

Fatima's Deliverance

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Arabic

Advanced
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My brother Mustapha and my sister Fatima were almost of the same age; the former was at most but two years older. They loved each other fervently, and did in concert, all that could lighten, for our suffering father, the burden of his old age. On Fatima's seventeenth birthday, my brother prepared a festival. He invited all her companions, and set before them a choice banquet in the gardens of our father, and, towards evening, proposed to them to take a little sail upon the sea, in a boat which he had hired, and adorned in grand style. Fatima and her companions agreed with joy, for the evening was fine, and the city, particularly when viewed by evening from the sea, promised a magnificent prospect. The girls, however, were so well pleased upon the bark, that they continually entreated my brother to go farther out upon the sea. Mustapha, however, yielded reluctantly, because a Corsair had been seen, for several days back, in that vicinity.

Not far from the city, a promontory projected into the sea; thither the maidens were anxious to go, in order to see the sun sink into the water. Having rowed thither, they beheld a boat occupied by armed men. Anticipating no good, my brother commanded the oarsmen to turn the vessel, and make for land. His apprehensions seemed, indeed, to be confirmed, for the boat quickly approached that of my brother, and getting ahead of it, (for it had more rowers,) ran between it and the land. The young girls, moreover, when they knew the danger to which they were exposed, sprang up with cries and lamentations: in vain Mustapha sought to quiet them, in vain enjoined upon them to be still, lest their running to and fro should upset the vessel. It was of no avail; and

when, in consequence of the proximity of the other boat, all ran upon the further side, it was upset.

Meanwhile, they had observed from the land the approach of the strange boat, and, inasmuch as, for some time back, they had been in anxiety on account of Corsairs, their suspicions were excited, and several boats put off from the land to their assistance: but they only came in time to pick up the drowning. In the confusion, the hostile boat escaped. In both barks, however, which had taken in those who were preserved, they were uncertain whether all had been saved. They approached each other, and, alas! found that my sister and one of her companions were missing; at the same time, in their number a stranger was discovered, who was known to none. In answer to Mustapha's threats, he confessed that he belonged to the hostile ship, which was lying at anchor two miles to the eastward, and that his companions had left him behind in their hasty flight, while he was engaged in assisting to pick up the maidens; moreover, he said he had seen two taken on board their boat.

The grief of my old father was without bounds, but Mustapha also was afflicted unto death, for not only had his beloved sister been lost, and did he accuse himself of having been the cause of her misfortune, but, also, her companion who had shared it with her, had been promised to him by her parents as his wife; still had he not dared to avow it to our father, because her family was poor, and of low descent. My father, however, was a stern man; as soon as his sorrow had subsided a little, he called Mustapha before him, and thus spake to him:—

“Thy folly has deprived me of the consolation of my old age, and the joy of my eyes. Go! I banish thee forever from my sight! I curse thee and thine offspring—and only when thou shalt restore to me my Fatima, shall thy head be entirely free from a father's execrations!”

This my poor brother had not expected; already, before this, he had determined to go in search of his sister and her friend, after having asked the blessing of his father upon his efforts, and now that father had sent him forth into the world, laden with his curse. As, however, his former grief had bowed him down, so this consummation of misfortune, which he had not deserved, tended to steel his mind. He went to the imprisoned pirate, and, demanding whither the ship was bound, learned that she carried on a trade in slaves, and usually had a great sale thereof in Balsora.

On his return to the house, in order to prepare for his journey, the anger of his father seemed to have subsided a little, for he sent him a purse full of gold, to support him during his travels. Mustapha, thereupon, in tears took leave of the parents of Zoraida, (for so his affianced was called,) and set out upon the route to Balsora.

