful,

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān
and the camels, driven by the naked feet of
their masters, shared the pleasure.
And I gave the shield of strength and the sword
of courage to a certain Amrar, but in the dust
that rose like gilded muslin I saw the veiled
Dāsīn.

8.

And they joyfully played at gallant parties, to
celebrate the caressing, the sole one, and they
said :

*She is silver and gold hammered together. She is the
wine of my mouth. She is a garden in sleep, the
water of the well preferred, a sky under which
the brave shall some day lie at rest.*

*It is for you, who love her more than the sum
of us, to tell us what she is.*

9.

Then I said to my brothers :

Dāsīn is the dove and the jackal, the bed and the
sepulchre, she is Hell and Allāh.

This is a thing not doubtful, a thing certain, that
I should be lying by the side of God to-night if
love could kill.

This is a thing not doubtful, a thing certain, that

From the Tamashek

if I were a son of the dust, I would leave the
comfort of my tomb to see Dāsīn.

I would have her to the warm fold of her heart,
and mix in the air she breathed, if I were a son
of the dust, if love could kill.

10.

Then one whom we call the Bee of Love,
though he finds consolation in wasps of women,
hearts without honey, said to me :

O Musa, they are not worth our fighting camels,
for these return to us.

Come back and steal her away and have her,
struggling. A blow over the mouth is better
than compliments.

11.

And one who is ever laughing said to me, he
was my friend :

Aflān has nothing in his head but pride, in his
heart nothing but glory. She will soon cast
him off. These things are little food for
women.

There was a girl who wept like rain and cried
like a milk-camel for her man, lying upon his

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān
sepulchre. And on the dawn of the fourth
month she kissed the Book and tasted salt and
said : *Make my new robe of happiness, O sisters.*

12.

But I said :

Your love is rough for my heart, Dāsīn ; it has
fulfilled its thirst out of the blood of my flesh.
I am bones breathing slowly, breathing in
silence.

There was a soul, and a city of tortures was built
in it, and yet it lived.

That was my soul. Oh, go to your gallant
parties !

13.

The swords are calling me and my camel, who
are two fighters, for we have lost Dāsīn.
Speak to him of blood and he gallops furiously,
and for me, my pride of strength sets me taller
than my tall camel.

We go with our brothers to raid the Arab dogs,
and the dagger of the raid is in our teeth. But
the dagger of vengeance is in our eyes, slaying
two for one.

Their bones will crack in the palms of our
hands like breaking lances, their walls will

From the Tāmashek

crumble under the hammer of our knees as haystacks fall. For it is better to sleep the night with rage than with repentance.

14.

And death became Dāsīn and would have none of me. But he took a certain one for his lion's meal, blinded by a dagger and driven mad and trying to blind the sun, and he took the heart of a certain one opened as an orange, and the head of a certain one shattered as a pomegranate, and the bowels of a certain one leaping out and rolling like red snakes, and a certain one nailed to the sand by four lances.

We dug us pits in the sand, and became very earth within them, and knew the unsatisfied hunger of the grave.

Earth lets a man from her jaws for a little space, as a panther a rabbit, and we call it life.

So we lay in wait and killed them behind black shields.

15.

Night adds his treasure to my treasures, I walk on the sky's black rock, where the straw wagon

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

climbing to God makes a white road, and
follow your steps across the time of time.

As the wagon sows her white straw, I sow the
letters of your name between the stars.

I took my brothers to the oasis whose guards
defend no more.

Hidden by the green wall of the palms and the
red wall of the wall, the dates and women
sleep, O dates and sugary women for my
brothers.

They smell the life of the white date flowers and
the rose smell of the women, and what we
cannot bear away we crush under our heels,
Dāsīn.

How shall I tell you of the drunkenness of
killing, you who know love?

They are the two daughters of the panther, and
bring life in sleep.

I would put the bitter taste of my kisses in your
mouth to-night.

And when that oasis was emptied like a bag, we
went to another, but there was a cry in the
night: *The white camel is dying.*

His kneeling female chewed the invisible grass
of prayer, the water of her glance flowed from
the white camel to us, and from us to
God.

He fought against death with the four lances of
his stiffening legs, and cried *Dāsīn.*

From the Tamashek

16.

O you who love the victorious warrior, yourself greatly victorious, this shadow upon the shadow of the earth is of our fighting shields, as dear as our sons to us, and guarding our sleep. If your jasmine finger touched them they would tremble, if you laid your jasmine ear to them you would hear blood cries.

17.

We went slowly, weighed down with weariness and plunder, and other Arabs spied us with the white eyes of rage, and fell upon us. My brothers were still drunk with the palm wine of pleasure, and fell like dates, and I alone remained alive. Dāsīn, you hold my life and death between your hands, and play with them as a child plays.

18.

I washed my brothers with sand and dug their graves, and my weeping mingled with my sweat.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

And my brown camel was weeping for the death
of my white camel. He is as tall as two men,
and his feet are as large as war drums. I set my
saddle of cheetah skin upon him.

O mahogany camel with white feet, time is a
great Amenokhal, he rules eternity.

Why do you seem to snuff Dāsīn in all the
breezes?

You bear me through the moonlight, red camel,
and your eyes desire the clouds. But I have
loſt death and I have loſt Dāsīn.

BOOK III

The Dream and the Desire

I.

AND MY THIRST FOR DĀSĪN GREW GREATER
sun by sun.

I declared war upon myself, that I might forget
her, but the ringdoves of my thought were
true to her.

Then silence fell on me like sand, and I could not
cut her name out of my flesh.

And I said your name in the chaplet of the days
with the name of Allāh, because, though it is
my hunger and thirst, it feeds me and gives me
to drink.

2.

There came a man against me rearing like
a horse and crying: *I love Dāsīn*. But I
bounded higher than he and broke his lance.
I would have killed him if I had not seen my
shield upon his arm.

‘Who are you,’ I cried, ‘who fight in the same
fashion as Musa-ag-Amāštān and with his
weapons?’

Then he unveiled his face, and his face was mine.

3.

And that man drew me into a cave where none
might enter, and there I slew a beast as great

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān
as a zebu. She was curled like a hedgehog
into a ball, and spurted scalding water.
And I said: 'Dāsīn will sing, because she
feared for her lovers.'

4.

I left that cave and heard the bleating of a kid.
But when I sought for it, it was a snake as long
as six men, and there were buck's horns upon
his head in a toothed wheel.
And I thought I had killed evil with my sword,
having killed the snake, but the eldest brother
of the lizard said to me :
Evil must be, for it is the night of good.
And I saw you smile, Dāsīn.

5.

Night was the blue veil of the giant Elias, whose
body is a gold column that the sand sends up
to God. And my camel, kneeling to kiss his
feet, seemed a white ant beside him.
Then the giant Elias fought with the mountain,
and split her to the heart with a single blow,
so that the desert cried with the voice of the
serpent of the lightning from East to West,

From the Tamashek

because there was now a breach for my heart
to come to Dāsīn.

And in the green fountain of a tree I saw two
ring-doves building.

Do you not hear my heart moaning against
yours?

6.

A swallow, writing the name of Dāsīn in the sky,
cried out *I hear your hearts*, and all the other
birds sang in the sun of her.

And because her wing came back, the flowers
wrapped jewelled collars upon the branches,
and I felt your arms.

7.

