

The Lady and the Kazi

From the Persian

DURING the reign of Sultan Mahomed Subaktaghin in Ghaznin, a man was traveling from Aderbaijan to Hindustan; when he arrived in Ghaznin, he was much pleased with the climate, so he decided to settle there; and as he had great experience in commerce, he went to the bazaar and became a broker and was very successful in business.

He intended to marry, and fortune being propitious to him, he entered into a matrimonial alliance with a virtuous and handsome young woman; by degrees his business also became more and more flourishing, and having accumulated much wealth, he was numbered among the richest merchants.

He wished to extend his transactions to Hindustan and sent goods to that country; but as he had no connections or intimate friends in Ghaznin who might take charge of his wife till his return, this thought troubled him greatly, and as he considered it the first duty of a respectable man to be on his guard on this subject, and not to hazard his reputation and honor, he determined not to start on his journey till he had provided an asylum for his spouse.

Now since the Kazi of the city was a man noted for his piety, virtue, and honor, he said to himself: "I cannot do better than intrust the keeping of my wife to so godly and honest a man, who is a magistrate and a churchman, and enjoys the esteem of the rich and the poor; let her remain in his house till I return from my journey."

He hastened to make his obeisance to the Kazi and said: "O President of the judgment seat of truth and piety, by whose talented and searching disposition the explanations of religious and secular questions are flowing, and by whose essentially holy authority and intelligence the commendatory and prohibitory laws are corroborated, may

your righteous opinion always remain the guide of those who seek to walk in the strait way of piety. I, your humble servant, am an inhabitant of this city, and it is my intention to undertake a journey to Hindustan; I have a young wife, the leaves of whose modesty and virtue are bound up in the splendid volume of her natural excellence; but as I have nobody who might protect and take care of her, and also because she might fall under the obloquy of false tongues, I flatter myself that she might find a refuge under the guardianship of your lordship."

The Kazi placed the seal of acquiescence upon this request and said that he would take care of her. That man furnished his wife with all the necessary expenses for one year, delivered her to the Kazi, and started on his journey.

The lady spent her whole time in the house of the Kazi in prayer and devotion, and nearly a whole year had elapsed without the breeze of a single profane glance having blown on the vernal abode of her face, and without her having ever heard the bird of a voice in the foliage of her ears; till one day the Kazi unexpectedly made his appearance and looked at her, when he perceived her Leila-like beauty sitting within the black mansion of her musked ringlets, and her sweet tenderness mounted upon the palfrey¹ of attractiveness and melancholy, the Kazi's intellect became troubled, and Ferhad-like² he began to dig the Bistún of his soul, which was melting and burning in the censer of distraction.

He was anxious to make overtures against her virtue, but being aware of her whole nature and chastity, he durst not attempt it; nevertheless, when the wife of the Kazi one day absented herself to visit the public baths and had left the lady alone to take care of the house, he was so completely dominated by his unlawful passion that he threw skyward the turban of concupiscence and said:

¹ In the text, "Gulgún," the name of the horse which Lady Shirin rides, in the poem of "Ferhad and Shirin."

² Ferhad dug in the mountain Bistún and sculptured Shirin's likeness.

"The desired game for which I looked in the skies,
Has now on earth fallen into the net of my good fortune."

The Kazi locked the door and commenced his stratagem by complimenting her modesty; and continued to address her in the following strain:

"Virtuous lady! The reputation of my honesty and piety has spread in the world and penetrated all corners, neither could the charms of the paradisaical Houris seduce my righteous disposition from the road of firm determination, or impel me to transgress the laws of purity; then why do you avoid me so much? If the absence of intelligence and of the knowledge of the true state of things keep your face veiled with the curtain of bashfulness, my obedience to the laws of God, and my fear of eternal punishment at the day of resurrection, prohibit me from allowing the fire of sensuality to be kindled within me.

"I would not disturb your peace even with the sinful glance of my eye.

"Be of good cheer and throw aside the veil of apprehension from your face, because there is no danger of sinning; and although it is against the law of God and the Prophet to exact services from guests, yet since you belong to the house and I am dependent on your kindness, I would request you to procure me some food, for I am hungry."

The woman placed the prohibitory veil of bashfulness on her face, and waited upon the Kazi with all due modesty; she put the meal before him and retired to a corner; the Kazi had provided himself with a drug which deprives of his senses anyone who tastes it, and said to the woman: "You know that three kinds of persons will be rejected from the mercy of God on the day of resurrection, and will be subjected to endless tortures; firstly, he who eats alone; secondly, he who sleeps alone; and thirdly, he who travels alone; and till now it has never happened to me that I did any of these three things; since I am now eating alone and anyone who does this has the devil for his com-

panion, and to whomsoever this happens, his faith will be endangered; why should you not, in order to free me from the snares of the devil, defile your hands by partaking of this meal?"

He did not cease to invite her till she sat down near the table and helped herself to some food. The Kazi took this opportunity to throw some of the medicine into the plate; after the unfortunate woman had swallowed a few morsels she felt herself fainting, and wanting to get up from the table, her feet refused to bear her, and she fell senseless to the ground.

