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Golden Cities, Far

95¢



Edited, with Introduction and Notes by

LIN CARTER



There is, perhaps, no reading matter so flagrantly devoted to pure pleasure as adult fantasy.

It has appeared in written form now for at least several hundred years, but the tradition of joy in the tales of man's more impossible adventures and endeavors goes back far beyond written history. No country in the world is without its myths, its magic, its epic legends, its gods and heroes of monumental stature.

Lin Carter writes with infectious enthusiasm about the origins and sources of the glittering array of fantasies he has collected in this volume—indeed, his joy in the discoveries he has made is at least as much fun to follow as the reading of each selection itself. And this joy is perhaps why these stories live, and have lived for centuries—in every age there have been those who loved the tales of the past and had the ability to share their love and to perpetuate the grand and glorious history of fantasy.

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**Adult
Fantasy**

GOLDEN CITIES, FAR

**Edited,
with an Introduction
and Notes,
by Lin Carter**

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"How Nefer-ka-ptah Found the Book of Thoth" (orig. "The Story of the Book of Thoth") is from *The Wisdom of the Egyptians* by Brian Brown (New York, Brentano's, 1928).

"The Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld" is a segment from the unpublished poem *Ishtar* (freely rendered from the Sumerian Angalta Kigalsha) by Lin Carter. It appears here in print for the first time, and is copyright © 1970 by Lin Carter.

"The Talisman of Oromanes" is from *Tales of the Genii*, translated by Sir Charles Morell, a pseudonym of the Reverend James Ridley. The edition used here was published in London by George Bell in 1889.

"Wars of the Giants of Albion" is from the first book of the *Historia Regum Britanniae* of Geoffrey of Monmouth; it is a new version of the 1718 Aaron Thompson translation, done especially for *Golden Cities, Far* by Wayland Smith; copyright © 1970 by Lin Carter.

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"The Shadowy Lord of Mommur" is an excerpt from *Huon of Bordeaux*, translated into English by Sir John Bourchier and retold by Robert Steele (London, George Allen, 1895).

"Olivier's Brag" is from *The Merrie Tales of Jacques Tournebroke* by Anatole France, translated by Alfred Allinson. The text used here is taken from *The Works of Anatole France*, Vol. III (New York, Parke, Austin and Lipscomb, n.d.).

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"Arcalaus the Enchanter" is from the First Book of *Amadis of Gaul*, translated by Robert Southey (London, John Russell Smith, 1872), and "The Isle of Wonders" is from the Second Book of the same romance.

"The Palace of Illusions" was translated from the Italian epic *Orlando Furioso* of Ludovico Ariosto especially for its appearance in this book. Copyright © 1970 by Richard Hodgins.

With respect and affection,
I dedicate this compendium
of ancient marvels to
FRITZ LEIBER,
one of the finest living masters
of heroic fantasy

LIN CARTER

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**Here
There Be
Dragons**

An Introduction

. . . geographers . . . crowd into the edges of their maps parts of the world which they do not know about, adding notes in the margin to the effect that beyond this lies nothing but sandy deserts full of wild beasts, unapproachable bogs, Scythian ice, or a frozen sea.

—Plutarch: *Lives, Theseus*

The less you know about a thing, the more eager you are to listen to somebody's extravagant accounts of it and its marvels.

Our ancestors knew hardly anything about geography, but the map makers had to put *something* in those big blank spots. Sometimes they just wrote the name of the country or continent in large calligraphy and filled in the empty places with flourishes and curlicues. On other occasions they sketched in tiny pictures of the Tower of Babel, or Noah's Ark neatly perched on a mountain peak, or Gog and Magog locked up behind the Caucasus.

And once in a while a bored or playful cartographer, confronted with a blank space in, say, the great Gobi Desert or Further Tartary, would lean forward and carefully letter-in "Heere ther bee Dragonnes" or some other morsel of editorial commentary.

Firsthand information was hard to come by in those days. Our ancestors knew next to nothing about the planet they happened to be living on, for the very good reason that it was still mostly unexplored. But that never stopped anyone from making up tall tales of distant marvels.

Take the shape of the earth itself. Anaximander, who made his reputation as a Thinker by importing the sundial into Greece, said it was cylindrical.

That old bean-hater Pythagoras said it was obviously a sphere.* Somebody called Henricus thought it might be oval.

* Actually, he came the closest. The earth *is* a kind of sphere, a sphere flattened at both poles: technically, an "oblate spheroid."

And a rather colorful 6th Century A.D. Egyptian topped them all. He was called Cosmas Indicopleustes, which means "he-who-went-to-India," or something like that, and he was convinced the earth was rectangular like the top of a table.

This Cosmas was a successful traveling salesman who retired from business and got religion. He became a monk and wrote a book called *Christian Topography*, which must be the most insane geography book of all time. As the authority for his tabletop theory, he scorned all profane sources of data and went straight to Holy Writ. St. Paul once called the world "God's tabernacle," you see, and elsewhere the scriptures said your standard tabernacle, or altar, should be two cubits long and one cubit wide. From this Cosmas extrapolated that the world was flat as a board, rectangular, and exactly twice as long from east to west as it was from north to south. (And with sharp corners, I assume.)

Luckily, no one paid much attention to Cosmas Indicopleustes, because everybody had his own idea, and these got wilder as time went on. Wildest of all was a theory of one Matthew of Paris. This savant had the notion that the world was shaped like a spread-out cloak. *Chlamys extensa*, as he put it. That one almost put geographical speculation back two thousand years!

Maps in those days were most intriguing. Based on vague hints in classical authors, or rumors derived from the occasional traveler who may or may not ever have actually been there, or just on their own imaginations, the old geographers filled up their charts with a number of countries that were not really there at all and probably never had been.

The Empire of Prester John was a favorite and, depending on which geographer you preferred, this country was on the marches of Cathay, or somewhere in India, or down at the tail end of Africa.

The land of the Cimmerians was also popular. It was usually up on top of Scythia, or way over beside Hyperborea, or on the shores of the Frozen Sea. The Cimmerians—who turned up in the 20th century in Robert E. Howard's popular stories of Conan the Barbarian—were actually made up by old blind Homer. He seems to have invented them by getting the Welsh *Cymry* tribes confused with an obscure pack of

nomads called the *Gimri*. As the *Gimri* were supposed to dwell north of the Black Sea, Homer and later writers assigned the imaginary nation of Cimmeria to that general region.

Atlantis showed up on some of the older maps too, despite the fact that Plato, who was the first to talk about it, said it had been destroyed ages before. It kept turning up for many centuries, and last made an appearance, I believe, in 1678 A.D., on a map published by Athanasius Kircher, a brainy Jesuit who had a private theory about everything in (or out of) the world, obviously including Atlantis.

Atlantis lay due west of the Pillars of Hercules, where few people had been, so it was safe to put it on maps. But even places somewhat better traveled, like India, were not very realistically depicted. And the further away you got, the fewer the restrictions on creative thinking. . . .

For example, south of India lay the magical island of Taprobane, or Serendib. South of that stretched the mighty waters of the Indian Ocean, or as they used to call it in those days, the Erythraean Sea.

This sea was, of course, filled with a variety of nautical monstrosities. One such was the *Fastitocalon*, a sort of awfully big whale who liked to snooze on top of the ocean with most of him under the surface and just his back above the waters. He was so big that his back alone was as big as an island, and frequently was mistaken for one. In fact, the *Fastitocalon* was constantly being landed on by sea-weary mariners hungry for a bit of *terra firma*. They usually did not discover their mistake until after they had built a bonfire on his back with the sun-dried seaweed and driftwood with which his enormous bulk was bedecked. Awakened to find himself on fire, the *Fastitocalon*, not unnaturally, would crash-dive to the ocean floor—generally taking the hapless mariners down with him. (But not always; sometimes they got back to their ship in time to sail away unscathed, as did our old friend Sinbad on his first voyage.)

Another spectacular denizen of the Erythraean Sea was the *Aspidochelone*, a king-sized turtle who had the sweetest breath in Creation. So sweet, in fact, that all he had to do for lunch was cruise along the surface with his mouth open, and

the fish, delighted by the odor of his breath, swam right in by the solid ton. This was definitely not the safest of all seas to sail!

Below all this was a colossal continent of marvels called *Terra Australis Incognita*, or the Unknown Southland, for the excellent reason that nobody had ever been there. Which, of course, hardly stopped people from talking about it.

The Unknown Southland has quite an amusing history. Originally, it was called Antichthon or sometimes, Antipodea. The cartographer Oronce Fine renamed it Terra Australis on his 1531 world map, and the name stuck. The idea of there being such a place dates back to another one of those Greek wise men called Hipparchus of Bithynia. (Who flourished, if that's really the word I want, around 146-127 B.C.)

He sounds to me like a thoroughly unlikable, quarrelsome, hardheaded old pedant. Once he got an idea into his head, it was there to stay, and he was not about to change his mind to please anybody. Most of Hipparchus' books are lost by now, but we know a lot about his ideas because people like Strabo and Claudius Ptolemy were always quoting him. Especially Ptolemy, who thought him quite a brain and stole most of his stuff for his own *Almagest*.

We don't know much about Hipparchus' career, but he seems to have been constantly getting into fights with other philosophers. He had violent opinions about Eratosthenes; he was dead set against the "new" astronomy that had sprung up since Alexander the Great; he thought Aristarchus of Samos was a fool and his heliocentric theory hogwash (as a matter of fact, the theory was absolutely true); and at some point, Hipparchus got the wrong idea about the tail end of Africa. He figured that it curved around the other way and ran along *underneath* the Indian Ocean.

Eventually he decided that Africa ran all the way to China and was a part of it, making the Indian Ocean a land-locked sea. Since you could hardly call this Africa-to-China land bridge either "Africa" or "China", a new name had to be devised: hence Antichthon, Antipodea, and later on, Terra Australis Incognita.

When Ptolemy came along he bought the whole idea—lock, stock and barrel. And so did everybody after Ptolemy. Then somebody decided Terra Incognita wasn't a part of Africa or China after all. Oh, it was there, all right, but it

was a full-blown island continent of its own, not just the bottom part of one.

This idea of a separate continent south of everything else perhaps arose because of Pythagoras. He promulgated the idea (actually, a rather pretty idea), that the gods, being perfect, could create only perfection; and Pythagoras' idea of perfection was that everything balanced equally.

Hence if you had a map with Europe, Asia, and Africa in the top half, it ought to be balanced with the same amount of real estate in the bottom half. Thus, by the 5th century A.D., we have Macrobius' world map showing Terra Incognita as big as Asia, Africa and Europe rolled into one.

The more imaginative geographers vied with each other in making up facts about this fantasy continent. It was a lush tropical country filled with flowers, they said. The streets were paved with gold; the women were not only gorgeous but went around without any clothes on; and diamonds and emeralds were as common as pebbles on the beach. One of the later map-makers, Ortelius, added the most picturesque detail of all: Terra Incognita, said he, abounded in parrots as big as horses. (Actually, he said, "*Psittacorum regio . . . ob incredibilem earem avium ibedem magnitudinem.*" A whopper like that one is enough to sink most imaginary continents on the spot.)

Time passed. Terra Incognita got bigger and fancier and more detailed. Beside the giant parrots and all those naked women, it was by now adorned with exquisitely detailed rivers and mountain ranges and so on, just like a real country . . . despite the fact that nobody had ever been there.

The end was in sight for Terra Incognita though. On May 20, 1498, Vasco da Gama dropped anchor in Calcutta harbor. He had sailed around Africa and straight to India—going right through the place where Hipparchus' imaginary elongated African peninsula was supposed to have been. And he didn't spot a single diamond-strewn shore line on the way, or even a giant parrot. People hate to give up a lovely notion though, and seventeen years after da Gama sailed right through it, obstinate geographers like the Nuremberg mathematician Johannes Schöner were still showing the imaginary country—palm trees, parrots, and all—on their globes. However, doom was at hand: further voyages squelched the le-

gend, and the Unknown Southland gradually faded into myth.

Hipparchus had the last laugh, however. In 1820, a 21-year-old sailor named Nathaniel Palmer, master of the sloop *Hero* out of Stonington, Connecticut, realized the dream of sixteen centuries when he cruised along the western coast of a peninsula that turned out to be part of a genuine south polar continent—now familiar to every schoolboy by the name of Antarctica. That peninsula is now named Palmer Land, after the young Connecticut sailor.

If Hipparchus had the last laugh, Ortelius got a chuckle or two out of it as well. For when people like Scott and Amundsen got to Antarctica they found the polar continent inhabited, maybe not by gigantic parrots, but at least by a remarkable and otherwise unknown species of huge bird called the penguin.

Why do people make up places like Cimmeria and Atlantis and Terra Incognita and then spin wild yarns about their many marvels?

Simple. Once people start speculating about what lies just over the horizon, a basic law of human nature, which I have just invented, goes into action. I call it "Carter's Third Law," or the Greener Pastures Theorem. It goes like this:

Everybody knows how things are at home—they are terrible. You work like a dog night and day and just barely manage to keep the wolf from the door and the wife and kids from having to beg from strangers in the street, and as soon as you are able to lay a few *tetradrachmas* away for a rainy day, the local potentate raises the price of leeks or slaps another tax on the family chariot.

Conditions are awful and they are getting worse every day, and this has been the way of the world since the last Ice Age at least. So, in order to keep yourself from going bats or running amok in the forum with a meat ax, you comfort yourself with the happy thought that somewhere there is a lovely land where the streets are paved with gold, all the women look like Raquel Welch and walk around with their clothes off, and rubies and emeralds are just lying around in such numbers as to form a traffic hazard.

Thus, while worrying about where you are going to scrape

up the bread to pay for Junior's root canal work and last month's installment on last year's palanquin, you can at least beguile yourself with glittering dreams of

*. . . fabulous lands and golden cities, far
Beyond the dim, endragonned, dreaming sea.*

And, by golly, it makes you feel better!

It doesn't in the least matter where the fabulous land of glittering cities and fantastic marvels is, or how reliable the information about it is, just so long as you can believe it's there.

Nor does the name really matter. Pindar called it Hyperborea; Pytheas of Massilia called it Ultima Thule; Plato called it Atlantis; Aristophanes called it Nephelococcygia; Pliny called it the Fortunate Isles; Sir Thomas More called it Utopia. So did Rabelais. Medieval writers called it Cockaigne.

Our own century has given it a host of new names, beautiful names—Oz, Barsoom, Tormance, Neverland, Zimiamvia, Poictesme, Carcosa, Narnia, Simrana, Middle-earth, Zothique. As a race, we have always been fascinated by the gorgeous realms of our own imagination, and I dare say we always will be.

Here is a whole bookful of them.