And the four gates of the sky compassed me
with their pillars, and the North gate set a
platter of cool blue china at my feet, with
oranges and grapes and figs and pomegranates,
from the lands which go down to ocean.

Gather the honey of the Western combs of the
sun, said the second gate.

And the third gate showed me the blood of
dawn spilled on the tombs of the stars.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

And the fourth gate showed me the sun of the
South through the red stone of your heart,
Dāsīn.

And my camel, girt with the muslins of white
feasting, carried me over the four roads, and
did not move.

And the men who saw me cried aloud :

Greeting, O you whose thought is white upon a
white camel girt with white dreams.

Surely he will lead us to the white dwelling of
peace, a dome made by the great number
of his thrown javelins, the dwelling of
peace.

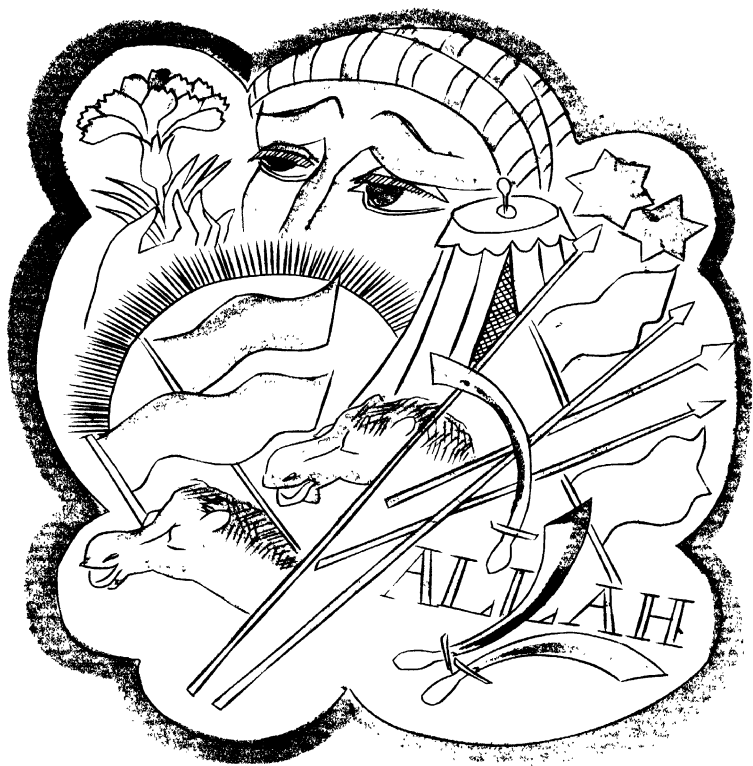
8.

I met the caravan of the Sages with all my
fathers walking at their head.

The song of the war drum went with them, and
their camels were whiter than jasmine, and the
two women, frankness and faith, guided their
way.

They carried jars full of cleansing and assuaging
water, and their passing made a white road on
the ground, such as the straw wagon of Allāh
scatters upon the night.

And we judge you according to the colour of
your road.



From the Tamashek

9.

I met the caravan of the sins, and they wished to kill my white camel because he carried my white thought. But I was stronger, and they knelt down to me, crying with closed lips : *When we cannot cut off a hand, we kiss it.* Their camels had the heads of apes.

I met the caravan of the merchants, each with the eyes of a wild cat, shining in the night, and their hands were the hands of vultures.

They said in frightened voices : *We are poor and weary beneath the gold of the sun, ah, pity us !*

10.

Thereafter my camel was whipped by the wind of the South, and in that region whither he fled he started an ostrich.

My shadow, stretching before me, gave birth to a gold rider in a gold bernous, and we four hunted the bird until evening lavished a woman's smile upon the desert, and sunset held forth an ostrich plume for Dāsīn-ult-Yema, and the rose chamber of the sky was shut.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

11.

The mirage built a city to hear me speak of you,
Dāsīn, and I said to the priests and the warriors
and the shepherds of that city that you
were the rose of my people, wearing the new
moon, and a star as bait for kisses.

12.

And when the mirage had veiled herself like a
man to hear me speak of you, I said to the
passing fever :

O red eyes of the hunting leopard, O hashish
laugh and lioness hair, O hot hands of the
monkey, what make you against Dāsīn ?

And fever, tittering, put aside her yellow veil
and said : *Behold, she is here !*

And I saw you with hands that danced in the
dancing sand ; you were a statue of white salt,
and your hands alone were living.

13.

Tell me life with its milk and jasmine, its honey
and roses, its pepper and henna, its falcon and
knife.

From the Tamashek

I set the seal of love upon your mouth, and
possessed you as the sky possesses the mountain,
as the mountain the plain.

But you melted like salt between my hands, and
fever with her red eyes melted also.

14.

And a leopard said to me : *I am hungry for her
even as you are.*

And I said to the leopard :

O my fighting brother, we are dressed alike in
night and yellow day, and it is not by fasting
that we die, but by desire. Carry me, therefore,
to the place of her violin and the light of
her singing.

But the leopard was jealous and would not
bear me.

15.

The wind carried your caravan towards me and
I saw your gilded camels and heard your
voice.

But when I would seize you, the wind fluttered
his veil before my eyes, and threw me blind to
the desert.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

16.

Then came thirst to me, with her hands of hot ashes, and she gripped me so that your name came forth from my lips. And dream with his eagle's wings set you before me, and you carried a jar upon your shoulder, silvered with water.

The hot ashes of thirst were quenched in your breath and scattered under the healing nakedness of your feet, your feet that assuage like water.

17.

But thirst rose up to snatch your jar from you with hands of flame, and as she burned your shadow, she whispered to you :

‘There is one thing you may not steal from me even in dream, and that is the sacred cataract of my water, for the Sages alone shall give it, to each according to the number of his palm trees the Sages give it.’

O Dāsīn, let him be as a dog with green slaver, that flees from water and is killed by man.

From the Tamashek

18.

Then death lifted the cover of the sand dune.

She has a black viper for a collar about her neck, and her neck is of bone, and her heart is a red scorpion.

She speaks not, because the wild cat of the night has eaten her tongue.

She showed me the grave and made me a sign to lie down within it, and gave me hashish.

The scorpion and the viper are blood and shadow. They danced the leaping dance of hashish upon my bones.

Their eyes shone like red stars, and they coupled upon my body until death called them with her empty eyes.

19.

Death came to me, wearing the white haik of the moon ; and her black hands in the wet shadow buried the dead ; and night that has a jackal's voice beheld her.

Death left only your name living on the dead sand.

And the mountains, with their brows of stone, rose up to pray at my dying.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

They had been dead so long, and told me the peace of the dead. It is a light, whose seven rays are seven rivers.

20.

I, being ash within my tomb of ashes, saw you put on the seven veils of light and rule the seven rivers.

And I heard the voice of my mother, singing in my sleep :

‘ When you must weep, O blood of the lion and my blood, the mimosa and the palm weep also, and the horse and the camel and your mother weep.’

But your red voice, O Dāsīn, covered her white voice, and said :

‘ The song of the mother is milk, but the song of the mistress is of palm tree wine.’

And the milk song lulled me in my cradle on the branch of the gum tree :

21.

‘ Do not weep, lamb hot against my heart, but suck this milk and that.

‘ I have put wild mint upon you, and when you are grown you shall say :

From the Tamashek

'Your milk was sweeter than dates and clearer than the light of the sun and moon, therefore I have increased as a palm tree.'

22.