The Kazi quickly gathered up the articles that were on the table and meditated worse things; when he suddenly heard noises on the outside; this greatly disturbed him, and he was much embarrassed where to conceal the woman so that nobody might discover the circumstance.

Now the Kazi happened to keep his money and valuables in a subterranean room which was situated exactly under the apartment in which he was. Nobody knew anything about this place except himself; he opened the trapdoor, thrust the woman into it and again covered the floor with the carpet; then he went out and saw that his family had returned from the bath.

The Kazi said: "Why did you all leave the house empty?" They answered: "We have left the wife of the merchant to take care of the place." The Kazi said: "It is two hours since I arrived at home and have seen no one; why do you trust such a person? She may have taken away something." They were all astonished and said that she was not such a woman, and wondered what had become of her.

While this talk was going on the husband of that woman, having just returned from his journey to Hindustan, came at that moment to the house of the Kazi to inquire for his wife. The Kazi said: "It is some time since your wife has left the house without giving us notice or asking permission."

The merchant said: "O Kazi! This is not the time to

crack jokes; deliver to me my wife." The Kazi swore an oath and affirmed that he was in earnest. The merchant said: "I am too well acquainted with the nature and disposition of my wife ever to believe her to be capable of such a trick; there must be something else the matter."

The Kazi got angry and replied: "It is I who must be offended, you foolish man; why do you talk nonsense and uselessly insult us? Go and see where your wife is!"—As the merchant was greatly attached to his spouse, and the smoke of distress was beginning to ascend from the oven of his brains, he tore the collar of patience and hastened to make his complaint to the Sultan, and prostrating himself upon the carpet of supplication he said:

"Oh, exalted and happy monarch,
May felicity be the servant of your palace.
The Kazi of the city has done me injustice,
Greater than the blast of a tornado of the west.
If it be permitted I shall explain
The injustice of that mean-spirited wretch."

The Sultan said: "Bring forward your complaint that I may become acquainted with it." The merchant said: "I am a native of Aderbaijan, and it was the fame of the justice and protection which the poor obtain at the hands of your majesty that induced me to settle in this country, and it is some time since I dwelt under the shadow of your majesty's protection. I had a beautiful and modest wife, and intending to travel to Hindustan, I committed her one year ago to the charge of the Kazi. Now I have again returned, but he, being deceived by his covetousness, refuses to give up to me my wife."

The Sultan ordered the Kazi to be brought into his presence, but the latter, suspecting what would happen, suborned by the promise of money several vagabonds to testify, when called upon, that they had seen the merchant's wife absent herself from the Kazi's house three months ago.

When the Kazi arrived, the Sultan asked him what kind of a complaint the merchant had against him.

The Kazi said: "May the torch of your majesty's welfare be luminous, and the castle of opposition ruinous! This man has intrusted his wife to me and it is nearly three months since she went out of my house without giving any notice, and up to this time she has not come back; we have been unable to discover any traces of her."

The merchant answered: "This is contrary to the nature of my wife, and I do not believe it." The Sultan said: "Who are the witnesses?"

The Kazi answered that several neighbors and householders of the vicinity were acquainted with the fact, and wrote down their names; at a sign of the Sultan to a Chamberlain, these witnesses were brought in, and they confirmed the assertion of the Kazi.

Then the Sultan said to the merchant: "As the Kazi has established his assertion by witnesses, your complaint falls to the ground." Upon this the merchant retired disappointed.

The Sultan was in the habit of perambulating the bazaars and streets of the city occasionally, in disguise, to mix among the people, and thus discover what they thought of him. That night he left his palace according to his wont and walked about.

He happened to pass near the door of a shop where boys were playing the game of "The King and his Vizier." One of the children was made king, and said to the others: "I am king and you are all under my authority; you must not seek to evade my commands." Another boy said: "If you give unjust judgments like Sultan Mahomed we shall soon depose you." The other asked: "What injustice has Sultan Mahomed done?"

He answered: "To-day the affair of a merchant came before the Sultan. This merchant had confided his wife to the keeping of the Kazi, and he hid her in his own house; the Sultan called for witnesses, when the Kazi gained his cause by bringing into court witnesses whom he had previously bribed. It is a great pity that people should have the administration of justice in their hands who

are unable to distinguish between right and wrong; had I been in the place of the Sultan I would very quickly have discovered the truth or falsehood of the witnesses of the Kazi."

When the Sultan had heard the conversation of these children he sighed and returned to his palace in great agitation of mind; next morning as soon as it was daylight he sent somebody to fetch the boy. The boy came and the Sultan received him in a very friendly way, saying: "This day you shall be my Lieutenant the whole day from morning till evening, and I intend to allow you to sit in judgment and to act entirely according to your own will." Then the Sultan whispered to a Chamberlain to invite the merchant again to state his complaint against the Kazi.

The merchant came and did so; the witnesses were again called for, whom the Kazi again brought into court. The Kazi wished to take a seat, but the boy said: "Ho, Master Kazi! It is a long time since the leading strings of judicial power, and the power of tying and untying the knotty points of law, have been in your hands; why do you seem to be so ignorant of legal customs? You have been brought into this court as a party in a lawsuit and not as an assessor; it is the rule that you should stand below on an equality with your accuser, till the court breaks up, and then you should obey whatever its decision might be."