When I edited *Dragons, Elves, and Heroes* for Ballantine Books last year, I selected some of the most splendid stories from the epics, myths, legends and romances of Spain, Finland, Persia, Russia, Wales, and Scotland. My tales came from the *Kalevala*, the *Shah Namah*, the *Gesta Romanorum*, the *Mabinogion*, and the great prose romance, *Palmerin of England*.

Of course I did not even come near to exhausting the world's treasure-house of heroic fantasy, which must have been obvious to the majority of my readers. Many tales I wanted to include in that anthology I simply did not locate in time; many others did not occur to me until it was too late; and there were some which I very much desired to put in that book but which were just not available in good translations.

The chance to edit this new collection, *Golden Cities, Far,*

gives me the opportunity to make up for some of those omissions. In this new book you will find scenes and stories drawn from the heroic literature of Italy, Arabia, Portugal, Sumeria, France, Britain and Egypt.

I have packed this book with tales drawn from some of the strangest and most magical wonder-books ever written—*Orlando Furioso* and *The Arabian Nights*, the fabulous chronicles of Charlemagne and of King Arthur, ancient tales of marvels from the Sumerian epics and the Egyptian papyri, and from the most glorious and immortal of all the romances, *Amadis of Gaul*. Some of the versions included have not ever been published before and were created especially for this book. Such is the case with the excellent translation from Ariosto, which Richard Hodgens made at my request.

I wish you a happy voyage through *Golden Cities, Far*.

—LIN CARTER

Editorial Consultant:
The Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series

Hollis, Long Island, New York

PART I

FROM

THE ANCIENT

EAST



“But as a rule the ancient myths are not found to yield a simple and consistent story, so that nobody need wonder if details of my recension cannot be reconciled with those given by every poet and historian.”

—Diodorus Siculus

Introduction to the First Tale: How Nefer-Ka-Ptah Found The Book of Thoth

A very old legend relates that one night the mighty philosopher and magician, Apollonius of Tyana, opened a secret tomb beneath the Great Pyramid of Cheops and discovered the mummy of Hermes Trismegistus. Clashed to the bosom of the mummy of the ancient magician was a miraculous tablet of pure emerald, engraved with a mystic inscription in the lost Phoenician tongue. The wise old philosopher pried loose the grasp of the withered fingers and bore the Emerald Tablet from the tomb. And thus was discovered the secret formula—the great mystery of the alchemists—which the long-dead magician had carved upon his mystic emerald eons before.

The Greeks called him Hermes Trismegistus, but he was really the Egyptian god Thoth. Actually even that name is incorrect: a precise transliteration of the hieroglyphics is impossible, as the Egyptians did not write down vowels, but the name has been reconstructed as "Tehuti." Since all the scribes set down were consonants, this turns up as "T-H-T" on the monuments; hence, by adding the vowels you prefer, you can get "Thoth."

He was a moon god, lord of science and magic, inventor of hieroglyphics and medicine, and he is one of the very oldest of the gods of the Egyptian pantheon. Oddly enough, even the Egyptians called him a magician and the Emerald Tablet, no recent forgery, has been found copied out in a document called the

Leyden papyrus, which was itself found in the tomb of an anonymous magician in Thebes in 1828.

Thoth—Hermes Trismegistus—wrote *The Book of Thoth*.

And thereby hangs a tale. . . .

There is no more fabled and mysterious book in the world than *The Book of Thoth*.

It was written by the very hand of the ibis-headed God of Magic when he resided upon the earth in human form. No one is exactly certain just when this was, but it was a very long time ago and doubtless before the Flood. His reign over Egypt followed those of several other gods, including Isis and Osiris, to whose court Thoth served as a sort of grand vizier.

During his stay on earth, Thoth set down the secrets of magical wisdom in a great book, or perhaps in many books known generically as *The Book of Thoth*. After he quit the earth and returned to the supernal abode of the gods, many sorcerers sought the hiding-place of this mighty volume.

Or so goes the old story.

The odd thing is that some authorities believe there may be a germ of truth behind it.

The ancient Egyptians always deified their kings, and in later dynasties, kings automatically became gods upon ascending the throne of Upper and Lower Egypt. This went for foreign intruders too; hence Alexander and Julius Caesar became gods, at least beside the Nile.

This custom aside, some scholars suggest that Thoth may actually have been a grand vizier to some early king. A wise statesman, a learned man, a deep philosopher, his wisdom would savor of the supernatural to later generations. Thus the statesman-philosopher might, in time, have become a powerful magician, at least in the popular imagination (as happened to the Latin poet Virgil in the Middle Ages), and from there it is only a short step to godhood.

At any rate, we have it on the highest authority that *The Book of Thoth*—or at least, a number of

FROM THE ANCIENT EAST

books ascribed to Thoth's authorship—were venerated throughout Egyptian history and were still preserved as late as the early years of the Christian era. We know this because St. Clement of Alexandria saw them carried through the streets in a pagan religious festival, and recorded his account of the procession.

When the Greeks got into Egypt they identified the ibis-headed god of magic and learning with their own god Hermes. Since one of the Egyptian titles of this divinity calls him "thrice-greatest Thoth," the Greeks referred thereafter to the god as "thrice-greatest Hermes," or "Hermes Trismegistus."

In the late classical and early Christian eras, this Hermes Trismegistus became transmuted into a lordly magician of terrific powers: he had built the pyramids and the Sphinx; he had written mighty books; he was the greatest wizard the Ancient World had seen.

Fragments of philosophical tracts attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, and dating most likely from the Hellenistic age, have been discovered and translated. A noted scholar, G. R. S. Mead, has translated them and published them, together with his brilliant commentaries, in three volumes. The name of this work is, most appropriately, *Thrice-Greatest-Hermes*; it appeared in 1906. (I have read the fragments, and they have little to do with authentic Egyptian religion or occult philosophy.)

It seems a good yarn has real lasting power. The story that follows is one of the oldest in the world, and it still has the vigor and weird mystery requisite to thrill new generations.

The story was found among Egyptian papyri which dated from the XIX Dynasty. That was the glorious age of Seti I and Rameses and Merneptah, somewhere around the time of the legendary Exodus. Modern authorities call this the New Kingdom and date it roughly between 1567 B.C. and 1085 B.C.

The story, then, was written down about thirty-three centuries ago, although in vocal tradition it may, of course, be far older than even that.

A tale has to be a good one to last for 3,300 years.
I trust you will agree with me that this one is.

How Nefer-Ka-Ptah Found the Book of Thoth From the Egyptian Papyri, Retold by Brian Brown

Now Ahura was the wife of Nefer-ka-ptah, and their child was Merab; this was the name by which he was registered by the scribes in the House of Life. And Nefer-ka-ptah, though he was the son of the King, cared for naught on earth but to read the ancient records, written on papyrus in the House of Life or engraved on stone in the temples; all day and every day he studied the ancient wisdom of remote ages.

One day he went into the temple to pray to the gods, but when he saw the inscriptions on the walls he began to read them; and he forgot to pray, he forgot the gods, he forgot the priests, he forgot all that was around him until he heard laughter behind him. He looked around and a priest stood there, and from him came the laughter.

"Why laughest thou at me?" asked Nefer-ka-ptah.

"Because thou readest these worthless writings," answered the priest. "If thou wouldst read writings that are worth the reading, I can tell thee where the Book of Thoth lies hidden."

Then Nefer-ka-ptah was eager in his questions, and the priest replied, "Thoth wrote the Book with his own hand, and in it is all the magic in the world. If thou readest the first page, thou wilt enchant the sky, the earth, the abyss, the mountains, and the sea; thou wilt understand the language of the birds of the air, and thou wilt know what the creeping things of earth are saying, and thou wilt see the fishes from the darkest depths of the sea. And if thou readest the other page, even though thou wert dead and in the world of ghosts, thou couldst come back to earth in the

FROM THE ANCIENT EAST

form thou once hadst. And besides this, thou wilt see the sun shining in the sky with the full moon and the stars, and thou wilt behold the great shapes of the gods."

Then said Nefer-ka-ptah, "By the life of Pharaoh, that Book shall be mine. Tell me whatsoever it is that thou desirest, and I will do it for thee."

"Provide for my funeral," said the priest. "See that I am buried as a rich man, with priests and mourning women, offerings, libations, and incense. Then shall my soul rest in peace in the fields of Aalu. One hundred pieces of silver must be spent upon my burying."

Then Nefer-ka-ptah sent a fleet messenger to fetch the money, and he paid one hundred pieces of silver into the priest's hands. When the priest had taken the silver, he said to Nefer-ka-ptah:

"The Book is at Koptos in the middle of the river.
In the middle of the river is an iron box,
In the iron box is a bronze box,
In the bronze box is a keté-wood box,
In the keté-wood box is an ivory-and-ebony box,
In the ivory-and-ebony box is a silver box,
In the silver box is a gold box,
And in the gold box is the Book of Thoth,
Round about the great iron box are snakes and scorpions
and all manner of crawling things, and above all there is
snake which no man can kill. These are set to guard
the Book of Thoth."

When the priest had finished speaking, Nefer-ka-ptah ran out of the temple, for his joy was so great that he knew not where he was. He ran quickly to Ahura to tell her about the Book and that he would go to Koptos and find it.

But Ahura was very sorrowful, and said, "Go not on this journey, for trouble and grief await thee in the southern land."

She laid her hand upon Nefer-ka-ptah as though she would hold him back from the sorrow that awaited him. But he would not be restrained, and broke away from her and went to the King, his father.

He told the King all that he had learned, and said, "Give me the royal barge, O my father, that I may go to the southern land with my wife Ahura and my son Merab. For the Book of Thoth I must and will have."

So the King gave orders and the royal barge was prepared, and in it Nefer-ka-ptah, Ahura, and Merab sailed up the river to the southern land as far as Koptos. When they arrived at Koptos, the high priest and all the priests of Isis of Koptos came down to the river to welcome Nefer-ka-ptah, sacrificed an ox and a goose, and poured a libation of wine to Isis of Koptos and her son Harpocrates. After this, the priests of Isis and their wives made a great feast for four days in honor of Nefer-ka-ptah and Ahura.

On the morning of the fifth day, Nefer-ka-ptah called to him a priest of Isis, a great magician learned in all the mysteries of the gods. And together they made a little magic box, like the cabin of a boat, and they made men and a great store of tackle, and put the men and the tackle in the magic cabin. Then they uttered a spell over the cabin, and the men breathed and were alive, and began to use the tackle. And Nefer-ka-ptah sank the magic cabin in the river, saying, "Workmen, workmen! Work for me!" And he filled the royal barge with sand and sailed away alone, while Ahura sat on the bank of the river at Koptos, and watched and waited, for she knew that sorrow must come of this journey to the southern land.

The magic men in the magic cabin toiled all night and all day for three nights and three days along the bottom of the river; and when they stopped, the royal barge stopped also, and Nefer-ka-ptah knew that he had arrived where the Book lay hidden.

He took the sand out of the royal barge and threw it into the water, and it made a gap in the river, a gap of a schoenus long and a schoenus wide; in the middle of the gap lay the iron box, and beside the box was coiled the great snake that no man can kill, and all around the box on every side to the edge of the walls of water were snakes and scorpions and all manner of crawling things.

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Then Nefer-ka-ptah stood up in the royal barge, and across the water he cried to the snakes and scorpions and crawling things; a loud and terrible cry, and the words were words of magic. As soon as his voice was still, the snakes and scorpions and crawling things were still also, for they were enchanted by means of the magical words of Nefer-ka-ptah, and they could not move. Nefer-ka-ptah brought the royal barge to the edge of the gap, and he walked through the snakes and scorpions and crawling things, and they looked at him, but could not move because of the spell that was on them.

And now Nefer-ka-ptah was face to face with the snake that no man could kill, and it reared itself up ready for battle. Nefer-ka-ptah rushed upon it and cut off its head, and at once the head and body came together, each to each, and the snake that no man could kill was alive again, and ready for the fray. Again Nefer-ka-ptah rushed upon it, and so hard did he strike that the head was flung far from the body, but at once the head and body came together again, each to each, and again the snake that no man could kill was alive and ready to fight. Then Nefer-ka-ptah saw that the snake was immortal and could not be slain but must be overcome by subtle means. Again he rushed upon it and cut it in two, and very quickly he put sand on each part, so that when the head and body came together there was sand between them and they could not join, and the snake that no man could kill lay helpless before him.

Then Nefer-ka-ptah went to the great box where it stood in the gap in the middle of the river, and the snakes and scorpions and crawling things watched, but they could not stop him.

He opened the iron box and found a bronze box,
He opened the bronze box and found a keté-wood box,
He opened the keté-wood box and found an ivory-and-ebony box,
He opened the ivory-and-ebony box and found a silver box,
He opened the silver box and found a gold box,
He opened the gold box and found the Book of Thoth.

He opened the Book and read a page, and at once he had enchanted the sky, the earth, the abyss, the mountains, and the sea, and he understood the language of birds, fish, and beasts. He read the second page and he saw the sun shining in the sky, with the full moon and the stars, and he saw the great shapes of the gods themselves; and so strong was the magic that the fishes came up from the darkest depths of the sea. So he knew that what the priest had told him was true.

Then he thought of Ahura waiting for him at Koptos, and he cast a magic spell upon the men that he had made, saying, "Workmen, workmen! Work for me! and take me back to the place from which I came." They toiled day and night till they came to Koptos, and there was Ahura sitting by the river, having eaten nothing and drunk nothing since Nefer-ka-ptah went away. For she sat waiting and watching for the sorrow that was to come upon them.

But when she saw Nefer-ka-ptah returning in the royal barge, her heart was glad and she rejoiced exceedingly. Nefer-ka-ptah came to her and put the Book of Thoth into her hands and bade her read it. When she read the first page, she enchanted the sky, the earth, the abyss, the mountains, and the sea, and she understood the language of birds, fish, and beasts; and when she read the second page, she saw the sun shining in the sky, with the full moon and the stars, and she saw the great shapes of the gods themselves; and so strong was the magic that the fishes came up from the darkest depths of the sea.

Nefer-ka-ptah now called for a piece of new papyrus and for a cup of beer; and on the papyrus he wrote all the spells that were in the Book of Thoth. Then he took the cup of beer and washed the papyrus in the beer, so that all the ink was washed off and the papyrus became as though it had never been written on. And Nefer-ka-ptah drank the beer, and at once he knew all the spells that had been written on the papyrus, for this is the method of the great magicians.

Then Nefer-ka-ptah and Ahura went to the temple of Isis and gave offerings to Isis and Harpocrates, and made a great feast, and the next day they went on board the royal barge

and sailed joyfully away down the river towards the northern land.

