



THE LAUGHABLE STORIES OF BAR-HEBRAEUS

E. A. WALLIS BUDGE

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THE
LAUGHABLE STORIES
COLLECTED BY
MÂR GREGORY JOHN BAR-HEBRÆUS
MAPHRAN OF THE EAST FROM A.D. 1264 TO 1286

THE SYRIAC TEXT EDITED WITH AN
ENGLISH TRANSLATION
BY
E. A. WALLIS BUDGE

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PREFACE

The present work contains the complete Syriac text of the seven hundred and twenty-seven "Laughable Stories"—which were collected by John Abu'l-Faraj, more commonly known as Gregory Bar-Hebræus, the head of the Jacobite Church, or Maphrian of the East, from A.D. 1264 to 1286. Sixty-eight of these stories have been published before, eight by Adler, Bernstein and others, and sixty by Morales; but the remainder now appear in print for the first time. The text is edited from two MSS., one of which (India Office MS. No: 9) was written in the year 1712, and the other (a modern copy in my own possession) in 1893, and so far as can be judged from the extracts given by Morales from the Vatican MS. No. CLXXIII, the greater part of which was written about the year 1333, we have the text much as it existed about fifty years after the compiler's death. The translation has been made tolerably literal, but the language of Bar-Hebræus is so concise that I have been obliged to give paraphrases rather than translations of certain of his stories and pithy sayings. No attempt has been made to trace the source of all the stories and sayings, for parallels and counterparts of the greater number of them may be met with in the literature of most of the ancient civilized countries. As was to be expected in a work devoted to a delineation of the virtues, and follies, and vices of man, by means of proverbs, anecdotes and narratives, a number of stories occur which would have been omitted by an occidental compiler. These have, however, been relegated to the respectable obscurity of the Latin, tongue by my friend Mr. J. B. Hodge, M.A., of the Department of Printed Books, British Museum; thus the integrity of the work has been maintained in its printed form, and it is hoped that the general reader will find nothing to offend his taste.

A peculiar interest attaches itself to the "Book of Laughable Stories" for it was the child of the compiler's old age. And it says much for the broadmindedness and versatility of the, learned and venerable Bar-Hebræus that, while his mind was closely occupied with history and philosophy and with the writing of works on grammar and other difficult subjects, the enthusiastic churchman found time to jot down notes of the witty, cynical, amusing, edifying, and didactic sayings and narratives

which he came across during his perusal of the literatures of the Jews and Greeks, Arabs and Persians, Indians and Syrians. Lists of proverbs and moral and religious aphorisms have been the normal product of the writers of the East from the time when Kaqemna, who flourished in the reign of Kuni, kin of Egypt, about B.C. 3800, wrote his Book of Instructions;" but the work of Bar-Hebraeus differs considerably from them all, inasmuch as the soundest and best teaching, both as regards the present and the future life, is successfully inculcated by means of a series of concise sayings and stories culled from some of the best literatures of the world. It has been the fashion among some to scoff at Syriac literature as being the product of priests and monks who had no knowledge of the profane writings of other nations; that the greater part of it as known to us relates to ecclesiastical matters is true beyond a doubt, but that the greatest Syriac writers had other interests is also equally true, and of these Bar-Hebraeus is the most brilliant example. The "Book of Laughable stories" covers a wide ground, and embraces a very miscellaneous group of subjects. We should hardly expect the idea of "Woman's Rights" ever to have entered into the head of the Maphrian of the Jacobite Church, or even to have existed in an Oriental land in the XIIIth century of our era, yet from one of his stories we see that it did, and also that some women's views of the matter were much then what they are now. For when one woman asked another why a man should have the power to buy a woman and to do what he pleased with her while a woman could not act with freedom in any matter, she replied, "It is because kings, and judges, and lawgivers have all been men. They have, therefore, acted the part of advocate of their own cause, and have, in consequence, oppressed the women" (see *infra*, p. 136). Similarly we should hardly expect Bar-Hebraeus to refer to the breakage of glass by careless servants, and yet he does so, for he relates that a set of beautiful glass vessels was given to Alexander the Great and that, although he much admired them, he ordered them to be broken. When he was asked why he had done so, he said, "I know that they would be broken one after another by the servants' hands, and that thereby anger would be always stirred up in me; for this reason it is that with one burst of wrath I have driven away many storms of rage" (see *infra*, p. 14). Sometimes, too, curious information is preserved in a story. Thus among Bar-Hebraeus, anecdotes of weavers is one in which we are told that it was men who followed that trade who stole "Joseph's cup, and the rod of Moses, and

the fleece of Gideon, and the sling of David, and the swaddling bands of John, and the sandals of the Apostles; and when Mary asked them to shew her the way to the Sepulchre, they sent her by a wrong road" (see *infra*, p. 123).

For a general description of the plan of the "Book of Laughable Stories" the reader is referred to p. XXI ff, and it only remains for me to express here my grateful thanks to Mr. C. H. Tawney for his kindness in obtaining for me the loan of the India Office MS. containing a copy of the Syriac text of the work.

London, August 1, 1896.

E. A. WALLIS BUDGE.

INTRODUCTION

Early life and education of Bar-Hebraeus.

John¹ Abu'l-Faraj or Abu'l-Faraj Gregory, the author of the "Book of Laughable Stories" printed in the present volume, was the son of Aaron, a Jewish physician, who lived at Melitene; from the fact that his father was a Jew, the child was commonly called by the Syrians "Bar 'Ebhrâyâ" (*i.e.* the "son of the Hebrew"), whence the name "Bar-Hebraeus". He was born A. Gr. 1537 = A.D. 1226, and the early years of his life were passed in the diligent study of the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic languages; philosophy and theology next occupied his close attention, and he obtained a considerable knowledge of medicine from his father and from other celebrated physicians. When eighteen years old Bar-Hebraeus accompanied his father to Antioch.

He is consecrated Bishop of Gûbôs.

Subsequently he went to Tripolis, ###, and together with Şelîbhâ bar-Ya'kôbh Waghîh ###, studied the healing art and medicine with a certain learned Nestorian called Jacob; whilst there the Patriarch Ignatius II. sent for them, and appointed Şelîbhâ Bishop of Akko and Bar-Hebraeus Bishop of Gûbôs near Melitene. In the following year Aaron of Lâkabhin near Melitene left his flock and went to Jerusalem, and Ignatius II. appointed Bar-Hebraeus to the vacant see. In 1253 he was transferred to Aleppo, and eleven years later he was raised to the dignity of Maphrian by the Patriarch Ignatius III., Abbot of Gewîkhâth near Mopsuestia.

Becomes Maphrian of the Jacobite Church.

The principal events which took place in connection with his ecclesiastical rule are described by Bar-Hebraeus himself in his *Ecclesiastical Chronicle*², to which work the reader is referred for information about the busy and most useful life which this eminent man

¹ The chief facts of the life of Bar-Hebraeus are given by Assemânî, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, ii. p. 244 f.; Bar-Hebraeus, *Chron. Eccles.*, ii. col. 431 ff.; and Wright, *Syriac Literature*, p. 265 ff.

² Ed. Abbeloos and Lamy, pt. ii. col. 431 ff.

lived; the following account of his death we owe to his brother Bar-Şaumâ.

His forebodings of death and superstition.

In the year 1286, when Bar-Hebraeus had arrived at the sixtieth year of his age, he began to be afraid that his end was drawing nigh, and he said, "I was born in the year when Chronos and Zeus were in conjunction in the sign of the Zodiac Aquarius; twenty years later when the same planets were in conjunction in the sign of the Balance I was consecrated bishop; twenty years later when the same planets were in conjunction in the sign of the Twins I was held to be worthy of the office of Maphrian³: and twenty years later, when the same two planets shall again be in conjunction in the sign of Aquarius, I believe that I shall depart from this world." And he said, "O net of the worlds, in the year 1537 (*i.e.*, A.D. 1226) thy mesh did catch me; but I believe that in the year 1597 (*i.e.*, A.D. 1286) I shall no longer be in thee⁴." Throughout that unlucky year he continued to brood on these things and they could not be banished from his mind.

His brother's fears for his safety.

Bar-Hebraeus was then dwelling in the country near Nineveh, and his brother Bar-Şaumâ, knowing that marauding bands from Syria were each summer in the habit of invading that district, and of carrying people into captivity, and of plundering, and of spoiling and laying waste the land about Nineveh far and wide, and believing his brother to be quite incapable of taking steps to protect either himself or his people, said to himself, "Peradventure he will fall into the hands of these robbers, and the Maphrian's words will actually come to pass." From that time on he ceased not to urge with great persistence that Bar-Hebraeus should leave the district and betake himself to the country of Marâghah in Adhôr bâîjân, that he might escape from the death upon which he perpetually brooded.

Bar-Hebraeus is persuaded to go to Marâghah.

³ In Syr., ###, *i.e.*, "He who maketh [the Church] to flourish."

⁴ The text of this curious passage runs:—### p. xv ###. See Assemânî, *B.O.*, ii. 263; *Chron. Eccles.*, ii. col. 467.

At length Bar-Şaumâ's importunity had the desired effect and Bar-Hebraeus set out for Marâghah and arrived there in safety.

He translates his Syriac Chronicle into Arabic.

Here he was treated with the greatest honour by men of every class, and the Arab nobles entreated him to translate his Chronicle, originally written in Syriac, into Arabic⁵ so that they also might read and enjoy it. To this he agreed, and he at once began to make the Arabic translation, using the most beautiful and classical language for the purpose; after working for a "month of days" he had finished the whole translation with the exception of three folios. His death was, no doubt, accelerated by this most laborious task, an idea of the magnitude of which may be gained from the fact that the translation fills 565 pages in small 4to!

He falls sick.

On the night of the Sabbath, the 27th day of the month Tammûz (July) he was seized with fever, and he was consumed with heat the whole night long; on the Sunday the physicians came and struggled to make him drink some medicine, but this he refused to do, saying that drugs would do him no good for his hour had come.

He refuses medicine.

It was noticed that he had been better and stronger in his general health and body during that year than he had been for many years past, but the fever had so weakened him three days later that, when on the Sunday he asked for pen and paper to write and they were given to him, he was unable to write at all;

Is prostrated by fever.

"and twice an hour he felt his left hand with his right and said, My strength hath come to an end and is worn out. Thou hast wronged me, O my brother, and hast not permitted me to die and to be buried by the pious monks, and elders, and deacons, of whom this day I have been the chief for twenty-two years.

His cheerful speech to his brother.

⁵ The first edition of this work was published at Oxford in 1663 under the title of "*Historic Compendiosa Dynastiarum*," ed. E. Pococke.

Thou wouldst make me to flee from death, O my brother, but behold the flight hath not benefited me. Be strong, however, and of good cheer, and weep not, neither mourn immoderately as if some new thing had taken place in the world. With these and such like words did he speak the whole day, and he was cheerful and laughed, being not at all afraid of death like other men. And he called straightway for Said the physician and deacon and said to him, 'Write what I shall tell thee,' and he made a beginning to his discourse [with these words]:—"The days of the child of man are like unto the grass, and like the flower of the field doth he grow up." Then having completed the confession, as was right, he brought forth with his hand two statutes, one for the patriarchal throne, and the other for the throne of the Maphrian and for the ordering of his cell, and delivered them to his brother.

His exhortations to the brethren.

And he began to give commands to his disciples, saying, 'Abide in love, and depart not from one another, and whensoever ye are gathered together in love I also am in your midst.'

He dies.

But they, poor, wretched beings, rent their garments and cast dust upon their heads, and were weeping until about three hours of the night had passed, when he who meanwhile had ceased not to talk and to laugh with a smiling face, went out like a lamp, or I should rather say like a brilliant and splendid torch, and he departed to his Lord on the night of the thirty-third day of Tammûz (July) in the year 1597," *i.e.*, A.D. 1286⁶

Universal manifestations of grief at his death.

When the Catholicus Mâr Yahbh Allâhâ, who was at that time in the city of Marâghah, heard of the death of Bar-Hebraeus, he ordered that no man should go into the market and that no shop should be opened. The bell-ringer went forth and all the people were gathered together to the Maphrian's cell, and the Catholicus of the Nestorians sent there the pious folk who were with him, together with a number of large wax candles to be burnt during the funeral service, and the whole of the congregations of the Armenians and Greeks came likewise; about two

⁶ For the text see B. O., ii. p. 264 f; and Chron. Eccles., ii col. 471 if.

hundred were assembled there and they continued in prayer from dawn until the ninth hour.

Sympathy of the Christian sects.

When the Nestorians, and the Greeks, and the Armenians had ended their prayers and had buried him in a suitable manner, they laid the holy body in the little altar at which he was wont to pray and to make offerings all the time he sojourned in Marâghah.

His body is removed to the Monastery of Mâr Mattai.

Subsequently his body was removed to the Monastery of Mâr Mattai, which was built in the early centuries of the Christian era in the mountain called Alpep by ancient Syrian writers⁷, and Jebel Maqlûb by the Arabs, situated at a distance of a few hours to the north-east of Môşul (Nineveh). Here in a niche in the north-west corner of the same chamber in which Mâr Mattai is buried, is the tomb of Bar-Hebraeus; the Monastery is in the possession of the Jacobites, but it is sadly out of repair and most things of value have been plundered by Kurds, and only a few monks now live there. During the winter when the snow has fallen the Monastery is difficult of access, and even when there is no snow the path is steep and difficult⁸.

From the facts stated above it is evident that all the Christians in Mesopotamia and in the countries about deplored the loss of Bar-Hebraeus with sincere grief, and there is little doubt that he was the greatest writer whom the Syrian Church ever produced⁹.

Great learning of Bar-Hebraeus.

His knowledge of Greek and Arabic opened store-houses of learning which were closed to most of his fellow-countrymen, and his energy and general literary ability were remarkable. His works shew that he had studied deeply many subjects of which the other scholars of his Church were profoundly ignorant, and the ready wit of his many-sided mind and his lucid style enabled him to adapt the knowledge of extraneous and

⁷ See Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 19.

⁸ For a view of this Monastery see Badger, *The Nestorians*, vol. i. p. 97.

⁹ See B. O., ii. p. 269 ff.; Wright, *Syriac Literature*, p. 265 ff., 269 ff.

difficult subjects to his own needs, and to express them simply but clearly for the advantage of his readers.

His untiring energy.

This is no place to give a catalogue of his works¹⁰, and it must be sufficient to state that during the forty years which he passed in the service of his Church—eighteen years as bishop of various dioceses, and twenty-two years as Maphrian—he seems to have been able to master the philosophy of the Greeks and the Arabs, and to have made it available by his translations of their works for his fellow-countrymen. Philosophy, theology, natural science, history, medicine, the science of grammar, &c., were only a few of the subjects in the knowledge of which he excelled, and it is evident from a perusal of his works that he was no superficial student of the false sciences of the day, I mean astrology, divination, and so forth.

His service to the literature of his country.

The service which he rendered to his Church and her literature, and to his nation can hardly be overestimated, and Western scholars owe him a great debt of gratitude especially for his *Universal History*, his *Storehouse of Secrets*, and his grammatical works.

The Book of Laughable Stories.

The "Book of Laughable Stories" which is edited and translated in the following pages, is a work which Bar-Hebraeus wrote in the late years of his life¹¹; it is called in Syriac both "Book of Laughable Stories"¹², and "Book of Refreshing "Stories", ###. An Arabic version of this work was made by its author which was entitled *Daf' al Hamm*, ### or "The Driving away of Care"¹³; manuscripts of both works are scarce. The first¹⁴ to make any portion of the work known to scholars was Adler, who in his *Brevis linguae syr. institutio*, Altona, 1784, published eight of the stories, which were republished by Bernstein¹⁵ and others. In 1886

¹⁰ Jedenfalls ist Barhebraeus einer der hervorragendsten Männer seiner Kirche and seiner ganzen Nation. Noeldeke, *Orientalische Skizzen*, p. 273.

¹¹ Wright, *Syr. Lit.*, p. 280.

¹² Or ###; *Chron. Eccles.*, ii. col. 479; *B.O.*, ii. p. 271. No. 21, and p. 306.

¹³ See Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

¹⁴ Nestle in *Z.D.M.G.*, Bd. xl. p. 410, note 1.

¹⁵ See *Chrestomathia Syriaca*, Leipzig, 1832, p. vi.

Morales published the text of sixty of the stories, with a German translation¹⁶ and vocabulary, from the Vatican MS. No. CLXXIII. wherein the whole collection fills foll. 80-158; this MS. seems to date from the XIVth century of our era, but the last part of it was written by a later hand.

The MSS. of the work.

The text here given is taken from the India Office MS. No. 9, and from a copy of the "Laughable Stories" in my own possession. The India Office MS. consists of 444 paper leaves, measuring about 8 in. by 6 ¼ in. From fol. 1 to fol. 59, and from fol. 194 to the end the page is filled with two columns of 29 lines each; but from fol. 60 to fol. 193 the page only contains one column of 21 lines. The MS. is beautifully written in a fine Nestorian hand, and vowels and diacritical points have been added abundantly; two handwritings are distinguishable in the MS. The "Laughable Stories" begin on fol. 351 *b*, col. 1, and end on fol. 413 *b*, col. 2; they were copied by the famous Hômo¹⁷, the son of Daniel the elder, of Al-ḵôsh, A. Gr. 2024 = A.D. 1712-13. My own copy is quite modern, but it was made by a good scribe from an ancient manuscript; if only he had followed his instructions and copied all the stories instead of making a selection from them we should probably have gained several additional, important textual variants. The MS. is in small quarto and the page contains usually about 17 lines; the titles, headings of chapters &c., are written in red, and at the end are a number of exhortations, of a miscellaneous character, to the reader to lead a godly, righteous, and sober life, followed by some verses on the death of the Patriarch John bar-Ma'danî, who died in 1263.

Description of the work.

The "Laughable Stories" of Bar-Hebraeus are in number about seven hundred and twenty-seven, and these are divided into twenty chapters which vary in length. They were compiled from a variety of sources during the later years of his life, and it is clear from his Prologue that he intended them to comfort, and amuse, and instruct those who read them. That they were not written for his own nation alone is clear from the fact

¹⁶ See *Z.D.M.G.*, Bd. xl. pp. 410-456.

¹⁷ See Hoffmann, *Opuscula Nestoriana*, pp. I and XXIII. When I was at Al-ḵôsh in November, 1890, I talked with two men who claimed descent from this famous Hômo.

that he recommends them to the Muslim, and to the Hebrew, and to the stranger as well as to the Syrian. Men of every taste and disposition can read therein with advantage, for the wise man will find wisdom therein, and the fool folly, and the pious piety, and the gay amusement, and the superstitious reasons for their superstitions.

The miscellaneous character of the stories.

A certain number of the stories are coarse¹⁸ and refer to matters which are not generally discussed in a book intended for popular reading, but the compiler excuses himself for the insertion of such by saying that as "in the tabernacle of wisdom every kind of thing is necessary, nothing whatsoever that in a natural way sharpeneth the intelligence, and enlighteneth the understanding, and comforteth and rejoiceth the mind which is sorrowful and suffering should ever be rejected" (see p. 185). From the India Office MS. we may learn that certain stories of this class were not considered suitable for all readers, but the Western reader will probably doubt the wisdom of the man who made the selection. Thus the reader is told on the margin to skip (###) No. CCCXXVII, yet he is told to read (###) No. CCCXXVIII, which is more coarse; similarly he is told to skip Nos. CCCCVII and CCCCIX, but to read No. CCCCVIII. No. CCCCXI is passed over without note or comment, as likewise is No. CCCXXXVII, a most repulsive story. Whether we owe these marginal notes to tradition or to Hômo the scribe is a matter which cannot be cleared up at present. That any reference to the relations between the sexes should be expunged from a book intended for the use of monks or of men living in a monastery is not to be wondered at, but that the reader should be specially directed to read certain of the stories is a matter for surprise.

In reading the "Book of Laughable Stories" the most casual reader will observe that Bar-Hebraeus must have spent considerable labour in compiling his work, and it is certain that he must have read a vast amount of literature of all kinds written in several languages.

The sources of the "Laughable Stories".

¹⁸ I.e., Nos. XXVI, XXXVII, LX, CCCXXVII, CCCXXVIII, CCCCVII, CCCCVIII, CCCCIX, CCCCXI, CCCXXXVII, DI, DV, DXX, DXXXVII, DXLV, DLXIII, DLXX, DLXXIV, DLXXXI, DCXXXV, DCXXXVII, &c.

Some of the sayings of the Greek, Persian, Indian, and Arabian sages he probably took from some work like that of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Miskavaih (died A.H. 421 = A.D. 1030), who collected a number of precepts of the ancient sages of Persia, India, Arabia, and Greece, which were translated into Persian by Taḳî Shushtarî¹⁹, and it seems that he supplemented these from notes made during the course of his own studies. It is clear that in some cases he amplified his text, and that in others he modified and gave a different turn to the original story. Some of the stories may have existed in more than one form, or they may have been told in different ways.

Variant forms of the same stories.

Thus in No. CCCLXXX the scarabaeus is made to say to its mother, "Whithersoever I go men spit upon me," and its mother replies "It is because thy beauty and smell are pleasant." With this may be compared the Arabic proverb, "The beetle is a beauty in the eyes of its mother."²⁰ Again in No. CCCLXXV we have the story of the ape of the mosque and the dog, but the turn given to the story therein is quite different from that of the Arabic version²¹. We may also notice in passing that stories told of one man by one author are told of some one quite different by Bar-Hebraeus. Thus in No. IV it is said that Socrates once saw a woman who had hanged herself, and that he remarked, "Would that all trees bore such fruit as this;" but in Diogenes Laertius (VI, 2) the saying is attributed to Diogenes the Cynic, and is thus given:—###."

Method of editing employed by Bar-Hebraeus.

From the fifth Chapter of the "Laughable Stories" we are able to see the plan upon which Bar-Hebraeus worked in making his compilation and to form an idea how far he followed his authorities, and how far he abridged them. In perusing the Chapter we see at once that he stands on his own ground, and that he is dealing with a class of literature with which he is familiar at first hand. The chief source of the stories of the

¹⁹ See Brit. Mus. MS. Orient. No. 457, of the Jāvidān Khirad which, *inter alia*, contains the Precepts of Buzurjmehr (fol. 20 a), the Maxims of the Sages of India (fol. 59 a), the Proverbs of the Arabs (fol. 111 b), and the Proverbs of the Greek Sages (fol. 119 a). See Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian MSS. in the British Museum*, p. 441 a.

²⁰ Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs*, No. 60. p. 16.

²¹ They met a monkey defiling a mosque. "Dost thou not fear," said they, "that the Lord will transform thee?" He replied, "Yes, if He should make me a gazelle." ###, See Burckhardt, *Arabic Proverbs*, No. 132. p. 35.

Christian recluses is the Syriac version of Palladius' work, and most of the "Sayings" attributed to them are from the Apophthegmata which usually follow it in MSS.; of the thirty-eight stories in the Chapter I have traced twenty-eight to Palladius.

Use of the work of Palladius and the Apophthegmata of the Fathers.

It will be seen from the full texts which accompany stories Nos. CXCVII, CCII, CCIX, how very much Bar-Hebraeus has condensed his authorities, but there is no doubt that he has in most cases preserved the pith of the stories in his own abridged versions. It is surprising, however, that he limited himself to thirty-eight stories, for the Syriac Palladius and the Apophthegmata form an almost inexhaustible mine for sayings and stories quite as remarkable as those which Bar-Hebraeus selected. It is difficult also to understand why the names of the chief actors in the stories are sometimes omitted. Thus "the certain man who was righteous according to this world" (No. CLXXVI) was Arsenius; the brother that "was perfect to such a degree that even wild animals became his friends and he used to nourish their young" (No. CC) was Macarius of Alexandria, and so on. Whether it be true or not the latter story has a pretty continuation in Palladius, for we read there that, a few days after the holy man had made the hyaena's cubs to see by spitting on their eyes and praying over them, the mother came into his cell dragging a goat-skin which she deposited at his feet, evidently intending it for his use.

Stories of the Christian recluses.

And the ascetic took it and wore it until he was an old man. On another occasion when the door of his cell was shut the hyaena jumped over the wall, bearing a young one in her mouth; Macarius saw that it too was blind and he treated its eyes, as he had those of the other cubs, successfully. The day following the mother brought back to the cell for the holy man a sheep-skin, which subsequently became the property of the blessed woman Melania²². A comparison of the other stories of the Christian recluses with the Syriac texts which I have given in the notes to them will shew that when Bar-Hebraeus found the facts briefly related in terse language he excerpted them without alteration; but when the

²² For the text see *infra*, pp. 49, 50.

opposite was the case he cut down the text, or paraphrased it, or explained it, or omitted whole passages, whenever it suited his views or convenience to do so. Moreover, I suspect that this would be found to be the case with almost every story in the book, if it were traced to its original form.

Superstition of Bar-Hebraeus.

Judging from the group of stories of men whose dreams and divinations have come true it would seem that Bar-Hebraeus himself was somewhat superstitious, and that he was not free from many of the notions and beliefs common to the uneducated folk of his day. We have seen above (p. xiv) that several months before his death he became convinced that his whole life was to consist of three parts, each containing twenty years, and that the length of it was to be represented by the number of years which were to elapse between two periods when the planets Chronos and Zeus would be in conjunction in the sign of the Zodiac Aquarius; in other words, he believed that Chronos and Zeus were his planets and that the length of his life was in some way connected with their movements.

Great antiquity of belief in magic.

The interpretation of omens and dreams was a science in Babylonia and Assyria thousands of years before the time of Bar-Hebraeus, and there is no doubt that many popular beliefs belonging to a far older period existed in his day. Thus in No. DXLVII a simpleton asks an astrologer to arrange that his son should be born under the sign of Hermes, meaning that he wishes him to be a scribe; now, the Greeks identified Hermes with the Babylonian god Nebo, who was the god of learning and the scribe of the gods, but the idea that a man would become a scribe because he was born when Nebo or Hermes was "ruling" belonged to a much older time than that of the Greeks. Stories of the speech of animals, likewise, have their originals in the literature of Mesopotamia and Egypt, and if we had records of the earliest peoples of these countries we should probably find that such originals were derived from writers belonging to still earlier nations, and that these in turn had borrowed from their predecessors.

BY THE POWER OF GOD, THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE, THE
CAUSE OF ALL BLESSINGS, I WRITE THE "BOOK OF LAUGHABLE

STORIES WHICH GREGORY BAR-HEBRÆUS, THE MAPHRAN OF
THE EAST, COLLECTED WITH MUCH CARE AND DILIGENCE.

MAY HIS PRAYERS BE WITH US!

AMEN.

INTRODUCTION

Through Thy blessed Name, O Lord of the Universe, blessings are rained down upon us; and through Thy gracious direction and guidance [our] paths are made straight; and through Thee our ways are made smooth and the stumbling-blocks are cleared from our road; and through Thee our understandings are illumined and our intellects made clear. O all-blessed Nature, O Trinity, O Thou Who didst create the Universe by the might of [Thy] Godhead, pour out Thy mercy abundantly upon us from the sublime habitations of Thy heavens, and do Thou sustain [my] feeble speech, for Thou art the Cause of all blessings, so that it may gather together in a little book the narratives which refresh the mind and which wash away from the heart every grief and care. And let this book be a consolation to those who are sad, and a binding up [of the spirit] to those who are broken, and an instructive teacher to those who love amusement, for no matter worthy of being recorded is omitted therefrom. And let this book be a religious friend to the reader, whether he be Muslim, or Hebrew, or Aramean, or a man belonging to a foreign country and nation. And let the man who is learned, I mean to say the man who hath a bright understanding, and the man that babbleth conceitedly, even though he drive every man mad, and every other man choose what is best for himself, and let each pluck the flowers which please him, for in this way the book will succeed in bringing together the things which are alike, each to the other. And inasmuch as it hath been put together in sections it will be clear and plain to the reader; moreover, the twenty chapters which the plan of the book compriseth [are written] in concise but fluent language.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. PROFITABLE SAYINGS OF THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

I. A certain disciple of Socrates said unto him, "How is it that I see in thee no sign of sorrow?" Socrates replied, "Because I possess nothing for which I should sorrow if it perished."

II. Another [disciple] said unto him, "If the vessel wherein thou hidest were to be broken, what wouldst thou do?" Socrates replied, "Even if the vessel were to be broken, the place in which it is would not be broken."

III. To Socrates the wife of a certain man said, "How ugly is thy face, O Socrates!" And Socrates replied unto her, saying, "If thou thyself hadst been a clean mirror I should have been distressed [by thy words]; but since thou art a dirty one my beauty is not reflected by thee. I do not, however, blame thee because of it."

IV. Socrates saw a woman who had hanged herself on a tree, and he said, "Would that all trees bore such fruit as this!"

V. A certain woman saw Socrates as they were carrying him along to crucify¹ him, and she wept and said, "Woe is me, for they are about to slay thee without having committed any offence." And Socrates made answer unto her, saying, "O foolish woman, wouldst thou have me also commit some crime that I might be punished like a criminal?"

VI. A certain philosopher had a daughter, and two men came [to him] wishing to take her to wife; one of them was poor and the other was rich. To the rich man he said, "I will not give my daughter unto thee," and he gave her to the poor man. And when the folk asked him, "Why hast thou acted in this manner?" he made answer unto them, saying, "The rich man is a fool, and I was afraid lest he would come to poverty; but the poor man is wise, and therefore I hope and believe that he will gain riches and wealth."

¹ See the note to story No. XCIII.

VII. Certain men asked another philosopher, "What thing would benefit the majority of mankind?" And he replied, "The death of a wicked governor."

VIII. To another philosopher it was said, "Wherein dost thou differ from the king?" And he replied, "The king is a slave to his lusts, whilst my passion is subservient unto me."

IX. Certain men asked Plato, "With what shall a man console himself when he falleth into temptation?" And Plato made answer unto him, saying, "The wise man consoleth himself because he knoweth that that which hath come to pass must necessarily have happened; but the fool consoleth himself [by thinking] that that which hath happened unto himself hath also happened unto other men."

X. Aristotle commanded Alexander [the Great], saying, "Do not reveal thy secret unto two men lest, if it be revealed, thou be unable to be certain which of the two hath made it public, and if thou punishest both of them thou wilt then certainly inflict an injury upon him that revealed it not, and if thou forgivest both of them thou wilt not do even an act of grace because of him who revealed it not."

XI. To another philosopher it was said, "What man is happy?" And he replied, "He whose expectations are, for the most part, realised."

XII. Aristotle said, "One wise man agreeth with another wise man, but a fool neither agreeth with a wise man nor a fool. For, behold, all the parts of one straight line coincide with all the parts of another straight line, but the parts of crooked lines neither coincide with those of a straight line, nor with those of a crooked line."

