



THE BIBLE, THE KORAN, AND THE TALMUD

DR. G. WEIL

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**THE BIBLE, THE KORAN,
AND THE TALMUD
OR,
BIBLICAL LEGENDS OF THE MUSSULMANS**

**COMPILED FROM ARABIC SOURCES, AND
COMPARED WITH JEWISH TRADITIONS
BY
DR. G. WEIL**

The Bible, The Koran, and the Talmud By Dr. G. Weil.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

DR. WEIL has stated, in his Introduction to these Legends, that he chiefly extracted them from original Arabic records, which are still received by Mohammedans as the inspired biographies of the ancient patriarchs and prophets.

It must still farther be added that the leading ideas of these Mohammedan legends, *i.e.*, their prominent historical narratives, and the doctrines and precepts which they either state expressly or imply, are contained in the Koran. In some instances it gives their minutest particulars. Indeed, it would seem as if these legends formed part, at least, of what the founder of the Mohammedan faith terms "the mother of the book," indicating that they preceded his Koran in order of time, and embodied the germ of that faith which he subsequently developed.

This idea is suggested by the learned German compiler, and is corroborated by the fact that the legends were unknown to the Arabs before Mohammed began to preach, while in the Koran he refers to them as already familiar to his hearers.

But, be this as it may, it is certain that the fact of their leading ideas being found in the Koran invests them with divine authority to the faithful Moslem, for it is a primary article of his creed that every thing contained in the Koran is of Allah. On first reading these legends, it therefore occurred to the writer that they might be a valuable acquisition, as an epitome of Mohammedan theology and morals. And their peculiar character, their constant allusion to scriptural facts, with which most Bible readers strongly identify themselves, their novel, and gorgeous, and often sublime inventions, investing them at once with the fidelity of historical detail, and the freshness and fascination of Oriental fiction, seem to fit them especially for popular instruction. If it be asked what benefit may be derived from promulgating the tenets of a professedly erroneous system, it is replied that a distinction ought to be observed between the false systems that have

ceased to be believed, and those which are still maintained as divine truths by any portion of mankind.

It may be questioned whether the former ought at all to be taught, although there are reasons why even the exploded mythology of the ancients should be known; but respecting the second class, to which the religion of Mohammed belongs, there should be but one opinion.

Our Redeemer has committed to us, in part, the propagation of his holy faith, by which alone he declares that mankind shall attain to that holiness, peace, and glory for which they have been created. The exhibition, therefore, in the stewards of the Gospel, of a false religion, in which, as in the case before us, one hundred and twenty millions of our immortal race are at this moment staking their all, can not but be important, at once to awaken within us feelings of deep and active charity for these benighted multitudes, and to furnish us with the requisite intelligence for effectually combating their grievous errors with the weapons of truth.

Should the public feel any interest in this work, the translator proposes, in a future volume, to discuss the legendary principle at some length, and to show the analogy of its practical working in the Jewish, the Mohammedan, and Roman Catholic systems of religion.

INTRODUCTION

MOHAMMED has been frequently reproached with having altered and added most arbitrarily to the religious history of the Jews and Christians, two important considerations not being sufficiently borne in mind. In the first place, it is probable that Mohammed learned only late in life to write, or even to read the Arabic, and he was unquestionably ignorant of every other spoken or written language, as is sufficiently apparent from historical testimony: hence he was unable to draw from the Old and New Testaments for himself, and was entirely restricted to oral instruction from Jews and Christians.

Secondly, Mohammed himself declared both the Old and New Testaments, as possessed by the Jews and Christians of his time, to have been falsified; and, consequently, his own divine mission could be expected to agree with those writings only in part. But the turning-point on which the greater portion of the Koran hinges—the doctrine of the *unity* of God, a doctrine which he embraced with the utmost consistency, and armed with which he appeared as a prophet before the pagan Arabs, who were addicted to the most diversified Polytheism—appeared to him much obscured in the Gospels, and he was therefore forced to protest against their genuineness.

But with regard to the writings of the Jews of the Old Testament, which he had received from the mouth of his Jewish contemporaries, he was induced to believe, or, at least, pretended to believe, that they too had undergone many changes, inasmuch as Ismael, from whom he was sprung, was evidently treated therein as a step-child, or as the son of a discarded slave; whereas Abraham's paternal love and solicitude, as well as the special favor of the Lord, were the exclusive portion of Isaac and his descendants. The predictions respecting the Messiah, too, as declared in the writings of the Prophets, appeared to him incompatible with the faith in himself as the seal of the Prophets. Moreover, Mohammed was probably indebted for his religious education to a man who, abandoning the religion of Arabia, his native country, had sought refuge first in Judaism, and then in Christianity,

though even in the latter he does not seem to have found perfect satisfaction. This man, a cousin of his wife Kadidja, urged forward by an irresistible desire after the knowledge of truth, but, as his repeated apostasies would serve to show, being of a skeptical nature, may have discovered the errors that had crept into all the religious system of his time; and having extracted from them that which was purely Divine, and freed it from the inventions of men, may have propounded it to his disciple, who, deeply affected by its repeated inculcation, at length felt within himself a call to become the restorer of the old and pure religion. A Judaism without the many ritual and ceremonial laws, which, according to Mohammed's declaration, even Christ had been called to abolish, or a Christianity without the Trinity, crucifixion, and salvation connected therewith—this was the creed which, in the early period of his mission, Mohammed preached with unfeigned enthusiasm.

It would be out of place here to exhibit in detail the rapidly-changing character both of Mohammed and his doctrines; but what has been said appeared indispensable by way of introduction to the legends in this work. With the exception of a few later additions, these legends are derived from Mohammed himself. Their essential features are found even in the Koran, and what is merely alluded to there is carried out and completed by oral traditions. Hence these legends occupy a twofold place in Arabic literature. The whole circle of the traditions, from Adam to Christ, containing, as they do in the view of Mussulmans, real and undisputed matters of fact, which are connected with the fate of all nations, for this the foundation of the universal history of mankind; while, on the other hand, they are especially made use of as the biography of the Prophets who lived before Mohammed. It is therefore highly important to ascertain the ground from which the source of these legends has sprung, and to show the transformation which they underwent in order to serve as the fulcrum for the propagation of the faith in Mohammed.

Respecting the origin of these legends, it will appear, from what has been said, that, with the exception of that of Christ, it is to be found in Jewish traditions, where, as will appear by the numerous citations from the Midrash, they are yet to be seen. Many traditions respecting the Prophets of

the Old Testament are found in the Talmud, which was then already closed, so that there can be no doubt that Mohammed heard them from Jews, to whom they were known, either by Scripture or tradition. For that these legends were the common property both of Jews and Arabs can not be presumed, inasmuch as Mohammed communicated them to the Arabs as something new, and specially revealed to himself; and inasmuch as the latter actually accused him of having received instruction from foreigners. Besides Warraka, who died soon after Mohammed's first appearance as a prophet, we know of two other individuals, who were well versed in the Jewish writings, and with whom he lived on intimate terms, viz., Abd Allah Ibn Salam, a learned Jew, and Salman the Persian, who had long lived among Jews and Christians, and who, before he became a Mussulman, was successively a Magian, Jew, and Christian. The monk Bahira, too, whom, however, according to Arabic sources, he only met once, on his journey to Bozra, was a baptized Jew. All these legends must have made a deep impression on a religious disposition like that of Mohammed, and have roused within him the conviction that at various times, when the depravity of the human race required it, GOD selected some pious individuals to restore them once more to the path of truth and goodness. And thus it might come to pass that, having no other object than to instruct his contemporaries in the nature of the Deity, and to promote their moral and spiritual improvement, he might desire to close the line of the Prophets with himself.

But these legends the more especially furthered his object, inasmuch as in all of them the Prophets are more or less misunderstood and persecuted by the infidels, but, with the aid of God, are made to triumph in the end. They were therefore intended by him to serve as a warning to his opponents, and to edify and comfort his adherents. But the legend of Abraham he must have seized and appropriated with peculiar avidity, on account of its special use as a weapon both against Jews and Christians, while, at the same time, it imparted a certain luster to all the nations of Arabia descending through Ismael from Abraham.

It is difficult to find out with precision how much of this last legend was known in Arabia before Mohammed; but it is probable, that as soon as the

Arabs became acquainted with the Scriptures and traditions of the Jews, they employed them in tracing down to Mohammed the origin both of their race and of their temple. But that they possessed no historical information respecting it will appear from the fact that, notwithstanding their genealogical skill, they confess themselves unable to trace Mohammed's ancestry beyond the twentieth generation. It is, however, quite evident, not only that the legends of Abraham and Ismael, which related much that was favorable to the latter, concerning which the Bible was silent, but that all the others in like manner were more or less changed and amplified by Mohammed, and adapted to his own purposes. We are, however, inclined to ascribe these modifications to the men by whom he was surrounded rather than to himself; for we consider him, at least during the period of his mission, as the mere tool of certain Arabian reformers rather than an independent prophet, or, at all events, more as a dupe than a deceiver. Yet to him unquestionably belongs the highly poetical garb in which we find these legends, and which was calculated to attract and captivate the imaginative minds of the Arabs much more than the dull Persian fables narrated by his opponents.

In the legend of Christ, it is not difficult to discover the views of a baptized Jew. He acknowledges in Christ the living Word, and the Spirit of GOD, in contradistinction to the dead letter and the empty ceremonial into which Judaism had then fallen. In the miraculous birth of Christ there is nothing incredible to him, for was not Adam, too, created by the word of the Lord? He admits all the miracles of the Gospel, for had not the earlier prophets also worked miracles? Even in the Ascension he finds nothing strange, for Enoch and Elias were also translated to heaven. But that a true prophet should place himself and his mother on a level with the Most High God is repugnant to his views, and he therefore rejects this doctrine as the blasphemous invention of the priests. He refuses also, in like manner, to believe the Crucifixion, because it appears to him to reflect upon the justice of GOD, and to conflict with the history of former prophets, whom He had delivered out of every danger.¹ "No man shall suffer for the sins of his

¹ The reader is reminded of what our Savior says of all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, who perished between the temple and the altar.—E. T.

neighbor," says the Koran: hence, though Christ might have followed out his designs without the fear of death, it seemed to him impossible that the Lord should have permitted Christ, the innocent, to die in so shameful a manner for the sins of other men. But he regards as a Savior every prophet who by divine revelation, and an exemplary and pious life, restores man to the way of salvation which Adam had abandoned at his fall; and such a savior he believed himself to be.

Now, as the legend of Abraham was valuable to Mohammed on account of the pure and simple lesson which it inculcated, as well as for its connection with the sacred things of Mecca, so he valued the legend of Christ especially for its promise of the Paraclete, which he believed, or at least proclaimed himself to be, and to which appellation the meaning of his own name at least furnished him with a better claim than some others who had arrogated it to themselves before him. Here, again, we perceive that Mohammed was probably misinformed both by Jews and Christians, though perhaps from no sordid motive. Some one, for instance, as Maccavia has already observed, may have told him that Christ had spoken of a *peryclete*—a word which is synonymous with Ahmed (the much-praised one). At all events, in all the legends of the Mussulmans, Mohammed is declared even by the oldest prophets to be the greatest of all that were to come (although there are fewer traces of this found in the Koran); and wherever, in the Jewish legends, Moses, Israel, and the Thora are prominently brought forward, there the Mussulmans place Mohammed, the Arabs, and the Koran. The name to which they most frequently appeal as their voucher is Kaab Alahbar, a Jew, who embraced Islamism during the caliphate of Omar. As translations of the Koran abound in the German language, it can not be difficult for the reader to separate those portions of these legends composed by Mohammed from those which were afterward interpolated, but which were ascribed to him, and descended to posterity as sacred traditions.

The oral traditions respecting the ancient prophets, which are put into Mohammed's mouth, are so numerous, and some of them so contradictory, that no historian or biographer has been able to admit them all. It was therefore necessary to select; and in order to make them in some degree

complete, we were obliged to draw from various sources, as it was only in this way that the unity and roundness could be obtained in which they are here presented to the reader.

Besides the Koran and the commentaries upon it, the following MSS. have been made use of for this little work:

1. The book Chamis, by Husein Ibn Mohammed, Ibn Ahasur Addiarbekri (No. 279 of the Arabian MSS. in the library of the Duke of Gotha), which, as the introduction to the biography of Mohammed, contains many legends respecting the ancient prophets, especially Adam, Abraham, and Solomon.

2. The book Dsachirat Alulum wanatidjal Alfuhum (storehouse of wisdom and fruits of knowledge), by Ahmed Ibn Zein Alabidin Al-bekri (No. 285 of the above-mentioned MSS.) in which also the ancient legends from Adam to Christ are prefixed to the History of Islam and more especially the lives of Moses and Aaron minutely narrated.

3. A collection of legends by anonymous authors. (No. 909 of the same collection.)

4. The Legends of the Prophets (Kissat Alan-bija), by Muhammed Ibn Ahmed Alkissai. (No. 764 of the Arabic MSS. of the Royal Library at Paris.)

ADAM. (A MOHAMMEDAN LEGEND)

THE most authentic records of antiquity which have come down to us state that Adam was created on Friday afternoon, at the hour of Assr.¹

The four most exalted angels, Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, and Israil, were commanded to bring from the four corners of the earth the dust out of which Allah formed the body of Adam, all save the head and heart. For these He employed exclusively the sacred earth of Mecca and Medina, from the very spots on which, in later times, the holy Kaaba and the sepulchre of Mohammed were erected.²

Even before it was animated, Adam's beautiful form excited the admiration of the angels who were passing by the gates of Paradise, where Allah had laid it down. But Iblis coveted man's noble form, and the spiritual and lovely expression of his countenance, and said, therefore, to his fellows, "How can this hollow piece of earth be well pleasing in your sight? Nothing but weakness and frailty may be expected of this creature." When all the inhabitants of heaven, save Iblis, had gazed on Adam in long and silent wonder, they burst out in praises to Allah, the creator of the first man, who was so tall, that when he stood erect upon the earth his head reached to the seventh heaven.

Allah then directed the angels to bathe the Soul of Adam, which he had created a thousand years before his body, in the sea of glory which proceedeth from himself, and commanded her to animate his yet lifeless form. The Soul hesitated, for she was unwilling to exchange the boundless heavens for this narrow home; but Allah said, "Thou must animate Adam even against thy will; and as the punishment of thy disobedience, thou shalt one day be separated from him also against thy will." Allah then breathed

¹ The hour of Assr is between noon and evening, and is set apart by the Mussulman for the performance of his third daily prayer.

² Mohammed, the founder of Islam, was born in 571 A.D., at Mecca, where the Kaaba, then an ancient temple, was held in great veneration. In 622 the idolaters of Mecca compelled him to emigrate to Medina, where he died in June, 632. Vide Gustavus Weill. *Mohamed der Prophet, sein Leben und seine Lehre*, &c. Stuttgart, 1843, 8vo.

upon her with such violence that she rushed through the nostrils of Adam into his head. On reaching his eyes, they were opened, and he saw the throne of Allah, with the inscription, "There is out one GOD, and Mohammed is his Messenger." The Soul then penetrated to his ears, and he heard the angels praising Allah; thereupon his own tongue was loosed, and he cried, "Blessed be thou, my Creator, the only One and Eternal!" and Allah answered, "For this end wast thou created; thou and thy descendants shall worship me; so shall ye ever obtain grace and mercy." The Soul at last pervaded all the limbs of Adam; and when she had reached his feet, she gave him the power to rise; but, on rising, he was obliged to shut his eyes, for a light shone on him from the throne of the Lord which he was unable to endure; and pointing with one hand toward it, while he shaded his eyes with the other, he inquired, "O Allah! what flames are those?" "It is the light of a prophet who shall descend from thee and appear on earth in the latter times. By my glory, only for his sake have I created thee and the whole world.³ In heaven his name is Ahmed,⁴ but he shall be called Mohammed on earth, and he shall restore mankind from vice and falsehood to the path of virtue and truth."

All created things were then assembled before Adam, and Allah taught him the names of all beasts, of birds, and of fish; the manner in which they are sustained and propagated, and explained their peculiarities, and the ends of their existence. Finally, the angels were convoked, and Allah commanded them to bow down to Adam, as the most free and perfect of His creatures, and as the only one that was animated by His breath. Israfil was the first to obey, whence Allah confided to him the book of Fate. The other angels followed his example: Iblis alone was disobedient, saying, with disdain, "Shall I, who am created of fire, worship a being formed of the dust?" He was therefore expelled from heaven, and the entrance into Paradise was forbidden him.

Adam breathed more freely after the removal of Iblis; and by command of Allah, he addressed the myriads of angels who were standing around him, in

³ The Midrash Jalkut (Frankfort on the O., 5469), says Rabbi Juda, teaches that the world was created on account of the merits of Israel. R. Hosia says it was created on account of the Thora (the Law); and R. Barachia, on account of the merits of Moses.

⁴ The much-praised One.

praise of His omnipotence and the wonders of His universe; and on this occasion he manifested to the angels that he far surpassed them in wisdom, and more especially in the knowledge of languages, for he knew the name of every created thing in seventy different tongues.⁵

After this discourse, Allah presented him, through Gabriel, with a bunch of grapes from Paradise, and when he had eaten them he fell into a deep sleep. The Lord then took a rib from Adam's side, and formed a woman of it, whom he called Hava (Eve), for he said, I have taken her from (hai) the living. She bore a perfect resemblance to Adam; but her features were more delicate than his, and her eyes shone with a sweeter luster, her hair was longer, and divided into seven hundred braids; her form was lighter, and her voice more soft and pure.

While Allah was endowing Eve with every female charm, Adam was dreaming of a second human being resembling himself. Nor was this strange, for had he not seen all the creatures which had been presented to him in pairs? When, therefore, he awoke, and found Eve near him, he desired to embrace her; yet, although her love exceeded his own, she forbade him, and said, "Allah is my lord; it is only with his permission that I may be thine! Besides, it is not meet that a woman should be wedded without a marriage gift." Adam then prayed the angel Gabriel to intercede for him with Allah, that he might obtain Eve for his wife, and to inquire what marriage gift would be demanded. The angel soon returned, and said, "Eve is thine, for Allah has created her only for thee! Love her as thyself, and treat her with indulgence and kindness. The marriage gift which he requires of thee is, that thou shouldst pray twenty times for Mohammed, his beloved, whose body shall one day be formed out of thy flesh and blood, but whose soul has

⁵ When the Lord intended to create man, he consulted with the angels, and said to them, "We will create man after our image." p. 23 But they replied, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? What are his excellences?" He said, "His wisdom exceeds your own." He then took all kinds of wild beasts and birds, and when he asked the angels to give their names, they were not able to do so. After the creation, he brought these animals to Adam, who, on being asked their names, replied immediately, "This is an ox, this is an ass, that a horse, a camel," &c. (Compare Geiger, Was hat Mohamed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen, p. 99, &c.)

dwelt in Allah's presence many thousand years before the creation of the world."⁶

Ridwhan, the guardian of Eden, came leading Meimun, the winged horse, and a fleet she-camel. The one he presented to Adam, the other to Eve. The angel Gabriel assisted them in mounting, and conducted them to Paradise, where all the angels and animals present saluted them with the words, "Hail! ye parents of Mohammed!"

In the midst of Paradise there stood a green silken tent, supported on golden pillars, and in the midst of it there was a throne, on which Adam seated himself with Eve, whereupon the curtains of the tent closed around them of their own accord.

When Adam and Eve were afterward walking through the garden, Gabriel came and commanded them, in the name of Allah, to go and bathe in one of the four rivers of Paradise. Allah himself then said to them, "I have appointed this garden for your abode; it will shelter you from cold and heat, from hunger and thirst. Take, at your discretion, of every thing that it contains; only one of its fruits shall be denied you. Beware that ye transgress not this one command, and watch against the wily rancor of Iblis! He is your enemy, because he was overthrown on your account; his cunning is infinite, and he aims at your destruction."

The newly-created pair attended to Allah's words, and lived a long time, some say five hundred years, in Paradise without approaching the forbidden tree. But Iblis also had listened to Allah, and resolving to lead man into sin, wandered constantly in the outskirts of heaven, seeking to glide unobserved into Paradise. But its gates were shut, and guarded by the angel Ridwhan. One day the peacock came out of the garden. He was then the finest of the birds of Paradise, for his plumage shone like pearl and emerald, and his voice was so melodious that he was appointed to sing the praise of Allah daily in the main streets of heaven.

⁶ The idea that many things existed before the creation of the world is purely Jewish. The Mussulmans adopted it. Some of them maintained that the Koran had existed before the world, which assertion excited many bloody contests among them. The Midrash Jalkut, p. 7, says, Seven things were in existence before the creation of the world: the Thora, Repentance, Paradise, Hell, the Throne of God, the name of the Messiah, and the holy Temple. Some maintain that the throne and the Thora really existed, while the Lord only thought of the other five before he created the world.

Iblis, on seeing him, said to himself, "Doubtless this beautiful bird is very vain: perhaps I may be able to induce him by flattery to bring me secretly into the garden."

When the peacock had gone so far from the gates that he could no longer be overheard by Ridwhan, Iblis said to him,

"Most wonderful and beautiful bird! art thou of the birds of Paradise?"

"I am; but who art thou, who seemest frightened as if some one did pursue thee?"

"I am one of those cherubim who are appointed to sing without ceasing the praises of Allah, but have glided away for an instant to visit the Paradise which he has prepared for the faithful. Wilt thou conceal me under thy beautiful wings?"

"Why should I do an act which must bring the displeasure of Allah upon me?"

"Take me with thee, charming bird, and I will teach thee three mysterious words, which shall preserve thee from sickness, age, and death."

"Must, then, the inhabitants of Paradise die?"

"All, without exception, who know not the three words which I possess."

"Speakest thou the truth?"

"By Allah the Almighty!"

The peacock believed him, for he did not even dream that any creature would swear falsely by its maker; yet, fearing lest Ridwhan might search him too closely on his return, he steadily refused to take Iblis along with him, but promised to send out the serpent, who might more easily discover the means of introducing him unobservedly into the garden.

Now the serpent was at first the queen of all beasts. Her head was like rubies, and her eyes like emerald. Her skin shone like a mirror of various hues. Her hair was soft like that of a noble virgin; and her form resembled the stately camel; her breath was sweet like musk and amber, and all her

words were songs of praise. She fed on saffron, and her resting-places were on the blooming borders of the beautiful Cantharus.⁷ She was created a thousand years before Adam, and destined to be the playmate of Eve.

"This fair and prudent being," said the peacock to himself, "must be even more desirous than I to remain in eternal youth and vigor, and will undoubtedly dare the displeasure of Ridwhan at the price of the three invaluable words." He was right in his conjecture, for no sooner had he informed the serpent of his adventure than she exclaimed, "Can it be so? Shall I be visited by death? Shall my breath expire, my tongue be paralyzed, and my limbs become impotent? Shall my eyes and ears be closed in night? And this noble form of mine, shall it perish in the dust? Never, never! Even if Ridwhan's wrath should light upon me, I will hasten to the cherub, and will lead him into Paradise, so he but teach me the three mysterious words."

The serpent ran forthwith out of the gate, and Iblis repeated to her what he had said to the peacock, confirming his words by an oath. "How can I bring thee into Paradise unobserved?" inquired the serpent.

"I will contract myself into so small a bulk that I shall find room in a cavity of thy teeth!"

"But how shall I answer Ridwhan if he addresses me?"

"Fear nothing; I will utter holy names that shall render him speechless."

The serpent then opened her mouth: Iblis flew into it, and, seating himself in the hollow part of her front teeth, poisoned them to all eternity. When they had passed Ridwhan, who was not able to utter a sound, the serpent opened her mouth again, expecting that the cherub would resume his natural shape, but Iblis preferred to remain where he was, and to speak to Adam from the serpent's mouth, and in her name. After some resistance, she consented, from fear of Ridwhan, and from her anxiety to obtain the mysterious words. Arrived at Eve's tent, Iblis heaved a deep sigh: the first which envy had forced from any living breast.

⁷ One of the rivers of Paradise.

"Why art thou so cast down to-day, my beloved serpent?" inquired Eve, who had heard the sigh.

"I am anxious for the future destiny of thee and of thy husband," replied Iblis, imitating the voice of the serpent.

"How! Do we not possess in these gardens of Eden all that we can desire?"

"True; and yet the best of the fruits of this garden, and the only one which can procure you perfect felicity, is denied you."

"Have we not fruits in abundance of every taste and color? why should we regret this one?"

"If thou knewest why this fruit is denied you, all the rest would afford thee no pleasure."

"Knowest thou the reason?"

"I do; and it is precisely this knowledge which fills my heart with care; for while all the fruits which are given you bring with them weakness, disease, old age, and death, that is, the entire cessation of life, this forbidden fruit alone bestows eternal youth and vigor."

"Thou hast never spoken of these things until now, beloved serpent; whence derivest thou this knowledge?"

"An angel informed me of it, whom I met under the forbidden tree."

Eve answered, "I will go and speak with him;" and, leaving her tent, she hurried toward the tree.

On the instant, Iblis, who knew Eve's curiosity, sprang out of the serpent's mouth, and was standing under the forbidden tree, in the shape of an angel, but with a human face, before Eve had reached it.

"Who art thou, singular being," she inquired, "whose like I have never seen?"

"I was man, but have become an angel?^{sic}"

"By what means?"

"By eating of this blessed fruit, which an envious God had forbidden me to taste on pain of death. I long submitted to his command, until I became old and frail; my eyes lost their luster and grew dim, my ears no longer heard, my teeth decayed, and I could neither eat without pain, nor speak with distinctness. My hands trembled, my feet shook, my head hung down upon my breast, my back was bent, and my whole appearance became at last so frightful that all the inhabitants of Paradise fled from me. I then longed for death, and expecting to meet it by eating of this fruit, I stretched out my hands and took of it; but lo! it had scarcely touched my lips, when I became strong and beautiful as at first; and though many thousand years have since elapsed, I am not sensible of the slightest change either in my appearance or in my energies."

"Speakest thou the truth?"

"By Allah, who created me, I do."

Eve trusted to his oath, and plucked an ear of the wheat-tree.

Now, before Adam's sin, wheat grew upon the finest tree of Paradise. Its trunk was of gold, its branches were of silver, and its leaves of emerald. From every branch there sprung seven ears of ruby; each ear contained five grains, and every grain was white as snow, sweet as honey, fragrant as musk, and as large as an ostrich's egg. Eve ate one of these grains, and finding it more pleasant than all she had hitherto tasted, she took a second one and presented it to her husband.

Adam resisted long—our doctors say, a whole hour of Paradise, which means eighty years of our time on earth; but when he observed that Eve remained fair and happy as before, he yielded to her importunity at last, and ate the second grain of wheat, which she had had constantly with her, and presented to him three times every day.

Scarcely had Adam received the fruit when his crown rose toward heaven, his rings fell from his fingers, and his silken robe dropped from him. Eve, too, stood spoiled of her ornaments and naked before him, and they heard how all these things cried to them with one voice, "Woe unto you! your calamity is great, and your mourning will be long: we were created for the obedient

only: farewell until the resurrection!" The throne which had been erected for them in the tent thrust them away and cried, "Rebels, depart!" The horse Meimun, upon which Adam attempted to fly, would not suffer him to mount, and said, "Hast thou thus kept the covenant of Allah?"

All the creatures of Paradise then turned from them, and besought Allah to remove the human pair from that hallowed spot, Allah himself addressed Adam in a voice of thunder, and said, "Wast thou not commanded to abstain from this fruit, and forewarned of the cunning of Iblis, thy foe?" Adam attempted to flee from these upbraidings, and Eve would have followed him, but he was held fast by the branches of the tree Talh, and Eve was entangled in her own disheveled hair, while a voice from the tree exclaimed, "From the wrath of Allah there is no escape: submit to his divine decree! Leave this Paradise," continued Allah, in tones of wrath, "both you, and the creatures which have seduced you to transgress: by the sweat of your brow alone shall you earn your bread; the earth shall henceforth be your abode, and its possessions shall fill your hearts with envy and malice! Eve shall be visited with all kinds of sickness, and bear children in pain. The peacock shall be deprived of his voice, and the serpent of her feet. The darkest caverns of the earth shall be her dwelling-place, dust shall be her food, and to kill her bring sevenfold reward. But Iblis shall depart into the eternal pains of hell."

Hereupon they were hurled down from Paradise with such precipitancy that Adam and Eve could scarcely snatch a leaf from one of the trees wherewith to cover themselves. Adam was flung out through the Gate of Repentance, teaching him that he might return through contrition; Eve through the Gate of Mercy; the peacock and the serpent through the Gate of Wrath, but Iblis through that of the Curse.

Adam came down on the island Serendib, Eve on Djidda, the serpent fell into the Sahara, the peacock into Persia, and Iblis dropped into the torrent Aila.

When Adam touched the earth, the eagle said to the whale, with whom he had hitherto lived on friendly terms, and had whiled away many an hour in pleasant converse on the shores of the Indian Ocean, "We must now part

forever; for the lowest depths of the sea and the loftiest mountain tops will henceforth scarcely preserve us from the cunning and malice of men."

Adam's distress in his solitude was so great that his beard began to grow, though his face had hitherto been smooth; and this new appearance increased his grief until he heard voice which said to him, "The beard is the ornament of man upon the earth, and distinguishes him from the weaker woman."

Adam shed such an abundance of tears that all beasts and birds satisfied their thirst therewith; but some of them sunk into the earth, and, as they still contained some of the juices of his food in Paradise, produced the most fragrant trees and spices.

Eve also was desolate in Djidda, for she did not see Adam, although he was so tall that his head touched the lowest heaven, and the songs of the angels were distinctly audible to him. She wept bitterly, and her tears, which flowed into the ocean, were changed into costly pearls, while those which fell on the earth brought forth all beautiful flowers.

Adam and Eve lamented so loudly that the east wind carried Eve's voice to Adam, while the west wind bore his to Eve. She wrung her hands over her head, which women in despair are still in the habit of doing; while Adam laid his right hand on his beard, which custom is still followed by men in sorrow unto this day.

The tears flowed at last in such torrents from Adam's eyes, that those of his right eye started the Euphrates, while those of his left set the Tigris in motion.

All nature wept with him, and the birds, and beasts, and insects, which had fled from Adam by reason of his sin, were now touched by his lamentations, and came back to manifest their sympathy.

First came the locusts, for they were formed out of the earth which remained after Adam was created. Of these there are seven thousand different kinds of every color and size, some even as large as an eagle. They are governed by a king, to whom Allah reveals his will whenever he intends to chasten a wicked people, such as, for instance, the Egyptians were at the

time of Pharaoh. The black letters on the back of their wings are ancient Hebrew, and signify, "There is but one only God. He overcomes the mighty, and the locusts are part of his armies, which he sends against sinners."

When at last the whole universe grew loud with lamentation, and all created beings, from the smallest insect up to the angels who hold whole worlds in one hand, were weeping with Adam, Allah sent Gabriel to him with the words which were destined to save also the prophet Jonah in the whale's belly:

"There is no God besides thee. I have sinned; forgive me through Mohammed, thy last and greatest prophet, whose name is engraved upon thy holy throne."

As soon as Adam had pronounced these words with penitent heart, the portals of heaven were opened to him again, and Gabriel cried, "Allah has accepted thy repentance. Pray to him, and he will grant all thy requests, and even restore thee to Paradise at the appointed time." Adam prayed:

"Defend me against the future artifices of Iblis my foe!"

Allah replied:

"Say continually there is no God but one, and thou shalt wound him as with a poisoned arrow."

"Will not the meats and drinks of the earth, and its dwellings, ensnare me?"

"Drink water, eat clean animals slain in the name of Allah, and build mosques for thy abode; so shall Iblis have no power over thee."

"But if he pursue me with evil thoughts and dreams in the night?"

"Then rise from thy couch and pray."

"O Allah! how shall I always distinguish between good and evil?"

"I will grant thee my guidance: two angels shall dwell in thy heart; one to warn thee against sin, the other to lead thee to the practice of good."

"Lord, assure me of thy pardon also for my future sins."

"This thou canst only gain by works of righteousness! I shall punish sin but once, and reward sevenfold the good which thou shalt do."

At the same time the angel Michael was sent to Eve, announcing to her also the mercy of Allah.

"With what weapons," inquired she, "shall I, who am weak in heart and mind, fight against sin?"

"Allah has endued thee with the feeling of shame, and through its power thou shalt subdue thy passions, even as man conquers his own by faith."

"Who shall protect me against the power of man, who is not only stronger in body and mind, but whom also the law prefers as heir and witness?"

"His love and compassion toward thee, which I have put into his heart."

"Will Allah grant me no other token of his favor?"

"Thou shalt be rewarded for all the pains of motherhood, and the death of a woman in childbed shall be accounted as martyrdom."

Iblis, emboldened by the pardon of the human pair, ventured also to pray for a mitigation of his sentence, and obtained its deferment until the resurrection, as well as an unlimited power over sinners who do not accept the word of Allah.

"Where shall I dwell in the mean time?" said he.

"In ruins, in tombs, and all other unclean places shunned by man!"

"What shall be my food?"

"All things slain in the name of idols."

"How shall I quench my thirst?"

"With wine and intoxicating liquors!"

"What shall occupy my leisure hours?"

"Music, song, love-poetry, and dancing."

"What is my watchword?"

"The curse of Allah until the day of judgment."

"But how shall I contend with man, to whom thou hast granted two guardian angels, and who has received thy revelation?"

"Thy progeny shall be more numerous than his; for every man that is born, there shall come into the world seven evil spirits; but they shall be powerless against the faithful."

Allah then made a covenant with the descendants of Adam. He touched Adam's back, and lo! the whole human family which shall be born to the end of time issued forth from it, as small as ants, and ranged themselves right and left.

