

his bidding and said, "The flavor of these olives hath not changed and they are of this year's growth." Then said the boy, "Methinks ye are mistaken, for seven years ago Ali Khwajah put the olives into the jar: how then could fruit of this year find their way therein?" But they replied, "'Tis even as we say: an thou believe not our words send straightway for other oil-merchants and make inquiry of them, so shalt thou know if we speak sooth or lies." But when the merchant of Baghdad saw that he could no longer avail to prove his innocence, he confessed everything; to wit, how he had taken out the Ashrafis and filled the jar with fresh olives. Hearing this the boy said to the Prince of True Believers, "O gracious Sovereign, last night in play we tried this cause, but thou alone hast power to apply the penalty. I have adjudged the matter in thy presence and I humbly pray that thou punish this merchant according to the law of the Koran and the custom of the Apostle; and thou decree the restoring of his thousand gold pieces to Ali Khwajah, for that he hath been proved entitled to them."

Another Solomon

From the Chinese

AT T'ai-yüan there lived a middle-aged woman with her widowed daughter-in-law. The former was on terms of too great intimacy with a notably bad character of the neighborhood; and the daughter, who objected very strongly to this, did her best to keep the man from the house. The elder woman accordingly tried to send the other back to her family, but she would not go; and at length things came to such a pass that the mother-in-law actually went to the mandarin of the place and charged her daughter-in-law with the offense she herself was committing. When the mandarin inquired the name of the man concerned, she said she had only seen him in the dark and didn't know who he

was, referring him for information to the accused. The latter, on being summoned, gave the man's name, but retorted the charge on her mother-in-law; and when the man was confronted with them, he promptly declared both their stories to be false. The mandarin, however, said there was a *primâ facie* case against him, and ordered him to be severely beaten, whereupon he confessed that it was the daughter-in-law whom he went to visit. This the woman herself flatly denied, even under torture; and on being released, appealed to a higher court, with a very similar result. Thus the case dragged on, until a Mr. Sun, who was well-known for his judicial acumen, was appointed district magistrate at that place. Calling the parties before him, he bade his lictors prepare stones and knives, at which they were much exercised in their minds, the severest tortures allowed by law being merely gyves and fetters. However, everything was got ready, and the next day Mr. Sun proceeded with his investigation. After hearing all that each one of the three had to say, he delivered the following judgment: "The case is a simple one; for although I cannot say which of you two women is the guilty one, there is no doubt about the man, who has evidently been the means of bringing discredit on a virtuous family. Take those stones and knives there and put him to death. I will be responsible." Thereupon the two women began to stone the man, especially the younger one, who seized the biggest stones she could see and threw them at him with all the might of her pent-up anger; while the mother-in-law chose small stones and struck him on non-vital parts.¹ So with the knives: the daughter-in-law would have killed him at the first blow, had not the mandarin stopped her, and said, "Hold! I now know who is the guilty woman." The mother-in-law was then tortured until she confessed, and the case was thus terminated.

¹ The Chinese distinguish sixteen vital spots on the front of the body and six on the back, with thirty-six and twenty non-vital spots in similar positions, respectively. They allow, however, that a severe blow on a non-vital spot might cause death, and *vice versa*.

Calamity Ahmad and Habzalam Bazazah

From the Arabic

CALIPH HARUN AL RASCHID went in to Kut al Kulub, who rose to him on sighting him and kissed the ground between his hands; when he said to her, "Hath Ala al-Din visited thee?" and she answered, "No, O Commander of the Faithful, I sent to bid him come, but he would not." So the Caliph bade carry her back to the Harim and saying to Ala al-Din, "Do not absent thyself from us," returned to his palace. Accordingly, next morning Ala al-Din mounted and rode to the Divan, where he took his seat as Chief of the Sixty.

Presently the Caliph ordered his treasurer to give the Wazir Ja'afar ten thousand dinars and said, when his order was obeyed, "I charge thee to go down to the bazaar where handmaidens are sold and buy Ala al-Din a slave girl with this sum." Accordingly in obedience to the King, Ja'afar took Ala al-Din and went down with him to the bazaar.

Now as chance would have it that very day, the Emir Khalid, whom the Caliph had made Governor of Baghdad, went down to the market to buy a slave girl for his son, and the cause of his going was that his wife, Khátun by name, had borne him a son called Habzalam Bazazah, and the same was foul of favor and had reached the age of twenty without learning to mount horse; albeit his father was brave and bold, a doughty rider ready to plunge into the Sea of Darkness.¹ And it happened that on a certain night his mother said to his father, "I want to find him a wife." Quoth Khalid, "The fellow is so foul of favor and withal so sordid and beastly that no woman would take him at a gift." And she answered, "We will buy him a slave girl."

So it befell, for the accomplishing of what Allah Al-

¹Or night. A metaphor for rushing into peril.

mighty had decreed, that on the same day Ja'afar and Ala al-Din, the Governor Khalid and his son went down to the market, and behold, they saw in the hands of a broker a beautiful girl, lovely faced and of perfect shape, and the Wazir said to him, "O broker, ask her owner if he will take a thousand dinars for her." And as the broker passed by the Governor with the slave, Habzalam Bazazah cast at her one glance of the eyes which entailed for himself one thousand sighs; and he fell in love with her and passion got hold of him and he said, "O my father, buy me yonder slave girl."

So the Emir called the broker, who brought the girl to him and asked her her name. She replied, "My name is Jessamine"; and he said to Habzalam Bazazah, "O my son, an she please thee, do thou bid higher for her." Then he asked the broker, "What hath been bidden for her?" and he replied, "A thousand dinars." Said the Governor's son, "She is mine for a thousand pieces of gold and one more," and the broker passed on to Ala al-Din who bid two thousand dinars for her; and as often as the Emir's son bid another dinar, Ala al-Din bid a thousand.

The ugly youth was vexed at this and said, "O broker! who is it that outbiddeth me for the slave girl?" Answered the broker, "It is the Wazir Ja'afar who is minded to buy her for Ala al-din Abu al-Shamat." And Ala al-Din continued till he brought her price up to ten thousand dinars, and her owner was satisfied to sell her for that sum.

Then he took the girl and said to her, "I give thee thy freedom for the love of Almighty Allah"; and forthwith wrote his contract of marriage with her and carried her to his house.

Now when the broker returned, after having received his brokerage, the Emir's son summoned him and said to him, "Where is the girl?" Quoth he, "She was bought for ten thousand dinars by Ala al-Din, who hath set her free and married her." At this the young man was greatly vexed and cast down and, sighing many a sigh, returned home, sick for love of the damsel; and he threw himself