And the voice of my mother fell silent, and all was covered in the unmoving dance of the sand, except your name.

I will no longer say your name, for I needs must fear it. As is the name of fire to the negro, so is your name to me. They say :

It is a red word like a red flame to burn the tongue that speaks it.

23.

Your name alone comes forth from the tall tower of my head, like the torch of a palm tree shaken in the South wind.

I am a bloody lance lying in the sand, the bitter rust of desire is eating my breast.

It is blinding my eyes with red dust.

. . .

BOOK IV

The Silence and Mystery

I.

THE DESERT OF MY HEART ADJOINS THE visible desert, making it greater still, and silence adds a veil above my veil with fingers of air and sand.

And silence adds a cry to all the cries with her mouth of air and sand.

And silence adds an image to the images with her eyes of air and sand.

And under my two veils I live two lives, to hear you and to see you, whom I would not name, whose name each beat of my heart is crying aloud.

2.

The Arabs, the conquered sons of the conquered and who speak like horses, say that we bear the Veil to keep us from the evil of the dust of the West ; but that is because they lie.

Men of our dignity may not be seen.

Seven sorrows upon the man who shows his mouth, for the mouth is a leprous well where the devil of the tongue is lying in wait, for the mouth is a holy house and the angel of the word abides there.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

Seven sorrows upon the man who shows his mouth, for there a devil and an angel live in chains together.

3.

Your law is my master, O Dāsīn, but the law of the Veil is my guide ; it is my leader across the sand where the camel of each man passes. If the law of love is harder and brighter than emeralds and powdered gold,
The law of the dark Veil is clearer than the light ;
I must hide my face in anger and in pride, in love and suffering ; I must hide my face in death.

4.

And I must draw into myself, O Dāsīn, to veil my face from God for the five prayers of the day.
I must veil my face before old age to do obeisance to its old belief.
I must veil my face before my equal in nobility to do obeisance to our splendour.
I must veil my face before woman to do obeisance to her beauty, for it is as the beauty of that

From the Tamashek

moon which drapes a black veil before the cheeks of the sun.

Thus shall I dwell in truth and reach the seven rivers of the Garden of God.

And even as I veil my face before the wisdom of the years of my father, so must I be gone from him and leave him when he hears the song of the imzad and has thoughts of love: a palm tree, a father of palm trees, when the Summer sun returns.

5.

No woman has kissed my mouth, because I may not unveil my face; I may not unveil more than the nostrils of my face at gallant parties; I must keep my lips from all profane possession.

But you are noble, O Dāsīn, even as I am noble; I will taste the lust of your heart in the breath of your mouth, I will pass my life in my breath to the lips of my beloved.

6.

I slept on the hot desert with your name in my heart, and my dream carried your name from

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

my heart to my lips ; at dawn in that place where my lips had kissed your name, I saw this flower which withers not, I saw the sand rose.

Each morning, that I might have strength to make your glance tender, I said my prayer towards the Eastern light in this way :

- ‘ See, O Sultān of Gods, O Guide and Eye of Heaven, the palm tree and the hill and the falcon have hastened and risen higher than You into the sky, that they may mount guard.
- ‘ Awake and climb, O Sun, climb higher than my voice, climb higher than the cries of the caravan, higher than the crying of the simoom, for he would roll your gold face in a black veil.
- ‘ O the gold rose, the honey and the lion and the fire, leave night, for she is dying, she is old and cold and sad, leave her to the jackal that howls his desire to her.
- ‘ Spread the warm oil of your heart in the sky, for our hearts adore your flame, and I will bear you on my brow as a falcon, even as the chief of noble birds of chase, a hawk with golden claws.
- ‘ I will lay you at the feet of Dāsīn-ult-Yema as a rose of fire.
- ‘ O you who suffer for love of the moon, and are weary from pursuing her on your gold camel and overtaking her not,

From the Tamashek

- ‘ O warrior tamed by the victorious lance of night on the blood-red field of evening, surely you will have pity on Musa-ag-Amāštān and comprehend him.
‘ Even as you lie down to die before me, you hold out your purple rose that I may take it to our well-beloved.’

7.

Then I said to the silent garden of the night as she piled the black mountain of the sky upon our mountain :

- ‘ I would climb from rock to rock and pluck the silver rose of the moon and the young roses of the stars for Dāsīn.’

The moon is many and yet one, and you, O Dāsīn, are one and yet very many.

Therefore I mingle the two of you in my thoughts, and it is Dāsīn I see in the chamber of the stars at night.

8.

We must be of the desert, O Dāsīn, to know what silence is. It drips from the lamp of each star, it falls from the white grave of the moon.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

There is not any heart beat in the whole sand, it sleeps like the breast of a dead woman whom no kiss can wake. And there is neither bird nor tree to sing.

And he who does not know these things may say that he has never been alone.

I laid myself down in the vastness, and it dug the naked shield of the cradle and the grave beneath my feet.

9.

We must have seen a dead man couched in the desert to know how noble and beautiful he stays, he is in a sleep which wakes by the side of God.

The sun tans him as gazelle skin, and the spirits of evil odour do not haunt him ; he is like a gold statue, and the lion guards him.

10.

To-day the silence was so full of you that the earth beneath my fingers fell into your shape, and I watched it dance in my hands, and you came forth from my heart and gave it breath.

From the Tamashek

And I thought of our game of making in red
clay the falcon and the hound and the horse,
the camel and the woman.

11.

The turning and returning days are full of gall,
and patience is the key of time.

I sit all night by the side of death, and he looks
upon me. I try to tell him to take me, but
cannot find my voice.

My heart opens and speaks *Dāsīn* to death, and
death smiles and lets me live.

12.

A light was born in the light, a silence was born
in the silence, and I heard your voice with the
voice of your violin :

‘Musa has washed the name of Aflān from my
life, and earth heeds nothing but Musa travel-
ling upon her to come to me.’

And I saw in my heart my green rice-field
offering the white pearls of its rice to me, O
you my green rice-field, you my rice. I would
eat you under my black veil, *Dāsīn*.

Glory be to God who has given me the wings

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān
of my red camel ; he carries me to the camp
of her I love.

Glory be to the Prophet who has borne the
torch of the word of God into the desert, to
light a sun which shall not be quenched in the
night of grief.

If the teeth of sorrow were blacker than the
black mountains,

If the teeth of night were longer than those of
death on the seventh day of mourning,

Yet would the Name of God gild them all over
as the name of Dāsīn is made gold in my
mouth.

13.

Her whom I love is Dāsīn, and they know
this well, from the ant to the camel upon
my way, from the slave to the proud in
heart.

The ant counts the paces of this notorious love,
the camel chews on the taste of it, the slave
weighs its chain, and the proud in heart raises
the prayer of it.

How should I hide this love ?

It is not in my hand, to be in any way shaken from
it ; it is in the hardest of my heart and nothing
can make it fall.

From the Tamashek

14.

You are calling me in the mimosa, for his flower is blowing ; you are calling in the gum tree, his sugar is shining ; you are calling in the date palm, for his fruit is leaning to me, and in the oued, for his water trembles.

You are calling in the mimosa. The word of the Saint of Teleya was true, that you would some day love me. He said to me : 'Who loves you, were it a dog, you will some day love.'

15.

My naked feet hasten my camel, for Dāsīn awaits us. The unseen spirits of the twilight creep from the last rays and decorate the earth : they are leather workers with ochre and blood and saffron squares and cordings ; and a thread of black night surrounds these coloured things.