At the head of the former stood Mohammed, with the prophets and the rest of the faithful, whose radiant whiteness distinguished them from the sinners, who were standing on Adam's left, headed by Kabil (Cain), the murderer of his brother.

Allah then acquainted the progenitor of man with the names and destinies of each individual; and when it came to King David the prophet's turn, to whom was originally assigned a lifetime of only thirty years, Adam inquired, "How many years are appointed to me?"

"One thousand," was the answer.⁸

"I will renounce seventy if thou wilt add them to the life of David!"

Allah consented; but, aware of Adam's forgetfulness, directed this grant to be recorded on a parchment, which Gabriel and Michael signed as witnesses.⁹

⁸ Nine hundred and thirty years was the lifetime of Adam, according to Gen., v., 3.

⁹ The Lord showed to Adam every future generation, with their heads, sages, and scribes. He saw that David was destined p. 40 to live only three hours, and said, "Lord and Creator of the world, is this unalterably fixed?" The Lord answered,

"It was my original design!"

"How many years shall I live?"

"One thousand,"

"Are grants known in Heaven?"

Allah then cried to the assembled human family, "Confess that I am the only God, and that Mohammed is my messenger." The hosts to the right made their confession immediately; but those to the left hesitated, some repeating but one half of Allah's words, and others remaining entirely silent. And Allah continued: "The disobedient and impenitent shall suffer the pains of eternal fire, but the faithful shall be blessed in Paradise!"

"So be it!" responded Adam; who shall call every man by name in the day of the resurrection, and pronounce his sentence according as the balance of justice shall decide.

When the covenant was concluded, Allah once more touched Adam's back, and the whole human race returned to him.

And when Allah was now about to withdraw his presence for the whole of this life from Adam, the latter uttered so loud a cry, that the whole earth shook to its foundations: the All-merciful thereupon extended his clemency, and said, "Follow yonder cloud; it shall lead thee to the place which lies directly opposite my heavenly throne; build me a temple there, and when thou walkest around it, I shall be as near to thee as to the angels which encompass my throne!"

Adam, who still retained his original stature, in a few hours made the journey from India to Mecca, where the cloud which had conducted him stood still. On Mount Arafa, near Mecca, he found, to his great joy, Eve his wife, whence also this mountain (from Arafa, to *know*, to *recognize*) derives its name. They immediately began to build a temple with four gates, and they called the first gate the Gate of Adam; the second, the Gate of Abraham; the third, the Gate of Ismael; and the fourth, the Gate of Mohammed. The plan of the building they had received from the angel Gabriel, who had, at the same time, brought them a large diamond of exquisite brightness, which was afterward sullied by the sins of men, and at last became entirely black.

"Certainly!"

"I grant, then, seventy years of my life to David!"

What did Adam therefore do? He gave a written grant, set his seal to it, and the same was done by the Lord and Metatron.—*Midrash Jalkut*, p. 12.

This black stone, the most sacred treasure of the blessed Kaaba, was originally the angel who guarded the forbidden tree, and was charged to warn Adam if he should approach it, but, having neglected his trust, he was changed into a jewel, and at the day of judgment he shall resume his pristine form and return to the holy angels.

Gabriel then instructed Adam in all the ceremonies of pilgrimage, precisely as they were instituted by Mohammed at a later period; nor was he permitted to behold Eve his wife until the evening of Thursday, when the holy days were ended.

On the following morning Adam returned with his wife to India, and abode there during the remainder of his life. But he went every year on a pilgrimage to Mecca, until he at last lost his original size, retaining a height of only sixty yards. This diminution of his stature, according to the tradition of the learned, was caused by the excessive terror and grief which he experienced in consequence of the murder of Abel.

For Eve had born him two sons; whom he named Kabil and Habil (Cain and Abel), and several daughters, whom he gave in marriage to their brothers. The fairest of them he intended for Abel, but Cain was displeased, and desired to obtain her, though he had a wife already. Adam referred the decision to Allah, and said to his sons, "Let each of you offer a sacrifice, and he to whom Allah vouchsafes a sign of acceptance shall marry her." Abel offered a fatted ram, and fire came down from heaven and consumed it; but Cain brought some fruits, which remained untouched upon the altar. He was thereupon filled with envy and hatred toward his brother, but knew not how he might destroy his life.¹⁰

One day Iblis placed himself in Cain's way as he walked with Abel in the field, and seizing a stone, shattered therewith the head of an approaching wolf; Cain followed his example, and with a large stone struck his brother's forehead till he fell lifeless to the ground. Iblis then assumed the shape of a

¹⁰ Cain and Abel divided the world between them, the one taking possession of the movable, and the other of the immovable property. Cain said to his brother, "The earth on which thou standest is mine; then betake thyself to the air;" but Abel replied, "The garments which thou wearest are mine; take them off!" There arose a conflict between them, which ended in Abel's death. R. Huna teaches, They contended for a twin sister of Abel's: the latter claimed her because she was born with him; but Cain pleaded his right of primogeniture.—*Midrash*, p. 11.

raven, and having killed another raven, dug a hole in the earth with his bill, and laying the dead one into it, covered it with the earth which he had dug up. Cain did the same with his brother,¹¹ so that Adam was long in ignorance of the fate of his son, and shrunk together through care and sorrow. It was not until he had fully learned what had befallen Abel that he resigned himself to the will of Allah, and was comforted.

Now the discovery of Abel's corpse took place in this wise: Since his expulsion from Eden, Adam had lived on wild herbs, fruits, and meat, when, at Allah's command, the angel Gabriel brought him the remaining grains of wheat which Eve had plucked, a yoke of oxen, the various implements of husbandry, and instructed him in ploughing, sowing, and reaping.

While he was one day working in the field, his plough suddenly stopped, nor were all the exertions of his cattle able to move it. Adam struck the oxen, and the eldest of them said to him,

"Why dost thou strike me? Did Allah strike thee when thou wast disobedient?"

Adam prayed. "O Allah! after thou hast forgiven my sin, shall every beast of the field be permitted to reprove me?"

Allah heard him, and from that moment the brute creation lost the power of speech. Meanwhile, as the plough still remained immovable, Adam opened the ground, and found the still distinguishable remains of his son Abel.

At the time of harvest, Gabriel came again and instructed Eve in making bread. Adam then built an oven, and Gabriel brought fire from hell, but, first washed it seventy times in the sea, otherwise it would have consumed the earth with all that it contained. When the bread was baked, he said to Adam,

¹¹ The dog which had watched Abel's flocks guarded also his corpse, protecting it against the beasts and birds of prey. Adam and Eve sat beside it, and wept, not knowing what to do. But a raven, whose friend had died, said, "I will go and teach Adam what he must do with his son." It dug a grave and laid the dead raven in it. When Adam saw this, he said to Eve, "Let us do p. 44 the same with our child." The Lord rewarded the raven, and no one is allowed, therefore, to harm their young; they have food in abundance, and their cry for rain is always heard. R. Johanan teaches, Cain was not aware of the Lord's knowledge of hidden things; he therefore buried Abel, and replied to the Lord's inquiry, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" "Am I my brother's keeper?"—*Midrash*, p. 11.

"This shall be thy and thy children's chief nourishment."

Although Adam had shed so many tears over the labor of the plough that they served instead of rain to moisten and to fructify the seed, yet were his descendants doomed to still greater toil by reason of their iniquities. Even in the days of (Enoch) Idris, the grain of wheat was no larger than a goose's egg: in those of Elias it shrunk to the size of a hen's egg: when the Jews attempted to kill Christ, it became like a pigeon's egg; and, finally, under Uzier's (Esdras's) rule it took its present bulk.

When Adam and Eve were fully instructed in agricultural cookery, the angel Gabriel brought a lamb, and taught Adam to kill it in the name of Allah, to shear its wool, to strip its hide, and to tan it. Eve spun and wove under the angel's direction, making a veil for herself and a garment for Adam, and both Adam and Eve imparted the information which they had received from Gabriel to their grand-children and great-grand-children, in number forty, or, according to others, seventy thousand.

After the death of Abel and Cain, the latter of whom was slain by the blood-avenging angel, Eve gave birth to a third son, whom she called Sheth: he became the father of many sons and daughters, and is the ancestor of all prophets.

The 930th year of Adam's life came at last to its close, and the Angel of Death appeared to him in the shape of an unsightly he-goat, and demanded his soul, while the earth opened under his feet, and demanded his body. Adam trembled with fear, and said to the Angel of Death, "Allah has promised me a lifetime of a thousand years: thou hast come too soon." "Hast thou not granted seventy years of thy life David?" replied the angel. Adam denied for he had indeed forgotten the circumstance; but the Angel of Death drew forth from his beard the parchment in which the grant was written, and spread it out before Adam, who, on seeing it, willingly gave up his soul.

His son Sheth washed and buried him, after that Gabriel, or, according to others, Allah himself, had pronounced a blessing. The same was done with Eve, who died in the following year.

In regard to the places of their burial, the learned differ. Some have named India; other traditions fix on Mount Kubeis, and even on Jerusalem. Allah alone is omniscient.

IDRIS, OR ENOCH

IDRIS, or Enoch, was the son of Jarid, the son of Mahlalel, but was called Idris, from darasa (to study), for he was constantly occupied with the study of the holy books, both those which Allah had revealed to Adam, and those which Gabriel brought to him from heaven. He was so virtuous and pious, that Allah anointed him to be his prophet, and sent him as a preacher to the descendants of Cain, who only employed in deeds of sin the gigantic frames and surpassing strength with which Allah had endowed them. Enoch exhorted them unceasingly to purity of conduct, and was often compelled to draw his sword in defense of his life. He was the first who fought for Allah, the first who invented the balance to prevent deception in traffic, and the first also to sew garments, and to write with the Kalam. Idris longed ardently for Paradise; still he was not desirous of death, for he was anxious to do good on the earth; and but for his preaching and his sword,¹ the sons of Cain would have flooded the earth with iniquity. Allah sent him the Angel of Death in the form of a beautiful virgin, in order to see whether he would approve himself worthy of the peculiar favor which no man before him had ever received.

"Come with me," said the disguised angel to Idris, "and thou shalt do an acceptable work to Allah. My younger sister has been carried off by an ungodly descendant of Cain, who has confined her in the farthest regions of the West! Gird on thy sword, and help me to deliver her!"

Enoch girded on his sword, and took up his bow and the club, with which he had laid low at a single stroke whole ranks of the enemy, and followed the virgin from morn till eve, through desolate and arid deserts, but he said not a word and looked not upon her. At nightfall she erected a tent, but Idris laid himself down at its entrance to sleep on the stony ground. On her inviting him to share her tent with her, he answered, "If thou hast any thing to eat, give it to me." She pointed to a sheep which was roving through the

¹ See the E. Translator's Preface.

desert without a keeper, but he said, "I prefer hunger to theft; the sheep belongs to another."

Next day they continued their journey as before, Idris still following the virgin and uttering no complaint, though he was nearly overcome with hunger and thirst. Toward evening they found a bottle of water on the ground. The virgin took it up, and opening it, would have forced Enoch to drink, but he refused, and said, "Some luckless traveler has lost it, and will return to seek for it."

During the night, Idris having once more baffled all the wiles of the virgin, who had again endeavored to draw him into her tent, Allah caused a spring of clear fresh water to gush forth at his feet, and a date-tree to rise up laden with the choicest fruit. Idris invited the virgin to eat and to drink, and concealed himself behind the tree, waiting her return to the tent; but when, after a long interval, she came not, he stepped to the door and said, "Who art thou, singular maiden? These two days thou hast been without nourishment, and art even now unwilling to break thy fast, though Allah himself has miraculously supplied us with meat and drink; and yet thou art fresh and blooming like the dewy rose in spring, and thy form is full and rounded like the moon in her fifteenth night."

"I am the Angel of Death," she replied, "sent by Allah to prove thee. Thou hast conquered; ask now, and he will assuredly fulfill all thy wishes."

"If thou art the Angel of Death, take my soul."

"Death is bitter: wherefore desirest thou to die?"

"I will pray to Allah to animate me once more, that after the terrors of the grave, I may serve him with greater zeal."

"Wilt thou, then, die twice? Thy time has not yet come: but pray thou to Allah, and I shall execute his will."

Enoch prayed:

"Lord, permit the Angel of Death to let me taste death, but recall me soon to life! Art thou not almighty and merciful?"

The Angels of Death was commanded to take the soul of Idris, but at the same moment to restore it to him. On his return to life, Idris requested the angel to show him Hell, that he might be in a position to describe it to sinners with all its terrors. The angel led him to Malik, its keeper, who seized him, and was in the act of flinging him into the abyss, when a voice from heaven exclaimed,

"Malik, beware! Harm not my prophet Idris, but show him the terrors of thy kingdom."

He then placed him on the wall which separates hell from the place appointed as the abode of those who have merited neither hell nor heaven. Thence he saw every variety of scorpions and other venomous reptiles, and vast flames of fire, monstrous caldrons of boiling water, trees with prickly fruits, rivers of blood and putrefaction, red-hot chains, garments of pitch, and so many other objects prepared for the torture of sinners, that he besought Malik to spare him their farther inspection, and to consign him once more to the Angel of Death.

Idris now prayed the latter to show him Paradise also. The angel conducted him to the gate before which Ridwhan kept his watch. But the guardian would not suffer him to enter: then Allah commanded the tree Tuba, which is planted in the midst of the garden, and is known to be, after Sirdrat Almontaha, the most beautiful and tallest tree of Paradise, to bend its branches over the wall. Idris seized hold of them, and was drawn in unobserved by Ridwhan. The Angel of Death attempted to prevent it, but Allah said, "Wilt thou slay him twice?" Thus it came to pass that Idris was taken alive into Paradise, and was permitted by the most gracious One to remain there in spite of the Angel of Death and of Ridwhan.²

² In the Bible it is said the Lord took Enoch; but the Midrash adds, nine human beings entered Paradise alive: Enoch, Messiah, Elias, Eliezer the servant of Abraham, the servant of the King of Kush, Chiram the King of Tyre, Jaabez, the son of the Prince and Rabbi Juda, Serach the daughter of Asher, and Bitja the daughter of Pharaoh.

NOAH, HUD, AND SALIH

AFTER the translation of Idris, the depravity of men waxed so mightily, that Allah determined to destroy them by a flood. But the prophet Noah, who had in vain attempted to restore his followers to the path of virtue, was saved: for Allah commanded him to build an ark for himself and family, and to enter it as soon as his wife should see the scalding waters streaming from the oven.¹ This was the beginning of the flood; for it was followed by incessant rains from heaven (as from well-filled leathern bottles into which a sharp instrument has been plunged), which mingling with the subterraneous waters that issued forth from all the veins of the earth, produced an inundation which none save the giant Audj the son of Anak survived.² The ark floated during forty days from one end of the earth to the other, passing over the highest mountains; but when it came to Mount Abu Kubeis, on whose peak Allah had concealed the black diamond of the Kaaba, that it might serve in the second building of this blessed temple, it rode seven times round the sacred spot. At the lapse of six months the ark rested on Mount Djudi in Mesopotamia, and Noah left it as soon as the dove which he had sent to examine the state of the earth returned with an olive leaf in its mouth. Noah blessed the dove, and Allah gave her a necklace of green feathers; but the raven which Noah had sent out before the dove, he cursed, because, instead of returning to him, it stayed to feast on a carcass which it found on the earth,³ wherefore the raven is no longer able to walk like other birds.

But, spite of the calamities of the flood, which Allah intended to serve forever as a warning against sin, Iblis soon succeeded in banishing virtue and goodness from the human family as before. Even Noah's sons, Cham and

¹ The generation of the flood was chastised with scalding water.—*Midrash*, p. 14.

² Besides Noah, Og the King of Bashan was saved, for he seized hold on one of the beams of the ark, and swore to Noah that he and his posterity would serve him as bondmen. Noah made an opening through the wall of the ark, and gave Og some food daily, for it is written, "Only Og the King of Bashan survived of all the giants."—*Midrash*, p. 14.

³ The *Midrash*, p. 15, relates the same, and draws from it the conclusion that no one should seek to accomplish his ends by (unclean) unlawful means: the raven being unclean (unlawful) but the dove being clean.

Japhet, forgot the reverence that was due to their father, and left him uncovered when one day they found him asleep. Cham even derided him, and became on this account the father of all the black races of mankind. Japhet's descendants remained white, indeed, but it was written that none of them should attain to the dignity of a prophet. Sham (Shem) is the sole ancestor of the prophets, among whom Hud and Salih, who lived immediately after the flood, attained to high distinction.⁴ Hud was sent to the nation of giants which dwelt in Edom, a province of the Southern Arabia, then governed by King Shaddad, the son of Aad. When the prophet exhorted this king to the faith and fear of Allah, he inquired, "What shall be the reward of my obedience?" "My Lord," replied the prophet, "will give thee in the life to come, gardens of eternal verdure, and palaces of gold and jewels." But the king answered, "I stand not in need of thy promises, for I can even in this world build me gardens and pleasure-houses of gold, and costly pearls, and jewels." He then built Irem, and called it the City of Columns, for each of its palaces rested on a thousand columns of rubies and emeralds, and each column was a hundred cubits high. He next constructed canals, and planted gardens teeming with the finest fruit-trees and the fairest flowers.

When all was completed with prodigal magnificence, Shaddad said, "I am now in actual possession of all that Hud has promised me for the life to come." But when he would have made his entrance into the city, Allah concealed it from him and his followers, nor has it since been seen by man, save once in the reign of Maccavia.

The king and his people then wandered through the wilderness in rain and tempest, and at last sought shelter in caves. But Allah caused them to fall in, and only Hud escaped.

The destruction of this tribe induced their kinsmen, the Thamudites, who numbered seventy thousand warriors, to choose the region between Syria and Hedjaz as their abode, for they also feared to be destroyed, and hoped to secure themselves against the wrath of Allah by building their houses in the rocks. Djundu Eben Omer, the king of the Thamudites, built him a palace

⁴ Hud is probably the Eber of the Scriptures, whom the Rabbis esteem as a prophet, and the founder of a celebrated school of divinity.

there, whose splendor had never been equaled on earth, and the high-priest Kanuch erected a similar one for himself. But their most costly and most perfect building was the temple. In it there stood an idol of the finest gold, and adorned with precious stones: it had a human face, a lion's figure, a bull's neck, and a horse's feet. One day, when Kanuch, after his prayers, had fallen asleep in the temple, he heard a voice which said, "Truth shall appear, and delusion shall vanish." He sprang to his feet in terror, and rushed toward the idol, but lo! it was lying on the ground, and beside it lay the crown which had fallen from its head. Kanuch cried for help; the king and his viziers hastened to the spot, restored the idol to its place, and replaced the crown on its head. But the occurrence made a deep impression on the high-priest's mind. His faith in the idol failed, and his zeal to serve it cooled. The king soon discovered the change that had passed within him, and one day sent both his viziers to apprehend and to examine him. But scarcely had his messengers left the royal palace when they were struck blind, and were unable to find Kanuch's dwelling. Meanwhile, Allah sent two angels, who carried the high-priest to a distant valley unknown to his tribe, where a shady grotto, supplied with every convenience of life, was prepared for him. Here he lived peaceably in the service of the one God, and secure against the persecutions of Djundu, who in vain sent out messengers in every direction to discover him. The king gave up, at length, all hope of his capture, and appointed his own cousin, Davud, as high-priest in Kanuch's stead. But on the third day after his inauguration, Davud came to the king in haste, and reported that the idol had again fallen from its place. The king once more restored it, and Iblis cried from the idol, "Be steadfast in my worship, and resist all the temptations into which some innovators would lead you," On the following feast-day, when Davud was about to offer two fat bulls to the idol, they said to him, with a human voice, "Why will you offer us, whom Allah has endued with life, as a sacrifice to a dead mass of gold, which your own hands have dug from the earth, though Allah has created it? Destroy, O Allah, so sinful a people!" At these words the bulls fled, nor were the swiftest riders of the king able to overtake them. Yet it pleased Allah, in his wisdom and long suffering, to spare the Thamudites still longer, and to send to them a prophet who should labor by many wonders to convince them of the truth.

Ragwha, the wife of Kanuch, had not ceased to mourn since the flight of her husband; yet in the third year, Allah sent to her a bird from Paradise, to conduct her to his grotto. This bird was a raven, but its head was as white snow, its back was of emerald, its feet were of crimson, its beak was like the clearest sunbeam, and its eyes shone like diamonds, only its breast was black, for the curse of Noah, which made all ravens entirely black, had not fallen on this sacred bird. It was the hour of midnight when it stepped into Ragwha's dark chamber, where she lay weeping on a carpet, but the glance of its eyes lit up the chamber as if the sun had suddenly risen therein. She rose from her couch, and gazed with wonder on the beautiful bird, which opened its mouth and said, "Rise and follow me, for Allah has pitied thy tears, and will unite thee to thy husband." She rose and followed the raven, which flew before her, changing the night into day by the light of its eyes, and the morning star had not yet risen when she arrived at the grotto. The raven now cried, "Kanuch, arise, and admit thy wife," and then vanished.

Within a year after their reunion she gave birth to a son, who was the very image of Seth, and the light of prophecy shone on his brow. His father called him Salih (the pious), for he trusted to bring him up in the faith of the one only God, and in piety of life; but soon after Salih's birth Kanuch died, and the raven from Paradise came again to the grotto to take back Ragwha and her son to the city of Djundu, where Salih grew rapidly in mind and body, to the admiration of his mother, and of all who came to visit them; and at the age of eighteen he was the most powerful and handsome, as well as the most gifted youth of his time.

It then came to pass that the descendants of Ham undertook an expedition against the Thamudites, and were to all appearance on the point of destroying them. Their best warriors had already fallen, and the rest were preparing for flight, when Salih suddenly appeared on the battle-field at the head of a few of his friends, and by his personal valor and excellent manœuvres wrested the victory from the enemy, and routed them completely. This achievement secured to him the love and gratitude of the more virtuous part of his tribe, but the king envied him from this day, and sought after his life. Yet as often as the assassins came to Salih's dwelling to slay him by the king's command, their hands were paralyzed, and were only

restored by Salih's intercession with Allah. In this wise, the believers in Salih and his invisible God gradually increased, so that there was soon formed a community of forty men, who built a mosque, in which they worshiped in common.

One day the king surrounded the mosque with his soldiers, and threatened Salih and his adherents with death unless Allah should save them by a special miracle. Salih prayed, and the leaves of the date-tree that grew before the mosque were instantly changed to scorpions and adders, which fell upon the king and his men, while two doves which dwelt on the roof of the mosque exclaimed, "Believe in Salih, for he is the prophet and messenger of Allah." To this twofold wonder a second and third one were added, for at Salih's prayer the tree resumed its former shape, and some of the Thamudites who had been killed by the serpents returned to life again.

But the king continued in unbelief, for Iblis spoke from the mouth of the idol, calling Salih a magician and a demon.

The tribe was then visited by famine, but this also failed to convert them. When Salih beheld the stubbornness of the Thamudites, he prayed to Allah to destroy so sinful a people.

But he too, like his father, was carried by an angel to a subterraneous cave in sleep, and slept there twenty years. On waking, he was about to go into the mosque to perform his morning devotions, for he imagined that he had slept only one night; but the mosque lay in ruins; he then went to see his friends and followers, but some of them were dead; others, in the idea that he had abandoned them or been secretly slain, had gone to other countries, or returned to idolatry. Salih knew not what to do. Then appeared to him the angel Gabriel, and said, "Because thou hast hastily condemned thy people, Allah has taken from thee twenty years of thy life; and thou hast passed them sleeping in the cave."⁵ But rise and preach again. Allah sends

⁵ The idea of a prophet's intercession with God is of Scriptural origin. Abraham and Moses interceded with God, the one for Sodom, the other for his people; and, according to the Hebrew p. 62 legend, the Jews, on hearing Isaiah denouncing the judgments of God, threatened to put him to death, because he had not sought to turn away His wrath, as Moses had done under similar circumstances. Our Savior's parable of the gardener, who begged another year's respite for the unfruitful tree, is on the same principle. So is also Christ's reproof to his disciples, when they would have called down fire from Heaven. The punishment of

thee here Adam's shirt, Abel's sandals, the tunic of Sheth, the seal of Idris, the sword of Noah, and the staff of Hud, with all of which thou shalt perform many wonders to confirm thy words." On the following day, the king, and priests, and heads of the people, attended by many citizens, went in procession to a neighboring chapel, in which an idol, similar to that of the temple, was worshiped. Salih stepped between the king and the door of the chapel; and when the king asked him who he was, for Salih's appearance had so changed during the twenty years which he had spent in the cavern that the king did not recognize him, he answered, "I am Salih, the messenger of the one only God, who, twenty years ago, preached to thee, and showed thee many clear proofs of the truth of my mission. But since thou, as I perceive, still persistest in idolatry, I once more appear before thee in the name of the Lord, and by his permission offer to perform before thine eyes any miracle thou mayest desire in testimony of my prophetic calling."

The king took counsel with Shihab his brother, and Davud his high-priest, who stood near him. Then said the latter, "If he be the messenger of Allah, let a camel come forth from this rocky mountain, one hundred cubits high, with all imaginable colors united on its back, with eyes flaming like lightning, with a voice like thunder, and with feet swifter than the wind." When Salih declared his readiness to produce such a camel, Davud added, "Its fore legs must be of gold, and its hind legs of silver, its head of emerald, and its ears of rubies, and its back must bear a silken tent, supported on four diamond pillars inlaid with gold." Salih was not deterred by all these additional requirements; and the king added, "Hear, O Salih! if thou be the prophet of Allah, let this mountain be cleft open, and a camel step forth with skin, hair, flesh, blood, bones, muscles, and veins, like other camels, only much larger, and let it immediately give birth to a young camel, which shall follow it every where as a child follows its mother, and when scarcely produced, exclaim, 'There is but one Allah, and Salih is his messenger and prophet.'"

"And will you turn to Allah if I pray to him, and if he perform such a miracle before your eyes?"

Salih, therefore, however prettily introduced, must, like every other truth of the Koran, be referred to the knowledge which the Moslem had of the Scriptures.—E. T.

"Assuredly!" replied Davud. "Yet must this camel yield its milk spontaneously, and the milk must be cold in summer and warm in winter."

"Are these all your conditions?" asked Salih.

"Still farther," continued Shihab; "the milk must heal all diseases, and enrich all the poor; and the camel must go alone to every house, calling the inmates by name, and filling all their empty vessels with its milk."

"Thy will be done!" replied Salih. "Yet I must also stipulate that no one shall harm the camel, or drive it from its pasture, or ride on it, or use it for any labor."

On their swearing to him to treat the camel as a holy thing, Salih prayed: "O God! who hast created Adam out of the earth, and formed Eve from a rib, and to whom the hardest things are easy, let these rocks bring forth a camel such as their king has described, for the conversion of the Thamudites."

Scarcely had Salih concluded his prayer, when the earth opened at his feet, and there gushed forth a fountain of fresh water fragrant with musk: the tent which had been erected for Adam in Paradise descended from heaven, and thereupon the rocky wall which supported the eastern side of the temple groaned like a woman in travail; a flight of birds descended, and filling their beaks with the water of the fountain, sprinkled it over the rock, and lo! there was seen the head of the camel, which was gradually followed by the rest of its body; when it stood upon the earth, it was exactly as it had been described by the king, and it cried out immediately, "There is no God but Allah; Salih is his messenger and prophet." The angel Gabriel then came down and touched the camel with his flaming sword, and it gave birth to a young camel which resembled it entirely, and repeated the confession that had been required. The camel then went to the dwellings of the people, calling them by name, and, filling every empty vessel with its milk. On its way all animals bowed before it, and all the trees bent their branches to it in reverence.

The king could no longer shut his heart to such proofs of God's almightiness and Salih's mission: he fell on the prophet's neck, kissed him, and said, "I confess there is but one God, and that thou art his messenger!"

But the brother of the king, as well as Davud, and all the priesthood, called it only sorcery and delusion, and invented all kinds of calumnies and falsehoods to retain the people in unbelief and idolatry. Meanwhile, since the camel, by constantly yielding its milk and praising Allah as often as it went down to the water, made daily new converts, the chiefs of the infidels resolved to kill it. But when many days had passed before they ventured to approach it, Shihab issued a proclamation, that whosoever should kill the mountain camel should have his daughter Ranjan to wife. Kadbar, a young man who had long loved this maiden, distinguished as she was for grace and beauty, but without daring to woo her, being only a man of the people, armed himself with a huge sword, and, attended by Davud and some other priests, fell upon the camel from behind while it was descending to the waters, and wounded it in its hoof.

At that moment all nature uttered a frightful shriek of woe. The little camel ran moaning to the highest pinnacle of the mountain, and cried, "May the curse of Allah light upon thee, thou sinful people!" Salih and the king, who had not quitted him since his conversion, went into the city, demanding the punishment of Kadbar and his accomplices. But Shihab, who had in the mean time usurped the throne, threatened them with instant death. Salih, flying, had only time to say that Allah would wait their repentance only three days longer, and on the expiration of the third day would annihilate them like their brethren the Aadites. His threat was fulfilled, for they were irreclaimable. Already on the next day the people grew as yellow as the seared leaves of autumn; and wherever the wounded camel trod, there issued fountains of blood from the earth. On the second day their faces became red as blood; but on the third they turned black as coal, and on the same day, toward nightfall, they saw the camel hovering in the air on crimson wings, whereupon some of the angels hurled down whole mountains of fire, while others opened the subterraneous vaults of fire which are connected with hell, so that the earth vomited forth fire-brands in the shape of camels. At sunset, all the Thamudites were a heap of ashes. Only Salih and King Djundu escaped, and wandered in company to Palestine, where they ended their days as hermits.

ABRAHAM

SOON after the death of Salih, the prophet Abraham was born at Susa, or, according to others, at Babylon. He was a contemporary of the mighty king, Nimrod, and his birth falls into the year 1081 after the Flood, which happened in 2242 from the Fall. He was welcomed at his birth by the angel Gairiel, who immediately wrapped him in a white robe. Nimrod, on the night in which Abraham was born—it was between the night of Thursday and Friday morning—heard a voice in his dream which cried aloud, "Woe to them that shall not confess the God of Abraham: the truth has come to light, delusion vanishes!" He also dreamed that the idol which he worshiped had fallen down; and convened, therefore, on the following morning, all his priests and sorcerers, communicating to them his dream. Yet no one knew how to interpret it, or to give any account of Abraham. Nimrod had already once in a dream seen a star which eclipsed the light of the sun and moon, and had, therefore, been warned by his sorcerers of a boy who threatened to deprive him of his throne, and to annihilate the people's faith in him; for Nimrod caused himself to be worshiped as God. Yet, seeing that since that dream he had commanded every new-born male to be slain at its birth, he did not think there was any need for farther apprehension. Abraham alone was saved of the children who were born at that time by a miracle of heaven, for his mother had remained so slender during her whole pregnancy that no one had thought of it, and when her hour came she fled to a cave beyond the city, where, aided by the angel Gabriel, she was secretly delivered. In this cave Abraham remained concealed during fifteen months, and his mother visited him sometimes to nurse him. But he had no need of her food, for Allah commanded water to flow from one of Abraham's fingers, milk from another, honey from the third, the juice of dates from the fourth, and butter from the fifth. On stepping, for the first time, beyond the cave, and seeing a beautiful star, Abraham said, "This is my God, which has given me meat and drink in the cave." Yet anon the moon rose in full splendor, exceeding the light of the star, and he said, "This is not God; I will worship the moon." But when, toward morning, the moon waxed more and

more pale, and the sun rose, he acknowledged the latter as a divinity, until he also disappeared from the horizon. He then asked his mother, "Who is my God?" and she replied,

"It is I."

"And who is thy God?" he inquired farther.

"Thy father."

"And who is my father's God?"

"Nimrod!"

"And Nimrod's God?"

She then struck him on the face, and said, "Be silent!" He was silent, but thought within himself, "I acknowledge no other god than Him who has created heaven and earth, and all that is in them." When he was a little older, his father, Aser, who was a maker of idols; sent him out to sell them; but Abraham cried, "Who will buy what can only do him harm, and bring no good?" so that no one bought of him. One day, when all his townsmen had gone on a pilgrimage to some idol, he feigned sickness, and remaining alone at home, destroyed two-and-seventy idols, which were set up in the temple. It was then that he obtained the honorable surname of Chalil Allah (the friend of God). But on the return of the pilgrims he was arrested, and brought before Nimrod; for suspicion soon rested upon him, both on account of his stay at home, and the contemptuous reflections on the worship of idols in which he was known to indulge. Nimrod condemned him to be burned alive as a blasphemer.¹ The people of Babel then collected

¹ The Jewish legend respecting Abraham's contempt of idolatry and his sentence to be burned alive is as follows: "Terah p. 71 was an idolater, and, as he went one day on a journey, he appointed Abraham to sell his idols in his stead. As often as a purchaser came, Abraham inquired his age, and when he replied, 'I am fifty or sixty years old,' he said, 'Woe to the man of sixty who would worship the work of a day!' so that the purchasers went away ashamed.

"One day a woman came with a bowl of fine flour, and said, 'Set it before them;' but he took a staff and broke all the idols in pieces, and placed the staff in the hands of the largest of them. When his father returned, he inquired, 'Who has done this?' Abraham said, 'Why should I deny it? there was a woman here with a bowl of fine flour, and she directed me to set it before them. When I did so, every one of them would have eaten first; then arose the tallest, and demolished them with the staff.' Terah said, 'What fable art thou telling me! Have they any understanding!'

"Abraham replied, 'Do not thy ears hear what thy lips utter!'