XIII. It was said to Diogenes, "Why dost thou eat in the market-place?" He replied, "Because I am I hungry in the market-place."

XIV. Diogenes saw a harlot's child throwing stones at people, and he said to him, "Throw not stones, lest thou smite thine own father without knowing it."

XV. Another philosopher saw a certain man giving instruction to a certain maiden, and he said unto him, "Add not wickedness to wickedness. Why dost thou poison that which is right and proper by

dipping it in poison, whereby she shall be the more able to slay the children of men and to lead captive their minds?"

XVI. Another philosopher saw a damsel carrying fire, and he said, "Behold fire upon fire, but the bearer is stronger than the burden."

XVII. Another philosopher saw a woman in the theatre looking on as a spectator, and he said [to her], "Thou hast not come out to see, but to be seen."

XVIII. [To him also] it was said, "Why doth not the king love thee?" He replied, "It is the peculiar characteristic of kings to love not him that is greater than they."

XIX. Another philosopher said, "Take heed of the two-legged lion," thereby referring to the king.

XX. To another philosopher it was said, "Why do we eat the outside of the date, and the inside of the nut?" He replied, "The Divine Providence of the Creator concerneth not itself with how that which hath been created shall be eaten, but with the matter of how the species thereof shall be preserved in perpetuity; thus that whereby the species is preserved is inside both, even though the kernel of the nut is edible and the stone of the date is not."

XXI. Alexander [the Great] saw among the soldiers of his army a man called Alexander who continually took to flight in the time of war, and he said to him, "Either be strong in battle or change thy name, so that listeners be not deceived by the similarity of our names."

XXII. Another philosopher saw a city with a mighty wall round about it, and he said, "This is a dwelling-place for women and befitteth not men."

XXIII. A certain philosopher, who was a cynic from Alexandria, asked the king for a *mathkâl*² of gold, and the king made answer to him, saying, "This is not of the gifts which kings are wont to give." The philosopher then asked him for a talent [of gold]³, and the king replied, "This is not a request which should be made by a cynic."

² A gold coin equal in value to about nine shillings of our money.

³ I.e., about £4,217 sterling.

XXIV. Aristotle was asked, "Why have the envious always sad and gloomy faces?" He replied, "Because they are not only grieved over their own wickednesses, but also over the virtues of others."

XXV. Another philosopher was asked, "What is the occupation of orators?"⁴ He replied, "To magnify those who are little and to belittle him that is great."

XXVI. Dixit philosophus alius quidam, "Quatuor sunt genera corporalium voluptatum: quorum primum momento temporis durat ut coitu frueris; alterum per diem ut masculinâ prole gaudes usque dum nimium flere coepit; tertium per mensem ut novâ nuptâ usque dum ventrem fert; quartum tamen omnem per aevum ut divitiarum abundantia."

XXVII. Plato said, "The fool is known by two things: by his much speaking about that which benefiteth him not, and by his giving answers about subjects concerning which men ask him not."

XXVIII. Another philosopher was asked, "Which is the greatest fool of all?" He replied, "He who is "tripped up twice."

XXIX. It is said that upon the ring of Pythagoras there was written, "The evil which is not perpetual is better than the good which is not perpetual."

XXX. Another philosopher said, "The wise man recogniseth the fool because he himself was formerly a fool; but the fool never recogniseth the wise man, there never having been a time when he was wise."

XXXI. Another philosopher said, "About man there is nothing more marvellous than the fact that he spendeth his riches and is sad, but though his days pass away he is not grieved."

XXXII. A certain man saw Socrates gnawing the root of a tree, and he said to him, "If thou wert a servant of the king thou wouldst have no need to eat such food as this." And Socrates replied, saying, "If thou also didst eat such food as this thou wouldst have no need to serve the king."

⁴ Read ###.

XXXIII. It is said that when Alexander [the Great] had been poisoned⁵ and was nigh unto death, he wrote to his mother and said unto her, "When thou hast read this letter make ready much meat and make a feast for [thy] people, but do not allow to eat those who have not lost some relative by death." Now he did this so that when she considered and saw that no man had escaped this calamity she might be consoled and not be sad⁶.

XXXIV. To another philosopher it was said, "How "is it that thou dost condescend to learn from every "man?" He replied, "Because I know that learning is a "profitable thing come it from whatsoever source it may."

XXXV. Another philosopher whilst teaching his disciple said to him, "Dost thou understand?" and he replied, "Yes." The philosopher then said, "Thou liest, "for the mark of intelligence is the joy which sheweth itself in the disciple's face, and not his answer "'Yes'."

XXXVI. It was said to Diogenes, "Dost thou possess anywhere a house wherein to rest?" And he replied, "Wheresoever I rest there is my house."

XXXVII. Alius quidam in foro Venerem palam exercebat: qui interrogatus, "Nonne tui pudet? Quid facis?" Respondit, "Cur mei pudere decet: virum enim condo, si adolescere valet."

XXXVIII. It was said to Socrates, "Which of the irrational animals is not beautiful?" And he replied, "Woman," referring to her folly.

XXXIX. One day Diogenes went up to a high place and cried out for men to come unto him; and a large number of people were gathered together round about him. And he said unto them, "I did not call you but men," indicating the philosophers by the word "men".

XL. He was also asked, "What thing is the most difficult for a man [to do]?" And he replied, "To know himself and to conceal his secret."

XLI. A certain friend of Socrates⁷ took counsel with him concerning the marrying a wife, and he replied, "Take heed that there happen not unto thee that which befel the fish in the matter of the net; those which were

⁵ See my *Life and Exploits of Alexander the Great*, pp. 339, 373, 427 and 430.

⁶ Compare *Historia Compendiosa Dynastiarum*, ed. Pococke, Arabic text, p. 96; and *Contextio Gemmarum*, ed. Pococke, p. 287.

⁷ Variant, Diogenes.

inside longed to go out, and those which were outside were eager to go in."

XLII. Certain folk enquired of him concerning the proper time for [eating] food, and he replied, "Let him that hath food eat when he is hungry, and let him that hath it not eat when he can."

XLIII. Aristotle wrote to Alexander advising him, saying, "Take good heed that thy soldiers think no evil concerning thee, for to him who can think easily it is easy to speak, and to him who can speak easily it is easy to act"; now he said this that Alexander might do good unto every man.

XLIV. Another philosopher said, "Whatsoever thou hidest from thine enemy that reveal not to thy friend, for thou knowest not whether he may become thine enemy."

XLV. Diogenes was asked concerning a certain wealthy man, "Is he rich?" And he replied, "I know not whether he is rich [or not], but I do know that he possesseth much money." Now he meant by these words that the man who hankereth not to possess anything more is a rich man, because everyone who longeth for more than he hath is poor in comparison with that which he possesseth not.

XLVI. A king asked Diogenes, "Where are thy wealth and possessions?" And he pointed to his disciples and said, "With them," referring thereby to the wisdom [which he had taught them].

XLVII. To another philosopher it was said, "It is hard that that which a man seeketh not should come to him." And he replied, "Much harder than this is it that a man should seek that which cometh not to him."

XLVIII. Plato the philosopher was once rebuked because he possessed not riches, and he replied, "How can I possess that which avarice and greediness guard and which liberality and benevolence destroy?"

XLIX. Gifts of certain vessels of glass were given to Alexander, and though they pleased him very much he ordered them to be broken. And when he was asked the reason he replied, "I know that they would be broken one after the other by the servant's hands, and that thereby anger would be always stirred up in me; for this reason it is that with one burst of wrath I have driven away many storms of rage."

L. Plato was asked, "Why are not wisdom and anger found together?" And he replied, "Because no man can be found who is perfect in everything."

LI. Aristotle said, "The fool perceiveth not the sickness of his mind any more than doth the drunkard the thorn which hath entered into his hand."

LII. To Aristotle it was said, "Wherein art thou better than other men?" And he replied, "Because they live that they may eat, but I eat that I may live."

LIII. Another philosopher married a small and thin wife, and when he was asked why he had done so replied, "I chose the lesser evil."

LIV. It was reported to Alexander that the daughters of Darius were exceedingly beautiful, and he replied, "It would be a most shameful thing for us to be conquered by the men [of any nation whatsoever], [how much more⁸ then would it be a disgrace to us] if their women were to do so?"

LV. It happened to Socrates that he became once a fellow-traveller on the road with a rich man, and the report reached them that there were gangs of robbers and highwaymen on the road. And the rich man began to say, "Woe is me if they recognize me." But Socrates made answer to him, saying, "I am not of this opinion at all, woe be to them if they do not recognize me."

LVI. A certain rich man wrote above his door, "No evil thing shall enter in through thee." When Diogenes met him, he said unto him, "How, then, will thy wife enter the house?"

LVII. It was said to a certain philosopher while he was soaking dry bread in water to eat, "How canst thou desire to eat such [food] as this?" And he replied, "I leave it until I do desire to eat it."

⁸ Compare ###. Pseudo-Callisthenes, ed. Milner, p. 74, col. 2.

LVIII. When Alexander was going to wage war against the Amazons he said, "If we conquer this race it will not be a matter of boasting for us, and if they vanquish me it will be a great disgrace."⁹

LIX. Hippocrates said, "Whosoever injureth himself in order to do his neighbour any good whatsoever is a fool."

LX. Dixit idem philosophus, "Duobus tantum commiscere fas est feminae—conjugi scilicet et pulveri sepulchri."¹⁰

LXI. It was to him that his wife said, "Behold thy son doth not resemble thee in any way." He replied, "I gave thee the shapeless matter for his physical form only, and it is others who have given it shape," meaning by "others" the various natural formative forces which fashion the child in the womb.

LXII. It was he who said also, "It is meet for the wise man to look at his face in a mirror. If his countenance be ugly let him not add foulness of deeds thereunto; and if it be fair, let him not defile it by "corrupt deeds and actions."

LXIII. Another philosopher was asked, "Which is the best doctrine?" And he replied, "That which fools hate."

LXIV. As a certain philosopher was passing through a city he there saw the captain of a host who had not succeeded at all in warfare, together with a certain physician, and he said to the people of that city, "Would that this physician were the captain of your host, for he hath far more experience in the slaughter of men [than the captain of the host], and would that the captain of your host were your physician, because he is far more careful about killing men than the physician."

LXV. Plato said, "It is a very great disgrace¹¹ indeed for a man to be both ignorant and not anxious to gain instruction, for two vices are gathered together in him."

LXVI. It was said to Socrates by a certain man, "I am deeply pained for thee because thou art so poor." And he replied, "If thou couldst only

⁹ Compare the words of the Amazons to Alexander:—### See my *History of Alexander*, Syr. text, p. 229.

¹⁰ Or, "Duo tantum lecti ascendendi sunt feminae—genialis scilicet et funebris.

¹¹ On p. 16 of the Syr. text, l. 12, for ### read ###.

attain unto the pleasure of poverty, whereof thou art [now] deprived thou wouldst be sorry for thyself and not for me."

LXVII. To Socrates also a certain man said, "The words which thou hast spoken have not been [well] received." And he replied, "I grieve not at all that they have not been [well] received, but I should grieve if they had not been well delivered."

THE SECOND CHAPTER. PROFITABLE SAYINGS OF THE PERSIAN SAGES

LXVIII. Cyrus wrote to Hormizd the sage, saying, "If kings only knew their need of wise men, [and wise men knew] their need of kings, kings would never marvel if they stood continually at the doors of the wise; for the need of kings for wise men is greater than that of wise men for kings."

LXIX. Bazarjamhir¹ said, "It is better for a man to humble himself that he may overcome than to conquer that he may humble himself," that is to say, we must not be deceived by the man who humbleth himself to us for a time and afterwards ruleth over us tyrannically.

LXX. This same Bazarjamhir was asked, "What is the wealth which is not destroyed when cast away?" He replied, "Humility."

¹ I.e., Buzurjumihir, the son of Bakhtagân, ### (For this form of the name see Tornberg, *Ibn-el-Athiri*, tom. ii. p. 368, l. 14.), a famous Persian sage who flourished during the reign of Khusrau Anôsharwân, A.D. 531-579. According to Mas'ûdî (ii. p. 205) this king one day assembled his wise men and asked them to give him such advice as would be to the benefit of both himself and his people. When all had spoken except Buzurjumihir this sage said, "O king, all that thou desirest to hear I can say in twelve sentences," and when ordered to speak on he said that his counsel was:—1. "When a king is about to fall into lust, or covetousness, or laziness, or anger, or love, to fear God, and to dread in the consequences of these passions not man, but God. 2. To be sincere in word and faithful in performing engagements; to carry out what has been agreed upon, and bonds and treaties. 3. To accept the counsel of the sages in every matter. 4. To honour the learned, the nobles, the governors of frontiers, officers, secretaries and officials each in his grade. 5. To watch p. 19 the judges and to control the accounts of the taxgatherers; to reward faithful service and to punish dishonest service. 6. To visit often those in prison so as to learn their condition, in order to be able to double the watch over the guilty and to set free the innocent. 7. To safeguard roads and places of dealing, and to facilitate trade and the business of the merchant. 8. To punish the guilty according to their deserts, and to keep the people loyal. 9. To keep up a supply of arms and the munitions of war. 10. To honour his family, and children, and neighbours, and to watch over their interests. 11. To watch keenly over the frontier defence so as to perceive when danger is about to come and to take steps to ward it off. 12. To keep a watch upon the ministers and officials, and to recall those who are notoriously disloyal or incapable." Several other wise sayings are attributed to him, and this distinguished Persian seems, as Nöldeke says (*Geschichte der Perser und Araber*, p. 251) to have been the ideal of an Oriental Minister; the above twelve maxims were thought so highly of that the king ordered them to be written in letters of gold. A full account of Buzurjumihir and of his interpretation of the King's dream may be found in Mohl, *Le Livre des Rois par Abou'l-kasim Firdousi*, tom. vi. p. 192 ff. A copy of his moral teachings in the shape of question and answer, the interlocutors being the sage and his master, exists in Brit. Mus. MS. Add. 8994, fol. 84b-99b; see Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian MSS. in the British Museum*, p. 52, col. 2. The work is stated to have been written at the request of his master, King Anôsharwân, and it was called *Zafar-Nāmah*.

LXXI. This same Bazarjamhir said, "How beautiful patience would be if it were not that life is [so] short."

LXXII. Another sage was asked, "Is it indeed true that any speech of truth can be hated?" He replied, "Yes, by the Calumniator."

LXXIII. Another sage said, "I hold every man who saith that he hateth riches to be a liar until he establisheth a sure proof thereof from what he hath gathered together, and having established his belief it is, at the same time, quite certain that he is a fool!"

LXXIV. Another sage was enquired of concerning a means of subsistence, and he replied, "If it is ordained for thee hasten not, for it will come unto thee; and if it be not ordained go not in after it, for it will not come unto thee."

LXV. Another sage said, "He that doeth good to a fool is like him who decketh a pig with rich and heavy jewellery and who feedeth a serpent upon honey."

LXXVI. Another sage said, "He who is mighty in the fulfilling and keeping of the laws shall become mighty, and he who is mighty in transgressing the commandment and in [doing] illegal things shall become feeble."

LXXVII. Another sage used to say, "The wise man goeth round about [seeking] for a means of subsistence, but the fool [stayeth] in the place of his father who begot him."

LXXVIII. Once upon a time Anôsharwân² the king ordered that no man should either eat of the same kind of food as that of which he ate, or drink of the same kind of drink as that of which he drank. Now a certain prince having made ready royal food sent and invited one of the nobles to sit at meat with him. And when he had eaten his meal and had gone forth he wrote to the king, saying, "Such and such an one maketh use of the royal food. I myself have seen it and I cannot hide it from thee." And the king wrote on the back of the letter, "We praise thee for fidelity and for the covenant which thou hast kept with us, but we blame him that

² He reigned from A.D. 531 to 579.

made use of the food because he did not know how to keep his secret and revealed it unto such as thou."

LXXIX. Khusrau³ was asked, "Which of thy sons is [most] beloved by thee?" He replied, "He that loveth correction and feareth disgrace, and longeth for a rank higher than his own."

LXXX. Bazarjamhir said, "The defect of this world is that it never giveth to a man that of which he is deserving. For it either giveth to him more than that of which he is worthy, or it giveth to him less than that of which he is worthy."

LXXXI. Ardashîr⁴ said, "It is meet that the wrath of kings should be made manifest in shewing mercy upon those who provoke to wrath and not in depriving them of that which they need."

LXXXII. [Ardashîr]⁵ said that "the foundation of a nation is religion, and that the government is the protector thereof. Every building which possesseth not a sound foundation is quickly overthrown, and every house which possesseth no keeper is speedily despoiled."

LXXXIII. It is said that in the days of Khusrau⁶ the king a certain man went round about crying, "Who will buy three wise maxims for a thousand *dînârs*?" When the king heard [these words] he called him, and said unto him, "What are the sayings?" And the man ordered that the *dînârs* of which he had spoken should be made ready, and when they were ready he said, "This is the first saying:—There is no good in any man whatsoever. And the second is:—Although all men are thus nothing rational is to be obtained from them. And the third is:—It is necessary for the king to know the extent of the wickedness of every man and to expose him according to his wickedness so that he may escape from him." When the king heard these words he praised them and ordered the man to take the gold; but he would not do so. And the king said to him, "Why then

³ Probably Khusrau Anôsharwân.

⁴ Probably Ardashîr I, who began to reign A.D. 226, is here referred to. He was the author of several maxims and wise sayings.

⁵ Surely Bar-Hebraeus must here have a version of a piece of advice which Ardashîr is said to have given to his son Shâpûr. "O my son, behold, religion and sovereignty are sisters, neither one of which can exist without the other. For religion is the foundation of sovereignty, and sovereignty is the protector of religion. "Every building which is without foundation falleth down, and whatsoever is unprotected perisheth." ###. See Mas'ûdî (ed. B. de Meynard) tom. ii. p. 162.

⁶ Probably Khusrau Anôsharwân.

didst thou ask for it?" The man replied, "I wished to ascertain if ever any man would be willing to buy wisdom with gold, or not."

LXXXIV. Anôshâr wân said, "Idleness exciteth the thoughts, and the thoughts provoke sadness."

LXXXV. Another king commanded his son, saying, "When thou art king do not add unto the riches of thy soldiers, lest they cease from thy service through having no need of thee; neither do thou reduce them to poverty, lest they hate thee. But give thou unto every man that which is meet for him in his own capacity, and act in such a way that their hope in thee may be ever more and more increased even though thy gifts to them be not multiplied."

LXXXVI. Bazarjamhir said, "Of the supporters of a king some are like spears which can only be used by those who guard [him] at a distance; and some are like arrows which are shot away and return not; and some are like swords for which it is not meet that they should turn away from him."

LXXXVII. Khusrau said, "Do not show hatred to one whom thou art unable to remove from thee."

LXXXVIII. Bazarjamhir was asked, "Why do friends so easily turn into enemies, for with much more difficulty do enemies become friends?" And he replied, "Even in the same way that to overthrow a house is easier than to build it up, and the breaking of a vessel is easier than the making of it, and the spending of money is easier than the acquisition of it."

LXXXIX. Bazarjamhir also said, "In the season of Teshrîn⁷ months the crops are beautiful, and in the time of the month Nîsân⁸ [we] have the flowers. [Even so] in the maiden [we should have] beauty, and in the youth strenuous action [of the limbs], and in the stranger humility of mind."

XC. It was said to Khusrau, "What [class of] men dost thou wish to become wise?" He replied, "My enemies, because wise men are not easily

⁷ The first and second Teshrîn months correspond roughly to our October and November.

⁸ Nîsân corresponds roughly to our April.

made to work wickedness, but fools cannot by any means whatsoever keep themselves away from it."

XCI. When Bazarjamhir was imprisoned by the king⁹ his friends asked him, "With what, now, dost thou console thyself?" He replied, "With four sayings. In the first I say to myself, Everything is decreed and fixed by fate, and escape from wrath is impossible; in the second I say, If I cannot endure suffering patiently what can I do?; in the third [I say], It were possible for me to fall into a worse plight than this; and in the fourth I say, Perhaps respite is nigh although I know it not."

XCII. Bazarjamhir also exhorted a certain king who was ruling over a country to act as a friend towards honest folk, and as a judge towards those who were neither good nor bad, and as a tyrant towards the wicked¹⁰.

XCIII. When the king was angry with this same Bazarjamhir and crucified¹¹ him, his daughter heard [about it] and ran out among the men having her head uncovered, but when she came to her father on the cross she covered it. And when the king asked her concerning what she had done, she replied, "He was the only man [there] before whom it was meet to be ashamed [at being uncovered]."

XCIV. Sapor¹² said, "The ornaments of a city are these:—A victorious king, a righteous judge, a market [full] of merchandize, a skilful physician and a flowing river."

XCV. Khusrau (II) asked one of his wise men, "Which are the more numerous, men or devils?" And he replied, "If thou considerest the Kurds and the common folk of the bazaars men, men are the more numerous."

XCVI. Bazarjamhir said, "Whosoever loveth thee will keep thee from thine anger, but whosoever hateth thee will stir thee up thereunto."

⁹ He was thrown into prison by Khusrau II Parwêz (A.D. 590-628), who is said to have suspected him of having joined the atheists, ###; whilst there the king wrote insulting letters to him, and was so enraged at the sage's replies that he had his head cut off. See Mas'ûdî, *op. cit.*, tom. ii. pp. 224. 225.

¹⁰ The text of the first line of this saying appears to be corrupt. The saying itself echoes the general sense of Buzurjumihir's fifth maxim; see the note to story No. LXIX.

¹¹ As a matter of fact his head was cut off; see the note to story No. XCI. In story No. V Bar-Hebraeus used the root ### in the same loose way, for Socrates died by drinking poison.

¹² Shâpûr I began to reign A.D. 272, Shâpûr II A.D. 621, and Shâpûr III A.D. 695.

XCVII. To this same Bazarjamhir it was said, "Who is he that hath no defect in him?" And he replied, "He that dieth not."

XCVIII. Bazarjamhir's wife asked him a certain question and he replied, "I know not the answer." Thereupon she said unto him, "Dost thou take such large wages from the king [for thy wisdom] and yet not know the answer to my question?" And he replied, "I receive my wages for what I know, and it is not payment for what I know not. If I were to receive wages for that which I know not all the king's treasures would be insufficient to reward me, for the things which I know not are exceedingly many."

XCIX. Ispandahar¹³ said, "The horse, even though he be exceedingly swift, hath need of the whip, and a woman, though she be chaste, yet hath need of a man, and a man, even though he be wise, hath need to receive counsel from others."

C. Khusrau said, "Wine washeth from the heart trouble and grief."

CI. When Kîkôbâd (Kaikubâd)¹⁴ the king died, one of his wise men said, "Yesterday the king spake volubly, but to-day he being silent admonisheth [us] with greater effect."¹⁵

CII. This same wise man said, "Hearts have need to be reared on wisdom, even as men's bodies have need of food whereon to grow."

CIII. Sapor said, "On many occasions matters come to fools on the right hand, and to wise men on the left, and I recognize that the Governor of affairs is a Being quite distinct from them."

CIV. Ardashîr¹⁶ said, "Occupy thyself with the things which are seemly, in order that thou mayest be kept from the things which are unseemly."

CV. Bazarjamhir said, "When thou dost not know which of two things is the better for thee [to do], take counsel with thy wife and do the opposite

¹³ Probably Ispandahar, the son of Gushtasp; see Malcolm, *History of Persia*, Vol. I. p. 46 ff.; and Mohl, *Le Livre des Rois*, tom. IV. p. 451.

¹⁴ The founder of the Kaianian dynasty is here referred to; see Malcolm, *History of Persia*, vol. I. p. 23 ff.; Mohl, *Le Livre des Rois*, tom. I. p. 367.

¹⁵ This saying is also attributed to Diogenes, who is said to have uttered it over Alexander's dead body. In Mas'ûdî (*op. cit.* tom. vii. p. 186) it runs "Alexander was less talkative yesterday than he is to-day; but to-day he teacheth us more than he did yesterday." Another version is, "Of all teachings which thou hast bestowed upon us the most eloquent is thy death." Mas'ûdî (*op. cit.*, tom. ii. p. 253).

¹⁶ Probably Ardashîr I, who began to reign A.D. 226.

of that which she saith, for she will only counsel [thee to do] the things which are injurious to thee."

CVI. Merâdwîkh¹⁷ was asked, "Wherein doth trouble differ from wrath?" And he replied, "When a man is injured by some great thing he is troubled, but when by some small matter he is enraged."

CVII. One day while Khusrau was sitting down, a man mean of stature drew nigh to him and began to weep and cry, saying, "Avenge me upon him that hath oppressed me;" but Khusrau took no notice of him. And when one of his noblemen asked him, "Why dost thou not hearken unto his voice?" he said, "The man mean of stature cannot be oppressed." And the mean man understood and cried out, "Master, he that hath oppressed me is meaner than I;" and when the king heard [this] he laughed and avenged his cause.

¹⁷ Probably Mardawîj, ###, the king who was slain by his Turkish bodyguard while enjoying a bath in the palace of Ahmed ibn 'Abd el-Azîz, A.H. 323.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. PROFITABLE SAYINGS OF THE INDIAN SAGES

CVIII. It is said that when any man belonging to the Indians is dying, his friends arm themselves and go to his door, and say unto [the door-keeper], "Shew us who hath slain thy friend that we may kill him." And when he replies, "He that slayeth him is invincible and invisible," they say, "Grieve not then overmuch about that which neither thou nor we are able to withstand;" and thus are they wont to comfort the mourners.

CIX. A certain Indian sage used to say, "The wound of a sharp weapon may be quickly healed, but the wound caused by words is incurable."

CX. Another Indian sage said, "The lusts of this world are like unto the waters of the sea, for however much a man drinketh thereof, his thirst increaseth."

CXI. Another Indian sage said, "Learning addeth unto the wisdom of the wise man, and folly [addeth unto the folly] of the fool, even as the sun addeth sight unto healthy eyes, and doeth harm unto those which are diseased."

CXII. Another Indian sage said, "Put not thy confidence in thine enemy, even though he shew himself exceedingly gracious unto thee; for, behold, even though the water which is poured upon the fire is heated thereby, it nevertheless extinguisheth it."

CXIII. Another Indian sage said, "Wine maketh those who drink it to have four peculiarities. First of all it maketh a man like a peacock, that is to say he is pleased with his manner and movements; next he is like unto the ape, that is to say he beginneth to chatter with every one; next he is like a lion which relieth upon his strength and is puffed up; next he is like the swine, for having drunk immoderately he walloweth in the mire, and finally he vomiteth and rejoiceth after the manner of the beast."

CXIV. Another Indian sage said, "Wise men are those who suffer in their souls, but the fools are those who suffer in their bodies."

CXV. Another Indian sage was asked, "Which is the worst country?" And he replied, "That in which there is neither plenty nor peace."

CXVI. Another Indian sage said, "It is good for a man to approach his friend in a moderate spirit. For, behold, when a pillar is set in the sun, being partially in the shadow, its shadow is increased, but when it is too much in the shade its shadow is diminished."

CXVII. Another Indian said, "There are six things which abide not:—The shadow of a cloud, the friend-ship of fools, the love of women, overflowing wealth, the king who oppresseth, and lying praise."

CXVIII. Another Indian sage said, "There are five classes of men who weary their own souls and those of their neighbours:—The ignorant man who devoteth himself to the teaching of others; the man who desireth that which cometh not to him; the governor who taketh not counsel with his friends; the man who undertaketh a work which is too great for him; and the man who serveth the king deceitfully."

CXIX. Another Indian sage said, "Mixed wine is the preserver of the body even as the pillar is that of the house, which remaineth unmoved by reason of its sound condition."

CXX. Another Indian sage said, "There are two classes of men whose fraudulent pretensions are very evident. One is that of the hunter who boasts that he hath behaved with great valour in the fray, although no sign of a blow is seen upon him, and the other is that of the man who feigneth to lead a life of asceticism, although his neck is thick and his body strong."

CXXI. Another Indian sage was asked, "Which man is the most foolish?" And he replied, "He who having married a beautiful maiden leaveth her and departeth into a far country."

CXXII. Another Indian sage was asked, "What loss is that to which no advantage whatsoever cleaveth? And he replied, The loss of the raiment which is laid with a corpse in the grave."

CXXIII. Another Indian sage was asked, "Unto what is a woman who hath no husband like?" And he replied, "A river [bed] wherein there is no water."

CXXIV. Another Indian sage was asked, "Why is a fool like unto a blind man?" And he replied, "As a blind man cannot distinguish between light and darkness even so the fool cannot distinguish between wisdom and folly."

CXXV. Another Indian sage was asked, "What man is the strongest?" And he replied, "He that guardeth himself from a wanton gaze and from harlotry."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. PROFITABLE SAYINGS OF THE HEBREW SAGES

CXXVI. A certain Hebrew sage said, "Chastity and wantonness exist not only in act, but also in word."

CXXVII. Unto another rich Hebrew sage it was said, "Why dost thou suffer hunger seeing that thou lackest nothing?" And he replied, "Because I do not forget those who hunger and are in want."

CXXVIII. Another Hebrew sage wrote over the door of a prison, "This is the house of tribulation, wherein life is buried, and wherein the love of friends and the hatred of enemies are tried."

CXXIX. Another Hebrew sage said, "Let thine enemy who is feeble be considered a mighty man by thee in order that thou mayest not neglect to beware of him, and let thy strong friend be accounted a feeble man by thee, thus that thou mayest rely upon his support, and thou shalt [not] be harmed by thy companions."

CXXX. Another sage said, "It is not meet for a king to hasten to [take] vengeance, because he is able to avenge himself whensoever he pleaseth."

CXXXI. A certain ascetic saw a man eating flesh and he said, "Behold flesh eating flesh."

CXXXII. It is said that a certain ascetic entreated God to shew him flesh wherein was no blood in order that he might eat it, and He—Glory be to His goodness!—shewed him a grasshopper, saying, "Behold flesh wherein is no blood."

CXXXIII. Another sage said, "He who looseth any jot of the Law and doeth some other good work in its place, this good work is not imputed unto him for a reward, inasmuch as a gift doth not redeem a thing which is obligatory."

CXXXIV. Another sage said, "Overabundance of food poisoneth the heart even as a superfluity of water [ruineth] seed."

CXXXV. It is said that when Joseph put his brother Benjamin into prison straightway Jacob wrote to him, saying, "Prophets do not steal, neither do they beget thieves."

CXXXVI. It is said that God said unto Abraham, "Knowest thou why I have chosen thee to be My friend?" And Abraham replied, "Tell me, O Lord." And the Lord made answer to him, saying, "It is because thou hast taken upon thyself to be injured and not to do injury; therefore let him that would increase friends do likewise."