Earth is a vast red leather mat of execution, and Dāsīn gives herself naked to the love of the sword.

My camel uses all the fat of his hump in running, for Dāsīn awaits us.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

16.

My camel and I stretch forth our necks to you.
Will you sing of our coming ?

The moon makes our shadow run before us
along the sand. There is a blue cloud rolling
to Dāsīn upon the blue mountain. No raider
can stay it ; your name has made it invincible.

Why am I not the thunder or the hot wind to
come to you swiftly ?

The song of desire, Dāsīn, is older than the
rocks of the mountain.

The song of desire is my song. It swells my
tongue to a red pimento, it burns my blood
like pepper ; it twists me in the sand like a
snake, it makes me leap in the sand like a
hunting leopard.

I am maddened and scream and slaver at the
mouth.

17.

Does the demon tear you as he tears me ? Is he
more tender to your tenderness ? I think of
the old words, the young words of the man
who was at Abadal :

‘ I was at Abadal, and there I died of desire to
hear the sound of hair strings on the calabash.

From the Tamashek

‘ I dreamed of a young girl who makes music in the South, and I said to my camel : We must go swiftly from Abadal.’

18.

The camel of the man who was at Abadal ran with his legs, Dāsīn.

My camel loves you even as I love you. He gallops with his heart also to kneel before you.

BOOK V

The Return

I.

THE MOON IS MIGHTY TO-NIGHT AND
increases in brightness to lighten the way
to Dāsīn.

Look at the moon from the gallery of your
dwelling to-night, how great she is upon
Ilaman.

When the moon is mighty they say a king is
journeying in her light.

2.

I did not know that I told you the truth, Dāsīn,
saying that the moon grows great with a halo
for the journeys of kings.

But my brothers came forth to meet me upon
their whiteſt camels, making gunpowder sing
for me, bringing the purple bernous and the
war drum of leadership.

And the eldeſt among them ſaid :

‘Greeting be upon you ! The deeds you have
done in the desert make you our king.’

3.

Then the warriors ſaid to me :

‘Seven honours upon Muſa-ag-Amāſtān, our

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

Amenokhal, favoured of the Saint of Teleya,
who is most holy.

‘Seven honours upon him who has crossed the
desert gloriously to Timbuctoo.

‘The Niger is no bound to his authority.’

4.

And I said : ‘Unroll the fringes of the carpets
of return for me.

‘Dāsīn awaits me, and there is no fairer purple.

‘This is the horizon she looks upon, and this the
earth her walking lightly touches. These
mimosas powder her brow with gold, this
dwelling puts a garment upon her garment.’

It is the hour of the coming together of women
to do you homage.

They till the earth and take its colour, they have
left the reeds of their singing houses to carry
gifts to you.

They balance wooden dishes of green water-
melons.

And at their breasts the rose fruit lies like
children.

5.

And your noble sisters have decked themselves
in bracelets of silver and glass and goat horn.

From the Tamashek

Their rings are so many and so great that they may not labour at all.

They come to offer you tunics sewn with a cunning thorn, and little cords of the wool of wild sheep.

6.

They marry the white flowers of your choice to the green diss, as supple as a greyhound, to call down love upon you as they walk along. The rose tears of the tamarind fall upon them as they smile at me.

They greet me at your door with the marriage song and the song of fruitfulness.

They are as beautiful as the antelope and the hare, who were our mothers.

7.

They sing this marriage song :

We are hungry, *You shall eat.* We are naked, *We will clothe you.* We are walking, *You shall be set upon camels.*

They sing this song of fruitfulness :

I have seen dates this year such as the hand gives not to the tongue.

I have seen gold and silver threaded together

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

this year. I have seen the water of the well this year and I have drunk of it.

I have seen antelope fawns this year, as tender as children, and they spoke to me, softening their voices.

I saw a colt this year and the love of him wounded me. He feeds in a cornfield. If he were for sale I would get a thousand boys by him.

8.

My feet are set upon the border of the carpet of desire, and I do not move. I am bound hand and foot to happiness.

You hold the water-jar of your imzad to the water-jar of your proud body ; your greeting is as soft as moonlight, yet it shoots joy through me like a gun.

But above your voice I hear the voice of my father, saying :

‘ Take thought before you pass the threshold of the honeycomb.’

9.

I overleapt the stone of thought ; I see you glittering in the night of your palace, and I shut my eyes.

From the Tamashek

Who is about you, what men are considering
you? What women are singing and what
slaves are dancing? I cannot answer that.
I see you alone and naked for me beneath
your veils.

10.

Your jewels press red and blue kisses, drops of
blood and azure, upon your body which is
stretched out to me.
My lips conceive of doubling the number of
them.
The doves of joy set their white flights upon my
brow, for it has drawn near to yours.
Will the men never cease from telling their
combats, and the women of singing their lies
to the last lie?
Will the slaves not spare us of the dance of the
days a single day?

11.

Your imzad has a single string but a thousand
voices; it drives these proud bucks and
bleating she-goats into silence.
Now I hear you and see you.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

Stones rise in the sky like eagles and tortoises
croon like doves.

The snakes of a waterless land turn into rivulets,
and the blue gum trees weep gold tears.

The simoom folds his wings of fire, and shivers
in the cold. And the dead return.

12.

Now that the gallant party is finished, I open
my eyes again to stay them with the sight of
you.

All the men who have passed their turn in your
bed are no more than clouds passing before
the moon.

When the clouds have gone she shines as
purely.

I have forgotten even Afān.

He lives not, he is not dead, whom you love no
more.

And the women my father gave to me were no
more to me than vapours of the dew to the
sun who makes them.

13.

I see the dwelling built for you, its courtyard
watching the night like an unveiled head.

From the Tamashek

I see the gallery, an airy road for you.

You will come down from it at the hour of the rising dust when the flocks return.

You will press the udders of our goats and our she-camels, as the moon draws off the silver milk from the nipples of the stars at night.

Why do your eyes still look at the door which has shut upon the last guest ?

He was an Amrar, commanding a great tribe ; but he has not fought. He stays like a tent-peg among the pegs of his tent.

Would you choose him as your guide now that you have flown free again ?

He who drinks from a pitcher is no good guide.

I have fought many fights, and drink from the hollow of my hand.

14.

But why does your hand in this emptiness put a gag upon my kiss ?

Why does your body glide away from mine ?

Do you not know me well enough, the son of the sister of your mother ?

I will open the book of my life and read for you at hazard there, for you will see that your name is written on each page.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

15.

I have graven your name on the stone of the blue mountain that guards the gold of the sun at morning.

I have graven it also in the stone of the black mountain that guards the gold of the sun at night.

The sky of God writes out your name for ever with an ink of gold.

16.

My father has never forgiven your marriage with Aflān. He wished me to marry a certain imperious woman of a haughty house.

I refused my father.

We would not have thrust out our necks to the same branches.

She would have dressed herself in pride, and I gone naked.

If she had been a barrel brimmed with camel milk and I thirsting, I would not have drunk of her.

I said to my father :

‘If a man put a cord about his neck, God will find someone to pull on it.’



From the Tamashek

My father then questioned me in the language of our fathers :

‘ Would you pass by a well without drinking and giving your camel to drink ?

‘ Would you see a traveller without questioning him ?

‘ Not so, for you obey the laws of the desert which God wrote on the stones of it.

‘ O my son, O my noble camel, listen then to my laws.’