"Whereupon Terah took him and delivered him to Nimrod, who said to Abraham, 'Let us worship the fire!'

wood for a pile during a whole month, or, according to some of the learned, during forty days, and at that time knew of no more God-pleasing work than this: so that if any one was sick, or desired to obtain any favor from his gods, he vowed to carry a certain quantity of wood upon his recovery, or on the fulfillment of his wish. The women were especially active; they washed; or did other manual work for hire, and bought wood with their earnings. When at last the pile had attained a height of thirty cubits and a breadth of twenty, Nimrod commanded it to be set on fire. Then there mounted on high such a mighty flame, that many birds in the air were consumed by it; the smoke which arose darkened the whole city, and the crackling of the wood was heard at the distance of a day's journey. Then Nimrod summoned Abraham, and asked him again, "Who is thy God?"

"He that has power to kill and to make alive again," Abraham replied. He thereupon conjured up a man from the grave who had died many years ago, and commanded him to bring a white cock, a black raven, a green pigeon, and a speckled peacock. When he had brought these birds, Abraham cut them into a thousand pieces, and flung them in four different directions, retaining only the four heads in his hands. Over these he said a prayer, then called each bird by name, and behold, the little pieces came flying toward him, and, combining as they had been, united themselves to their heads. The birds lived as before, but he who had been raised from the dead at Abraham's command, descended again into the grave.

Nimrod then caused two malefactors to be brought from prison, and commanded one of them to be executed, but pardoned the other, saying, "I also am God, for I too have the disposal of life and death." However childish this remark was, for he only had the power of remitting the sentence of a living man, not of restoring the dead to life, Abraham did not object, but, in

"Rather the water that quenches the fire.'

"Well, the water.'

"Rather the cloud which carries the water.'

"Well, the cloud.'

"Rather the wind that scatters the cloud.'

"Well, the wind.'

"Rather man, for he endures the wind.'

"Thou art a babbler,' replied the king. 'I worship the fire, and will cast thee into it. May the God whom thou adorest deliver thee thence!'

"Abraham was thrown into a heated furnace, but was saved."—Vide Geiger, i., p. 124.

order to silence him at once, said, "Allah causes the sun to rise in the east; if thou be Allah, let it for once rise in the west." But, instead of replying, Nimrod commanded his servants to fling Abraham into the fire, by means of an engine which Satan himself had suggested to him.

At the same instant, the heaven with all its angels, and the earth with all its creatures, cried as with one voice, "God of Abraham! thy friend, who alone worships thee on earth, is being thrown into the fire; permit us to rescue him." The angel that presideth over the reservoirs was about to extinguish the flames by a deluge from on high, and he that keepeth the winds to scatter them by a tempest to all parts of the world; but Allah, blessed be his name! said, "I permit every one of you to whom Abraham shall cry for protection to assist him; yet if he turn only to me, then let me by my own immediate aid rescue him from death."² Then cried Abraham from the midst of the pile, "There is no God besides thee; thou art supreme, and unto thee alone belong praise and glory!" The flame had already consumed his robe, when the angel Gabriel stepped before him and asked, "Hast thou need of me?"

But he replied, "The help of Allah alone is what I need!"

"Pray, then, to him, that he may save thee!" rejoined Gabriel.

"He knows my condition," answered Abraham.

All the creatures of the earth now attempted to quench the fire: the lizard alone blew upon it, and, as a punishment, became dumb from that hour.

At Allah's command, Gabriel now cried to the fire, "Become cool, and do Abraham no harm!" To these last words Abraham was indebted for his escape; for at the sound of Gabriel's voice it grew so chill around him that he was well-nigh freezing, and the cold had therefore to be diminished again. The fire then remained as it was, burning on as before, but it had miraculously lost all its warmth; and this was not only so with Abraham's pile, but with all fires lighted on that day throughout the whole world.

² The Midrash, p. 20, says, "When the wicked Nimrod cast p. 74 Abraham into the furnace, Gabriel said, 'Lord of the world, suffer me to save this saint from the fire!' but the Lord replied, 'I am the only one supreme in my world, and he is supreme in his; it is meet, therefore, that the supreme should save the supreme.'"

Allah then caused a fountain of fresh water to spring up in the midst of the fire, and roses and other flowers to rise out of the earth at the spot where Abraham was lying. He likewise sent him a silken robe from Paradise, and an angel in human shape, who kept him company during seven days; for so long he remained in the fire. These seven days Abraham, in later times, frequently called the most precious of his life.

His miraculous preservation in the pile became the cause of his marriage with Radha, the daughter of Nimrod; for on the seventh day after Abraham was cast into the fire, she prayed her father for permission to see him. Nimrod endeavored to dissuade her from it, and said, "What canst thou see of him? He has long ere now been changed into ashes." Yet she ceased not to entreat him, until he suffered her to go near the pile. There she beheld Abraham, through the fire, sitting quite comfortable in the midst of a blooming garden. Amazed, she called out, "O Abraham, does not the fire consume thee?" He replied, "Whoever keeps Allah in his heart, and the words, 'In the name of Allah the All-merciful,' on his tongue, over him has fire no power."

Whereupon she begged his permission to approach him; but he said, "Confess that there is but one only God, who has chosen me to be his messenger!" As soon as she had made this confession of her faith, the flames parted before her, so that she was able to reach Abraham unharmed. But when she returned to her father, and told him in what condition she had found the prophet, and sought to convert him to his faith, he tormented and tortured her so cruelly, that Allah commanded an angel to deliver her from his hands, and conduct her to Abraham, who had meanwhile left the city of Babel.

Still Nimrod was far from being reclaimed; he even resolved to build a lofty tower, wherewith, if possible, to scale the heavens, and to search therein for the God of Abraham. The tower rose to a height of five thousand cubits; but as heaven was still far off, and the workmen were unable to proceed farther with the building, Nimrod caught two eagles and kept them upon the tower, feeding them constantly with flesh. He then left them to fast for several days, and when they were ravenous with hunger, he fastened to their feet a light, closed palanquin, with one window above and another

below, and seated himself in it with one of his huntsmen. The latter took along spear, to which a bit of flesh was attached, and thrust it through the upper window, so that the famishing eagles flew instantly upward, bearing the palanquin aloft. When they had flown toward heaven during a whole day, Nimrod heard a voice, which cried to him, "Godless man, whither goest thou? Nimrod seized the bow of his huntsman, and discharged an arrow, which forthwith fell back through the window stained with blood, and this abandoned man believed that he had wounded the God of Abraham.

But as he was now so far from the earth that it appeared to him no larger than an egg, he ordered the spear to be held downward, and the eagles and the palanquin descended.

Respecting the blood which was seen on Nimrod's arrow, the learned are not agreed as to whence it came: many contend it was the blood of a fish which the clouds had carried with them from the sea, and adduce this circumstance as the reason why fish need not be slaughtered.³ Others suppose that Nimrod's arrow had struck a bird which was flying still higher than the eagles. When Nimrod, in the swell of triumph, once more reached the pinnacle of his tower, Allah caused it to fall in with such frightful noise, that all people were beside themselves from terror, and every one spoke in a different tongue. Since that period the languages of men vary, and, on account of the confusion arising from this circumstance, the capital of Nimrod was called Babel (the confusion).

As soon, however, as Nimrod had recovered himself, he pursued Abraham with an army which covered the space of twelve square miles. Allah then sent Gabriel unto Abraham to ask him by what creature he should send him deliverance? Abraham chose the fly; and Allah said, "Verily, if he had not chosen the fly, an insect would have come to his aid, seventy of which are lighter than the wing of a fly."

The exalted Allah then summoned the king of flies, and commanded him to march with his host against Nimrod. He then collected all the flies and gnats

³ The laws of the Mohammedans, and of the Jews especially, regulate scrupulously the mode in which clean animals are to be slain; what part is to receive the mortal wound; how it is to be inflicted; the knife to be used; and the formula of prayer to be uttered. But no such laws exist in regard to fish.—E. T.

of the whole earth, and with them attacked Nimrod's men with such violence, that they were soon obliged to take to flight, for they consumed their skin, and bones, and flesh, and picked the eyes out of their heads. Nimrod himself fled, and locked himself up in a thickly-walled tower; but one of the flies rushed in with him, and flew round his face during seven days, without his being able to catch it, the fly returning again and again to his lip, and sucking it so long that it began to swell. It then flew up into his nose, and the more he endeavored to get it out, the more deeply it pressed into it, until it came to the brain, which it began to devour. Then there remained no other means of relief to him than to run his head against the wall, or to have some one strike his forehead with a hammer. But the fly grew continually larger until the fortieth day, when his head burst open, and the insect, which had grown to the size of a pigeon, flew out, and said to the dying Nimrod, who even now would not come to repentance, "Thus does Allah, whenever he pleases, permit the feeblest of his creatures to destroy the man who will not believe in him and in his messenger." The tower, in which Nimrod was, then tumbled in upon him, and he must roll about under its ruins until the day of the resurrection.

After Nimrod's death, many persons, whom the fear of the king had prevented, turned to the only God, and to Abraham his messenger. The first were his nephew Lot, the son of Haran, and Lot's sister Sarah, whom Abraham afterward married. She bore a perfect resemblance to her mother Eve, to whom Allah had given two thirds of all beauty, while the whole human race have to be satisfied with the remaining third, and even of this quota Joseph alone obtained one third.

Sarah was so beautiful that Abraham, who, in order to proclaim the true faith, was obliged to make many journeys to Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Arabia, found it necessary to carry her with him in a chest. One day he was arrested on the banks of the Jordan by a publican, to whom he was obliged to give tithe of all that he carried with him. Abraham opened all his chests but the one in which Sarah was confined; and when the publican proceeded to search it too, Abraham said, "Suppose it to be filled with silks, and let me pay the tithe accordingly." But the officer commanded him to open it. Abraham begged him again to pass it unopened, and offered to give tithe as

if it were filled with gold and jewels. Still the other insisted on his seeing the contents of the chest; and, when he beheld Sarah, he was so dazzled by her beauty, that he ran forthwith to the king, reporting what had happened.

The king immediately summoned Abraham, and inquired of him, "Who is the maiden whom thou carriest with thee?" Abraham, from fear of being put to death if he avowed the truth, replied, "She is my sister!" At the same time he told no falsehood,⁴ for in his mind he meant, "She is my sister in the faith." When the king heard this, he took her with him to his palace. Abraham stood full of despair before it, not knowing what to do, when Allah caused the walls of the palace to become transparent as glass, and Abraham saw how the king, as soon as he had seated himself with Sarah on a divan, desired to embrace her. But at that instant his hand withered, the palace began to shake, and threatened to fall. The king fell on the ground from dread and fright, and Sarah said to him, "Let me go, for I am the wife of Abraham."

Pharaoh thereupon summoned Abraham, and reproached him for his untruth. The latter then prayed for him, and Allah healed the king, who now gave Abraham many rich presents, and, among others, an Egyptian slave by the name of Hagar.⁵ She bore him a son, whom he called Ismael. But as Sarah was barren, and the more jealous since the light of Mohammed already shone on Ismael's forehead, she demanded of Abraham to put away Hagar and her son. He was undecided, until commanded by Allah to obey Sarah in all things. Yet he entreated her again not to cast off her bondmaid and her son. But this so exasperated her, that she declared she would not rest until her hands had been imbrued in Hagar's blood. Then Abraham pierced Hagar's ear quickly, and drew a ring through it, so that Sarah was able to dip her hand in the blood of Hagar without bringing the latter into danger.

⁴ The learned reader must be struck with the strong likeness existing between the moral of the Moslems and those of the Sanchez, the Escobars, the Tambourins, and the Molinas. The Bible says, indeed, "Abraham said to Pharaoh, 'She is my sister;'" but it does not justify him by adding that he told no falsehood.—E. T.

⁵ The Midrash, fol. 21, says that Hagar was given as a slave to Abraham by her father Pharaoh, who said, "My daughter had better be a slave in the house of Abraham than mistress in any other." Elimelech, in like manner, and for the same reason, gave his daughter as a bondmaid to Abraham, after he had seen the wonders which were done for Sarah's sake.

From that time it became a custom among women to wear ear-rings.

Sarah now suffered Hagar to remain yet a few years longer with her; but when she had borne Isaac, and observed that Abraham loved him less than Ismael, her jealousy awoke afresh, and she now insisted on Hagar's removal. Abraham then went with her and Ismael on his way, and the angel Gabriel guided them into the Arabian desert, to the place where afterward the holy temple of Mecca was built. This place had been dedicated to the worship of Allah even before Adam's birth.⁶ For when Allah made known to the angels his resolve of creating man, and they said, "Wilt thou fill the earth with sinful creatures?" Allah was so wroth at their dissuasion, that the angels, to reconcile Him, walked, singing praises, seven times round His throne. Allah pardoned them, but said, "Build me forthwith, in a direct line downward to the earth, a temple, which the sinners may one day encompass, that they also may obtain mercy, even as ye have now encircled my throne, and been forgiven." Allah afterward gave to Adam a diamond of Paradise, which is now called the black stone; for it afterward grew black by the unclean touch of the heathen, but will one day rise with eyes and a tongue, to bear testimony to those who have touched it in their pilgrimage.⁷ This jewel was originally an angel, appointed to watch over Adam, that he might not eat of the forbidden tree; but, on account of his neglect, was changed into a stone. At the time of the flood Allah lifted up this temple into heaven; yet the winds blew Noah's ark seven times round the spot where it had stood.

After having accompanied Hagar and Ismael unto Mecca, Abraham returned again to Sarah, in Syria, leaving the former, at Gabriel's command, to themselves, provided with a few dates and a bottle of water. But these provisions were soon exhausted, and the whole region was waste, arid, and uninhabited. When Hagar and Ismael were suffering from hunger and thirst, the former ran seven times from Mount Susa to Marwa,⁸ calling upon Allah for relief: the angel Gabriel then appeared to her, and stamped upon the

⁶ The sanctity which the Moslem attaches to places is akin to the feeling in the church of the Pharisees before Christ, and of Rome at present. But the Savior reproves it by those words, "Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."—*Matt.*, xviii., 20.—*E. T.*

⁷ The black stone of the Kaaba is to this day an object of great veneration with the Mussulmans, and every pilgrim visiting the temple kisses it repeatedly.—*E. T.*

⁸ The pilgrims to Mecca still run seven times from Mount Susa to Marwa, frequently looking round and stooping down, to imitate Hagar when seeking for water.—*E. T.*

earth with his foot, and behold, there started up a fountain, which is still known as the fountain of Semsem.⁹ But at that time its waters were as sweet as honey and as nutritious as milk, so that Hagar was unwilling again to leave these regions.

After some time there came two Amalekites to her, who were seeking a camel which had strayed there, and, finding good water, they informed their tribe thereof, which had encamped a few hours westward. They settled with her, and Ismael grew up among them; but Abraham visited him every month, riding on Barak, his miraculous horse, which carried him in half a day from Syria to Mecca.

When Ismael had attained the age of thirteen years, Abraham heard a voice in his dream, which cried, "Sacrifice Ismael thy son."

The Jews, and even many Mussulmans, do indeed maintain that it was his son Isaac whom Abraham offered; but the true believers reject this opinion, inasmuch as Mohammed called himself the son of two men who had been set apart as sacrifices, meaning thereby Ismael and his own father, Abd Allah, whom his grand-father, Abdul Mattalib, intended to offer in fulfillment of a vow, but, by the decision of a priestess, redeemed with a hundred camels.

When Abraham awoke, he was in doubt whether he should regard his dream as a Divine command or as the instigation of Satan. But, when the same dream was yet twice repeated, he dared not to hesitate any longer, and therefore took a knife and a rope, and said to Ismael, "Follow me!"

When Iblis saw this, he thought within himself, "An act so well pleasing to Allah I must seek to prevent," and he assumed the form of a man, and, going to Hagar, said to her, "Knowest thou whither Abraham has gone with thy son?" Hagar answered, "He has gone into the forest to cut wood."

"It is false," replied Iblis; "he intends to slaughter thy son."

⁹ This fountain is within the Kaaba: its water is brackish, though somewhat less so than the other water of Mecca.—E. T.

"How is this possible?" rejoined Hagar; "does he not love him as much as I?"

"Yea," continued Iblis, "but he believes that Allah has commanded it."

"If it be so," rejoined Hagar, "let him do what he believes pleasing to Allah."

When Iblis could effect nothing with Hagar, he betook himself to Ismael, and said, "Knowest thou for what end this wood which thou hast gathered is to serve?"

Ismael replied, "It is for our use at home."

"No!" rejoined Iblis; "thy father designs to offer thee as a sacrifice, because he dreamed that Allah had commanded him."

"Well," replied Ismael, "if it be so, let him fulfill on me the will of Allah."

Iblis then turned to Abraham himself, and said, "Sheik, whither goest thou?"

"To cut wood."

"For what purpose?"

Abraham was silent; but Iblis continued, "I know thou designest to offer up thy son, because Iblis has suggested it to thee in a dream;" but at these words Abraham recognized Iblis, and flinging at him seven pebbles, a ceremony since observed by every pilgrim, he said, "Get thee gone, enemy of Allah; I will act according to the will of my Lord." Satan went away enraged, but stepped yet twice more in a different form into Abraham's way, seeking to stagger his resolve. Abraham discovered him each time, and each time flung at him seven pebbles.¹⁰

When they came to Mina, upon the spot where Ismael was to be offered, the latter said to Abraham, "Father, bind me tightly, that I may not resist, and thrust back thy robe, that it may not be sprinkled with my blood, lest my

¹⁰ The Midrash, p. 28, says, "Abraham left Sarah early in the morning, while she slept; but Satan placed himself in his way as an aged man, and said, 'Whither goest thou?'"

mother mourn at the sight of it. Sharpen thy knife well, that it may kill me quickly and easily, for, after all, death is hard. When thou reachest home again, greet my mother, and take this robe to her as a memento."

Abraham obeyed weepingly the will of his son, and was just on the point of slaying him, when the portals of heaven were opened, and the angels looked on and cried, "Well does this man deserve to be called the friend of Allah!"

At this moment the Lord placed an invisible collar of copper round Ismael's neck, so that Abraham, spite of his utmost exertions, was unable to wound him. But when he put his knife to Ismael's neck a third time, he heard a voice which cried, "Thou hast fulfilled the command which was imparted to thee in thy dream!"

At this call he raised his eyes, and Gabriel stood before him with a fine horned ram, and said, "Slaughter this ram as the ransom of thy son."

This ram was the same which Abel offered and which, in the mean time, had pastured in Paradise.¹¹

The sacrifice over, Abraham returned to Syria, but Ismael remained with his mother among the Amalekites, of whom he took a wife.

One day Abraham desired to visit him; but Ismael was engaged in the chase, and his wife was alone at home. Abraham greeted her, but she did not return his salutation. He prayed her to admit him for the night, but she refused his prayer; he then demanded something to eat and to drink, and she answered, "I have nothing but some impure water." Then Abraham left her, and said, "When thy husband returns, greet him, and say, he must change the pillars of his house." When Ismael came home to inquire whether any one had been with her during his absence, she described Abraham, and told what he had enjoined upon her. By her description Ismael recognized his father, and his words he interpreted, that he should separate himself from his wife, which he soon did.

¹¹ Rabbi Elieser teaches: the ram came from the mountain. Rabbi Jehoshua: an angel brought it from Paradise, where it pastured under the tree of eternal life, and drank from the brook which flows beneath it. The ram diffused its perfume throughout the whole world. It was brought into Paradise on the evening of the sixth day of the creation.—*Midrash*, p. 28.

Not long after this, the Djorhamides wandered from Southern Arabia to the regions of Mecca, and drove out the Amalekites, who by their vicious courses had called down on themselves the punishment of Allah. Ismael married the daughter of their king, and learned of them the Arabic tongue. This woman, too, Abraham once found alone, and, on his greeting her, she returned his salutation kindly, rose up before him, and bade him welcome. On his inquiring how it fared with her, she replied, "Well, my lord. We have much milk, good meat, and fresh water."

"Have you any corn?" inquired Abraham.

"We shall obtain that too, by Allah's will. But we do not miss it. Only alight, and come in!"

"Allah bless you!" said Abraham; "but I can not tarry;" for he had given a promise to Sarah not to enter Hagar's house.

"Suffer me, at least, to wash thy feet," said the wife of Ismael, "for thou art indeed covered with dust."

Abraham then placed first his right foot,¹² and then his left, upon a stone which lay before Ismael's house, and suffered himself to be washed. This

¹² This legend, which has reference to Ismael, and which, it might be supposed, was of Arabic origin, and invented to account for the sanctity of the second curious stone of the Kaaba, is found in the Midrash, p. 27:

"Ismael married a wife of the daughters of Moab, and her name was Asia. After three years Abraham went to visit his son, having sworn previously to Sarah not to alight from his camel. He came toward noon to Ismael's dwelling, in which his wife was alone.

"Where is Ismael?"

"He is gone into the desert with his mother to gather dates and some other fruits.'

"Give me a little bread and water, for I am fatigued with traveling through the wilderness.'

"I have neither bread nor water.'

"When Ismael returns home, tell him that he change the door-posts of his house, for they are not worthy of him.'

"As soon as Ismael came, and she reported all that had happened, he understood what Abraham had meant, and sent her away."

"Hagar then brought him a wife from her father's house: her name was Fatima.

"After three years Abraham visited his son again, after having again sworn to Sarah that he would not alight at his house.

"He arrived this time, too, at Ismael's dwelling toward noon, and found Fatima quite alone. But she brought him immediately all that he desired. Then Abraham prayed for Ismael to the Lord, and his house was filled with gold and goods.

"When Ismael returned, and learned from Fatima what had happened, he rejoiced greatly, and knew that Abraham's parental love for him was not yet extinct."—*Midrash*, p. 28.

stone was afterward employed in the temple, and the prints of Abraham's feet are visible upon it to this day.

After she had washed him, Abraham said, "When Ismael returns, tell him to strengthen the pillars of his house!"

As soon as Ismael came home, his wife related to him what had happened to her with a stranger, and what message he had left.

Ismael inquired of his appearance; and when, from her answers, he recognized who it was, he rejoiced greatly, and said, "It was my father Abraham, the friend of Allah, who was doubtless well satisfied with thy reception, for his words signify nothing else than that I should bind thee more closely to me."

When Abraham was a hundred and ten years old, Allah commanded him, in a dream, to follow after the Sakinah; that is, a zephyr with two heads and two wings.

Abraham obeyed, and journeyed after the wind, which was changed into a cloud, at Mecca, on the spot where the temple still stands. A voice then called to him, "Build me a temple on the spot where the cloud is resting."

Abraham began to dig up the earth, and discovered the foundation-stone which Adam had laid. He then commanded Ismael to bring the other stones required for the building. But the black stone, which since the flood had been concealed in heaven, or, according to the opinion of some of the learned, on Mount Abu Kubeis, the angel Gabriel brought himself. This stone was even at that time so white and brilliant, that it illuminated during the night the whole sacred region belonging to Mecca.

One day, while Abraham was engaged with Ismael in the building of the temple, there came to him Alexander the Great, and asked what he was building; and when Abraham told him was a temple to the one only GOD, in whom he believed, Alexander acknowledged him as the messenger of Allah, and encompassed the temple seven times on foot.

With regard to this Alexander, the opinions of the learned vary. Some believe him to have been a Greek, and maintain that he governed the whole

world; first, like Nimrod before him, as an unbeliever, and then, like Solomon after him as a believer.

Alexander was the lord of light and darkness: when he went out with his army the light was before him, and behind him was the darkness, so that he was secure against all ambuscades, and by means of a miraculous white and black standard, he had also the power to transform the clearest day into midnight darkness, or black night into noonday, just as he unfurled the one or the other. Thus he was unconquerable, since he rendered his troops invisible at his pleasure, and came down suddenly upon his foes. He journeyed through the whole world in quest of the fountain of eternal life, of which, as his sacred books taught him, a descendant of Sam (Shem) was to drink, and become immortal. But his vizier, Al-kidhr, anticipated him, and drank of a fountain in the farthest west, thus obtaining eternal youth; and when Alexander came it was already dried up, for, according to the Divine decree, it had been created for one man only. His surname, the Two-cornered, he obtained, according to some, because he had wandered through the whole earth unto her two corners in the east and west; but, according to others, because he wore two locks of hair which resembled horns; and, according to a third opinion, his crown had two golden horns, to designate his dominion over the empires of the Greeks and Persians. But, lastly, it is maintained by many, that one day, in a dream, he found himself so close to the sun that he was able to seize him at his two ends in the east and west, and was therefore tauntingly called the Two-cornered.

The learned are similarly divided respecting the time in which he lived, his birthplace, parentage, and residence. Most of them, however, believe that there were two sovereigns of this name among the kings of antiquity: the elder of these; who is spoken of in the Koran, was a descendant of Ham, and contemporary of Abraham, and journeyed with Al-kidhr through the whole earth in search of the fountain of eternal life, and was commissioned by Allah to shut up behind an indestructible wall the wild nations of Jajug and Majug, lest they should have extirpated all the other inhabitants of the world. The younger Alexander was the son of Philip the Greek, one of the descendants of Japhet, and a disciple of the wise Aristotle at Athens.

But let us return to Abraham, who, after his interview with Alexander and Al-kidhr, continued the building of the temple until it had attained a height of nine, a breadth of thirty, and a depth of twenty-two cubits. He then ascended the Mount Abu Kubeis, and cried, "O ye inhabitants of the earth, Allah commands you to make a pilgrimage to this holy temple. Let his commandment be obeyed!"

Allah caused Abraham's voice to be heard by all men both living and uncreated; and all, even the children still in their mothers' womb, cried with one voice, "We obey thy commandment, O Allah!" Abraham, together with the pilgrims, then performed those ceremonies which are yet observed to this day, appointed Ismael as the lord of the Kaaba, and returned to his son Isaac in Palestine.

When the latter attained the age of manhood, Abraham's beard became gray, which astonished him not a little, since no man before him had ever turned gray.¹³ But Allah had performed this wonder that Abraham might be distinguished from Isaac. For as he was a hundred years old when Sarah bore Isaac, the people of Palestine derided him, and doubted of Sarah's innocence; but Allah gave to Isaac such a perfect resemblance of his father, that every one who saw him was convinced of Sarah's conjugal fidelity. But, to prevent their being mistaken for each other, Allah caused gray hairs to grow on Abraham as a mark of distinction; and it is only since that time that the hair loses its dark colour in old age. When Abraham had attained to the age of two hundred, or, as some maintain, of a hundred and five-and-seventy years, Allah sent to him the Angel of Death in the form of an aged man. Abraham invited him to a meal; but the Angel of Death trembled so much, that, before he could put a morsel into his mouth, he besmeared therewith his forehead, eyes, and nose. Abraham then inquired, "Why tremblest thou thus?"

"From age," replied the Angel of Death.

¹³ When Sarah weaned her son, Abraham made a feast. Then said the heathen, "Behold this aged couple, who have taken up a child from the streets, pretending it was their own, and to obtain credit more easily, have given a feast in its honor." But the Lord made Isaac so strikingly to resemble, &c. Also, in p. 15, among the wonders which were done in honor of Abraham, is enumerated his turning gray. And again, p. 30, "Before Abraham, there was no special mark of old age," &c.—*Midrash*, p. 27, 15, 30.

"How old art thou?"

"One year older than thyself!"

Abraham lifted up his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed, "O Allah! take my soul to thee before I fall into such a state!"

"In what manner wouldst thou like to die, friend of Allah?" inquired the Angel of Death.

"I should like to breathe out my life at the moment when I fall down before Allah in prayer."

The angel remained with Abraham until he fell down in prayer, and then put an end to his life.

Abraham was buried by his son Isaac, near Sarah, in the cave of Hebron. For many ages the Jews visited this cave, in which also Isaac and Jacob were afterward buried. The Christians subsequently built a church over it, which was changed into a mosque when Allah gave this country unto the Mussulmans. But Hebron was called Kirjath Abraham (the city of Abraham), or simply Chalil (Friend), and is known by that name unto this day.

JOSEPH

JOSEPH, the son of Jacob, the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham, was from his childhood the darling of his father; and as he lived with an aunt at a distance from his home, Jacob's constant longing for him added much to the fervor of his parental love. When he was only six years of age, his aunt became so much attached to him, that, in order to prevent her ever being obliged to part with him, she invented the following expedient. She took the family girdle which she, being the first-born, had inherited from Abraham through Isaac (it was the same which Abraham wore on his loins when thrown into the pile), girded Joseph with it, and accused him of theft, so that, according to the laws of those days, he became her slave for life. It was not until after her death that he returned again to the house of his father, and was naturally treated by him with greater care and tenderness than his elder brothers. Moreover, he was his eldest son by Rachael, the only one of his wives whom he had truly loved.

One morning Joseph told his father that he had seen in a dream how he and his brothers had each set a twig in the earth, and how those of his brothers withered, while his began to bloom, and shaded theirs with its foliage and blossoms. Jacob was so absorbed with the meaning of this dream, that he left a poor man who stood before him holding out his hand for alms unobserved, and allowed him to depart, without a gift. It was this transgression that brought on him all those sufferings by which he was soon to be visited. On the following morning Joseph again related to his father: "I have dreamed that the sun, moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me." Jacob could now no longer remain in doubt as to the meaning of these dreams; he perceived in them Joseph's future greatness, but recommended him not to speak of them to his brothers, who had long since envied him for the greater tenderness of his father. But, although Jacob knew the sentiments of his sons toward Joseph, yet was he one day persuaded by them to send him with them to the pasture. Scarcely were they alone in the open field, when they began to beat and to mock him. He would have sunk under their ill treatment if Allah had not filled the heart of his brother Judah

with compassion toward him. Judah said, "Do not kill your brother; if we but regain the undivided love of our father, we have attained our object. Let us therefore cast him into a pit till a caravan passes, and then sell him as a slave." Judah's advice was taken, and Joseph, stripped of his garments, was cast into a pit, where he must have been drowned had not Allah caused the angel Gabriel to place a large stone under his feet. Gabriel at the same time was instructed to illumine the pit by a jewel, and to cry, "Joseph, the time will come when thou shalt call thy brothers to account, without their suspecting it." The brothers then left the pit, but before returning home they slaughtered a lamb, and besmeared Joseph's upper garment with its blood, which can not be distinguished from that of man. They then said to their father, "While we were engaged in our occupations, there came a wolf and tore Joseph, who had remained with the stores; and, on seeking him afterward, we found this upper garment, which we recognized as his."

"How," said Jacob, "shall I believe that a wolf has devoured my son, while there is not a single rent in this garment?" (for the brothers had forgotten likewise to damage the garment). "Besides," he added, "there has no wolf been seen in these regions for many years."

"We imagined, indeed, that thou wouldst not give credence to our words," said one of his sons; "but let us search for the wolf," he continued, turning to his brothers, "in order to convince our father of the truth of our statement."

They then provided themselves with all kinds of implements of the chase, and scoured the whole region round about, until they at last found a large wolf, which they caught alive, and accused it before Jacob as Joseph's murderer; but Allah opened the mouth of the wolf, and he said,

"Believe not, O son of Isaac! the accusation of thy envious sons. I am a wolf from a foreign country, and have long been wandering about to seek my young one, which one morning I missed on waking. How should I, who am mourning the loss of a wild beast, bereave the prophet of Allah of his son?"

Jacob then delivered the wolf from the hands of his sons, and sent them away again, so as not to have their faces before his eyes; only Benjamin, his youngest son, he kept with him. The ten brothers thereupon returned to the

pit in which they had left Joseph, and arrived at the very moment when he was freed by some Bedouins, who, on their march from Madjan to Egypt, had sought to draw water from this pit but had brought up Joseph instead, who clung to their bucket. "This youth," said Judah to the leader of the caravan, ere Joseph could utter a word, "is our slave, whom we have confined in this pit on account of his disobedience. If you will take him with you to Egypt, and sell him there, you may buy him from us at a moderate rate." The leader of the caravan was greatly rejoiced at this offer, for he knew well that so beautiful a youth would bring him much gain. He bought him, therefore, for a few drachms; and Joseph did not break silence, for he feared that his brothers might put him to death if he contradicted them. Trusting in Allah, he journeyed quietly with the Bedouins until he was passing the grave of his mother. There, his grief overpowered him, and, casting himself on the ground, he wept and prayed. The leader of the caravan struck him, and would have dragged him away by force, when suddenly a black cloud overspread the sky, so that he started back affrighted, and prayed Joseph so long to forgive him, till the darkness again disappeared.

The sun was declining when the caravan entered the capital of Egypt, which was then governed by Rajjan, a descendant of the Amalekites. But Joseph's face shone brighter than the noon-day sun, and the singular light which it diffused attracted all the maidens and matrons to their windows and terraces. On the following day he was exposed for sale before the royal palace. The richest women of the city sent their husbands and guardians to buy him; but they were outbidden by Potiphar, the treasurer of the king, who was childless, and designed to adopt Joseph as his son. Zuleicha, the wife of Potiphar, received Joseph kindly, and gave him new robes; she likewise appointed him a separate summer-house for his abode, because he refused to eat with the Egyptians, preferring to live on herbs and fruits. Joseph lived six years as Potiphar's gardener, and, although Zuleicha loved him passionately since his first entrance into her house, she conquered her feelings, and was satisfied to regard him from her kiosk as he performed his labors in the garden. But in the seventh year Zuleicha became lovesick: her cheeks grew pale, her gaze was lifeless, her form was bent, and her whole body consumed away. When no physician was able to heal her, her nurse

said one day, "Zuleicha, confess that it is not thy body, but thy soul, which suffers in secret; sorrow is preying on thy health. Confide in thy nurse, who has fed thee with her own substance, and fostered thee since thy infancy like a mother. My advice may, perhaps, be useful."