CXXXVII. Another sage said, "The man who worketh guile is like unto a drawn sword; it is fair in its appearance, but when it is in action heed must be paid to it."

CXXXVIII. Another sage commanded his son, saying, "Divide thy time into three seasons. A season for thy prayer, a season for thy trafficking, and a season for thy bodily recreation and for thy ordinary meat and drink; for if thou dost not take thy [season of] recreation thou wilt not be able to fulfil the other two of prayer and trafficking."

CXXXIX. Another sage said, "Do not despise a man of mean appearance and of humble garb, lest perchance some excellent quality be concealed and hidden within him although thou knowest it not."

CXL. Another sage ordered his son, saying, "If thou art brought to poverty do not make it known to thy neighbours, lest thou be despised in their sight and it be grievous unto thee."

CXLI. Another sage said, "The soul which is deprived of wisdom is dead; but through doctrine it becometh alive, even as doth the waste and barren land by rain."

CXLII. Another sage said, "The forgiveness of a fault is what is obligatory on the man of understanding."

CXLIII. Another sage said, "Liberality is the cloak of defects."

CXLIV. Another sage said, "The fact that a man hasteneth to behave nobly saveth him from penitence."

CXLV. Another sage said, "Hardihood is the vice of youth even though it driveth it to virtue."

CXVI. Another sage said, "By the examination of the deeds vices are detected."

CXLVII. Another sage said, "The confession of his folly by the sinner is an entreaty for forgiveness which shall be accepted, and his repentance is his apology."

CXLVIII. Another sage said, "Place not thy confidence in a friend who is easily made angry, even though he be hidden within much goodness."

CXLIX. Another sage said, "Greediness is a sister unto prodigality and it inviteth it [to come]."

CL. Another sage said, "Cast not out from thy heart the fear of the king, even though thou be a constant member of his household, that his friendship for thee may increase."

CLI. Another sage said, "Make not a friend of thy house the man whose relatives make him a stranger unto them, for they are better acquainted with him than thou."

CLII. Another sage was asked, "What is the [greatest] labour in the world?" And he replied, "That of the feeble man who multiplieth hope."

CLIII. Another sage said, "Freedom of speech diminisheth honour, and it is bare of real love."

CLIV. Another sage said, "By gratitude gifts are made to abound, but by the cutting off of the same they also are cut off."

CLV. Another sage wrote to a certain man, saying, "I have sent such and such an one to thee in order that thou mayest satisfy my wants through him, not because I would not condescend to come in person, but in order that he might help me to return thanks unto thee, and be a witness of thy excellent behaviour towards me."

CLVI. Another sage said, "Despise not the mean man who hath been useful to thee in becoming great."

CLVII. Another sage said, "Fools pay attention to the errors and lapses of the children of men, but they take no heed of their excellent qualities, even as flies are persistent in setting upon the ulcerated members of the body, but never upon the limbs which are healthy."

CLVIII. Another sage said, "When thou askest for a gift which is greater than thy position and it is not granted unto thee, blame thyself because thou didst not ask something proportionate to thy condition."

CLIX. Another sage said, "Now, as concerning those who argue madly with each other in the debate, if they sought the truth they would never strive, because truth is a thing by itself, and truth and striving do not agree. But if they do not seek the truth but victory, then the contest must increase between them, for one of them cannot conquer unless the other be overcome."

CLX. Another sage said, "It is right that the governor of a nation should first of all order his own goings and then those of his people, for unless he doeth this it will happen to him as it would happen to the man who should wish to set in order the shadow of the thread before he had set in order the substance to which the shadow belonged."

CLXI. Another sage said, "It is right that the man who wisheth to do good things should thoroughly examine himself, [that he may do] even as he would that a man should do unto him. And he must be like the man who wisheth to sow seed, to whom it is therefore necessary to plough up thoroughly the ground in which he would sow the seed, lest peradventure it should be barren."

CLXII. Another sage said, "The king who is an oppressor speedily destroyeth his kingdom, but the righteous king prolongeth the life thereof; for the oppressor is a waster and a destroyer, and the righteous man is one who buildeth up. [With him] that which hath been laid waste speedily cometh into being [again], and in the process of time the edifice appeareth."

CLXIII. Another sage was asked by the wise men, "Wherein lieth the difference between fear and affliction?" He replied, "Fear cometh into being before tribulation cometh, but affliction after it."

CLXIV. The perfection of the rhetorical art is to be able to make truth wear the guise of falsehood, and that which is false the garb of truth; and to force men to the doing of that from which they would rather be excused, and to keep them back from the doing of that which they earnestly desire to do; and that not by force but by the ready will of those who hearken unto it.

CLXV. Another sage said, "Silence is the sleep of the mind and speech is its waking state, and when either sleep or waking is in moderation the mind is praiseworthy; and whether it be asleep or awake it is meet that it should be praised."

CLXVI. Another sage said, "I have often repented that I have spoken, but very rarely that I have held my peace."

CLXVII. Another sage said, "As long as a word remaineth unspoken it is in the prison of him that wished to speak, but when once it hath been spoken the speaker thereof becometh its prisoner."

CLXVIII. Another sage said, "Beware of speaking overmuch, for much speaking is a wide gulf wherein stumbling-blocks are exceedingly many."

CLXIX. Another sage said, "If animals which are to be eaten had been sent to the of death, even like man, the flesh which is fat would never have been eaten."

CLXX. Another sage said, "Blessed is he who is occupied with his own defects, for he will not make it a care unto him to pry into the weaknesses of his companions."

CLXXI. To another sage it was said, "Who are the blessed of the Lord? and who are accursed by Him?" He replied, "The blessed of the Lord are the children who are like unto old men, and the accursed are the old men who are like unto children."

CLXXII. Another sage said, "The places for prayer which are in their own houses are better for women than the public congregations."

CLXXIII. Another sage said, "If only ye knew that which I know, your weeping would get the better of your laughter."

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. PROFITABLE SAYINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN RECLUSES

CLXXIV. One of the Fathers said, "Young men in the beginning of their career take unto themselves labours for the sake of vain glory, but afterwards Divine grace secretly whispereth to them and persuadeth them to labour for Divine and not for human glory."

CLXXV. Another father said, "When God (Glory be to His Grace!) saw that the Fathers were exalted in their minds, He used to send them to men who wrought righteousness, even though they toiled little in the ascetic life, in order that they might be abased somewhat. Thus He sent Antony to a tailor, and Macarius to two women, and Paphnutius to a thief and a singer, and He sent two solitaires to a shepherd."

CLXXVI. It was said by God unto a certain man who was righteous according to this world, "Flee from men and thou shalt live," God indicating to him that he should go into the desert. Then a second voice came to him, saying, "Flee, keep silence, and lead a life of contemplation," that is to say, "When thou hast gone and hast become mighty in the deeds of the ascetic life then thou shalt dwell alone with thy soul¹."

CLXXVII. A certain brother said unto one of the aged men, "My thoughts wage war against me and say unto me, Thou art not able to fast and to pray, therefore go out of thy cell, and depart and minister unto the sick and let thy righteousness be sufficient for thee." The aged man made answer to him, "Go, eat, drink, and labour not, only do not depart from thy cell," for he knew that persistent dwelling in the cell would cut off all [his] thoughts².

¹ The man here referred to was Arsenius. The story as given in my MS. of Palladius is as follows:—"When Arsenius was in the p. 39 palace he prayed to God, saying, 'O Lord, direct me how to live.' And a voice came to him which said, 'Arsenius, flee from men and thou shalt live.'" And again, when he was living in the monastery, he prayed to God the [same] words, and again he heard a voice saying to him, "Arsenius, flee, keep silence, and lead a life of contemplation, for these are the roots which prevent a man from sinning." ### (fol. 197b, Nos. 1 and 2.)

² The text of the story in full runs:—### p. 40 ### (fol. 198b, No. 7).

CLXXVIII. Another sage said, "He that dwelleth in the world seeth not his sins by reason of the disturbed state of the affairs [therein]; but if he dwell in the peace and quietness of the desert, he will see God clearly and his sins will be rebuked."

CLXXIX. A certain noble and honourable and believing woman came from Rome to Egypt to Abbâ Arsenius and entreated him to make mention of her in his prayers. And he replied, "I will pray unto God that He may make the remembrance of thee to pass out of my heart." Now although by reason of her grief and sorrow she became sick, yet he did as he had said, that he might shut the door against the women who thronged to see him³.

CLXXX. Abbâ Antony said, "As a fish which is lifted up out of the water dieth, even so doth the recluse who tarrieth outside his cell."

CLXXXI. Abbâ Theodore and Abbâ Luke remained for fifty years in doubt, for they were vexed about the matter of changing their [dwelling] place, and they said, "Behold, in the winter will we change [it];" thus they did, and they did not go forth [from it] until the end of their lives⁴.

CLXXXII. One of them said, "The recluse who loveth a life of contemplation in his cell doth not flee meeting his neighbour because he despiseth and hateth him, but because of the sweet fruits which he plucketh therefrom, that is to say, freedom from worldly toil and from the sight and learning [of the same]."

CLXXXIII. Abbâ Agathon kept a stone in his mouth for a period of three years until he succeeded in keeping silence⁵.

CLXXXIV. One of the old men gave a cup of wine [twice] to Sisoës the great and he drank [it], but when he mixed it for him the third time he would not drink, saying, "Forbear, old man, for thou knowest not whether it be Satan," referring by these words to drunkenness which is the mother of all vices⁶.

³ The text of the story in full runs:—### p. 41 ### p. 42 ### (fol. 229a, No. 251).

⁴ The text in Palladius differs somewhat and reads:—### (fol. 199b, No. 12).

⁵ In Palladius:—### p. 43 ### (fol. 205a, No. 61).

⁶ Compare the following:—Abraham, the disciple of Sisoës, said to him, "Supposing there be a congregation on Saturday or Sunday, and that a brother were to drink three cups of wine: would that be too much?" Sisoës replied, "If Satan did not exist it would not be too much, but since he doth exist it is too much." ### (fol. 207a, No. 87).

CLXXXV. Abbâ Arsenius used, every Saturday night, to leave the sun behind him, and to stretch out his hands towards heaven and to pray until the sun rose in his face⁷.

CLXXXVI. Certain of the Fathers said, "Whosoever doth not receive all the brethren alike is not, as yet, perfect."

CLXXXVII. Certain philosophers went once on a time to the desert that they might tempt the recluses, and they said to one of the old men, "What do ye more than us? For we fast, and pray, and watch, and lead lives of self-abnegation." And they replied, "We do not only preserve our minds from turning to debating and reasoning but every aspect of our minds is in converse with God."

CLXXXVIII. Abbâ Macarius the Great arrived at so great a pitch of humility that when the brethren spake with him they spoke as unto a saint, and the great old man answered them never a word. But when a certain man of the brethren said unto him insultingly, "Ho father, if only thou hadst been a camel thou mightest have stolen natron and they would never have beaten thee," he gladly made answer unto them.

CLXXXIX. Abbâ Kîrnên used to say⁸, "If the man who dwelleth with a young man would be mighty in the ascetic life, he will not descend [from his cell] even for a moment, and he will not stretch himself out in his presence even for the sake of comfort. For young men excite lust by means of their faces, which are like those of women, and they stir up tribulation by their audacity."

CXC. When Abbâ Pachomius was afflicted by the passion of fornication he used to cast himself down naked before a hyaena's den, and take a desert viper and press it upon his body that it might bite him and that he might die. And he never went into a city or into a village, so that he might not see a woman⁹.

CXCI. Once on a time Abbâ Abraham said to Abbâ Sisoës, "Father, thou art grown old, let us now go and live among men for a little." And he

⁷ In Palladius:—### (fol. 209, No. 105.)

⁸ In Palladius:—### Compare also:—### (fol. 234a, Nos. 289 and 194).

⁹ The actual words of Pachomius are:—### (fol. 70a).

replied, "Let us go where there is no woman¹⁰. This he said not because he was afraid for himself, but that he might warn his disciples not to fall.

CXCII. Abbâ Ammon used to say, "There are some men who might live in their cells for a hundred years, and yet not know how it is meet for a recluse to live therein¹¹."

CXCIII. Abbâ Agathon said, "The man of anger will never be accepted by man, even though one rose from the dead."

CXCIV. Once when Abbâ Moses of Patrâ was battling against fornication he went to Abbâ Isidore [for advice]. And Isidore took him up upon the roof of his house, and shewed him the hosts of devils waging war in the west and the angels who were gaining the mastery in the east. This he did to him so that Moses might be encouraged to fight, and he returned to his cell¹².

CXCV. Mother Sarâ fought for seven years against the demon of fornication upon the roof until she had overcome him¹³. She used to say, "Whenever I put my feet upon the ladder to go up, I set my death before my eyes before I ascend¹⁴."

CXCVI. Concerning her it is said that she dwelt in an upper chamber over the river, and that she never once looked out to see the river which passed by the side of her cell¹⁵.

CXCVII. There were two brethren who went back into the world and took wives, but afterwards they repented and returned [to their cells]. And when the period of their repentance was ended and they went forth from their seclusion, the countenance of the one was transformed and was sad, but the appearance of the other was fair to see and his face was radiant. Now when the fathers saw them they were doubtful if the repentance of each was equally [sincere], and they said, "The one meditateth upon his sins and on hell, but the other on God's mercy which is poured out abundantly upon all men¹⁶."

¹⁰ In Palladius the story ends:—### p. 46 (fol. 245a, No. 369).

¹¹ The saying in full runs.—### (fol. 262a, No. 495).

¹² The full text runs:—### p. 47 ### (fol. 269b, no. 551).

¹³ In Palladius this story ends here (fol. 270, No. 555).

¹⁴ In Palladius:—### (fol. 231a, No. 266.)

¹⁵ In Palladius, see No. 202, fol. 222 a.

¹⁶ The full text runs:—### p. 49 ### (fol. 175a, No. 587).

CXCVIII. One of the brethren asked Abbâ Sisoës, saying, "What wouldst thou do, O father, for I have fallen?" Sisoës said to him, "Rise up," and the brother said unto him, "I have fallen many times and risen up [after them]. How long shall I continue to fall and rise up?" The old man said unto him, "Until death shall overtake thee in one of them, I mean either in rising up or in falling¹⁷."

CXCIX. One of the brethren went into the world and married a woman, and when his master heard thereof he prayed and entreated God, saying, "O Lord, permit not Thy servant to be dragged through the mire of the world;" and when the betrothed man and his bride went in to sleep together, he gave up the ghost and was not united unto her.

CC. One of the brethren was perfect to such a degree that even wild animals became his friends, and he used to nourish their young¹⁸. Now a certain father said unto him, "Go and enter a monastery of brethren, and dwell with them if thou wishest to be perfect," meaning thereby that to dwell [in peace] with the brethren was much more difficult than to live [friendly] with wild animals.

CCI. Abbâ Poemen said, "An evil nature is a wall of brass between God and man."

CCII. When the mother of Abbâ Poemen and of his brethren went to see them, they did not bring her into their cells neither did they speak with her¹⁹, thus keeping the command of our Lord Who said, "Whosoever loveth father or mother, &c.²⁰ "

CCIII. Abbâ Ammon the virgin²¹ once went to Abbâ Antony and said unto him, "I observe that I labour in the ascetic life more than thou, how is it then that thy name is more renowned in the world than mine?" Abbâ Antony said unto him, "Because I love our Lord more than thou."

¹⁷ In Palladius the text runs:—### (fol. 276*b*, No. 592).

¹⁸ This story is told of Macarius of Alexandria, and in full reads:—### p. 50 ### (fol. 325*b*, No. 161). See also Rosweyde, *Vitae Patrum*, pp. 228, 650, 732.

¹⁹ The full text of the story is as follows:—### (fol. 280*a*, No. 3).

²⁰ "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." St. Matthew x. 37.

²¹ In Palladius, ### "Abbâ Ammon, he of Nitria," *i.e.*, the Nitrian desert (fol. 305 *b*, No. 165), but Bar-Hebraeus seems to have missed the meaning of ### here.

CCIV. Once a year Abbâ Arsenius used to taste once every kind of fruit in order that he might give praise unto God, but Evagrius²² never at any time ate any fruit or any green thing.

CCV. Abbâ Poemen used to say, "As a snake or a scorpion having been placed in a closed vessel for a long time will in process of time die, even so will the wicked thoughts which are stirred up in the heart of ascetics, unless they actually turn them into actions, become powerless and perish."

CCVI. Abbâ Jacob used to say, "For a man to teach his neighbour without being asked to do so, is as if a man were to rebuke his neighbour."

CCVII. A certain brother asked Abbâ Sisoës saying, "So then thou hast not, O father, yet arrived at Antony's capacity [for ascetic labours]?" The old man said unto him, "If I had had only one thought of Abbâ Antony's my whole being would have been like a pillar of light²³."

CCVIII. A certain aged man was asked by a brother, "When I am in the place of purity, and the hour for prayer cometh, must I return?" The aged man said to him, "Nay, brother. Who having been rich would return to poverty?" Now he referred to the lifting up of the mind and to the converse with God in the place of purity.

CCIX. It is said concerning Saint Ammon²⁴ the virgin that when he was compelled by his parents to take a wife, on the night of the feast, immediately after going in with the bride to the feast, he brought out from his bosom the Book of the Apostle Paul, and admonished and taught the young woman the words which were written therein by the blessed man on virginity, saying, "It is better for a man not to approach a woman²⁵, and I would that all men should live even as do I in purity²⁶," and again [where] he saith, "The woman who hath never known man meditateth upon her Lord, that she may be holy²⁷ in her body and in her

²² The followers of Evagrius never drank their fill of water, and many of them ate neither bread nor fruit, nor any green thing except bitter herbs. ### (fol. 192 a. *Triumphs of Evagrius*).

²³ In Palladius this story runs:—### (fol. 320b, No. 287).

²⁴ The story has been much abridged by Bar-Hebraeus; the full text runs:—### p. 54 ### p. 55 ###. Eventually Ammon's wife thinks it better for herself and her husband to live wholly apart, and they do so (fol. 54a *Of Abbâ Ammon*).

²⁵ Corinthians vii. 1. Bar-Hebraeus quotes the Peshittâ Version.

²⁶ 1 Corinthians vii. 6.

²⁷ The Peshittâ has ###.

soul."²⁸ With words such as these did he exhort his betrothed one, and they made their bodies temples to the Holy Spirit.

CCX. One of the old men said, "If thou seest a young man who lusteth to go up to heaven of his own will, take hold of his leg and sweep him thence."

CCXI. One of the solitaires had so thoroughly dried up his body through the labour of fasting and prayer that the sun could be seen [shining] through his ribs.

²⁸ 1 Corinthians vii. 34.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER. PROFITABLE SAYINGS OF MUHAMMEDAN KINGS AND OF THEIR SAGES

CCXII. A certain king was asked by one of his nobles, "Who was the founder of thy race?" And he replied, "Ill luck brought it upon them that I should be the founder."

CCXIII. Another of the sages said, "The members of a man's household are the moth of his money."

CCXIV. Another of the kings was asked, "How is the peaceable condition of thy kingdom maintained?" And he replied, "When I fly, my nobles alight; and when they fly, I alight; that is to say, when I am in a rage they pacify me, and when they are enraged I pacify them."

CCXV. Another king was asked by his sages, "To what limit hath thine understanding reached?" And he replied, "To the extent that I believe no man, neither do I put any confidence in any man whatsoever."

CCXVI. One of the kings when he was young and was learning from his master made a mistake in a word, and when his teacher rebuked him the boy said to him, "What is that to thee? The very best horses stumble sometimes." The teacher replied, "Very true, but they are beaten and corrected for it." And the boy said, "Yes, but they break the nose of him that beateth them."

CCXVII. Another king said to one of his sages, "There are three attributes which I yearn greatly to possess. The first is that no man should be able to commit any sin against me which I should not have the power to forgive. The second is that none of those who ask boons from me should have any want which I should not be able to satisfy. And the third is that there should be no time longer than mine own." When the wise man heard these words he laughed. And the king said, "Why dost thou laugh?" He replied, "How can I help laughing, for behold thou lustest for the attributes which are only found with God." The king said, "I know it. Hide, then, my words, and let them be as a secret unto thee, lest every one who heareth of them shall laugh at me also."

CCXVIII. Another king ordered his son, saying, "Strengthen thy kingdom with righteousness, for that is a wall which cannot be breached."

CCXIX. Another of the sages said, "There are four things which a man need not be afraid [to serve]:—"The king, a child, the road, and an animal."

CCXX. Another of the sages said, "It is meet that those kings who heap up money should have the minds of those who are going to live for ever, and that those who scatter gifts should have the minds of those who are going to die to-morrow;" that is to say they should spare nothing, for thus will their kingdom stand.

CCXXI. Another of the sages said, "Guard ye carefully your women against singing and music, for they overthrow chastity, and build up lust, and invite wantonness and the drunkenness which is worse than that of wine."

CCXXII. Another of the sages said, "The Greeks are the more skilful, but the Persians are the more intelligent "

CCXXIII. Another king never permitted any man to kiss his hand, "For," said he, "the kissing of the hand is the proof [of the friendship] of friends and of the flattery of foes."

CCXXIV. Another king was besought by a certain man who professed to lead an ascetic life to give him the office of governor in a certain place, and he said to him, "If the ascetic life wherein thou art occupied is of God, it is not meet for us to destroy it by giving thee a governorship whereby sin would be provoked; and if it be merely hypocrisy it is not meet for us to make a hypocrite a governor." Thus he dismissed him.

CCXXV. Another of the wise men used to say, "The power of being able to [gratify a passion] destroyeth lust, even as water quencheth fire."

CCXXVI. One of the nobles of a certain king was about to rebel against him, and although the king wished to slay him he would not do this thing without taking counsel of one of his sages. And having called a certain wise man he asked him concerning it; and he made answer to him, saying, "There is nothing [left] for thee to do but to remove him from the earth; if thou doest not this thy kingdom will not stand." When the king

heard this he was mightily angry, and he said to the sage, "Wouldst thou counsel me to slay the man who is my right arm and upon whom I lean?" and he thrust out the wise man and drove him away. And it came to pass after a few days that the king devised means and cut off the head of him that wished to rebel, and he called the wise man and said unto him, "Dost thou remember the day wherein I took counsel with thee?" He replied, "How can I ever forget the day wherein I tasted death through fear of thee?" And the king said to him, "What thou didst counsel was right, and I had intended in my mind to do it, but I was afraid lest when thou hadst confirmed my own intention this secret would become revealed and the noble would slip out of my hands."

CCXXVII. To another king a certain man brought a pair of shoes, saying, "These are the shoes of the Prophet;" and the king received them and he gave him much money. And it came to pass that when the man had gone forth he said to those who were round about him, "I know that these shoes are not those of the Prophet, for the man who owned them was not one of those who could have inherited them, and that he either bought them or that they were given to him as a gift. Only I was afraid lest it should be reported concerning me that the shoes of the Prophet had come to me and that I had not made rejoicings over them, and lest I should be judged as one of little faith by men."

CCXXVIII. Another king (Hârûn al-Rashîd¹) had two sons, the one (El-Amîn²) by the Queen (Zubêdah³) and the other (Al-Ma'mûn⁴) by a handmaiden⁵, and because he wished the son of the handmaiden to be king after him the Queen was loud in her reproaches of the king. Thereupon the king said to her, "Let us make a trial of the intelligence of both of them, and whichever is the wiser shall reign;" and he then sent one trusty man to the one son, and another to the other to ask each of them what he would do for him when he became king. When the trusty man asked him that was the son of the Queen, he promised to make him

¹ This famous man was proclaimed Khalifa at Bagdad on Friday, the XIIth day before the end of Rebî' I. A.H. 170; he died at Sanâbâdh near Tûs on Saturday the IVth day of Jumada II. A.H. 193. He reigned twenty-three years and six months, and died aged forty-four years and four months, A.D. 808.

² I.e., ###, who was murdered on the XXVth day of the month Muharram, A.H. 198=A.D. 813; his head was cut off and sent to his brother Al-Ma'mûn.

³ I.e., ### daughter of Ja'far, the son of the Khalifa Manşûr, and wife of Hârûn al-Rashîd.

⁴ I.e., ## was proclaimed Khalifa at Bagdad when he was twenty-eight years and two months old. He died at Podendon, and his body was taken to Tarsus where it was buried A.H. 218 =A.D. 833. He reigned twenty-one years, and was forty-nine years old when he died.

⁵ I.e., Merâjil, ###, a native of ###.

his counsellor and to give him dominion over countries. But when the trusty man asked him that was the son of the handmaiden he took up the ink-pot which was in front of him and smote him on the head therewith and said, "O fool, wouldst thou demand a gift from me if the king died? Now as for me I would rather that we all should die, and that the king should live, because he would not miss such people as we, but where could we find another like him?" And when the Queen heard these things she agreed that the son of the handmaiden should become king and not her own son.

CCXXIX. One of the kings used to hate a certain member of his bodyguard, and he said to one of his nobles, "Hast thou not with thee someone who could slay such and such an one?" And he replied, "I will straightway slay him." And the king said to him, "I do not require the matter performed thus, for I want, when he is killed, to be able to pass judgment upon him that slew him and to kill him according to justice."

CCXXX. The handmaiden of a certain prince died, and he was so sorely grieved about her that he used to go out to the cemetery at night and weep. When his father heard this he wrote to him, saying, "How canst thou expect me to give thee dominion over a nation when thou sufferest thus for the sake of a handmaiden?" The son answered, "It is not about her price that I grieve, but because of the manner of woman that she was."

CCXXXI. Another king said, "Do not praise the kings who were before us, for this will lead the soldiers of our army to despise us."

CCXXXII. When another king was dying he ordered that after his eldest son the younger should be king, and when the son heard these words he said, "Thy will shall be fulfilled, my lord. But give orders that my young brother reign before me and I after him, so that the kingdom shall remain for my seed after my death, and thus the universal custom shall not be abrogated."

CCXXXIII. Another king said to his wise man, "We are much more intelligent than thou art, but thou art much more learned than we are. Therefore do not attempt to teach us in public, and do not say anything whatsoever to us unless we ask thee. When thou answerest do not go on to repeat some other matter, and to instruct us in learned doctrines, but

only such learning as is necessary for our kingdom. Furthermore do not feign to be greatly struck with wonder at the things which are spoken by us, for if thou doest this thou wilt show contempt for us. If thou doest these things thy position with us shall be exalted, and thou wilt be beloved by us."

CCXXXIV. There was a certain young prince who was requested by his father to come to him one morning, and when he went in to him the king thought that he had just been eating something. And he said unto him, "Dost thou eat so much as this early in the morning?" and the son denied that he had eaten anything. Now when the king asked those who were rearing him [whether his son had eaten or not], they confessed that he had, saying, "Every morning he asks for some food and eats it in this manner." And the king ordered them to rub down his teeth with a file in order to cause him pain [when he ate], and when they had filed away those in the upper jaw, he wept and said to the king, "Leave the teeth in the lower jaw until another time when thou art angry;" so the king laughed and sent him away.

CCXXXV. Another king when the table was removed used to say, "How manifold are thy mercies, O Lord, Who hast prepared for us more than we need."

CCXXXVI. One of the sages used to say, "The men in the market are despicable, and the handicraftsmen are rude, and the merchants are avaricious, but it is the lawyers who are the kings of the people."

CCXXXVII. A young prince said to his servant, "Go into the market and buy me of fine dates the value of half a *zûzâ*." When his father heard of it, he said to him, "Having now understood that a *zûzâ* may be halved thou mayest also understand that thou art not able to prosper."

CCXXXVIII. Another king said, "If men only knew how pleasant to me it is to forgive faults there is not one of them who would not commit them."

CCXXXIX. A certain prince had a little servant who used to learn with him in school, and who suddenly sickened and died. And when the king said to him, "My son, thy servant is dead," he replied, "Yes, he is dead, and he hath escaped from the school."

CCXL. A certain Byzantine king wrote a letter to one of the Arab kings using threatening words, and the Arab king wrote back, saying, "Our complete answer to that which thou hast written will be something which can be seen and not read," that is to say, "We will come in person to meet thee."

CCXLI. Another Arab king was pleased in his mind because they had brought to him certain baked meats which he loved. And having begun to eat he found therein a fly; and when he had thrown it away and had eaten a little more, he found another fly and yet another; and when he had eaten and they had taken away the table, he said, "Let them cook for me only a portion of this meat to-morrow, so that there may be fewer of flies therein."

CCXLII. Another sage said, "The gratification which ariseth from forgiveness is very much better than that which ariseth from vengeance, because to forgiveness praise appertaineth, and to vengeance repentance."

CCXLIII. Another sage said, "Do not speak too freely and openly with him that is thy superior, lest he be angry with thee; neither do thou thus with him that is thy inferior, lest he presume overmuch before thee."

CCXLIV. When the father of a certain young prince died a man asked him, "Whom did the king order to take care of thee?" And he replied, "The king ordered me to take care of those who should care for me."

CCXLV. Another king commanded his sons' teacher, saying, "First of all order thine own doings and then those of my sons, for upon thee are their eyes set. Teach them from books, from the Divine Scriptures, and from the histories of the righteous kings and prophets. Do not threaten them in my name, for when they have learnt by experience that thou art not able to reprove them, they will despise thee. Be not harsh with them, and drive them not overmuch lest they hate instruction; and be not slack with them lest they love idleness."

CCXLVI. Another of the sages used to say, "Shamefacedness is destroyed by two things, by a man seeking his own desire, and by converse with fools."

CCXLVII. When another king was admonishing the soldiers of his bodyguard and they were paying no heed unto him, he said to them, "Ye need a king who will do more unto you than admonish, ye need a king who will beat you."

CCXLVIII. Another of the sages was asked, "How is that thy mercy is so abundant?" And he replied, "I have never inflicted punishment on a man without leaving room for reconciliation."

CCXLIX. Another of the sages said, "The crime of him that slayeth a prophet is not greater than that of him whom a prophet slayeth, that is to say, he that slayeth a prophet certainly committeth sin, but unless the sin of him that is slain by a prophet be not very great he will not be slain."

CCL. Another of the kings said, "He that will not condescend to ask a gift of me is not worthy of a gift, whereupon a sage who was ready-witted said, He that asketh and receiveth lacketh more than what he gaineth, but a truly graceful act on thy part would be to give before thou art asked."