The Kazi went and placed himself near the merchant; then the merchant proffered his complaint, and the Kazi again affirmed that the woman had abandoned the house three months ago.

The boy said: "Have you any witnesses?" The Kazi beckoned to his followers and said: "These are the witnesses."

The boy called one of the witnesses and asked him in a subdued voice whether he had seen the woman? He said: "Yes." Then he inquired further what signs there were on her person, stature, or face? The man became embarrassed and said: "She has a mole on her forehead,

one of her teeth is wanting, she is of a fresh complexion, tall and slender."

The boy asked: "What time of day was it when she went away from the house of the Kazi?" He answered: "Morning." The boy said: "Remain in this place."

Then he called for another witness of whom he also asked the description, and got the following answer: "She is of low stature, lean, her cheeks are white and red, she has a mole near the lips, and she left the house in the afternoon."

Having placed this individual in another corner, he called for a third witness whose evidence contradicted both the others, and gradually he examined all of them, and found them disagreeing in everything.

The Sultan was sitting by the side of the boy and heard all; when the hearing of the witnesses was completed, the boy said: "You God-forgetting wretches, why do you give false evidence? Let the instruments of torture be brought forward that we may find out the truth." As soon as they heard the name of torture mentioned, they all offered to say the truth, and acknowledged themselves to be a set of poor fellows whom the Kazi had bribed with a sum of money and had instructed what to say; they also confessed that they knew nothing whatever about the woman.

The boy called the Kazi, and asked him what he had to say in this business; the Kazi commenced to tremble all over his body, and said: "The truth is as I have stated it." The boy said: "Our Kazi is a bold man, and his haughtiness hinders him from acknowledging the truth; the instruments of punishment ought to be made use of."

When the Kazi heard this, the fear of torture greatly distressed him, and he confessed the truth. Upon this the boy kissed the floor of good manners with the lips of obedience, and said: "The remainder of this affair is to be settled by the Sultan." The Sultan was much pleased with the acuteness and intelligence of the boy, and ordered the Kazi to be beheaded and all his property to be given to

the wife of that merchant. The boy was treated kindly and educated, until by degrees he won the whole confidence of the Sultan and became one of his greater favorites.

Mahaushadha

From the Tibetan

ONE day the king went into the park with his wives, and enjoyed himself there together with them. One of them took off a string of pearls worth a hundred thousand pieces of money and hung it on a spray of an aśoka tree. While sporting with the king she forgot about it and left it there. At midnight, after she had gone back to the palace with the king, she remembered that she had left her necklace in the forest. Meanwhile it had been carried off to the top of a tree by a female monkey.

The king ordered his men to hasten to the forest and bring back the necklace. They went there, but they did not find it. Now a beggar had gone there in search of the remnants of the food of which other men had made a meal. As he came forth from the forest after partaking of such food, the king's men arrested him. As no one else was to be seen there, they called on him to render up the necklace. Although he protested that he had not taken it, had not even seen it, yet he was beaten with fists and stakes, and then thrown into prison.

Tormented by hunger, he reflected that, unless he contrived some cunning way of escape he would die there of starvation. So he said to the jailer that he had, it was true, taken the pearl necklace, but that he had given it to such and such a young merchant. Him also the king's men summoned, and the two men were set fast connected by wooden fetters.

The merchant used to receive from home dainty food. While he was partaking of it the beggar asked him for

some. But the merchant reviled him, saying, "It is all very well for you to accuse me of theft in order that I may nourish you with my food. I will give you none of it." And having thus spoken, he ate it all up.

After this, when the merchant wished to change his place, and said, "Let us stand up and move," the beggar replied, "I will not listen to your words; I shall not get up." Then said the merchant, "Henceforward will I behave so that you will be contented." Thus with friendly words and with an oath he won over the beggar, and was able to do as he wished.

The next day the merchant sent home orders to provide in future food enough for two persons. Thereat the beggar was highly pleased, and he reflected that in former times he used to wander about the whole city without being able to find the means of filling his belly, but now food and drink in plenty were at hand.

While they so enjoyed themselves a further desire arose within them. They thought that in order to have still more pleasure they must call in a lute-player. So the beggar accused a lute-player also of having taken the string of pearls. Then the king's men cast him also into the prison.

After some time the others besought the beggar to find some means whereby they might become free, saying that in that case he should want for nothing. He promised to do so, and bethought himself that no one could be of use except Mahaushadha. So he told the king's men that Mahaushadha's son had likewise taken part in the affair, and they sent for him also.

When Mahaushadha heard that his son had been imprisoned, he felt that he must certainly go to the palace, for if he did not do so his son would fret himself. On arriving there, he asked the king what offense his son had committed. The king replied that he had been imprisoned on the testimony of the beggar with respect to the stolen pearl necklace. When Mahaushadha had become fully acquainted with the contrivance of the captives, he said to the king, "The theft has not been committed by any of these