Mustapha travelled by land, because from our little city there was no ship that went direct to Balsora. He was obliged, therefore, to use all expedition, in order not to arrive too long after the sea-robbers. Having a good horse and no luggage, he hoped to reach this city by the end of the sixth day. On the evening of the fourth, however, as he was riding all alone upon his way, three men came suddenly upon him. Having observed that they were well-armed and powerful men, and sought his money and his horse, rather than his life, he cried out that he would yield himself to them. They dismounted, and tied his feet together under his horse; then they placed him in their midst, and, without a word spoken, trotted quickly away with him; one of them having seized his bridle.

Mustapha gave himself up to a feeling of gloomy despair; the curse of his father seemed already to be undergoing its accomplishment on the unfortunate one, and how could he hope to save his sister and Zoraida, should he, robbed of all his means, even be able to devote his poor life to their deliverance? Mustapha and his silent companions might have ridden about an hour, when they entered a little valley. The vale was enclosed by lofty trees; a soft, dark-green turf, and a stream which ran swiftly through its midst, invited to repose. In this place were pitched from fifteen to twenty tents, to the stakes of which were fastened camels and fine horses: from one of these tents distinctly sounded the melody of a guitar, blended with two fine manly voices. It seemed to my brother as if people who had chosen so blithesome a resting-place, could have no evil intentions towards himself; and accordingly, without apprehension, he obeyed the summons of his conductors, who had unbound his feet, and made signs to him to follow. They led him into a tent which was larger than the rest, and on the inside was magnificently fitted up. Splendid cushions embroidered with gold, woven carpets, gilded censers, would elsewhere have bespoke opulence and respectability, but here seemed only the booty of a robber band. Upon one of the cushions an old and small-sized man was reclining: his countenance was ugly; a dark-brown and shining skin, a disgusting expression around his eyes, and a mouth of malicious cunning, combined to render his whole appearance odious. Although this man sought to put on a commanding air, still Mustapha soon perceived that not for him was the tent so richly adorned, and the conversation of his conductors seemed to confirm him in his opinion.

“Where is the Mighty?” inquired they of the little man.

“He is out upon a short hunt,” was the answer; “but he has commissioned me to attend to his affairs.”

“That has he not wisely done,” rejoined one of the robbers; “for it must soon be determined whether this dog is to die or be ransomed, and that the Mighty knows better than thou.”

Being very sensitive in all that related to his usurped dignity, the little man, raising himself, stretched forward in order to reach the other’s ear with the extremity of his hand, for he seemed desirous of revenging himself by a blow; but when he saw that his attempt was fruitless, he set about abusing him (and indeed the others did not remain much in his debt) to such a degree, that the tent resounded with their strife. Thereupon, of a sudden, the tent-door opened, and in walked a tall, stately man, young and handsome as a Persian prince. His garments and weapons, with the exception of a richly-mounted poniard and gleaming sabre, were plain and

simple; his serious eye, however, and his whole appearance, demanded respect without exciting fear.

“Who is it that dares to engage in strife within my tent?” exclaimed he, as they started back aghast. For a long time deep stillness prevailed, till at last one of those who had captured Mustapha, related to him how it had begun. Thereupon the countenance of “the Mighty,” as they had called him, seemed to grow red with passion.

“When would I have placed thee, Hassan, over my concerns?” he cried, in frightful accents, to the little man. The latter, in his fear, shrunk until he seemed even smaller than before, and crept towards the door of the tent. One step of the Mighty was sufficient to send him through the entrance with a long singular bound. As soon as the little man had vanished, the three led Mustapha before the master of the tent, who had meanwhile reclined upon the cushion.

“Here bring we thee him, whom thou commandedst us to take.” He regarded the prisoner for some time, and then said, “Bashaw of Sulieika, thine own conscience will tell thee why thou standest before Orbasan.” When my brother heard this, he bowed low and answered:—

“My lord, you appear to labor under a mistake; I am a poor unfortunate, not the Bashaw, whom you seek.” At this all were amazed; the master of the tent, however, said:—

“Dissimulation can help you little, for I will summon the people who know you well.” He commanded them to bring in Zuleima. An old woman was led into the tent, who, on being asked whether in my brother she recognised the Bashaw of Sulieika, answered:—

“Yes, verily! And I swear by the grave of the Prophet, it is the Bashaw, and no other!”