CCLI. A certain sage asked the Queen, saying, Persuade the king to fulfil a certain thing [for me]. And the Queen said, "Instead of asking me to persuade the king thou shouldst try to persuade him thyself, and let him make answer to thy petition." The sage said, "Nay my lady, when the tops of the branches of a tree which are laden with fruit are high and out of reach it is meet for a man to lay hold upon the lower parts of the branches and to pull them down [to him], so that he can easily pluck the fruit and eat thereof," whereby he gave it to be understood that the head of a woman is man.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. PROFITABLE STORIES OF TEACHERS AND LEARNED MEN

CCLII. A certain teacher used to say, "A very large portion of learning hath escaped me, I mean that portion which I was ashamed to learn from men who were my inferiors. Therefore do not, O my disciples, let it be accounted a disgrace by you to ask questions of those who are your inferiors, whereby ye may become accomplished and perfect."

CCLIII. Another teacher related a story of his master to the effect that on a certain day the people asked him more than fifty questions, and that he replied to [each of] them shamelessly "I do not know the answer thereof;" and that he never answered questions on any matters except such as he knew accurately.

CCLIV. Another teacher used to say, "The things which I know are few, but I know those accurately."

CCLV. Another learned man, when sitting at a feast with certain people who were drinking milk and honey, said to the servants, "Give me to drink of that for which when it cannot be found a man would sell his soul, but which when found is rejected;" now by these words he meant water.

CCLVI. Another learned man in heaping abuse on a common man, said, "The father of this man used to conceal the greater number of the animals which he owned in his garments;" now by those words he referred to lice.

CCLVII. Another learned man used to say, "Honourable praise is that the man to whom thou hast done no good thing should praise thee, and veritable abuse, likewise, is that he to whom thou hast never done harm should abuse thee."

CCLVIII. Another learned man said, "A man is wholly at ease until his teeth become worn out or he be sick."

CCLIX. Another learned man said, "I wish to be considered before God as one of the excellent ones of men, and before myself as one of the abjects of the children of men, and before men as one among them who is neither good nor bad; for the exalted are eaten up by care, and the abjects are wasted away by hunger."

CCLX. Another learned man said, "There are three classes of men who are not destitute of advantage:—He that teacheth being hired for wages, and he that hireth to learn excellence, and he who being the equal of his pupil in knowledge merely calleth to mind what he hath learnt; but the man who wisheth to learn whilst pretending to teach is remote from any advantage whatsoever."

CCLXI. Another learned man said, "He that meditateth upon a learned life, having no need so to do, should not be deprived of the benefit thereof when he hath need of it."

CCLXII. Another learned man said, "A good woman is like a raven with white legs," that is to say, she cannot be found.

CCLXIII. Another learned man was asked, "Who are the foolish ones?" And he replied, "Those who do not know either how to praise or to blame."

CCLXIV. Another learned man said, "Smite no man for his folly, for if thou dost so he will make profit by thee as from a friend, or he will hate thee as an enemy."

CCLXV. Another learned man was asked, "Who is the wise man? Is it he of whom a man hath said, Send a wise man and command him not?" And he replied, "He that hearkeneth."¹

CCLXVI. Another teacher pretended to learn the answer to a certain question from his disciple, and it was said to him [by a certain man], "Dost thou learn from such an one as this?" And he replied, "I know the answer to this question much better than he, but I wish him to taste the pleasure of teaching, in order that he may be incited the more to learn."

CCLXVII. Another teacher said, "The commentary on the Books of Scripture is like the earrings in the ears of a virgin."

¹ Read ###

CCLXVIII. Another teacher said, "Let the counsels which are mingled with the Scriptures be thy principal, and let those which are in thy heart be the interest thereof."

CCLXIX. Another teacher while writing a certain discourse upon a tablet, found that the tablet was filled before he had finished this discourse, and he began to rub out the beginning of his discourse from the top of the tablet, and then wrote the remainder of it. And when he was asked why he did this, he answered, "I am doing this in order that I may have my discourse by me complete, for having written down the beginning thereof I can repeat it by heart."

CCLXX. Another teacher said, "There are four classes of men to whom it is pleasant for them to be listened unto:—The man from whom a gift, or instruction, or blessings, or prayers are expected, or he that having the power can cause loss."

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. PROFITABLE SAYINGS OF THE ARAB ASCETICS AND OLD MEN

CCLXXI. One of the Arab ascetics happened to be present in the mosque with the governor of the country, and the governor said to him, "Ask of me whatsoever thou needest." The ascetic replied, "In the house of God it is meet to make supplication to God alone."

CCLXXII. Another ascetic said, "Extinguish the light of your anger by the remembrance of the fire of Gehenna" (*i.e.*, hell).

CCLXXIII. It was said to another ascetic when he was threatening sinners with [God's] punishment, "Where, then, is the lovingkindness of God?" He replied, "It is spread abroad over the righteous."

CCLXXIV. Another ascetic said, "It may be known that this world is a world of tribulation and wickedness, from the fact that there is no man in it who doth not seek to be something very much better than what he is."

CCLXXV. Another ascetic said, "The desirable things of this world which are transient are like dreams, and those who look for the things of the next world are in doubt about them."

CCLXXVI. Another ascetic said, "The world is carried on by those who serve God and by those who do not."

CCLXXVII. To another ascetic it was said, "Hast thou ever done anything whatsoever whereat God hath been pleased?" And he replied, "I do not know of a certainty whether I have or not, but I do know that in the matter of what I have done I have always been afraid lest it should displease God, and lest He should turn Himself against me."

CCLXXVIII. When another ascetic saw a certain man giving alms in the sight of men, he said unto him, "If thou wishest to lay up treasure for thyself carry it secretly, lest when men see it they plunder it."

CCLXXIX. Another ascetic admonished a king, saying, "Know well, [O king,] that if these treasures which are laid up in thy treasury had remained in the hands of those who were before thee they would never

have come to thee. Traffic thou, then, for thyself in that merchandise which thou hast not, for this will not remain with thee although it belongeth unto thee."

CCLXXX. Unto another ascetic it was said by the king, "Ask of me whatsoever thou needest, and I will give it unto thee." And he replied, "If it be that [I know] that thou wilt give when I ask, and that thou wilt open when I knock unto thee, this [knowledge] is to me one half of the gift."

CCLXXXI. Another ascetic said, "Death is the Divine Passover and the universal festival of this world."

CCLXXXII. Another ascetic was asked, "How was it thus easy for thee to dismiss the desirable things of this world?" And he replied, "Because I knew that death would pluck them away from me by force, therefore I renounced them of mine own free-will."

CCLXXXIII. Another ascetic heard a poor beggar saying, "Where are those who hate this transient world so that they may possess the world which will not come to an end?" And the ascetic replied, "They are all in heaven. Thou mayest find a few upon earth, but it is most probable that thou wilt not find any at all."

CCLXXXIV. Unto another it was said, "In what condition will men be on the day of Resurrection?" He replied, "The penitent will be like the lamb which having gone forth to graze hath returned to the fold, and the wicked will be like the lamb which [having gone forth to graze] hath been worried by a mad dog, that is to say by Satan: therefore he must be bound in chains."

CCLXXXV. Another ascetic seeing a king strongly guarded by his bodyguard said, "If he had done no injury to men he would not be afraid of them."

CCLXXXVI. Unto another ascetic it was said, "How canst thou endure being in this corner?" He said, "I am not alone, for I am continually holding converse with the Lord of created things, and when I wish Him to talk to me I read the Divine Scriptures, and when I wish to speak unto Him I pray."

CCLXXXVII. Another ascetic used to say, "It is meet that ye should fear the Lord, for He hath power over your strength, and that ye should be shamefaced before Him, because He observeth you continually in order to look closely into your doings."

CCLXXXVIII. Another ascetic used to say, "Take good heed lest there should happen unto thee that which happened unto him that oppressed thee."

CCLXXXIX. Unto another ascetic it was said by a certain governor, "How strict is thy life of abstinence!" And he replied, "Thou art more strict in thine asceticism than am I, because I have only renounced this world which abideth not, from which also thou thyself art about to be deprived by death; but thou hast also renounced that world which passeth not away, and thou hast hated it, therefore thou art an ascetic in respect of both worlds, while I am an ascetic in the matter of one only."

CCXC. Another ascetic said, "He that is careful to gather together more than he needeth, heapeth up for another."

CCXCI. When certain men were blaming another ascetic, and saying, "Thou givest away thine alms too freely," he made answer to them, "Why will ye not understand that it is meet for him that wisheth to go from one house to another to send on some provision in advance?"

CCXCII. Unto another ascetic a king said, "How is it that thou dost not pay homage to me, seeing that thou art of my servants?" And he replied, "If thou didst but understand thou wouldst know that thou wert in very truth the servant of my servants, for I have gained the mastery over and have conquered worldly lusts, but they have gained the mastery over and have conquered thee."

CCXCIII. Unto another ascetic one of the rich men said, "How is it that thy face is always joyful as if thou didst lead a life of pleasure?" And he replied, "It is meet for thee to lament and mourn and for me to rejoice and be glad, for in thy case the days of thy pleasure are coming to an end, and in mine it is the days of my tribulation which are about to cease."

CCXCIV. Another ascetic was asked, "Who is the Good One?" And he replied, "The Good One is He against Whom ye sin hourly, and Who promiseth to forgive you if ye repent of your evil deeds."

CCXCV. Another sage said, "When thou sinnest thou sinnest against thy Lord, Who feedeth thee; it is meet that thou shouldst fear Him."

CCXCVI. Another ascetic said, "What resemblance is there between those from whom the world hath fled and to whose hands the desirable things thereof come not, even though they struggle hard to possess them, and those who, being in a prosperous condition as regards the things of this world, have fled from the world?"

CCXCVII. Another ascetic said, "It is very much better for a man that his Lord should ask him, saying, Why hast thou not done [such and such a thing]? than that He should ask him, Why hast thou done [such and such a thing]? That is to say, it were better for a man to do neither righteousness nor evil, than that he should do nothing but sin.

CCXCVIII. Another ascetic was asked, "What is this world?" And he replied, "A laughing-stock to him that hath had experience thereof."

CCXCIX. Another ascetic was asked, "What man is wise?" And he replied, "He that doth not rejoice in the possession of the [things of the] world."

CCC. Another ascetic stood over the grave of a certain highway robber and said, "O mighty man, how is it that thou canst rest having slain so many souls? Behold, I could not rest [were I thee]."

CCCI. Another ascetic was asked, "Unto what is the world like?" And he replied, "It is too contemptible to be compared with anything whatsoever, for everything which is beyond the world is better than it."

CCCII. Another ascetic said to the children of men when he was admonishing them, "It is not that which ye know not which we teach you, but we remind you of that which ye well know."

CCCIII. A thief went to the abode of another ascetic by night, and finding nothing there he said to him, "O thou ascetic, where are thy possessions?" And he replied, "I have hidden them in the house above," meaning in heaven.

CCCIV. Unto another ascetic it was said, "How is it that thou dost never cast blame upon any man?" And he replied, "Because I myself am not entirely free from blame."

CCCV. To another ascetic it was said by a certain nobleman, "How is it that thou dost never come to visit us?" And he replied, "Because thou hast not with thee that which I seek to have, neither have I with me anything which I fear thou wilt want to carry off from me."

CCCVI. Another ascetic used to say, "Consider, now, and see of what benefit is wealth to those who have it. They have [always before them] the fear of the governor, and the care and anxiety [of keeping it] from thieves, and the envy of friends, and the hatred of the son who is waiting anxiously to inherit by [his father's] death."

CCCVII. Another ascetic used to say, "The members of a man are the armour of God with any one of which He can slay him;" that is to say, by the injury and destruction which appertain naturally to each member.

CCCVIII. Another ascetic used to say, "Thou shouldst increase thy fear of the Lord as if thou hadst never wrought righteousness, and thy hope in Him shall increase in thee in proportion as thou dost not commit sin."

CCCIX. Another ascetic said, "Teachers are the physicians of the people, and lusts are the diseases thereof. If a physician hath not the power to remove sickness from himself he is a fool to imagine that he can heal other folk." It seems as if this saying had been stolen from the Holy Gospel wherein it saith, Physician, heal thyself.¹

CCCX. When certain folk went to the abode of another ascetic they did not find in his house even a mat whereon to sit, and while they were marvelling that it was thus he said to them, "If we had been going to remain here² we should have spread the place with the finest carpets."

CCCXI. Another ascetic said, "Paradise was our first abode, and since we have been driven out therefrom we earnestly desire to return thither; therefore do we crave to return to the place which gave us birth, and not to an alien country."

CCCXII. Another ascetic said, "He that renounceth the world is not worthy to be praised overmuch, because, although for a short time he doth not voluntarily renounce it, after a little he is made to do so involuntarily."

¹ This remark may be that of a scribe. Compare St. Luke iv. 23.

² I.e., "If we were not going to die."

CCCXIII. Another ascetic wrote to a fellow ascetic and asked him to shew him what this world resembled, and what that which is to come will be like, and he wrote to him, saying, "This world is a sleep, and the world which is to come is the waking. Therefore, although we are unconscious thereof, it is of dreams that our conversation consisteth; but when we wake up we find most certainly that all the things which are here are phantoms."

CCCXIV. Unto another ascetic it was said, "Why, since thou art not sick and art not old, dost thou always lean upon a staff? He replied, Because I am [travelling] along a road, and I look forward to the pleasant time when I shall be removed therefrom, and it is manifest that a staff belongeth to the equipment of him that desireth to journey along a road."

CCCXV. Another ascetic said, "If thou wishest to comprehend the folly of [holding] worldly possessions, consider carefully that it is only the fools who gather them together, for good and excellent men are without them."

CCCXVI. Another ascetic said, "It is meet for a man to make provision for himself in this world according to the time which he shall abide therein, and also for the world which is to come according to the time which he shall abide therein."

CCCXVII. Another ascetic when he was passing by saw a certain man standing in the cemetery by the side of a sepulchral monument, and he said to him, "Observe, O man, that the place wherein thou standest is between two marvellous storehouses; in one are heaped up the children of men, and in the other are gathered together the things which they desired."

CCCXVIII. Unto another ascetic who lived in the cemetery it was said, "Why dwellest thou here?" And he replied, "I wish to distinguish between the bones of kings and those of their servants, but they cannot be distinguished, for they are all alike."

CCCXIX. Unto another ascetic the king said, "Ask whatsoever thou wishest me to give to thee." He replied, "[Give me] the life which is everlasting, and the youth which is without old age, riches which are never ending, and the joy which is not mingled with sorrow." And the

king said, "I have not power over these things to give them to thee," whereon the ascetic replied, "Leave me, then, to ask them of Him that hath power over them," that is to say, from God in the world to come.

CCCXX. Another ascetic used to say, "If God had said that He was about to punish one man only, I should have been horribly afraid lest I might be that man; and similarly, if He had said that He was about to shew mercy on one man only I should not have despaired of being that man. For although God is strong and His judgment is terrible, yet His mercies are exceedingly manifold."

CCCXXI. Another sage said, "Whatsoever thou wishest to possess not to-morrow, that let go to-day; and that which thou wouldst have to-morrow possess thou thyself thereof this day."

CCCXXII. Another sage said unto certain rich men, "I swear to you, by God, that when ye go forth from this world ye will lust for nothing further, except to return to the world, and to work righteousness that ye may be reckoned worthy of happiness and be delivered from punishment. Do righteousness then in the world before ye go out therefrom, for ye will never have the power to return here again."

CCCXXIII. Another ascetic used to say, "For forty years I have been always entreating God to fulfil for me one request, and He hath not granted it." And it was said to him, "What is the request for which thou hast petitioned and which hath not been granted unto thee?" And he replied, "That I might not be meditating on that which would not profit me."

CCCXXIV. Another ascetic used to say, "In Gehenna there is no punishment more severe for those who are there than the knowledge which they have that there is no end to their punishment; and similarly those who dwell in Paradise have no greater happiness than the knowledge that their glory and triumph are everlasting."

THE NINTH CHAPTER. PROFITABLE SAYINGS OF PHYSICIANS AND LEGENDS ATTRIBUTED TO THEM

CCCXXV. It is said that Ardashîr, the king of the Persians, never permitted a physician to prescribe for him until he had had him stung by a viper; if he was able to heal himself he gave him his daily food and the physician entered his service.

CCCXXVI. It was said unto a certain physician by a sick man, "I have eaten several chickens," and the physician said to him, "One chicken would have been sufficient for thee." The sick man said, "But chickens do no harm," and the physician answered, "If a man should put on ten silk garments, one over the other, he would imagine that he was clothed in a thick cloak."

CCCXXVII. Dixit medicus alius questo cuidam quia saepe cum feminis coire nequibat, "Carne vescere, vinum bibe, medicamentis utere in Venerem incitantibus, cum petulantibus versare ac lascivis—sic demum virum te praestare poteris."

CCCXXXIII. Medicus quidam cui dixerat aliquis, "Clamosis ventris inflationibus afficior et ructationibus flatuosis," respondit, "Ventrem certe cum strepitu inflant pedita quae nequeunt evadere: de flatuosis tamen ructationibus non adhuc legi quid sint."

CCCXXIX. A physician said, "The food which is not digested devoureth him that eateth it; eat then food in moderation that thou mayest have the power to digest it."

CCCXXX. A physician used to say, "He who exerciseth the duty of marriage overmuch multiplieth the destruction of the oil of the lamp of his life; but, however, if he wisheth to increase it let him do so, or if he pleaseth let him diminish it."

CCCXXXI. Another physician said, "It is meet for a physician to heal every sick person with medicines which are strange to him, but his diet

must consist of things which he hath been in the habit of taking, because his nature is familiarized with, them and will receive them; for by strange food it is harmed and it revolteth at it."

CCCXXXII. Another physician at the time of his death said unto his disciples, "Behold, he that prolongeth his sleep, and keepeth his stomach soft and his skin moist, his life shall be long."

CCCXXXIII. Another physician said, "That which is rarely used for its injurious qualities is better than that which is frequently used for the benefits [which it giveth]."

CCCXXXIV. Another physician said, "If we had been created from one elemental substance we should never be sick, for there would not have been mingled therewith any other natural element which would work in opposition thereto."

CCCXXXV. A physician said unto a certain man who came to him to be healed, "See now, behold we are three, I, and thou, and the sickness. Therefore if thou wilt take my side we two shall be easily able to conquer the one which is by itself; but if thou forsakest me and cleavest thereunto, I by myself shall not be able to overcome the two of you." That is to say, "If thou wilt not take care, and wilt eat meats, and wilt act in other harmful ways which strengthen the disease [I cannot cure thee]."

CCCXXXVI. *Medicus olim quidam roganti, "Cathartica sumenti cur corpus sollicitatur?" respondit, "Quia et in conclavi verrendo crescit pulvis."*

CCCXXXVII. When a certain physician went to visit a prince who was grievously sick, he felt his windpipe and looked at his urine, but could find in him no sign of bodily disease. Then he began to introduce love stories, and he saw that the beat of his pulse was changed, and he straightway enquired if he had been in the habit of holding converse with the servants out of doors. And the servants said to him, "He hath never been in the habit of going out." Then the physician said, "Let all the handmaidens come forth and pass before him," and they went by one by one, and straightway when a certain handmaiden drew nigh to him a mighty change took place in his pulse and breathing. Thus the physician was confirmed in his opinion, and he told the king his story and the handmaiden was given to him, and he was healed of his sickness.

CCCXXXVIII. Another physician was asked, "Why doth a dead man become heavy?" And he replied, "Because [in the human body] two substances are united; the light substance which beareth, and the heavy substance which is borne. When the light substance departeth the weight of that which is heavy increaseth."

CCCXXXIX. Another physician said, "The waste products of the body are these:—That which is in the head, [which is expelled] by means of the hair; that which is in the stomach, by vomiting; that which is under the skin, by perspiration; and that which is deep down and below the arteries, by the door of the blood."

CCCXL. Another physician said, "The seat of the phlegm is in the stomach and its dominion is in the breast; the seat of the blood is the heart and its dominion is in the head; the seat of red bile is in the gall bladder and its dominion is in the liver; and the seat of black bile is in the spleen and its dominion is in the heart."

CCCXLI. Another physician wishing to demonstrate the difficulty of the art of healing said, "Life is short but art is long, time presseth, experimenting is incautious, and finality is difficult [of attainment]."

CCCXLII. Another physician said, "Divide thy days into three seasons:—A season for work, that is to say for visiting the sick; a season for study, that is to say for reading medical books; and a season for bodily recreation."

CCCXLIII. A certain physician had a son who was hard of understanding, and who was incapable of receiving instruction. And his wife said to him, "Since this son was [begotten by] thee how is it that he cannot receive instruction as thou canst?" And he replied, "The mind, that which receiveth instruction, was not from me."

CCCXLIV. When a sick man asked a certain physician, who was wont to jest, about a drug he said to him, "Take an emollient of violet which hath grown as large as a clod of dung, and pour upon it as much boiling water as the juice which cometh out from a gourd; macerate them together until the mixture becometh like fat (or oil) and drink it." The sick man said to him, "Perhaps if I were beaten with a hundred stripes I might do the things which thou sayest, but without the stripes I never will."

CCCXLV. Another physician used to say, "Moderation is the friend of Nature and by it is health preserved; therefore let your toils, and meals, and motions, and intercourse with women be in moderation."

CCCXLVI. Another physician said, "The bodies which have not experienced sickness are not remote from danger."

CCCXLVII. Another physician was asked, "What is the aim and end of the art of healing?" He replied, "The preservation of health in [our] equals and friends, and the driving of sickness into [our] adversaries."

CCCXLVIII. Another physician said, "There are three great sins in the art of healing:—The administration of a poisonous drug, the administration of the medicine of barrenness, and the administration of the drug which expelleth the child from the womb."

CCCXLIX. Another physician said, "Nature is the minister of the soul in the formation of the body, and in the depicting of its designs, and in the preparation of its foods; and it draweth in nourishment and keepeth it, though it expelleth therefrom the useless superfluity; and it digesteth it and throweth it into the member which is to be nourished."

CCCL. To another physician it was said, "Beans in their skins easily build up (?) the body." And he replied, "Perhaps in the stomachs of those who are hungry, otherwise they digest better without their skins."

CCCLI. Another story. When the physicians of the Greek kings became sick the kings did not support them any longer.

CCCLII. [Another] story. When the Arab kings were about to employ a physician and wished to try [his skill], they were wont to bring to him a certain table and to order him to compound therefrom a food which would strengthen the bodies of [their] warriors, and a food which would heal the sick, and a food which would bring sickness and death upon the enemy; if he were able to do [these things] they then employed him.

CCCLIII. [Another] story. When a certain man came to a physician to enquire of him concerning an attack of colic which had come upon him, the physician said to him, "Eat a few thorns." And the man brought out ink and paper to write upon and said to the physician, "What dost thou advise?" And the physician said unto him, "Eat a few thorns, together

with a bushel of barley." And the man said, "Thou saidst nothing at all about barley at first," and the physician replied to him, "No, I did not, for I did not know until this moment that thou wert an ass."

CCCLIV. Dixit quidam scurrae urbano, "Matris meae gula assidue aliquid colligit: flagratque et constricta est." Respondit autem scurra, "Si venter uxoris tuae ad matris gulam similitudine accederet, multum proficeres."

CCCLV. A certain actor said unto a jesting physician, "The colic hath got hold of the ends of my hair, and my belly is becoming black." The physician said to him, "Shave thy head and thy beard and thou wilt never again have colic in the ends of thy hair; and as for the duskiness of thy belly, paint it with antimony and thou wilt be gratified therewith."

CCCLVI. When a certain jesting physician was passing by the door of a bath he saw a naked man coming out, and he said to him, "Why art thou going forth naked? go in lest thou suffer harm." And the man said, "They have stolen my clothes, and I am going out to seek for them;" and the physician said, "Let me bleed thee, then, that thy affliction may be diminished."

CCCLVII. Unto another physician it was said, "What is the [most] convenient time for eating," and he replied, "To him that hath anything to eat, when he is hungry, and to him that hath nothing, when he findeth [food]."

CCCLVIII. When a physician went in to visit a certain simple man and asked him, "How dost thou think thou art to-day? and what dost thou wish for?" he replied, "I am very well, but I am longing for some snow to eat." The physician said to him, "Snow is not a suitable thing for thee, for it will make thee cough." The sick man said to him, "Only let me suck the water from it, and I will throw away the rest of it even as I do with an apple."

CCCLIX. When a certain physician was sitting at meat at the table of a certain sophist a servant offered him fish and milk, and the physician began to eat one of them. Then the sophist said unto him, "Why dost thou not also eat of this dish which is very good?" and the physician replied, "I am afraid to do so, because the two together are not wholesome." And the sophist said, "This being so thou must, now,

perforce solve one of the two following propositions:—They are either antagonistic to each other when mixed together, or they are equal; now if they be antagonistic it is meet that one of them should be the bane of the other, and if they are equal why are they injurious when mixed together and when separate are not so? the mixture being injurious in each case." With such words did the sophist shut the mouth of the physician. But the truth of the dispute is that when they are gathered together they destroy each other through the properties which they possess, and thus they together become unwholesome, even without being mixed together.

CCCLX. When a certain man with a delicate stomach came to a physician, he asked him the reason why he was sick, and he replied, "I have eaten burnt bread." And the physician said unto him, "Paint thine eyes with stibium or with something that will sharpen thy vision." And the man said, "I did not ask thee about mine eyes, but about my belly;" and the physician said to him, "I know that, but I say unto thee, Paint thine eyes¹ with something that will sharpen thy vision, in order that thou mayest observe the bread which is burnt and mayest not eat of it."

CCCLXI. Another physician said, "It is not right for a man to hold intercourse with fools, because in the place where they sit fever cleaveth to the soul, even as the sitting under the shadow of nut trees inflameth the body."

CCCLXII. While a physician was sitting in the presence of a certain king, a nobleman to whom a child had been newly born, entered, and the king asked him, "How is the child? and how old is he?" The nobleman replied, "The child is well, but at present he is only seven days old." And the physician said to him, "What manner of understanding hath he?" And the nobleman answered, "Didst thou not hear me tell the king that he is only seven days old? Why dost thou enquire of me concerning his intelligence?" The physician said to him, "The child, whose looks are keen and whose crying is little, evidently hath understanding."

CCCLXIII. A certain man who had once been a painter left off painting and became a physician. And when it was said to him, "Why hast thou done this?" he replied, "The errors [made] in painting [all] eyes see and scrutinize; but the mistakes of the healing art the ground covereth."

¹ For ###, read ###.

CCCLXIV. Another physician was asked concerning [the use of] a certain laxative drug, and he replied, "It is [like] an arrow which is cast into the belly in the darkness. Now, if it falleth upon something which is effete and it expelleth it, then healing followeth its use; but if it doth not fall upon something effete, it must necessarily fall upon something which is in a healthy condition, and then it will do harm and cause disease."

CCCLXV. Another physician on being asked concerning a certain laxative drug, said, "It is like soap, which although it cleanseth also destroyeth things, especially the weak and the old."

CCCLXVI. Another physician when consulted by a certain man because his food did not digest in his stomach, said to him, "Eat it when it hath already been digested," that is to say, "Cook it well."

CCCLXVII. A physician said to a certain sick man, "Thou must eat neither fish nor flesh," and the man said to him, "If I had eaten them formerly I should not probably have been sick."

CCCLXVIII. A physician, seeing a man who had had a blow on the head about to bind it up with salt and carraway seeds, said to him, "Art thou going to send down thine head to the oven to be baked?"

THE TENTH CHAPTER. CHOICE STORIES OF THE SPEECH OF IRRATIONAL BEASTS

CCCLXIX. A fox was making sport of a lioness and mocking her because she only gave birth to one whelp a year. "Very true", replied the lioness, "but he is a lion."

CCCLXX. A gazelle or a fox said, "I am able easily to run faster than any hound of the chase, for if I can not how, when I am pursued, can I turn round and see the beards of the huntsmen who are galloping and shouting and abusing each other? and I make a laughing-stock of their stupidity because no hound of the turf hath ever been able to overtake me."

CCCLXXI. A wolf, and a fox, and a lion having banded themselves together snared a goat, and a stag, and a hare. And the lion said to the wolf, "Divide these amongst us." The wolf said, "The goat is for thee, the stag is for me, and the hare is for the fox;" and when the lion heard these words he became wroth and leaped upon the wolf and choked him. Then he said to the fox, "Do thou divide [the spoil]." And the fox said to him, "The goat is for thy breakfast, the hare for thy lunch, and the stag for thy supper;" and the lion said to him, "Whence hast thou learned to make such an equitable division?" The fox replied, "From this wolf which lieth before thee, O my lord the king."

CCCXXII. A wolf, and a fox, and a hare found a lamb, and they said to each other, "He that is the oldest amongst us shall eat him." The hare said, "I was born before God created the heavens and the earth;" and the fox said, "Thou art right indeed, for I was present when thou wert born;" and the wolf at the same time seizing the lamb, said, "My stature and capacity are witnesses that I am older than you both," so he ate the lamb.

CCCLXXIII. It was said to a fox, "Wilt thou accept one hundred *dinârs*¹ and take [this] letter addressed to a dog?" He replied, "The remuneration would be far too much, but I cannot travel along a road which droppeth with blood".

¹ I.e., about fifty shillings of our money.

CCCLXXIV. Two foxes having been snared together, one of them said to his neighbour, "Where shall we meet together again?" He replied, "In the dead meat market three days hence."

CCCLXXV. A certain dog in passing by a mosque defiled it, and when an ape who was squatting there saw him and said to him, "Dost thou not tremble before God that thou darest to defile the mosque?" the dog said to him, "Yea, thou hast been created in such a beautiful form by Him, that thine heart would [naturally] be grieved for His house and thou wouldst, of course, spare it thyself."

CCCLXXVI. A goat was standing on a roof and abusing a wolf, when the wolf replied, "It is not thou that art abusing me but it is the place whereon thou standest."

CCCLXXVII. A certain man having taken hold upon a thorn bush to mount a wall was caught thereby, and he began to abuse it; and the thorn bush said to him, "Abuse thyself because thou didst wish to take hold upon that which layeth hold upon everything."

CCCLXXVIII. A certain king was in company with one of his philosophers, and as they passed through a ruined village they saw there two owls; and he said to the philosopher, "What are these birds saying to each other?" And the philosopher said, "I understand something of what they are saying, and if thou wilt swear unto me that thou wilt do me no harm, I will shew thee." And when the king had sworn to him, the philosopher said, "One of the owls hath a son and the other a daughter, and they wish to arrange a marriage between them. The owl with the daughter is willing to give her one hundred ruined [villages] as a dowry, but the other one will not accept them and demandeth more. The father of the daughter having no more to give promiseth his fellow, saying, 'If this king ruleth his kingdom in the way in which he is now ruling it for one year more, I will give thee a thousand ruined [villages].'" When the king heard this he was rebuked, and he began to work righteousness.

CCCLXXIX. While a certain dog was pursuing a gazelle, the gazelle said unto him, "Thou art not able to catch me", and the dog said, "Why not?" The gazelle said to him, "Because I run for my life, but thou for thy master."