Zuleicha then threw herself into the arms of her aged friend, and avowed her love to Joseph, and her fruitless endeavors during six years to conquer it.

"Be of good cheer," said the matron to Zuleicha; "thou hast done more than others of thy sex, and art therefore excusable. Be thyself again; eat, drink, dress to advantage, take thy bath, that thy former beauty return; then shall Joseph's love surely exceed thy own. Besides, is he not thy slave? and from mere habit of obedience he will gratify all thy wishes."

Zuleicha followed her advice. In a short time she was as blooming and healthful as before; for she thought that only a favorable opportunity was needed to crown her wishes with success.

But Joseph resisted all her allurements; and when she at length found that all her efforts to lead him astray were in vain, she accused him before her husband Potiphar, who threw him into prison; but Allah, who knew his innocence, changed the dark cell in which he was confined to a bright and cheerful abode. He also commanded a fountain to spring up in the midst thereof, and a tree rose at his door, which gave him shade and pleasant fruit.

Joseph, who was soon universally known and feared for his wisdom and the skill which he possessed to interpret dreams, had not been long in prison when the following circumstance occurred: The King of the Greeks, who was then at war with Egypt, sent an ambassador to Rajjan, ostensibly with the design of negotiating for peace, but in reality only to seek the means of slaying this heroic king. The ambassador addressed himself to a Grecian matron who had for many years lived in Egypt, and asked her advice. "I know of no better means," said the Grecian to her countryman, "than to bribe either the king's chief cook or his butler to poison him." The ambassador made the acquaintance of them both, but, finding the chief cook the most tractable, he cultivated a closer intimacy with him, until he

succeeded at last, by means of a few talents of gold, in determining him to poison the king.

As soon as he supposed that he had secured the object of his mission, he prepared for his departure, but previously visited his countrywoman, with the intention of communicating to her the chief cook's promise; but, as she was not alone, he could merely say that he had every reason to be gratified with his success. These words of the ambassador soon reached the king's ears; and as they could not be referred to his ostensible mission, since the negotiations for peace, on account of which he alleged that he had come, were entirely broken off, and the war had already recommenced, some secret or other was suspected. The Grecian was led before the king, and tortured, until she confessed all that she knew; and as Rajjan did not know which of them was guilty, he commanded that both the chief cook and butler should mean while be put into the same prison where Joseph was languishing. One morning they came to him, and said, "We have heard of thy skill in the interpretation of dreams; tell us, we pray thee, what we may expect from our dreams of last night." The butler then related that he had pressed out grapes, and presented the wine to the king. But the chief cook said that he had carried meats in a basket in his hand, when the birds came and devoured the best of them. Joseph exhorted them first of all to faith in one God, and then foretold the butler's restoration to his former office, but to the chief cook he predicted the gallows. As soon as he finished his speech, both of them burst out in laughter, and derided him, for they had not dreamed at all, and merely meant to put his skill to the test. But Joseph said to them, "Whether your dreams have been real or invented, I can not say; but what I have prophesied is the judgment of Allah, which can not be turned aside." He was not mistaken. The spies of the king soon found out that the Greek ambassador had had frequent interviews with the chief cook, while he had seen the butler but once; the former was therefore condemned to death, but the latter reinstated in his office.

On leaving the prison, Joseph entreated the butler to remember him, and to obtain his freedom from the king. The butler did not remember him; but the tree before his door withered, and his fountain was dried up, because,

instead of trusting in Allah, he had relied upon the help of a feeble man.¹ He was seven years in prison when one morning he saw the butler again. He came to lead him before the king, who had had a dream which no one was able to interpret. But Joseph refused to appear unless he had first convinced the king of his innocence. He then related the cause of his imprisonment to the butler, who brought his answer to the king, and the latter immediately summoned Zuleicha and her friends. They confessed that they had falsely accused Joseph. Rajjan then sent a writing, which not only restored him to liberty, but even declared the imprisonment which he had endured to have been unjust, and the result of a calumnious charge.²

Joseph then put on the robes which Rajjan had sent him, and was conducted to the royal palace, where the king had assembled about him all the nobles, the priests, the astrologers, and soothsayers of Egypt.

"I saw in my dream," said the king, as soon as Joseph was near him, "seven lean kine, which devoured seven fat ones; and seven blasted ears, which consumed seven rank and full ones. Canst thou tell me what this dream signifies?"

Joseph replied, "Allah will grant to thy kingdom seven plentiful years, which shall be succeeded by seven years of famine. Be therefore provident, and during the first seven years let as much grain be collected and stored up as shall be required for the maintenance of thy subjects during the seven years that shall follow."

This interpretation pleased the king so well, that he made Joseph the high steward of his dominions in Potiphar's stead.

He now traveled through the country buying the grain, which, on account of the great abundance, was sold on most moderate terms, and built store-houses every where, but especially in the capital. One day, while riding out to inspect a granary beyond the city, he observed a beggar in the street,

¹ The Midrash says, "Joseph remained yet two years in prison, because he had asked the chief butler to remember him."

² "Potiphar's wife looked so ill, that her friends inquired what she complained of. She related her adventure with Joseph, and they said, 'Accuse him before thy husband, that he may be put in prison.' She entreated her friends to accuse him likewise to their husbands. They did so; and their husbands came to Potiphar complaining of Joseph's audacious demeanor toward their wives," &c.—*Midrash*, p. 45.

whose whole appearance, though most distressing, bore the distinct traces of former greatness. Joseph approached her compassionately, and held out to her a handful of gold. But she refused, and said, sobbing aloud, "Great prophet of Allah, I am unworthy of thy gift, although my transgression has been the stepping-stone to thy present fortune."

At these words, Joseph regarded her more closely, and behold, it was Zuleicha, the wife of his lord. He inquired after her husband, and was told that he had died of sorrow and poverty soon after his deposition.

On hearing this, Joseph led Zuleicha to a relative of the king, where she was treated like a sister, and she soon appeared to him as blooming and youthful as at the time of his entrance into her house. He asked her hand from the king, and married her with his permission, and she bore him two sons before the frightful years of famine, during which the Egyptians were obliged to sell to Rajjan, first their gold, their jewelry, and other costly things, for corn; then their estates and slaves, and at last their own persons, their wives and children.

Yet not only in Egypt, but even in the adjacent countries, a great famine prevailed. In the land of Canaan, too, there was no more corn to be found, and Jacob was forced to send all his sons save Benjamin to buy provisions in Egypt. He recommended them to enter the capital by the ten different gates, so as not to attract the evil eye by the beauty of their appearance, and to avoid public attention.³

Joseph recognized his brothers, and called them spies, because they had come to him separately, though, according to their own confession, they were brothers. But when, to exculpate themselves, they explained to him the peculiar circumstances of their family, and, to justify their father's carefulness, they spoke of a lost brother, Joseph grew so angry, that he

³ Jacob said to his sons, "Do not enter by one gate, because of the evil eye." Joseph expected his brothers, and therefore commanded the keepers of the gates to report every day the names of arriving strangers. One day the first keeper brought him the name of Reuben; the second the name of Simeon; and so on, until he had received the name of Asher, Jacob's tenth son. He then commanded all the store-houses but one to be closed, and said to the keeper of that, "If such and such men come, let them be taken and brought before me."

"You are spies," said he to his brothers when they stood before him, "otherwise you would have entered the city by the same gate."—*Midrash*, p. 46, 47.

refused them the desired provisions, and demanded of them to bring down their brother Benjamin with them; and, to be certain of their return, he detained one of them as a hostage.

A few weeks after they returned again with Benjamin.

Jacob was indeed unwilling to let his youngest son depart, for he feared lest a misfortune similar to that of Joseph's would befall him: yet, to escape from famine, he was obliged to yield at last.

Joseph now directed that the corn which they had desired should be measured to them, but gave orders to his steward to conceal a silver cup in Benjamin's sack, to seize them as thieves at the gate of the city, and to lead them back to his palace.

"What punishment," demanded Joseph of the brethren, "is due to him that has stolen my cup?"

"Let him be thy slave," replied the sons of Jacob, certain that none of them was capable of committing so disgraceful an act. But when their sacks were opened, and the cup was found in Benjamin's, they cried to him, "Woe to thee! what hast thou done? Why hast thou followed the example of thy lost brother, who stole the idol of Laban his grand-father, and the girdle of his aunt?"

Still, as they had sworn to their father not to step before his face without Benjamin, they prayed Joseph to keep one of their number as his slave in Benjamin's stead. But Joseph insisted on retaining Benjamin, and Reuben said therefore to his brothers, "Journey to our father, and tell him all that has befallen us; but I, who am the eldest of you, and have vowed unto him to sacrifice my life rather than to return without Benjamin, will remain here until he himself shall recall me. He will probably acknowledge that such an accident could not have been foreseen, and that, if our brother had been known to us as a thief, we should not have pledged ourselves for him."

But Jacob would not credit the story of his returning sons, and feared that they had now acted toward Benjamin as they had formerly done toward Joseph. He burst into tears, and wept till the light of his eyes was

extinguished: his grief for Joseph also revived afresh, though he had never ceased to trust to the fulfillment of his dream.

But now the brothers returned the third time into Egypt, determined to free Benjamin by force, for they were so powerful that they could engage single-handed with whole hosts of warriors. Judah especially, when excited to wrath would roar like a lion, and kill the strongest men with his voice;⁴ nor could he be pacified until one of his kinsmen touched the prickly bunch of hair which, on such occasions, protruded from his neck.

However, they once more endeavored by entreaty to move Joseph to set Benjamin free; but when they spoke of their father's love for him, he inquired, "What, then, has become of Joseph?"

They said, "A wolf has devoured him."

But Joseph took his cup into his hand, and feigning to prophesy out of it, cried, "It is false; you have sold him."

When they denied this charge, Joseph told Zuleicha to give him the parchment which Judah had with his own hand given to the Bedouin when they sold him; and he showed it to them.

"We had a slave whose name was Joseph," said Judah; and he grew so enraged that he was on the point of roaring aloud; but his voice failed him, for Joseph had beckoned to his son Ephraim to touch his bunch of hair, which was so long that it nearly trailed on the ground. When his brothers saw this, there remained no doubt to them of their standing before Joseph, for they could have no other kinsman in Egypt. They therefore fell down before him and cried, "Thou art our brother Joseph; forgive us!"

⁴ "When Joseph would have shut up Simeon, his brothers offered him their assistance, but he declined it. Joseph commanded seventy valiant men to put him in chains; but when they approached him, Simeon roared so loud that the seventy fell down at his feet and broke their teeth. Joseph said to his son Manasseh, who was standing at his side, 'Chain thou him.' Manasseh struck him a single blow, and bound him instantly; so that Simeon exclaimed, 'Certainly this was the blow of a kinsman!' Again, when Joseph sent Benjamin to prison, Judah cried so loud, that Chushim, the son of Dan, heard him in Canaan, and responded. Joseph feared for his life, for Judah was so enraged that he wept blood. Some say Judah wore five garments, one over the other; but when he was angry his heart swelled so much that his five garments burst open. Joseph also cried so terribly, that one of the pillars of his house fell in, and was changed into sand. Then Judah said, 'He is valiant, like one of us.'"—*Midrash*, p. 46, 47.

"You have nothing to fear from me," replied Joseph, "and Allah, the merciful, will also be gracious and pardon you. But rise, and go up quickly to our father, and bring him hither. Take my garment with you; cast it over his face, and his blindness will pass away."

Scarcely had they left the capital of Egypt when the wind carried the fragrance of Joseph's garment to their father, and when Judah, who was hastening in advance of his brothers, gave it to him, his eyes were opened again.⁵ They now departed together for Egypt. Joseph came out to meet them, and, having embraced his father, exclaimed, "Lord, thou hast now fulfilled my dreams, and given me great power! Creator of heaven and earth, be thou my support in this world and the future! Let me die the death of a Moslem, and be gathered to the rest of the pious!"

Neither Jacob nor Joseph left Egypt any more; and both ordained in their testaments that they should be buried in Canaan by the side of Abraham, which was also done. May the peace of Allah be with them!

⁵ The Jewish legend relates, that when the brothers learned Joseph's safety, they were unwilling to communicate it to their father, fearing the violent effects of sudden joy.

But the daughter of Asher, Jacob's grand-child, took her harp and sung to him the story of Joseph's life and greatness; and her beautiful music calmed his spirit. Jacob blessed her, and she was taken into Paradise without having tasted death.—E. T.

MOSES AND AARON

WHEN the time had come in which Allah again designed to send a prophet on the earth, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had three dreams in one night. In his first dream he heard a voice which called, "Pharaoh, repent! The end of thy dominion is at hand, for a youth of a foreign tribe shall humble thee and thy people before the whole world." The king awoke, disturbed by his dream, but after a short time he fell asleep again, and there appeared to him a lion, which threatened to tear a man in pieces. The man was only armed with a rod, but stood still calmly until the lion rushed on him, when he struck it a single blow with his rod, and flung it dead into the Nile. The king awoke, more disturbed than before, and was only able to sleep again toward morning; but scarcely had he closed his eyes, when he saw Asia, his virtuous wife, riding through the air on a winged horse. The horse flew toward heaven; but she cried to him a last farewell, whereupon the earth split open under his feet, and swallowed him up. Pharaoh sprung up from his couch as soon as he awoke, and summoned Haman, his vizier, commanding him to call together immediately all the magicians, the soothsayers, and astrologers of his capital. When they, many thousands in number, were assembled in the largest hall of the royal palace, Pharaoh ascended the throne, and told his dreams with a tremulous voice; but, although their interpretation was clear to every one in the whole assembly, no one ventured to avow the truth unto the king. Yet the latter divining from their ghastly looks what was passing within them, commanded the chief of the astrologers not to conceal any thing, and assured him beforehand of his grace, though he should predict the worst.

"Most mighty king!" said the chief of the astrologers, a man of nine-and-ninety years of age, whose silvery beard reached down to his breast, "it never was so difficult to thy servant to obey thy commands as at the present moment, when I am forced to predict to thee the greatest calamity. One of thy slaves of the daughters of Israel will bear a son, or has perhaps already borne him, who shall hurl thee and thy people into the lowest abyss." At these words Pharaoh began to weep aloud: he tore his crown from his head,

rent his robes, and struck his breast and face with clinched fists. All who were present wept with him; yet no one presumed to speak a word of consolation. At last Haman, the vizier, stepped forward and said, "Great king, my fidelity and attachment are known to thee. Pardon, therefore, thy slave, if he has the boldness to blame thy dejection, and to suggest a plan which will frustrate the fulfillment of thy visions. As yet the power is in thy hand, and, if thou wilt but use it unsparingly, so shalt thou put to shame all the interpreters of thy dream. Let all the children that are born this year, and all women that are with child, be immediately put to death, and thou mayest defy the apprehended peril."¹ Pharaoh followed this cruel counsel. Seven thousand children of one year and under were strangled forthwith, and as many women with child thrown into the Nile.²

One night, when Amram, an Israelite, who was one of Pharaoh's viziers, was as usual in attendance on the king, the angel Gabriel appeared to him bearing on one of his wings Johabed, Amram's wife, the daughter of Jaser. He laid her down near Pharaoh, who was sunk in a deep sleep, and snored like a slaughtered bull; and Gabriel said to Amram, "The hour is come when the messenger of Allah shall appear!" He vanished after having spoken these words, and left Johabed with Amram until the rising of the morning star. Then he carried her back on his wings to her dwelling before Pharaoh awoke.

That night the king had the same dreams again which had so much disturbed him before.

As soon as he awoke he summoned Amram, and again commanded him to convene the interpreters of dreams. But he had scarcely uttered the word,

¹ "Here the Mussulman legend differs from the Talmud, according to which Bileam gave this counsel. Job was silent; and Jethro, the king's third counselor, endeavored to dissuade the king from violence. Bileam was therefore destroyed by the Israelites. Job was led into temptation, and suffered greatly for his silence; but Jethro, who, on account of his clemency, was forced to flee into Midian, was rewarded by becoming the father-in-law of Moses."—*Midrash*, p. 52.

² "In the year 130 after the settlement of the Israelites in Egypt, Pharaoh dreamed of an aged man who was holding a balance in his right hand. In one of its scales he placed all the sages and nobles of Egypt, and a little lamb in the other; and it outweighed them all.

"Pharaoh was amazed at the weight of the lamb, and told his dream on the following morning to his attendants. They were terrified; and one of them said, 'This dream forepodes a great affliction which one of the children of Israel will bring upon Egypt. If it please the king, let us issue a royal edict, commanding every male child of Hebrew parents to be slain at its birth.' The king did as he was advised."—*Miarash*, p. 51.

when the chief of the astrologers begged for admittance. Pharaoh welcomed him, and inquired what had led him so early to the palace.

"Regard for thy throne and for thy life," answered the astrologer. "I read last night in the stars that the lad who shall one day deprive thee of life and empire has been conceived. I could therefore scarcely await the morning star to inform thee of this sad occurrence. Possibly thou mayest succeed in discovering the man who, notwithstanding thy prohibition and thy sage precautions, has found means of frustrating thy design."

Pharaoh was the rather disposed to credit the astrologer, since the repetition of his dream indicated the same. He therefore reproached Amram for not having adopted better measures, which might have rendered impossible the transgression of his commands.

But Amram said, "Pardon thy servant if he venture to doubt the infallibility of this master's interpretation, but the measures which I have adopted, and executed under my own inspection, are of that sort, that on this occasion it is quite incomprehensible to me. Yesterday, as soon as I had left the royal palace, I betook myself to the other side of the river, and, summoning all the men of Israel, threatened with death him who should under any pretext whatever remain behind. Nevertheless, to make sure that, if any one had remained concealed in his dwelling, he should still be separated from his wife, I commanded all women to be shut up in another quarter of the city, which, like the camp of the men, I surrounded with troops, so that no one was able to go in or out. Mean while, I will so act as if I were persuaded of this astrologer's statement. If thou desire it, I will strangle the women, or subject them to severer regulations; we shall discover the guilty one, and destroy her." But Allah infused compassion toward the women of Israel into Pharaoh's heart, and he contented himself with having them more rigidly guarded. But these measures, according to the decision of Allah, proved abortive; for, as Amram was not permitted to move out of the royal palace, Haman did not in the least suspect Johabed, and made her an exception from the common rule, as she was the vizier's wife. Within a twelvemonth

from that time Johabed gave birth to a man child, whom she called Musa (Moses). She was delivered without a pain.³

But the sorrow of her heart was the greater when she cast her eyes on the little child, whose face beamed like the moon in her splendor, and thought of his death, which was drawing nigh. Yet Moses rose, and said, "Fear nothing, my mother; the God of Abraham is with us."

In the night when Moses was born the idols in all the temples of Egypt were dashed down. Pharaoh heard a voice in his dream, which called to him, "Turn to the only God, the Creator of heaven and earth, or thy destruction is inevitable." In the morning the astrologer appeared again, and announced to Pharaoh the birth of the lad who would one day be his destruction. Haman now commanded all the dwellings of the Israelitish Women to be searched afresh, and made no exception even with Johabed's, fearing lest some other woman might have concealed her child therein. Johabed had gone out when Haman entered her house, but had previously hid her child in the oven, and laid much wood before it. Finding nothing in the whole house, Haman commanded the wood in the oven to be lighted, and went away, saying, "If there be a child concealed there, it will be consumed." When Johabed returned, and saw the blazing fire, she uttered a frightful cry of woe; but Moses called to her, "Be calm, my mother; Allah has given the fire no power over me." But as the vizier frequently repeated his visits, and Johabed feared lest he might one day have the wood removed instead of lighting the oven, she resolved to intrust her child to the Nile rather than to expose it to the danger of being discovered by Haman. She obtained, therefore, a little ark from Amram, laid Moses in it, and carried it to the river at midnight; but, passing a sentinel, she was stopped, and asked what the ark contained which she carried under her arm. At that instant the earth opened under the sentinel's feet, and engulfed him up to his neck; and there came a voice out of the earth, which said, "Let this woman depart

³ On these words, "And she saw that the child was fair," the Midrash offers the following reflection: "The learned maintain that at the birth of Moses there appeared a light which shone over the whole world, for in the account of the creation we have the same phrase: 'The Lord saw the light that it was good.'"

It is somewhat difficult to apprehend the precise point of the Rabbis. At the creation of the light it is said GOD saw the light that it was good. The subject of which it was predicated that it was good, then shone over the whole world. Hence it is argued, that, as the same predicate is applied to Moses's face, it must follow that it shone with similar brightness. This is no bad specimen of Rabbinical logic.—E. T.

unharméd; nor let thy tongue betray what thy eyes have seen, or thou art a child of death." The soldier shut his eyes in token of obedience, for his neck was already so compressed that he could not speak, and as soon as Johabed had passed on, the earth vomited him forth again. When she arrived at the place on the shore where she designed to conceal the ark among the rushes, she beheld a huge black serpent: it was Iblis, who placed himself in her way in this form, with the intention of staggering her resolve.

Affrighted, she started back from the vile reptile; but Moses called to her from the ark, "Be without fear, my mother; pass on: my presence shall chase away this serpent." At these words Iblis vanished. Johabed, then opening the ark once more, pressed Moses to her heart, closed it, and, weeping and sobbing, laid it among the reeds, in hopes that some compassionate Egyptian woman would come and take it up. But as she departed, she heard a voice from heaven exclaim, "Be not cast down, O wife of Amram! we will bring back thy son to thee; he is the elected messenger of Allah."

To manifest the weakness of human machinations against that which the Kalam has written on the heavenly tablets of Fate, Allah had ordained that the child now at the mercy of the floods should be saved by Pharaoh's own family. He commanded, therefore, as soon as Johabed had left the Nile, that the angel who was set over the waters should float the ark in which Moses lay into the canal which united Pharaoh's palace with the river; for, on account of his leprous daughters, to whom his physicians had prescribed bathing in the Nile, he had constructed a canal, by which the water of the river was guided into a large basin in the midst of the palace gardens. The eldest of the seven princesses first discovered the little ark, and carried it to the bank to open it. On her removing the lid, there beamed a light upon her which her eyes were not able to endure. She cast a veil over Moses, but at that instant her own face, which hitherto had been covered with scars and sores of all the most hideous colors imaginable, shone like the moon in its brightness and purity, and her sisters exclaimed in amazement, "By what means hast thou been so suddenly freed from leprosy?"⁴

⁴ The daughter of Pharaoh went to the river for she was a leper, p. 123 and not permitted to use warm baths; but she was healed as soon as she stretched out her hand to the crying infant, whose life she preserved. She said within herself, "He will live to be a man; and whoever preserves a life is like the savior of a world." For this cause also she obtained the blessings of the life to come.—*Midrash*, p. 51.

"By the miraculous power of this child," replied the eldest. "The glance which beamed upon me when I beheld it unveiled has chased away the impurity of my body, as the rising sun scatters the gloom of night."

The six sisters, one after the other, now lifted the veil from Moses's face, and they too became fair as if they had been formed of the finest silver. The eldest then took the ark on her head, and carried it to her mother Asia, relating to her in how miraculous a manner both she and her sisters had been healed.

Asia took Moses from the ark, and brought him to Pharaoh, followed by the seven princesses. Pharaoh started involuntarily when Asia entered his chamber, and his heart was filled with dark presentiments; besides, it was not customary for his women to come to him uninvited. But his face regained its cheerfulness when he beheld the seven princesses, whose beauty now surpassed all their contemporaries.

"Who are these maidens?" he inquired of Asia. "Are they slaves whom some tributary prince has sent to me?"

"They are thy daughters, and here upon my arm is the physician who has cured them of their leprosy."

She then narrated to the king how the princesses had found Moses, and how they had recovered from their distemper on beholding him.

Pharaoh was transported with joy, and for the first time in his life embraced his beloved daughters. But after a little while his features were overcast again, and he said to Asia, "This child must not live: who knows whether his mother be not an Israelite, and he the child of whom both my dreams, as well as my astrologers, have foreboded me so much evil?"

"Dost thou still believe in idle dreams, the mere whispers of Satan, and in the still more idle interpretations given by men who boast of reading the future in the stars? Hast thou not slain the young mothers of Israel and their children; and even searched their houses? Besides, will it not always be in thy power to destroy this fragile being? Meanwhile, take it to the palace, in gratitude for the miraculous cure of thy daughters."

The seven princesses seconded the prayers of Asia, until Pharaoh relented, permitting the child to be brought up in the royal palace. Scarcely had he pronounced the words of grace when Asia hastened back to her apartments with the child, and sent for an Egyptian nurse; but Moses thrust her away, for it was not the will of the Highest that he should receive nourishment from a worshiper of idols.⁵ Asia commanded another nurse to be brought; but her also, as well as a third one, Moses would not embrace. On the following morning the queen made known that any woman, who would engage to nurse a strange child for a handsome remuneration, should repair to the royal palace. After this the entire court of the castle was filled with women and maidens, many of whom had come from curiosity only. Among the latter was Kolthum (Miriam), the sister of Moses. When she heard that the child had been found in an ark floating on the water, and that it still refused to take nourishment, she ran quickly and told her mother. Johabed hastened to the palace, and was announced to Asia as a nurse, for the severe regulations against the Israelitish women were now removed. Moses scarcely beheld his mother, when he stretched out his arms toward her, and as he embraced her immediately, she was engaged as a nurse for the space of two years. After the expiration of that time, Asia sent her away with many rich presents, but kept Moses with her, intending to adopt him as her son, since she had no male descendants. Pharaoh himself became daily more attached to the child, and often spent whole hours together in playing with him. One day—Moses was then in his fourth year—while Pharaoh was playing with him, he took the crown from the king's head, and throwing it on the ground, thrust it away with his foot. The king's suspicion was roused afresh: enraged, he ran to Asia, reproaching her for having persuaded him to let Moses live, and manifested once more a desire to put him to death;⁶ but

⁵ From these words, his sister said to the daughters of Pharaoh, "Shall I call a Hebrew nurse?" We may conclude that they had taken him (Moses) to all the Egyptian women, but that he refused to receive food from them, for he thought, "Shall the lips which are destined to speak with the Shekinah touch that which is unclean?"—*Midrash*, p. 51.

⁶ In the third year after the birth of Moses, Pharaoh was sitting on his throne, the queen was at his right hand, his daughter holding Moses at his left, and the princes of Egypt were round a table before him. Moses stretched out his hand, took the king's crown, and placed it on his own head. The courtiers were terrified; and Bileam the magician said, "Remember, O king! thy dreams, and their interpretations: this child is doubtless of the Hebrews, who worship GOD in their hearts; and he has, by a movement of his precocious wisdom, laid hold on the government of Egypt. (Here follow examples from Abraham to Joseph, showing the ambition of the Hebrews to usurp the Egyptian throne.) If it please the king, let us shed this child's blood before he be strong enough to destroy thy kingdom." But the Lord sent an angel in

Asia laughed at him for permitting the naughtiness of a child to excite in him such gloomy thoughts.

"Well, then," said Pharaoh, "let us see whether the child has acted thoughtlessly or with reflection? Let a bowl with burning coals and one with coin be brought. If he seize the former, he shall live; but if he stretch out his hand to the latter, he has betrayed himself."

Asia was forced to obey, and her eyes hung in painful suspense on Moses's hand, as if her own life had been at stake. Endowed with manly understanding, Moses was on the point of taking a handful of the shining coin, when Allah, watching over his life, sent an angel, who, against the child's will, directed his hand into the burning coals, and even put one to his mouth. Pharaoh was again reassured, and entreated Asia for forgiveness; but Moses had burned his tongue, and was a stammerer from that day.⁷

When Moses was six years old, Pharaoh one day teased him so much, that in his anger he pushed with his foot so violently against the throne on which Pharaoh sat, that it was overthrown. Pharaoh fell on the earth, and bled profusely from his mouth and nose. He sprang to his feet, and drew his sword against Moses to thrust him through. Asia and the seven princesses were present, yet all their endeavors to calm him were in vain. Then there flew a white cock toward the king, and cried, "Pharaoh, if thou spill the blood of this child, thy daughters shall be more leprous than before." Pharaoh cast a glance on the princesses; and as from dread and fright their faces were already suffused with a ghastly yellow, he desisted again from his bloody design.

Thus Moses grew up in Pharaoh's house, amid every variety of danger, which GOD, however, warded off in a miraculous manner. One morning—he was then already in his eighteenth year—he was performing his ablutions in the Nile, and prayed to Allah. An Egyptian priest saw him, and observed that

the form of an Egyptian prince, who said, "If it please the king, let two bowls, the one filled with Shoham stones the other with burning coals, be presented to the child," &c.—*Midrash*, p. 52.

⁷ The Jewish legend accounts from this occurrence for the words of Moses in Exodus, chap. iv., ver. 10: "O my Lord! I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken to thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue."—E. T.

he prayed unlike the other Egyptians, who always turn their faces toward Pharaoh's palace, while the eyes of Moses were directed on high.

"Whom worshipest thou?" inquired the priest, in great astonishment.

Moses, having finished his prayer, replied, "My Lord!"

"Thy father Pharaoh?"

"May Allah curse thee, and all those who worship the king as God!"

"Thou shalt atone with thy life for this imprecation. I will forthwith go to thy father, and accuse thee before him."

Then Moses prayed, "Lord of the waters! who hast destroyed by the floods the whole human race, save Noah and Audj, let them even now overflow their banks, to engulf this blasphemous priest."

He had scarcely pronounced these words, when there arose such waves in the Nile as only the fiercest tempest excites in the mighty ocean. One of them rolled over the shore, and swept away the priest into the stream.

When he saw his life in danger, he cried out, "Mercy! O Moses, have mercy! I swear that I will conceal what I have heard from thee."

"But if thou break thine oath?"

"Let my tongue be cut out of my mouth."

Moses saved the priest, and went his way; but when he came to the royal palace he was summoned before Pharaoh, beside whom sat the priest, who had evidently betrayed him.

"Whom worshipest thou?" inquired Pharaoh.

"My Lord," replied Moses, "who gives me meat and drink, who clothes me, and supplies all my wants." Moses thereby intended the only God, the Creator and Preserver of the world, unto whom we are indebted for all things.

But Pharaoh, according to the will of Allah, referred this reply to himself, and commanded that the priest, as a calumniator, should have his tongue cut out, and be hanged before the palace.

Having attained the age of manhood, Moses frequently conversed with the Israelites during his excursions, and listened eagerly to their accounts of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but especially of Joseph, for his mother had long ere this revealed to him the secret of his birth. One day he beheld how a Kopt was most cruelly treating an Israelite, by name Samiri. The latter implored his protection, and Moses struck the Egyptian a blow which stretched him lifeless on the earth. On the following morning Samiri was again striving with an Egyptian, and prayed Moses again to help him; but the latter reproached him for his quarrelsome disposition, and raised his hand threateningly against him. When Samiri saw this, he said, "Wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Kopt yesterday?" The Egyptian who was present heard it, and accused Moses of murder before Pharaoh. The king directed that he should be delivered to the relations of the slain; but one of the royal household, a friend of Moses, informed him immediately of Pharaoh's sentence, and he succeeded in making his escape in time.

Moses wandered many days through the wilderness, until Allah sent him an angel in the form of a Bedouin, who guided him into Midian, where the faithful priest Shuib (Jethro) dwelt, in the midst of idolaters. The sun was declining when he arrived before a well at the outskirts of the little town, and there stood Lija and Safurja, the two daughters of Shuib, with their flocks.⁸

⁸ According to the Jewish legend, there intervened many years between the flight of Moses from Egypt and his arrival in Midian: these years, they say, he spent in Ethiopia, where Bilaam had gone before him; and while the king of that country made war against Syria and other nations, he (Bilaam) treacherously seized on the capital, fortifying it with ditches and walls on three sides, and guarding the fourth by venomous serpents. The king returned, and had laid siege to this city during nine years without succeeding in capturing it, when Moses arrived in his camp. He advised him to take all the storks' eggs from the neighboring forests, to rear the young, and having withheld their food from them for some days, to send them against the serpents. The king did so; the storks destroyed the serpents, and the city was taken; but Bilaam escaped through an opposite gate, and again excited Pharaoh against the people of Israel. The Ethiopians made Moses their first vizier, and afterward their king, giving to him the deceased king's widow in marriage. But as she was an idolater, he refused to treat her as his wife, nor did he participate in the religious observances of the people: the queen therefore accused him publicly, and proposed her own son

"Why do you not water your cattle," inquired Moses, "since the night will soon overtake you?"

"We do not venture to do so," replied Lija, "until the other shepherds, who hate us and our father, have first watered theirs."

Then Moses himself led their cattle to the well, and said, "If any of the shepherds has aught against you, I myself wilt see to the matter." The maidens yielded; nor did any of the shepherds, who assembled around, dare to oppose Moses, for his holy appearance filled them with awe.

When Shuib, astonished at the unusually early return of his daughters, heard from them that a stranger had watered their cattle, he sent Safurja to the well to invite him to his house. But Moses, although suffering with hunger, did not touch the refreshments that were set before him, and when Shuib inquired why he rejected his hospitality, he replied, "I am not of those who accept a reward for any good deed that they have done."

"In like manner, I," replied Shuib, "am not of those who show hospitality only to their benefactors. My house is open to every stranger; and as such, not as the protector of my daughters, thou mayest accept my invitation."

"Moses then ate till he was satisfied, and related during his repast what had befallen him in Egypt.

"As thou mayest not return to thy home, said Shuib, when he had come to the conclusion of his narrative, "remain with me as my shepherd, and, after serving me eight or ten years faithfully, I will give thee my daughter Safurja to wife."