“Seest thou, wretch, that thy dissimulation has become as water?” cried out the Mighty in a furious tone. “Thou art too pitiful for me to stain my good dagger with thy blood, but to-morrow, when the sun is up, will I bind thee to the tail of my horse, and gallop with thee through the woods, until they separate behind the hills of Sulieika!” Then sank my poor brother’s courage within him.

“It is my cruel father’s curse, that urges me to an ignominious death,” exclaimed he, weeping; “and thou, too, art lost, sweet sister, and thou, Zoraida!”

“Thy dissimulation helps thee not,” said one of the robbers, as he bound his hands behind his back. “Come, out

of the tent with thee! for the Mighty is biting his lips, and feeling for his dagger. If thou wouldst live another night, bestir thyself!”

Just as the robbers were leading my brother from the tent, they met three of their companions, who were also pushing a captive before them. They entered with him. “Here bring we the Bashaw, as thou hast commanded,” said they, conducting the prisoner before the cushion of the Mighty. While they were so doing, my brother had an opportunity of examining him, and was struck with surprise at the remarkable resemblance which this man bore to himself; the only difference being, that he was of more gloomy aspect, and had a black beard. The Mighty seemed much astonished at the resemblance of the two captives.

“Which of you is the right one?” he asked, looking alternately at Mustapha and the other.

“If thou meanest the Bashaw of Sulieika,” answered the latter in a haughty tone, “I am he!”

The Mighty regarded him for a long time with his grave, terrible eye, and then silently motioned to them to lead him off. This having been done, he approached my brother, severed his bonds with his dagger, and invited him by signs to sit upon the cushion beside him. “It grieves me, stranger,” he said, “that I took you for this villain. It has happened, however, by some mysterious interposition of Providence, which placed you in the hands of my companions, at the very hour in which the destruction of this wretch was ordained.”

Mustapha, thereupon, entreated him only for permission to pursue his journey immediately, for this delay might cost him much. The Mighty asked what business it could be that required such haste, and, when Mustapha had told him all, he persuaded him to spend that night in his tent, and allow his horse some rest; and promised the next morning to show him a route which would bring him to Balsora in a day and a half. My brother consented, was sumptuously entertained, and slept soundly till morning in the robber’s tent.

Upon awaking, he found himself all alone in the tent, but, before the entrance, heard several voices in conversation, which seemed to belong to the swarthy little man and the bandit-chief. He listened awhile, and to his horror heard the little man eagerly urging the other to slay the stranger, since, if he were let go, he could betray them all. Mustapha immediately perceived that the little man hated him, for having been the cause of his rough treatment the day before. The Mighty seemed to be reflecting a moment.

“No,” said he; “he is my guest, and the laws of hospitality are with me sacred: moreover, he does not look like

one that would betray us.”

Having thus spoken, he threw back the tent-cover, and walked in. “Peace be with thee, Mustapha!” he said: “let us taste the morning-drink, and then prepare thyself for thy journey.” He offered my brother a cup of sherbet, and after they had drunk, they saddled their horses, and Mustapha mounted, with a lighter heart, indeed, than when he entered the vale. They had soon turned their backs upon the tents, and took a broad path, which led into the forest. The Mighty informed my brother, that this Bashaw whom they had captured in the chase, had promised them that they should remain undisturbed within his jurisdiction; but some weeks before, he had taken one of their bravest men, and had him hung, after the most terrible tortures. He had waited for him a long time, and to-day he must die. Mustapha ventured not to say a word in opposition, for he was glad to have escaped himself with a whole skin.