CCCLXXX. A scarabaeus said to its mother, "Whithersoever I go men spit upon me." Its mother replied, "It is because thy beauty and smell are pleasant."

CCCLXXXI. When a fox was being hotly pursued by a dog he said to him, "Thou art not acting thus towards me because of thy strength but because of my feebleness; if this be not so, go and try [to catch] a wolf."

CCCLXXXII. A house-sparrow having been caught by a man said to him, "What wouldst thou do with me?" and he replied, "I am going to kill and eat thee." The sparrow said to him, "How can the little flesh which is on my body satisfy thee? Only promise that thou wilt let me go and I will teach thee three things which will be much better for thee than eating me. The first thing I will teach thee whilst I am still in thine hands; the second when I am on a tree; and the third when I am on a rock." The birdcatcher said, "Teach me [the first] now." And the bird said, "Take heed that thou dost not repent of a thing which is past," whereupon the birdcatcher let the sparrow go free. And when the sparrow was sitting on a tree, he said, "Take heed that thou dost not believe in that which cannot happen." And then he began to fly away, saying, "O fool, if thou hadst killed me thou wouldst have found in my stomach two precious stones which are beyond price." And the birdcatcher began to bite his fingers and said, "Teach me the third thing before thou fliest away." Then the bird said to him, "Since thou hast forgotten the two things which I have taught thee what will it profit thee if I teach thee the third? Did I not say, 'Thou shalt not repent over 'that which is past,' and, 'Thou shalt not believe in 'that which cannot be?' whenever was a precious stone seen in the stomach of a sparrow?"

CCCLXXXIII. A certain hawk was vexing a cock with abuse and saying, "Thou hast no love for man at all. For behold men with their own hands cause thee to be begotten, and they feed thee, and they prepare hens to be thy wives, and they do all manner of good unto thee. Yet when they leave thee by thyself a little time thou takest to flight, and thou flauntest about, and thou goest up upon the walls, and thou crowest loudly, and thou wilt not return to the house wherein thou hast been reared. But as for me, having taken me from my native rock they starve me, and when they have trained me for a short time, they turn me loose and I must go off by myself, and get quarry, and bring it to them, although if I wished I

need not come back." The cock said unto him, "Thou dost not understand the matter clearly. If thou didst see as many hawks spitted on short skewers roasting before the fire as I see chickens, thou wouldst never come back when once thou hadst escaped."

CCCLXXXIV. Another fox taught its young, saying, "When ye see the vines loaded with grapes, and the keeper asleep, and the river full of water with waves thereon, and the moon shining, rejoice and be glad, for your luck hath arisen, and ye may feed yourselves."

CCCLXXXV. Another fox said, "If the fox-grapes were sweet they would not be left out in the open, without keepers, by mankind."

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER. STORIES OF THOSE WHOSE DREAMS AND DIVINATIONS HAVE COME TRUE

CCCLXXXVI. A certain king saw in his dream that another king who was his enemy had thrown him upon the ground, and he went up and gathered together his wise men and repeated to them what he had seen. And one of the wise men who was more skilful than all the rest said to him, "The dream and the interpretation thereof are as follows. Thou shalt indeed fight with that king and thou shalt overcome him, for thou wert upon the earth, and it was supporting thee and was nigh unto thee, while he was above thee, and his back was towards the sky which was very far away from thee."

CCCLXXXVII. A certain king sent an ambassador to another king who was his enemy, and when he returned the king said to him, "How didst thou find him?" The ambassador said, "I found him sitting on a step with his feet in water." And the king said, "In very truth he shall have dominion over me, and he will make spoil of my wives and daughters, for a step indicateth dominion, and the feet being in the water indicate commerce with women."

CCCLXXXVIII. Another king sent a painter secretly unto another king who was his enemy to paint his portrait and to bring it to him. And when he had painted it and brought it to him, he took the picture and placed it on the cushion (*or* pillow) and said to the philosophers who were able to read characters in faces, "What say ye of the man who hath such features as these?" And they said to him, "There is no need for us to tell thee anything about his features, for inasmuch as thou hast placed him on thy pillow, he will in very truth reign in thy room." And thus it happened.

CCCLXXXIX. Another king gathered together his troops and went forth to make war against his adversary, and as they were passing by a certain village they saw two rams fighting and their owners came and each took his own ram, and they went away. And a wise man said to the king, "Thou wilt neither conquer nor be conquered, but even as thou art, so

wilt thou return." And it came to pass that when they had marched for a few days, a certain report came to the king, and he went back to his own country.

CCCXC. A certain man asked a fortune-teller about a relative of his who had gone to a far country, and of whom for a long time he had heard no news. And it came to pass that whilst they were in the midst of the narrative behold a dead man passed by, being carried on his way to be buried; and his hand was upon his breast. And the fortune-teller said, "He about whom thou askest is dead," whereupon his disciple said to him, "He is not dead, for the dead man who hath his hand on his breast indicateth that it is the dead man himself who is dead and not any one else." And after some time he that had gone away returned.

CCCXCI. They say that in a certain village a troop of devils appeared in the form of men, and they said to the villagers, "Behold, a camel hath strayed away from us give us a man that he may search for him." And when they brought out a man to them to look for the camel, he saw ravens flying about, and he made his escape, and went into the village and said, "In very truth, these are devils and not men; furthermore they have lost no camel." And it came to pass at these words that these men vanished, and they never appeared again.

CCCXCII. A certain ruler had a diviner whose words he wished to prove false. And it came to pass on a certain day that the sheep which he possessed strayed into the wilderness; and he told his diviner to make divination concerning them; and he also commanded his servant, saying, "Whilst I am speaking with the diviner, do thou emit a croak like that of a raven on the roof." Now when the diviner heard the croak, he said, "In very truth highway robbers have stolen the sheep." Thereupon the governor laughed and said, "Thou hast made a mistake, for it was not a raven which croaked, but my servant." The diviner answered, "Now therefore, if it was thy servant who croaked and not a raven, in very truth the shepherd is slain and the flocks are carried off." And when they went to enquire they found that the matter was thus.

CCCXCIII. A certain king said unto a man who used divination on the Sabbath day, "Look [and tell me] if my kingdom shall endure for my son after me, or not;" and he took him by his hand and squeezed it. And the diviner made answer to him, saying, "Thy son will demand overmuch

from the people, and his kingdom shall come to an end, for the pressure of my hand by thee indicateth the oppressive demand for money from the people [by thy son], and, moreover, the Sabbath day whereon thou hast asked the question is a day of cessation from labour according to the old Law."

CCCXCIV. A certain Arab related that once when he was mounted on a camel and was travelling in the desert, he became thirsty, and he took out a water-skin wherefrom to drink; and as he did so a raven croaked in his face, and the water was scattered about in the dust. And being very angry he drew his sword and slit up the skin bottle, and behold, there fell from it a large viper which had made its way therein for the sake of the water, and which had escaped the notice of him that filled the skin. And it came to pass that when the man had travelled a little further he saw the raven alight in the middle of the way, and when he cried out to him he stood up upon a rock, and swooped down upon a large purse full of gold that had been dropped by some merchants.

CCCXCV. Another magician went to a certain king, and said to him, "I saw in my dream a man who said to me, Go and announce to the king that he shall live another eighty years, and behold this shall be a sign unto him:—Behold, he shall see in a dream as if eighty rings [set with] hyacinthine stones were given to him." And when the king heard these words he marvelled and said, "Verily I have seen even as thou hast said;" and he gave him a thousand *dînârs*¹.

CCCXCVI. Another magician who had at home a wife whose name was Zahrâh was once travelling alone in the desert. And having gotten concerning her a suspicion of wrong he began to mutter to himself—just as a man hummeth a tune to himself in the night—several times, "Hath Zahrâh any who committeth adultery with her?" And when by these means his mind had become wholly occupied with the matter, he heard a voice from the desert, saying, "Yes, Nathrêh sleepeth with her." And it came to pass that when he returned to his house, his neighbours came and went into the house to see him. And when they had all departed there remained with him one who prolonged, his converse, and when he also had gone out the magician said to his wife, "Who is this man and what is his name?" His wife replied, "This is Nathrêh who of all the

¹ I.e., about twenty-five pounds sterling.

neighbours is most beloved by our children, and he is exceedingly affectionate to them." Her husband said unto her, "Yea, O woman, out of the desert we have received an account of this man and of his name."

CCCXCVII. A certain man dreamed in his dream that he was frying dung, and he came to an interpreter of dreams that he might explain it for him. And the interpreter said to him, "Give me a *zûzâ*, and I will interpret it for thee;" and the man replied, "If I had a *zûzâ* I would buy fish with it and fry them, and I would not fry dung."

CCCXCVIII. Another interpreter of dreams having gone from Taghrîth (Tekrît)² to Bâbêl (Babylon) it was said to him, "In Tekrît there are many interpreters of dreams, but here we have none; why hast thou left thy native place?" And he replied, "The people of Tekrît will not allow even the gnats to sleep, therefore they do not have many dreams; consequently there is no work for us."

CCCXCIX. Another magician saw a certain dead³ thief in a dream, and he said to him, "What hath God done to thee?" He replied, "For every man whom I have killed He hath slain me ten times." But when on another night the magician saw the same dream again, and asked him the same question again, the thief replied to him, "How often wilt thou weary me, O son of a whore? I know that I answered thy question once."

CCCC. Another magician said, "It is absolutely necessary for a man to resemble his father, either in his head, or in his voice, or in his gait."

CCCCI. Another magician saw a certain comic actor, who had been long dead⁴, in a dream, and he said, "What hath God done to thee?" The actor replied to him, saying, "O fool, what dost thou imagine hath done to me? Thinkest thou that He hath a daughter to whom He hath married me? He hath done unto me that which He doeth unto all men who die."

CCCCII. The wife of a certain man saw in her dream as if a man was saying to her, "Wouldst thou rather have ten ordinary children, or three which should be as ten?" And having made no answer to him she awoke and related the dream to her husband, who said unto her, "If thou seest again him that spake unto thee, thou shalt say unto him, Nay, but I

² A city on the west bank of the Tigris about two days' journey below Mōṣul (Nineveh).

³ Read ###.

⁴ Read ###.

would rather "have three children who should be as ten." And it came to pass on the following night, when the woman was asleep, that she saw again him that had asked her the question, and she said that which her husband had instructed her to say. And after some time she gave birth to three sons, one after the other, and the three of them became captains of thousands and men famous in the world.

CCCCIII. A certain man had a virgin daughter who was skilled in divination, and a man who had lost a horse went to her that she might divine for him [where he was]; and when she had divined, she looked in the face of the man, and blushed, and became shamefaced, and covered her face, and she was unable to speak to the man. And when her father saw her, he said to the man, "My daughter hath divined, and she hath shewn that thou wilt find thy horse; let her then become thy wife and take her to thy house, because she is so shamefaced in thy presence." And it came to pass that when the man had gone forth and searched for his horse he found it, and he was hot with love for the young woman, and he sent for her, and married her.

CCCCIV. As two merchants were going about in a certain city to amuse themselves they saw a certain woman sitting in the market with her hair dishevelled, and many people were gathered together about her. And one of the two merchants began to laugh and to make a mock of the woman, whereupon she lifted up her head and said, "Mark, now, O thou man, who laughest, and believe [what I say]; thou shalt not go forth from this city until thou art dead; and this man, thy friend who is with thee, shall take to wife the handmaiden that thou lovest as thine own soul." And it came to pass that after a few days he in truth sickened and died, and the other man took the handmaiden.

CCCCV. A certain man came to an interpreter of dreams, carrying a sack on his shoulder, and he said, "I saw in my dream as if I were tying up with cords the necks of skin-bags with great violence." And the interpreter of dreams said to him, "Hast thou in very truth seen this dream?" And the man said, "Yea, indeed, I have seen it." Then the interpreter of dreams said to the people who were round about him, "This is the man who stealeth children and strangleth them, and strippeth their clothes from off them; and if ye search his sack ye will find the cords for strangling [them]." And when they had searched it,

they found that the matter was so, and they took the man and they delivered him to the judge, and they crucified him.

CCCCVI. Another man drew nigh to an interpreter of dreams and said, "I saw in my dream as if I had upon my knees a child, and he was uttering cries. The interpreter of dreams saith to him, Dost thou play upon the harp? [for if thou dost], do not occupy thyself therewith again."

CCCCVII. Dixit alius quidam somniorum interpreti, "Dormienti mihi duo panes in manibus visi sunt quorum de utroque sumebam." Responsum est "Tu quidem cum duabus unâ matre natis coire soles."

CCCCVIII. Dixit mercator quidam somniorum interpreti, "Dormienti mihi canis rufus commensalis epulari visus est." Responsum est, "Scythicum servum habes qui uxori tuae haud secus quam tu, inire solet." Quod, rem percontatus, verum esse intellexit.

CCCCIX. Dixit alius quidam somniorum interpreti, "Dormiens favum edere ad focum visus sum et postea mel quod e favo effluxerat." Cui responsum est, "Deorum igitur iram pertimesce et coire desine cum istâ quae te lactavit."

CCCCX. A certain woman said to one of the wise men, "I saw in my dream that a black cat went into my husband's belly, and that it brought forth something therefrom which it ate." He said to her, "If thy dream be really thus, in the coming night a certain black thief will break into thy husband's shop and will steal therefrom a hundred and fifteen *zûzê*⁵." And when that day was passed and the night had come, the man's shop was broken into, and that exact sum of money was found to have been stolen. And when the man who heated the bath had captured the black man and beaten him, he confessed that it was he who had broken into the shop. And when the people asked the interpreter of dreams, saying, "How couldst thou [find] out these things by divination?" he said, "The interpretation of cat is a thief, and the blackness thereof was an indication of the colour of the thief; the belly indicated a storehouse, and the number of the *zûzê* was indicated by the numerical values of the letters which form the word 'cat'⁶."

⁵ I.e., about £2.17.6 of our money.

⁶ The Syriac word is ###, i.e., ### = 100, ### = 9, and ### = 6: total 115.

CCCCXI. Dixit alius quidam somniorum interpreti, "Dormienti mihi vestes sanguine perfundi visi sunt quem cum in puteal expresseram, iterum perfundebantur." Cui responsum est, "Nefasto cum quadam coitu diu fruitus es at nondum tui poenituit."

CCCCXII. A certain man's wife saw in a dream a dead woman, and she asked her, saying, "My daughter, what deed is most beloved by God?" And she replied, "He that distributeth nuts to the poor." Now when she repeated this to the interpreter he said to her, "Thou hast hidden treasure laid up under the ground, go and distribute it among the poor and needy, for nuts are symbolic of treasure, both by the similarity of their name⁷ and also by the similarity of action, for when a man draweth nigh to a nut it is noised abroad and cannot be hidden; even so also is it with treasure."

⁷ *Gaiwzâ* = "nut", and *gazzâ* "treasure".

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER. STORIES ABOUT WEALTHY AND LIBERAL AND GENEROUS MEN

CCCCXIII. A certain poet rebuked a certain king in the following words, saying, "I made a mistake in praising him having drunk wine from out of his cups, "For evil lieth in ambush in his cups, and his walls are built upon it." Now when the king heard these words he was neither grieved nor angry, but he sent to him a thousand *dînârs*, and said to him, "Spend these on thy supper, and come not inside our walls lest the evil which is in our cups meeteth thee."

CCCCXIV. The wife of a certain liberal and wealthy man said to him, "I have never seen any behaviour worse than that of thy brethren, for in the time of thy prosperity they come round about thee, but in the time of thy poverty and misery they kept aloof from thee." He replied to her, "This ariseth from the nicety of their discretion, because they do not wish to be a weight upon us when our hand is forced to give."

CCCCXV. A man came to a certain liberal man and asked alms of him, and he unwittingly set the end of the stick upon which he rested upon his toe, and leaned his weight upon it. And when the rich man had granted him his request and the beggar had gone, those who were about him said, "How couldst thou bear him to put the end of his stick on thy toe with-out thy saying a word?" He replied, "I was afraid to say anything to him, lest being ashamed he would not condescend to ask [anything of me]."

CCCCXVI. A certain king whilst riding through the market heard the voice of a woman calling to her son by the royal name, and he said, "Who is this that hath the same name as the king? Give him one hundred *dînârs*." Thus it came to pass that every woman who bore a male child used to call it by the king's name, and she went and received a hundred *dînârs*.

CCCCXVII. A certain wealthy man having been sick for some days, no man came in to visit him. And he said to those who were round about him, "How is it that no man cometh to me?" They said to him, "They are

afraid because of the debts which thou hast against them, and fear lest thou shouldst remember them and shouldst demand the payment thereof from them." When he heard these words he said to the criers, "Go ye forth and cry in the markets, saying, I, so and so, hereby testify that no man shall be held to be in debt to me, neither during my lifetime nor to my children after me." Thus he made a present of several thousands of pieces of silver in one day to the people.

CCCCXVIII. Another rich man having been asked by a poor man for a piece of silver, and not having one with him, wrote him an order with his own hand, saying that he owed him two pieces of silver until the end of the month, thus giving [them] to him.

CCCCIX. Another wealthy merchant bought a maiden for sixty thousand pieces of silver in the market, and he wanted a beast whereon she could ride and go with him to his house; and as at the moment there was no animal ready a certain soldier brought his mule to her to ride upon. And when she was mounted he that had bought her said unto him that had lent her his beast to ride, "She shall be thine, and she shall go with thee to thine house." And the soldier being bashful and hardly liking to accept her, her master swore that neither the maid nor the price thereof should come into his possession; and, thus he made a gift [worth] sixty thousand *zûzê* in a moment¹.

CCCCXX. Another man brought a gift to a certain king, and having accepted it the king was sad. And when he was asked why he was sad, he replied, "How can I help being sad, for, behold, every time that I give this man the price thereof, he will only consider it to be what he hath given to me. Therefore it is meet for kings to give rather than that gifts should be made to them."

CCCCXXI. A certain player of music asked a king to give him something which he could ride, and the king commanded them to give him a camel, and a horse, and a mule, and an ass, and a maiden, saying to him, "If we could find anything else which could be ridden we would have given it to thee."

CCCCXXII. A poet asked a certain king to give him [some] flour, but he did not give it to him. And when the report thereof reached a certain

¹ I.e., £ 1500, if we reckon the *zûzâ* at sixpence.

neighbouring king he sent the poet a sack of flour, wherein were one thousand *dînârs*, and he wrote to him, saying, "We "have sent thee flour to eat, together with a thousand *dînârs* which thou mayest spend in purchasing other things that may be needed by thee."

CCCCXXIII. Another man dwelt in the neighbourhood of a certain rich man, and he wished to sell his house. And when some one came to buy it the owner of the house said, "And how much wilt thou give extra for the wealthy man who liveth in the neighbourhood?" The would-be buyer said to him, "How canst thou imagine that thou oughtest to receive extra money because of the wealthy man in the neighbourhood?" The owner of the house said, "Wilt thou not purchase from me [this] neighbourship? Now everything which thou lackest he would have supplied thee with, and whenever thou wert overburdened he would have set thee free. Go, thou art not worthy to buy my house." And it came to pass that when the rich man heard [these things], he sent to the owner of the house one thousand *dînârs*, saying, "Spend whatsoever thou needest to spend, but do not sell thy house."

CCCCXXIV. Another rich man said unto a certain needy man who had asked a gift from him, "Go and ask so and so, for he hath never looked upon the back of the man who went without a gift from him."

CCCCXXV. A certain king, wishing to go forth on a journey of pleasure, said to one of those who desired to go forth with him, "See what money I have in the treasury, and let the governors thereof allow thee to take some, and thou shalt come forth with us." And the man went and took nine hundred thousand pieces of silver and came back and kissed the king's hand, saying, "I have taken nine hundred thousand pieces of silver;" and he began to return thanks [to the king]. And when he had gone out, the king said to those who were about him, "What have I said to him? [I told him] to take the money and to come forth with us that he might spend it upon what we needed, but he thought that I had given it as a gift to him. As, however, he has thought thus, even as he hath believed so shall it be to him." So he allowed him to have all this sum [of money].

CCCCXXVI. Another rich man being asked, "What is the height of liberality?" said, "For a man to grant the request of the poor man in the time of his need."

CCCCXXVII. A poet having gone to the house of a certain governor and sung a song in his praise, the governor made him a present of much money. And it came to pass that when he wished to depart the governor's servants did not attend him to set him on his way, neither did they pay attention unto him [when he called]. And when he began to reprove them for behaving thus, the servants said unto him, "We do not consider that we are obliged to wait upon him that is about to leave us, but only upon him that arriveth, and we rejoyce more in him that cometh than in him that goeth away, because we are accustomed to receive travellers only." Then the poet, wondering at their intelligence, said, "Ye are much more worthy of praise than your master."

CCCCXXVIII. A certain lawyer related [the following story]. "There were three of us students together, and each of us invested ten [talents] of silver. With their money my companions bought houses, and vineyards, and gardens, but I spent mine on my own wants and in making sundry and divers gifts to the king's servants. And after a little time it was discovered that a robbery had been committed, and the king commanded them to confiscate everything which we possessed, and to shut us all up in prison. Whereupon the king's servants having made entreaty and supplication on my behalf, they brought me out again, but behold, my former companions are still languishing in restraint, and they are begging for alms."

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER. STORIES OF MISERS

CCCCXXIX. A poet said unto a certain avaricious man, "Why dost thou never bid me to a feast with thee?" He replied to him, "Because thou eatest very heartily indeed, besides thou swallowest so hurriedly; and whilst thou art still eating one morsel thou art getting ready for the next." The poet said to him, "What wouldst thou have then? Wouldst thou have me whilst I am eating one morsel to stand up and bow the knee, and then take another?"

CCCCXXX. While a certain miserly man was eating bread with his wife a man came to visit them, and they said unto him, "Command [us]." And he said unto them, "I am quite undone," that is to say, "I am exhausted." And when the miser heard these words he said to his wife, "Doth he mean to say 'I have had my meal¹,' that is to say, 'I have eaten,' but doth not know [how to speak] after the manner of books? "Let us not press him, then, lest he lay in food upon food, and he suffer pain and blame us for urging him [to eat]."

CCCCXXXI. Whilst a certain miser was eating figs a man came to visit him, and immediately he saw him he hid the figs in the skirts of his garments. Then he drew his head inside the body of his garment and cried out to the man from within, saying, "I am fumigating myself from below because I have taken cold; therefore stay outside for a little until I can stand up, and blame [me] not."

CCCCXXXII. Another man relates the following:—"I was sitting at the table of a certain miser when he took a bread-cake in his hand, and said, 'People complain that my bread-cakes are small; now what son of a whore is able to eat the whole of one of these bread-cakes?'"

CCCCXXXIII. Another miser used to say, "If we were to gratify the lust of the poor by granting their requests, we should be worse than they."

CCCCXXXIV. The noblemen of a certain miserly king said unto him, "If thou wishest, be pleased to make a certain sign to us, so that when we see it we may depart from thy presence that thou mayest have rest. Thy

¹ The pun is, of course, on the words ###, and ##.

father had a sign which consisted in his saying, 'Whenever ye please,' and as soon as the nobles heard these words they departed, and thine ancestor straightway threw the sceptre out of his hand. But now what sign wilt thou give us? He said to them, My sign is this:—When I ask the cooks, saying, 'What have ye prepared?' let no man prolong his sitting in my presence."

CCCCXXXV. When the friend of a certain miser went to visit him he brought him some dates, and they began to eat; and every time that the master of the house ate one the friend ate one also. And when the master of the house saw that the dates were coming to an end, he said to his friend, "O thou man of understanding, if every time I eat a date thou doest likewise, where is the reward of my labours? Or perhaps thou dost imagine that I gained these without any exertion?"

CCCCXXXVI. When a number of folk were sitting at table with another miser and he wished to keep them from eating, he said to them, "This is not the kind of food for a man to eat if he wisheth to make a supper."

CCCCXXXVII. Avarus alius quidam aegrotans oleum, medicis jubentibus, hausit: ubi alvum autem pergâsset, servis, "Ite," clamat, "oleum e stercore meo colligite quo ad lucernas incendendo uti possimus."

CCCCXXXVIII. When a certain miser was dying he commanded his son, saying, "In thy dealings with men be thou like unto those who play chess, and who are most careful to keep what is their own, and to take what belongs to others both by skill and craft."

CCCCXXXIX. When a certain miser heard that there lived in the city another miser who was more crafty in miserly acts than himself he went to see him. And when he had gone into his house and had saluted him, the master thereof rose up and went to the market to buy oil to bring in to his guest to eat with the bread; and having drawn nigh to one of the shopmen, the shopman said to him, "I have some oil which is as clear as water." Then the miser said, "I have whole skins full of water in the house," and he quickly returned thereto. And he filled a dish with water and setting it before his guest said unto him, "I went out to buy some oil to bring thee, and I saw that wishing to praise the oil they compared it unto water. Now unless water had been better than oil, they would not

have compared it therewith." And when the traveller heard these words he said, "Verily there hath never been in our time a more clever miser than thou."

CCCCXL. A certain miser used to rise up during the night whilst his children were asleep, and if he saw any of them lying upon his right side he turned him over upon his left, saying, "[I do this] that the food in them may not be too quickly digested, so that they may not wake up in the early hours of the morning and ask for something to eat before anything is ready for them."

CCCCXLI. A certain miser observed that his son was wont to take bread and to place it on the window near which he went out, after which he ate it; and he asked him why he did so. His son said to him, "I can inhale the smell of the baking which cometh out from the windows, therefore I set the bread there that the steam of the smoking meat may pass through it; and then I eat it." Theft his father smote him and said to him, "O son that murmurest, henceforward thou shalt be in the habit of eating bread only."

CCCCXLII. A certain miserly woman was wrangling with a man who was selling flour to her, and she said, "I have taken from thee a *rîlâ*² of flour, and only ninety bread-cakes can be made therefrom." The man said to her, "O woman, whose womanly character hath fled, if thou art wont to make every bread-cake of the size of a mill-stone, wherein have I offended?"

CCCCXLIII. Another man saw the daughter of a certain man saying to a shopman, "My mother saith to thee, 'Take back this loaf and give me a smaller one, but give me some carrots besides.'"

CCCCXLIV. A certain butcher once, when he had no work in the city, went out to one of the villages, and bought a sheep and killed it; and he skinned it as if he were about to sell it. And having waited from morning until evening and nothing had been bought, a certain old woman came to him with a basket of bran and said unto him, "Give me some flesh for this bran, only let it be from a fatty part." Then the butcher being enraged said, "May the village perish in which flesh can be bought for bran." The old woman said to him, "Woe is me, for thou art a man of the

² The Arabic ###, a weight of about a pound.

city with heavy teeth; wilt thou only sell flesh for date-stones?" And it came to pass that when the butcher heard that people could buy meat there with date-stones, he took his dead beast and went back to the city.

CCCCXLV. Another man in going through a certain city wanted some fine wheat flour, and when he asked where it could be bought they said to him, "Here thou wilt only find fine wheat flour at the scent merchants, who sell it for [laying upon] sores."

CCCCXLVI. Another miser said to a dealer, "Give me a piece of cheese for a halfpenny," and the dealer said to him, "For a halfpenny all that thou wilt get of the cheese is a sniff of it."

CCCCXLVII. When a traveller visited a certain miser he said to his handmaiden, "Make ready the sweetmeats that our guest may eat." And she said to him, "We have no honey," and he said to her, "Prepare the silk covered couch for him to recline upon, and sit thou beside him, and chafe and rub his feet."

CCCCXLVIII. Another miser whilst quarrelling violently with his neighbour was asked by a certain man, "Why art thou fighting with him?" He replied to him, "I had eaten a roasted head, and I threw the bones outside my door, so that my friends might rejoice and mine enemies be sorry when they saw in what a luxurious manner I was living; and this fellow rose up and took the bones and threw them before his own door."

CCCCXLIX. Whilst the wife and son of another miser were eating with him at table he said, "Laziness is accursed at the table." His son said to him, "Dost thou now speak concerning me, O my father?" And his father said to him, "Wouldst thou then have thy mother to understand that she was to go out and labour, and then eat?"

CCCCL. Three misers hired a house and dwelt therein together, and they bought the oil for the lamp from a common fund; and they bound up in a napkin the eyes of him that had nothing to contribute to the price of the oil, until they went to sleep and had hung up the lamp.

CCCCLI. A certain author composed a tract wherein he praised miserly conduct, and he brought it unto a king who was a miser. And it came to pass that when the king had read it, he sent to the author, and said unto

him, "We do not wish to give thee any money so that it may not be we who shall destroy thy good and excellent counsels;" thus was the author put to shame by that which he himself had written.

CCCCLII. Another miser having taken a hireling said unto him, "On what terms wilt thou work for me?" and the hireling said, "For the food of my mouth." The miser said to him, "Nay; thou must come down very, very much lower than this [in terms]." And the hireling said to him, "I do not know any way of reducing them lower than this except by fasting the whole of Wednesday, and the whole of Friday until the next day."

CCCCLIII. Another poet was questioned by a man concerning a certain miser, saying, "Who eateth with him at his table?" and the poet replied, "Flies."

CCCCLIV. Another miser said, "That no man may ever say to the angels, Give me some money," or, "Give me something to eat," or, "Give me something to put on," is an abundant gratification for them."

CCCCLV. Unto another miser it was said, "How beautiful the hands look on the table!" and he said, "Only when they are empty."

CCCCLVI. Whilst a certain poor man was sitting by the side of a very rich but mean man, the rich man asked him, "How many persons are there in thy house?" The poor man said to him. "Three daughters and our handmaidens." And when the rich man heard this he wagged his head and bent it down before him, and the poor man thought that he was going to have pity upon him and to give him something. But straightway the rich man lifted up his head and said to him, "I was calculating how much four people could weave; the man who hath four spinning-wheels at work in his house is not a poor man."

CCCCLVII. Another nobleman who was very miserly, while going on a journey to the king, passed through a certain village, and he stayed the night at the house of a certain widow; and [on his departure] he said to her, "This time, if the king giveth me a thousand *dînârs*, I will give thee one *dînâr*." And having gone to the king he gave him five hundred *dînârs*, and on his return the nobleman saw the woman and gave her half a *dînâr*, saying, "Even this half a *dînâr* ought not to come to thee by right, for I did not say to thee, 'If he giveth me five hundred,' and the promise was made in respect of the thousand *dînârs* only."

CCCCLVIII. When a certain man went to the house of a miser he gave him old wine to drink on an empty stomach; and when he had taken the cup he said "Ugh!" And they said unto him, "What is it? Why dost thou not speak?" He replied, "If I were to speak the master of the house would die when he heard of it, for I want something to eat; and if I am silent I shall die by reason of the strength of this wine."