But behold, Thoth had discovered the loss of his Book, and Thoth raged like a panther of the south, and he hastened before Ra and told him all, saying, "Nefer-ka-ptah has found my magic box and opened it, and has stolen my Book, even the Book of Thoth; he slew the guards that surrounded it, and the snake that no man can kill lay helpless before him. Avenge me, O Ra, upon Nefer-ka-ptah, son of the King of Egypt."

The majesty of Ra answered and said, "Take him and his wife and his child, and do with them as thou wilt." And now the sorrow for which Ahura watched and waited was about to come upon them, for Thoth took with him a power from Ra to give him his desire upon the stealer of his Book.

As the royal barge sailed smoothly down the river, the little boy Merab ran out from the shade of the awning and leaned over the side watching the water. And the power of Ra drew him, so that he fell into the river and was drowned. When he fell, all the sailors on the royal barge and all the people walking on the river-bank raised a great cry, but they could not save him. Nefer-ka-ptah came out of the cabin and read a magical spell over the water, and the body of Merab came to the surface, and they brought it on board the royal barge. Then Nefer-ka-ptah read another spell, and so great was its power that the dead child spoke and told Nefer-ka-ptah all that had happened among the gods, that Thoth was seeking vengeance, and that Ra had granted him his desire upon the stealer of his Book.

Nefer-ka-ptah gave command, and the royal barge returned to Koptos, that Merab might be buried there with the honor due to the son of a prince. When the funeral ceremonies were over, the royal barge sailed down the river toward the northern land. A joyful journey was it no longer, for Merab was dead, and Ahura's heart was heavy on account of the sorrow that was still to come, for the vengeance of Thoth was not yet fulfilled.

They reached the place where Merab had fallen into the

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water, and Ahura came out from under the shade of the awning, and she leaned over the side of the barge, and the power of Ra drew her so that she fell into the river and was drowned. When she fell, all the sailors in the royal barge and all the people walking on the river-bank raised a great cry, but they could not save her. Nefer-ka-ptah came out of the cabin and read a magical spell over the water, and the body of Ahura came to the surface, and they brought it on board the royal barge. Then Nefer-ka-ptah read another spell and so great was its power that the dead woman spoke and told Nefer-ka-ptah all that had happened among the gods, that Thoth was still seeking vengeance, and that Ra had granted him his desire upon the stealer of his Book.

Nefer-ka-ptah gave command and the royal barge returned to Koptos, that Ahura might be buried there with the honor due to the daughter of a king. When the funeral ceremonies were over, the royal barge sailed down the river towards the northern land. A sorrowful journey was it now, for Ahura and Merab were dead, and the vengeance of Thoth was not yet fulfilled.

They reached the place where Ahura and Merab had fallen into the water, and Nefer-ka-ptah felt the power of Ra drawing him. Though he struggled against it, he knew that it would conquer him. He took a piece of royal linen, fine and strong, and made it into a girdle, and with it he bound the Book of Thoth firmly to his breast, for he was resolved that Thoth should never have his Book again.

Then the power drew him yet more strongly, and he came from under the shade of the awning and threw himself into the river and was drowned. When he fell, all the sailors of the royal barge and all the people walking on the river-bank raised a great cry, but they could not save him. And when they looked for his body they could not find it. So the royal barge sailed down the river till they reached the northern land and came to Memphis, and the chiefs of the royal barge went to the King and told him all that had happened.

The King put on mourning raiment; he and his courtiers, the high priest and all the priests of Memphis, the King's

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army and the King's household, were clothed in mourning apparel, and they walked in procession to the haven of Memphis to the royal barge. When they came to the haven, they saw the body of Nefer-ka-ptah floating in the water beside the barge, close to the great steering-oars. And this marvel came to pass because of the magical powers of Nefer-ka-ptah; even in death he was a great magician by reason of the spells he had washed off the papyrus and drunk in the beer.

Then they drew him out of the water, and they saw the Book of Thoth bound to his breast with the girdle of royal linen. And the King gave command that they should bury Nefer-ka-ptah with the honor due to the son of a king, and that the Book of Thoth should be buried with him.

Thus was the vengeance of Thoth fulfilled, but the Book remained with Nefer-ka-ptah.

Introduction to the Second Tale: The Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld

In a corner of my dining room stands a Victorian curio cabinet with glass shelves and a mirror back. On one of these shelves, amidst a fascinating clutter of Egyptian talismans and tomb-figurines, Greek and Roman pottery, old Chinese jade and cloisonné, Phoenician beads and pre-Columbian pottery, lies an object of great antiquity and interest.

It is a tablet of baked clay inscribed with cuneiform. Broken at one end, black and crumbling with age, it is probably about three thousand years old. An almost palpable aura of ancients hovers about it. I have never attempted to have a translation made of the eight rows of cuneiform inscription which some long-dead hand cut into this old Babylonian tablet. Hence I have no idea what message it has borne across the immensity of thirty centuries from the crumbling ruins of Chaldea to my home on Long Island. Nor do I know where it came from with any precision . . . but I like to imagine that it is a fragment from a certain royal library . . . the most ancient library known to man, and perhaps the first collection of books in human history.

The Great King of Assyria, the Conqueror of the Earth, the Lord of Many Cities, the Beloved Son of the Gods, was truly a mighty man of war.

He had been elevated to the throne of his father, the Great King Esarhaddon, some time before the year 668 B.C. He raised the war standard against his enemies; he conquered the Egyptians; he plundered the wealth of golden Susa; and all of the ancient world

lay at his feet as he reigned from his splendid capitol, Nineveh. He ruled the world for more than forty years and his name appears in the Bible.

His people called him *Assur-bani-pal*, which means "Assur creates a son." But the Greek historians, for some reason known only to Greek historians, called him "Sardanapalus." And the Hebrew author of the Book of Ezra in the Old Testament—his own name is unknown to us—called him "Asnapper," again for some reason known only to nameless Hebrew authors.

Assurbanipal was the last, and perhaps the greatest, of the line of kings to rule the empire of the Assyrians; and after he died around 625 B.C., his country was overrun by its enemies, and his great city of Nineveh was destroyed by the Chaldeans. Deserted, a cluster of ruins, it was quickly buried and forgotten, and eventually it became only a name, a legend, its very site a forgotten mystery.

The last half of the 19th century might well be called "the heroic age of archaeology." By the middle of the century, Champollion had discovered the key to the Rosetta Stone. By 1870, a retired German banker named Schliemann, armed only with a copy of Homer, had begun excavating the site of Troy. By 1900, Sir Arthur Evans was digging up the lost city of Knossos on Crete. And in 1839, a young English traveler named Henry Layard paused en route to Ceylon—and discovered Nineveh!

The trip to Ceylon was forgotten, and with good reason. For Layard had found the palace of Assurbanipal, and the first library known to man. In all, some twenty-five thousand cuneiform tablets of baked clay were brought back to the British Museum, and in 1872 the world gasped with amazement, for among the Ninevite tablets had been discovered a description of the Flood.

Today we know that Assurbanipal was not only a great conqueror and a mighty king, but the world's first collector of rare books. For Assurbanipal sent his agents out to comb the archives of the old cities of his empire, and brought back to Nineveh the lost

literature of a forgotten people, the Sumerians, which his scholars translated into the Assyrian language, thus miraculously preserving the writings of a most ancient and mysterious race.

The Sumerians are the mystery-people of antiquity, and the secret of their amazing civilization has yet to be discovered.

Six thousand years ago, at the very beginnings of history, they entered Mesopotamia out of the shadowy East, conquered, and built cities. During the immense age that stretched from 3,500 to two thousand years before Christ, their strange civilization dominated all that part of the world. During the Sumerian Age the art of cuneiform writing was invented and perfected, and the Sumerians created an elaborate mythos and an astounding literature that is rich in wonder and marvel, filled with human insight and wisdom and splendid tales of heroic fantasy.

They were neither a Semitic nor an Indo-European people, and their language, which is agglutinative, like Hungarian, Finnish, and Turkish, is beautiful and mysterious. For the Sumerian language stands alone: it is not related to any other known language on earth, living or dead. Its deciphering would have been humanly impossible had it not been for a fortunate accident. The Sumerians, you see, were of a higher order of civilization than any previously known, and when at last they were overthrown and vanished from history, they had made such a powerful impression on the Semitic peoples native to that region that their language became a holy tongue, and survived the extinction of Sumeria much in the way that Latin survived the collapse of the Roman Empire and became the *lingua franca* of the Christian world.

The civilizations that arose after the fall of Sumeria left us bilingual syllabaries and even interlinear translations of the Sumerian classics, in which each line of the Sumerian original is followed by its Akkadian translation. By the age of Assurbanipal, fifteen centuries after the disappearance of the Sumerians, the language was almost forgotten, which is why the Great King of Assurbanipal had the classics translated into

his own tongue, Assyrian; thus preserving the epics into the next era.

The wonderful library of Assurbanipal, the oldest collection of books known to us, and probably the first in the world, was rescued intact from the wreckage of forgotten Nineveh by the careful hands of Austen Henry Layard. It was a great archaeological triumph—one of the greatest discoveries of all time. It is immeasurably important because it added more to our knowledge of preclassical antiquity than any other single discovery.

And if there is no patron saint of us book-collectors, I for one, am happy to nominate Assurbanipal, Lord of Nineveh, once King of the World, to that honor.

As new generations of archaeologists followed Layard to the buried cities of Mesopotamia, they discovered something almost as remarkable as the world's first library: the world's first library *catalogue*! This listing of the Sumerian classics by title proved valuable when it came to identifying the clay books and piecing their fragments together.

Among those listed, however, some were missing. One of these was a poem called the *Angalta Kigalshe*, which means "from the great above." The Sumerians, it seems, sometimes took the first couple of words of a poem and used them as its title. And the very first line of this poem, in the original Sumerian, transliterates as:

An-gal-ta ki-gal-she geshtug-ga-ni na-an-gub.

The *story* of the poem was known; it was usually referred to as "Ishtar's Descent to the Netherworld." But it was almost seventy-five years before the text of the poem itself turned up, and when it did it was in an Akkadian version which dated from the first millennium B.C. It was discovered in bits and pieces, and the first three fragments were among previously unidentified shards in the University Museum at Philadelphia.

A very great scholar named Samuel Noah Kramer, who has devoted his career to the high civilization of

the Sumerians, pieced the poem together and deciphered it: It was quite a job, and it took him six years to do it, for the fragments were scattered far and wide, from Philadelphia to Oxford to Istanbul. Dr. Kramer has published the original text, the transliteration, and his own translation; the ending of the poem, unfortunately, has never come to light.

Fourteen years ago I became fascinated with the haunting power of the Sumerian epics, and with the strange beauty of the *Angalta Kigalshe* in particular. The slow, undulant rhythm of the Sumerian line of verse, and the somber repetition of lines and images, have a peculiar magic; one can almost hear a solemn chorus chanting the poem.

Inevitably, I found myself attempting a version of the *Angalta Kigalshe*. It is not a formal translation, for I am no Sumerian scholar. It is an imaginative reconstruction of the poem as it might once have been. I am indebted to the version published by Samuel Noah Kramer, but I have freely rehandled the ordering of the lines, bridged missing lines and verses with new ones of my own, and reshaped the whole movement of the poem. It follows the style and structure, the language and imagery of the *Angalta Kigalshe*, but I have not scrupled to replace awkward or difficult lines with lines of my own coinage. And I use the Babylonian "Ishtar" rather than the Sumerian "Inanna" as the more familiar name.

The story of the poem begins after Tammuz, the lover of Ishtar, has been slain; the goddess laments the demise of the handsome youth and descends into the Netherworld to plead with the Lord of the Dead that he be restored to the land of the living. I refrain from printing the poem in its entirety here, as it is very long. This is, by the way, the first publication of my *Ishtar* or of any portion of it.

The Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld
From the Sumerian epic,
Angalta Kigalshe
in a new version by Lin Carter

I The Lament

Weep, weep for Tammuz, weep for Tammuz slain.
Weep for the young, the golden-throated god
beloved of Ishtar whose house is the sixth of zones.
Weep for the young god now bereft of life,
taken by black Nergal into the Netherworld,
to the land of no returning, to the house of night,
where dust lies thick on bolt and door;
O weep for Tammuz, slain.

As a tall tamarisk growing in the garden
whose root no stream hath blessed,
as a slim willow planted in the forest
whose root no water reacheth,
Tammuz hath faded and fallen,
the young god hath faded and fallen,
taken by Nergal the Dark Hornless One
to the land of the unliving, to the doors of death,
O weep for Tammuz, slain.

*From the great above to the great below,
the goddess, from the great above to the great below,
Ishtar, from the great above to the great below,
descendeth.*

Seeking the spirit of her lover slain,
seeking the spirit of young Tammuz slain,

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my lady abandoned heaven, abandoned earth.
To the Netherworld she descended.

From the white mansion of the moon
Lord Sin the god immortal saw her pass.
Sin, god of gods, saw her pass
and he darkened his bright sphere
that all heaven and earth might know
and mourn her mighty sorrow.

*From the great above to the great below,
to the Netherworld she descended.*

From the golden house of the sun
Lord Shamash the god eternal saw her pass.
Shamash, god of gods, saw her pass
and he darkened his brilliant sphere
that all gods and men might know
and mourn her depthless sorrow.

*From the great above to the great below,
to the Netherworld she descended.*

II *The Wanderings*

Through the world she passed on her journey,
and through the five ancient cities.

And the streets of Shuruppak wept for her,
the towers of Babtibira wept for her,
the walls of Nippur wept for her
and Nippur sang a song to her sorrow:

O Ishtar, mother of the world,
lady of the morning and the evening,
fare well on your long journey,
fare well on your quest of sorrow,
come safe to the dark kingdom,
come safe to the land of shadows,
and free Tammuz from the hand of Death.

Through the world she passed on her journey,

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and the lion-gated cities.

And the streets of Zabalam wept for her,
the towers of Uruk wept for her,
the walls of Kish wept for her
and Kish sang a song to her sorrow:
O Ishtar, mother of the gods,
great goddess, full breasted,
fare well on your long journey,
fare well on your quest of sorrow,
come safe to the black kingdom,
come safe to the land of spirits,
and free Tammuz from the hand of Night.

Through the world she passed on her journey,
and the shining, sacred cities.

And the streets of Adab wept for her,
the towers of Ur wept for her,
the walls of Nineveh wept for her
and Nineveh sang a song to her sorrow:
O Ishtar, mother of mankind,
lady of love, lady of beauty,
fare well on your long journey,
fare well on your quest of sorrow,
come safe to the grim kingdom,
come safe to the land of darkness,
and free Tammuz from the hand of Nergal.