At the entrance of the forest, the Mighty checked his horse, showed Mustapha the way, and gave him his hand with these words: “Mustapha, thou becomest in a strange way the guest of the robber Orbasan. I will not ask thee not to betray what thou hast seen and heard. Thou hast unjustly endured the pains of death, and I owe thee a recompense. Take this dagger as a remembrance, and when thou hast need of help, send it to me, and I will hasten to thy assistance. This purse thou wilt perhaps need upon thy journey.”

My brother thanked him for his generosity; he took the dagger, but refused the purse. Orbasan, however, pressed once again his hand, let the money fall to the ground, and galloped with the speed of the wind into the forest. Mustapha, seeing that he could not overtake him, dismounted to secure the purse, and was astonished at the great magnanimity of his host, for it contained a large sum of gold. He thanked Allah for his deliverance, commended the generous robber to his mercy, and again started, with fresh courage, upon the route to Balsora.

Lezah paused, and looked inquiringly at Achmet, the old merchant.

“No! if it be so,” said the latter, “then will I gladly correct my opinion of Orbasan; for indeed he acted nobly towards thy brother.”

“He behaved like a brave Mussulman,” exclaimed Muley; “but I hope thou hast not here finished thy story, for, as it seems to me, we are all eager to hear still further, how it went with thy brother, and whether he succeeded

in rescuing thy sister and the fair Zoraida.”

“I will willingly proceed,” rejoined Lezah, “if it be not tiresome to you; for my brother’s history is, throughout, full of the most wonderful adventures.”

About the middle of the seventh day after his departure, Mustapha entered the gate of Balsora. As soon as he had arrived at a caravansery, he inquired whether the slave-market, which was held here every year, had opened; but received the startling answer, that he had come two days too late. His informer deplored his tardiness, telling him that on the last day of the market, two female slaves had arrived, of such great beauty as to attract to themselves the eyes of all the merchants.

He inquired more particularly as to their appearance, and there was no doubt in his mind, that they were the unfortunate ones of whom he was in search. Moreover, he learned that the man who had purchased them both, was called Thiuli-Kos, and lived forty leagues from Balsora, an illustrious and wealthy, but quite old man, who had been in his early years Capudan-Bashaw of the Sultan, but had now settled down into private life with the riches he had acquired.

Mustapha was, at first, on the point of remounting his horse with all possible speed, in order to overtake Thiuli-Kos, who could scarcely have had a day’s start; but when he reflected that, as a single man, he could not prevail against the powerful traveller, could still less rescue from him his prey, he set about reflecting for another plan, and soon hit upon one. His resemblance to the Bashaw of Sulieika, which had almost been fatal to him, suggested to him the thought of going to the house of Thiuli-Kos under this name, and, in that way, making an attempt for the deliverance of the two unfortunate maidens. Accordingly he hired attendants and horses, in which the money of Orbasan opportunely came to his assistance, furnished himself and his servants with splendid garments, and set out in the direction of Thiuli’s castle. After five days he arrived in its vicinity. It was situated in a beautiful plain, and was surrounded on all sides by lofty walls, which were but slightly overtopped by the structure itself. When Mustapha had arrived quite near, he dyed his hair and beard black, and stained his face with the juice of a plant, which gave it a brownish color, exactly similar to that of the Bashaw. From this place he sent forward one of his attendants to the castle, and bade him ask a night’s lodging, in the name of the Bashaw of Sulieika. The servant soon returned in company with four finely-attired slaves, who took Mustapha’s horse by the bridle, and led him into the court-yard. There they assisted him to

dismount, and four others escorted him up a wide marble staircase, into the presence of Thiuli.

The latter personage, an old, robust man, received my brother respectfully, and had set before him the best that his castle could afford. After the meal, Mustapha gradually turned the conversation upon the new slaves; whereupon, Thiuli praised their beauty, but expressed regret because they were so sorrowful; nevertheless he believed that would go over after a time. My brother was much delighted at his reception, and, with hope beating high in his bosom, lay down to rest.