17.

Then my father asked Kashuni from her people. And all men said with him :

‘ When Kashuni came to girlhood many women were put away and did not know why. Many camels were worn out in visiting her and men died by the sword. Saints came as ambassadors to the house of her mother, but her mother had chosen Musa-ag-Amāstān and paid no attention.’

Again I refused.

18.

Would you know the joy of bearing by me ?
It is the dawn and the dove, the dawn and the
dove and the white river.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

You would say :

‘ I have cradled a son of the strong Master with
the leopard’s heart, I have suckled a son of
the just Master with the lips of peace.

‘ I laugh and my laugh is a rose,

‘ As rose as the henna of a child’s hand.’

19.

Or do you wish me as the brother and lover of
your body ?

Or do you wish me one of the slain on the sand
where there are no stones to bear witness ?

Would you roll wool of the finest fleece for me
in the blood of henna,

Henna as red as your heart ?

20.

I stretch forth my hands to you, O God, and ask
for the love of Dāsīn-ult-Yema.

I ask it in an invisible mosque that I have built for
You, more beautiful because it is not.

How should hands that God built of clay build
clay into a house for God ?

BOOK VI

The Possession and Death

I.

YOU ARE MINE NOW. YOUR ARMS ARE stretched out to me like palm trees, your hands have lifted the veil from my lips.

I have gone down into your love as into a tomb, life has closed over me.

What pleasure could sugared fruits and the honey give me now ?

I have known your kiss.

What drunkenness could fighting give me now ?

2.

Her kiss has the greedy smell of bread of date flour with hot butter.

It has the scent of the mimosa as she laughs to the blue gum tree under the gold hand of the morning.

Her skin is as soft as bread.

She is an antelope fawn going from gum tree to gum tree, eating the green leaves all the Summer night.

She is a white camel, she is the fringes of red belts, she is a grape ripening in the valley where the date is ripening.

Dāsīn is the thread of the pearls of my collar, the

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān
silk cord holding the talismans asleep upon
my breast.

I have gone down into her love as into a tomb,
and have no wish to find my life again.

3.

You have made a living death for me, O Dāsīn.
This second refusal is more cruel to me, because
you lay under me and forgot the others for a
short space.

You swore to break the collar of the past and be
my desire.

Then you called back the birds of your laughter,
to keep them in the cage of your mouth for
other men.

And yet my anger breaks like a flask of ointment
before the sun of your heart.

Tell me your thought, for my thought dare not
read it.

Is it to Aflān that you would have me give the
purple bernous of the Amenokhal?

Does the Amrar seem to you delightful?

4.

You are as proud as the light which holds us
beneath her chain of gold ; surely you did not
believe that my love would tame you?

From the Tamashek

Dāsīn has killed me as the moon kills the sun on
the day of her raiding.

Shall I sell my flocks to buy you honey,
or silk of green and blue? Shall I buy
for you camels as silent, horses as proud,
or adamant rubies?

5.

Do you think me too generous to the
poor?

But you yourself are charity.

Do you thirst for the blood of captured
warriors?

But you yourself have cared for them and
restored them.

6.

Before the pity of your eyes and the disgust
upon your lips, Dāsīn,

I wished to go back to the desert when seven
times seven suns had fallen like dying shields,
but my camel would not.

He lay under my blows, and opened his mouth
to show the grass of his preference. He keeps
it in the corner of his cheek to chew upon, as
my heart chews your name.

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

7.

I stay.

I would sing Dāsīn-ult-Yema and her white camel and her saddle with ornaments, the whiteness of Dāsīn upon the whiteness of her camel.

It is as the Prophet appearing among his people. Dāsīn is the white moon, and I ask of God who rolled her in His hand to write me among His number.

There is no more. I stay and I cease to sing. I would hear her upon the violin that steals her voices.

8.

It is because God gave senses to the violin, so that when it sings men cease from speaking and every hand pulls down a veil over the eyes, that I most adore Him.

My camel and I were called by your violin, and we came to you and had peace.

I would rather not have known that peace, because you have broken it like a water-jar.

I am a blind man, seizing at shadows and falling upon death.

Keep my camel, for he will not leave you. I am going I know not whither.

From the Tamashek

9.

All grains of rice have the same taste, all dates
the same honey.

I told you that I would go to see women, and
be comforted.

They were all beautiful and all the same.

Dāsīn was different.

10.

I passed over the seas to gallant cities ; but the
palm of a man's hand cannot hide the
sun.

Who was she that came to me in the red veils of
hashish, to lie against me as upon coals ?

Who said to me : *Take my heart*, and cried so
terribly when I tore it from her.

I killed her because I had to kill that night ; I
did not know her name ; I was killing every
woman when I killed her.

11.

O Dāsīn-ult-Yema, will you be smiling awake,
or will you be pretending sleep, when I lift

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān
the fold of the garment that covers your head
on my return ?

If you drive me away again, Dāsīn-ult-Yema, the
sharpened knives of the sun must bury my
shame in the desert.

12.

Dāsīn did not look at my red hand, where the
life of the woman was weeping.

Dāsīn did not look at my red hand. She was on
her way to smile at red flamingoes.

I pressed the fruit of every lip in the city with
disgust.

Time has counted his gold beads over and over
since I set forth again.

13.

I lived because you judged me more worthy
than Aflān to bring up your golden boy, my
name child.

The flesh of your flesh was near me, and I was
still the eagle, the king of the people.

His eyes dwelt upon me with the eyes of your
childhood mingled with my childhood ; but
he died fighting as a lion dies.

From the Tamashek

I partake of the ash upon your brow ; there
is but one thing a man may give to a
woman's grief, and that you do not want
from me.

14.

You did not wish to see me, but the Saint
of Teleya came to me bearing your farewell,
and bringing me pardon.

My tears behold your tears ; you are more
beautiful under your tears than the earth in
rain.

One morning far from now you will smile again
at sunrise, astonished to smile. It will not be
at Musa-ag-Amāstān.

The lion cub slain in battle would have moaned
between us for ever.

15.

The Amenokhal of the men whiter than we,
who commands the armies from the North,
together with his warriors and the slaves who
serve him,

He who has come to avenge the great captain of
the first white harka,

Loves of Dāsīn and Musa-ag-Amāstān

He says that he will make us greater and more beautiful with my help.

I cannot live without Dāsīn-ult-Yema. Let another take my place at that captain's side.

16.

The black month that killed Sidna Slimān, Master of Jinn, is upon me now.

I will enter without fear among the dead.

Let them leave me alone with my black slaves.

Uthmān, stay at my head towards the East ;
stay at my feet towards the West, O Ilmak ;
so that I may die as a day dies between two nights.

Let the word of pardon fall upon my brow from God.

17.

God allows further that I should say this to you,
my brothers in battle and in prayer :

He who has been alone in life would be alone in death,

Bury me between the breasts of the desert,

She is better than the visited tomb for him who

From the Tamashek

shall have neither offering nor prayer, but only sleep.

And I affirm the Unity of God, the second finger of my right hand being raised up to Him :

There is no God but God !

To him who dies of great love there needs a great forgetting.

18.

O my cousin, O son of the sister of my mother, they say that you are dead.

I climb the hill and take stones and bury my heart.

I smell the scent of you between my breasts, darling, and it is fire.

.

Camel-Boy
Rhythms



Compliment for Radya

*AS LOVERS SING THEIR GIRLS
Saying they are like gardens
So paint my beauty,*

Pour damask wine with compliment.