III *The Descent*

To the first gate came the goddess,
before the onyx gate she halted,
to the keeper of the gate she spake:
I am Ishtar, and I would pass.

And the first gate opened unto her,
the Shugurra, the crown of the plain,
was lifted from her brows.

*From the great above to the great below,
to the Netherworld she descended.*

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To the second gate came the goddess,
before the amber gate she halted,
to the keeper of the gate she spake:
I am Ishtar, and I would pass.
And the second gate opened unto her,
the rod, the rod of lapis lazuli,
was lifted from her hand.
*From the land of light to the land of darkness,
to the Netherworld she descended.*

To the third gate came the goddess,
before the agate gate she halted,
to the keeper of the gate she spake:
I am Ishtar, and I would pass.
And the third gate opened unto her,
the stones, the chain of precious stones,
were lifted from about her throat.
*From the land of the living to the land of death,
to the Netherworld she descended.*

To the fourth gate came the goddess,
before the crystal gate she halted,
to the keeper of the gate she spake:
I am Ishtar, and I would pass.
And the fourth gate opened unto her,
the gems, the sparkling gems,
were lifted from her breast.
*From the house of joy to the house of sorrow,
to the Netherworld she descended.*

To the fifth gate came the goddess,
before the lapis gate she halted,
to the keeper of the gate she spake:
I am Ishtar, and I would pass.
And the fifth gate opened unto her,
the ring, the gold ring that she wore,
was lifted from her finger.
From the house of day to the house of night,

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to the Netherworld she descended.

To the sixth gate came the goddess,
before the ruby gate she halted,
to the keeper of the gate she spake:
I am Ishar, and I would pass.

And the sixth gate opened unto her,
the pectoral, the gleaming pectoral,
was lifted from her breast.

*From the house of hope to the house of despair,
to the Netherworld she descended.*

To the seventh gate came the goddess,
before the silver gate she halted,
to the keeper of the gate she spake:
I am Ishtar, and I would pass.
And the seventh gate opened unto her,
the robes, the robes she wore as garments,
were lifted from her body.

*From the great above to the great below,
to the Netherworld she descended.*

IV *The Supplication*

My lady abandoned heaven, abandoned earth,
to the Netherworld she came
to the dark house of Nergal,
to the seven-gated palace.

Naked she was brought into the house,
naked she was brought into the hall,
naked she was led before the throne
naked she made supplication.

Before the shadow throne she knelt,
to him who sat thereon she spake:
O Nergal, lord of darkness,
prince of shadows, hear my mission.
To the Netherworld have I come

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with the water of life for my beloved,
to revive the form of Tammuz,
that the earth may bloom in springtime,
and the womb of nature burgeon;
lord of spirits, prince of dead men,
give me back the soul of Tammuz,
only Tammuz, I implore you!

Nergal, on the throne of darkness,
looked upon her, naked, kneeling.
Nergal looked upon her beauty
and beheld her tears of sorrow.
As the rays of sun in springtime
warm the earth, though dark and frozen,
make it quicken with the seedlings,
so her beauty warmed his being
and his heart was moved to pity.

PART II:

**THE WORLD
OF THE
ARABIAN
NIGHTS**



The vast blue night
Was murmurous with peris' plumes
And the leathern wings of genies; words of power
Were whispering; and old fishermen,
Casting their nets with prayer, might draw to shore
Dead loveliness: or a prodigy in scales
Worth in the Caliph's kitchen pieces of gold:
Or copper vessels, stopped with lead,
Wherein some Squire of Eblis watched and railed,
In durance under potent charactry
Graven by the seal of Solomon the King.

—William Ernest Henley

Introduction to the Third Tale: Prince Ahmed and The Fairy Paribanou

In the year 1704 Queen Anne was on the throne of England, and the fourteenth Louis, of the house of Bourbon, ruled the kingdom of France, then in its fifth year of war against the Grand Alliance. Great events were taking place on the world stage; the face of Europe was in the throes of change; ancient dynasties were crumbling and old, out-moded ways of life were sinking towards extinction. And four small books appeared that year on the bookstalls of Paris.

Two hundred and sixty-six years have passed since that far-off day, and I doubt if many of my readers could tell who the members of the Grand Alliance were, or the name of that war, or who won it. Or even what it was all about.

But there is hardly a single one of my readers who is not familiar with the contents of those four little books that so unobtrusively adorned the bookstalls along the Seine that long-gone and vanished summer. . . .

Such, I suppose, is the irony of fame. The kings and conquerors, the wars and dynasties, and all that most of us would, without really thinking much about it, consider important, are really of no importance at all compared to the importance of a book. At least, a book as famous and as beloved as the imperishable *Arabian Nights*.

It was the distinguished Orientalist and archaeologist Antoine Galland whose name appeared on those first four volumes of his edition of *The Arabian Nights* (his books were entitled *Les Mille et Une Nuit*). He was a very famous and widely honored scholar of

the time, although today his sole claim to fame is authorship of that translation.

At the beginning of the 18th century hardly anything was known of the literature of the "mysterious East." European travelers had ventured into the realms of Islam and returned with glowing accounts of exotic and barbaric magnificence. But of Eastern literature scarcely anything was known. Hence the unique value of Galland's pioneering work, for it was the first translation of any size or importance from Oriental literature.

Galland achieved international success virtually overnight. Pirated versions appeared at once in Amsterdam. Other European capitals soon delighted in their own translated versions of one of the world's most superb and glorious storybooks. Within three years England, too, was reading of Sinbad the Sailor, Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, and all the other marvels of the Orient, in an anonymous English version done by an unknown writer called "the Grub Street translator."

The Arabian Nights is still considered one of the most successful books in the history of printing. And the end is not even in sight.

Galland, you see, introduced Europe to a new world of wonder—a world of gorgeous cities of domes and minarets, of winged horses and flying carpets, of sinister Oriental enchanters and glorious Caliphs, of magic rings and caverns of glittering treasure—where captive djinns lay ensorcelled in wave-borne bottles under the Seal of Solomon the King. A whole new universe of dazzling beauty and magical adventure was thus made available to the European reader, and *The Arabian Nights* has been enormously popular from that day to our own.

When I was editing *Dragons, Elves, and Heroes*, I very much wanted to include something from *The Arabian Nights*. But the better stories, and the more fantastic, are too familiar, and I believed the choice lay between one of these—like Ali Baba, or Aladdin—or a tale of minor interest. In the end, I chose

a third alternative and omitted *The Arabian Nights* altogether from that first collection.

In the interim, I have discovered—or rediscovered, actually, since I had read it a time or two before—one of the most gorgeous and inventive of all the tales Scheherazade ever told.

Andrew Lang singled out "Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Paribanou" for particular praise. He did this by including the tale in the very first of his "color" fairy-tale anthologies, *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889). You can derive an accurate estimate of the very high esteem with which Lang regarded this tale if you stop to think that *The Blue Fairy Book*, being the first of his twelve anthologies, naturally contained the cream of the crop.

He also paid this tale the singular compliment of using part of its "machinery" as background lore in a story of his own. For when, in that same year of 1889, he wrote his splendid fantasy novel for children, *Prince Prigio*, he had his pragmatic young prince of Pantouflia discover in the palace attic, among a clutter of old rubbish, certain family heirlooms, among which were "the famous carpet which Prince Hussein bought long ago, in the market at Bisnagar . . . that spyglass of carved ivory which Prince Ali bought in the bazaar in Schiraz," to say nothing of a flask of water from the Fountain of Lions. You will learn of the discovery of each of these marvels in "Prince Ahmed."

Since this story strikes me as one of the very best in *The Arabian Nights*, it is a trifle curious to note that, insofar as I have been able to discover, it has never yet been included in any modern English version of *The Arabian Nights*.

It was in Galland's, however. Galland's *Les Mille et Une Nuit—The Thousand and One Nights*—were published in twelve small volumes. They appeared in Paris between 1704, when the first of them was printed, and 1717. "Prince Ahmed" is in the last of the twelve.

The story, to be honest, does not have the ring of authenticity to it. This is not to say it is not a good

story, for it is; indeed, it is a superb tale; but it has more the style and flavor of classic French fairy-tales from the *Cabinet des Fées* or a comparable collection. It just does not sound genuinely Arabic or Persian.

Perhaps for this reason, in part, and certainly for the very good reason that Galland did not live to publish the last volume, which contained it, (the book was seen through the press by other hands) suspicious scholars and translators cast doubt on the bona-fides of "Prince Ahmed." Frankly, they considered it spurious: a tale penned by Galland himself, most likely.

It does not appear in the John Payne translation; even Sir Richard Francis Burton omits it (although he included it among the *Supplemental Nights*, together with other stories of indefinite and dubious authenticity). No recent edition known to me includes it, and this is a great pity.

The facts of the matter came out much later. The manuscripts from which Galland worked to produce that posthumous twelfth volume were unfortunately lost, so we do not know where he got the tale. But "Prince Ahmed" is indeed authentic. Versions of the story have since been discovered in Sanskrit, Hindi, Tamil, and Persian. So perhaps, now that its credentials have been approved, some editor will include the tale of "Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Paribanou" among *The Arabian Nights*, where it justly belongs.

Incidentally, Scheherazade told her Sultan this tale on the Six Hundred and Forty-Third Night. He enjoyed it so much that she managed to stretch it out over the next twenty-four evenings.

I hope you like it as much as the Sultan Shahriyar, Andrew Lang, and I.

Prince Ahmed and the Fairy Paribanou
From Galland's
Les Mille et Une Nuit
In an Old English Version

I

There was a sultan who had three sons and a niece. The eldest of the princes was called Houssain, the second Ali, the youngest Ahmed, and the princess, his niece, Nouronihar.

The Princess Nouronihar was the daughter of the younger brother of the sultan, who died, and left the princess very young. The sultan took upon himself the care of his daughter's education, and brought her up in his palace with the three princes, proposing to marry her when she arrived at a proper age, and to contract an alliance with some neighboring prince by that means. But when he perceived that the three princes, his sons, loved her passionately, he thought more seriously on that affair. He was very much concerned. The difficulty he foresaw was to make them agree, and that the two youngest should consent to yield her up to their elder brother. As he found them positively obstinate, he sent for them all together and said to them: "Children, since for your good and quiet I have not been able to persuade you no longer to aspire to the princess, your cousin, I think it would not be amiss if every one traveled separately into different countries, so that you might not meet each other. And as you know I am very curious and delight in everything that's singular, I promise my niece in marriage to him that shall bring me the most extraordinary rarity; and for the purchase of the rarity you shall go in search after and the expense of traveling I will give you every one a sum of money."

As the three princes were always submissive and obedient

to the sultan's will, and each flattered himself fortune might prove favorable to him, they all consented to it. The sultan paid them the money he promised them, and that very day they gave orders for the preparations for their travels and took their leaves of the sultan, that they might be the more ready to go the next morning. Accordingly they all set out at the same gate of the city, each dressed like a merchant, attended by an officer of confidence dressed like a slave, and all well mounted and equipped. They went the first day's journey together and lay all at an inn, where the road was divided into three different tracts. At night, when they were at supper together, they all agreed to travel for a year and to meet at that inn; and that the first that came should wait for the rest; that as they had all three taken their leaves together of the sultan, they might all return together. The next morning by break of day, after they had embraced and wished each good success, they mounted their horses and took each a different road.

Prince Houssain, the eldest brother, arrived at Bisnagar, the capital of the kingdom of that name and the residence of its king. He went and lodged at a khan appointed for foreign merchants, and having learned that there were four principal divisions where merchants of all sorts sold their commodities and kept shops, and in the midst of which stood the castle, or rather the king's palace, he went to one of those divisions the next day.

Prince Houssain could not view this division without admiration. It was large and divided into several streets, all vaulted and shaded from the sun, and yet very light too. The shops were all of a size, and all that dealt in the same sort of goods lived in one street; as also the handicrafts-men, who kept their shops in the smaller streets.

The multitude of shops, stocked with all sorts of merchandises, as the finest linens from several parts of India, some painted in the most lively colors, and representing beasts, trees, and flowers, silks and brocades from Persia, China, and other places, porcelain both from Japan and China, and tapestries, surprised him so much that he knew not how to

believe his own eyes; but when he came to the goldsmiths and jewels he was in a kind of ecstasy to behold such prodigious quantities of wrought gold and silver, and was dazzled by the luster of the pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and other jewels exposed to sale.

Another thing Prince Houssain particularly admired was the great number of rose-sellers who crowded the streets, for the Indians are so great lovers of that flower that not one will stir without a nosegay in his hand or a garland on his head; and the merchants keep them in pots in their shops, that the air is perfectly perfumed.

After Prince Houssain had run through that division, street by street, his thoughts fully employed on the riches he had seen, he was very much tired, which a merchant perceiving civilly invited him to sit down in his shop, and he accepted; but had not been sat down long before he saw a crier pass by with a piece of tapestry on his arm, about six feet square, and cried at thirty purses. The prince called to the crier and asked to see the tapestry, which seemed to him to be valued at an exorbitant price, not only for the size of it, but the meanness of the stuff. When he had examined it well, he told the crier that he could not comprehend how so small a piece of tapestry and of so indifferent appearance could be set at so high a price.

The crier, who took him for a merchant, replied: "If this price seems so extravagant to you, your amazement will be greater when I tell you I have orders to raise it to forty purses and not to part with it under." "Certainly," answered Prince Houssain, "it must have something very extraordinary in it which I know nothing of." "You have guessed it, sir," replied the crier, "and will own it when you come to know that whoever sits on this piece of tapestry may be transported in an instant wherever he desires to be, without being stopped by any obstacle."

At this discourse of the crier the Prince of the Indies, considering that the principal motive of his travel was to carry the sultan, his father, home some singular rarity, thought that he could not meet with any which could give

him more satisfaction. "If the tapestry," said he to the crier, "has the virtue you assign it, I shall not think forty purses too much, but shall make you a present besides." "Sir," replied the crier, "I have told you the truth; and it is an easy matter to convince you of it as soon as you have made the bargain for forty purses, on condition I show you the experiment. But as I suppose you have not so much about you, and to receive them I must go with you to your khan, where you lodge, with the leave of the master of the shop we will go into the back shop and I will spread the tapestry; and when we have both sat down and you have formed the wish to be transported into your apartment of the khan, if we are not transported thither, it shall be no bargain, and you shall be at your liberty. As to your present, though I am paid for my trouble by the seller, I shall receive it as a favor and be very much obliged to you and thankful."

On the credit of the crier the prince accepted the conditions and concluded the bargain, and having got the master's leave they went into his back shop. They both sat down on the tapestry, and as soon as the prince formed his wish to be transported into his apartment at the khan he presently found himself and the crier there; and as he wanted not a more sufficient proof of the virtue of the tapestry, he counted the crier out forty purses of gold and gave him twenty pieces for himself.