He might, perhaps, have been sleeping an hour, when he was awakened by the rays of a lamp, which fell dazzlingly upon his eyes. When he had raised himself up, he believed himself dreaming, for there before him stood the very same little, swarthy fellow of Orbasan's tent, a lamp in his hand, his wide mouth distended with a disgusting laugh. Mustapha pinched himself in the arm, and pulled his nose, in order to see if he were really awake, but the figure remained as before.

"What wishest thou by my bed?" exclaimed Mustapha, recovering from his amazement.

"Do not disquiet yourself so much, my friend," answered the little man. "I made a good guess as to the motive that brought you hither. Although your worthy countenance was still well remembered by me, nevertheless, had I not with my own hand assisted to hang the Bashaw, you might, perhaps, have deceived even me. Now, however, I am here to propose a question."

"First of all, tell me why you came hither," interrupted Mustapha, full of resentment at finding himself detected.

"That I will explain to you," rejoined the other: "I could not put up with the Mighty any longer, and therefore ran away; but you, Mustapha, were properly the cause of our quarrel, and so you must give me your sister to wife, and I will help you in your flight; give her not, and I will go to my new master, and tell him something of our new Bashaw."

Mustapha was beside himself with fear and anger; at the very moment when he thought he had arrived at the happy accomplishment of his wishes, must this wretch come, and frustrate them all! It was the only way to carry his plan into execution—he must slay the little monster: with one bound, he sprang from the bed upon him; but the other, who might perhaps have anticipated something of the kind, let the lamp fall, which was

immediately extinguished, and rushed forth in the dark, crying vehemently for help.

Now was the time for decisive action; the maids he was obliged, for the moment, to abandon, and attend only to his own safety: accordingly, he approached the window, to see if he could not spring from it. It was a tolerable distance from the ground, and on the other side stood a lofty wall, which he would have to surmount. Reflecting, he stood by the window until he heard many voices approaching his chamber: already were they at the door, when seizing desperately his dagger, and garments, he let himself down from the window. The fall was hard, but he felt that no bone was broken; immediately he sprang up, and ran to the wall which surrounded the court. This, to the astonishment of his pursuers, he mounted, and soon found himself at liberty. He ran on until he came to a little forest, where he sank down exhausted. Here he reflected on what was to be done; his horses and attendants he was obliged to leave behind, but the money, which he had placed in his girdle, he had saved.

His inventive genius, however, soon pointed him to another means of deliverance. He walked through the wood until he arrived at a village, where for a small sum he purchased a horse, with the help of which, in a short time, he reached a city. There he inquired for a physician, and was directed to an old experienced man. On this one he prevailed, by a few gold pieces, to furnish him with a medicine to produce a death-like sleep, which, by means of another, might be instantaneously removed. Having obtained this, he purchased a long false beard, a black gown, and various boxes and retorts, so that he could readily pass for a travelling physician; these articles he placed upon an ass, and rode back to the castle of Thiuli-Kos. He was certain, this time, of not being recognised, for the beard disfigured him so that he scarcely knew himself.

Arrived in the vicinity of the castle, he announced himself as the physician Chakamankabudibaba, and matters turned out as he had expected. The splendor of the name procured him extraordinary favor with the old fool, who invited him to table. Chakamankabudibaba appeared before Thiuli, and, having conversed with him scarcely an hour, the old man resolved that all his female slaves should submit to the examination of the wise physician. The latter could scarcely conceal his joy at the idea of once more beholding his beloved sister, and with palpitating heart followed Thiuli, who conducted him to his seraglio. They reached an unoccupied room, which was beautifully furnished.

“Chambaba, or whatever thou mayest be called, my good physician,” said Thiuli-Kos, “look once at that hole in

the wall; thence shall each of my slaves stretch forth her arm, and thou canst feel whether the pulse betoken sickness or health.”