Therefore I said to her
Whose lids are curved swords :

I have poured wine
And nothing except the water of your mouth
Is like it at all.

It is a crystal flame,
As fresh as water from the rock,
Soft as wild honey.

It has the odour of a basket of fruits
From some green eye of God
Among the deserts :
But the smell of your body
Is preferred to it.

Your breasts were ripened in the hands of the
Prophet,
They are apples smoothed with myrrh.

Camel-Boy Rhythms

Your navel is a silver cup,
A well of glowing water ;
The deer in the mirage of my dreams
Go down to drink there.

Your whole body is a dawn waking
Over orchards of opening pomegranate trees
Mingled with roses.

Torch among women,
I have sung the wine of our violet grapes
And the sealed wine of your beauty ;
Now God be merciful !

*Pour damask wine with compliment,
As lovers sing their girls
Saying they are like gardens
So paint my beauty.*

• • •

Song

RED IS THE BANNER THE PIRATES HOIST
When they take the open sea
And of such is your purple robe the wind whirls
Round the mast of your body.

White are the stars of the snow
Falling upon the oar reach
And bending the oars :
Of such is the balance of your neck.

And of your eyes and of your hair :
At midnight the crescent curves
And Aldebaran and Altair are like moons.

. . .

The Antidote

WHEN YOUR STARS HAVE BURNED ME
My thirsting love leans out
To the wet fruit of your lips.

Your closing eyelids are shadowed wings
For a protection
Beating over the lavender garden.

I drink an antidote for your eyes
In a place of snow.

. . .

Inflexible

IF I TOLD MY PAIN TO AN INDIAN SWORD,
Yamena,
It would melt in hearing.

If I spoke of my torment to the rocks of the
mountain
They would weaken and turn to sand.

Give me a feather of hope, disdainful falcon,
For my torture has lasted too long
And the waiting tears me.

But the girl with the tattooed brow made
answer,
Parting her veil :
' When shall the bitter almond be made sweet? '

May the Jinn ravish you,
Virgin without a soul !
May the sky strike you !
By the Face of the Compassionate God,
By the Letters of the Book,
By the Triumph of the Name,
Be cursed, be cursed !

Your eyes are killing me,
Yamena, gentle one.

Song

DEER OF THE RIVER,
Dove of the rocks,
O gold,
Your hair is the silk
Of the feathers of the maize, O falcon.

Your eyes are waters of the oasis
Mirroring date palms,
Your body,
Fastened at the breasts with coral,
Is opal gauze.

You are like Stamboul
Because of the number of your fervent,
Your feet are pigeons with silver collars,
They carry messages of love
And death.

. . .

Love's Warrior

HIS MARE IS AS WHITE AS FLAX,
As a king's war tent,
As the dome of holiness.

He has gold reins
And his pistols are gilded,
The dust rises before his riding
In storms of fear.

He defies the princes of the world
And his beauty is terrible,
Who but Fātimah of the rash dark glances
Would dare provoke him ?

. . .

Sovereign

HER EYES ARE CUT STONES
Shining and staying cold,
Her cheek is the opening of poppies,
Her cardinal lips are tinted
Like Morocco leather.

Her neck is the mast of a ship
Kissed by the fortunate breezes of the sea,
It is a tower above God's house.

Her breasts are like silver crowns
On the butts of pistols,
There is a coral ball let into each.

Her body is a flushed sword.

When she comes proud and dressed
My eyes must fear her,
My soul hates and adores her
For her cruel pride.

But when she lies naked and quiescent
On my dark carpet,
Seeing the doves of her kissing knees
I cannot believe her evil.

Youth

LITTLE BRANCH OF YOUTH,
Your cheek is coloured with copper apples.

Tell me what roses,
What flowering almond trees,
What garden with fountains saw you born,
Closed flower,
One morning fifteen months of May ago ?

. . .

In the Street of the Women

LIGHT SHOWS BETWEEN THE BEAMS OF YOUR
door
And there are many of us.

The old woman, pulling at the red curtain,
Peers among us,
But she will not catch my eye.

Once I gave you a French mirror
With other delights,
And you mouthed my nipples
And called me your Sultān ;
Now there are many of us
And light shows between the beams of your door.

. . .

To the Fair Anointed

FAIR, ANOINTED WITH ZEBED AND ESSENCES,
 Deer of the thyme-planted plains,
 Palm tree of Hanif,
 Mare of the Juad,

Apricot orchard,
 Dove of the penthouse,
 Spots of the panther,
 Moon of accomplishment,

Honey from a comb the bee has kneaded,
 Wheat in the ear,
 Tressed silk,
 O pure gum benjamin,

Diet of dates,
 Striped muslin,
 Riding of riders,
 O crescent cutting the nights,

You are as El-Jezireh,
 Pomegranate of Paradise,
 For the rich only.

. . .

Spring

DAWN SCATTERS PEARLS FROM EITHER HAND.

The flowers of the almond come abroad
And the breeze sows them upon the roses.

The amaranth and the purple
Woo the jasmine terrace.

The clove tree and the sweet-briar
Shine in their colours.

The birds in the green leaves sing their verse :
He is Allāh, the only, over and over.

The stars of the orange set in his branches
And I fail for love
Because the brightness of your mouth
Has touched these things.

. . .

Why?

GAZELLE,
Why am I driven to your feet?

Why are the swords of your soldiers bright for
ever
Though you are faithless,
Why is my love a broken knife?

Why does your beauty trouble the wit of man
And the fold of your eyebrow, eagle, hold in
chains?

Why do the leaves of my branches strew the
earth,
Why is my garden wasted?

Why does your meadow, breathing of the balm
tree,
Deny my flocks?

Why is your body needful to me?

Why do the readers of the Korān
Find you like wine?

Camel-Boy Rhythms

Why am I as a dead man already washed,
Why do you refuse me resurrection ?

Why do my hopes break
As a ruin of mountains ?

Why have you lost me ?

The Burden of Love

THE BURDEN OF LOVE
Is greater than the vigour of my body.
The rank of my mistress
Surpasses the height of that star
Just setting to the West.

As a burned land waits for the rain
I wait for the beauty of this woman.

Flow more swiftly down to me, water of my life,
Hasten, O river,
Before the woof of my day falls from the loom
Where Allāh weaves.

. . .

The Naked Summer Moon

WHEN YOU RISE FROM YOUR SCATTERED
 silks
In the darkened room,
Queen of my night,
When you rise
Dressed in your bracelets only
And your necklaces,
You are the slight and naked moon of Summer,
And glittering reign alone.

. . .

Message

MAY THE MORNING BE FORTUNATE TO YOU,
Rider with spurs of fire,
May your journey be prosperous !
If you pass by the tribe of the fairest among
women,
Ask after her bended brows, my lord.
She sighs for me no more.

Her forgetting is the stone of a tomb
Sealed over me.
O rider, question her
That I may be delivered.

Tell her I sing her body
That bends like an iris in running water,
Her cheek as bright as purple wool,
The moon of her brow with blue signs
Putting a spell on reason.

Tell her that I sing her lips as crimson as flame
Filtering out honey :
It is blander than sealed wine in firelight,
It makes the heart grow faint.

Tell her I sing her crystal neck,
It is rolled round with scented collars ;

Camel-Boy Rhythms

Tell her I sing her ripening citrons
And her ivory flanks
And her little feet as plump as knuckle-bones.