In this manner Prince Houssain became the possessor of the tapestry, and was overjoyed that at his arrival at Bisnagar he had found so rare a piece which he never disputed would gain him the hand of Nouronihar. In short, he looked upon it as an impossible thing for the princes, his younger brothers, to meet with anything to be compared with it. It was in his power, by sitting on his tapestry, to be at the place of meeting that very day; but as he was obliged to stay there for his brothers, as they had agreed, and as he was curious to see the King of Bisnagar and his court and to inform himself of the strength, laws, customs, and religion of the kingdom, he chose to make a longer abode there and to spend some months in satisfying his curiosity.

Prince Houssain might have made a longer abode in the kingdom and court of Bisnagar, but he was so eager to be nearer the princess that, spreading the tapestry, he and the officer he had brought with him sat down and, as soon as he had formed his wish, were transported to the inn at which he and his brothers were to meet, and where he passed for a merchant till they came.

Prince Ali, Prince Houssain's second brother, who designed to travel into Persia, took the road, having three days after he parted with his brothers joined a caravan, and after four days' travel, arrived at Schiraz, which was the capital of the kingdom of Persia. Here he passed for a jeweler.

The next morning Prince Ali, who traveled only for his pleasure and had brought nothing but just necessaries along with him, after he had dressed himself, took a walk into that part of the town which they at Schiraz called the bezestein.

Among all the criers who passed backward and forward with several sorts of goods, offering to sell them, he was not a little surprised to see one who held an ivory telescope in his hand of about a foot in length and the thickness of a man's thumb, and cried it at thirty purses. At first he thought the crier mad, and to inform himself, went to a shop and said to the merchant, who stood at the door: "Pray, sir, is not that man" (pointing to the crier who cried the ivory perspective glass at thirty purses) "mad? If he is not, I am very much deceived." "Indeed, sir," answered the merchant, "he was in his right senses yesterday; and I can assure you he is one of the ablest criers we have, and the most employed of any when anything valuable is to be sold. And if he cries the ivory perspective glass at thirty purses it must be worth as much or more, on some account or other. He will come by presently, and we will call him, and you shall be satisfied. In the mean time sit down on my sofa and rest yourself."

Prince Ali accepted the merchant's obliging offer, and presently afterward the crier passed by. The merchant called him by his name and, pointing to the prince, said to him: "Tell that gentleman, who asked me if you were in your right senses, what you mean by crying that ivory perspective glass,

which seems not to be worth much, at thirty purses. I should be very much amazed myself if I did not know you." The crier, addressing himself to Prince Ali, said: "Sir, you are not the only person that takes me for a madman on account of this perspective glass. You shall judge yourself whether I am or no, when I have told you its property: and I hope you will value it at as high a price as those I have showed it to already, who had as bad an opinion of me as you. First, sir," pursued the crier, presenting the ivory pipe to the prince, "observe that this pipe is furnished with a glass at both ends, and consider that by looking through one of them you see whatever object you wish to behold."

"I am," said the prince, "ready to make you all imaginable reparation for the scandal I have thrown on you if you will make the truth of what you advance appear," and as he had the ivory pipe in his hand, after he had looked at the two glasses he said: "Show me at which of these ends I must look that I may be satisfied."

The crier presently showed him, and he looked through, wishing at the same time to see the sultan, his father, whom he immediately beheld in perfect health, set on his throne, in the midst of his council. Afterward, as there was nothing in the world so dear to him, after the sultan, as the Princess Nouronihar, he wished to see her; and saw her at her toilet, laughing and in a pleasant humor, with her women about her.

Prince Ali wanted no other proof to be persuaded that this perspective glass was the most valuable thing in the world, and believed that if he should neglect to purchase it he should never meet again with such another rarity. He therefore took the crier with him to the khan where he lodged, and told him out the money and received the perspective glass.

Prince Ali was overjoyed at his bargain, and persuaded himself that as his brothers would not be able to meet with anything so rare and admirable, the Princess Nouronihar would be the recompense of his fatigue and trouble; that he thought of nothing but visiting the court of Persia incognito,

and seeing whatever was curious in Schiraz and thereabout till the caravan with which he came returned back to the Indies. As soon as the caravan was ready to set out, the prince joined them, and arrived happily without any accident or trouble, otherwise than the length of the journey and fatigue of traveling, at the place of rendezvous, where he found Prince Houssain, and both waited for Prince Ahmed.

Prince Ahmed, who took the road of Samarcand, the next day after his arrival there went, as his brothers had done, into the bezestein, where he had not walked long but heard a crier, who had an artificial apple in his hand, cry it at thirty-five purses, upon which he stopped the crier and said to him: "Let me see that apple, and tell me what virtue and extraordinary properties it has, to be valued at so high a rate." "Sir," said the crier, giving it into his hand, "if you look at the outside of this apple, it is very worthless, but if you consider its properties, virtues, and the great use and benefit it is to mankind, you will say it is no price for it, and that he who possesses it is master of a great treasure. In short, it cures all sick persons of the most mortal diseases, and if the patient is dying, it will recover him immediately and restore him to perfect health; and this is done after the easiest manner in the world, which is by the patient's smelling the apple."

"If I may believe you," replied Prince Ahmed, "the virtues of this apple are wonderful, and it is invaluable; but what ground have I, for all you tell me, to be persuaded of the truth of this matter?" "Sir," replied the crier, "the thing is known and averred by the whole city of Samarcand; but, without going any further, ask all these merchants you see here and hear what they say. You will find several of them will tell you they had not been alive this day if they had not made use of this excellent remedy. And that you may the better comprehend what it is, I must tell you it is the fruit of the study and experiments of a celebrated philosopher of this city, who applied himself all his lifetime to the study and knowledge of the virtues of plants and minerals, and at last attained to this composition, by which he performed such

surprising cures in this town as will never be forgot, but died suddenly himself, before he could apply his sovereign remedy, and left his wife and a great many young children behind him in very indifferent circumstances, who, to support her family and provide for her children, is resolved to sell it."

While the crier informed Prince Ahmed of the virtues of the artificial apple a great many persons came about them and confirmed what he said; and one among the rest said he had a friend dangerously ill whose life was despaired of, and that was a favorable opportunity to show Prince Ahmed the experiment. Upon which Prince Ahmed told the crier he would give him forty purses if he cured the sick person.

The crier, who had orders to sell it at that price, said to Prince Ahmed: "Come, sir, let us go and make the experiment, and the apple shall be yours; and I can assure you that it will always have the desired effect." In short, the experiment succeeded, and the prince, after he had counted out to the crier forty purses and he had delivered the apple to him, waited patiently for the first caravan that should return to the Indies, and arrived in perfect health at the inn where the Princes Houssain and Ali waited for him.

When the princes met they showed each other their treasures, and immediately saw through the glass that the princess was dying. They then sat down on the carpet, wished themselves with her, and were there in a moment.

Prince Ahmed no sooner perceived himself in Nouronihar's chamber than he rose off the tapestry, as did also the other two princes, and went to the bedside and put the apple under her nose. Some moments after, the princess opened her eyes and turned her head from one side to another, looking at the persons who stood about her, and then rose up in the bed and asked to be dressed, just as if she had waked out of a sound sleep. Her women having presently informed her, in a manner that showed their joy, that she was obliged to the three princes for the sudden recovery of her health, and particularly to Prince Ahmed, she immediately expressed her joy to see them, and thanked them all together and afterward Prince Ahmed in particular.

While the princess was dressing the princes went to throw themselves at the sultan their father's feet and pay their respects to him. But when they came before him they found he had been informed of their arrival by the chief of the princess' eunuchs, and by what means the princess had been perfectly cured. The sultan received and embraced them with the greatest joy, both for their return and the recovery of the princess, his niece, whom he loved as well as if she had been his own daughter, and who had been given over by the physicians. After the usual ceremonies and compliments, the princes presented each his rarity: Prince Houssain his tapestry, which he had taken care not to leave behind him in the princess' chamber; Prince Ali his ivory perspective glass; and Prince Ahmed his artificial apple: and after each had commended their present, when they put it into the sultan's hands, they begged of him to pronounce their fate, and declare to which of them he would give the Princess Nouronihar for a wife, according to his promise.

The Sultan of the Indies, having heard, without interrupting them, all that the princes could represent further about their rarities, and being well informed of what had happened in relation to the Princess Nouronihar's cure, remained some time silent, as if he were thinking on what answer he should make. At last he broke silence and said to them: "I would declare for one of you children with a great deal of pleasure if I could do it with justice: but consider whether I can do it or no. 'Tis true, Prince Ahmed, the princess, my niece, is obliged to your artificial apple for her cure; but I must ask you whether or no you could have been so serviceable to her if you had not known by Prince Ali's perspective glass the danger she was in, and if Prince Houssain's tapestry had not brought you so soon. Your perspective glass, Prince Ali, informed you and your brothers that you were like to lose the princess, your cousin, and there you must own a great obligation.

"You must also grant that that knowledge would have been of no service without the artificial apple and the tapestry. And lastly, Prince Houssain, the princess would be very

ungrateful if she should not show her acknowledgment of the service of your tapestry, which was so necessary a means toward her cure. But consider, it would have been of little use if you had not been acquainted with the princess' illness by Prince Ali's glass and Prince Ahmed had not applied his artificial apple. Therefore, as neither tapestry, ivory perspective glass, nor artificial apple has the least preference one before the other, but, on the contrary, there's a perfect equality, I cannot grant the princess to any one of you; and the only fruit you have reaped from your travels is the glory of having equally contributed to restore her health.

"If all this be true," added the sultan, "you see that I must have recourse to other means to determine certainly in the choice I ought to make among you; and that, as there is time enough between this and night, I'll do it to-day. Go and get each of you a bow and arrow, and repair to the great plain where they exercise horses. I'll soon come to you; and declare I will give the Princess Nouronihar to him that shoots the furthest."

The three princes had nothing to say against the decision of the sultan. When they were out of his presence they each provided themselves with a bow and arrow, which they delivered to one of their officers and went to the plain appointed, followed by a great concourse of people.

The sultan did not make them wait long for him, and as soon as he arrived, Prince Houssain, as the eldest, took his bow and arrow and shot first; Prince Ali shot next, and much beyond him; and Prince Ahmed last of all, but it so happened that nobody could see where his arrow fell; and notwithstanding all the diligence that was used by himself and everybody else, it was not to be found far or near. And though it was believed that he shot the furthest and that he therefore deserved the Princess Nouronihar, it was, however, necessary that his arrow should be found to make the matter more evident and certain; and notwithstanding his remonstrance, the sultan judged in favor of Prince Ali, and gave orders for preparations to be made for the wedding,

which was celebrated a few days after with great magnificence.

Prince Houssain would not honor the feast with his presence. In short, his grief was so violent and insupportable that he left the court and renounced all right of succession to the crown, to turn hermit.

Prince Ahmed, too, did not come to Prince Ali's and the Princess Nouronihar's wedding, any more than his brother Houssain, but did not renounce the world as he had done. But as he could not imagine what had become of his arrow, he stole away from his attendants and resolved to search after it, that he might not have anything to reproach himself with. With this intent he went to the place where the Princes Houssain and Ali's were gathered up, and going straight forward from there, looking carefully on both sides of him, he went so far that at last he began to think his labor was all in vain; but yet could not help going forward till he came to some steep craggy rocks, which were bounds to his journey and were situated in a barren country about four leagues distant from where he set out.

II

When Prince Ahmed came pretty nigh to these rocks he perceived an arrow, which he gathered up, looked earnestly at, and was in the greatest astonishment to find it was the same he shot away. "Certainly," said he to himself, "neither I nor any man living could shoot an arrow so far," and finding it laid flat, not sticking into the ground, he judged that it rebounded against the rock. "There must be some mystery in this," said he, to himself again, "and it may be advantageous to me. Perhaps fortune, to make me amends for depriving me of what I thought the greatest happiness, may have reserved a greater blessing for my comfort."

As these rocks were full of caves, and some of those caves were deep, the prince entered into one, and looking about, cast his eyes on an iron door, which seemed to have no lock, but he feared it was fastened. Thrusting against it, it opened,

and discovered an easy descent, but no steps, which he walked down with his arrow in his hand. At first he thought he was going into a dark, obscure place, but presently a quite different light succeeded that which he came out of, and entering into a large, spacious place at about fifty or sixty paces distant, he perceived a magnificent palace, which he had not then time enough to look at. At the same time, a lady of majestic port and air advanced as far as the porch, attended by a large troop of ladies, so finely dressed and beautiful that it was difficult to distinguish which was the mistress.

As soon as Prince Ahmed perceived the lady, he made all imaginable haste to go and pay his respects; and the lady, on her part, seeing him coming, prevented him from addressing his discourse to her first, but said to him: "Come nearer, Prince Ahmed—you are welcome."

It was no small surprise to the prince to hear himself named in a place he had never heard of, though so nigh to his father's capital, and he could not comprehend how he should be known to a lady who was a stranger to him. At last he returned the lady's compliment by throwing himself at her feet, and rising up again, said to her: "Madam, I return you a thousand thanks for the assurance you give me of a welcome to a place where I believed my imprudent curiosity had made me penetrate too far. But, madam, may I, without being guilty of ill manners, dare to ask you by what adventure you know me? And how you, who live in the same neighborhood with me, should be so great a stranger to me?" "Prince," said the lady, "let us go into the hall. There I will gratify you in your request."

After these words, the lady led Prince Ahmed into the hall. Then she sat down on a sofa, and when the prince by her entreaty had done the same, she said: "You are surprised, you say, that I should know you and not be known by you, but you will be no longer surprised when I inform you who I am. You are undoubtedly sensible that your religion teaches you to believe that the world is inhabited by genii as well as men. I am the daughter of one of the most powerful

and distinguished genii, and my name is Paribanou. The only thing that I have to add is that you seemed to me worthy of a more happy fate than that of possessing the Princess Nouronihar; and that you might attain to it, I was present when you drew your arrow, and foresaw it would not go beyond Prince Houssain's. I took it in the air and gave it the necessary motion to strike against the rocks near which you found it, and I tell you that it lies in your power to make use of the favorable opportunity which presents itself to make you happy."

As the fairy Paribanou pronounced these last words with a different tone and looked at the same time tenderly upon Prince Ahmed, with a modest blush on her cheeks, it was no hard matter for the prince to comprehend what happiness she meant. He presently considered that the Princess Nouronihar could never be his, and that the fairy Paribanou excelled her infinitely in beauty, agreeableness, wit, and, as much as he could conjecture by the magnificence of the palace, in immense riches. He blessed the moment that he thought of seeking after his arrow a second time, and yielding to his love, he replied: "Madam, should I all my life have the happiness of being your slave and the admirer of the many charms which ravish my soul, I should think myself the most blessed of men. Pardon in me the boldness which inspires me to ask this favor, and don't refuse to admit me into your court, a prince who is entirely devoted to you."