Moses accepted this offer, and pledged himself to eight years' service, but added that he should cheerfully remain two years longer, if he had nothing to complain of; and he abode ten years with him. On the morning following his arrival, he accompanied the daughters of Shuib to the pasture; but as he had fled from Egypt without a staff, Safurja brought to him the miraculous rod of her father, which had served for the support and defense of the

to reign in his stead; but Moses fled to Midian; and Jethro, fearing the Ethiopians, imprisoned him during ten years without giving him any food; but Zipora secretly supplied him with bread and water, &c.

prophets before him.⁹ Adam had brought it with him from Paradise: after his death it passed into the hands of Sheth; after that it went to Idris, then to Noah, Salih, and Abraham. Moses was thirty years old when he entered the service of Shuib, and thirty-eight on his marriage with Safurja. In his fortieth year he determined to return to Egypt in order to inquire after his relatives and brethren in the faith. It was a cold and stormy day when he drew near to Mount Thur, on which a bright fire was blazing; and he said to his wife, "Rest here in the valley; I will see what this flame signifies, and bring thee a few brands on my return." But when Moses came near the fire, he heard a voice out of the midst of the burning and yet unconsumed bush exclaim, "Take off thy shoes, for thou art in the presence of thy Lord, who manifests himself to thee as The Light, to sanctify thee as his prophet, and to send thee to Pharaoh, whose unbelief and cruelty are so great, that long ere this the mountains would have crushed him, the seas have swallowed him up, or the flames of heaven consumed his soul, if I had not determined to give in his person a proof of my omnipotence unto the whole world."

Moses fell down and said, "Lord, I have slain an Egyptian, and Pharaoh will put me to death if I appear before him; besides, my tongue has been paralyzed since my infancy, so that I am not able to speak before kings."

"Fear not, son of Amram!" replied the voice from the fire. "If thy Lord had not watched over thee, thou wouldst have been changed into dust even before thy birth; but as regards thy imperfect speech, it shall not prevent the exercise of thy calling, for I give to thee thy brother Aaron as vizier, who shall communicate my will to Pharaoh."

"Go fearlessly to Pharaoh; the staff which is in thy hand shall protect thee from violence. Thou canst persuade thyself of it if thou wilt but lay it down on the earth."

⁹ The rod of Moses was created on the sixth day, and given to Adam while yet in Paradise: he left it to Enoch, and he gave it to Shem; from him it descended to Isaac and Jacob. The latter took it with him into Egypt, and before his death presented it to Joseph. When he died it was taken, with the rest of his goods, to Pharaoh's house, where Jethro, being one of the king's magicians, saw it; and taking it with him to Midian, he planted it in his garden, where no one was able to approach it until the arrival of Moses. He read the mysterious words written upon the staff, and took it without difficulty from the ground. Jethro, who saw this, exclaimed, "This is the man who shall deliver Israel!" and gave him his daughter Zipora. With this staff Moses kept Jethro's flock during forty years, without being attacked by wild beasts and without losing any from his fold.—Midrash, p. 53.

Moses threw away his staff, and behold! it was changed into a large living serpent. He would have fled from it, but the angel Gabriel held him back, and said, "Lay hold of it; it can do thee no harm." Moses stretched out his hand toward it, and it once more was changed into a staff. Strengthened by this miracle, he was about to return to Safurja to pursue with her his way to Egypt; but the angel Gabriel said to him, "Thou hast now higher duties than those of a husband. By command of Allah, I have already taken back thy wife to her father, but thou shalt fulfill thy mission alone."

On the night that Moses was treading Egyptian ground, there appeared unto Aaron, who had succeeded his father Amram as vizier to Pharaoh, an angel with a crystal cup filled with the rarest old wine; and said, as he handed him the cup, "Drink, Aaron, of the wine which the Lord has sent thee in token of glad tidings. Thy brother Moses has returned to Egypt: God has chosen him to be his prophet, and thee to be his vizier. Arise, and go to meet him."

Aaron instantly left Pharaoh's chamber, in which he, as once his father before him, was obliged to watch, and went beyond the city toward the Nile. But when he reached the bank of the stream. there was not a single boat at hand to ferry him over. Suddenly he beheld a light at a distance; and on its nearer approach he discovered a horseman, who flew toward him with the speed of the wind. It was Gabriel mounted on the steed Hizam, which shone like the purest diamond, and whose neighings were celestial songs of praise. Aaron's first thought was that he was pursued by one of Pharaoh's men, and he was on the brink of casting himself into the Nile; but Gabriel made himself known in time to prevent him, and lifted him on his winged horse, which carried them both to the opposite bank of the Nile. Here Moses was standing; and as soon as he beheld his brother, he cried aloud, "Truth has come, and falsehood has fled!" Gabriel then placed Moses also beside him, and set him down before the house of his mother; but Aaron he carried back into the royal palace, and when Pharaoh awoke, his vizier was again at his post. Moses spent the remainder of that night and the whole of the next day with his mother, to whom he was obliged to relate all that had befallen him in a foreign land since the day of his flight from Egypt.

The second night he spent with Aaron in Pharaoh's chamber. All the doors of the palace, however fast they were closed, opened of their own accord as soon as he touched them with his rod, and the guards standing before them became as if petrified. But when they reported in the morning what they had seen, and the porter who came in with his keys to open the doors of the palace found them wide open, while neither door nor lock exhibited any mark of violence, and nothing of the costly things scattered through the various saloons were missing, Haman said to Pharaoh, "Aaron, who has watched by thee, must explain this matter; for, as thy chamber has likewise been opened, the intruder can have had no other object than to converse with him."¹⁰

Pharaoh immediately summoned Aaron before him, and threatening him with the rack, demanded who his nightly visitor had been. Aaron, in the conviction that Allah would not leave his prophet in the power of an infidel king, avowed that it was his brother Moses who had been with him. Pharaoh immediately sent Haman with a detachment of the royal body-guard into Moses's dwelling, in order to bring him to judgment in the presence of all the viziers and high officers of state, who were forthwith ordered to assemble in the grand hall. He himself presided on his throne, which was entirely of gold, and adorned with the most costly pearls and diamonds. When Moses stepped into the judgment hall, Pharaoh swooned away, for he recognized in him the child that had been saved by his daughters, and now feared him the more, inasmuch as he knew that he was Aaron's brother, and consequently an Israelite. But he soon recovered, on their sprinkling him with rose-water, and with his consciousness also returned his former

¹⁰ Rabbi Meier says, "Pharaoh's palace had 400 gates, 100 on each side; and before each gate stood 60,000 tried warriors." It was therefore necessary for Gabriel to introduce Moses and Aaron by another way. On seeing them, Pharaoh said, "Who has admitted them?" He summoned the guards, and commanded some of them to be beaten, and others to be slain. But as Moses and Aaron returned the next day again, the guards, when called in, said, "These men are sorcerers, for they certainly have not come in through the gates." On the same page it is said, "Before the gate of the royal palace were two lionesses, which did not suffer any one to pass through without the express command of Pharaoh, and they would have rushed upon Moses; but he raised his staff, p. 138 their chains fell off, and they followed him joyfully into the palace, as a dog follows his master after a long separation," &c. And again, "The 400 gates of the palace were guarded by bears, lions, and other ferocious beasts, who suffered no one to pass unless they fed them with flesh. But when Moses and Aaron came, they gathered about them, and licked the feet of the prophets, accompanying them to Pharaoh."—*Midrash*, p. 44, 45.

stubbornness of heart. Pretending never to have seen him before, he inquired, "Who art thou?"

"I am the servant of Allah, and his messenger."

"Art thou not Pharaoh's slave?"

"I acknowledge no other lord than the only Allah."

"To whom art thou sent?"

"To thee, in order to admonish thee to faith in Allah and in me his messenger, and to lead forth the Israelites out of thy country."

"Who is the Allah in whose name thou speakest to me?"

"The only One, the Invisible, who hath created heaven and earth, and all that in them is."

Pharaoh then turned to Aaron, and inquired of him, "What thinkest thou of the words of this foolhardy man?"

"I believe in the only God, whom he proclaims, and in him as his messenger."

On hearing this, Pharaoh said to Haman, "This man has ceased to be my vizier: take off forthwith his robe of honor!"

Haman then took his purple robe from him, and he stood ashamed, for the upper part of his body was uncovered. Moses cast over him his woolen garment; but, as he was not accustomed to such coarse raiment, he trembled in all his limbs. At that moment the ceiling of the hall was opened, and Gabriel flung a robe round Aaron glittering with so many diamonds that all who were present were dazzled, as if the lightning had flashed through the darkest night. Pharaoh admired this robe, which had not a single seam, and inquired of his treasurer what might be its value.

"Such a garment," replied the troubled treasurer, "is priceless, for the meanest of the jewels is worth ten whole years' revenue of Egypt. Such diamonds I have never beheld in any bazar, nor are the like to be found among all the treasures that have been amassed in this palace from the

earliest times. None but sorcerers can obtain possession of such jewels by Satanic arts."

"Ye are then sorcerers!" said Pharaoh to Moses and Aaron. "Be it so. I esteem sorcerers highly, and will make you the heads of this fraternity, if ye will swear not to use your art to my prejudice."

"The Lord of the distant east and west," rejoined Moses, "has sent me as a prophet unto thee, in order to convert thee. We are no sorcerers."

"And wherewithal wilt thou prove thy mission?"

Moses flung his staff on the ground, and instantly it was changed into a serpent as huge as the largest camel. He glanced at Pharaoh with fire-darting eyes, and raised Pharaoh's throne aloft to the ceiling, and opening his jaws, cried, "If it pleased Allah, I could not only swallow up thy throne, with thee and all that are here present, but even thy palace and all that it contains, without any one perceiving the slightest change in me."

Pharaoh leaped from his throne, and adjured Moses, by Asia his wife, to whom he was indebted for life and education, to protect him against this monster. At the mention of Asia's name, Moses felt compassion toward Pharaoh, and called the serpent to him. The serpent placed the throne in its proper position, and stepped like a tender lamb before Moses. He put his hand into his jaws, and seized him by his tongue, whereupon he once more became a staff. But scarcely was this peril warded off from Pharaoh, when his heart again opened to the whispers of Satan, and instead of lending his ear to Moses, he demanded of the viziers to counsel him what he should do.

"Let the heads of these two rebels be cut off," said Haman, "and fear nothing from them; for all that they represent as divine wonders is nothing but idle delusion."

"Do not follow this counsel, mighty king!" cried Hiskil, the treasurer: "think of the contemporaries of Noah, and the nations of Aad and Thamud. They also believed Noah, Hud, and Salih, the prophets whom Allah had sent to be demons and deceivers, until the wrath of Allah fell on them, destroying them and their possessions by fire and water."

But now uprose Haman's predecessor, a hoary man of a hundred and twenty years of age, and said, "Permit me also, O king of kings! before I descend to the grave, to impart to thee my opinion. What king can boast of having so many magicians in his kingdom as thou? I therefore hold it to be the wisest plan that thou fix on a day in which they all may assemble together, and have a meeting with Moses and Aaron. If these are nothing but sorcerers, the Egyptian masters of this art will not be a whit inferior to them; and then thou art still at liberty to do with them according to thy high will. But if they put thy sorcerers to shame, then are they indeed the servants of a mightier God, to whom we shall be forced to submit."

Pharaoh approved of the counsel of his aged vizier, and commanded all the sorcerers of Egypt, seventy thousand in number, to repair to the capital at the expiration of a month. When they were assembled, the king commanded them to choose seventy chiefs from their body, and these seventy were again to be represented by the two most renowned among them, in order to contend in magic arts with Moses and Aaron in the face of the whole people. Pharaoh's command was punctually obeyed, and the choice of the magicians fell on Risam and Rejam, two men of Upper Egypt, who were no less esteemed and feared throughout the whole country than Pharaoh himself.

On an appointed day, Pharaoh, for whom a large silken tent, embroidered with pearls and supported on silver pillars, had been erected, proceeded to a large plain beyond the city, accompanied by his viziers and the nobles of his kingdom: Risam and Rejam on the one side of the tent, and Moses and Aaron on the other, awaited his commands; and the whole population of Egypt was on the field of contest from early dawn, anxious to see which party would obtain the victory. Pharaoh demanded of the two Egyptians to change their rods into serpents: this was done, and Haman said to Pharaoh, "Did not I tell thee that Moses and Aaron were no more than other sorcerers, who deserve chastisement for having abused their art?"

"Thou art too hasty in thy judgment," said Hiskil. "Let us see first whether Moses will not be able to do still greater things than these."

At a sign from the king, Moses stepped forward and prayed to Allah that he would glorify his name in the face of all Egypt. Allah then brought to naught the charm of the Egyptians, which was mere illusion, and it was unto all present as if a dark veil was removed from their eyes; and they recognized again as staffs what had appeared before as serpents. Moses threw his staff upon the earth, and it became a serpent with seven heads, which did not remain motionless like those of the magicians, but pursued the two sorcerers with open jaws. They threw themselves to the earth, and exclaimed, "We believe in the Lord of the World, the God of Moses and Aaron."

Pharaoh cried to them wrathfully, "How dare you confess yourselves to another faith without my permission, simply because these sorcerers are more dexterous than you? Unless you recall your words, I shall cause your hands and feet to be cut off, and shall hang you on the gallows."

"Wilt thou punish us," replied the sorcerers, "because we can not deny the signs of Allah! Behold, we are prepared to yield up our lives in support of our faith."

Pharaoh, in order to set a terrible example, caused the threatened punishment to be executed on them, and they died the first martyrs to the faith of Moses.

The king now waxed daily more cruel; every believer was put to death with the most excruciating tortures. He did not even spare his own daughter, Masheta, the wife of Hiskil, on learning that she no longer honored him as God. She endured with admirable fortitude the death by fire, after seeing all her children slaughtered before her eyes at Pharaoh's command.

Asia herself was now accused before him of apostasy, and even she was condemned to death; but the angel Gabriel comforted her with the annunciation that she should hereafter be united with Mohammed in Paradise, and gave her a potion by which she died without pain.

Pharaoh now conceived, like Nimrod before him, the iniquitous design to war against the God of Moses. He therefore caused a tower to be built, at which fifty thousand men, mostly Israelites, were compelled to labor day

and night, he himself riding up and down among them to urge on the indolent. But Moses prayed to Allah, and the tower fell in, crushing under its ruins all those Egyptians who had committed violence against the Israelites. But even this judgment made only a passing impression on the heart of Pharaoh, for Allah desired to perform still greater wonders before he condemned the soul of the king to eternal hell. First he visited him with a flood. The Nile overflowed its banks, and the waters rose so high that they reached to the neck of the tallest man. After that, a host of locusts invaded the land, which not only consumed all provisions, but even copper and iron. Then followed all kinds of disgusting vermin, which defiled all meats and drinks, and filled all garments and beds, so that Pharaoh, however often he might change his raiment, had not a moment's rest. When this plague disappeared, and Pharaoh still resisted the wishes of Moses, all the waters were changed to blood as soon as an Egyptian took them in his hand, but remained unchanged for the Israelites.¹¹

Finally, many of the Egyptians, especially the more eminent, who had strengthened Pharaoh in his unbelief were turned into stone, together with all their goods. Here, one might see a petrified man, sitting in the bazar, with a balance in his hand; there, another, marking something with the Kalam, or counting gold; and even the gate-keeper of the palace stood there turned to stone, holding a sword in his right hand. Omar Ibn Abd Alasis¹² had in his possession all kinds of petrified fruits of those times, and frequently showed them to his guests as a warning against unbelief. At Moses's prayer, Allah revived the petrified men; but when Pharaoh refused afresh to permit the Israelites to depart, there burst out upon the land so thick a darkness, that whoever happened to be standing could not sit down, and whoever happened to be sitting had no power to rise. Thereupon the Nile was dried up, so that man and beast died of thirst. On this occasion, Pharaoh himself ran to Moses, and adjured him to pray for him once more, that the water

¹¹ "All the water kept in vessels was changed into blood; even the spittle in the mouth of the Egyptians; for it is written, 'there was blood, throughout the land of Egypt.' Rabbi Levi informs us that this plague enriched the Jews; for if a Jew and an Egyptian lived together in the same house, and the Egyptian went to draw water, it was changed into blood; but if the Jew went it remained pure. Drinking out of the same vessel, the Jew obtained water, and the other blood; but if the latter bought it of a Jew, it remained pure."—*Midrash*, p. 66.

¹² This Omar was the eighth caliph of the house of Omarides. He ascended the throne in the 99th year of the Hegira, and was previously governor of Egypt.

might flow back into the Nile. For the last time Moses prayed for him, and the Nile was not only filled to its banks, but there also streamed from it a little brook, which followed Pharaoh whithersoever he went, so that at any moment he was able to supply with water both man and beast. But instead of turning to Allah, the king made use of this special favor also as a means of inducing the people to reverence him still as God.

The long-suffering of the Lord was now exhausted, and the king was himself to pronounce his sentence, and to choose the manner of death which his wickedness had deserved. Gabriel assumed the appearance of a noble Egyptian, and accused before Pharaoh one of his slaves, who, in his absence, had proclaimed himself the lord of the house, and constrained the other domestics to serve him. "This impostor," said Pharaoh, "deserves to die."

"How shall I put him to death?"

"Let him be thrown into the water."

"Give me a written warrant."

Pharaoh commanded an instrument to be drawn up, according to which any slave who usurped the honors of his master was to be drowned.

Gabriel left Pharaoh, and gave Moses the command to quit Egypt with his people. Pharaoh pursued them with his host, and enclosed them on all sides, so that there remained no other way of escape to Israel than toward the Red Sea. Hemmed in between the Egyptians and the sea, they fell with reproaches upon Moses, who had brought them into this dangerous position; but he raised his staff toward the waters, and instantly there were twelve paths opened through the sea for the twelve tribes of Israel, each of which was separated from the rest by a lofty, yet quite transparent wall.

When Pharaoh reached the sea-shore, and beheld the dry paths in the midst of the sea, he said to Haman, "Now Israel is lost to us, for even the waters seem to favor their flight."

But Haman replied, "Are not those paths opened likewise for us? We shall soon overtake them with our horse."

Pharaoh took the path in which Moses marched with the tribe of Levi; but his steed grew restiff, and was unwilling to go forward. Then mounted Gabriel, in human form, on the horse Ramka, and rode in before Pharaoh. This horse was so beautiful, that as soon as the king's steed saw him, he plunged in behind.

But when Pharaoh and his whole host were in the sea, the angel Gabriel turned to the king, and showed him the warrant of the previous day, bearing the royal seal, and said, "Frail mortal, who didst desire to be worshiped as God! behold, thou hast condemned thyself to die by water." At these words, the twelve walls tumbled in, the floods burst forth, and Pharaoh and all that followed him perished in the waters. But in order to convince both the Egyptians who had remained behind, as well as the Israelites, of Pharaoh's death, Allah commanded the waves to cast his body, first on the western and then on the eastern shore of the Red Sea.

But now Moses had no less to contend against the Israelites than formerly against Pharaoh; for they seemed unable to tear themselves from the service of idols, notwithstanding all the wonders of the only Lord, which he had performed.

Yet as long as he tarried with them they presumed not to demand an idol; but when Allah called him to himself on Mount Sinai, they threatened Aaron, whom he had left behind as his representative, with death, if he would not give them an idol.

Samiri now admonished them to bring all their gold, including even the ornaments of their women, and cast it into a copper caldron, under which a strong fire was lighted. As soon as the gold was melted, he flung into it a handful of sand, which he had taken up from under the hoof of Gabriel's horse, and lo! there was formed out of it a calf, which ran up and down like a natural one.

"Here is your Lord, and the Lord of Moses!" then cried Samiri; "this God we will worship!"¹³

While the Israelites, notwithstanding the admonition of Aaron, had abandoned Allah, the angel Gabriel uplifted Moses so high into the heavens that he heard the scribbling of the Kalam which had just received the command to engrave the Decalogue for him and for his people on the eternal tablets of Fate.

But the higher Moses rose, the stronger grew his desire to behold Allah himself in his glory.

Then commanded Allah all the angels to surround Moses, and to commence a song of praise. Moses swooned away, for he was wanting in strength both to behold these hosts of shining forms as well as to hear their thrilling voices.

But when he came to himself again, he confessed that he had asked a sinful thing, and repented. He then prayed to Allah that he would make his people the most excellent of the earth. But Allah replied, "The Kalam has already marked down as such the people of Mohammed, because they shall fight for the true faith until it cover the whole earth."

"Lord," continued Moses, "reward tenfold the good deeds of my people, and visit sin but once; let also each good intention, though not carried into effect, obtain a recompense, but pass by each evil thought unpunished."

"These are privileges," replied Allah, "accorded to those only who believe in Mohammed, in whose name even Adam prayed to me. Admonish, therefore, thy people to faith in him, for he shall rise first on the day of the resurrection from his grave, and enter into Paradise at the head of all the

¹³ According to the Rabbinical legends, Samael (Satan) rushed into the calf, and groaned so loudly that the Israelites believed it living. The Rabbis also maintained that it was not Aaron, but some other person (some say Micah), who made the calf.—Vide Seiger, p. 167.

prophets. He also shall obtain the grace of revealing to his people the commandment of the five daily prayers and the fast of Ramadhan."¹⁴

When Moses returned again to his own people, and found them worshipping before the golden calf, he fell upon Aaron, caught him by the beard, and was on the point of strangling him, when Aaron swore that he was innocent, and pointed out Samiri as the prime mover of this idolatry.

Moses then summoned Samiri, and would have put him to death instantly, but Allah directed that he should be sent into banishment.

Ever since that time he roams like a wild beast throughout the world; every one shuns him, and purifies the ground on which his feet have stood, and he himself, whenever he approaches men, exclaims, "Touch me not!"

Yet, before Moses expelled him from the camp of the Israelites at Allah's command, he caused the calf to be broken into pieces, and having ground it to dust, forced Samiri to defile it. It was then put into water, and given the Israelites to drink.

After Samiri's removal, Moses prayed Allah to have mercy on his people; but Allah replied, "I can not pardon them, for sin yet dwells in their inward parts, and will only be washed away by the potion which thou hast given them."

On returning to the camp, Moses heard woeful shriekings. Many of the Israelites, with ghastly faces and with bodies frightfully swollen, cast themselves down before him, and cried, "Moses, help us! the golden calf is tearing our vitals; we will repent, and die cheerfully, if Allah will but pardon our sin." Many repented really of their sins; but from others only pain and the fear of death had extorted these expressions of repentance.

Moses commanded them, therefore in the name of Allah, to slay each other.

¹⁴ It is well known that the Mussulmans keep a yearly fast, which lasts from sunrise to sunset for a whole month. And they even exceed the Jews in strictness, for they not only take neither meat nor drink, but also abstain from smoking during the fast. As their year is lunar, the month of Ramadhan falls at every season of the year.

Then there rose a darkness, like unto that which Allah had sent upon Pharaoh. The innocent and reclaimed hewed with the sword to the right and to the left, so that many slew their nearest kinsmen; but Allah gave their swords power over the guilty only. Seventy thousand worshipers of idols had already fallen, when Moses, moved by the cries of women and children, implored God once more for mercy.

Instantly the heavens grew clear, the sword rested, and all the remaining sick were healed.

On the following day Moses read unto them the Law, and admonished them to obey scrupulously its prescriptions. But many of the people exclaimed, "We shall not submit to such a code." The laws especially obnoxious to them were those which regulated the revenge of blood and punished the pettiest theft with the loss of the hand. At that instant, Mount Sinai became vaulted over their heads, excluding the very light of heaven from them, and there cried a voice from the rocks, "Sons of Israel, Allah has redeemed you from Egypt merely to be the bearers of his laws: if you refuse this burden, we shall fall in upon you, and thus you shall be compelled to support a weightier mass until the day of the resurrection."

With one voice they then exclaimed, "We are ready to submit to the Law, and to accept it as the rule of our life."

When Moses had instructed them fully in the Law, and expounded what was pure and what impure, what lawful and what unlawful, he gave the signal to march for the conquest of the promised land of Palestine.

But, notwithstanding all the wonders of Allah, who fed them with manna and quails in the wilderness, and caused twelve fresh fountains to spring out of the rocky ground wherever they encamped, they were still faint-hearted, and would not depart until they had obtained better information respecting the country and its inhabitants through spies.

Moses was obliged to yield, and sent a man out of every tribe into Palestine.

The spies, on their return, related, "We have seen the land which we are to subdue by the sword: it is good and fruitful.

"The strongest camel is scarcely able to carry one single bunch of grapes; a single ear yields sufficient corn to satisfy a whole family, and the shell of a pomegranate can easily contain five armed men.

"But the inhabitants of that country and their cities are of a size proportionate to the products of their soil. We have seen men the smallest of whom was six hundred cubits high. They stared at our dwarfish appearance, and derided us. Their houses naturally correspond with their size, and the walls which surround their cities are so high that an eagle is scarcely able to soar to the summit thereof."

When the spies had finished their report, they dropped down dead; only two of them, Joshua, the son of Nun, and Caleb, who had kept silence, remained alive. But the Israelites murmured against Moses, and said, "We shall never fight against such a gigantic people. If thou hast a mind to do so, march alone with thy God against them."

Thereupon Moses announced to them, in the name of Allah, that by reason of their distrust in the help of Him who had divided the sea for their safety, they were doomed to wander forty years through the wilderness. He then took leave of them, and journeyed, preaching the true faith through the whole earth from east to west, and from north to south.

When Moses was one day boasting of his wisdom to his servant Joshua, who accompanied him, Allah said, "Go to the Persian Gulf, where the seas of the Greeks and the Persians commingle, and thou shalt there find one of my pious servants who surpasses thee in wisdom."

"How shall I recognize this wise man?"

"Take with thee a fish in a basket: it will show thee where my servant lives."

Moses now departed with Joshua toward the country which Allah had pointed out, and constantly carried with him a fish in a basket. On one occasion he laid himself down, quite exhausted, on the sea-shore, and fell asleep. It was late when he awoke, and he hurried on to reach the desired

inn; but Joshua had, in his haste, neglected to take the fish with him, and Moses forgot to remind him of it. It was not until the next morning that they missed their fish, and were on the point of returning to the spot where they had rested on the preceding day; but, on reaching the sea-shore, they beheld a fish gliding quite erect on the surface of the water, instead of swimming therein, as fish are wont to do: they soon recognized it as theirs, and therefore went after it along the shore. After having, for a few hours, followed their guide, it suddenly dived below: they stood still, and thought, "Here the God-fearing man whom we are seeking must dwell;" and soon they descried a cave, over whose entrance was written, "In the name of Allah, the All-merciful and All-gracious." On stepping in, they found a man who appeared in all the bloom and vigor of a youth of seventeen, but with a snow-white beard flowing even to his feet. It was the prophet Chidhr, who, though gifted with eternal youth, was withal endowed with the finest ornament of hoary age.

After mutual salutation, Moses said, "Accept me as thy disciple, and permit me to accompany thee in thy wanderings through the world, that I may admire the wisdom which Allah has bestowed on thee."

"Thou canst not comprehend it, and wilt therefore not remain long with me."

"If Allah pleases, thou shalt find me both obedient and patient. Reject me not!"

"Thou mayest follow me, yet must thou ask me no question until I shall, of my own accord, explain my actions."

When Moses had submitted to this condition, Al Chidhr took him to the shore of the sea, where a vessel was lying at anchor. He took an axe and struck out two planks of the vessel, so that it sank immediately.

"What dost thou?" cried Moses: "the men that are in it will now perish."

"Did I not say," replied Al Chidhr, "thou wilt not long continue patiently with me?"

"Pardon me," said Moses; "I had forgotten my promise."

Al Chidhr then journeyed farther with him, until they met a beautiful boy, who was playing with shells on the sea-shore. Al Chidhr drew his knife, and cut the throat of the child.

Moses cried, "Why murderest thou an innocent child, who can in no wise have deserved death? Thou hast committed a great crime!"

"Did I not tell thee," replied Al Chidhr, "thou canst not travel long in my company?"

"Pardon me yet this once," replied Moses; "and if I inquire again, then mayest thou reject me!"

They now traveled long to and fro, until they arrived, weary and hungry, in a large city. Yet no one would lodge them, nor give them meat or drink without money. Suddenly Al Chidhr beheld how the walls of a beautiful inn, out of which they had just been driven, threatened to fall in; he then stepped before them, and supported them until they stood upright again; and when he had strengthened them, he went his way.

Then said Moses to him, "Thou hast now performed a work which would have occupied many masons during several days; why hast thou not at least demanded a reward, that we might have bought some provisions?"

"Now we must separate," said Al Chidhr; "yet, ere we part, I will explain to thee the motives of my conduct. The vessel which I have damaged, but which may be easily repaired, belonged to poor men, and formed their only source of maintenance. At the time I struck it, many ships of a certain tyrant were cruising in those seas, capturing every serviceable craft. By me, therefore, these poor sailors have saved their only property.

"The child whom I have slain is the son of pious parents; but he himself (I perceived it in his face) was of a depraved nature, and would in the end, have led his parents into evil. I have therefore preferred to slay him: Allah will give them pious children in his stead.

"As for the wall of the inn which I have raised up and strengthened, it belongs to two orphans whose father was a pious man. Beneath the wall there is a treasure hid, which the present owner would have claimed if it had

fallen: I have therefore repaired it, that the treasure may be left secure until the children shall have grown up.

"Thou seest, then," continued Al Chidhr, "that in all this I have not followed blind passion, but have acted according to the will of my Lord."¹⁵

Moses prayed Al Chidhr once more to pardon him, but did not venture to ask permission to remain with him.

During the last thirty years Moses had passed through the southern, eastern, and western parts of the earth, and there were yet left to him ten years for wandering in the north, which, notwithstanding the ferocity of the nations of that region, and the rigidity of its climate, he visited in every direction until he came to the great iron wall which Alexander had erected to protect the inhabitants against the predatory incursions of the nations of Jadjudj and Madjudj. After he had admired this wall, which is cast in one piece, he praised the omnipotence of Allah, and retraced his steps toward the Arabian desert.

Nine-and-thirty years had already elapsed since he had separated from his brethren. Most of the Israelites whom he had left in their prime had meanwhile died, and another generation had risen in their stead.

¹⁵ This legend is evidently of Jewish origin. It is related respecting Moses, that while on Mount Sinai, the Lord instructed him in the mysteries of his providence. Moses having complained of the impunity of vice and its success in this world, and the frequent sufferings of the innocent, the Lord took him to a rock which projected from the mountain, and where he could overlook the vast plain of the desert stretching at his feet.

On one of its oases he beheld a young Arab asleep. He awoke, and, leaving behind him a bag of pearls, he sprung into his saddle, and rapidly disappeared from the horizon. Another Arab came to the oasis: he discovered the pearls, took them, and vanished in the opposite direction.

Now an aged wanderer, leaning on his staff, bent his weary steps toward the shady spot: he laid himself down, and fell asleep. But scarcely had he closed his eyes, when he was rudely roused from his slumber; the young Arab had returned, and demanded his pearls. The hoary man replied, he had not taken them. The other grew enraged, and accused him of theft. He swore that he had not seen his treasure; but the other seized him; a scuffle ensued; the young Arab drew his sword, and plunged it into the breast of the aged man, who fell lifeless on the earth.

"O Lord, is this justice?" exclaimed Moses, with terror. "Be silent! Behold, this man, whose blood is now mingling with the waters of the desert, many years ago, secretly, on the same spot, murdered the father of the youth who has now slain him. His crime remained concealed from men, but vengeance is mine: I will repay!"

The reader must be struck with the similarity of these fictions and the beautiful poem on the same subject by Barnell, who, if unacquainted with the Arabic legend, may have read the one have related in Schiller's "Sendung Moses."—E. T.

Among the few aged men who yet remained was his kinsman Karun (Korah), Ibn Jachar, Ibn Fahitz. He had learned from Moses's sister, Kolthum (Miriam), who was his wife, the science of alchemy, so that he was able to convert the meanest metal into gold. He was so rich that he built lofty walls of gold round his gardens, and required forty mules to carry the keys of his treasures when he traveled.¹⁶ By means of his wealth he had succeeded in acquiring a truly regal influence during Moses's absence. But when, at Moses's return, his importance diminished, he resolved on his destruction. He therefore visited a maiden whom Moses had banished from the camp on account of her abandoned courses, and promised to marry her if she would declare before the elders of the congregation that Moses had expelled her only because she had refused to listen to his proposals. She promised Korah to act entirely after his will. But when she arrived before the elders with the intention of calumniating Moses, she was not able to prefer her charge. Allah put different words into her mouth: she acknowledged her guilt, and confessed that Korah had induced her, by innumerable promises, to bring a false accusation against Moses. Moses prayed to Allah for protection against the malignity of his kinsman; and lo! the earth opened under the feet of Korah, and devoured him, with all his associates and goods.

As the fortieth year was hastening to its close, Moses marched with the Israelites toward the frontier of Palestine.

But when Jalub Ifn Safum, the king of Balka, received intelligence of the approach of the Israelites, who had already, in their march, conquered many cities, he called to him Beliam the sorcerer, the son of Baur, in hopes to be enabled, by his counsel and aid, to withstand the Israelites. But an angel appeared to Beliam in the night, and forbade him to accept the invitation of Jalub. When, therefore, the messengers of the king returned to Balka without Beliam, Jalub purchased the most costly jewels, and sent them secretly by other messengers to Beliam's wife, to whom the sorcerer was so much attached as to be quite under her control. Beliam's wife accepted the presents, and persuaded her husband to undertake the journey. The king, accompanied by his viziers, rode out some distance to meet him, and

¹⁶ The Midrash says, "Korah had 300 white mules, which carried the keys of his treasures. His wealth was his ruin!"

appointed one of the most beautiful houses of the city for his abode. According to the custom of the country, the guest was provided three days from the royal tables, and the viziers visited him from time to time, without speaking, however, of the object for which he had been called to Balka. It was not until the fourth day that he was summoned to the king, and entreated to curse the people of Israel. But Allah paralyzed the tongue of Beliam, so that, notwithstanding his hatred toward the people, he was not able to utter a word of imprecation.