Tell her I sing the small flowers of her nails
Red as carnation,
And the down of her cheek
Like the powdering of waterfalls
In the morning sun.

Tell her I sing and turn
And weep and am on fire.

May the morning be fortunate to you,
Rider with spurs of lightning,
May your journey be prosperous !
If you pass by the tribe of the fairest among
women,
Ask after her bended brows, my lord.

. . .

Meeting

THE POISON WIND HAS BLOWN ALL DAY.

As the sun went down
It swelled the silks of Lubna
Like the breast of a dove,
But she did not move her veil
Or turn her head.

The cloud has passed above us without granting
water,
Its thunder has grumbled without spreading rain.

. . .

How Many

PALM OF OUR GARDENS,
How many have your lids killed like knives?
Your breasts are quinces shaken
Under figured silk,
How many hungers have they lighted?
Your hands are turning ivories,
They are flowered with rings.
How many thirsts stretch forth
Toward your cups?

. . .

Song

HER WALKING IS A CYPRESS IN THE GARDENS
of Mornag,
Her body is a lance set above mosques,
As white as spinning silk.

I used to get drunk on the light of swords,
But love spurred from the ambush of her face
And has unseated me.

. . .

The Sand Gazelle

WHEN YOU SEE ME BENEATH YOUR STRIPED
veils

Your breasts tremble, Hudhailah.

As timid as the sand gazelle,

What do you fear when I meet you ?

Does the red furnace in my breast

Scorch your tenderness ?

Is the ocean of love

Roaring from my heart

And seeking to die down at your fragile feet

So terrible

That you will not bathe them in it ?

Or have you guessed that God made love

Out of a red furnace and a roaring sea ?

The wave and the flame of my passion

Are dancing about your body of pearl

And your closed heart.

That is why

When you see me beneath your striped veils

Your breasts tremble, Hudhailah.

. . .

Song

THE JUJUBE PLUM TREES
Grow by the town where I was born,
We boys played knuckle-bones
With the dropped fruit of
The jujube plum trees.
At night in Spring
All the town smelt of the flowers of
The jujube plum trees,
As sweet as the breath
Of one who played knuckle-bones
With my expectant heart,
But lay with me at last under
The jujube plum trees.

. . .

Wakefulness

I WAKE UNDER THE TENT WHILE OTHERS
sleep,
Because of black glances
Shining below curls of hair.

I compare myself with the sleepers,
God's peace is over them,
I wake to dream of raping her slim body.

I suffer for dark eyes and for a palm tree
And for a striped veil ;
She does not deign to turn her glances upon me
That rape my sleep.

. . .

Love's Bird

HER BROWS ARE TWO LETTERS *NUN* TRACED
On the same line,
Her eyes are drawn with a wine-sombre ink
On rare paper,
Her small mouth is a rivulet of honey
And her cheeks have the scarlet of allspice.

Rise in your flight,
Spread forth your wings,
Sweet-footed gentle pigeon.

Circle toward the tribe of Nejma
At the hour of prayer,
And when the morning comes
Drop down into her breast.

Tell her that I am as one
Whose wound has reached the bone,
He cannot draw the blade from it.

I was a partridge coming down to drink
And a hunter crept upon me.

Sweet-footed gentle pigeon
With the knowing eye,
Drop down into the breast of Nejma
At the hour of prayer :
By her very delicate skin
You will know Nejma.

. . .

The Partridge

I HAVE CAUGHT YOU
But will not kill you,
Partridge fallen among the lentisk trees.
Your feet are coloured like Āishah's,
They are painted red.
They are painted with the henna of the heels
Of my well-loved one.
My desire has not touched her
And her heart flies far away.

. . .

Image

THIS IMAGE IS MADE FOR HER WHOSE MOUTH
Is pure design.

I nourish myself in you
As flowers in the water of a cup,
I breathe your love
As other men breathe roses.

You are a garden of jasmine and carnation
Tangled together,
Complaining in incense.

As cool as dew,
As troublous as sweet wine,
Your flanks are of sea pearl.

This image is made for her whose mouth
Is pure design.

. . .

Propitious Hour

I MET A GIRL THIS DUSK
Who had cheek-bones as rose
As the arbutus tree,
And held her in my arms.
Good luck, she said,
O falcon full of ardour.
Kiss my small mouth,
When night comes you shall pick my fruit.

. . .

A Lonely Garden

THE SKY IS LIGHTLESS AND THE SPRING
useless,
The flowers open without a reason,
Their perfumes waste in air.

Under the shadow of the lemon tree,
White with blossom,
Swollen with bees,
I plunge my wrists into the runlets of water
And my fever remains.

I remember you
Under the rose tree of your choosing.

When the heavy roses
Weary of waiting so long for you
Let fall their purple tears,
It is as if Christians were burning incense
Before their dead.

My head used to rest upon your arm
When I was asleep.

Allāh, if you would have me live,
Paint from my heart the image of her little
slippers
Upon the threshold of my door
Set side by side.

. . .

The Carpets

SHE STAYED HER STEPS
In front of certain opening flowers
And parted her veil in the sunlight
To breathe the noon.

She pointed to a carpet of Shiraz
Decking a balustrade :
' The flowers and the silks
Have the same abundant colour,
And it is as if the same hand
Had interlaced them.

' But the flower carpet
Is lent you for a short Spring only,
Its colours fade up in perfume as we speak
Like a smoke of incense.'

Therefore
Let us love desperately now,
Your beauty is hot as amber.

. . .

The Moon's Message

THE MOON BORROWED YOUR VEIL OF BLUE
silk
And bore me a message ;
I killed my white horse
And set the night on fire
To come to you.
You waited me, a field of lilies
On the shadowy carpet ;
My mouth is sweet with kissing your neck
And bitter with the henna of your feet.

. . .

Sorcery

HAWTHORN, I BURN YOU FOR LOVE OF SA'ID,
Arm of the panther.

Iris root, I mingle you with hawthorn
That he may desire me.

O dwarf jujube plum tree,
Come with your branch to swell the fire
To make my image a ghost about his thought.

O fir-apple, may Sa'id be thirsty for Zainah.

O green oak, may all other women
Be powerless to draw him from me.

Lavender, that my beloved upon my mouth
Be as an eagle with broken wings.

O violet fig, my husband is very old,
May God grant him His sleep.

O every plant,
Seal up the sense of an old and jealous man
And give me to the love of Sa'id,
Arm of the panther.

Mas'ūda

MAS'ŪDA IS GRACIOUS AS A ONE-YEAR HIND,
And when she passes,
Because of the smallness of her feet
Earth keeps no trace of her.

Her neck is a flower after rain,
Her eyes are turquoises in silver.

When Mas'ūda smiles
We think of hailstones
Dropped in a Persian rose.

Her arms are white adders
Marked with blue markings,
And her hair is rays of the rising sun
Tressed in a skein.

She is a dove from a fine cote
And has killed me with her gentleness.

. . .

The Feast of Pardon

IT IS THE FEAST OF PARDON.

‘Gather again the figs and the pomegranates
From my orchard,
Pasture again upon the breasts of the beloved,
For it is the Feast of Pardon,’

I fell on my face like a drunken man
And then rose up to dance ;
My tent is swollen with treasure
On the Feast of Pardon.

. . .

To an Ouled Nail

YOUR BROW IS LIKE A WALL PLASTERED
with lime,
And your breasts are ready pears.