"Prince," answered the fairy, "will you not pledge your faith to me as well as I give mine to you?" "Yes, madam," replied the prince in an ecstasy of joy. "What can I do better and with greater pleasure? Yes, my sultanness, my queen, I'll give you my heart without the least reserve." "Then," answered the fairy, "you are my husband and I am your wife. But as I suppose," pursued she, "that you have eaten nothing to-day, a slight repast shall be served up for you, while preparations are making for our wedding-feast at night, and then I will show you the apartments of my palace, and you shall judge if this hall is not the meanest part of it."

Some of the fairy's women, who came into the hall with

them and guessed her intentions, went immediately out, and returned presently with some excellent meats and wines.

When Prince Ahmed had ate and drunk as much as he cared for, the fairy Paribanou carried him through all the apartments, where he saw diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and all sorts of fine jewels, intermixed with pearls, agate, jasper, porphyry, and all sorts of the most precious marbles. But, not to mention the richness of the furniture, which was inestimable, there was such profuseness throughout that the prince, instead of ever having seen anything like it, owned that he could not have imagined that there was anything in the world that could come up to it. "Prince," said the fairy, "if you admire my palace so much, which, indeed, is very beautiful, what would you say to the palaces of the chief of our genii, which are much more beautiful, spacious, and magnificent? I could also charm you with my gardens, but we will let that alone till another time. Night draws near, and it will be time to go to supper."

The next hall which the fairy led the prince into, and where the cloth was laid for the feast, was the last apartment the prince had not seen and not in the least inferior to the others. At his entrance into it he admired the infinite number of sconces of wax candles perfumed with amber, the multitude of which, instead of being confused, were placed with so just a symmetry as formed an agreeable and pleasant sight. A large side table was set out with all sorts of gold plate, so finely wrought that the workmanship was much more valuable than the weight of the gold. Several choruses of beautiful women richly dressed, and whose voices were ravishing, began a concert, accompanied with all sorts of the most harmonious instruments; and when they were set down at table the fairy Paribanou took care to help Prince Ahmed with the most delicate meats, which she named as she invited him to eat of them, and which the prince found to be so exquisitely nice that he commended them with exaggeration, and said that the entertainment far surpassed those of men. He found also the same excellence in the wines, which

neither he nor the fairy tasted of till the dessert was served up, which consisted of the choicest sweetmeats and fruits.

The wedding-feast was continued the next day, or rather the days following the celebration were a continual feast.

At the end of six months Prince Ahmed, who always loved and honored the sultan, his father, conceived a great desire to know how he was, and that desire could not be satisfied without his going to see. He told the fairy of it and desired she would give him leave.

"Prince," said she, "go when you please. But don't take it amiss that I give you some advice how you shall behave yourself where you are going. First, I don't think it proper for you to tell the sultan, your father, of our marriage, nor of my quality nor the place where you have been. Beg of him to be satisfied in knowing you are happy, and desire no more; and let him know that the sole end of your visit is to make him easy and inform him of your fate."

She appointed twenty gentlemen, well mounted and equipped, to attend him. When all was ready Prince Ahmed took his leave of the fairy, embraced her, and renewed his promise to return soon. Then his horse, which was most finely caparisoned, and was as beautiful a creature as any in the Sultan of the Indies' stables, was led to him, and he mounted him with an extraordinary grace; and after he had bid her a last adieu, set forward on his journey.

As it was not a great way to his father's capital, Prince Ahmed soon arrived there. The people, glad to see him again, received him with acclamations of joy and followed him in crowds to the sultan's apartment. The sultan received and embraced him with great joy, complaining at the same time, with a fatherly tenderness, of the affliction his long absence had been to him, which he said was the more grievous for that, fortune having decided in favor of Prince Ali, his brother, he was afraid he might have committed some rash action.

The prince told a story of his adventures without speaking of the fairy, whom he said that he must not mention, and ended: "The only favor I ask of your majesty is to give me

leave to come often and pay you my respects and to know how you do."

"Son," answered the Sultan of the Indies, "I cannot refuse you the leave you ask me, but I should much rather you would resolve to stay with me. At least tell me where I may send to you if you should fail to come, or when I may think your presence necessary."

"Sir," replied Prince Ahmed, "what your majesty asks of me is part of the mystery I spoke to your majesty of. I beg of you to give me leave to remain silent on this head, for I shall come so frequently that I am afraid that I shall sooner be thought troublesome than be accused of negligence in my duty."

The Sultan of the Indies pressed Prince Ahmed no more, but said to him:

"Son, I penetrate no further into your secrets, but leave you at your liberty; but can tell you that you could not do me a greater pleasure than to come, and by your presence restore to me the joy I have not felt this long time, and that you shall always be welcome when you come, without interrupting your business or pleasure."

Prince Ahmed stayed but three days at the sultan his father's court, and the fourth returned to the fairy Paribanou, who did not expect him so soon.

A month after Prince Ahmed's return from paying a visit to his father, as the fairy Paribanon had observed that the prince, since the time that he gave her an account of his journey, his discourse with his father, and the leave he asked to go and see him often, had never talked of the sultan, as if there had been no such person in the world, whereas before he was always speaking of him, she thought he forbore on her account. Therefore she took an opportunity to say to him one day: "Prince, tell me, have you forgot the sultan, your father? Don't you remember the promise you made to go and see him often? For my part, I have not forgot what you told me at your return, and so put you in mind of it, that you may not be long before you acquit yourself of your promise."

So Prince Ahmed went the next morning with the same attendance as before, but much finer, and himself more magnificently mounted, equipped, and dressed, and was received by the sultan with the same joy and satisfaction. For several months he constantly paid his visits, and always in a richer and finer equipage.

At last some viziers, the sultan's favorites, who judged of Prince Ahmed's grandeur and power by the figure he cut, made the sultan jealous of his son, saying it was to be feared he might inveigle himself into the people's favor and dethrone him.

The Sultan of the Indies was so far from thinking that Prince Ahmed could be capable of so pernicious a design as his favorites would make him believe that he said to them: "You are mistaken. My son loves me, and I am certain of his tenderness and fidelity, as I have given him no reason to be disgusted."

But the favorites went on abusing Prince Ahmed till the sultan said: "Be it as it will, I don't believe my son Ahmed is so wicked as you would persuade me he is. However, I am obliged to you for your good advice, and don't dispute but that it proceeds from your good intentions."

The Sultan of the Indies said this that his favorites might not know the impressions their discourse had made on his mind, which had so alarmed him that he resolved to have Prince Ahmed watched, unknown to his grand vizier. So he sent for a female magician, who was introduced by a back door into his apartment. "Go immediately," he said, "and follow my son, and watch him so well as to find out where he retires, and bring me word."

The magician left the sultan, and knowing the place where Prince Ahmed found his arrow, went immediately thither and hid herself near the rocks, so that nobody could see her.

The next morning Prince Ahmed set out by daybreak, without taking leave either of the sultan or any of his court, according to custom. The magician, seeing him coming, followed him with her eyes, till on a sudden she lost sight of him and his attendants.

As the rocks were very steep and craggy, they were an insurmountable barrier, so that the magician judged that there were but two things for it: either that the prince retired into some cavern or an abode of genii or fairies. Thereupon she came out of the place where she was hid and went directly to the hollow way, which she traced till she came to the further end, looking carefully about on all sides; but notwithstanding all her diligence, she could perceive no opening, not so much as the iron gate which Prince Ahmed discovered, which was to be seen and opened to none but men, and only to such whose presence was agreeable to the fairy Paribanou.

The magician, who saw it was in vain for her to search any further, was obliged to be satisfied with the discovery she had made, and returned to give the sultan an account.

The sultan was very well pleased with the magician's conduct and said to her: "Do you as you think fit. I'll wait patiently the event of your promises." And to encourage her, he made her a present of a diamond of great value.

As Prince Ahmed had obtained the fairy Paribanou's leave to go to the Sultan of the Indies' court once a month, he never failed, and the magician, knowing the time, went a day or two before to the foot of the rock where she lost sight of the prince and his attendants and waited there.

The next morning Prince Ahmed went out, as usual, at the iron gate, with the same attendants as before, and passed by the magician, whom he knew not to be such, and seeing her lie with her head against the rock and complaining as if she were in great pain, he pitied her, turned his horse about, and went to her and asked her what was the matter with her and what he could do to ease her.

The artful sorceress looked at the prince in a pitiful manner, without ever lifting up her head, and answered in broken words and sighs, as if she could hardly fetch her breath, that she was going to the capital city, but on the way thither she was taken with so violent a fever that her strength failed her, and she was forced to lie down where he saw her, far from any habitation and without any hopes of assistance.

“Good woman,” replied Prince Ahmed, “you are not so far from help as you imagine. I am ready to assist you and convey you where you will meet with a speedy cure. Only get up and let one of my people take you behind him.”

At these words, the magician, who pretended sickness only to know where the prince lived and what he did, refused not the charitable offer he made her, and that her actions might correspond with her words, she made many pretended vain endeavors to get up. At the same time, two of the prince’s attendants, alighting off their horses, helped her up and set her behind another, and mounted their horses again and followed the prince, who turned back to the iron gate, which was opened by one of his retinue who rode before. And when he came into the outward court of the fairy, without dismounting himself, he sent to tell her he wanted to speak with her.

The fairy Paribanou came with all imaginable haste, not knowing what made Prince Ahmed return so soon; who, not giving her time to ask him the reason, said: “Princess, I desire you would have compassion on this good woman,” pointing to the magician, who was held up by two of his retinue. “I found her in the condition you see her in and promised her the assistance she stands in need of, and am persuaded that you, out of your own goodness, as well as upon my entreaty, will not abandon her.”

The fairy Paribanou, who had her eyes fixed upon the pretended sick woman all the time that the prince was talking to her, ordered two of her women who followed her to take her from the two men that held her and carry her into an apartment of the palace, and take as much care of her as herself.

While the two women executed the fairy’s commands, she went up to Prince Ahmed, and whispering him in the ear, said: “Prince, this woman is not so sick as she pretends to be, and I am very much mistaken if she is not an imposter who will be the cause of a great trouble to you. But don’t be concerned, let what will be devised against you. Be persuaded

that I will deliver you out of all the snares that shall be laid for you. Go and pursue your journey."

This discourse of the fairy's did not in the least frighten Prince Ahmed. "My princess," said he, "as I do not remember I ever did or designed anybody an injury, I cannot believe anybody can have a thought of doing me one, but if they have, I shall not, nevertheless, forbear doing good whenever I have an opportunity." Then he went back to his father's palace.

In the mean time the two women carried the magician into a very fine apartment, richly furnished. First they sat her down upon a sofa, with her back supported with a cushion of gold brocade, while they made a bed on the same sofa before her, the quilt of which was finely embroidered with silk, the sheets of the finest linen, and the coverlet cloth-of-gold. When they had put her into bed (for the old sorceress pretended that her fever was so violent she could not help herself in the least) one of the women went out and returned soon again with a china dish in her hand, full of a certain liquor, which she presented to the magician, while the other helped her to sit up. "Drink this liquor," said she. "It is the water of the fountain of lions and a sovereign remedy against all fevers whatsoever. You will find the effect of it in less than an hour's time."

The magician, to dissemble the better, took it after a great deal of entreaty, but at last she took the china dish and, holding back her head, swallowed down the liquor. When she was laid down again, the two women covered her up. "Lie quiet," said she who brought her the china cup, "and get a little sleep if you can. We'll leave you, and hope to find you perfectly cured when we come again an hour hence."

The two women came again at the time they said they should, and found the magician up and dressed and sitting upon the sofa. "O admirable potion!" she said. "It has wrought its cure much sooner than you told me it would, and I shall be able to prosecute my journey."

The two women, who were fairies as well as their mistress, after they had told the magician how glad they were that she

was cured so soon, walked before her and conducted her through several apartments, all more noble than that wherein she lay, into a large hall, the most richly and magnificently furnished of all the palace.

Paribanou sat in this hall on a throne of massive gold, enriched with diamonds, rubies, and pearls of an extraordinary size, and attended on each hand by a great number of beautiful fairies, all richly clothed. At the sight of so much majesty, the magician was not only dazzled, but was so amazed that, after she had prostrated herself before the throne, she could not open her lips to thank the fairy as she proposed. Paribanou saved her the trouble and said to her: "Good woman, I am glad I had an opportunity to oblige you and to see you are able to pursue your journey. I won't detain you, but perhaps you may not be displeased to see my palace. Follow my women and they will show it you."

Then the magician went back and related to the Sultan of the Indies all that had happened, and how very rich Prince Ahmed was since his marriage with the fairy, richer than all the kings in the world, and how there was danger that he should come and take the throne from his father.

Though the Sultan of the Indies was very well persuaded that Prince Ahmed's natural disposition was good, yet he could not help being concerned at the discourse of the old sorceress, to whom, when she was for taking her leave, he said: "I thank thee for the pains thou hast taken and thy wholesome advice. I am so sensible of the great importance it is to me that I shall deliberate upon it in council."

Now, the favorites advised that the prince should be killed, but the magician advised differently: "Make him give you all kinds of wonderful things, by the fairy's help, till she tires of him and sends him away. As, for example, every time your majesty goes into the field you are obliged to be at a great expense, not only in pavilions and tents for your army, but likewise in mules and camels to carry their baggage. Now, might not you engage him to use his interest with the fairy to procure you a tent which might be carried in a man's hand,

and which should be so large as to shelter your whole army against bad weather?"

When the magician had finished her speech, the sultan asked his favorites if they had anything better to propose, and finding them all silent, determined to follow the magician's advice, as the most reasonable and most agreeable to his mild government.

Next day the sultan did as the magician had advised him and asked for the pavilion.

Prince Ahmed never expected that the sultan, his father, would have asked such a thing, which at first appeared so difficult, not to say impossible. Though he knew not absolutely how great the power of genii and fairies was, he doubted whether it extended so far as to compass such a tent as his father desired. At last he replied: "Though it is with the greatest reluctance imaginable, I will not fail to ask the favor of my wife your majesty desires, but will not promise you to obtain it; and if I should not have the honor to come again to pay you my respects, that shall be the sign that I have not had success. But beforehand I desire you to forgive me, and consider that you yourself have reduced me to this extremity."