When the king saw this, he prayed him at least to assist with his counsel against the invading nation.

"The best means against the Israelites," said Beliam, "who are so terrible only through the assistance of Allah, is to lead them into sin. Their GOD then forsakes them, and they are unable to resist any foe. Send, therefore, the most beautiful women and maidens of the capital to meet them with provisions, that they may yield to sin, and then thou shalt easily overcome them."

The king adopted this counsel; but Moses was apprised thereof by the angel Gabriel, and caused the first Israelite who was led into sin to be put to death, and as a warning, commanded his head to be carried on a spear throughout the camp. He then instantly led on the attack: Balka was taken, and the king, with Beliam and his sons, were the first to perish in the fight. Soon after the conquest of Balka, Gabriel appeared, and commanded Moses, together with Aaron and his sons, to follow him to a lofty mountain which lay near the city. On reaching the pinnacle of the mountain they beheld a finely-wrought cave, in the midst of which there stood a coffin, with the inscription, "I am destined for him whom I fit." Moses desired to lay himself first into it, but his feet protruded; then Aaron placed himself in it, and behold, it fitted him as if his measure had been taken. Gabriel then led Moses and Aaron's sons beyond the cave, but he himself returned to wash and to bless Aaron, whose soul had mean while been taken by the Angel of Death. When Moses returned to the camp without Aaron, and announced his death to the Israelites who inquired for his brother, he was suspected of having murdered him; many, even, were not afraid to proclaim their suspicions in public. Moses prayed to Allah to manifest his innocence in the

presence of all the people, and behold, four angels brought Aaron's coffin from the cave, and raised it above the camp of the Israelites, so that every one could see him, and one of the angels exclaimed, "Allah has taken Aaron's soul to himself."¹⁷ Moses, who now anticipated his approaching end pronounced a long discourse before the Israelites, in which he enforced on them the most important laws. At the close, he warned them against falsifying the Law, which had been revealed to them, and in which the future appearance of Mohammed, in whom they were all to believe, was quite clearly announced. A few days after, while he was reading in the Law, the Angel of Death visited him. Moses said, "If thou be commanded to receive my soul, take it from my mouth, for it was constantly occupied with the word of Allah, and has not been touched by any unclean thing." He then put on his most beautiful robes, appointed Joshua his successor, and died at an age of one hundred and twenty, or, as some of the learned maintain, of one hundred and eighty years. The mercy of Allah be with him!

Others relate the particulars of Moses's death as follows: When Gabriel announced to him his approaching dissolution, he ran hurriedly to his dwelling, and knocked hastily at the door. His wife Safurija opened it, and beholding him quite pale, and with ruffled countenance, inquired, "Who pursueth thee, that thou runnest hither in terror and lookest dismayed! Who is it that pursueth thee for debt?"

Then Moses answered, "Is there a mightier creditor than the Lord of heaven and earth, or a more dangerous pursuer than the Angel of Death?"

"Shall, then, a man who has spoken with Allah die?"

"Assuredly, even the angel Gabriel shall be delivered to death, and Michael and Israfil, with all other angels. Allah alone is eternal, and never dies."

Safurija wept until she swooned away; but when she came to herself, Moses inquired,

"Where are my children?"

¹⁷ In perfect accordance with the Midrash. p. 255.

"They are asleep."

"Awake them, that I may bid them a last farewell."

Safuriya went before the couch of her children, and cried, "Rise, ye poor orphans; rise, and take leave of your father, for this day is his last in this world and his first in the next."

The children started from their sleep in affright, and cried, "Woe unto us! who will have compassion upon us when we shall be fatherless? Who will with solicitude and affection step over our threshold?"

Moses was so moved that he wept bitterly.

Then said Allah to him, "Moses, what signify these tears? Art thou afraid of death, or departest thou reluctantly from this world?" "I fear not death, and leave this world with gladness; but I have compassion on these children, from whom their father is about to be torn."

"In whom trusted thy mother when she confided thy life to the waters?"

"In Thee, O Lord."

"Who protected thee against Pharaoh, and gave thee a staff with which thou dividedst the sea?"

"Thou, O Lord."

"Go, then, once more to the sea-shore, lift up thy staff over the waters, and thou shalt see another sign of my omnipotence."

Moses followed this command, and instantly the sea was divided, and he beheld in the midst thereof a huge black rock. When he came near it, Allah cried to him, "Smite it with thy staff." He smote it; the rock was cleft in twain, and he saw beneath it, in a sort of cave, a worm with a green leaf in his mouth, which cried three times, "Praised be Allah, who doth not forget me in my solitude! Praised be Allah, who hath nourished and raised me up!" The worm was silent; and Allah said to Moses, "Thou seest that I do not forsake the worm under the hidden rock in the sea, and how should I forsake thy children, who do even now confess that God is one, and that Moses is his prophet?"

Moses then returned, reproved, to his house, comforted his wife and children, and went alone to the mountain. There he found four men, who were digging a grave, and he inquired of them, "For whom is this grave?" They replied, "For a man whom Allah desires to have with him in heaven." Moses begged permission to assist at the grave of so pious a man. When the work was done, he inquired, "Have you taken the measure of the dead?" "No," they said, "we have forgotten it; but he was precisely of thy form and stature: lay thyself in it, that we may see whether it will fit thee: Allah will reward thy kindness." But when Moses had laid himself down within it, the Angel of Death stepped before him, and said, "Peace be upon thee, Moses!"

"Allah bless thee, and have pity upon thee! Who art thou?"

"I am the Angel of Death! Prophet of Allah, and come to receive thy soul."

"How wilt thou take it?"

"Out of thy mouth."

"Thou canst not, for my mouth hath spoken with God."

"I will draw it out of thine eyes."

"Thou mayest not do so, for they have seen the light of the Lord."

"Well, then, I will take it out of thine ears."

"This also thou mayest not do, for they have heard the word of Allah."

"I will take it from thy hands."

"How darest thou? Have they not borne the diamond tablets on which the Law was engraved?"

Allah then commanded the Angel of Death to ask of Ridwhan, the guardian of Paradise, an apple of Eden, and to present it to Moses.

Moses took the apple from the hand of the Angel of Death to inhale its fragrance, and at that instant his noble soul rose through his nostrils to heaven.

But his body remained in this grave, which no one knew save Gabriel, Michael, Israfil, and Azrail, who had dug it, and whom Moses had taken for men.

SAMUEL, SAUL, AND DAVID

THE Israelites lived under Joshua (who was, however, not a prophet, but merely a virtuous prince and valiant chief) conformably to the laws revealed by Moses; the Lord therefore enabled them to expel the giants from the land of Canaan, and at their cry, "Allah is great," the loftiest walls of fortified cities fell in.

But after Joshua's death they relapsed into all those iniquities on account of which the Egyptians had been so severely punished; wherefore Allah, in order to chastise and to reclaim his people, sent the giant Djalut (Goliath) against them, who defeated them in numerous engagements, and even took from them the Tabut (the sacred ark of the Covenant), so that the protection of Allah entirely departed from them.

One day, when the heads of the people were assembled to consult in what manner the mighty Goliath might be resisted, there came a man to them of the family of Aaron: his name was Ishmawil Ibn Bal (Samuel), and said, "The God of your fathers sent me to you, to proclaim speedy help if you will turn to him, but utter destruction if you continue in your wicked courses."

"What shall we do," inquired one of the elders, "to obtain the favor of Allah?"

Samuel replied, "You shall worship Allah alone, and offer no sacrifices unto idols; nor eat that which has died of itself, nor swine's flesh, nor blood, nor any thing that has not been slaughtered in the name of Allah. Assist each other in doing good, honor your parents, treat your wives with kindness, support the widow, the orphan, and the poor. Believe in the prophets that have gone before me, especially in Abraham, for whom Allah turned the burning pile into a garden of delight; in Ismael, whose neck he rendered invulnerable, and for whom he caused a fountain to spring up in the stony desert; and in Moses, who opened with his rod twelve dry paths through the sea.

"Believe, in like manner, in the prophets that shall come after me; above all, in Isa Ibn Mariam, the spirit of Allah (Christ), and in Mohammed Ibn Abd Allah."

"Who is Isa?" inquired one of the heads of Israel.

"He is the prophet," replied Samuel, "whom the Scriptures point out as the Word of Allah. His mother shall conceive him as a virgin by the will of the Lord and the breath of the angel Gabriel. Even in the womb he shall praise the omnipotence of Allah, and testify to the purity of his mother; but at a later period he shall heal the sick and leprous, raise the dead, and create living birds out of clay. His godless contemporaries will afflict and attempt to crucify him; but Allah shall blind them, so that another shall be crucified in his stead, while he, like the prophet Enoch, is taken up into heaven without tasting death."

"And Mohammed, who is he?" continued the same Israelite; "his name sounds so strangely that I do not remember ever having heard it in Israel."

"Mohammed," Samuel replied, "does not belong to our people, but is a descendant of Ismael, and the last and greatest prophet, to whom even Moses and Christ shall bow down in the day of the resurrection.

"His name, which signifies the 'Much-praised-One,' indicates of itself the many excellences for which he is blessed by all creatures both in heaven and on earth.

"But the wonders which he shall perform are so numerous that a whole human life would not suffice to narrate them. I shall content myself, therefore, with communicating to you but a part of what he shall see in one single night.¹

"In a frightfully tempestuous night, when the cock refrains from crowing, and the hound from baying, he shall be roused from his sleep by Gabriel, who frequently appears to him in human form; but who on this occasion

¹ The following narrative, which Samuel is made to utter, describes the Night Journey of Mohammed. He revealed it to his followers in the 12th year of his mission; and though his Arabs were given to the marvellous, yet this staggered even their credulity, p. 174 and would have proved his utter ruin but for the resolute interposition of Abu Bekr.—E. T.

comes as Allah created him, with his seven hundred radiant wings, between each of which is a space which the fleetest steed can scarcely traverse in five hundred years.

"He shall lead him forth to a spot where Borak, the miraculous horse, the same which Abraham used to mount on his pilgrimages from Syria to Mecca, stands ready to receive him.

"This horse also has two wings like an eagle, feet like a dromedary; a body of diamonds, which shines like the sun, and a head like the most beautiful virgin.

"On this miraculous steed, on whose forehead is engraved 'There is no Lord but Allah, and Mohammed is his messenger,' he is carried first to Medina, then to Sinai, to Bethlehem, and to Jerusalem, that he may pray on holy ground. From thence he ascends by a golden ladder, whose steps are of ruby, of emerald, and hyacinth, into the seventh heaven, where he is initiated in all the mysteries of creation, and the government of the universe.

"He beholds the pious amid all their felicities in Paradise, and sinners in their varied agonies in hell. Many of them are roaming there like ravenous beasts through barren fields; they are those who in this life enjoyed the bounties of Allah, and gave nothing thereof to the poor.

"Others run to and fro, carrying fresh meat in one hand, and corroded flesh in the other; but as often as they would put the former into their mouths, their hands are struck with fiery rods until they partake of the putrefied morsel. This is the punishment of those who broke their marriage vow, and found pleasure in guilty indulgences.

"The bodies of others are terribly swollen, and are still increasing in bulk: they are such as have grown rich by usury, and whose avarice was insatiable.

"The tongues and lips of others are seized and pinched with iron pincers, as the punishment of their calumnious and rebellious speeches, by which they caused so much evil in the earth.

"Midway between Paradise and hell is seated Adam, the father of the human race, who smiles with joy as often as the gates of Paradise are thrown open, and the triumphant cries of the blessed are borne forth, but weeps when the gates of hell are unclosed, and the sighs of the damned penetrate to his ear.

"In that night Mohammed beholds, besides Gabriel, other angels, many of whom have seventy thousand heads, each head with seventy thousand faces, each face with seventy thousand mouths, and each mouth with seventy thousand tongues, each of which praises Allah in seventy thousand languages. He sees, too, the Angel of Reconciliation, who is half fire and half ice: the angel who watches with scowling visage and flaming eyes the treasures of fire: the Angel of Death, holding in his hand a huge tablet, inscribed with names, of which he effaces hundreds every instant: the angel who keeps the floods, and measures out with an immense balance the waters appointed unto every river and every fountain; and him, finally, who supports the throne of Allah on his shoulders, and is holding a trumpet in his mouth, whose blast shall one day wake the sleepers from the grave.

"He is at last conducted through many oceans of light, into the vicinity of the holy throne itself, which is so vast, that the rest of the universe appears by its side like the scales of a coat of armor in the boundless desert.

"That which shall be revealed to him there," continued Samuel, "is as yet concealed from me; but this I know: He shall gaze on the glory of Allah at the distance of a bow-shot; shall then descend to earth by the ladder, and return on Borak to Mecca as rapidly as he came.

"To accomplish this vast journey, including his stay in Medina, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and in heaven, he requires so little time, that a water vase, which he overturns in rising from his couch, will not have emptied its contents at his return."

The assembled Israelites listened attentively to Samuel, and when he had finished, they exclaimed with one voice, "We believe in Allah, and in his prophets which were and are to come; only pray that He may deliver us from the tyranny of Goliath."

Samuel prayed and fasted till at length Allah sent an angel, who commanded him to go out of the city, and to proclaim the first man who should meet him king over Israel, since in his reign the Israelites should regain their independence from foreign bondage.

Samuel did as he was commanded, and met Talut (Saul), the son of Bishr, the son of Ahnun, the son of Benjamin, who was a husbandman of lofty stature, but not otherwise remarkable, though Allah had put much wisdom into his heart.

He was wandering about in search of a heifer which had broken away from her plough and run at large. Samuel assisted him in her recovery, and then took Saul home with him, anointed him with oil, and presented him to the heads of Israel as their king and divinely-commissioned deliverer.

But they refused to accept as their king a common peasant, who hitherto had not distinguished himself in any wise; and they demanded a miracle.

"Allah," replied Samuel, "will, in token of his ratifying this kingly election, restore to you the ark of the covenant."

From that day the Philistines were visited with the most painful and disgusting leprosy, whose origin no physician could discover, and which no physician could cure. But as the plague fell most heavily on that city where the ark of the covenant, which had been carried in triumph from one place to another, happened to be, no one would retain it any longer, and it was at last left standing in a wagon in the open field.

Allah then commanded two invisible angels to carry it back into the midst of the camp of Israel, who thereupon no longer hesitated to do fealty unto Saul as their king.

As soon as he was elected, Saul mustered the host of Israel, and marched against the Philistines at the head of seventy thousand men.

During their march through the wilderness, they were one day in want of water, so that a universal murmuring arose against Samuel and Saul. Samuel, who was following after the ark of the covenant, prayed to the Lord, and there sprung from out the rocky ground a fountain of water,

which was as fresh as snow, as sweet as honey, and as white as milk. But when the soldiers came rushing toward it. Samuel cried, "You have grievously sinned against your king and against your God by reason of discontent and rebellion. Forbear to touch this water, that by abstinence you may atone for your sin!"

But Samuel's words met with no regard. Only three hundred and thirteen men—as many as fought in the first engagement of the Mussulmans against the Infidels—mastered their appetite, barely refreshing themselves, while all the rest of the army yielded to the temptation, and drank in full draughts from the fountain.

When Talut beheld this, he disbanded the whole army, and, relying on the aid of Allah, marched against the enemy with the small number of his men who had conquered their desire.

Among this little band were six sons of a virtuous man whose name was Isa. Davud (David), his seventh son, had remained at home to nurse his aged father.

But when, for a long time, no engagement took place between Israel and the Philistines, since no one had accepted the challenge to single combat with Goliath, by which a general battle was to be preceded, Isa sent also his seventh son into the camp, partly to carry fresh provisions to his brothers, and partly to bring him tidings of their welfare.

On his way he heard a voice from a pebble which lay in the midst of the road, calling to him, "Lift me up, for I am one of the stones with which the prophet Abraham drove Satan away when he would have shaken his resolve to sacrifice his son in obedience to his heavenly vision."

David placed the stone, which was inscribed with holy names, in the bag which he wore in his upper garment, for he was simply dressed like a traveler, and not as a soldier.

When he had proceeded a little farther, he again heard a voice from another pebble, crying, "Take me with thee, for I am the stone which the angel Gabriel struck out from the ground with his foot when he caused a fountain to gush forth in the wilderness for Ismael's sake."

David took this stone also, and laying it beside the first, went on his way. But soon he heard the following words proceeding from a third stone: "Lift me up, for I am the stone with which Jacob fought against the angels which his brother Esau had sent out against him."

David took this stone likewise, and continued his journey without interruption until he came to his brothers in the camp of Israel. On his arrival there, he heard how a herald proclaimed, "Whoever puts the giant Goliath to death shall become Saul's son-in-law, and succeed hereafter to his throne."

David sought to persuade his brothers to venture the combat with Goliath, not to become the king's son-in-law and successor, but to wipe off the reproach that rested on their people.

But, since courage and confidence failed them, he went to Saul, and offered to accept the giant's challenge. The king had but little hopes indeed that a tender youth, such as David then was, would defeat a warrior like Goliath; yet he permitted the combat to take place, for he believed that even if he should fall, his reproachful example would excite some others to imitate his heroic conduct.

On the following morning, when Goliath, as usual, challenged with proud speech the warriors of Israel, David, in his traveling apparel, and with his bag containing the three stones, stepped down into the arena. Goliath laughed aloud on seeing his youthful antagonist, and said to him, "Rather hie thee home to play with lads of thine own years. How wilt thou fight with me, seeing that thou art even unarmed?"

David replied, "Thou art as a dog unto me, whom one may best drive away with a stone;" and before Goliath was yet able to draw his sword from its scabbard, he took the three stones from his bag, pierced the giant with one of them so that he instantly fell lifeless on the ground, and drove with the second the right wing of the Philistines into flight, and their left wing with the third.

But Saul was jealous of David, whom all Israel extolled as their greatest hero, and refused to give him his daughter until he brought the heads of a

hundred giants as the marriage gift. But the greater David's achievements were, the more rancorous grew the envy of Saul, so that he even sought treacherously to slay him. David defeated all his plans; but he never revenged himself, and Saul's hatred waxed greater by reason of this very magnanimity.

One day he visited his daughter in David's absence, and threatened to put her to death unless she gave him a promise, and confirmed it by the most sacred oaths, that she would deliver her husband unto him during the night. When the latter returned home, his wife met him in alarm, and related what had happened between her and her father. David said to her, "Be faithful to thine oath, and open the door of my chamber to thy father as soon as I shall be asleep. Allah will protect me even in my sleep, and give me the means of rendering Saul's sword harmless, even as Abraham's weapon was impotent against Ismael, who yielded his neck to the slaughter."

He then went into his forge, and prepared a coat of mail, which covered the whole upper part of his body from his neck downward. This coat was as fine as a hair, and, clinging to him like silk, resisted every kind of weapon; for David had been endowed, as a special favor from Allah, with the power of melting iron without fire, and of fashioning it like wax for every conceivable purpose, with no instrument but his hand.

To him we are indebted for the ringed coat of mail, for up to his time armor consisted of simple iron plates.

David was wrapped in the most peaceful slumber, when Saul, guided by his daughter, entered his chamber; and it was not until his father-in-law haggled the impenetrable mail with his sword as with a saw, bearing on it with all his strength, that David awoke, tore the sword from his hand, and broke it in pieces as if it had been a morsel of bread.

But after this occurrence, he thought it no longer advisable to tarry with Saul, and therefore retired to the mountains, with a few of his friends and adherents. Saul made use of this pretext to have him suspected of the people, and at last, accusing him of treason, marched against him at the head of one thousand soldiers. But David was so endeared to the

inhabitants of the mountain, and knew its hiding-places so well, that it was impossible for Saul to take him.

One night, while Saul was asleep, David left a cave which was quite near to the king's encampment, and took the signet ring from his finger, together with his arms and a standard which were lying by his side. He then retreated through the cave, which had a double entrance, and the next morning appeared on the pinnacle of a mountain which stood opposite to the camp of the Israelites, having girt on Saul's huge sword, and waving his standard up and down, and stretching out his finger on which he had placed the king's ring.

Saul, who could not understand how a thief could have penetrated into the midst of his well guarded camp, recognized David and the articles which had been taken from him. This new proof of his dexterity and magnanimous disposition overcame at last the king's envy and displeasure; he therefore dispatched a messenger, who in the royal name begged forgiveness for all the grievances he had inflicted, and invited David to return to his home.

David was overjoyed at a reconciliation with his father-in-law, and they now lived together in peace and harmony until Saul was slain, in a disastrous engagement with the Philistines.

After Saul's death David was unanimously elected King of Israel, and by the help of Allah he soon reconquered the Philistines, and extended the boundaries of his kingdom far and wide.

But David was not only a brave warrior and a wise king, but likewise a great prophet. Allah revealed to him seventy psalms, and endowed him with a voice such as no mortal possessed before him. In height and depth, in power and melody combined, no human voice had ever equaled it. He could imitate the thunders of heaven and the roar of the lion as well as the delicious notes of the nightingale; nor was there any other musician or singer in Israel as long as David lived, because no one who had once heard him could take pleasure in any other performance. Every third day he prayed with the congregation, and sung the psalms in a chapel which was hewn out of the mountain rocks. Then not only all men assembled to hear him, but even beasts and birds came from afar, attracted by his wonderful song.

One day, as he was on his return from prayer, he heard two of his subjects contending which of the two was the greater prophet, Abraham or himself. "Was not Abraham," said the one, "saved from the burning pile?" "Has not David," replied the other, "slain the giant Djalut?" "But what has David achieved," resumed the first, "that might be compared with Abraham's readiness to sacrifice his son?"

As soon as David came home, he fell down before Allah and prayed: "Lord, who hast proved on the pile Abraham's fidelity and obdience, grant unto me too an opportunity show unto my people that my love to thee withstands every temptation."

David's prayer was heard: when, three days afterward, he ascended his pulpit, he perceived a bird of such beautiful plumage that it attracted his whole attention, and he followed it with his eyes to every corner of the chapel, and to the trees and shrubs beyond. He sung fewer psalms than he was wont to do; his voice failed him as often as he lost sight of this graceful bird, and grew soft and playful in the most solemn parts of the worship whenever it reappeared.

At the close of the prayers, which, to the astonishment of the whole assembly, were concluded on this occasion several hours sooner than usual, he followed the bird, which flew from tree to tree, until he found himself, at sunset, on the margin of a little lake. The bird disappeared in the lake, but David soon forgot it; for in its stead there rose up a female form, whose beauty dazzled him like the clearest midday sun. He inquired her name: it was Saja, the daughter of Josu, the wife of Uriah Ibn Haman, who was with the army. David departed, and on his return commanded the chief of his troops to appoint Uriah to the most dangerous post in the vanguard of the army. His command was executed, and soon afterward the death of Uriah was reported. David then wooed his widow, and married her at the expiration of the prescribed time.

On the day after his marriage, there appeared, at Allah's command, Gabriel and Michael in human form before David, and Gabriel said, "The man whom thou seest here before thee is the owner of ninety-nine sheep, while I

possess an only one; nevertheless, he pursues me without ceasing, and demands that I should give up my only sheep to him."

"Thy demand is unreasonable," said David, "and betrays an unbelieving heart and a rude disposition."

But Gabriel interrupted him, saying, "Many a noble and accomplished *believer* permits himself more unjust things than this."

David now perceived this to be an allusion to his conduct toward Uriah; and, filled with wrath, he grasped his sword,² and would have plunged it into Gabriel; but Michael gave a loud laugh of scorn; and when Gabriel and himself had ascended above David's head on their angels' wings, he said to David, "Thou hast pronounced thine own sentence, and called thine act that of a barbarous infidel: Allah will therefore bestow upon thy son a portion of the power which he had originally intended for thee. Thy guilt is so much the greater, since thou prayedst that thou mightst be led into temptation without having the power of resisting it."

At these words the angels vanished through the ceiling; but David felt the whole burden of his sin. He tore the crown from his head, and the royal purple from his body, and wandered through the wilderness wrapped in simple woolen garments, and pining with remorse, weeping so bitterly that his skin fell from his face, and that the angels in heaven had compassion on him, and implored for him the mercy of Allah. But it was not until he had spent three full years in penitence and contrition that he heard a voice from

² The Scriptures teach that David acknowledged his sin on Nathan's reproof. The whole narrative is so beautiful, that we subjoin it, as given in 2 Sam., xii., 1-8, 13.

"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city, the one rich, and the other poor. The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds, but the poor *man* had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children: it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveler unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would, moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

"And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord."

heaven, which announced to him that the All-compassionate Allah had at length opened the gate of mercy. Pacified and strengthened by these words of consolation, David soon recovered his physical powers and his blooming appearance, so that on his return to Palestine no one observed in him the slightest change.

But, during the king's long absence, many of the rabble, whom he had banished, gathered round his son Absalom, and made him king over Israel. He was therefore compelled, as Absalom would not renounce the throne, to make war against him. But no engagement took place; for when the prince was about to join his forces, Allah commanded the Angel of Death to take him from his horse and hang him on a tree by his long hair, that to all future time rebellious sons might take warning by his fate. Absalom remained hanging there until one of David's chieftains passed by and slew him with the sword. But, although David soon came to be esteemed and beloved by his people as before, yet, mindful of what had taken place with the two angels, he ventured not again to execute judgment. He had already nominated a kadhi, who was to adjust in his stead all disputes that might arise, when the angel Gabriel brought him an iron tube with a bell, and said, "Allah has beheld thy diffidence with pleasure, and therefore sends thee this tube and bell, by means of which it will be easy for thee to maintain the law in Israel, and never to pronounce an unjust sentence. Suspend this tube in thy hall of judgment, and hang the bell in the midst thereof: place the accuser on one side of it, and the accused on the other, and always pronounce judgment in favor of him who, on touching the tube, elicits a sound from the bell." David was greatly delighted at this gift, by means of which he who was in the right was sure to triumph, so that soon no one dared to commit any injustice, since he was certain to be detected by the bell.

One day, however, there came two men before the judgment seat, one of whom maintained that he had given a pearl into the keeping of the other, who now refused to restore it. The defendant, on the other hand, swore that he had already given it back. As usual, David compelled them both, one after the other, to touch the tube; but the bell uttered no sound, so that he did not know which of the two spake truth, and was inclined to doubt the

farther virtue of the bell. But when he had repeatedly directed both to touch the tube, he observed that as often as the accused was to pass the ordeal, he gave his staff to be holden by his antagonist. David now took the staff in his own hand, and sent the accused once more to touch the tube, when instantly the bell began to ring aloud. David then caused the staff to be inspected, and behold, it was hollow, and the pearl in question was concealed within it. But on account of his thus doubting the value of the tube which Allah had given him, it was again removed to beaven, so that David frequently erred in his decisions, until Solomon, whom his wife Saja, the daughter of Josu, had borne him, aided him with his counsel. In him David placed implicit confidence, and was guided by him in the most difficult questions, for he had heard in the night of his birth the angel Gabriel exclaim, "Satan's dominion is drawing to its close, for this night a child is born, to whom Iblis and all his hosts, together with all his descendants, shall be subject. The earth, air, and water, with all the creatures that live therein, shall be his servants: he shall be gifted with nine tenths of all the wisdom and knowledge which Allah has granted unto mankind, and understand not only all the languages of men, but those also of beasts and of birds.

One day—Solomon was then scarcely thirteen years of age—there appeared two men before the tribunal, the novelty of whose case cited the astonishment of all present, and even greatly confounded David. The accuser had bought some property of the other, and in clearing out a cellar, had found a treasure. He now demanded that the accused should give up the treasure, since he had bought the property without it; while the other maintained that the accuser possessed no right to the treasure, since he had known nothing of it, and had sold the property with all that it contained. After long meditation, David adjudged that the treasure should be divided between them. But Solomon inquired of the accuser whether he had a son, and when he replied that he had a son, he inquired of the other if he had a daughter, and he also answering in the affirmative, Solomon said, "If you will adjust your strife so as not to do injustice one to the other, unite your children in marriage, and give them this treasure as their dowry."

On another occasion, there came a husbandman and accused a shepherd whose flock had pastured on the grain of his field. David sentenced the

shepherd to give part of his flock in restitution to the husbandman; but Solomon disapproved of this judgment, and said, "Let the shepherd give up to the husbandman the use of his flock, their work, their milk, and their young ones, until the field shall be restored to the condition in which it was at the time of the flock's breaking in, when the sheep shall once more return to their owner."

David, however, one day observed that the high tribunal over which he presided beheld with displeasure the interference of Solomon in their transactions, although they were obliged to confess that his views were always better than their own. The king therefore demanded of them to examine Solomon, in the face of all the great and noble men of his kingdom, in all the doctrines and laws of Moses. "If you have satisfied yourselves," he added, "that my son knows these perfectly, and consequently never pronounces an unjust judgment, you must not slight him by reason of his youth, if his views regarding the application of the law often differ from mine and yours. Allah bestows wisdom on whomsoever he pleaseth."

The lawyers were indeed persuaded of Solomon's erudition; nevertheless, hoping to confound him by all manner of subtle questions, and thus to increase their own importance, they accepted David's proposal, and made arrangements for a public examination. But their expectations were disappointed; for, before the last word of any question put to Solomon was yet pronounced, he had already given a striking answer, so that all present firmly believed that the whole matter had been arranged beforehand with his judges, and that this examination was instituted by David merely to recommend Solomon as his worthy successor to the throne. But Solomon at once effaced this suspicion, when, at the close of this examination he arose, and said to his judges, "You have exhausted yourselves in subtleties in the hope of manifesting your superiority over me before this great assembly; permit me now, also, to put to you a very few simple questions, the solution of which needs no manner of study, but only a little intellect and understanding. Tell me what is Every thing, and what is Nothing. Who is Something, and who is less than Nothing?" Solomon waited long; and when the judge whom he had addressed was not able to answer, he said, "Allah, the Creator, is Every thing, but the world, the creature, is Nothing. The

believer is Something, but the hypocrite is less than Nothing." Turning to another, Solomon inquired, "Which are the most in number, and which the fewest? What is sweetest, and what most bitter?" but as the second judge also was unable to find a proper answer to these questions, Solomon said, "The most numerous are the doubters, and they who possess a perfect assurance of faith are the fewest in number. The sweetest is the possession of a virtuous wife, excellent children, and a respectable competency; but a wicked wife, undutiful children, and poverty are the most bitter." Finally, Solomon put the following questions to a third judge: "Which is the vilest, and which the most beautiful? What the most certain, and what the least so?" But these questions also remained unanswered, until Solomon said, "The vilest thing is when a believer apostatizes, and the most beautiful when a sinner repents. The most certain thing is Death and the Last Judgment, and the most uncertain, Life and the Fate of the Soul after the resurrection. You perceive," he then continued, "it is not the oldest and most learned that are always the wisest. True wisdom is neither of years nor of learned books, but only of Allah, the All-wise."

Solomon excited by his words the greatest astonishment in all that were present; and the heads of the people exclaimed with one voice, "Blessed be the Lord, who has given to our king a son who in wisdom surpasses all the men of his time, and who is worthy one day to sit on the throne of his father!"

David, in like manner, thanked Allah for the grace which he had shown to him in Solomon, and now only desired, before his death, to meet with his future companion in Paradise.

"Thy request is granted!" cried a voice from heaven; "but thou must go and seek him alone; and, in order to reach his presence, thou must renounce thy earthly pomp, and wander as a poor pilgrim through the world."

The next day David nominated Solomon as his representative, laid aside his royal robes, wrapped himself round with a simple woollen garment, put on his sandals, took a staff in his hand, and left his palace. He now wandered from city to city, and from village to village, inquiring every where for such of the inhabitants as were most distinguished for piety, and endeavoring to

make their acquaintance; but for many weeks he found no one whom he had reason to consider as his destined companion in the life to come.

One day, on reaching a village on the shores of the Mediterranean Ocean, there arrived at the same time with him a poorly-clad aged man, who was carrying a heavy burden of wood on his head. The appearance of the hoary man was so venerable, that David followed him to see where he lived. But he entered into no house at all, and sold his wood to a merchant who stood at the door of his warehouse, then gave to a poor man who begged him for alms the half of the little money which he had earned, bought with the rest a small loaf of bread, of which also he gave a large portion to a blind woman, who implored the compassion of the faithful, and then returned on his way to the mountain from whence he had come. "This man," thought David, "might well be my companion in Paradise; for his venerable appearance, and his actions which I have just witnessed, testify to a rare piety. I must therefore seek to become better acquainted with him." He then followed the aged man at some distance, until, after a march of several hours over steep mountains, crossed by deep ravines, the latter entered into a cave, which admitted the light of heaven through a crevice of the rock. David remained standing at the entrance of the cave, and heard how the hermit prayed fervently, and then read the Law and the psalms, until the sun had set. He then lighted a lamp, and pronounced the evening prayer, drew from his bag the bread which he had bought, and consumed about half thereof.

David, who had hitherto not ventured to disturb the man in his devotions, now stepped into the cave and greeted him.

"Who art thou?" said the other, after having returned the salutation; "for, save the GOD-fearing Mata Ibn Juhanna, King David's future companion in Paradise, I never saw any human being in these regions."

David gave his name, and begged for farther particulars respecting Mata.

But the hermit replied, "I am not permitted to point out to thee his dwelling; but if thou searchest this mountain with attention, it can not escape thee."