Answer as he might, Mustapha could not arrange it so that he might see them; nevertheless, Thiuli agreed to tell him, each time, the usual health of the one he was examining. Thiuli drew forth a long list from his girdle, and began, with loud voice, to call out, one by one, the names of his slaves; whereupon, each time, a hand came forth from the wall, and the physician felt the pulse. Six had been read off, and declared entirely well, when Thiuli, for the seventh called Fatima, and a small white hand slipped forth from the wall. Trembling with joy, Mustapha grasped it, and with an important air pronounced her seriously ill. Thiuli became very anxious, and commanded his wise Chakamankabudibaba straightway to prescribe some medicine for her. The physician left the room, and wrote a little scroll:

“Fatima, I will preserve thee, if thou canst make up thy mind to take a draught, which for two days will make thee dead; nevertheless, I possess the means of restoring thee to life. If thou wilt, then only return answer, that this liquid has been of no assistance, and it will be to me a token that thou agreest.”

In a moment he returned to the room, where Thiuli had remained. He brought with him an innocent drink, felt the pulse of the sick Fatima once more, pushed the note beneath her bracelet, and then handed her the liquid through the opening in the wall. Thiuli seemed to be in great anxiety on Fatima’s account, and postponed the examination of the rest to a more fitting opportunity. As he left the room with Mustapha, he addressed him in sorrowful accents:

“Chadibaba, tell me plainly, what thinkest thou of Fatima’s illness?”

My brother answered with a deep sigh: “Ah, sir, may the Prophet give you consolation! she has a slow fever, which may, perhaps, cost her life!”

Then burned Thiuli’s anger: “What sayest thou, cursed dog of a physician? She, for whom I gave two thousand gold pieces—shall she die like a cow? Know, if thou preservest her not, I will chop off thine head!”

My brother immediately saw that he had made a misstep, and again inspired Thiuli with hope. While they were yet conversing, a black slave came from the seraglio to tell the physician, that the drink had been of no assistance.

“Put forth all thy skill, Chakamdababelda, or whatever thy name may be; I will pay thee what thou askest!” cried out Thiuli-Kos, well-nigh howling with sorrow, at the idea of losing so much gold.

“I will give her a potion, which will put her out of all danger,” answered the physician.

“Yes, yes!—give it her,” sobbed the old Thiuli.

With joyful heart Mustapha went to bring his soporific, and having given it to the black slave, and shown him how much it was necessary to take for a dose, he went to Thiuli, and, telling him he must procure some medicinal herbs from the sea, hastened through the gate. On the shore, which was not far from the castle, he removed his false garments, and cast them into the water, where they floated merrily around; concealing himself, however, in a thicket, he awaited the night, and then stole softly to the burying-place of Thiuli’s castle.

Hardly an hour had Mustapha been absent, when they brought Thiuli the intelligence that his slave Fatima was in the agonies of death. He sent them to the sea-coast to bring the physician back with all speed, but his messengers returned alone, with the news that the poor physician had fallen into the water, and was drowned; that they had espied his black gown floating upon the surface, and that now and then his large beard peeped forth from amid the billows. Thiuli seeing now no help, cursed himself and the whole world; plucked his beard, and dashed his head against the wall. But all this was of no use, for soon Fatima gave up the ghost, in the arms of her companions. When the unfortunate man heard the news of her death, he commanded them quickly to make a coffin, for he could not tolerate a dead person in his house; and bade them bear forth the corpse to the place of burial. The carriers brought in the coffin, but quickly set it down and fled, for they heard sighs and sobs among the other piles.

Mustapha, who, concealed behind the coffins, had inspired the attendants with such terror, came forth and lighted a lamp, which he had brought for that purpose. Then he drew out a vial which contained the life-restoring medicine, and lifted the lid of Fatima’s coffin. But what amazement seized him, when by the light of the lamp, strange features met his gaze! Neither my sister, nor Zoraida, but an entire stranger, lay in the

coffin! It was some time before he could recover from this new stroke of destiny; at last, however, compassion triumphed over anger. He opened the vial, and administered the liquid. She breathed—she opened her eyes—and seemed for some time to be reflecting where she was. At length, recalling all that had happened, she rose from the coffin, and threw herself, sobbing, at Mustapha's feet.