"Son," replied the Sultan of the Indies, "I should be very sorry if what I ask of you should cause me the displeasure of never seeing you more. I find you don't know the power a husband has over a wife, and yours would show that her love to you was very indifferent if she, with the power she has of a fairy, should refuse you so trifling a request as this I desire you to ask of her for my sake."

The prince went back, and was very sad for fear of offending the fairy. She kept pressing him to tell her what was the matter, and at last he said: "Madam, you may have observed that hitherto I have been content with your love and have never asked you any other favor. Consider, then, I conjure you, that it is not I, but the sultan, my father, who indiscreetly, or at least I think so, begs of you a pavilion large enough to shelter him, his court, and army from the violence of the weather, and which a man may carry in his

hand. But remember it is the sultan, my father, asks this favor."

"Prince," replied the fairy, smiling, "I am sorry that so small a matter should disturb you and make you so uneasy as you appeared to me."

Then the fairy sent for her treasurer, to whom, when she came, she said: "Nourgihan" (which was her name), "bring me the largest pavilion in my treasury." Nourgihan returned presently with the pavilion, which she could not only hold in her hand, but in the palm of her hand when she shut her fingers, and presented it to her mistress, who gave it to Prince Ahmed to look at.

When Prince Ahmed saw the pavilion which the fairy called the largest in her treasury, he fancied she had a mind to jest with him, and thereupon the marks of his surprise appeared presently in his countenance; which Paribanou perceiving burst out laughing. "What! prince," cried she, "do you think I jest with you? You'll see presently that I am in earnest. Nourgihan," said she to her treasurer, taking the tent out of Prince Ahmed's hands, "go and set it up, that the prince may judge whether it may be large enough for the sultan, his father."

The treasurer went immediately with it out of the palace and carried it a great way off, and when she had set it up, one end reached to the very palace; at which time the prince, thinking it small, found it large enough to shelter two greater armies than that of the sultan his father's, and then said to Paribanou: "I ask my princess a thousand pardons for my incredulity. After what I have seen I believe there is nothing impossible to you." "You see," said the fairy, "that the pavilion is larger than what your father may have occasion for; for you must know that it has one property—that it is larger or smaller according to the army it is to cover."

The treasurer took down the tent again and brought it to the prince, who took it and, without staying any longer than till the next day, mounted his horse and went with the same attendants to the sultan, his father.

The sultan, who was persuaded that there could not be any

such thing as such a tent as he asked for, was in a great surprise at the prince's diligence. He took the tent, and after he had admired its smallness his amazement was so great that he could not recover himself. When the tent was set up in the great plain which we have before mentioned, he found it large enough to shelter an army twice as large as he could bring into the field.

But the sultan was not yet satisfied. "Son," said he, "I have already expressed to you how much I am obliged to you for the present of the tent you have procured me; that I look upon it as the most valuable thing in all my treasury. But you must do one thing more for me, which will be every whit as agreeable to me. I am informed that the fairy, your spouse, makes use of a certain water, called the water of the fountain of lions, which cures all sorts of fevers, even the most dangerous, and as I am perfectly well persuaded my health is dear to you, I don't doubt but you will ask her for a bottle of that water for me, and bring it me as a sovereign medicine, which I may make use of when I have occasion. Do me this other important piece of service, and thereby complete the duty of a good son toward a tender father."

The prince returned and told the fairy what his father had said. "There's a great deal of wickedness in this demand," she answered, "as you will understand by what I am going to tell you. The fountain of lions is situated in the middle of a court of a great castle, the entrance into which is guarded by four fierce lions, two of which sleep alternately, while the other two are awake. But don't let that frighten you. I'll give you means to pass by them without any danger."

The fairy Paribanou was at that time very hard at work, and as she had several clews of thread by her, she took up one and, presenting it to Prince Ahmed, said: "First take this clew of thread. I'll tell you presently the use of it. In the second place, you must have two horses: one you must ride yourself, and the other you must lead, which must be loaded with a sheep cut into four quarters, that must be killed to-day. In the third place, you must be provided with a bottle, which I will give you, to bring the water in. Set out

early to-morrow morning, and when you have passed the iron gate throw the clew of thread before you, which will roll till it comes to the gates of the castle. Follow it, and when it stops, as the gates will be open, you will see the four lions. The two that are awake will by their roaring wake the other two, but don't be frightened, but throw each of them a quarter of mutton, and then clap spurs to your horse and ride to the fountain; fill your bottle without alighting and then return with the same expedition. The lions will be so busy eating they will let you pass by them."

Prince Ahmed set out the next morning at the time appointed by the fairy, and followed her directions punctually. When he arrived at the gates of the castle he distributed the quarters of mutton among the four lions and passing through the midst of them bravely, got to the fountain, filled his bottle, and returned back as safe and sound as he went. When he had gone a little distance from the castle gates, he turned him about, and perceiving two of the lions coming after him, he drew his saber and prepared himself for defense. But as he went forward he saw one of them turned out of the road at some distance, and showed by his head and tail that he did not come to do him any harm, but only to go before him, and that the other stayed behind to follow. He put his sword up again in its scabbard. Guarded in this manner, he arrived at the capital of the Indies, but the lions never left him till they had conducted him to the gates of the sultan's palace; after which they returned the same way they came, though not without frightening all that saw them, for all they went in a very gentle manner and showed no fierceness.

A great many officers came to attend the prince while he dismounted from his horse, and afterward conducted him into the sultan's apartment, who was at that time surrounded with his favorites. He approached toward the throne, laid the bottle at the sultan's feet, kissed the rich tapestry which covered his foot-stool, and then said: "I have brought you, sir, the healthful water which your majesty desired so much to keep among your other rarities in your treasury, but at the

same time, wish you such extraordinary health as never to have occasion to make use of it."

After the prince had made an end of his compliment, the sultan placed him on his right hand and then said to him: "Son, I am very much obliged to you for this valuable present, as also for the great danger you have exposed yourself to upon my account (which I have been informed of by a magician who knows the fountain of lions); but do me the pleasure," continued he, "to inform me by what address, or rather by what incredible power, you have been secured."

"Sir," replied Prince Ahmed, "I have no share in the compliment your majesty is pleased to make me. All the honor is due to the fairy, my spouse, whose good advice I followed." Then he informed the sultan what those directions were, and by the relation of this, his expedition, let him know how well he had behaved himself. When he had done, the sultan, who showed outwardly all the demonstrations of great joy, but secretly became more jealous, retired into an inward apartment, where he sent for the magician.

The magician, at her arrival, saved the sultan the trouble to tell her of the success of Prince Ahmed's journey, which she had heard of before she came, and therefore was prepared with an infallible means, as she pretended. This means she communicated to the sultan, who declared it the next day to the prince, in the midst of all his courtiers, in these words: "Son," said he, "I have one thing more to ask of you, after which I shall expect nothing more from your obedience nor your interest with your wife. This request is to bring me a man not above a foot and a half high, and whose beard is thirty feet long, who carries a bar of iron upon his shoulders of five hundredweight, which he uses as a quarter-staff."

Prince Ahmed, who did not believe that there was such a man in the world as his father described, would gladly have excused himself; but the sultan persisted in his demand, and told him the fairy could do more incredible things.

The next day the prince returned to his dear Paribanou, to whom he told his father's new command, which, he said, he

looked upon to be a thing more impossible than the two first. "For," added he, "I cannot imagine there can be such a man in the world. Without doubt he has a mind to try whether or no I am so silly as to go about it, or he has a design on my ruin. In short, how can he suppose that I should lay hold on a man so well armed, though he is but little? What arms can I make use of to reduce him to my will? If there are any means, I beg you will tell them, and let me come off with honor this time."

"Don't affright yourself, prince," replied the fairy. "You ran a risk in fetching the water of the fountain of lions for your father, but there's no danger in finding out this man, who is my brother Schaibar, but is so far from being like me, though we both had the same father, that he is of so violent a nature that nothing can prevent his giving cruel marks of his resentment for a slight offense; yet, on the other hand, is so good as to oblige any one in whatever they desire. He is made exactly as the sultan your father has described him, and has no other arms than a bar of iron of five hundred pounds weight, without which he never stirs and which makes him respected. I'll send for him, and you shall judge of the truth of what I tell you; but be sure to prepare yourself against being frightened at his extraordinary figure when you see him."

"What! my queen," replied Prince Ahmed, "do you say Schaibar is your brother? Let him be never so ugly or deformed, I shall be so far from being frightened at the sight of him that, as our brother, I shall honor and love him."

The fairy ordered a gold chafing-dish to be set with a fire in it under the porch of her palace, with a box of the same metal, which was a present to her, out of which taking a perfume and throwing it into the fire, there arose a thick cloud of smoke.

Some moments after the fairy said to Prince Ahmed: "See, there comes my brother." The prince immediately perceived Schaibar coming gravely with his heavy bar on his shoulder, his long beard, which he held up before him, and a pair of thick mustaches, which he tucked behind his ears and almost

covered his face; his eyes were very small and deep-set in his head, which was far from being of the smallest size, and on his head he wore a grenadier's cap; besides all this, he was very much hump-backed.

If Prince Ahmed had not known that Schaibar was Paribanou's brother, he would not have been able to have looked at him without fear, but, knowing first who he was, he stood by the fairy without the least concern.

Schaibar, as he came forward, looked at the prince earnestly enough to have chilled his blood in his veins, and asked Paribanou, when he first accosted her, who that man was. To which she replied: "He is my husband, brother. His name is Ahmed; he is son to the Sultan of the Indies. The reason why I did not invite you to my wedding was I was unwilling to divert you from an expedition you were engaged in, and from which I heard with pleasure you returned victorious, and so took the liberty now to call for you."

At these words, Schaibar, looking on Prince Ahmed favorably, said: "Is there anything, sister, wherein I can serve him? It is enough for me that he is your husband to engage me to do for him whatever he desires."

"The sultan, his father," replied Paribanou, "has a curiosity to see you, and I desire he may be your guide to the sultan's court."

"He needs but lead me the way—I'll follow him."

"Brother," replied Paribanou, "it is too late to go to-day, therefore stay till to-morrow morning; and in the mean time I'll inform you of all that has passed between the Sultan of the Indies and Prince Ahmed since our marriage."

The next morning, after Schaibar had been informed of the affair, he and Prince Ahmed set out for the sultan's court. When they arrived at the gates of the capital the people no sooner saw Schaibar but they ran and hid themselves, and some shut up their shops and locked themselves up in their houses, while others, flying, communicated their fear to all they met, who stayed not to look behind them, but ran too; insomuch that Schaibar and Prince Ahmed, as they went along, found the streets all desolate till they came to the

palace, where the porters, instead of keeping the gates, ran away too, so that the prince and Schaibar advanced without any obstacle to the council-hall, where the sultan was seated on his throne and giving audience. Here likewise the ushers, at the approach of Schaibar, abandoned their posts and gave them free admittance.

Schaibar went boldly and fiercely up to the throne, without waiting to be presented by Prince Ahmed, and accosted the Sultan of the Indies in these words: "Thou hast asked for me," said he. "See, here I am. What wouldst thou have with me?"

The sultan, instead of answering him, clapped his hands before his eyes to avoid the sight of so terrible an object; at which uncivil and rude reception Schaibar was so much provoked, after he had given him the trouble to come so far, that he instantly lifted up his iron bar and killed him before Prince Ahmed could intercede in his behalf. All that he could do was to prevent his killing the grand vizier, who sat not far from him, representing to him that he had always given the sultan, his father, good advice. "These are they, then," said Schaibar, "who gave him bad," and as he pronounced these words, he killed all the other viziers and flattering favorites of the sultan who were Prince Ahmed's enemies. Every time he struck he killed some one or other, and none escaped but they who were not so frightened as to stand staring and gaping and who saved themselves by flight.

When this terrible execution was over, Schaibar came out of the council-hall into the midst of the court-yard with the iron bar upon his shoulder, and looking hard at the grand vizier, who owed his life to Prince Ahmed, he said: "I know here is a certain magician, who is a greater enemy of my brother-in-law's than all these base favorites I have chastised. Let the magician be brought to me presently." The grand vizier immediately sent for her, and as soon as she was brought, Schaibar said, at the time he fetched a stroke at her with his iron bar: "Take the reward of thy pernicious counsel and learn to feign sickness again."

After this he said: "This is not yet enough. I will use the

whole town after the same manner if they do not immediately acknowledge Prince Ahmed, my brother-in-law, for their sultan and the Sultan of the Indies." Then all that were there present made the air echo again with the repeated acclamations of "Long life to Sultan Ahmed," and immediately after, he was proclaimed through the whole town. Schaibar made him be clothed in the royal vestments, installed him on the throne, and after he had caused all to swear homage and fidelity to him, went and fetched his sister Paribanou, whom he brought with all the pomp and grandeur imaginable, and made her to be owned Sultanness of the Indies.

As for Prince Ali and Princess Nouronihar, as they had no hand in the conspiracy against Prince Ahmed and knew nothing of any, Prince Ahmed assigned them a considerable province, with its capital, where they spent the rest of their lives. Afterward he sent an officer to Prince Houssain to acquaint him with the change and make him an offer of which province he liked best; but that prince thought himself so happy in his solitude that he bade the officer return the sultan, his brother, thanks for the kindness he designed him, assuring him of his submission; and that the only favor he desired of him was to give him leave to live retired in the place he had made choice of for his retreat.

Introduction to the Fourth Tale: The Talisman of Oromanes

The Arabian Nights, as I have suggested, was an instant hit and was retranslated and published, not only all over Europe, but all over the world as well.

By today, one or another version of this greatest of all the compendia of wonder tales in world literature has appeared in such languages as French, German, Turkish, Dutch, Portuguese, Hindustani, Greek, Italian, Danish, Persian, Icelandic, and even Javanese and Malay—to say nothing, of course, of English.

Sparked by the success of Antoine Galland, other scholars, travelers and translators hastened in his footsteps to ransack the libraries of the East. The ink was hardly dry on those first few volumes of Galland than a deluge of imitations poured forth to burden the bookstalls of Europe.

Turkish Tales appeared in 1707, and *Persian Tales* in 1714; then came *Chinese Tales* in 1725, and *Mogul Tales* in 1736, followed by *Oriental Tales* in 1745, *Tartar Tales* in 1759, something with the rather unlikely title of *Peruvian Tales* in 1764, *Arabian Tales* in 1792, and a volume called *Siamese Tales* in 1796.

How they managed to miss Japan and Tibet and Afghanistan, I do not know.

Most of these let's-get-on-the-bandwagon-too volumes were successful enough; a few of them were rather widely translated and published throughout Europe; however, none of them very seriously threatened the preeminence of Galland and his epoch-making milestone, *The Arabian Nights*.

Before the century was out, the influence of all of this new Orientalia was making itself felt on original fiction.