David now wandered up and down for a long time without finding any traces of Mata. He was on the point of returning to the hermit, in hopes of obtaining better directions, when, on an eminence, in the midst of the rocky ground, he discovered a spot which was quite moist and soft. "How singular," thought he, "that just here, on this pinnacle of a mountain, the ground should thus be moistened! Surely there can be no fountain here!" While he was thus standing absorbed in thought respecting this remarkable phenomenon, there descended on the other side of the mountain a man who was more like an angel than a human being; his looks were cast down to the earth, so that he did not observe David; but on the moistened spot he stood still, and prayed with such fervency that his tears gushed like streams from his eyes. David now understood how it came to pass that the earth was so soaked, and thought, "A man who thus worships his God may well be my companion in Paradise." But he presumed not to address him till he heard how, among other things, he prayed. "My God, pardon the sin of King David, and preserve him from farther transgression! Be merciful to him for my sake, since thou hast destined me to be his companion in Paradise."

David now went toward him, but on reaching his presence he was dead.

He dug up the soft earth with his staff, washed him with the water that remained in his bottle, buried him, and pronounced over him the prayer of death. He then returned to his capital, and found in his harem the Angel of Death, who received him with the words, "Allah has granted unto thee thy request, but now thy life is ended."

"God's will be done!" replied David, and fell lifeless to the earth.

Gabriel then descended to comfort Solomon, and to bring him a heavenly robe, in which he was to wrap his father. All Israel followed his remains to the entrance of the cave where Abraham lies buried.

SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SABA

AFTER Solomon had paid the last honors to his father, he was resting in a valley between Hebron and Jerusalem, when suddenly he swooned away. On reviving, there appeared to him eight angels, each of whom had immeasurable wings of every color and form, and thrice they bowed down to him. "Who are you?" demanded Solomon, while his eyes were yet half closed. They replied, "We are the angels set over the eight winds. Allah, our Creator and thine, sends us to swear fealty, and to surrender to thee the power over us and the eight winds which are at our command. According to thy pleasure and designs, they shall either be tempestuous or gentle, and shall blow from that quarter to which thou shalt turn thy back; and at thy demand they shall rise out of the earth to bear thee up, and to raise thee above the loftiest mountains." The most exalted of the eight angels then presented to him a jewel with this inscription: "To Allah belong greatness and might:" and said, "If thou hast need of us, raise this stone toward heaven, and we shall appear to serve thee." As soon as these angels had left him, there came four others, differing from each other in form and name. One of them resembled an immense whale; the other, an eagle; the third, a lion; and the fourth, a serpent. "We are the lords of all creatures living in earth and water," they said, bowing profoundly to Solomon, "and appear before thee at the command of our Lord, to do fealty unto thee. Dispose of us at thy pleasure. We grant to thee and to thy friends all the good and pleasant things with which the Creator has endowed us, but use all the noxious that are in our power against thy foes." The angel who represented the kingdom of birds then gave him a jewel with the inscription, "All created things praise the Lord;" and said, "By virtue of this stone, which thou needest only to raise above thy head, thou mayest call us at any moment, and impart to us thy commands." Solomon did so instantly, and commanded them to bring a pair of every kind of animal that live in the water, the earth, and the air, and to present them to him. The angels departed quick as lightning, and in the twinkling of an eye there were standing before him every imaginable creature, from the largest elephant down to the smallest

worm; also all kinds of fish and birds. Solomon caused each of them to describe its whole manner of life; he listened to their complaints, and abolished many of their abuses. But he conversed longest with the birds, both on account of their delicious language which he knew as well as his own, as also for the beautiful proverbs that are current among them. The song of the peacock, translated into human language, means, "As thou judgest, so shalt thou be judged." The song of the nightingale signifies, "Contentment is the greatest happiness." The turtle-dove sings, "It were better for many a creature had it never been born." The hoopoo, "He that shows no mercy shall not obtain mercy." The bird syrdak, "Turn to Allah, O ye sinners." The swallow, "Do good, for you shall be rewarded hereafter." The pelican, "Blessed be Allah in heaven and earth!" The dove, "All things pass away; Allah alone is eternal." The kata, "Whosoever can keep silence goes through life most securely." The eagle, "Let our life be ever so long, yet it must end in death." The raven, "The farther from mankind, the pleasanter." The cock, "Ye thoughtless men, remember your Creator."

Solomon chose the cock and the hoopoo for his constant attendants. The one, on account of his monitory sentence, and the other, inasmuch as his eyes, piercing as they do through the earth as if it were crystal, enabled him during the travels of the king to point out the place where fountains of water were hid, so that water never failed Solomon, either to quench his thirst, or to perform the prescribed ablutions before prayer. But, after having stroked the heads of the doves, he commanded them to appoint unto their young the temple which he was about to erect as their habitation. (This pigeon pair had, in the course of a few years, increased so much, through Solomon's blessed touch, that all who visited the temple walked from the remotest quarter of the city under the shadow of their wings.)

When Solomon was again alone, there appeared an angel, whose upper part looked like earth, and whose lower like water. He bowed down toward the earth, and said, "I am created by Allah to manifest his will both to the dry land and to the sea; but he has placed me at thy disposal, and thou mayest command, through me, over earth and sea: at thy will the highest mountains shall disappear, and others rise out of the ground; rivers and seas shall dry up, and fruitful countries be turned into seas or oceans." He then

presented to him before he vanished a jewel, with the inscription, "Heaven and earth are the servants of Allah."

Finally, another angel brought to him a fourth jewel, which bore the inscription, "There is no GOD but one, and Mohammed is his messenger." "By means of this stone," said the angel, "thou obtainest the dominion over the kingdom of spirits, which is much greater than that of man and beasts, and fills up the whole space between the earth and heaven. Part of these spirits," continued the angel, "believe in the only GOD, and pray to him; but others are unbelieving. Some adore the fire; others the sun; others, again, the different stars; and many even the water. The first continually hover round the pious, to preserve them from evil and sin; but the latter seek in every possible manner to torment and to seduce them, which they do the more easily, since they render themselves invisible, or assume any form they please." Solomon desired to see the genii in their original form. The angel rushed like a column of fire through the air, and soon returned with a host of demons and genii, whose appalling appearance filled Solomon, spite of his dominion over them, with an inward shudder. He had no idea that there were such misshapen and frightful beings in the world. He saw human heads on the necks of horses, with asses' feet; the wings of eagles on the dromedary's back; and the horns of the gazelle on the head of the peacock. Astonished at this singular union, he prayed the angel to explain it to him, since Djan, from whom all the genii were descended, had only a simple form. "This is the consequence," replied the angel, "of their wicked lives and their shameless intercourse with men, beasts, and birds; for their desires know no bounds, and the more they multiply the more they degenerate."

When Solomon returned home, he commanded the four jewels which the angels had given him to be set in a signet ring, in order that he might be able at any moment to rule over spirits and animals, and over wind and water. His first care was to subdue the demons and genii. He caused them all to come before him save the mighty Sachr, who kept himself concealed in an unknown island of the ocean, and Iblis, the master of all evil spirits, to whom God had promised the most perfect independence till the day of judgment. When they were assembled, he stamped his signet ring on each of their necks, to mark them as his slaves. He obliged the male genii to erect various

public buildings; among others, also a temple after the plan of that at Mecca, which he had once seen during his travels to Arabia. The female genii he obliged to cook, to bake, to wash, to weave, to spin, to, carry water, and to perform other domestic labors. The stuffs they produced Solomon distributed among the poor, and the food which they prepared was placed on tables of two leagues square, for the daily consumption amounted to thirty thousand oxen and as many sheep, with a great number of fowls and fish, of which he could obtain as many as he chose by virtue of his ring, notwithstanding his remoteness from the ocean. The genii and demons sat at iron tables, the poor at tables of wood, the chiefs of the people and of the army at tables of silver, but the learned and eminently pious at golden ones, and the latter were waited on by Solomon himself.

One day, when all the spirits, men, beasts, and birds, had risen, satisfied, from their various tables, Solomon prayed to Allah that he might permit him to entertain all the creatures of the earth.

"Thou demandest an impossibility," replied Allah; "but make a beginning to-morrow with the inhabitants of the sea."

Solomon thereupon commanded the genii to load with corn one hundred thousand camels and as many mules, and to lead them to the sea-shore. He himself followed, and cried, "Come hither, ye inhabitants of the sea, that I may satisfy your hunger." Then came all kinds of fish to the surface of the sea. Solomon flung corn unto them till they were satisfied and dived down again. On a sudden, a whale protruded his head, resembling a mighty mountain. Solomon made his flying spirits to pour one sack of corn after the, other into its jaws; but it continued its demand for more, until not a single grain was left. Then it bellowed aloud, "Feed me, Solomon, for I never suffered so much from hunger as to-day."

Solomon inquired of it "whether there were more fish of the kind in the sea."

"There are of my species alone," replied the whale, "seventy thousand kinds, the least of which is so large that thou wouldst appear in its body like a grain of sand in the wilderness."

Solomon threw himself on the ground, and began to weep, and besought the Lord to pardon his senseless demand.

"My kingdom," cried Allah to him, "is still greater than thine: arise, and behold but one of those creatures whose rule I can not confide to man."

Then the sea began to rage and to storm, as if all the eight winds had set it in motion at once; and there rose up a sea monster so huge that it could easily have swallowed seventy thousand like the first, which Solomon was not able to satisfy, and cried with a voice like the most terrible thunder, "Praised be Allah, who alone has the power to save me from starvation!"

When Solomon was returning again to Jerusalem, he heard such a noise, proceeding from the constant hammering of the genii, who were occupied with the building of the temple, that the inhabitants of Jerusalem were no longer able to converse with each other. He therefore commanded the spirits to suspend their labors, and inquired whether none of them was acquainted with a means by which the various metals might be wrought without producing such a clamor. Then there stepped out one from among them, and said, "This is known only to the mighty Sachr; but he has hitherto succeeded in escaping from thy dominion."

"Is, then, this Sachr utterly inaccessible?" inquired Solomon.

"Sachr," replied the genius, "is stronger than all of us put together, and is as much our superior in swiftness as in power. Still, I know that he drinks from a fountain in the province of Hidjr once in every month. Perhaps thou mayest succeed, O wise king! to subdue him there to thy scepter."

Solomon commanded forthwith a division of his swift-flying genii to empty the fountain, and to fill it with intoxicating liquor. Some of them he then ordered to linger in its vicinity until they should see Sachr approaching, and then instantly to return and bring him word. A few weeks afterward, when Solomon was standing on the terrace of his palace, he beheld a genius flying from the direction of Hidjr swifter than the wind. The king inquired of him if he brought news respecting Sachr.

"Sachr is lying overcome with wine at the brink of the fountain," replied the genius, "and we have bound him with chains as massive as the pillars of

thy temple; but he will burst them asunder as the hair of a virgin when he has slept off his wine."

Solomon then mounted hastily the winged genius, and in less than an hour was borne to the fountain. It was high time, for Sachr had already opened his eyes again; but his hands and feet were still chained, so that Solomon set the signet on his neck without any hinderance. Sachr uttered such a cry of woe that the whole earth quaked; but Solomon said to him, "Fear not, mighty genius! I will restore thee to liberty as soon as thou shalt indicate the means whereby I may work the hardest metals without noise."

"I myself know of no such," replied Sachr; "but the raven will best be able to advise thee. Take only the eggs from a raven's nest, and cover them with a crystal bowl, and thou shalt see how the mother-bird shall cut it through."

Solomon followed Sachr's advice. A raven came and flew about the bowl; but, finding that she could not get access to the eggs, she flew away, and a few hours afterward reappeared with a stone in her beak, called Samur, which had no sooner touched the bowl than it fell in two halves.

"Whence hast thou this stone?" inquired Solomon of the raven.

"From a mountain in the distant west," replied the raven.

Solomon then commanded some of the genii to follow the raven to the mountain, and to procure more of these stones; but Sachr he set free again, according to his promise. When the chains were taken from him, he shouted with exultation; but his joy sounded in Solomon's ear like the laughter of scorn. As soon as the spirits returned with the Samur stones, he caused himself to be carried back to Jerusalem by one of them, and divided the stones among the genii, who could now continue their labors without making the slightest noise.

Solomon then constructed a palace for himself, with a profusion of gold, silver, and precious stones, the like of which no king had ever possessed before him. Many of its halls had crystal floors and ceilings, and he erected a throne of sandal-wood, covered with gold, and embossed with the most costly jewels. While the building of his palace was in progress, he made a

journey to the ancient city of Damascus, whose environs are reckoned among the four earthly paradises.

The genius on whom he rode pursued the straightest course, and flew over the valley of ants, which is surrounded by such lofty cliffs, and deep, impassable ravines, that no man had been able to enter it before.

Solomon was much astonished to see beneath him a host of ants, which were as large as wolves, and which, owing to their gray eyes and feet, appeared at a distance like a cloud.

But, on the other hand, the queen of the ants, which had never seen a human being, was in no small trouble on perceiving the king, and cried to her subjects, "Retire quickly to your caverns!"

But Allah said to her, "Assemble all thy vassals, and do homage to Solomon, who is king of the whole creation."

Solomon, to whom the winds had wafted these words, then at a distance of six leagues, descended to the queen, and in a short time the whole valley was covered with ants as far as his eye could reach. Solomon then asked the queen, who was standing at their head, "Why fearest thou me, since thy hosts are so numerous that they could lay waste the whole earth?"

"I fear none but Allah," replied the queen; "for if my subjects which thou now beholdest were threatened with danger, seventy times their number would appear at a single nod from me."

"Why, then, didst thou command thy ants to retire while I was passing above thee?"

"Because I feared lest they might look after thee, and thus forget their Creator for a moment."

"Is there any favor that I may show thee ere I depart?" inquired Solomon.

"I know of none: but rather let me advise thee so to live that thou mayest not be ashamed of thy name, which signifies 'The Immaculate;' beware also of ever giving away thy ring without first saying, 'In the name of Allah the All-merciful.'"

Solomon once more exclaimed, "Lord, thy kingdom is greater than mine!" and took leave of the queen of ants.

On his return he commanded the genius to fly in another direction, so as not to disturb the devotions of the queen and her subjects.

On arriving at the frontiers of Palestine, he heard how some one prayed:

"My God, who hast chosen Abraham to be thy friend, redeem me soon from this woeful existence!"

Solomon descended to him, and beheld an aged man bowed down with years, and trembling in all his limbs.

"Who art thou?"

"I am an Israelite of the tribe of Judah."

"How old art thou?"

"Allah alone knows. I counted up to my three hundredth year, and since that time full fifty or sixty more must have passed away."

"How camest thou to so great an age, which, since Abraham's time, no human being has attained?"

"I once saw a shooting star in the night of Al-Kadr, and expressed the senseless wish that I might meet with the mightiest prophet before I died."

"Thou hast now reached the goal of thy expectations: prepare thyself to die, for I am the king and prophet Solomon, to whom Allah has granted a power such as no mortal before me ever possessed." Scarcely had he finished these words, when the Angel of Death descended in human form, and took the soul of the aged man.

"Thou must have been quite close to me, since thou camest so promptly," said Solomon to the angel.

"How great is thy mistake! Be it known to thee, O king! that I stand on the shoulders of an angel whose head reaches ten thousand years beyond the seventh heaven, whose feet are five hundred years below the earth, and

who, withal, is so powerful, that if Allah permitted it, he could swallow the earth, and all that it contains, without the slightest effort.

"He it is who points out to me when, where, and how I must take a soul. His gaze is fixed on the tree Sidrat Almuntaha, which bears as many leaves inscribed with names as there are men living on the earth.

"At each birth a new leaf, bearing the name of the newly born, bursts forth; and when any one has reached the end of his life, his leaf withers and falls off, and at the same instant I am with him to receive his soul."

"How dost thou proceed in this matter, and whither takest thou the souls at death?"

"As often as a believer dies, Gabriel attends me, and wraps his soul in a green silken sheet, and then breathes it into a green bird, which feeds in Paradise until the day of the resurrection. But the soul of the sinner I take alone, and having wrapped it in a coarse, pitch-covered woolen cloth, carry it to the gates of hell, where it wanders among abominable vapors until the last day."

Solomon thanked the angel for his information, and besought him, when he should one day come to take his soul, to conceal his death from all men and spirits.

He then washed the body of the deceased, buried him, and having prayed for his soul, begged for a mitigation of his bodily pains at the trial he was to undergo before the angels Ankir and Munkir.¹

This journey had fatigued Solomon so much, that he ordered the genii, on his return to Jerusalem, to weave strong silken carpets, which might contain him and his followers, together with all the requisite utensils and equipages for traveling. Whenever he desired thereafter to make a journey, he caused one of these carpets, of a larger or smaller size, according to the number of his attendants, to be spread out before the city, and as soon as all that he

¹ These two angels make inquiry of the dead concerning his God and his faith, and torment him if he be not able to answer properly.

Similar things are said in the "Chibut hakebar" (knocking at the tomb) of the Rabbis.—Compare Maraccius, *Prodrom.*, § iii., p. 90.

required was placed upon it, he gave a signal to the eight winds to raise it up. He then seated himself on his throne, and guided them into whatever direction he pleased, even as a man guides his horses with bit and reins.

One night Abraham appeared to him in a dream, and said, "Allah has distinguished thee above all other men by thy wisdom and power. He has subjected to thy rule the genii, who are erecting a temple at thy command, the like of which the earth has never borne before; and thou ridest on the winds as I once rode on Borak, who shall dwell in Paradise until the birth of Mohammed. Show thyself grateful, therefore, unto the only God, and, taking advantage of the ease with which thou canst travel from place to place, visit the cities of Jathrib,² where the greatest of prophets shall one day find shelter and protection, and of Mecca, the place of his birth, where now the holy temple stands which I and my son Ismael (peace be on him!) rebuilt after the flood."

The next morning, Solomon proclaimed that he would undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca, and that each and every Israelite would be permitted to accompany him. There immediately applied so many pilgrims, that Solomon was obliged to have a new carpet woven by the spirits, two leagues in length and two in breadth.

The empty space which remained he filled with camels, oxen, and smaller cattle, which he designed to sacrifice at Mecca, and to divide among the poor.

For himself he had a throne erected, which was so studded with brilliant jewels that no one could raise his eyes to him. The men of distinguished piety occupied golden seats near the throne: the learned were seated on silver, and part of the common people on wood. The genii and demons were commanded to fly before him, for he trusted them so little that he desired to have them constantly in his presence, and therefore always drank out of crystal cups so as never to lose sight of them, even when he was compelled to satisfy his thirst. But the birds he directed to fly above the carpet in close array, to protect the travelers from the sun.

² The ancient name of Medina, where Mohammed died.

When the arrangements were complete, and men, spirits, birds, and beasts were assembled, he commanded the eight winds to raise up the carpet, with all that it contained, and to carry it to Medina. In the vicinity of that city, he made a signal to the birds to lower their wings, whereupon the winds gradually abated until the carpet rested on the earth.

But no one was permitted to leave the carpet, for Medina was then inhabited by worshipers of idols, with whom the king would not suffer his subjects to come in contact.

Solomon went unattended to the spot where, in later times, Mohammed erected his first mosque—it was then a burial-ground—performed his midday devotions, and then returned to the carpet. The birds, at his nod, spread their wings, the winds bore up the carpet, and swept on with it to Mecca. This city was then governed by the Djorhamides, who had migrated there from the Southern Arabia, and were at that time worshipers of the only God, keeping the Kaaba as pure from idolatry as it was in the days of Abraham and of Ismael. Solomon therefore entered it, with all his attendants, performed the ceremonies obligatory on pilgrims, and when he had slain the victims which he brought with him from Jerusalem, he pronounced in the Kaaba a long discourse, in which he predicted the future birth of Mohammed, and exhorted all his hearers to enforce faith in him upon their children and descendants.

After a stay of three days, King Solomon resolved to return again to Jerusalem. But when the birds had unfolded their wings, and the carpet was already in motion, he suddenly discovered a ray of light striking upon it, whence he concluded that one of his birds had left its post.

He therefore summoned the eagle, and directed him to call over the names of all the birds, and to report which was absent. The eagle obeyed, and soon came back with the answer that the hoopoo was wanting.

The king grew enraged; the more so, because he needed the hoopoo during the journey, since no other bird possessed its powers to descry the hidden fountains of the desert.

"Soar aloft," he cried harshly to the eagle; "search for the hoopoo, and bring it hither, that I may pluck off its feathers, and expose it naked to the scorching sun, until the worms shall have consumed it."

The eagle soared heavenward until the earth beneath him appeared like an inverted bowl. He then halted, and looked in every direction to discover the truant subject. As soon as he spied it coming from the south, he plunged down, and would have seized it in his talons, but the hoopoo adjured him by Solomon to forbear.

"Darest thou to invoke the king's protection?" replied the eagle. "Well may thy mother weep for thee. The king is enraged, for he has discovered thy absence, and sworn to punish it terribly."

"Lead me to him," rejoined the other. "I know that he will excuse my absence when he hears where I have been, and what I have to report of my excursion."

The eagle led him to the king, who was sitting on his judgment throne with wrathful countenance, and instantly drew the delinquent violently toward him. The hoopoo trembled in every limb, and hung down his plumage in token of submission. But when Solomon would have grasped him still more tightly, he cried, "Remember, O prophet of Allah! that thou, too, shalt one day give an account unto the Lord: let me, therefore, not be condemned unheard."

"How canst thou excuse thy absenting thyself without my permission?"

"I bring information respecting a country and a queen whose names thou hast not even heard of—the country of Saba, and Queen Balkis."

"These names are indeed quite strange to me. Who has informed thee of them?"

"A hoopoo from those regions, whom I met during one of my short excursions in the course of our conversation I spoke to him of thee, and thy extensive dominions, and he was astonished that thy fame should not yet have reached his home. He entreated me, therefore, to accompany him

there, and convince myself that it would be worth thy while to subject the land of Saba unto thy scepter.

"On our way he related to me the whole history of that country down to its present queen, who rules over so large an army that she requires twelve thousand captains to command it."

Solomon relinquished his hold of the hoopoo, and commanded him to recount all that he had heard of that country and its history, whereupon the bird began as follows: "Most mighty king and prophet! be it known to thee that Saba is the capital of an extensive country in the south of Arabia, and was founded by King Saba, Ibn Jashab, Ibn Sarab, Ibn Kachtan. His name was properly Abd Shems (the servant of the Sun); but he had received the surname of Saba (one who takes captive) by reason of his numerous conquests."

Saba was the largest and most superb city ever constructed by the hand of man, and, at the same time, so strongly fortified that it might have defied the united armies of the world.

But that which especially distinguished this city of marble palaces were the magnificent gardens in the center of which it stood.

For King Saba had, in compliance with the counsels of the wise Lockman, constructed vast dikes and numerous canals, both to guard the people from inundation during the rainy season, and also against want of water in time of drought.

Thus it came to pass, that this country, which is so vast that a good horseman would require a month to traverse it, became rapidly the richest and most fertile of the whole earth. It was covered with the finest trees in every direction, so that its travelers knew nothing of the scorching sun. Its air, too, was so pure and refreshing, and its sky so transparent, that the inhabitants lived to a very great age, in the enjoyment of perfect health.

The land of Saba was, as it were, a diadem on the brow of the universe.

This state of felicity endured as long as it pleased Allah. King Saba, its founder, died, and was succeeded by other kings, who enjoyed the fruits of

Lockman's labors without thinking of preserving them; but time was busy with their destruction. The torrents, plunging from the adjacent mountains, gradually undermined the dike which had been constructed to restrain and to distribute them into the various canals, so that it fell in at last, and the whole country was, in consequence, laid waste by a fearful flood. The first precursors of an approaching disaster showed themselves in the reign of King Amru. In his time it was that the priestess Dharifa beheld in a dream a vast dark cloud, which, bursting amid terrific thunderings, poured destruction upon the land. She told her dream to the king, and made no secret of her fears respecting the welfare of his empire; but the king and his courtiers endeavored to silence her, and continued, as before, their heedless, careless courses.

One day, however, while Amru was in a grove in dalliance with two maidens, the priestess stepped before him with disheveled hair and ruffled countenance, and predicted anew the speedy desolation of the country.

The king dismissed his companions; and having seated the priestess beside him, inquired of her what new omen foreboded this evil. "On my way hither," replied Dharifa, "I met crimson rats standing erect, and wiping their eyes with their feet; and a turtle, which lay on its back, struggling in vain to rise: these are certain signs of a flood, which shall reduce this country to the sad condition in which it was in ancient times."

"What proof givest thou me of the truth of thy statement?" inquired Amru.

"Go to the dike, and thine own eyes shall convince thee."

The king went, but speedily came back to the grove with distracted countenance. "I have seen a dreadful sight," he cried. "Three rats as large as porcupines were gnawing the dikes with their teeth, and tearing off pieces of rock which fifty men would not have been able to move."

Dharifa then gave him still other signs; and he himself had a dream, in which he saw the tops of the loftiest trees covered with sand—an evident presage of the approaching flood—so that he resolved to fly from his country.

Yet, in order to dispose of his castles and possessions to advantage, he concealed what he had seen and heard, and invented the following pretext for his emigration.

One day he gave a grand banquet to his highest officers of state and the chiefs of his army, but arranged with his son beforehand that he should strike him in the face during a discussion. When this accordingly took place at the public table, the king sprang up, drew his sword, and feigned to slay his son; but, as he had foreseen his guests rushed in between them, and hurried away the prince. Amru then swore that he would no longer remain in a country where he had suffered such a disgrace. But, when all his estates were sold, he avowed the true motive of his emigration, and many tribes joined themselves to him.

Soon after his departure the predicted calamities took place, for the inhabitants of Saba, or Mareb, as this city is sometimes called, listened neither to the warnings of Dharifa nor the admonition of a prophet whom Allah had sent them. The strong dike fell in, and the waters, pouring from the mountain, devastated the city and the entire vicinity. "As, however, the men of Saba," continued the hoopoo, in his narrative before King Solomon, "who had fled into the mountain, were improved by their misfortune, and repented, they soon succeeded, with the help of Allah, in constructing new dams, and in restoring their country to a high degree of power and prosperity, which went on increasing under the succeeding kings, though the old vices too reappeared, and, instead of the Creator of heaven and earth, they even worshiped the sun." The last king of Saba, named Sharahbil, was a monster of tyranny. He had a vizier descended from the ancient royal house of the Himiarites, who was so handsome that he found favor in the eyes of the daughters of the genii, and they often placed themselves in his way in the shape of gazelles, merely to gaze upon him. One of them, whose name was Umeira, felt so ardent an attachment for the vizier, that she completely forgot the distinction between men and genii, and one day, while he was following the chase, appeared in the form of a beautiful virgin, and offered him her hand, on condition that he would follow her, and never demand an account of any of her actions. The vizier thought the daughter of the genii so far exalted above all human beauty,

that he lost his self-command, and consented, without reflection, to all that she proposed. Umeira then journeyed with him to the island where she lived, and married him. Within a year's time she bore a daughter, whom she called Balkis; but soon after that she left her husband, because he (as Moses had done with Al-kidhr) had repeatedly inquired into her motives when unable to comprehend her actions. The vizier then returned with Balkis to his native country, and concealed himself in one of its valleys at a distance from the capital: there Balkis grew up like the fairest flower of Yemen; but she was obliged to live in greater retirement the older she became, for her father feared lest Sharahbil might hear of her, and treat her as remorselessly as the other maidens of Saba.

Nevertheless, Heaven had decreed that all his precautions should be abortive; for the king, in order to learn the condition of his empire, and the secret sentiments of his subjects, once made a journey on foot, disguised like a beggar, throughout the land. When he came to the region where the vizier lived, he heard both him and his daughter much spoken of, because no one knew who he was, nor whence he had come, nor why he lived in such obscurity. The king therefore caused his residence to be pointed out, and he reached it at the moment when the vizier and his daughter were seated at table. His first glance fell on Balkis, who was then in her fourteenth year, and beautiful like an houri of Paradise, for, with the grace and loveliness of woman, she combined the transparent complexion and the majesty of the genii. But how great was his astonishment, when, fixing his eye on her father, he recognized his former vizier, who had so suddenly disappeared, and whose fate had remained unknown!

As soon as the vizier observed that the king had recognized him, he fell down at his feet, imploring his favor, and relating all that had befallen him during his absence. Sharahbil pardoned him from love to Balkis, but demanded that he should resume his former functions, and at the same time presented him with a palace in the finest situation near his capital. But a few weeks had scarcely elapsed when the vizier one morning returned from the city with a heavily clouded brow, and said to Balkis, "My fears are now realized! The king has asked thy hand, and I could not refuse without

endangering my life, although I would rather see thee laid in thy grave than in the arms of this tyrant."

"Dismiss your fears, my father," replied Balkis; "I shall free me and my whole sex from this abandoned man. Only put on a cheerful brow, that he may not conceive any suspicion, and request of him, as the only favor I demand, that our nuptials be solemnized here in privacy."

The king cheerfully agreed to the wish of his bride, and repaired on the following morning, accompanied by a few servants, to the vizier's palace, where he was entertained with royal magnificence. After the repast, the vizier retired with his guests, and Balkis remained alone with the king; but on a given signal her female slaves appeared: one of them sang, another played on the harp, a third danced before them, and a fourth presented wine in golden cups. The last was, by Balkis's directions, especially active, so that the king, whom she urged by every art to partake of the strongest wines, soon fell back lifeless on his divan. Balkis now drew forth a dagger from beneath her robe, and plunged it so deeply into the heart of Sharahbil, that his soul rushed instantly to hell. She then called her father, and pointing to the corpse before her, said, "To-morrow morning, let the most influential men of the city, and also some chiefs of the army, be commanded, in the king's name, to send him their daughters. This will produce a revolt, which we shall improve to our advantage."

Balkis was not mistaken in her conjecture; for the men, whose daughters were threatened with infamy, called their kinsmen together, and marched in the evening to the palace of the vizier, threatening to set it on fire unless the king should be delivered up to them.

Balkis then cut off the king's head, and flung it through the window to the assembled insurgents. Instantly there arose the loud exultations of the multitude; the city was festively illumined, and Balkis, as protectress of her sex, was proclaimed Queen of Saba. "This queen," concluded the hoopoo, "has been reigning there since many years in great wisdom and prudence, and justice prevails throughout her now flourishing empire. She assists at all the councils of her viziers, concealed from the gaze of men by a fine curtain, seated on a lofty throne of most skillful workmanship, and adorned with

jewels; but, like many of the kings of that country before her, she is a worshiper of the sun."

"We shall see," said Solomon, when the hoopoo had concluded the account of his journey, "whether thou hast spoken the truth, or art to be numbered among deceivers."

He then caused a fountain to be pointed out by the hoopoo, performed his ablutions, and, when he had prayed, wrote the following lines: "From Solomon, the son of David and servant of Allah, to Balkis, queen of Saba, in the name of Allah the All-merciful and Gracious, blessed are they who follow the guidance of Fate! follow thou my invitation, and present thyself before me as a believer." This note he sealed with musk, stamped his signet on it, and gave it to the hoopoo, with the words, "Take this letter to Queen Balkis; then retire, but not so far as to preclude thee from hearing what she shall advise with her viziers respecting it."

The hoopoo, with the letter in his bill, darted away like an arrow, and arrived next day at Mared. The queen was surrounded by all her counselors, when he stepped into her hall of state, and dropped the letter into her lap. She started as soon as she beheld Solomon's mighty signet, opened the letter hurriedly, and, having first read it to herself communicated it to her counselors, among whom were also her highest chieftains, and entreated their counsel on this important matter.

But they replied with one voice, "You may rely on our power and courage, and act according to your good pleasure and wisdom."

"Before, then, I engage in war," said Balkis, "which always entails much suffering and misfortune upon a country, I will send some presents to King Solomon, and see how he will receive my ambassadors. If he suffers himself to be bribed, he is no more than other kings who have fallen before our power; but if he reject my presents, then is he a true prophet, whose faith we must embrace."

She then dressed five hundred youths like maidens, and as many maidens like young men, and commanded the former to behave in the presence of Solomon like girls, and the latter like boys. She then had a thousand carpets

prepared, wrought with gold and silver; a crown, composed of the finest pearls and hyacinths; and many loads of musk, amber, aloes, and other precious products of South Arabia. To these she added a closed casket containing an unperforated pearl, a diamond intricately pierced, and a goblet of crystal.

"As a true prophet," she wrote to him, "thou wilt no doubt be able to distinguish the youths from the maidens, to divine the contents of the closed casket, to perforate the pearl, to thread the diamond, and to fill the goblet with water that has neither dropped from the clouds nor gushed forth from the earth."

All these presents and her letter she sent to him by experienced and intelligent men, to whom she said at their departure, "If Solomon meet you with pride and harshness, be not cast down, for these are indications of human weakness; but if he receive you with kindness and condescension, be on your guard, for you then have to do with a prophet."

The hoopoo heard all this, for he had kept close to the queen until the ambassadors had departed. He then flew in a direct line, without resting, to the tent of Salomon, to whom he reported what he had heard. The king then commanded the genii to produce a carpet which should cover the space of nine parasangs, and to spread it out at the steps of his throne toward the south. To the eastward, where the carpet ceased, he caused a lofty golden wall to be erected, and to the westward, one of silver. On both sides of the carpet he ranged the rarest foreign animals, and all kinds of genii and demons.

The ambassadors were greatly confused on arriving in Solomon's encampment, where splendor and magnificence were displayed such as they had never conceived of before. The first thing they did on beholding the immense carpet, which their eyes were unable to survey, was to fling away their thousand carpets which they had brought as a present for the king. The nearer they came the greater waxed their perplexity, on account of the many singular birds, and beasts, and spirits through whose ranks they had to pass in approaching Solomon; but their hearts were relieved as soon

as they stood before him, for he greeted them with kindness, and inquired with smiling lips what had brought them to him.

"We are the bearers of a letter from Queen Balkis," replied the most eloquent of the embassy while he presented the letter.