CCCCLIX. A certain miser was in the habit of not eating except at midnight, and when he was asked why he behaved thus, he replied, "At this time the flies have all settled to rest, and a man may remain undisturbed by him that knocketh at the door [begging]."

CCCCLX. A certain philosopher said unto a miser, "Thou imaginest that thou art a miser and a skinflint, but behold, thou art the most liberal of men. For after a short time thou wilt distribute thy wealth among thy heirs who have pleased thee, and also among those who have not pleased thee."

CCCCLXI. A certain miser fell sick, and the day of the crisis of the disease came and he did not sweat. And straightway his servants said to the physician, "Why is this?" The physician said to them, "Go ye and eat of the bread of which he himself is wont to eat, and when he sees you [eating], the sweat will soon break out upon him."

CCCCLXII. Another miser having found a *zûzâ* (*i.e.*, sixpence) in the market, took [it] and threw it into his purse, saying, "It may now be hoped, O *zûzâ*, that thou wilt henceforth have some rest, and that soldiers will not fight and slay each other in war, and that merchants will not act like highwaymen in the roads, and that the daughters of noblemen will not fall into wantonness on thy account."

CCCCLXIII. It is said that certain miserly merchants joined together and set up a common cooking-pot, and each of them passed a different coloured thread through the piece of meat which belonged to him. And when it was cooked each took hold of the thread and brought out his meat, but they divided the broth among them equally.

CCCCLXIV. Once when a *zûzâ* fell into the hands of a certain miser he kissed it and hugged it lovingly and said, "Thou art my father, and my mother, and my brother, and my friend. Through what a number of cities hast thou circulated! What a number of seas hast thou passed through!

How very many rich men hast thou brought to poverty! How very many needy ones hast thou enriched! How very many virgins hast thou corrupted and brought to misery! And how very many daughters of noblemen³ (?) hast thou called to wantonness!" And as he threw the coin into his purse he said, "Go into the place wherefrom thou shalt never again emerge to be troubled."

CCCCLXV. Another miser said to his servant, "Bring hither the table and shut the door," and the servant said, "This is not right. I will first of all shut the door and then I will bring the table, lest, peradventure, while I am putting the table in its place some one will enter before I can shut the door." His master said unto him, "Henceforward, by reason of thine understanding, thou shalt be a free man and not a slave, for thou behavest like a nobleman."

CCCCLXVI. Another man relates the following:—"Once when I was eating a spoonful of food out of a dish with a certain miserly merchant, I saw that the bread which was spread out on his side of the dish was made of fine flour, whilst that which was on my side was made of coarse meal."

CCCCLXVII. Another man relates the following:" Once when I was eating in the company of a rich but miserly man, a cat came up, and I wanted to take a little piece of bread to throw to her; and he said to me, 'Put it down, for this doth not belong to us but to the neighbours.'"

CCCCLXVIII. Another miser had a very beautiful wife, but because he did not provide her with all that she wanted, they were continually falling out. And it came to pass on a certain day, the man being angry with her, that he obtained a separation from her legally, and he gave her her dowry and expelled her from his house. Now the rumour of her and of her beauty spread abroad and reached the king, and he lusted for her, and sent to her to take her to wife. But the woman said that she would not consent to his wish until after he had commanded that she should sit on a chariot, and that her former husband should draw her along in it; and the king commanded that it should be thus. And as they were travelling along the road, she took out a *dînâr* and threw it on the ground, and said to him that had formerly been her husband and was now drawing her

³ The exact meaning of ### is unknown to me.

chariot, "Hand me up the *zûzâ* which I have dropped;" and when he looked on the ground he found the *dînâr*. And he said to her, "This is not a *zûzâ*, but a *dînâr*." She said to him, "Blessed be the Lord who hath prepared a *dînâr* for me to find, seeing that I have lost a *zûzâ*." By the *zûzâ* she referred to the man whom she had lost, and by the *dînâr* to the king whom she had found.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. STORIES OF MEN WHO FOLLOWED DESPISED HANDICRAFTS

CCCCLXIX. A certain man came to a barber and said to him, "Shave my head for me and take heed that thou handle the razor skilfully. Be careful of my ears and do not gash me, and do not leave a hair anywhere." The barber said to him, "Rest assured that I will shave thy head as thou commandest me, and I will do so in such a way that everyone who seeth it shall wish to stroke it with his hand."

CCCCLXX. A certain weaver came to a judge and asked him, saying, "If a judicial case required men (*i.e.*, witnesses) and people asked me to come to bear witness before thee on a certain matter, wouldst thou receive my testimony?" The judge replied to him, "Yes, if it were accompanied by that of three other trustworthy witnesses." And the weaver said to him, "Well and good, I will tell these three witnesses that they may be ready beforehand, and then, [when] they let me know, I will come."

CCCCLXXI. Another weaver wished to prophesy, and when certain folk said to him, "No one ever saw a prophet who was a weaver," he replied, "Shepherds, in spite of their exceedingly great simplicity, have been employed as prophets, but weavers have never been so employed."

CCCCLXXII. Another weaver was asked by a certain man, "If thou wert king what wouldst thou desire?" He replied, "Honey and pounded sesame seeds."

CCCCLXXIII. Luck came to a certain weaver and he became a governor. And one day his music player said to him, "O master, give me a fine cloak wherein I may dress myself at the feast." He replied to him, "Bring me the stuff for weaving it, and in the three days which are yet to pass before the feast day I will make for thee a cloak."

CCCCLXXIV. Another man said, "The intelligence of seventy women is like unto that of one man, and the mind of seventy weavers is as that of one woman."

CCCCLXXV. Another man said, "They were weavers who stole Joseph's cup, and the rod of Moses, and the fleece of Gideon, and the sling of David, and the swaddling bands of John, and the sandals of the Apostles; and when Mary asked them to shew her the way to the Sepulchre, they sent her by a wrong road. For this reason she prayed and entreated her Lord, saying, 'Wherever weavers live let them toil with their hands and feet for others, and let no blessing ever come upon them.'"

CCCCLXXVI. Another man went to a tooth-drawer to extract for him a tooth which was diseased, and the tooth-drawer asked him for a *zûzâ*; and the man said, "I will not give a whole *zûzâ*, but only a half." Then the handicraftsman said to him, "Less than a *zûzâ* I will not take, but if thou wishest it, and on account of thine honourable position, I will pull out another tooth also, and I will not charge thee any more than the *zûzâ*."

CCCCLXXVII. Another man had a diseased tooth which made his mouth to smell badly, and when he went to the tooth-drawer and had opened his mouth and exhaled the foul smell, the handicraftsman said to him, "This matter doth not belong to my handicraft but to the trade of those who cleanse the sewers."

CCCCLXXVIII. A certain woman took a kettle with a hole in it to the blacksmith, and she said to him, "Mend it for me." And having taken it he smeared a little clay over and into the hole and blackened it with soot and gave it back to her. And when the woman had taken the kettle [home], and had filled it with water [and set it on the fire], the clay melted away as the water began to boil. "Then straightway she took the kettle and went back to the blacksmith and said to him, "What hast thou done? Behold, the kettle is just as it was [when I first brought it], and the hole is unstopped." The blacksmith said to her, "Perhaps thou hast put some water in it? I thought that thou wishedst to put bran or herbs into it, but since it is water that thou wouldst put in it get thee to some other craftsman who is more skilled than I am, and let him mend it."

CCCCLXXIX. Another man who was a sailor, saw a man riding a horse, and noticed that he worked his legs as he did so; and he said, "Glory be to Thee, O God, the legs of this man are his rudders!"

CCCCLXXX. Another man was gathering up dung [for fuel] and he said, "How beautiful is that which David¹ saith, "Man in his honour hath no understanding, but resembleth the beast and is like thereunto." And when a certain rich man heard him he said unto him, "What now, is this honour of thine whereby thou hast understanding, which causeth thee to be dissimilar and unlike the beast? For, behold, thou art occupied with the dung of beasts all the days of thy life." The man said to him, "My honourable estate is that I eat of the labour of my hands, and that I ask no alms from such as thou."

CCCCLXXXI. A certain shopkeeper lit a lamp in the day time and set it before him, and when it was said to him, "Why doest thou this?" he replied, "Behold all the shopkeepers around me are buying and selling, but no man cometh nigh unto me. And I thought that perhaps folk did not see me, and therefore I have made a blaze before me that they may do so."

CCCCLXXXII. Another man wishing to sell rue cried out, saying, "Take ye of this honey; take ye of this sweetmeat." And a certain man drew nigh to him and said, "I have a sick person at home, and I wish to buy some bitter rue, for this is what he longeth for; hast thou none?" The seller said to him, "Take some of this which is before me, and do not believe my words, for every bit that I have is more bitter than the vinegar in my shop."

CCCCLXXXIII. A certain cook² cried out about the roasted meat which he had before him, saying, "Peradventure ye would wish me to prolong my praises of the meat which is before you? Whosoever eateth of my meat once will not [need] to buy oil for seven days by reason of the grease which will run from him."

CCCCLXXXIV. Another man went to a certain man in the market and asked him to lend him some money, and he said to him, "At thy command will I withhold nothing from thee," And he commanded his servant to bring him a bag of *zûzê*, and a pair of scales, and a mirror, and he weighed out to him the amount which he required. And when he had taken the money the man of the market put the mirror into his hands,

¹ Psalm xlix. 20.

² ### = ### = Arab. ###.

and said unto him, "Look, now, at thy face in the mirror and see how joyful it is on the day whereon thou borrowest money and receivest it. Take care, now, that thy countenance be thus gladsome, and not gloomy on the day whereon thou must pay it back."

CCCCLXXXV. A certain merchant having bought a crate full of glass vessels wanted some one to carry it to his home with him, and when a certain youth came to carry it, he said to him, "Take it, and ask no hire of me, and I will teach thee three counsels whereby thou shalt live nobly." And when the youth hath shouldered the crate and had gone one third of the way he said to the merchant, "Teach me, now, one of the three counsels." And the merchant said to him, "This is one of them:—If any man say unto thee, 'Hunger is better than satiety,' believe him never a whit." And when the youth had gone one half of the way, he said to him, "Tell me, now, the second counsel." And the merchant said to him, "If any man say unto thee, 'It is better to walk than to ride,' believe him never a whit." And when the youth had come to the house he said, "Teach me, now, the third counsel." And the merchant said unto him, "If any man shall tell thee that he hath found any man who will carry a load for hire less than thine, believe him never a whit. Then the youth cast the crate upon the ground and the glass vessels which were in it were broken to pieces and crushed into dust, and he said to the merchant, "If any man saith unto thee that a single glass vessel remaineth unbroken among these, believe him never a whit."

CCCCLXXXVI. A certain tax-gatherer having fled and hidden himself from the king found that his blood had become heated and excited in him, and he said unto him in whose house he was hidden, "Go to such and such a blood-letter and mention my name in his presence; if he abuseth me say nothing further to him, but if he speaketh well of me bid him come to me." And the man went and did thus, and he took the blood-letter and brought him to him; and when he had gone in he saluted the tax-gatherer with respect and behaved graciously to him. And the tax-gatherer said to him, "Cup me on the back of my neck," and when he had cupped him and had let blood and wished to depart, the tax-gatherer took out a *dînâr* and gave it to him; and the surgeon took the money and went and told his son. Then the son rose up and went and knocked at the door and entered the chamber of the tax-gatherer and said to him, "I hear that thou hast been cupped on the back of the neck,

but thou didst not require this, for it should have been done on thine arm." Then he cupped him on the arm and let out some more blood, and as he was going out the tax-gatherer gave him a *dînâr* also; and he went and told his son-in-law. And this man came also and knocked at the door, and he entered the chamber of the tax-gatherer and said to him, "Thou didst not require cupping except on thy legs." Then the tax-gatherer being afraid that [if he refused to allow it] the man would be angry and go forth and betray his hiding-place, said, "Do as thou advisest; and when he had let out some blood and wished to go the tax-gatherer gave him a *dînâr* and bade him tell no man about the house where he was. And it came to pass that, when the tax-gatherer had meditated a short time, he rose up and went to the king, and told him his story, saying, "These cursed villains wanted to let out and suck all my blood by their cuppings; draw thy sword now, and slay me, and I shall escape from [my] trouble." And when the king heard this, he laughed and forgave him all the money which he owed him.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER. LAUGHABLE STORIES OF ACTORS AND COMEDIANS

CCCCLXXXVII. To a certain comedian it was said, "When a cock riseth up in the early morning hours, why doth he hold one foot in the air?" He replied, "If he should lift up both feet together he would fall down."

CCCCLXXXVIII. Another comedian said, "If it be only those that are weary and heavy-laden who are to enter Paradise, as our Lord said¹, there is nothing that who will go in before the harp, for in this world he endureth much trial and tribulation. His throat is squeezed, his ear is twisted, his belly is smitten, and when he is old he is thrown into the fire."

CCCCLXXXIX. Another actor said, "When I was young and was learning the actor's art, my master used to say to me, 'Take heed and learn well how thou mayest become used to do the exact opposite of the words which are spoken to thee, that is to say, if people say unto thee, 'Go, thou must come,' and when they say unto thee, 'Come, thou must go.' And in the morning he himself used to say, 'Good evening,' and in the evening, 'Good morning.' And it came to pass one day that having been into the king's presence and made him laugh, the king commanded them to write him an order on the Treasury to give him a thousand pieces of silver. Now when he had taken the paper he came out, to me and gave it to me, saying, 'Collect [the money] for me.' And I went straightway and soaked the paper in water, and when I had brought it to him it was torn into shreds; and the guards would not let him go into the king's presence again in order that he might give him another order. Then, being greatly wroth, he said to me, 'Go then utterly to perdition, for thou hast no longer any need of me.'"

CCCCXC. Another actor used to say, "With one small experiment I can vanquish the believer who saith that everything, both of good and of evil, cometh from God, and that man hath no power to do anything of himself." And when it was said to him, "How is this?" he said, I will lift

¹ St. Matthew xi. 28.

up my hand over a man's neck, and I will ask him, 'Am I able to smite thy neck, or not?' If he saith, 'Yes,' behold he hath repudiated what he confesseth; and if he saith 'No,' I will smite him and shew him that I have the power to do so."

CCCCXCI. Unto another actor who was lame it was said, "What is the cause [of thy lameness]?" He replied, "I wish to go forth into the country to-morrow, but I shall not get far if a thorn run into my foot."

CCCCXCII. Another actor said, "I and my brother were twins, and we both came forth from the womb at one time. He hath become a merchant whilst I am a wandering beggar. How then can the opinions of the astronomers be held to be true? This proof alone is quite sufficient to shew their falsehood."

CCCCXCIII. Another actor was eating his supper with his friend, whose wife waited upon them, when straightway there fell in front of them a pebble from the roof, and then another and another. And looking up he said to his handmaiden, "Go up to the roof and see if the sun hath set;" and having gone up and tarried for a season, she came down and said, "Yes." His friend then said to him, "Didst thou not know that the sun had set and that darkness reigned?" And he answered, saying, "Yes, how could I help knowing it? But unless I had made the girl go up with some such excuse as this to those who wanted her, they would never have ceased calling her and making signs to her to go up. Dost thou understand?" He said to him, "Yes, I understand."

CCCCXCIV. Whilst another comic actor was in the company of a judge, a certain woman came in with her face covered, and her eyes, which were very beautiful, alone were visible; and she began to weep and to make railing accusations against her adversary. And the actor said to the judge, "Believe [me], this woman is an evil-speaking person, but her eyes proclaim her to be suffering oppression." And having spoken further and at great length she uncovered her face, and behold she had on her face a most hideous nose [as flat] as a sixpence; and when he had eyed her closely the actor said to the judge, "Nay, my lord, although her eyes shew that she is an injured woman, yet her nose testifieth that she is a liar and an abominable person, and she is not worthy that any man should shew pity upon her."

CCCCXCV. Another actor whilst eating with his children at table [observed] that they seized their meat before he could do so, and ate it, and he said to them, "Take heed, now, for the Law commandeth [you, "saying], 'Honour thy father and thy mother,' now, as far as I am concerned, ye may curse me a thousand times; but do not then take a morsel of meat before I have done so."

CCCCXCVI. Another actor was asked, "What do comic actors resemble?" He replied, "A man whose left hand is filled with filth, and [who hath] his right hand [stretched out for]² alms, and [who saith] 'yes,' and 'no?' If ye do not³ say to him 'Take,' he causeth pollution⁴."

CCCXC VII. Another actor having taken money on loan from a certain man denied [that he had done so], and having been brought before a judge, the judge said to the owner of the money, "Hast thou any witnesses?" And the lender said, "No." The judge said to the actor, "Swear now to me that thou hast not received the money," and the actor replied, "If thou wilt allow it, prithee let my brother swear for me, for I know certainly that he hath not taken anything."

CCCCXC VIII. Unto another actor it was said, "Dost thou wish that a *dînâr* might be given to thee now?" And he said, "Yes, only stop them from giving me twenty stripes with sticks." The people said to him, "Why?" He said to them, "Because I know that the children of men of this age never give for nothing."

CCCCXCIX. Another actor was going about in Sebastia (*i.e.*, Sîwâs) in the winter season dressed in a new flaxen garment, and a certain man said to him, "Give me this tunic of thine and thou wilt still have thy cloak, and thy Christ commanded thee to give both thy tunic and thy cloak to whosoever asked thee for them⁵." And he replied, "Let the mind of Christ be far from me on this matter! For this commandment was [not] given by Him to the people of Sebastia in the winter season, although it may have been given to the people of Palestine in the summer season."

D. Another actor was quarrelling with a shopkeeper called Zakrôn, who said to him, "Art thou not ashamed of me? Thy mother was like a sister

² Supply some word like ### or ###.

³ Read ###.

⁴ *I.e.*, "If you will not give me something I will throw dirt at you."

⁵ St. Matthew v. 40.

to me at the time when thou wert a child among us." And being much offended the actor went to his mother and said to her, "My mother, knowest thou Zakrôn the shop-keeper?" And she said "Dost thou mean Zakrôn the son of Isaac?" And the actor said, "Now I believe that the man did not lie in what he said, I did imagine that thou couldst never have known him, but behold, thou hast known his father also."

DI. *Mimus alius interrogatus, "Quis tibi foramen istud perfossit, quod in ano geris?" respondit, "Idem qui matri tuae duo foramina, alterum in parte anteriore, alterum a tergo."*

DII. Another actor went into his house and found a man with his wife and the door wide open; and he said to the man, "What a senseless dolt thou art to imagine that this woman doth not know the difference between good and evil; art thou in reality thus wanting in sense?"

DIII. Another actor saw his wife halfway up a ladder, and swore that he would never again have any more to do with her, whether she came down or whether she went up. And when the woman heard this she threw herself down from the ladder on the ground, and said, "Behold, I did not come down, and I did not go up, but I fell down." Her husband said to her, "Believe me, if only the people of the city were acquainted with thee they would certainly hire thee to teach them cunning ways of making their decisions."

DIV. When another actor was drunk his wife said to him, "I wish to God that He would make the drinking of wine abominable in thy sight." And he said to her, "And I also wish that he would make sweet-meats, and cakes, and dainty foods abominable in thy sight, for behold thou hast ruined my house by the buying of flour, and dripping, and honey."

DV. *Mimus alius quidam deformem quamdam viduam uxorem duxerat interrogatus, "Qualis sit ista femina," regessit, "Vaginae latitudine aream Arani⁶ refert, frigiditate autem Montem Libanum."*

DVI. Another actor was asked if it were possible for a child to be born to a man seventy years old, and he replied, "Yes, if he hath a neighbour handy aged thirty."

⁶ = *I.e.*, Ornan or Araunah. See 2 Samuel xxiv. 16; 1 Chronicles xxi. 18.

DVII. The wife of another actor being with child looked at her husband's ugly face and said, "Woe is me if the child which I carry in my womb resembleth thee." And he said, "Nay, but woe be to thee if he doth not resemble me, for thou shalt no longer eat my bread, and I will send thee away to him whom the child shall resemble."

DVIII. Another actor saw a Jew who had become a Christian and who was not leading a very good life, and he said to him, "O thou who didst provoke Moses to wrath, and who dost not please Christ, go now to Muhammed. Perhaps, however, thou wilt die on thy first coming to him, and before thou hast time to provoke him to wrath, for I know that if thou wert converted to him for long thou wouldst anger him."

DIX. When the neighbour of another actor wanted from him a spoon, he said, "I only wish that we had something which we could eat in our fingers."

DX. Whilst another actor was eating fish and milk it was said to him, "Art thou not afraid to put milk and fish into thy stomach together?" And he replied, "How can the fish be sensitive to the milk seeing that he is dead already?"

DXI. Another actor was quarrelling with his wife whom he wished to put away from him, and she said to him, "Remember the very long time wherein we have lived together." And he said to her, "Believe me, thou hast never committed any [greater] folly than this, for thou hast tarried too long with me, and behold I am sated with thee, and I hate thee."

DXII. Once when it was winter another actor said to his wife, "Make me a key, for I greatly desire it." His wife said to him, "Whatever stores have we which need [locking up with] a key?" And he replied, "The coldness of the air which will freeze them, and behold the place will be ready for the time when we prepare flesh and vinegar⁷, and salt, and wood."

DXIII. As another actor was going into a place where there were some drunken men they struck him, and when it was said to him, "Why dost thou not curse them?" he said, "They are drunken men and would not understand curses, and therefore I am not going to waste my abuse upon them in vain."

⁷ For ### read ###.

DXIV. Another actor went into his house and found a sieve laid upon his couch, and he went and hung himself up on the peg in the wall. His wife said to him, "What is this? Art thou possessed of a devil?" And he said to her, "Nay, but when I saw the sieve in my place, I went to its place."

DXV. A certain woman asked her neighbour, saying, "Why should a man have power to buy a handmaiden and to lie with her and to do whatsoever he pleaseth with her, while a woman hath no power to do any such things freely and openly?" And she said to her, "Because the kings, and the judges, and the lawgivers are all men; and they have therefore acted the parts of advocates of their own causes and have oppressed the women."

DXVI. Another actor went to a certain merchant and begged him to lend him a hundred silver *zûzê*, and he said to him, "What wilt thou deposit with me as surety?" And the actor said, "I have no pledge [to leave], but I will write thee an acknowledgment, so that at the time of payment if I do not produce witnesses [to swear] that I have paid thee I will swear [it myself] without either reason or speech."

DXVII. Another actor said to his servant, "When thou goest on any business⁸ and returnest, if it be ended satisfactorily say 'Wheat,' and if not say 'Barley. And one day when he had gone and returned, the actor asked him, "Wheat or Barley?" and he replied, "Something quite different." The actor said, "What meanest thou?" And the servant said, "Not only did they not perform the business on which I went, but they cursed me and beat me."

DXVIII. Another actor heard a man saying to his companion, "When thou art travelling by night and wouldst that the dogs should not molest thee, shout in their faces the Psalm wherein occur the words, '[And save] my only one from the mouth of the dogs⁹.' And he said to him, "Nay, but let him also take a stick in his hand, for all dogs do not understand the Psalms, although there may be among them some who read them."

DXIX. A judge commanded them to shave off the beard of an actor, and when the barber wanted to do so, he said to him, "Fill thy mouth with

⁸ *I.e.*, Arab. ###.

⁹ Psalm xxii. 20.

air." The actor said to him, "O fool, did the judge command thee to shave my beard or to teach me how to blow a whistle?"

DXX. *Mimus alius interrogatus quot eduxisset liberos, regessit, "Deos obtestor uxorem meam saepius peperisse quam cum illâ concubuerim."*

DXXI. Unto another actor who had been bitten by a dog it was said, "If thou wishest to know whether he was mad or not, give him bread made of fine wheaten flour; if he eateth it then he is mad." The actor said, "If I were to do this there is not a dog in the world but would bite me in order to be tried in this same way."

DXXII. Certain men told lies about another actor concerning some offences [which had been committed], and the judge took him and gave him fifty stripes with a stick, but some time afterwards, when the judge discovered that the men had accused him falsely, he said to the actor, "I punished thee by mistake." The actor said, "Nay, but keep an account of my stripes by thee, so that when I in very deed do commit some offence, thou mayest reckon them as my punishment and not inflict chastisement upon me afresh."

DXXIII. Unto another actor it was said, "What sayest thou to some cakes fried in butter and honey?" The actor said, "What am I able to say? But indeed this I know of a certainty. If Moses the prophet had gone into Pharaoh's presence with cakes fried in butter and honey, the king would have believed his words straightway; but since he went in with a rod, Pharaoh is not to be blamed overmuch because he did not believe, for he was a king and was angry."

DXXIV. Another actor who hated the egg plant, having been invited by a certain nobleman, found that all his meats were made therewith; and he said to the servant, "Give me some water that I may drink, that is, if there be no egg plant in it."

DXXV. Another actor was invited to a feast by a certain nobleman who began to eat the yelks of hard-boiled eggs and to set the white of the eggs before the actor to eat. And the actor said, "May God have mercy on the sphere wherein all exactitude is found," that is to say wherein the yelk and the white are bound closely together.

DXXVI. Another actor went to the house of a certain rich man who was sick, and enquired concerning his illness, and the sick man said to him, "Boils have broken out upon me in a loathsome place." The actor said, "I do not see any in thy face," meaning "thy face is a loathsome place."

DXXVII. Another actor, who was sitting at meat with a certain miserly nobleman, let fall some of his food on to his garments, and the nobleman said to the servants, "Wash the meat off his garments for him." The actor said, "Thy meat doth not need to be washed off," that is to say, "there is no grease in it."

DXXVIII. Another actor had a wife whose face was very ugly, and one rainy and gloomy day she said to him, "How can one use such a day as this advantageously?" He said to her, "In divorce and separation."

DXXIX. Unto another actor it was said, "Is wheat flour very dear in the market to-day?" And he replied, "I never asked, for I only buy baked bread."

DXXX. When another actor saw a man who had sore eyes, he said, "With what dost thou treat the disease in thine eyes?" And he replied, "With the singing of Psalms and with the prayers of my mother who is a nun." The actor made answer, "These are very excellent things indeed, but a little antimony is needed with them."

DXXXI. Another actor said, "For six kinds of men it is not good to drink wine: for him who when singing is a fool; for him who reclineth at meat on his right side; for him who eateth green herbs overmuch; for him who drinketh of the first cup; for him who rejoiceth in suppers; and for him who is in the habit of defiling his garment."

DXXXI. Another actor was sick, and when his master, who was a very foolish man, went out he asked him, "What wouldst thou that I should do for thee?" he replied, "I very much want thee not to come into my presence again."

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER. STORIES OF CLOWNS AND SIMPLETONS

DXXXIII. It is said that a silly fellow heard that a certain man was dead, and that when he saw his brother, he asked him, "Is it thou that art dead, or thy brother?"

DXXXIV. Another silly fellow whose son was dead was much grieved, and he wished to kill himself, but having taken counsel with one of his friends, he said, "Perhaps if I kill myself the prince will suffer sorrow on my account."

DXXXV. The wife of another simpleton said to him, "Thy beard has grown long by reason of thy stupidity," and he said to her, "Reproach me not, otherwise that for which thou reproachest me may happen unto thee," that is to say "thy beard may grow long."

DXXXVI. To another man a son was born, and when his neighbours came to congratulate him he thanked them, and said, "He cometh from God and from you."

DXXXVII. *Stultus alius quidam qui cum matre suâ pisces conditos edebat, "Epulare" ait, "mî mater: Cibus enim habemus ad coeundum praestantissimum."*

DXXXVIII. Another simpleton went to visit his neighbour's son who was sick, and he said to his neighbour, "When he dieth, do not do as thou didst when thy other son died, for I do not remember that I was invited to his funeral."

DXXXIX. Another fool had two hunting dogs, one black and the other white. And the governor said to him, "Give me one of them." The man said to him, "Which of them dost thou want?" and the governor said, "The black one." The man said, "The black one I love more than the white," and the governor replied, "Then give me the white one." And the foolish man said to him, "The white one I love more than both put together."

DXL. A certain rich man who was a clown never gave anything to a poor man, and he used to say, "That which God hath not given him, how can I give him?"

DXLI. Another simpleton said to his wife, "After thou art dead I shall not stay with my children." And she replied, "Thus thou sayest, but thou wilt not do [what thou sayest];" and he made answer to her saying, "After my death thou wilt see the truth of my words."

DXLII. Another man had a pain in his stomach, and being asked the cause thereof, he said, "I have eaten largely of a little milk and it hath done me harm."

DXLIII. Another simpleton seeing a fat ox said, "He would become a fine buffalo if his hoofs had not been cloven."

DXLIV. Unto another silly man it was told concerning the Magians that they were in the habit of knowing their mothers carnally, and he said, "The wrath of God be upon them. Believe [me], if thou wert to give me a hundred pieces of silver I would not do this thing."

DXLV. *Stultus alius quidam quum cum virgine quam duxerat concubisset virginis patrem mane salutatum ivit dixitque, "Filia tua me noctu sanguine perfudit—quod credo te fraude finxisse ne quid de istius castitate dubitarem."*

DXLVI. Another fool, who was a Jew, when his son was being circumcised said to him that was making the cutting, "Cut him little by little, for he hath never before been circumcised."

DXLVII. A son having been born to another simpleton, he brought an astrologer to cast his nativity, that is, to declare the sign of the Zodiac under which he was born; and he said to him, "I entreat thee to make Hermes his sign of the Zodiac, for I have heard that he who is born under such circumstances becometh a scribe."

DXLVIII. The neighbour of another silly fellow said to him, "I see that thy wife is with child," and he replied, "[Yes], in a slight way and not very much."

DXLIX. A certain simpleton looked at the moon when it was fourteen days old, and said, "Blessed month." And when it was said to him, "How

is it thou didst not see the moon before?" he answered, "I was not in the city having only just come."

DL. Another silly man said, "I was wishing that God had never created me at all, or that I had been now blind, or that my hands and my feet were cut off."

DLI. When another fool was passing by some fishermen, he said to them, "Are those fish which ye are catching fresh or salted?"

DLII. Another simpleton asked his disciple, "On what day did we celebrate the fifth day of the week of the Mysteries a year ago?" And the disciple who was more simple than he, replied, "I do not know of a certainty, but a year ago I think we celebrated the fifth day of the week of the Mysteries on the third day."

DLIII. The friend of another fool had promised to send him some grapes from his vineyard, and when he delayed in doing so, the fool put some of his urine into a glass and sent it to a physician, and said, "See if this sheweth any sign of grapes being sent to me during the next few days."

DLIV. Another simpleton said, "I understand every-thing, I know even how mustard may be obtained from figs, and how a bottle in the shape of an acorn¹ may be made out of wood, but I have never yet known him that made holes collectively."