“How may I thank thee, excellent being,” she exclaimed, “for having freed me from my frightful prison?” Mustapha interrupted her expressions of gratitude by inquiring, how it happened that she, and not his sister Fatima, had been preserved. The maiden looked in amazement.

“Now is my deliverance explained, which was before incomprehensible,” answered she. “Know that in this castle I am called Fatima, and it was to me thou gavest thy note, and the preserving-drink.”

My brother entreated her to give him intelligence of his sister and Zoraida, and learned that they were both in the castle, but, according to Thiuli's custom, had received different names; they were now called Mirza and Nurmahal. When Fatima, the rescued slave, saw that my brother was so cast down by this failure of his enterprise, she bade him take courage, and promised to show him means whereby he could still deliver both the maidens. Aroused by this thought, Mustapha was filled with new hope, and besought her to point out to him the way.

“Only five months,” said she, “have I been Thiuli’s slave; nevertheless, from the first, I have been continually meditating an escape; but for myself alone it was too difficult. In the inner court of the castle, you may have observed a fountain, which pours forth water from ten tubes; this fountain riveted my attention. I remembered in my father’s house to have seen a similar one, the water of which was led up through a spacious aqueduct. In order to learn whether this fountain was constructed in the same manner, I one day praised its magnificence to Thiuli, and inquired after its architect. ‘I myself built it,’ answered he, ‘and what thou seest here is still the smallest part; for the water comes hither into it from a brook at least a thousand paces off, flowing through a vaulted aqueduct, which is as high as a man. And all this have I myself planned.’ After hearing this, I often wished only for a moment to have a man’s strength, in order to roll away the stone from the side of the fountain; then could I have fled whither I would. The aqueduct now will I show to you; through it you can enter the castle by night, and set them free. Only you must have at least two men with you, in order to overpower the slaves which, by night, guard the seraglio.”

Thus she spoke, and my brother Mustapha, although twice disappointed already in his expectations, once again took courage, and hoped with Allah’s assistance to carry out the plan of the slave. He promised to conduct her in safety to her native land, if she would assist him in entering the castle. But one thought still troubled him, namely, where he could find two or three faithful assistants. Thereupon the dagger of Orbasan occurred to him, and the promise of the robber to hasten to his assistance, when he should stand in need of help, and he therefore started with Fatima from the burying-ground, to seek the chieftain.

In the same city where he had converted himself into a physician, with his last money he purchased a horse, and procured lodgings for Fatima, with a poor woman in the suburbs. He, however, hastened towards the mountain where he had first met Orbasan, and reached it in three days. He soon found the tent, and unexpectedly walked in before the chieftain, who welcomed him with friendly courtesy. He related to him his unsuccessful attempts, whereupon the grave Orbasan could not restrain himself from laughing a little now and then, particularly when he announced himself as the physician Chakamankabudibaba. At the treachery of the little man, however, he was furious; and swore, if he could find him, to hang him with his own hand. He assured my brother that he was ready to assist him the moment he should be sufficiently recovered from his ride. Accordingly, Mustapha remained that night again in the robber’s tent, and with the first morning-red they set out, Orbasan taking with him three of his bravest men, well mounted and armed. They rode rapidly,

and in two days arrived at the little city, where Mustapha had left the rescued Fatima. Thence they rode on with her unto the forest, from which, at a little distance, they could see Thiuli's castle; there they concealed themselves, to await the night. As soon as it was dark, guided by Fatima, they proceeded softly to the brook, where the aqueduct commenced, and soon found it. There they left Fatima and a servant with the horses, and prepared themselves for the descent: before they started, however, Fatima once more repeated, with precision, the directions she had given; namely, that, on emerging from the fountain into the inner court-yard, they would find a tower in each corner on the right and left; that inside the sixth gate from the right tower, they would find Fatima and Zoraida, guarded by two black slaves. Well provided with weapons and iron implements for forcing the doors, Mustapha, Orbasan, and the two other men, descended through the aqueduct; they sank, indeed, in water, up to the middle, but not the less vigorously on that account did they press forward.