"I know its contents," replied Solomon, "without opening it, as well as those of the casket which you have brought with you; and I shall, by the help of Allah, perforate your pearl, and cause your diamond to be threaded. But I will first of all fill your goblet with water which has not fallen from the clouds nor gushed from the earth, and distinguish the beardless youths from the virgins who accompany you." He then caused one thousand silver bowls and basins to be brought, and commanded the male and female slaves to wash themselves. The former immediately put their hands, on which the water was poured to their faces; but the latter first emptied it into their right hands as it flowed from the bowl into their left, and then washed their faces with both their hands. Hereupon Solomon readily discovered the sexes of the slaves, to the great astonishment of the ambassadors. This being done, he commanded a tall and corpulent slave to mount on a young and fiery horse, and to ride through the camp at the top of his speed, and to return instantly to him. When the slave returned with the steed to Solomon, there poured from him whole torrents of perspiration, so that the crystal goblet was immediately filled.

"Here," said Solomon to the ambassadors, "is water which has neither come out of the earth nor from heaven." The pearl he perforated with the stone, for the knowledge of which he was indebted to Sachr and the raven; but the threading of the diamond, in whose opening there was every possible curve, puzzled him, until a demon brought him a worm, which crept through the jewel, leaving a silken thread behind. Solomon inquired of the worm how he might reward him for this great service, by which he had saved his dignity as a prophet. The worm requested that a fine fruit-tree should be appointed to him as his dwelling. Solomon gave him the mulberry-tree, which from that time affords a shelter and nourishment to the silk-worm forever.

"You have seen now," said Solomon to the ambassadors, "that I have successfully passed all the trials which your queen has imposed on me. Return to her, together with the presents destined for me, of which I do not stand in need, and tell her that if she do not accept my faith and do homage unto me, I shall invade her country with an army which no human power shall be able to resist, and drag her a wretched captive to my capital."

The ambassadors left Solomon under the fullest conviction of his might, and mission a prophet; and their report respecting all that had passed between them and the king made the same impression on Queen Balkis.

"Solomon is a mighty prophet," said she to the viziers who surrounded her, and had listened to the narrative of the ambassadors. "The best plan I can adopt is to journey to him with the leaders of my army, in order to ascertain what he demands of us." She then commanded the necessary preparations for the journey to be made; but, before her departure, she locked up her throne, which she left with the greatest reluctance, in a hall which it was impossible to reach without first stepping through six other closed halls; and all the seven halls were in the innermost of the seven closed apartments, of which the palace, guarded by her most faithful servants, consisted.

When Queen Balkis, attended by her twelve thousand captains, each of whom commanded several thousand men, had come within a parasang of Solomon's encampment, he said to his hosts, "Which of you will bring me the throne of Queen Balkis before she come to me as a believer, that I may rightfully appropriate this curious piece of art while yet in the possession of an infidel?"

Hereupon a misshapen demon (who was as large as a mountain) said, "I will bring it to thee before noon, ere thou dismiss thy council. I am not wanting in power for the achievement, and thou mayest intrust me with the throne without any apprehension."

But Solomon had not so much time left, for he already perceived at a distance the clouds of dust raised by the army of Saba.

"Then," said his vizier Assaf, the son of Burahja, who, by reason of his acquaintance with the holy names of Allah, found nothing too difficult, "raise thy eyes toward heaven, and before thou shalt be able to cast them down again to the earth, the throne of the Queen of Saba shall stand here before thee."

Solomon gazed heavenward, and Assaf called Allah by his holiest name, praying that he might send him the throne of Balkis. Then, in the twinkling of an eye, the throne rolled through the bowels of the earth until it came to the throne of Solomon, and rose up through the opening ground, whereupon Solomon exclaimed, "How great is the goodness of Allah! this was assuredly intended as a trial whether I should be grateful to him or not; but whosoever acknowledgeth the goodness of Allah, does it to himself, and whoever denieth it, does no less so. Allah has no need of human gratitude "

After having admired the throne, he said to one of his servants, "Make some change on it, and let us see whether Balkis will recognize it again." The servants took several parts of the throne to pieces, and replaced them differently; but when Balkis was asked whether the throne was like it, she replied, "It seems as if it were the same."

This and other replies of the queen convinced Solomon of her superior understanding, for she had undoubtedly recognized her throne; but her answer was so equivocal that it did not sound either reproachful or suspicious. But, before he would enter into more intimate relations with her, he desired to clear up a certain point respecting her, and to see whether she actually had cloven feet, as several of his demons would have him to believe, or whether they had only invented the defect from fear lest he might marry her and beget children, who, as descendants of the genii, would be even more mighty than himself. He therefore caused her to be conducted through a hall whose floor was of crystal, and under which water, tenanted by every variety of fish, was flowing. Balkis, who had never seen a crystal floor, supposed that there was water to be passed through, and therefore raised her robe slightly, when the king discovered, to his great joy, a beautifully-shaped female foot. When his eye was satisfied, he called to her, "Come hither! there is no water here, but only a crystal floor; and confess

thyself to the faith in one only GOD." Balkis approached the throne, which stood at the end of the hall, and in Solomon's presence abjured the worship of the sun.

Solomon then married Balkis, but reinstated her as Queen of Saba, and spent three days in every month with her.

On one of his progresses from Jerusalem to Mareb, he passed through a valley inhabited by apes, which, however, dressed and lived like men, and had more comfortable dwellings than other apes, and even bore all kinds of weapons. He descended from his flying carpet, and marched into the valley with a few of his troops. The apes hurried together to drive him back, but one of their elders stepped forward and said, "Let us rather seek safety in submission, for our foe is a holy prophet." Three apes were immediately chosen as ambassadors to negotiate with Solomon. He received them kindly, and inquired to which class of apes they belonged, and how it came to pass that they were so skilled in all human arts. The ambassadors replied, "Be not astonished at us, for we are descended from men, and are the remnant of a Jewish community, which, notwithstanding all admonition, continued to desecrate the Sabbath until Allah cursed them, and turned them into apes.³ Solomon was moved to compassion and, to protect them from all farther animosity on the part of man, gave them a parchment, in which he secured to them forever the undisturbed possession of this valley.

(At the time of the Calif Omar, there came a division of troops into this valley; but when they would have raised their tents to occupy it, there came an aged ape, with a scroll of parchment in his hands, and presented it to the leader of the soldiers. Yet, as no one was able to read it, they sent it to Omar at Medina, to whom it was explained by a Jew, who had been converted to Islam. He sent it back forthwith, and commanded the troops to evacuate the valley.)

Meanwhile, Balkis soon found a dangerous rival in Djarada, the daughter of King Nubara, who governed one of the finest islands in the Indian Ocean. This king was a fearful tyrant, and forced all his subjects to worship him as a god.

³ Mohammed mentions this in the Koran as a fact.

As soon as Solomon heard of it, he marched against him with as many troops as his largest carpet could contain, conquered the island, and slew the king with his own hand. When he was on the point of leaving the palace of Nubara, there stepped before him a virgin who far surpassed in beauty and grace the whole harem of Solomon, not even the Queen of Saba excepted. He commanded her to be led to his carpet, and, threatening her with death, forced her to accept his faith and his hand.

But Djarada saw in Solomon only the murderer of her father, and replied to his caresses with sighs and tears.

Solomon hoped that time would heal her wounds, and reconcile her to her fate; but when, at the expiration of a whole year, her heart still remained closed against love and joy, he overwhelmed her with reproaches, and inquired how he might assuage her grief.

"As it is not in thy power," replied Djarada, "to recall my father to life, send a few genii to my home: let them bring his statue, and place it in my chamber: perhaps the very sight of his image will procure me some consolation."

Solomon was weak enough to comply with her request, and to defile his palace with the image of a man who had deified himself and to whom even Djarada secretly paid divine honors. This idol worship had lasted forty days, when Assaf was informed of it. He therefore mounted the rostrum, and, before the whole assembled people, pronounced a discourse, in which he described the pure and God-devoted life of all the prophets, from Adam until David. In passing to Solomon, he praised the wisdom and piety of the first years of his reign, but regretted that his later courses showed less of the true fear of God.

As soon as Solomon had learned the contents of this discourse, he summoned Assaf, and inquired of him whereby he had deserved to be thus censured before the whole people.

Assaf replied, "Thou hast permitted thy passion to blind thee, and suffered idolatry in thy palace."

Solomon hastened to the apartments of Djarada, whom he found prostrate in prayer before the image of her father, and exclaiming,

"We belong unto Allah, and shall one day return to Him!" he shivered the idol to pieces, and punished the princess. He then put on new robes, which none but pure virgins had touched, strewed ashes on his head, went into the desert, and implored Allah for forgiveness.

Allah pardoned his sin; but he was to atone for it during forty days. On returning home in the evening, having given his signet into the keeping of one of his wives until he should return from an unclean place, Sachr assumed his form, and obtained from her the ring. Soon after, Solomon himself claimed it; but he was laughed at and derided, for the light of prophecy had departed from him, so that no one recognized him as king, and he was driven from his palace as a deceiver and impostor. He now wandered up and down the country, and wherever he gave his name he was mocked as a madman, and shamefully entreated. In this manner he lived nine-and-thirty days, sometimes begging, sometimes living on herbs. On the fortieth day he entered into the service of a fisherman, who promised him as his daily wages two fishes, one of which he hoped to exchange for bread. But on that day the power of Sachr came to an end; for this wicked spirit had, notwithstanding his external resemblance to Solomon, and his possession of the signet ring, by which he had obtained power over spirits, men, and animals, excited suspicion by his ungodly deportment, and his senseless and unlawful ordinances.

The elders of Israel came daily to Assaf, preferring new charges against the king; but Assaf constantly found the doors of the palace closed against him.

But when, finally, on the fortieth day, even the wives of Solomon came and complained that the king no longer observed any of the prescribed rules of purification, Assaf, accompanied by some doctors of the law, who were reading aloud in the Thora, forced his way, spite of the gate-keepers and sentinels, who would have hindered him, into the hall of state, where Sachr sojourned. No sooner did he hear the word of God, which had been revealed

to Moses,⁴ than he shrunk back into his native form, and flew in haste to the shore of the sea, where the signet ring dropped from him.

By the providence of the Lord of the universe, the ring was caught up and swallowed by a fish, which was soon afterward driven into the net of the fisherman whom Solomon served. Solomon received this fish as the wages of his labor, and when he ate it in the evening he found his ring.

He then commanded the winds to take him back to Jerusalem, where he assembled around him all the chiefs of men, birds, beasts, and spirits, and related to them all that had befallen him during the last forty days, and how Allah had, in a miraculous manner, restored the ring which Sachr had wilily usurped.

He then caused Sachr to be pursued, and forced him into a copper flask, which he sealed with his signet, and flung between two rocks into the Sea of Tiberias, where he must remain until the day of the resurrection.

The government of Solomon, which after this occurrence lasted ten years, was not clouded again by misfortune. Djarada, the cause of his calamity, he never desired to see again, although she was now truly converted. But Queen Balkis he visited regularly every month until the day of her death.

When she died, he caused her remains to be taken to the city of Tadmor, which she had founded, and buried her there. But her grave remained unknown until the reign of Calif Walid, when, in consequence of long-continued rains, the walls of Tadmor fell in, and a stone coffin was discovered sixty cubits long and forty wide, bearing this inscription:

"Here is the grave of the pious Balkis, the Queen of Saba and consort of the Prophet Solomon, the son of David. She was converted to the true faith in the thirteenth year of Solomon's accession to the throne, married him in

⁴ There is an allusion here to the peculiar ideas which both Mohammedans and Jews attach to the recitation of scriptural or imagined sacred words and sentences.

They believe their bare reading or repetition valuable:

1. As being meritorious before God, independent of any reaction which it may produce on their heart and understanding.
2. Because every letter is supposed to possess a (cabalistic) charm acting with resistless power upon spirits, and even upon the Lord himself.—E. T.

the 14th, and died on Monday, the second day of Rabi-Awwal, in the three-and-twentieth year of his reign."

The son of the calif caused the lid of the coffin to be raised up, and discovered a female form, which was as fresh and well preserved as if it had but just been buried. He immediately made a report of it to his father, inquiring what should be done with the coffin.

Walid commanded that it should be left in the place where it was found, and be so built up with marble stones that it should never be desecrated again by human hands.

This command was obeyed; and, notwithstanding the many devastations and changes which the city of Tadmor and her walls have suffered, no traces have been found of the tomb of Queen Balkis.

A few months after the death of the Queen of Saba, the Angel of Death appeared unto Solomon with six faces: one to the right, and one to the left; one in front, and one behind; one above his head, and one below it. The king, who had never seen him in this form, was startled, and inquired what this sixfold visage signified. "With the face to the right," replied the Angel of Death, "I fetch the souls from the east; with that to the left, the souls from the west; with that above, the souls of the inhabitants of heaven; with that below, the demons from the depths of the earth; with that behind, the souls of the people of Madjudj and Jadjudj (Gog and Magog); but with that in front, those of the Faithful, to whom also thy soul belongs."

"Must, then, even the angels die?"

"All that lives becomes the prey of death as soon as Israfil shall have blown the trumpet the second time. Then I shall put to death even Gabriel and Michael, and immediately after that must myself die, at the command of Allah. Then God alone remains, and exclaims, 'Whose is the world?' but there shall not a living creature be left to answer him! And forty years must elapse, when Israfil shall be recalled to life, that he may blow his trumpet a third time, to wake all the dead."

"And who among men shall rise first from the grave?"

"Mohammed, the prophet, who shall in later times spring from the descendants of Ismael.

"Israfil himself and Gabriel, together with other angels, shall come to his grave at Medina, and cry, 'Thou purest and noblest of souls! return again to thy immaculate body, and revive it again.' Then shall he rise from his grave, and shake the dust from his head. Gabriel greets him, and points to the winged Borak, who stands prepared for him, and to a standard and a crown which Allah sends him from Paradise. The angel then says to him, 'Come to thy Lord, and mine, thou elect among all creatures! The gardens of Eden are festively adorned for thee; the houris await thee with impatience.' He then lifts him upon Borak, places the heavenly standard in his hand, and the crown upon his head, and leads him into Paradise. Thereupon the rest of mankind shall be called to life. They shall all be brought to Palestine, where the great tribunal shall be held, and where no other intercession than that of Mohammed is accepted. That will be a fearful day, when every one shall think only of himself. Adam will cry, 'O Lord, save my soul only! I care not for Eve, nor for Abel.' Noah will exclaim, 'O Lord, preserve me from hell, and do with Ham and Shem as thou pleasest!' Abraham shall say, 'I pray neither for Ismael nor Isaac, but for my own safety only.' Even Moses shall forget his brother Aaron, and Christ his mother, so greatly shall they be concerned for themselves. None but Mohammed shall implore the mercy of God for all the faithful of his people. They that are risen will then be conducted over the bridge Sirat, which is composed of seven bridges, each of which is three thousand years long. This bridge is as sharp as a sword, and as fine as a hair. One third of it is an ascent, one third is even, and one third is a descent. He alone who passes all these bridges with success can be admitted into Paradise. The unbelievers fall into hell from the first bridge; the prayerless, from the second; the uncharitable, from the third; whoever has eaten in Ramadhan, from the fourth; whoever has neglected the pilgrimage, from the fifth; whoever hath not commended the good, from the sixth; and whoso hath not prevented evil, from the seventh."

"When shall the resurrection be?"

"That is known only to Allah; but assuredly not before the advent of Mohammed, the last of all prophets. Previously to it the prophet Isa (Christ), sprung from thy own family, shall preach the true faith, shall be lifted up by Allah, and be born again. The nations of Jadjudj and Madjudj shall burst the wall behind which Alexander hath confined them. The sun shall rise in the west, and many other signs and wonders shall precede."

"Suffer me to live until the completion of my temple, for at my death the genii and demons will cease their labor."

"Thy hour-glass has run out, and it is not in my power to prolong thy life another second."

"Then follow me to my crystal hall!"

The Angel of Death accompanied Solomon unto the hall, whose walls were entirely of crystal. There Solomon prayed; and, leaning upon his staff, requested the angel to take his soul in that position. The angel consented; and his death was thus concealed from the demons a whole year, till the temple was finished. It was not until the staff, when destroyed by worms, broke down with him, that his death was observed by the spirits, who, in order to revenge themselves, concealed all kinds of magical books under his throne, so that many believers thought Solomon had been a sorcerer. But he was a pure and divine prophet, as it is written in the Koran, "Solomon was no infidel, but the demons were unbelievers, and taught all manner of sorceries." When the king was lying on the ground, the angels carried him, together with his signet ring, to a cave, where they shall guard him until the day of the resurrection.

JOHN, MARY, AND CHRIST

THERE once lived in Palestine a man named Amram Ibn Mathan, who had attained to a great age without being blessed with posterity. Shortly before his death his wife Hanna prayed to the Lord that he might not suffer her to die childless. Her prayer was heard, and when she was with child she dedicated her offspring to the service of the Lord; but, contrary to her expectations, she gave birth to a daughter, whom she named Mariam (Mary), and was naturally in doubt if her child would be accepted as a servant in the temple, until an angel cried to her, "Allah has accepted thy vow, although he knew beforehand that thou shouldst not give birth to a son. He has, moreover, sanctified thy daughter, as well as the man-child that shall be born of her, and will preserve him from the touch of Satan, who renders every other child susceptible of sin from its birth (on which account, also, all children cry aloud when they are born)."

These words comforted Hanna, whose husband had died during her pregnancy. As soon as she had recovered from her childbed, she carried her infant daughter to Jerusalem, and presented her to the priests, as a child dedicated to Allah. Zachariah, a priest whose wife was related to Hanna, was desirous of taking the child home with him; but the other priests, who were all eager for this privilege (for, on account of his piety, Amram had stood high in repute among them), protested against it, and forced him to cast lots with them for the guardianship of Mary. They proceeded, therefore, twenty-nine in number, to the Jordan, and flung their arrows into the river, on the understanding that he whose arrow should rise again, and remain on the water, should bring her up. By the will of Allah, the lot decided in favor of Zachariah, who then built a small chamber for Mary in the Temple, to which no one had access but himself; but when he brought her some food, she was already supplied, and though it was in winter, the choicest summer fruits were standing before her. To his inquiry whence she had obtained it all, she replied, "From Allah, who satisfieth every one according to his own

pleasure, and giveth no account of his proceedings."¹ When Zachariah saw this, he prayed to Allah to perform a miracle even in his case, and to bless him with a son, notwithstanding his advanced age. Then Gabriel called to him, "Allah will give thee a son, who shall be called Jahja (John), and bear testimony to the Word of God" (Christ). Zachariah went down to his house filled with joy, and related to his wife what the angel had announced to him; but as she was already ninety-and-eight years of age, and her husband one hundred and twenty, she laughed at him, so that at length he himself began to doubt the fulfillment of the promise, and asked a sign from Allah.

"As the punishment of thy unbelief," cried Gabriel unto him, "thou shalt be speechless for three days, and let this serve thee as the sign thou hast required."

On the following morning, Zachariah, as usual, desired to lead in prayer, but was unable to utter a single sound until the fourth day, when his tongue was loosed, and he besought Allah to pardon him and his wife.

Then there came a voice from heaven, which said, "Your sin is forgiven, and Allah will give you a son, who shall surpass in purity and holiness all the men of his time. Blessed be he in the day of his birth, as well as in those of his death and resurrection."

Within a year's time Zachariah became the father of a child, which, even at its birth, had a holy and venerable appearance. He now divided his time between him and Mary; and John in the house of his father, and Mary in the Temple, grew up like two fair flowers, to the joy of all believers, daily increasing in wisdom and piety.

¹ The general defection of the Church had, long before Mohammed's time, spread into Arabia, where Christianity had been early and extensively planted.

Many heresies respecting the Trinity and the Savior, the worship of saints and images, errors on the future state of the soul, &c., had so completely overrun the nominal church of that country, that it is difficult to say whether one particle of truth was left in it. More especially the worship of Mary as the mother of God, whom the Marianites considered as a divinity, and to whom the Collyridians even offered a stated sacrifice, was in general practice round Mohammed; and it is as curious as it is sad to observe how this idolatry affected him.—E. T.

When Mary had grown to womanhood, there appeared to her one day, while she was alone in her cell, Gabriel, in full human form.

Mary hastily covered herself with her veil, and cried, "Most Merciful! assist me against this man."

But Gabriel said, "Fear nothing from me: I am the messenger of thy Lord, who has exalted thee above all the women of earth, and am come to make known to thee his will. Thou shalt bear a son, and call him Isa, the Blessed One. He shall speak earlier than all other children, and be honored both in this world and in the world to come!"

"How shall I bear a son," replied Mary, affrighted, "since I have not known a man?"

"It is even so," replied Gabriel. "Did not Allah create Adam without either father or mother, merely by his word, 'Be thou created?' Thy son shall be a sign of His omnipotence, and as His prophet, restore the backsliding sons of Israel to the path of righteousness."

When Gabriel had thus spoken, he raised with his finger Mary's robe from her bosom, and breathed upon her.

Thereupon she ran into the field, and had scarcely time to support herself on the withered trunk of a date-tree before she was delivered of a son. Then cried she, "Oh that I had died, and been forgotten long ere this, rather than that the suspicion of having sinned should fall upon me!"

Gabriel appeared again to her, and said, "Fear nothing, Mary. Behold, the Lord causes a fountain of fresh water to gush forth from the earth at thy feet, and the trunk on which thou leanest is blossoming even now, and fresh dates are covering its withered branches. Eat and drink, and when thou art satisfied, return to thy people; and if any one shall inquire of thee respecting thy child, be thou silent, and leave thy defense to Him."

Mary plucked a few dates, which tasted like fruit from Paradise, drank from the fountain, whose water was even like milk, and then went, with her child in her arms, unto her family; but all the people cried out to her, "Mary, what hast thou done? Thy father was so pious, and thy mother so chaste!"

Mary, instead of replying, pointed to the child.

Then said her relations, "Shall this new-born child answer us?"

But Jesus said, "Do not sin in suspecting my mother. Allah has created me by his word, and has chosen me to be his servant and prophet."

But, notwithstanding all these wonders, the sons of Israel would not believe in Christ when, at the age of manhood, he proclaimed to them the Gospel which Allah had revealed to him. He was derided and despised because he called himself "the Word and the Spirit of Allah," and was challenged to perform new miracles in the sight of the whole people.

Christ then created, at the will of Allah, various kinds of birds out of clay, which he animated with his breath, so that they ate and drank, and, flew up and down like natural birds.² He healed in one day by his prayer fifty thousand blind and leprous persons, whose cure the best physicians of those times had been unable to effect. He recovered many dead, who, after he had recalled them to life, married again, and had children, and even raised up Sam, the son of Noah, who, however, died again immediately. But he not only revived men, but even isolated parts and limbs. During his wanderings, he one day found a skull near the Dead Sea, and his disciples asked him to recall it to life. Christ prayed to Allah, and then, turning to the skull, said, "Live, by the will of the Lord, and tell us how thou hast found death, the grave, and the future state!"

The skull then assumed the form of a living head, and said, "Know thou, O Prophet of Allah! that about four thousand years ago, after taking a bath, I fell into a fever, which, notwithstanding all the medicines which were given me, continued seven days. On the eighth day I was so entirely exhausted that all my limbs trembled, and my tongue cleaved to the roof of my mouth. Then there came to me the Angel of Death in a terrible shape. His head touched the sky, while his feet stood in the lowest depths of the earth. He

² In the original, it is said, Christ was able to tell the people what food they had taken, and what provisions they had laid up in store. This whole legend shows how painfully deceived Mohammed was by those who spoke to him of the Lord Jesus Christ; but if, even with his knowledge, he believed Him to have been a great prophet, would he not have believed in his divinity if he had read the Gospels?

held a sword in his right hand, and a cup in his left, and there were ten other angels with him, whom I took to be his servants. I would have shrieked so loudly at their sight that the inhabitants of heaven and of earth must have been petrified; but the angels fell on me, and held my tongue, and some of them pressed my veins, so as to force out my soul. Then said I, 'Exalted spirits, I will give all that I possess for my life.' But one of them struck me in the face, and almost shattered my jaw-bone, saying, 'Enemy of Allah! He accepts no ransom.' The Angel of Death then placed his sword upon my throat, and gave me the cup, which I was forced to empty to the dregs, and this was my death. My consciousness now lost, I was washed, wrapped in a shroud, and interred; but when my grave was covered with earth, my soul returned to my body, and I was sorely afraid in my solitude. But soon there came two angels, with a parchment in their hands, and told unto me all the good and all the bad that I had done while living in the body, and I was compelled to write it down with my own hand, and to attest it by my own signature; whereupon they suspended the scroll on my neck, and vanished. There then appeared two other dark blue angels, each with a column of fire in his hand, one single spark of which, if it had dropped on the earth, would have consumed it. They called to me, in a voice like thunder, 'Who is thy Lord?' Overcome with fright, I lost my senses, and said, shudderingly, 'You are my lords;' but they cried, 'Thou liest, enemy of Allah!' and struck me a blow with the column of fire that sent me down to the seventh earth; but as soon as I returned again to my grave, they said, 'O Earth! punish the man who has been rebellious against his Lord.' Instantly the earth crushed me, so that my bones were almost ground to powder; and she said, 'Enemy of God! I hated thee while thou didst tread my surface, but, by the glory of Allah, I will avenge me now, while thou art lying in my bowels.' The angels then opened one of the gateways of hell, and cried, 'Take this sinner, who did not believe in Allah; boil and burn him.' Thereupon I was dragged into the center of hell by a chain which was seventy cubits in length, and as often as the flames consumed my skin I received a fresh one, but only to suffer anew the torments of burning. At the same time, I was so hungry that I prayed for food; but I only obtained the putrefied fruit of the tree Sakum, which not merely increased my hunger, but even caused the most horrid pain and violent thirst; and when I asked for something to drink, nothing but boiling

water was given me. At last they urged one end of the chain with such violence into my mouth, that it came out through my back, and chained me hand and foot."

When Christ heard this, he wept with compassion, but demanded of the skull to describe hell more minutely.

"Know, then," continued the skull, "O Prophet of Allah! that hell consists of seven floors, one below the other. The uppermost is for hypocrites, the second for Jews, the third for Christians, the fourth for the Magi, the fifth for those who call the prophets liars, the sixth for idolaters, and the seventh for the sinners of the people of the prophet Mohammed, who shall appear in later times. The last-mentioned abode is least terrible, and sinners are saved from it through the intercession of Mohammed; but in the others the torture and agony are so great, that if thou, O Prophet of Allah! shouldst but see it, thou wouldst weep with compassion as a woman who has lost her only child. The outer part of hell is of copper, and the inner part of lead. Its floor is punishment, and the wrath of the Almighty its ceiling. The walls are of fire, not clear and luminous, but black fire, and diffusing a close, disgusting stench, being fed with men and idols."

Christ wept long, and then inquired of the skull to which family he belonged during lifetime.

He replied, "I am a descendant of the Prophet Elias!"

"And what desirest thou now?"

"That Allah would recall me to life, that I might serve him with my whole heart, so as one day to be worthy of Paradise!"

Christ prayed to Allah, "O Lord! thou knowest this man and me better than we know ourselves, and art omnipotent."

Then Allah said to him, "I had long ago resolved upon that which he desires; since, indeed, he had many excellences, and was especially benevolent to the poor, he may return to the world through thy intercession; and if he serve me henceforward faithfully, all his sins shall be forgiven."

Christ cried unto the skull, "Be again a perfect man, through the omnipotence of God!" and while the words were still on his lips, there rose up a man who looked more blooming than in his former life, and cried, "I confess that there is but one God, and that Abraham was his friend; Moses saw him face to face, Isa is his spirit and word, and Mohammed shall be his last and greatest messenger. I confess, moreover, that the resurrection is as certain as death, and that hell and Paradise do really exist."

This man lived sixty-and-six years after his resuscitation, and spent his days in fasting and his nights in prayer; nor did he alienate a single moment from the service of the Lord until he died.

But the more wonders Christ performed before the eyes of the people, the greater was their unbelief; for all that they were not able to comprehend they believed to be sorcery and delusion, instead of perceiving therein a proof of his divine mission. Even the twelve apostles whom he had chosen to propagate the new doctrine were not steadfast in the faith, and asked of him one day that he might cause a table, covered with viands, to descend from heaven!

"A table shall be given you," said a voice from heaven, "but whosoever shall thereafter continue in unbelief shall suffer severe punishment."

Thereupon there descended two clouds, with a golden table, on which there stood a covered dish of silver.

Many of the Israelites who were present exclaimed, "Behold the sorcerer! what new delusion has he wrought?" But these scoffers were instantly changed into swine. And on seeing it, Christ prayed, "O Lord! let this table lead us to salvation and not to ruin!" Then said he to the apostles, "Let him who is the greatest among you rise and uncover this dish." But Simon, the oldest apostle, said, "Lord, thou art the most worthy to behold this heavenly food first." Christ then washed his hands, removed the cover, and said, "In the name of Allah!" and behold, there became visible a large baked fish, with neither bones nor scales, which diffused a fragrance around like the fruits of Paradise. Round the fish there lay five small loaves, and on it salt, pepper,

and other spices. "Spirit of Allah," said Simon, "are these viands from this world or from the other?" But Christ replied, "Are not both worlds, and all that they contain, the work of the Lord? Receive whatever he has given with grateful hearts, and ask not whence it comes! But if the appearance of this fish be not sufficiently miraculous to you, you shall behold a still greater sign." Then, turning to the fish, he said, "Live! by the will of the Lord!" The fish then began to stir and to move, so that the apostles fled with fear. But Christ called them back, and said, "Why do you flee from that which you have desired?" He then called to the fish, "Be again what thou wast before!" and immediately it lay there as it had come down from heaven. The disciples then prayed Christ that he might eat of it first; but he replied, "I have not lusted for it: he that has lusted for it, let him eat of it now." But when the disciples refused to eat of it, because they now saw that their request had been sinful, Christ called many aged men—many deaf, sick, blind, and lame, and invited them to eat of the fish. There now came thirteen hundred, which ate of the fish, and were satisfied; but whenever one piece was cut off from the fish, another grew again in its place, so that it still lay there entire as if no one had touched it. The guests were not only satisfied, but even healed of all their diseases. The aged became young, the blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spake, and the lame regained their vigorous limbs. When the apostles saw this, they regretted that they had not eaten; and whoever beheld the men that had been cured and invigorated thereby, regretted in like manner not to have shared in the repast. When, therefore, at the prayer of Christ, a similar table descended again from heaven, the whole people, rich and poor, young and old, sick and whole, came to be refreshed by these heavenly viands. This lasted during forty days. At the dawn of day, the table, borne on the clouds, descended in the face of the sons of Israel, and before sunset it gradually rose up again, until it vanished behind the clouds; but as, notwithstanding this, many still doubted whether it really came from heaven, Christ prayed no longer for its return, and threatened the unbelievers with the punishment of the Lord. Nevertheless, in the hearts of the apostles every doubt respecting the mission of their Lord was removed, and they traveled partly in his company, partly alone, through the whole of Palestine, preaching the faith in Allah and his prophet Christ, and, according to the new revelation, permitting the eating of many things which had been

prohibited to the sons of Israel. But when he would have sent them to teach his Gospel even in distant countries, they excused themselves with their ignorance of foreign tongues. Christ complained of their disobedience before the Lord; and behold, on the following day his disciples had forgotten their own language, and every one knew only the language of the people unto which Christ desired to send him, so that they had no longer any reason to disobey his commands.

But while the true faith found many followers abroad, the hatred of the sons of Israel, but especially of the priests and the heads of the people, toward Christ, daily waxed in rancor, until at last, when he had attained the age of thirty-and-three years, they sought to take his life; but Allah overthrew their plans, and raised him to heaven unto himself, while another man, whom Allah had caused to have a perfect resemblance to him, was put to death in his stead.

The farther particulars of the last moments of this prophet are variously narrated by the learned, but most of them run as follows: On the evening before the Passover feast, the Jews took Christ captive, together with his apostles, and shut them up in a house, with the intention of putting Christ publicly to death on the following morning. But in the night Allah revealed to him, "Thou shalt receive death from me, but immediately afterward be raised up to heaven, and be delivered from the power of the unbelievers." Christ gave up his spirit, and remained dead for the space of three hours. In the fourth hour the angel Gabriel appeared, and raised him unperceived by any through a window into heaven. But an unbelieving Jew, who had stolen into the house to watch Christ that he might by no means escape, became so like him that even the apostles themselves took him to be their prophet. He it was who, as soon as the day dawned, was chained by the Jews and led through the streets of Jerusalem, every body crying to him, "Hast thou not revived the dead! Why shouldst thou not be able to break thy fetters?" Many pricked him with rods of thorn, others spit in his face, until he at last arrived at the place of execution where he was crucified, for no one would believe that he was not the Christ.

But when Mary had wellnigh succumbed from grief at the shameful death of her supposed son, Christ appeared to her from heaven, and said "Mourn

not for me, for Allah has taken me to himself, and we shall be reunited in the day of the resurrection. Comfort my disciples, and tell them that it is well with me in heaven, and that they shall obtain a place beside me if they continue steadfast in the faith. Hereafter, at the approach of the last day, I shall be sent again upon the earth, when I shall slay the false prophet Dadjal and the wild boar (both of which cause similar distress in the earth), and such a state of peace and unity shall ensue, that the lamb and the hyena shall feed like brothers beside each other. *I shall then burn the Gospel, which has been falsified by ungodly priests, and the crosses which they have worshiped as gods*, and subject the whole earth to the doctrines of Mohammed who shall be sent in later times."

When Christ had thus spoken, he was once more lifted on a cloud to heaven. But Mary lived yet six years in the faith of Allah, and of Christ her son, and of the prophet Mohammed, whom both Christ as well as Moses before him had proclaimed.

The peace of Allah be upon them all!