DLV. A certain governor set out to go and worship in Jerusalem, and he was hastening on with all speed that he might arrive there while the festival was being celebrated. And a silly man said to him, "Why dost thou kill the horses and the people who are with thee? Send on [in advance] and let them know of thy coming in Jerusalem, so that they may delay the festival and may not hurry on too fast."

DLVI. The daughter of another simpleton died, and when he was asked how old she was, he replied, "I do not know exactly, but she was born at the time when oranges were plentiful."

DLVII. Another fool being mounted on an ass that would not travel under him swore that he would give him no barley that night. Nevertheless having come to his house and the evening having fallen, he

¹ I.e., ###, a rare word; see my *Thomas of Margâ*, Vol. i. p. 353, l. 17.

said to his disciple, "Give the ass a sack of barley, but do not let him know that I told thee to do so, otherwise he will not be afraid of me in the future."

DLVIII. Another simpleton said, "I was present this day at the burial of such and such a man." And when he was asked, "Which of his sons is dead," he said, "There were two of them, and the middle one is dead."

DLIX. Another fool said to his neighbour, "Last night I saw a dream, and I thought that the governor of our city was talking with thee, and that he was looking at me: what did he say about me?"

DLX. Another silly man whilst praying in Jerusalem said, "O My Lord, forgive me, that it may be forgiven to Thee, give unto me, that it may be given unto Thee thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold, even as Thou hast promised²."

DLXI. Another simpleton visited a certain man, and he went to kiss his head; but the man said to him, "Do not kiss my head because I have put some grease on it." The foolish man said to him, "I would kiss it even if there were pounds and pounds of dung upon it."

DLXII. Another fool said, "When my brother died, my father was very penitent," and his companion said, "Did he kill him, or did thy brother fall sick and die?" The fool said, "I do not know, only thus did such and such a servant of ours relate."

DLXIII. Stultus alius quidam interrogatus, "Cur nondum uxorem duxisti?" respondit, "Frater meus uxorem duxit quae, en! ambobus et illi et mihi sufficit." Conclamabant omnes, "Vae misero tibi! quo modo una duum uxor fieri potest?" Respondit autem, "Abram respice qui pater erat gentium: quomodo evenit ut duas uxores duxisset, ipse tamen unus ambabus suffecit."

DLXIV. Another fool said, "My father went twice to Jerusalem, and there did he die and was buried, but I do not know which time he died, whether it was during the first visit or the last."

DLXV. Another silly man having gone to the bath found that frankincense was being burnt therein, and thinking that the smoke

² Compare St. Matthew xiii. 8.

thereof was dust he became very angry, and said to the man in charge of the bath, "I tell thee that when I wish to enter the bath thou must neither sweep the room with a brush nor make a dust."

DLXVI. When another fool was told, "Thy ass is stolen, he said, Blessed be God that I was not upon him."

DLXVII. Another fool looked up into the heavens and said, "How beautiful are Thy heavens, O Lord, but Thou art worthy of something which is more beautiful than they."

DLXVIII. Another stupid man became a judge, and it was said to him, "Forgive such and such a man his offence." And he said, "I will not forgive him until I hear that he hath fallen at my feet and kissed them."

DLXIX. Another simpleton, who was a servant, had ten asses which he hired to certain people, and when they came back to their places he took his asses and counted them, [and found them to be] ten. Then he mounted one of them and rode some distance and came back, and as he was going away he counted those that were before him, and found them [to be] nine; and he was angry, and alighted and counted them over again, and found them [to be] ten. And he mounted an ass again, and counted the others and found them [to be] nine; thereupon he dismounted and counted [them], and found them [to be] ten. Then he said, "Verily there is a devil with me, for whenever I mount an ass I lose one of them; therefore I must not ride lest I lose one altogether." Thus he travelled over the whole country on foot, for he dared not mount one of them.

DLXX. Stultus quidam qui catharticum sibi adhibuerat in aedificium dirutum se contulit ventrem evacuatum; cum autem subligacula solvere voluit, tunicae ligamina recinxit ut ubi consederat ventrem in chlamydem exoneraret.

DLXXI. Now the son of a certain silly man died, and as they were letting him down into the grave, the father said to the men, "Let him rest on his right side, for [to lie] this way is much better and more convenient for the digestion of the food."

DLXXII. A foolish old woman having gone to visit a sick man said unto his masters, "Believe me, I have become very old and infirm, and I am

not always able to go in and come out. Therefore when this man dieth—may God preserve your lives!—do not blame me if I am unable to come to his burial."

DLXXIII. Another fool whose hawk had escaped asked the governor to shut the gates of the city until he had caught him.

DLXXIV. *Stultus alius quidam interrogatus, "Quot annos natam filiam in matrimonium tradidisti? Nescio hercle respondit, hoc tamen scio me istam spopondisse verendis cum maxime istius lanugine tectis. Computate ergo quot annos natae verenda lanugo tegat."*

DLXXV. A certain simple judge was asked, "What ought to be done unto the man who committeth an offence with a she-ass?" and he replied, "They should both be put to death." And the people said, "Wherein hath the she-ass offended, for it is an irrational animal, and hath no understanding?" He replied, "If my mother or my sister happened to be the she-ass I would put her to death without mercy."

DLXXVI. The son of a certain silly old woman died—now his name was Lazarus—and the priest was burying him. And when he began to read the [section of the] Gospel which begins, "Now Lazarus was dead³," he said, "Lazarus is dead, and I rejoice." And the old woman said to him, "And why shouldst thou not rejoice? For behold, his clothing, and his bed, and everything which he possessed have been carried to thy house."

DLXXVII. A certain poet made some verses in praise of a certain weak-minded man who said to him, "I cannot reward thee with anything which I possess, but if thou hast committed any offence I will forgive it thee."

DLXXVIII. When another foolish man was praying in a church, he said, "O my Lord, have pity upon me, and pardon me the offences which I have committed by Thy will and against Thy will, with Thy knowledge and without Thy knowledge."

DLXXIX. And another said, "Forgive me all my sins which are known unto Thee, and those which are not."

³ See St. John xi. 14.

DLXXX. Another simpleton said when the rain fell upon his grain crop, "O Lord, dost Thou know how much wages are due unto Thee that Thou waterest this my crop?"

DLXXXI. *Stulto cuidam meienti, stultus alius*, "Quam ingentem penem habes!" ait, "quo modo, quaeso, istum portare vales?" Regisset alter, "I istud domi meae dictum: ibi enim assidue maledicor quia tam parvus sit."

DLXXXII. Another silly man buried some *zûzê* coins in the plain, and made a fragment of a cloud a mark of the place where it was. And some days after he came to carry away the money, but could not find the place to do so, and he said, "Consider now; the *zûzê* were in the ground, and they must have been carried away by some people. For who can steal the cloud which is in the sky? And what arm could reach thereunto? This matter is one worthy to be wondered at."

DLXXXIII. Another simpleton looked into a vessel of water, and he went and said to his mother, "There is a thief in the vessel." And when his mother came and had looked in also she saw her own face in the water by the side of that of her son. And she said to her son, "Verily it is a thief, and there is, besides, a whore with this cursed fellow; stand thou here that they may not come out and escape until I can call the neighbours."

DLXXXIV. Another silly man remarked concerning a certain lascivious man who was a Sodomite, that even more than Lot he was the prince of Sodomites.

DLXXXV. Another simpleton was asked, "How many days' journey is it between Aleppo and Damascus?" and he replied, "Twelve; six to go and six to come back."

DLXXXVI. Another silly man looked at the chickens which were in his house and said, "O chickens, when will [any] man become sick that he may eat you and [thus] will ye be saved from the knock on the head which ye will receive?"

DLXXXVII. Another simpleton was running along on the heath and crying out certain words with a loud voice, and when he was asked why he did thus, he said, "I wish to know how far my voice will reach."

DLXXXVIII. Another silly man, when asked by his friends to lend them a saddle, said, "Believe me, I have only just now alighted from it, perhaps ye will wait for an hour in order that it may have some rest."

DLXXXIX. When the wife of another silly man was about to bring forth a child, he said to the midwife, "Get me a son, and I will give thee a *dînâr*."

DXC. Another fool when about to buy some snow took a piece of it and tasted it, and he said to the seller, "If ye have any that is colder than this shew it to me," and when the seller had shewn him another piece, he asked, "How dost thou sell this?" and the seller said, "This latter kind I sell by the carat; but the former kind I sell either in the lump or by the piece." Then the fool said, "In that case I will take a little of the latter kind for my own use, and some of the former kind for the people in my house."

DXCI. Another silly man when told by the physician, "Squeeze the juice of two pomegranates [into a vessel] with the pulpy parts of them and drink [it]," said, "How much pulp am I to put with them?"

DXCII. Another fool having bought a handmaiden [found that] his wife was enraged, and he said to her, "If thou dost continue to annoy me in this way I swear by God that for a whole year from now I will have nothing more to do with thee."

DXCIII. Another simpleton, having looked at a mirror and seen his face therein, laughed, and being asked [why he did so] said, "I am astonished at my face, for it is beautiful [when seen] afar off, but when near it is not."

DXCIV. Another silly man was asked, "How many years old art thou?" He replied, "I know not, but I have heard my mother say that I was born before the grapes were ripe, 'and', said she, thy brother is older than thou by two months and half a year."

DXCV. Another fool owned a house together with some other folk, and he said one day, "I want to sell the half of it which is my share and buy the other half, so that the whole building may be mine."

DXCVI. Another silly man bought a piece of meat and gave it to his servant, saying, "Take this home and tell them to boil it for me with some

rice." The servant said, "They have no wood there," and the man said, "Very well, then, let them boil for me pearl-barley and rice in equal parts."

DXCVII. Another simpleton, whose daughter had fallen into a well, said to her, "Do not move from where thou art until I bring some one to draw thee up."

DXCVIII. Another silly man having been asked about his birthday, said, "I was born on Hosanna Sunday, two weeks after the Feast of the Resurrection."

DXCIX. Another stupid man said during his prayers, "O Lord, my God, pardon my mother, my sister, and my wife." And when he was asked, "Why dost thou not mention thy father?" he replied, "Because I was a child when he died, and I did not know him."

DC. Another simpleton when praying said, "O my "Lord, give me five thousand pieces of silver, so that I may give one thousand of them to the poor; and if it be that Thou art not certain [about me] give me four thousand and do Thou Thyself give the other thousand with Thine Own hands into theirs."

DCI. Another silly man having gone on a journey to carry on his trade wrote to his father, saying, "I have been ill with a very grievous sickness, and if any one else had been in my place he would not have been able to live." And his father made him answer, saying, "Believe me, my son, if thou hadst died thou wouldst have grieved me sadly, and I would never have spoken to thee again in the whole course of my life."

DCII. Another simpleton on being asked what he had learned at school replied, "Arithmetic;" whereupon some people said to him, "If four pieces of silver be divided equally among three men, how much will each receive?" And he said, "Two of them will receive two pieces of silver each, so that there will be twice two pieces of silver for the three of them."

DCIII. Another silly man was carrying on his shoulder a little boy dressed in a red gown, and forgetting all about his being there, he began to ask the folk, saying, "Who hath seen a boy dressed in a red gown?" And when it was said to him, "Peradventure it is this boy, who is on thy shoulder," and he had lifted up his head and seen him, he struck him,

saying, "O son of adultery, how many times have I told thee that when I am carrying thee thou art not to go away from me?"

DCIV. Another simpleton was sitting in a boat on the sea, and he had a few *zûzê* in his hand. And as he looked, he saw on the garment of one of those who were with him an orange, and he stretched out his hand and laid hold of it with his two fingers, but wishing to throw the orange into the sea he threw the *zûzê* instead, and kept fast hold on the orange. And when he was rebuked for doing this, he said, "I was afraid that it might run away and stick in our garments again."

DCV. Another fool seeing an Arab minaret from which men were calling [the people] to prayer, said to his companion, "How very tall the men who built this minaret must have been!" His friend replied, "O silly man, how could any man be as tall as this? They built it first of all on the ground, and then set it up [on its end]."

DCVI. Certain stupid husbandmen came to the governor and began to complain, saying, "The taxes laid upon us are too heavy, and if thou canst not diminish them we must leave [our lands] and go away." The governor said to them, "What now do ye wish me to do for you?" and they replied, "We wish that thou wouldst tax us one fifth and that thou shouldst not take tithe from us, for we cannot pay tithe." The governor said to them, "Your wishes shall be carried out," and so this custom came upon them even to this day.

DCVII. Another fool said, "I saw a man with a long beard who was riding upon an ass which he was beating, and he said to him, "O cursed one, if thou didst not wish to be ridden why didst thou become an ass?"⁴

DCVIII. Another simple man, when he saw his crop lying flat before the violent wind and hail, looked up to heaven and said, "O Lord, Thou commandest the children of men neither to do evil nor to do harm to each other, but what sayest Thou to this work of Thine? But who can judge Thee because Thy deeds do not correspond to Thy words?"

DCIX. Another fool had a son who had put his head outside the window and a hailstone fell upon it, whereupon he cursed him that had struck

⁴ Var. "was asking in the market, 'Has there not passed before you a red old man with a red helmet on his head?'"

him. Then his father struck him and putting his own head out of the window looked up to heaven and said, "O my Lord, blame him not, for as yet he knoweth Thee not."

DCX. Another simpleton, whilst washing his hands, said, "I have tried my hands, and if I were to wash them a thousand times they would not be clean, unless I washed them twice."

DCXI. Another silly man went to visit a man whose son was dead, and he began to say, "Blessed be God; I thank God for His goodness." And the people who were there present began to rebuke him, saying, "Why speakest thou in this manner?" He replied, "Because I heard that some one belonging to him was dead, and since it is his son there is no [cause for] trouble, for so long as he liveth he will be able to beget one son after the other."

DCXII. Another fool went to a grammarian that he might teach him to speak correctly, and when he had read with him for nigh upon a year, he asked the grammarian, "Do I pronounce *sûsyâ* with a *tsâdhê* or with a *semkath*?⁵"

DCXIII. Another nobleman was a silly man, and once when he was travelling along the road in company with some other folk, he said to them, "Leave me for a short time, for I want to say a few words to myself."

DCXIV. Whilst another simpleton was saying his prayers in the church he heard the priests saying in their prayers, "Adam sinned, but Christ was crucified to redeem him;" and he said, "This is not justice, for he that committed the sin should be the one to be crucified."

DCXV. When another silly man was cracking an almond the kernel slipped away out of his hands, and he said, "Glory be to Thee, O God, for even the kernel of the almond trieth to escape death."

DCXVI. Another fool stood on the sea-shore and said, "Glory be to Him that created the sea out of dry wood."

DCXVII. The son of another simpleton shewed him a young dove, and said, "Look, father, which doth it resemble, its father or its mother?" His

⁵ I.e.; the fool could not distinguish between the sounds of *s* and *ts* after nearly a year's study.

father said to him, "Which is its father or mother? This male or this female? "

DCXVIII. Another simpleton said, "I love the discourses of Mâr Jacob⁶ very much indeed, so much so that I am blessed by him every day." His companion said to him, "But why art thou not blessed by the Holy Gospel?" and he replied, "The Gospel is good, but I have found by experience that Mâr Jacob helpeth me."

DCXIX. Another fool went into a new house and was walking round about in it when the owner thereof said, "What sayest thou; have I built well [or not]?" He said, "Everything is beautiful in it except the latrine, which hath one fault: its door is so narrow that a table will not go through it."

DCXX. A certain nobleman who was a fool had got possession of a village, and he sent to those who were over it, saying, "Do not let the husbandmen sow their fields any more with seed of the downy thorn or with the pips and stones of fruit, because not a quarter of it cometh up; but let them sow it with pure seed, and let the poor sow grass seed likewise without the pips and stones of fruit."

⁶ *I.e.*, Jacob of Edessa; he was born about A.D. 640 and died 5th of June A.D. 708.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER. STORIES OF LUNATICS AND OF MEN POSSESSED OF DEVILS

DCXXI. They say that a certain demoniac saw a fay nobleman and he said to him, "O thou who art as fat as a pig, if the devil which is in me had been alive in the time of Christ, he would never have left thee and entered into me."

DCXXII. When it was said to another demoniac by a certain nobleman, "Knowest thou me?" he said, "Yes, I know thee, and I know thy brother." The nobleman said to him, "Who is my brother?" And he replied to him, "Thou, even as one who is like him, hast neither root nor stem," that is to say, "Thou art not of noble descent."

DCXXIII. When another demoniac went to the house of a certain nobleman he offered him some bread only, and the demoniac went out refusing this and saying, "I will come to thee on the day of the feast when some meat may be found with thee."

DCXXIV. Another demoniac said, "I went into a hospital and saw a demoniac who was in fetters, and I thrust out my tongue at him and rolled mine eyes. And when he saw me do this he looked up to heaven and said, 'Glory be to Thee, O God, for one whom the physicians have left free, and for one whom they have bound.'"

DCXXV. Another demoniac went round about the market, saying, "He that would be an excellent man, let him learn that which I know not. For when he saith, 'I know not,' men will teach him to know; and when he saith, 'I know,' those who ask questions will prove to him that he is ignorant by means of hard questions."

DCXXVI. Another demoniac, having laid hold upon a man, threw him down under him and was choking him, when certain folk came and rescued the man from him. And when they were beating him they asked him why he did this, and he said, "If he did not wish to be choked why did he fall under me? And he did not suffer for a moment in my hands."

DCXXVII. Another madman said, "I wish to eat sweetmeats and, dung," whereupon certain folk who heard him, said, "Let us bring both to him, and we shall see how he will eat them." And when they had brought them to him he began to eat the sweetmeat and left the dung where it was, saying, "I suspect that there is poison in this dung, but if ye wish me to eat it without a doubt, do ye also eat a portion thereof and I will eat the remainder."

DCXXVIII. Another madman went up to a polished pillar and said, "Who will give me a *zûzâ* for going up to the top?" And when certain folk had given him the *zûzâ*, he took it and said, "Bring me now a ladder," and the people said, "Did we agree with thee [to climb it] with a ladder?" The madman said, "Ye certainly did not agree with me to do it without one, ye only stipulated that I should go up."

DCXXIX. Another madman said to a certain teacher, "What manner of words are these which are uttered in the Gospel, 'If they persecute you in one city, flee to another?' and, besides, if they shut up a man how can he escape? It would have been right for our Lord to give the command, 'They shall bind in chains no man, neither shall they shut him up.'"

DCXXX. It was said unto a certain lunatic by the demoniacs, "Number for us the demoniacs that are in Emesa." And he replied, "I cannot count the demoniacs because they are so many, but I can count the men of understanding who are therein because they are so few."

DCXXXI. A certain lunatic put on a skin cloak with the hairy side outwards, and when people asked him why he did so, he replied, "If God had known that it was better to have the hairy side of the skin cloak inwards, He would not have created the wool on the outside of the sheep."

DCXXXII. Another lunatic when asked "Where is thy native land?" replied, "The place where I was born was Sinjâr¹, and I was reared in the Monastery of Mâr Behnâm²," because in the majority of cases demoniacs were accustomed to be carried there bound in fetters, so that they might be benefited by the power of the saint.

¹ A city in the mountains about four days' journey east of Môsul.

² See Hoffmann, *Auszüge*, p. 17 ff.

DCXXXIII. Another demoniac being very mad used to strike people, and a certain man rose up and took a stick and beat him severely. Then the people began to say to him, "Let him alone, for he is a demoniac and doth not know what he doeth," and when the demoniac heard this he said to them, "Make him to understand about God, for he knoweth Him not."

DCXXXIV. A certain man said unto a demoniac, "Take four pieces of silver, and go and reap in my place in the royal crops." And he replied, "There are two things which I cannot do by myself, that is, to take money and to reap; but let me take the money and do thou go and reap, so that the labour may be easy both for thee and for me."

DCXXXV. Dixit alius quidam a daemone obsessus, "Proximâ nocte somnium mihi obvenit partim verum, partim falsum." Quaestum est de eo, "Quid vis dicere?" et regessit, "Dormiens cum pulcherrimâ puellâ coire visus sum: experrectus autem intellexi me coiisse non tamen cum puellâ."

DCXXXVI. Another demoniac lifted his eyes to heaven and said, "Should the understanding One do thus? Was this the work of a wise being? Thou, [O God] hast created a multitude of men, but, behold, Thou killest half of them by hunger. How much better would it have been if instead of every hundred souls Thou hadst made one, for then all men could have lived happily and in abundance. It is meet that a man should multiply those who are supported by him in proportion to the food which he hath."

DCXXXVII. Another demoniac was very skilful in interpreting dreams in his madness, and one day a certain nobleman said to him, "I saw in my dream as if a great number of sparrows were fastened up the skirts of my garments, and I made them to fly off one after the other, but when the last one came to escape I caught hold of it." And the demoniac interpreted the dream thus:—"If thou didst in truth see what thou sayest thou must have made thy supper upon lentiles.—Cum autem dormitares pedere coepisti: ventrem postremus exonerare expetentem to ipsum cohibuisti." Cui nobilis subridens, "Di te accusent! Mihi enim evenit quemadmodum narras."

DCXXXVIII. Whilst another lunatic was sitting down and weeping it was said to him, "Why weepest thou? And why art thou sad?" He replied, "How can I help weeping? for behold the winter hath come and I have no tunic." And they said to him, "Be not in tribulation, God will not leave thee without a tunic," and he replied, "True, but last year He not only left me without a tunic, but also without a cloak and without a loin cloth."

DCXXXIX. Another lunatic was sitting in the market and eating baked meat, and a certain man said to him, "Give me some of that which thou art eating, so that I also may eat like thee." He replied, "This doth not belong to me, but a certain nobleman commanded me to eat it all for his sake, and I am afraid to transgress his commandment."

DCXL. To another lunatic, round about whom a large number of boys were gathered together, it was said, "Go and lie down in a certain place so that these boys may go away from thee;" and he replied, "When they are hungry they will depart."

DCXLI. Another lunatic was a Jacobite, and a certain Greek said to him, "Wilt thou take a *zûzâ* and curse Jacob Bûrde'âyâ?"³ And he replied, "No, but give me the half of one and I will curse thee and Leo⁴, who is much more honourable than Jacob, and to these I will also add for the Marcianus who was an emperor⁵."

DCXLII. Another lunatic was boasting that he was a king in the time of Hercules, and when a certain nobleman said to him, "Thou art the king of podical sternutations", he replied, "If I were what thy words say I am, my kingdom would be greater and much more vast than that of Hercules, because podical sternutations are much more numerous than Greeks."

DCXLIII. When another lunatic was fettered in the hospital, he that filled the drinking-cup came to him and said, "Take, drink, and if thou dost not do so I will beat thee with this whip." And the lunatic replied, "Give it to me and I will drink, although I know well that thou thyself needest to drink it more than I do."

DCXLIV. Another lunatic was passing through the cloth-workers' bazaar when he saw a large number of men gathered together about a shop

³ Born at Edessa A.D. 154, died A.D. 222.

⁴ I.e., Leo the Pope; he was born about A.D. 400, and died about A.D. 461.

⁵ Emperor of the East A.D. 450–457.

which had been broken into during the night, and he also drew nigh and looked at the place where the thieves broke through. Then he said, "Do not all of you know who did this?" and they said, "No." And the lunatic said to them, "I know, but I shall not tell you until you bring me three loaves of bread, and two roasted heads to eat, for I am famished; and when I have satisfied my hunger I will tell you." And the people said to each other, "It is not to be wondered at if he should know [who did it], for he is wandering about the whole night through, and thieves never hide from him, because they know that he hath no intelligence and that he could not identify them." And when they had brought the food to him and he had eaten and was satisfied, he stood up in the breach and said, "So ye do not know whose deed this is? Then ye have all become little children. This is, indeed, the work of thieves and of no one else." So he left [them] and went away.

DCXLV. Another lunatic, when the boys were throwing stones at him, ran away from them, and there met him a woman who was carrying a little child, and he went and smote the little child so that he nearly died. And the woman said to him, "The wrath of God be upon thee! In what way did the child offend thee?" The lunatic said, "O harlot, to-morrow when he hath grown a little more he will be worse than these."

DCXLVI. Two lunatics were engaged in a severe fight with each other when the guards captured them and hauled them before the governor. The governor said to one of them, "Why didst thou strike this man?" and he replied, "Manu testes meas exporrectâ captabat ut prehensum alterutrum resecaret." Judex ergo quaesivit, "Quare manu testes illius captabas?" Respondit, "Crede mihi tot habet uxores et pellices ut tale facinus patrare nunquam ausus essem."

DCXLVII. Another lunatic was eating dates together with their stones, and when he was asked why he did so, he said, "The shopman weighed them out to me thus."

DCXLVIII. Whenever an ordinary man died people were in the habit of giving a *zûzâ* to a certain lunatic, and once when a rich man died, his relatives gave him two. And having taken the *zûzê* and gone out the lunatic said to the relatives of the dead man, "Do not forget that ye have given alms to me for the next among you who shall die."

DCXLIX. Another lunatic asked a certain nobleman to give him a pair of shoes, "For", he said, "I am barefooted." And when the governor had given him the shoes, he said to him, "Have a care so that my head also may pray for thee as well as my feet, otherwise the prayer of my feet will not be more availing than the curses of my head." And the nobleman commanded and gave him a cloak also.

DCL. The wife of another lunatic came to the judge and made a complaint against her husband, saying, "He beateth me and he starveth me." And when the judge had rebuked him for such conduct the lunatic said, "As regards the beatings which I give her she speaketh the truth, but in the matter of the starving she lieth." Then he fell at the feet of the judge, and entreated him to come in person with him to the door of his house that he might see for himself and judge rightly in the matter. Now when the judge heard [these words] he imagined that the lunatic wished to shew [him] the quantity of bread and meal which were in his house, so he rose up and went with him. Quum tamen ad aedium fores ventum est ingentem merdam illi monstravit quaesivitque, "Hanc per deos rem cognoscite, num istam merdam edere famelica valuisset?" And when the judge looked he was very angry and reproached himself because he had been persuaded to come with the lunatic.

DCLI. Unto another lunatic a certain man said, "Why standest thou idle? Behold, the prince distributeth two *zûzê* to every man." The lunatic said, "Shew me, now, the two *zûzê* which he hath given thee if thou art telling the truth."

DCLII. A certain lawgiver became possessed of a devil, and a man said to him, "What saith the law concerning a man who hath died and left a widow, and a son, and a daughter, when it is found that he hath also left behind him a thousand *dînârs*?" The lunatic replied, To the widow shall come widowhood, to the son shall come the orphan's estate, and the daughter hath that whereon she can live by whoring; but the money shall be divided among the poor and the lunatics who are not able to work."

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER. STORIES OF THIEVES AND OF ROBBERS

DCLIII. When a certain man's money had been stolen the people said to him, "Grieve not, for in the day of judgment the wages of him who took it shall not be reckoned [unto him];" and he replied, "I do not know about that, but at the moment he hath taken all my wages."

DCLIV. Certain things having been stolen from a man it was said to him, "Take refuge in God and in the adorable Gospel, and He will expose the thief." The man replied, "If the thief had hearkened unto the counsel of the Gospel, he would not only have robbed me, but he would also have destroyed me and slain me; for he would have heard our Lord saying, 'The thief cometh not except to steal and to slay, and to destroy¹,' and how can He Who counselled the thief thus expose him?"

DCLV. When some thieves were stripping another man of his clothes he said to them, "Leave my clothes on me, and I will send you the price thereof with something in addition." The thieves said to him, "O fool, who ever saw the robber who put anything out at interest?"

DCLVI. Another thief used only to steal children, whom he sold. And when he was asked why he did this, he said, "I steal children because they will all rise at the Resurrection, and when people demand their children from me I shall be able to say, 'Here are your children, take them.' But if I were to steal an ass or a garment, whence should I obtain them when they were demanded from me in the day of the Resurrection?"

DCLVII. Another thief having stolen much clothing from a certain house, the owners of the house found out who he was and captured him: and he began to entreat them to let him go, and took an oath that he would leave off stealing. Then they said unto him, "Let go our clothing then, and go to the Devil's perdition," whereupon the thief said to them, "If ye take those things away from me on what shall I live during the time of [my]

¹ St. John x. 10.

repentance? For behold, I have sworn to you that I will not steal again, and I have no other handicraft."

DCLVIII. Some thieves went to the house of a certain man by night, and began to search for something which they found not, whereupon the owner of the house said to them, "O brave boys, that which ye seek to find in this house by night I have looked for therein very carefully, but have not found it."

DCLIX. Another man was repeating a story of how whilst travelling along the road together with twenty men, two wicked highwaymen fell upon them and stripped them of what they had. And when it was said to him, "How could two men get the mastery over you?" he said, "What could we do? For one of them seized one of us and the other did the plundering; how then could one of us vanquish two?"

DCLX. From one of the elders a Book of the Gospels with a golden case was stolen, and he stood up in the church, and admonished and cursed him that had stolen it. And when he saw them all weeping and uttering curses with him, he said to them, "Behold, all ye people of the village, ye all weep, men, and women, and children, but if your weeping be sincere, who stole the Book of the Gospels?"

DCLXI. When some money had been stolen from another man, he said, "This is a sad day," and a thief replied, "Not for every man."

DCLXII. When another robber broke into a house and found nothing therein except a pen and some ink, he took [the pen] and wrote on the wall, "Woe is me for your sakes! How needy and lazy ye must be."

DCLXIII. From another man some money was stolen, and he suspected that his wife had stolen it. And while he was weeping and groaning his neighbour said to him, "Weep not, have hope in God and He will return to thee thy money." And the man said to him, "Behold, this woman maketh no use of God, and it will not be easy for her to return anything; and as for God, whom doth He fear that He should return anything?"

DCLXIV. Another thief stole an ass and carried him to the market to sell, and when he was asked for how much he had sold it, he said, "For exactly what I gave for it: I gained nothing and I lost nothing."

DCLXV. Certain thieves went into the house of another man, and took everything which they found therein, and they left nothing there except a mat; and as they were going out the owner of the house took the mat himself and went forth with them. The thieves said to him, "Where art thou going with us?" and he replied, "To see the house to which we are going from here, for God hath made you to carry for me my property without payment."