The bands of your hair are black
Under silver fillets.

Your eyes are like holes
Where serpents lie in wait for ants,
Or coals beginning to grow red.

Musk is in all your ornaments.

Your belly is a melon rolling under silk
When you are dancing.

God knows why you are sombre before your
door
With heavy rings.

God knows why your mouth does not smile
To show your teeth,
Bleached bones on the desert of your heart.

You fear neither life nor death,
You follow your destiny.

God knows why.

. . .

Satisfaction

YOU FED MY THIRST WITH A DISDAIN
More bitter than aloes,
But now the gold of your pride
Is tumbled in the sand.

A rider passing in youth
Knew how to take you ;
And now he rides down other loves.

You are a door with a broken lock,
Robbed of its secret.

. . .

Riding

AT NIGHT I WAS TOLD SHE WAITED FOR ME.
I mounted my swart horse ;
Dawn drew her sword against the darkness
And cut a way for me.

. . .

To a Dancer

THE FAITHFUL REJOICE AFTER RAMADĀN ;
Women are the macerations of the fast to
me,

You are my feasting :
And when you begin to dance
My heart pricks up his ears.

If I were a snake
I would band your legs together with my body,
And rest my head
In the crook of your perfume cresset,
For the mad thought of that place
Is choking me.

. . .

Farewell

AS THE SUN WALKS TOWARD THE SEA
He throws burning torches before him
Into the water.

He walks in gold,
He walks as a bride in coloured garments,
His red and green garments, and as blue
As the glances of a Christian slave
His garments.

Call him farewell as he drowns,
For night comes drumming
To veil him and take away.

My love was a sun
Gilding your indifference a little while,
Now he is drowned in the sea of his tears
Cold with your coldness.

Cry farewell to him.

. . .

Anger in Love

ONE DAY I MADE YOU VERY ANGRY.

You rose in the rage of your torrential hair
And knotted the little adders of your arms ;
The rings of your fingers shone like eyes
And you defied me.

Your feet were closed blossoms,
The flowers of your heels were not parted,
You trembled and were as beautiful
As a silver sword.

But I knew how to cool you
So that you gave way beneath my mouth.
Then were your eyes stars in a dark river
And your face a drowned moon
In the lake of night.

. . .

Litanies

ALLĀH, WHO RIPENS THE FRUIT FOR AUTUMN,
Give me Zubaidah of the fine garments.

Allāh, who created the pomegranate,
Give me Zubaidah of the bleeding lips.

Allāh, who made fig blossom,
Give the musk flesh of Zubaidah.

Allāh, who fashioned new almonds,
Make her to smile on me.

Allāh, who planted the orchard of Sahel,
Give me to Zubaidah,
For she is a tree with fruits.

Allāh, who thought the first dark poppy,
Now grant her husband sleep and that she say
come.

. . .

The Rape

SHE HAS THE DARK WATER EYES OF A
 gazelle
 Feeding upon flowers.

The fish leaps between the breasts of the ocean,
 When he is drawn forth from the waters
 He lies as an image of such as I
 On the hot shore.

I have compared her to a forest of banners,
 To a wood of poplar trees,
 She trembles in her disdain as a mare trembles
 Saddled before the battle.

I surprised her in the time of sleep,
 She had unclasped her girdle ;
 The men of her tribe pursued me,
 Crying *Kill him, kill him !*

By the prophet Ahmad and by David, O Allāh,
 I hope for clemency ;
 Give me two bold companions for the darkness
 That I may see again the daughter of the Amīr
 Al-Kazwīnī
 In her far tribe.

The Victor

LISTEN TO THE REASONS
For the lightness of my singing,
O you who hear my gay embroideries
Of silk on song.

My joy is flowers growing in my breast,
My heart a coffer brimming with necklaces,
And the coloured crystals of my song
Escape sometimes.

There are narcissus eyes
Glancing in perfume to the soul,
There are flowery lights.

There is drunkenness of lips,
There is a scarlet mouth,
A coral cup.

There are white orange seeds
Ranged side by side
On purple silk.

There is a garden of carnations,
And by what miracle has a grain of musk
Fallen among them ?

Camel-Boy Rhythms

There is a crystal path,
And in a land where neither rain nor dew falls
A heart of palm.

There are two pomegranates
With silk rinds,
The height of God's achievement.

There are jasmine and wallflowers,
Rivers and honeycombs,
Baskets of rosemary
And tufts of basil.

I have not put on armour
Nor thundered my horse to the assault
To win these things.

I have come unarmed,
Setting my hand to my crushed breast ;
I have fallen as if for prayer at two jacinthine
feet
To win these things.

. . .

Song

WHEN SHE WHOSE BRIGHTNESS INSULTS
the emerald
Walks in our garden,
The odour of each yearning rose tree
So takes on sweetness
That the dew rolls from them
In a true rose-water.

O falcons of the air,
Fly after this wild dove for me
And drive her down into my breast
To sleep.

. . .

Vision

HER BODY HIDES UNDER SEVEN TUNICS,
But the breasts of it
Seem to be breaking through.

Her leg is a virgin yataghan
In a prince's fingers,
Her wrist shines like a mirror.

Her cheek has the light of Aldebaran
Taking his place among the constellations.

Her nose is as a falcon
Lit in a garden,
Defying with its wings.

Her eyebrow is the crescent bending at dusk,
And the creatures of God regard it.

. . .

Zohra

WHEN ZOHRA MEETS ME AMONG THE FIELDS
My heart grows drunk with her
And staggers to left and right.

When Zohra meets me among the fields
She seems to waver there
Like a new asphodel.

Her flushed legs seem to quarrel
With a bickering of silver,
The coupled rings of her little half-boots sound
Like the murmur of the Streams of Paradise :
Girls, leaning over their images,
Let fall the drunken flowers of their hair there
Upon the water.

But when the day goes down without a sight
of her
I know the thirst of the ungodly
Bewildered in the ovens of Hell
With snakes.

. . .

Yāsamin of the Abid

THE WOMEN OF THE ABID ARE MOST
beautiful,
Expressing all with a sign of the eyebrow
And disdaining speech.

Yāsamin was the fairest of the Abid,
The fruits of the others had ripened,
But she had the tenderness of flower green.

I was as a pilgrim come too late,
Silver made beautiful with chisels,
O grafted rose, Yāsamin.

Then you were a garment none had worn ;
My heart weeps for the beautiful woman
With the slender belt.

I was as a pilgrim come too late,
Yāsamin, my darling.

. . .

Elegy

FIRE IS EATING MY HEART
As it lies in the tomb of the slight 'Azīzah.
The young palm tree is cut down
And the golden grape is trampled,
The wine of her life has run away.

I am a very brave man,
But death betrays me.

The young palm tree is cut down
And the golden grape is trampled,
The wine of her life has run away.

The twins of her breast
Were the fawns of a wild hind ;
I spoke of them as apples,
My hands were not weary of holding them.

She was my mare,
Obeying no other rider.

The young palm tree is cut down
And the golden grape is trampled,
The wine of her life has run away.

Camel-Boy Rhythms

My fair one died on my breast,
I looked at her
And she was for the first time cold.
I had only one eye when she chose me,
A thorn had pierced the other.
I follow my destiny,
Leave me to weep with my one eye.

Fire is eating my heart
As it lies in the tomb of the slight 'Azīzah.
The young palm tree is cut down
And the golden grape is trampled,
The wine of her life has run away.

. . .

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