In a half hour they arrived at the fountain, and immediately began to ply their tools. The wall was thick and firm, but could not long resist the united strength of the four men; they soon made a breach sufficiently large to allow them to slip through without difficulty. Orbasan was the first to emerge, and then assisted the others. Being now all in the court-yard, they examined the side of the castle which lay before them, in order to find the door which had been described. But they could not agree as to which it was, for on counting from the right tower to the left, they found one door which had been walled up, and they knew not whether Fatima had included this in her calculation. But Orbasan was not long in making up his mind: "My good sword will open to me this gate," he exclaimed, advancing to the sixth, while the others followed him. They opened it, and found six black slaves lying asleep upon the floor; imagining that they had missed the object of their search, they were already softly drawing back, when a figure raised itself in the corner, and in well-known accents called for help. It was the little man of the robber-encampment. But ere the slaves knew what had taken place, Orbasan sprang upon the little man, tore his girdle in two, stopped his mouth, and bound his hands behind his back; then he turned to the slaves, some of whom were already half bound by Mustapha and the two others, and assisted in completely overpowering them. They presented their daggers to the breasts of the slaves, and asked where Nurmahal and Mirza were: they confessed that they were in the next chamber. Mustapha rushed into the room, and found Fatima and Zoraida awakened by the noise. They were not long in collecting their jewels and garments, and following my brother.

Meanwhile the two robbers proposed to Orbasan to carry off what they could find, but he forbade them, saying: "It shall never be told of Orbasan, that he enters houses by night, to steal gold." Mustapha, and those he had preserved, quickly stepped into the aqueduct, whither Orbasan promised to follow them immediately. As soon as they had departed, the chieftain and one of the robbers led forth the little man into the court-yard; there, having fastened around his neck a silken cord, which they had brought for that purpose, they hung him on the highest point of the fountain. After having thus punished the treachery of the wretch, they also entered the aqueduct, and followed Mustapha. With tears the two maidens thanked their brave preserver, Orbasan; but he urged them in haste to their flight, for it was very probable that Thiuli-Kos would seek them in every direction.

With deep emotion, on the next day, did Mustapha and the rescued maidens part with Orbasan. Indeed, they never will forget him! Fatima, the freed slave, left us in disguise for Balsora, in order to take passage thence to her native land.

After a short and agreeable journey, my brother and his companions reached home. Delight at seeing them once more, almost killed my old father; the next day after their arrival, he gave a great festival, to which all the city was invited. Before a large assemblage of relations and friends, my brother had to relate his story, and with one voice they praised him and the noble robber.

When, however, Mustapha had finished, my father arose and led Zoraida to him. "Thus remove I," said he with solemn voice, "the curse from thy head; take this maiden as the reward which thy unwearied courage has merited. Receive my fatherly blessing: and may there never be wanting to our city, men who, in brotherly love, in prudence, and bravery, may be thy equals!"

The Caravan had reached the end of the desert, and gladly did the travellers salute the green meadows, and thickly-leaved trees, of whose charms they had been deprived for so many days. In a lovely valley lay a caravansery, which they selected as their resting-place for the night; and though it offered but limited accommodations and refreshment, still was the whole company more happy and sociable than ever: for the thought of having passed through the dangers and hardships, with which a journey through the desert is ever accompanied, had opened every heart, and attuned their minds to jest and gayety. Muley, the young and merry merchant, went through a comic dance, and sang songs thereto, which elicited a laugh, even from Zaleukos,

the serious Greek. But not content with having raised the spirits of his comrades by dance and merriment, he also gave them, in the best style, the story he had promised, and, as soon as he could recover breath from his gambols, began the following tale.

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