DCLXVI. Another thief broke into a house and found there nothing but a jar of wine whereof he was glad; and he took [it] and drank [it], and became drunken. In the morning the master of the house rose up and found him lying there asleep, and he took his upper tunic and went and sold it in the market, and bought something to eat; and this he brought home and cooked and ate, and the remainder he left. Now when the thief woke up he found that the eye of day had risen, and that as he could not go forth he must hide himself until the evening. And when the evening had come the thief waited for the master of the house to go to sleep so that he might go forth; and when he had gone to sleep the thief rose up to depart, and again ransacked everything in the house but found nothing except that which the master of the house had left of his food. And this he sat down and ate, and he took [some of the wine], and drank it and made merry and did not go forth until the morning. Then the master of the house arose, and finding him still there, he took his second tunic and went yet again [to the market] and sold it, and bought some things to eat; and he brought these home, and cooked and ate of them, and what was over he left. And the thief woke up at the third hour of the day and could not, therefore, depart; so he remained until the night. Now when he was wishing to go forth once more, he found the food which had been left, and he ate it, and drank [wine], and became drunken and fell asleep. Then the master of the house rose up and took his cloak and went and sold it, and thus the two of them did until the master of the house left no garment at all on the thief, not even his loin-cloth. And finally when the thief woke up and found that he had nothing at all wherewith to cover his body, he said to himself. "Why should I fear the master of the house? For he hath eaten of what belongs to me more than I have eaten of his." Then he went, and woke him up, and said, "Give me something wherewith I may cover myself, so that I may turn and depart; where is my clothing?" The master of the house said to him, "Where am I to get it

to give thee? "Consider, now, what we have spent and what we have eaten. On the first day we ate the price of thy upper tunic, and on the second day the price of thy lower one, and on the third day the price of thy cloak, and on the fourth day the price of thy loin-cloth. If thou wert able to drink more than what thou didst eat, why didst thou not inform me? For I did not prepare food for thee."

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER. STORIES OF WONDERFUL EVENTS AND OCCURRENCES

DCLXVII. They say that the mind of a certain sage was so wonderfully acute that he acquired the knowledge of the four sciences of mathematics in one year, and that he understood them perfectly. And it came to pass that he forgot all this learning, and that his understanding was so disturbed that one day he took hold of his beard in his hand, wishing to shave off that which was superfluous: but he let go that which was below his hand and cut off that which was above it. Thus he remained beardless and he was obliged to sit in the house for a whole year until his beard grew long again.

DCLXVIII. It is found written in a certain Hebrew book that, at the time when the prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder with a saw, a certain traveller tarried the night with another man. And the traveller began to speak to the master of the house, saying, "Do not imagine that God will be unmindful of the murderers of the prophet, for He will reward them in this world; and the master of the house said to him, I was one of those who held the saw." And it came to pass that whilst they were conversing the flame of the lamp flickered and spluttered, and the master of the house straightway put his hand out to make it burn properly. And the flame caught hold of his fingers—now at that time they burned naphtha in their lamps—and as he at once put his mouth to spit on them, straightway the fire caught his beard and face, and although he went and threw himself into the cistern of water, the whole of him was consumed.

DCLXIX. A certain nobleman was sitting at table eating, and the smell of his cooked meat was wafted out into the market-place; and a poor man came and begged for a little of it. And the wife of the nobleman rose up to give him some, but he cried out to her and would not allow her to do so. And it came to pass, when the nobleman had eaten and had risen up from the table, that he rose up to go on the roof, and he fell down from the top of the ladder and died; and his wife inherited everything that he had. Then she returned to her father's house and began to give away the old clothes of her husband, among which was a very old pillow, and one

day she saw a certain poor man and gave this to him. And the poor man went and emptied out the hay stuffing that he might wash the pillow-case, and he found inside it one thousand *dînârs* of gold. Then he took the money and obtained for himself goodly apparel, and he took his seat in the clothworkers' bazaar; and he told the old women to look out for a wife for him to marry. And it came to pass that one of them went and found the lady who had given him the pillow, and the woman returned and said to him, "Behold, I have found a beautiful widow, but she is a young and a God-fearing woman, and she hath inherited great wealth from her first husband." And the man was pleased with her and sent to her the gifts of a bridegroom to a bride, and took her to wife. Now when she had gone to his house and had repeated to him the story of her life, and the account of the poor man who had begged for some food and of her husband's death, he in his turn told her the story of the pillow, whereupon they recognised each other. And they glorified God, Who had given to the poor man the house, and property, and wife of him that had deprived him of a little food.

DCLXX. Another of the Frankish merchants was about to go by sea to the country of China, when an old man came and entreated him to take with him in the ship a piece of lead [weighing] about ten *lîrê*, and to sell it in China, and buy with the price thereof something which he would find there and bring it back to him; and the merchant undertook to do so. And when he had arrived in China, a certain man came and asked him, "Hast thou no lead with thee?" and he replied, "I have a little;" and he sold the piece for one hundred and thirty *dînârs*, and he bought with the money some silk and came back. Now the man who bought the lead from him also came and was a fellow-passenger in the ship with him, and he began to question him about him that had given him the lead; so the merchant described to him the old man. Then the man said, "This old man is my uncle, by whom I have been cruelly treated, and through whom I came to this country. Now, therefore, will I reveal to thee the story of the lead, for I am no longer afraid. When I had bought the lead from thee I carried it to another city where lead is exceedingly precious, and certain buyers came to me and entreated me to break it up and to give a piece to each of them. And when I had broken it up in my house I found in the middle of it one thousand *mathkâls* of gold, and behold, with them I purchased the things which I have with me; and I thank God

that He hath not deprived me of what belonged to my uncle, even though he hated me and would not willingly have given me anything at all." Now when they arrived at their city they found that the old man was dead and that he had no other heir except his brother's son; so he took the silk which the merchant had with him and everything which he found in his uncle's house.

DCLXXI. It is said that a certain man was sitting in company with some other men, and that some one called to him from behind him; and when he turned round to see who it was, he died. And some days after his son was asked, "How did thy father die?" and as he was shewing them and saying, "He turned round and died, just like this," he also died as he uttered the words.

DCLXXII. A certain young man whilst sleeping one night saw in his dream that the angels carried him to Gehenna and delivered him over to the devils who cast him into Gehenna; and by reason of his terror when he rose in the morning all the hair of his head and of his beard was quite white like that of an old man eighty years old. And his acquaintances wondered at him.

DCLXXIII. It is said that a certain king wished to put one of his soldiers to death by poison, and having heard that he was about to have a vein opened he called the physician who usually bled him, and giving him gifts ordered him to poison the scalpel. And he went and did so, and he opened the vein of the soldier and he died; and the physician put the scalpel among his other scalpels and forgot it. And it came to pass that some days after this the physician himself needed to be bled, and he told his disciple to open a vein; and the disciple went and unconsciously took that same scalpel and opened his master's vein, and thus he died by the same means as those by which he had killed the soldier.

DCLXXIV. It is said that once on a time a certain blind man was on board a ship, together with seventy souls, and that the ship having been wrecked they were all drowned except the blind man who saved himself by means of a spar; yet when he came on shore he fell sick and died.

DCLXXV. Once on a time a certain wealthy man who had become absolutely poor, went to another rich man who was his friend, and when he had shewn him his condition his friend brought out a bag containing

three hundred *dînârs*, and he swore an oath that besides these he had nothing else left. And when his friend had taken the bag and had gone to his house, another of his friends came to him and shewed him that he had not enough money for a day's expenses; and he had compassion upon him and brought forth the bag, saying, "I also have nothing, but one of my friends gave me this bag. Do thou, however, take it, and God will provide for me." And when the friend had taken the bag and gone to his house, before he opened it, there came unto him the man unto whom the bag had belonged originally, and asked him for some help, and the friend said within himself, "I apprehend that this bag hath not fallen to my lot;" so he took it out and gave it to the man. And when he saw it he recognized that it was his own bag and he asked the friend concerning the matter, and the friend told him that such and such an one had given it to him. And the original owner said, "And I gave it to him, but justice demandeth that we should divide it among the three [of us]." And they sent and called the other man and divided the money equally among them.

DCLXXVI. A certain sailor, that is to say a mariner, related the following:—"Once when I was in a certain city of Hagiopontos a merchant called me into his house, and said unto me, 'If thou canst carry me in thy ship to the country of Palestine secretly, I will give thee whatsoever thou askest; for the king of the country hath set his eye upon me, and he is expecting gifts from me, the which I am bringing from my store.' Then I being greedy said, '[It shall be according to] thy command;' so I took all the possessions of the man, which [in value] amounted to more than one hundred thousand *dînârs* of Egyptian gold, besides royal apparel. And I took the man also, and one night we embarked in the ship and put out to sea, and there fell upon us sea-robbers and they carried off all the merchant's property and also wished to kill him. Then I entreated them to let me put him ashore naked, and after a time I myself escaped from them. And I went to one of the cities of Palestine and I found that same man sitting by a roadside asking for alms; and I glorified God Who maketh rich and Who maketh poor."

DCLXX VII. Another man told the following story:—"One day I lost a horse, and I went out to the plain to find him; and being hungry and thirsty I went into a certain village where I saw in a certain house a young woman with a beautiful face; and I asked her for a little bread, and

she said, 'Sit down that I may bring thee a little cooked food.' And when I had sat down her husband came and said to her, 'Did I marry thee to set out food for wayfarers?' And he said to me, 'Get up, man, and go about thy business,' and being ashamed I rose up and went to another village. And when I had gone therein I met a young man with a handsome face and I asked him for some bread, and he replied, 'Prithee let us go to the house that thou mayest eat a little cooked food.' So I went with him and we came to the door of his house, and there came forth a woman and said, 'Who is this man?' and the young man said, 'He is a traveller, and I have 'brought him to eat bread.' And the woman said, 'Have I taken thee for a husband that thou shouldst bring wayfarers in on me in this wise?' and she shut the door in his face and mine. Then I laughed out loud straightway, and I began to wonder at the man in the first village, and at the woman in this village. And the young man asked me why I laughed, and I told him what had happened to me in the former village; and having described to him the house and the woman and her husband, he said to me, 'This is much more worthy of wonder—that the woman is my sister, and this wife of mine is the sister of the man who is my sister's husband.'

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER. PHYSIOGNOMICAL CHARACTERISTICS DESCRIBED BY THE SAGES

DCLXXVIII. Soft hair indicateth timidity, and harsh hair is a sign of bravery. For behold, the camel, and the hare, and the lamb have soft hair, but the lion and the wild pig have harsh hair; now this characteristic is found also in the fowl of the air. An abundance of hair on the belly indicateth a strong desire for marriage; and this [observation] is derived from winged fowl.

DCLXXIX. The man with coarse hair, and lofty stature, and a broad belly, and a closely knit back, and broad shoulders, and little flesh on his neck, and a fleshy breast, and small thighs, and red and dry eyes, and a long and pointed forehead, is a mighty man and a hunter; but he who hath the reverse of these attributes is a weak and timid man.

DCLXXX. He whose flesh is soft, and who is not fat overmuch, whose arms move easily, whose hair is soft and not black overmuch, and whose complexion is between red and white, is a good man by nature and in him there is no wickedness.

DCLXXXI. He that hath much flesh on his neck, and large feet, and shoulders drawn upwards, and a round belly, and forehead and a tinge of green in his eyes, is a man who is without sexual passion.

DCLXXXII. He that hath his eyes open always, and thick eyebrows, and a meagre stature, and hasty movements, and a ruddy colour, and a round face, and a mole on his cheek, is an impudent and audacious man.

DCLXXXIII. He that hath an emaciated face, and eyebrows which do not meet, and slow movements, is a man who grieveth and despaireth habitually.

DCLXXXIV. He whose head leaneth to the right, and whose knees are stretched out from each other in walking, who moveth his arms as he goeth along, who leaneth with his hand on the top of his side when he sitteth down, and who doth not look upon the various sides [of a matter]

in a disordered manner, is a man who is blessed in all his movements and actions, and he is naturally noble.

DCLXXXV. He that hath a broad cheek, and coarse thick hair upon it, and quick movements. of the head, is a man of wrath.

DCLXXXVI. He that hath the upper lip larger than the lower one, and a ruddy colour, and a hasty gait, is a man easily [moved] to words of abuse.

DCLXXXVII. He that hath a whitish colour, and very fat eyes, and a round nose, and moist eyes, is a man prone to the passion of love and to the love of women; he will never allow himself to do harm to any man whatsoever, and usually daughters are born to him.

DCLXXXVIII. The man who hath the upper members of his body larger than the lower ones, and a flat nose, and a fat body, and a fluent speech, and a superabundance of hair on his belly, loveth his children exceedingly.

DCLXXXIX. The man who hath a thick neck is a man of wrath, and is even like the bull.

DCXC. The man who hath a long and thin neck is a man addicted to love like the gazelle.

DCXCI. He that hath a very meagre neck is a crafty man like the wolf.

DCXCII. He that shaketh his legs as he goeth along is one who meditateth upon lofty subjects and is even like the lion, especially if his arms are curved.

DCXCIII. He that hath thin and mobile lips, with the upper one falling over the lower, is a hunter even as are the lion and large dogs.

DCXCIV. He that hath a thick upper lip, which appeareth to cover over the lower one, is a man lacking in intelligence, and dense in understanding and is even like the ass.

DCXCV. He that hath a thick nose-end is a sluggish man and is even like the ox; but he that hath a thin nose-end is a man of wrath like the dog.

DCXCVI. He that hath large ears is like unto the ass in his movements, for behold, those dogs which have small ears are very swift and active in their movements.

DCXCVII. He that hath deep-set eyes is cunning like the ape, and he that hath very prominent eyes is simple like the ass.

DCXCVIII. He whose complexion is very black or very white is a timid man, like the Indians and the whole race of women.

DCXCIX. He whose complexion is ruddy overmuch is one who leadeth into error, like the fox.

DCC. He that hath a very red face is a lover of wine; now this indication is derived from the drunkard.

DCCI. He that hath blue or gray eyes is a timid man.

DCCII. The man whose eyes are absolutely colourless is a fool, even like the goat.

DCCIII. He that hath hair overmuch on his breast and belly hath neither foundation nor stability in his actions, and is even as are certain feathered fowl.

DCCIV. He that hath no hair upon his breast is an impudent man, and he is even like unto a woman; but he that hath hair upon his breast is even like a lion.

DCCV. He whose hair covereth his forehead is a man who is fitted naturally to be a slave.

DCCVI. He whose steps are long behaveth wickedly in his actions: and he is accounted excellent, even as is the lion, especially if there be a sound [when he moveth] his arms.

DCCVII. He whose eyes have swift motions is a plunderer, even as the hawk.

DCCVIII. He that hath a dense body is a fool like unto the ass, especially if he hath a loud voice.

DCCIX. The man who at the beginning speaketh with a loud voice and endeth his speech in a thin, small voice is one who grieveth and who beareth many burdens like the ox.

DCCX. The man whose voice is feeble is timid like the lamb, and he whose voice is sharp and disjointed is a fool like the goat.

DCCXI. The man who reigneth when yet exceedingly young, that is to say in his childhood, being naturally of a good disposition, will not live to an old age, and in his hands the sovereignty will pass from his race, and things will happen in his time which have never happened before.

Similarly, if a man reign in the prime of life, and he be naturally of a wicked, avaricious, and greedy disposition, his kingdom will not endure. But the kingdom of the man who cometh to the throne when he is forty or fifty years of age, being naturally of a good disposition, will endure in proportion to the age which he is when he beginneth to reign. This fact hath been demonstrated by the experience of a great many sages of old.

DCCXII. The man who hath round eyes which project from his head and have red streaks in them is a miser, and an avaricious and corrupt man; and if it happen that they are directed upwards continually he hath not a single good trait in his character. Similarly a broad face is a sign of good nature, and for a man to have a face which is broad at the top and narrow at the chin is an indication of an evil nature.

DCCXIII. The man who hath a wide space between the eyebrows, and who winketh with the left eye, and whose ear is full of hair, and who looketh on the ground is crafty, and subtle, and deceitful, especially if his nose inclineth to the left.

DCCXIV. The man whose eyes are deep-set, and who hath a high forehead, and slightly elongated face, is an audacious fellow who will live long.

DCCXV. The man who hath large lips, and a flat nose, and great eyes which stare upwards is a fool, and no trust can be placed in him.

DCCXVI. The man who hath small eyes, and long eyelashes, and a high forehead, and a loose mouth, and crisp hair, and a bald skull, is a tyrant and one who sheddeth blood.

DCCXVII. The man who hath large eyes, with a cast(?) in the left one, and a handsome face, is a lover of wisdom, and is of keen intelligence; he is also addicted to fornication and is not entirely free from fraud.

DCCXVIII. The woman whose nose-end is slightly large, and who hath large black eyes with a slight tinge of red in the left one is chaste; she shunneth marriage with the greatest care, and hideth herself in corners.

DCCXIX. Thick and bushy eyebrows, small eyes, thick lips, and a sharp nose are bad signs in a woman.

DCCXX. No woman with a round face, and a small nose, and a pointed head, and whose eye is darker than her complexion, and whose hair is crisp, can escape fornication.

DCCXXI. The man whose eyes project from his head and who prolongeth his gaze on anything, is one who boasteth of himself and hath a high spirit, and is strenuous in worldly matters.

DCCXXII. He whose nose-end is high is one who hateth occupation.

DCCXXIII. Sharpness of nose, exceeding blackness of the eye, length of hair, and hasty speech, are signs of wrath and anger; the inward qualities of the man who hath them do not testify to his externals, and he is the offspring of fornication.

DCCXXIV. Furthermore, little compassion, avariciousness, mercilessness, lasciviousness, insolent speech and weakness in action are the signs of an adulterer and of one who is the offspring of fornication.

DCCXXV. Aristotle the Great said¹, "Since the soul and the body are counterparts in growth and are the natural kinsmen, each of the other, each of them acteth upon the other, and each is acted upon by his fellow. The soul is acted upon by the body in seasons of anger, and love, and sadness, and because the body is the revealer of our senses, the soul concealeth by means of the body the motion whereby we came to know this. And this is the science of physiognomy, and the signs which it possesseth are threefold. For either by the resemblance which we see

¹ For the original Greek text see Didot's edition of Aristotle, fol. iv. p. 1. The following passage, having reference to the same subject, I extract from Bar-Hebraeus' great translation of Aristotle's work entitled, "Butter of Wisdom," ###).

between some human and some animal form do we identify the motions of the person from the motions of the animal; or by the likeness which we see between a certain human being and a certain being among the various human races—as we might say the Ethiopians, or the Huns, or the Hittites—and when we compare the habits of the person with those of [one belonging to] these nations we cannot make a mistake; or the form of some person whom we see being like unto the form of him that is angry, or him that is afraid, or him that lusteth; therefore he who is naturally a man of wrath, or a timid man, or a man of lust we can describe and be certain that we are right. And this art hath need of a subtle intellect, and a profound understanding, and a perfect mind, and the heavenly aid of God—may His glory be adored! And he, who will ornament [his] understanding with spiritual light and, will devote himself to the understanding [of physical signs], will be even like unto the sun in true light in respect of the things which are visible, for without it no single eye is able to attain thereunto."

DCCXXVI. A certain wise man wished to listen rather than to speak, and being asked "Why?" replied, "It was for this reason that God created one tongue and two ears for man."

DCCXXVII. Another wise man said, "As men are wont to try vessels of earthenware by their ring, even so also is a man tried by the word of his mouth."

"The writer saith:—

Peradventure having meditated upon these miscellaneous stories which I have gathered together and arranged in this my book, thou mayest find one which lieth beyond the pale of the path of chastity, and which should be neither said nor done by him that dwelleth chastely in flourishing and well-ordered monasteries, and mayest begin to heap imprecations upon me; but do not do this. For as in the tabernacle of wisdom² every kind of thing is necessary, nothing whatsoever that in a natural way sharpeneth the intelligence, and enlighteneth the understanding, and comforteth and rejoiceth the mind which is sorrowful and suffering, should ever be rejected. So likewise is it in a large house: for not only are vessels of gold and silver necessary, but even vessels made of gourdskins. And to speak

² read ###.

after the manner of an apostle, whist thou dost purify thy mind and dost refine thine understanding, thou wilt not find in this book a single petty or contemptible story, or one which is absolutely destitute of some intellectual profit."

Here endeth the book.

Glory be to God Who hath given [me] strength; and to the Son Who hath helped [me]; and to the Holy Ghost Who brought [the work] to an end and completed it.

ADDITIONAL VERSES

[The following verses are not found in the India Office Ms.]

EXHORTATION TO A LIFE OF EXCELLENCE.

As a mourner weeping thou didst enter the world on the day of thy birth,
Though thou didst bring joy and laughter to thy kinsfolk;
Take care that thou art joyful and innocent on the day of thy death,
When they are weeping and wailing by reason of thy 5 departure.

THE WORTHLESSNESS OF [THIS] FLEETING LIFE.

The [days of] men's lives are few and evil, as hath been said,
And are for the most part, [full of] toil, and pain, and suffering, and
disgrace.
Childhood hath [its] faults and stripes of correction; And manhood its
fatiguing passions and goadings of 10 the flesh;
And in old age sickness and pain wear [a man] to nothing.
Then, straightway, death snatcheth [him] away to the storehouse of the
grave,
And, behold, there are for him henceforth either the awful judgment, and
the fiery furnace,

And the torment and the thick darkness wherein there is no light,
15 Or happiness with the angels in the shining heavens.

ON THE TRANSIENT NATURE OF [THIS] WORLD.

The moon, by reason of her phases, may be taken as a type of man.
She cometh into being, she waxeth, she groweth old,
she dieth, and is as if she had never been.
The course of her hours daily depicteth the form of the end,
20 And teacheth us that in the same manner the world
and the things thereof must pass away.

ON DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION.

The mornings and the evenings without written words depict
The story of death and of the resurrection by means of things which are

visible.

Night, like death, cometh upon all beings and creatures,
25 And spreadeth out over all rest and silence and tranquillity.

He carrieth away the crowns of exalted kings shamelessly,
And all the ranks of mighty men sink to rest at his approach.

He depriveth thrones also of their splendour,
And from princes he demandeth tax and tribute.

30 He maketh merchants to cease suddenly from travelling,
And handicraftsmen also from their trades and handicrafts.
He sheweth the way to all husbandmen coming from their fields,

And work and tillage upon all homesteads come to an end.

He burieth every man in his bed as if he were dead,
And he draweth over his face the gate of sleep as it 35 were a curtain.

He bindeth on crowns and is boastful, and commandeth all creation,
And he subdueth the sceptres of sea and of land [to his] dominion.

He maketh the earth to appear unformed, and waste, and void,
And he stilleth the clamour of all those who are prosperous through
trafficking.

And as with colour he depicteth to every man the 40 type of the end,
And how the course of the world and of the vault of heaven will cease.

Morn riseth like unto the sun of righteousness,
And with his beams he driveth away the night from the ends of the earth.

Like a trumpet the light it beareth forth into the inhabited world,
And men rise up from sleep as out of the grave. 45

Suddenly each man possesseth himself of life and wakefulness,
And every one pursueth his labours with zeal and diligence.

Morn commandeth the earth to beget its offspring from the womb of
night,

And each man riseth up to the things which belong to him in due order;
The rich man riseth up to his riches and the poor man 50 to his poverty
without confusion.

Morn painteth the picture of the great day of the Resurrection,
And sheweth how every man will possess the [fruit of] his labour from
justice.

OF THE FOOLS WHO MAGNIFY THEMSELVES OVER THE WISE.

The time when foxes shall turn into lions hath not yet been recorded,
 55 Nor when slaves shall have obtained dominion over their lords.

OF THE DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST ON OUR BEHALF.

O turtle-dove, I am struck with wonder at thee,. for I marvel at thee,
 For though thou hast ornaments on thy neck, yet hast
 thou pitch in thy hands, and weeping in thy mouth.

If thou art a bride why have thy wailings disturbed the woods?

60 And if thou art a mourner wherein do thine ornaments benefit thy
 body?

The dove replieth, "The love of my spouse hangeth upon my neck like a
 jewelled ornament,

"And my hands are dyed with his precious blood as it were with a pledge.

"And, behold, I suffer henceforth through what he suffered for me,

"Even as I take pride in and am glad because of his resurrection."

65 THE DISSOLUTION OF THE WORLD.

A certain wise man likened the world to the globe of the sun,

Which in turning in the hands of children indicateth the end;

It leapeth from one to another and passeth on without stopping.

And it indicateth to us that temporal glory is a dream.

The new moon sheweth the vanishing of the time of 70 my life,

And I take pride therein, and my mind, rejoiceth in the sight thereof.

She is born, she waxeth, she waneth, she dieth away, and finally
 disappeareth,

And every man occupieth himself with vain things and feareth not.

For the lamb is bound beneath the knife whilst its fellow leapeth,

And men are greatly moved by things which are to 75 be greatly desired
 whilst death spoileth.

ANOTHER.

O young man, thou lover of the world, let not this [present] enjoyment
 flatter thee,

For the name of this world is derived from labour¹, yea, even from
 vexation.

¹ The play here is on the words ### "world", and ### "labour".

OF THE CRAFTY MAN, AND OF THE MOCKER, AND OF THE BOASTER.

The man who is wicked, and is crafty, and is a boaster, 80
Continually pryeth into the lapses of his neighbour.
And rather than gaze upon virtues he closeth the eye,
And, like the fly, never seeketh anything but a sore.

OF THE AVARICIOUS MAN.

85 The man who is sluggish and altogether lazy in [doing] good
Leaveth behind not any to pollute the wall.
That the miser may heap up money he will even wear sandals of iron,
For never by any means whatsoever doth he improve in virtue.
He is a fountain from which man draweth not water. 90
And even though such a fountain were the spring of Siloam it would be
meet for it to be shut up.
When such a fountain is choked man complaineth not,
And when its waters are cut off every man rejoiceth, and leaveth it, and is
at peace.

ANOTHER.

The perverse prince of a people should first of all correct himself,
95 And then his people; otherwise his labour will be in vain.
For the crooked shadow cannot be straight
Except the wood from which it cometh be also straight.

ON THE DEATH OF A BELOVED ONE.

O our brother, at thy death I am stricken with amazement, I am afflicted
and am utterly undone, 100
And what I shall say of both matters I know not.
For either in thy death have I eaten of the second death,
Or death in thy death hath swallowed me up like a dragon.
O our little brother, among the brethren thou wert splendid and glorious,
Even as thou wert splendid and glorious among the stars of clay.
Thou didst dissipate all afflictions and sorrows, 105
Even as the rays of the sun scatter the darkness at noonday.

Against sufferings we had a buckler and armour,
And by thy converse every disagreeable thing was driven away.

ANOTHER.

The Lord, Who hath wrought great and mighty deeds 110 on earth,
And hath made the dead to live and hath given strength to the feeble,
Will give thee, O my brother, happiness with the angelic hosts,
And will sprinkle thee with the dew of mercy and of glorious things
And the spirits of the righteous will be friends and brethren of thine.

ANOTHER. 115

ON THE DEATH OF THE PATRIARCH JOHN BAR-MA'DANÎ²,

BY GREGORY BAR-HEBRÆUS.

O Angel of Death, why hast thou smitten me with such sorrow as this,
And hast pitilessly rewarded me with such evil as this?

The sun of time, the luminary, the prop of the Church,
The head of the soul, the soul of the spirit, the right 120 spirit,

The fruit of the heart, the life of life, the light of the pupil of the eye,
The holy of holies, the pure in feelings, the new spirit,
Hast thou taken away from us; and our lament is one of mourning.
Thou hast cast our crown to earth, thou hast overturned our exalted
horn.

125 Under thy protection it became springtime for us throughout the
year,

And even winter took upon itself the attribute of summer.

In the time of December as in the time of January

We possessed a rose without any hateful thing and grapes on the vine.

No man among us ever drew nigh to the fig-tree

130 Without seeing it to be full of fruit, yea, richly dowered therewith.

[Our] garden was like unto the Garden of Eden,

And, behold, without our father, it is like unto the bottommost hell.

O father of truth, let all life perish except thy life,

And if I forget thee, let this my beloved right hand forget me.

135 Through thy removal, behold, the Church hath become filled with

² He was created Maphrian A.D. 1232, and Patriarch in 1252, and he died in 1263.

grief,

And through the want of the perfection which belongeth
to thee it hath become a defective thing.

That which belonged to thyself alone hath become a strange form,
And to thee alone hath come the manhood of our Lord.

Tell me, O our father, where thy blessed habitation is,
140 And how the eye which hath become infirm can see thee.
Though there fall to me the fiercest path of fire,

Yet I will travel on the top thereof, even though it blaze with flame.

The pure soul which was in thy body hath become perfect,
And it hath straightway become mingled with the phalanxes of the
Watchers and of the spiritually wise;

Above the fiery coals among the wheels [hast thou] set 145 thy footstep.

If thou couldst permit me to see the divine Shechinah,

The eye of the soul which though now it were bashful,

Yet at the sight of thy shadow would it become luminous.

This despised form [of mine] would be unworthy to see thee,

Therefore hath thy Lord made for thee a house in the 150 heavens.

In all the world my soul hath become a wretched and apostate thing,

And thyself alone in all the world wast its friend.

Why didst thou leave it in despair and solitude?

Why didst thou not take it with thee as a handmaiden or as a servant?

Since it never at any time spared itself in [thy] service, 155

Why didst thou leave it in tears behind thee like a rejected thing?

From the time when it came into being it never heard the voice of
weeping,

But through thy departure it hath become skilled in the arts of grief.

What one who mourneth for a lover or for a mistress,

Payeth heed to the voice of him that draweth nigh 160 with speech of
consolation?

Though thinking to give comfort to others like the tragedian,

Its own habitation is far removed from consolation.

in the dreams of the night when [my] rational soul is empty,

It becometh painted with shapes of vanity in thy form, 165

For thou knowest that that which was sweet hath become most bitter.

And what ill luck hath come upon the soul that was thine handmaiden, O
mistress!

From the time when became certain to thee the intention of departure
 It became empty and destitute of both knowledge and understanding.
 In the treasury of the mind blazing fire hath been piled up, 170
 Which overcometh with fierce flame and burning the Babylonish woman.
 With the dew of life of thine angelic shadow
 Unless thou sprinkle her behold she will be burnt up like the Chaldean
 woman.

Her liver hath become to her a well—like the Israelitish woman—
 And in it is preserved the unquenchable fire of thy love.
 175 In two mighty fire-temples it hath become a dweller,
 And within a very little it had worshipped the fire like a Persian.
 In the heart and liver, which are the houses of life, the fire kindleth,
 And into them entereth the Magian prophetess to prophesy.
 Inasmuch as her body is enfeebled and her mind wandereth,
 180 If she erreth in her speech let her not be blamed.
 My heart hath no peace and quietness, and my mind getteth no rest,

And without thy likeness there will never remain perception in my brain.
 [My] sleep by day and by night is washed with tears,
 And for this reason a sleepless eye hath come to me.
 If an unwatchful eye hath ever been seen, * 185
 It would fix itself to see thee; and if [it] did not no man would see it sunk
 in slumber.³
 For at thy gate [my] soul standeth like a beggar,
 Asking a vision of thyself in a dream and not a cake.

³ I am uncertain about the meaning of these lines.