One of the first authors to show this influence was the Reverend James Ridley, who published in 1765, an enormously popular book called *Tales of the Genii*.

An amiable spoof, it purported to have been translated from the Persian of one Horam, the son of Asmar. Despite a lengthy biographical treatise on Horam, his life and works, which served as preface to the volume, Horam is as fictitious as his tales.

The "translator" of the *Tales*, Sir Charles Morell, ambassador of Great Britain to the court of the Grand Mogul of India, also did not exist. Actually, the book was an original compilation of stories written in imitation of *The Arabian Nights* by Ridley, then a youthful clergyman.

Galland may have introduced Europe to the glittering cosmos of

Giants and the Genii
 Multiplex of wing and eye,
 Whose strong obedience broke the sky,
 When Solomon was King

but authors like Ridley, and the fabulously wealthy English eccentric, William Beckford, whose feverish Oriental fantasy novel *Vathek* was published in French in 1782, or the popular Irish poet, Thomas Moore, whose lush, gorgeously colorful book-length verse romance called *Lalla Rookh* was published in 1817, or the young British novelist, George Meredith, who authored the most astounding Eastern phantasmagoria of them all, *The Shaving of Shagpat*, in 1855— authors like these, I say, felt right at home therein.

And thus the Oriental fantasy entered into the mainstream of the European wonder literature. It is still going strong today.

For this collection I have chosen a tale from Ridley called "The Talisman of Oromanes."

I am not sure just why James Ridley disguised his identity behind the double pseudonym of "Horam" and "Sir Charles Morell." The editor of my copy of *Tales of the Genii*, the edition of 1889, suggests Ridley may have feared offending the polite society of his day. "The author probably thought," argues the

editor, "that the composition of what some might call pagan tales would be deemed inconsistent with his clerical character." Quite possibly that was Ridley's reason.

But if that *was* the case, Ridley need not have worried for his reputation: *Tales of the Genii* was widely acclaimed by eminent Victorians. Gladstone confessed it was one of the delights of his boyhood; Dickens singled out "The Talisman of Oromanes" for special praise, saying it made a deep impression on his mind in childhood—so deep that he lovingly added a copy of this story to the library of his young hero, David Copperfield.

And I am proud to add it to your own.

The Talisman of Oromanes
The Merchant Abudah's Adventure
with the Ivory Box
From the Persian *Tales of the Genii*
Translated by Sir Charles Morell.

In the centre of the quay of Baghdad, where the wealth of the whole earth is poured forth for the benefit of the faithful, lived the fortunate Abudah, possessed of the merchandise and riches of many various nations, caressed by the mighty and blessed by the indigent; daily providing for thousands by his munificence, and winning daily the hearts of thousands by his charity and generosity. But however magnificently or royally the days of Abudah might be spent, his nights were the nights of disturbance and affliction. His wife, who was fairer than the greatest beauties of Circassia, and his children, who were livelier than the offspring of the fairies, and his riches, which were greater than the desires of man could consume, were unavailing to drive from his imagination the terrors of the night. For no sooner was the merchant retired within the

walls of his chamber, than a little ivory box, which no art might remove from its place, advanced without help into the centre of the chamber, and, opening, discovered to his sight the form of a diminutive old hag, who with crutches hopped forward to Abudah, and every night addressed him in the following terms: "O Abudah! to whom Mahomet hath given such a profusion of blessings, why delayest thou to search out the talisman of Oromanes? the which whoever possesseth shall know neither uneasiness nor discontent; neither may he be assaulted by the tricks of fortune or the power of man. Till you are possessed of that valuable treasure, O Abudah! my presence shall nightly remind you of your idleness, and my chest remain for ever in the chambers of your repose."

Having thus said, the hag retired into her box, shaking her crutches, and, with a hideous yell, closed herself in, and left the unfortunate merchant on a bed of doubt and anxiety for the rest of the night.

This unwelcome visitant, still repeating her threats, rendered the life of Abudah most miserable and fatiguing; neither durst he tell his grievance, lest the strangeness of the adventure should rather move the laughter than the compassion of his friends. At length, however, wearied out with the strange and importunate demands of this nightly hag, he ventured to open his mind; and in the midst of his friends asked publicly, as he was feasting in his saloon, who could give an account of the talisman of Oromanes, or the place where it was preserved. To this question his friends could return him no satisfactory answer; they had all indeed heard of its virtues, but despaired of finding it. So that Abudah was forced to return again to the upbraiding of his nocturnal hag, and knew not what course to steer in the pursuit of the appointed treasure.

The next day he caused it to be cried publicly in the streets of Baghdad that Abudah the merchant would give much riches to the man who could inform him where the talisman of Oromanes was lodged. This declaration was made for many days successively, but no one appeared to satisfy the inquiries of the impatient Abudah.

After many days, a poor traveller, who had been spoiled of his goods by the Arabians, passing through Baghdad, heard the publication, and immediately offered to go before Abudah and make known the place where the talisman of Oromanes was preserved. The friends of the wealthy merchant joyfully carried the poor traveller to the palace of Abudah, and with great tumult introduced him to the merchant, who was reclining on a sofa, and seemed entirely indifferent to the music which played before him, the dessert of elegancies which was prepared for his food, and the caresses of his wife and children, who endeavoured by their tenderness and affection to divert the gloom that overshadowed him.

"Abudah," cried his friends, lifting up their voices together, "behold the discoverer of the talisman of Oromanes."

At their voices the afflicted merchant looked up, like one awakened from a dream.

"This," said his friends, presenting the poor traveller to him, "this is the man who will engage to point out to you the talisman of Oromanes."

The traveller was now about to begin his relation, when Abudah, having eyed him round, commanded the apartment to be cleared, that no one but himself might enjoy the discovery. His family and friends obediently departed; and the traveller, being left alone with the merchant Abudah, thus began his tale:

"Your fortune and attendance, O wealthy citizen of Baghdad, allow of your search after the talisman of Oromanes; but to the poor and needy, to the outcasts of fortune, no such happiness is permitted: they may indeed wander, and examine, but the talisman is for ever shut up from their search; for infinite are the expenses which attend the discovery, and the large rewards which must be given to them who help the inquirer forward in his adventure after the sacred talisman. Myself, O merchant! have slaved through life to obtain a sufficiency for that great end and purpose: but since the prophet has repeatedly frustrated my designs, and reduced me to my original state of want, I must endeavour to wean my affections, and rest contented, though unblest."

"But, my friend," said Abudah, "you neglect to inform me where I may find or purchase this heavenly talisman."

"It is lodged," replied the poor traveller, "in the valley of Bocchim; princes are its guardians, and it is treasured up amidst all the riches of the earth, you cannot obtain admittance there without you go loaded with every variety that is costly and expensive, which you must present to the genii who keep a watch over this early paradise of riches; and if your present be not sufficiently costly, your labour is lost."

"I have," cried Abudah, rejoiced to hear the talisman might be obtained by riches, "nine thousand acres of pasturage around the rivers of Baghdad; I have twelve thousand estates of fruits, and oils, and corn; I have twenty-two mines of the finest diamonds, and six hundred vessels which fish for and produce the most costly pearls; I have, moreover, eight hundred warehouses, and four hundred storerooms, filled with the most precious bales of silks and brocades: besides these, the fortunes of nine vizirs mortgaged for a hundred years, and all the beautiful slaves of Circassia, are at my disposal."

"O happy, happy Abudah!" interrupted the poor traveller; "thine then, and only thine, is it to purchase a passage into the valley of Bocchim."

"If so," continued Abudah, overjoyed at the poor traveller's exclamation, "direct me instantly to the entrance of the valley."

"Alas! sir," answered the traveller, "it is in the deserts of Arabia, many days' journey from hence; besides, your presents are not ready, nor your guard lest the Arabs spoil you of your riches, and prevent your application at the entrance of the valley of Bocchim: but if you will permit your servant to direct you in the choice of the presents, some of which will take much time in preparing, by the next spring you may set forward, and speedily find an issue to your journey."

Abudah acquiesced in the arguments of the traveller; and having given orders that he should use as he pleased his immense riches, he gave himself entirely up to preparations for

the intended journey. The poor traveller, having sufficient powers, disposed of the riches of Abudah to purchase the necessary presents, and hired nine thousand archers to accompany the wealthy caravan of the merchant into the deserts. The appointed time being arrived, and everything prepared, Abudah took a tender leave of his wife and family, and began his journey with the poor traveller to the valley of Bocchim.

*The Merchant Abudah's
Adventure in the Valley of
Bocchim*

On the ninth day of the third month, ere the sun was rising on the mosques of Baghdad, was the sumptuous caravan drawn up in long order through the streets of that city, which Abudah beheld from his windows. Five hundred archers, mounted on the fleetest coursers, led the van; behind whom were twelve thousand oxen, thirty thousand sheep, and two hundred of the finest horses of Arabia. Next to these came six hundred men armed with pole-axes and scymetars, with silken banners, displaying the blessings of pasturage, and the utility and conveniency of cattle for the service of man.

After these were driven two hundred camels laden with all manner of dried and preserved fruits; a thousand more with all sorts of grain; a thousand with the richest wines; and five hundred with the most pure oil; five hundred more with spices and perfumes; and behind these a thousand armed husbandmen, singing the blessings of the earth, burning in censers the most costly perfumes, and bearing flaxen and silken banners, representing the seasons and annual labours of husbandry.

These were of the first day's cavalcade: the second began with five hundred miners armed with sledges and hammers, whom a large car followed, drawn by twenty strong oxen, having within it all the implements of iron; and above, in the upper part, a hero, who commanded the armed men in the whole cavalcade. Then came five hundred artificers, and after them a car drawn by twenty mules with the implements of lead, and a curious artisan on the top of the car singing the

uses of metals. Behind these came five hundred more artificers, with their different tools, and a car drawn by twenty horses with cast figures, statues, and implements of brass, and a cunning artificer on the top of the car. After these followed a thousand artificers in silver, and a sumptuous car of solid silver drawn by fifty unicorns, and laden with plate and silver coin; also a hundred camels behind, laden also with silver; and on the car sat the steward of Abudah.

At a small distance from these came forward a thousand men armed cap-a-pie, after the manner of Saracens; and behind these followed, on sumptuous mules, five hundred of the principal foreign merchants, richly habited with the emblems of commerce curiously wrought in their garments, who were followed by an enormous car drawn by four elephants, laden with golden emblems and devices, with great quantities of that precious metal; the car also was of beaten gold. And into this, taking leave of Abudah, ascended the poor traveler, arrayed in purple and gold, and pointed with a golden rod toward the valley of Bocchim. And these completed the second day's procession.

On the third day issued forth from the gates of Baghdad the final procession of the caravan of the merchant Abudah: a thousand archers began the ceremony, preceded by a martial band of music, and bearing among their ranks fifty silken streamers interwoven with gold, and having the emblems of Abudah's family wrought in their centres. Next to these came fifty carriages laden with the richest silks and brocades, and two hundred surrounded the carriages, arrayed in the different habits of two hundred nations; after whom came fifty negroes on dromedaries, bearing about their necks strings of the most costly pearl. After these a thousand armed soldiers, after the European manner, who, at a small distance, were followed by a hundred mutes, behind whom came, in two hundred palanquins, as many beautiful slaves from Circassia, each guarded by four eunuchs, and clad in the richest robes.

The next in the procession was the merchant Abudah, drawn in a chariot of pearl, of the most curious workmanship, by ten milk-white steeds, whose trappings were of gold.

As to the garments of the merchant, nothing could be conceived more magnificent; but the splendour of the jewels that were interwoven with the clothing exceeded the most lavish description. On each side the chariot a hundred musicians attended, and fifty slaves burning the choicest perfumes; various splendid banners waved around him; and two hundred friends behind of the highest rank in the city of Baghdad attended the illustrious and wealthy Abudah; after whom a thousand archers, and numberless camels laden with all manner of provisions, water, and wine, brought up the rear of this magnificent cavalcade.

On the thirteenth day they halted in a plain, bounded on its sides with lofty mountains, and at the further end with a deep forest of cedars and palms. Here the poor traveller, descending with Abudah, walked forward toward the forest before them.

The traveller led Abudah into the forest through thickets almost impervious, save the blind path which guided them forward. In this manner, they passed till the evening, when the traveller, entering a cave, disappeared from the wondering Abudah. The merchant essayed to follow him; but looking into the cave, he found it had no bottom; therefore he was obliged to desist.

The sun was now sinking from the mountains, and the glowing skies seemed to tip the woods with their reddening light. Abudah, being fatigued, first sought out a tree, and climbing into it, resolved there to wait the dawn of the morning. But the severe fatigues so exhausted him that, although he had resolved to watch till the morning, yet sleep soon overpowered him, and made him forget either the wonders or the dangers that surrounded him.

Abudah, in the morning when he awaked, was surprised at an unusual glitter about him; and looking more steadfastly, he found the tree wherein he sat to be of pure gold, and the leaves of silver, with fruit like rubies hanging in clusters on the branches. Looking around, he also beheld the face of the country as though it had been changed; for on every side appeared the most glorious palaces that eye could conceive,

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glittering with silver, gold, and precious stones; so that the whole appeared more like a heavenly than an earthly situation.

Descending full of wonder from the tree, he found the ground he trod on to be gold dust, and the stones pearls; these were covered with flowers which seemed formed of vegetable crystal, emeralds, and amethysts. Trees and shrubs of silver and gold met his eye, growing almost visibly about him. At the further end of the prospect, he beheld a vast and expanded dome, which seemed to cover a whole plain, and rose to the clouds. This dome shone so brightly, by the reflection of the costly materials of which it was composed, that he could hardly look toward it; he however advanced.

The dome, which was of entire gold, stood upon three hundred pillars of precious stones; one emerald formed the shaft of one pillar, one diamond the capital, and one ruby the pedestal: the intermediate spaces between the pillars were of crystal, one piece between each pillar; so that the inside of the dome was visible from all parts. The architrave was of solid pearl, inlaid with curious emblems, composed of festoons of amethysts, topazes, carbuncles, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, and the most sparkling diamonds.

Abudah, though the richest of mankind, was struck with astonishment at the profusion of riches and beauty which he beheld; and entering at one of the four portals (for the dome had four, one to each quarter of the heavens), he beheld an ancient form, seated on a throne too bright to distinguish the glorious materials of which it was made. A great number of crowned heads attended him; and these were supported by inferior beings, all clad in the most superb vestments. All around the dome were placed, with great beauty and symmetry, numberless heaps of wealth and riches; and the very pavement on which he trod was covered over with tapestry carpet, representing the riches of the earth, all in their natural colours.

Abudah, as abashed at this amazing magnificence, and beholding such personages within the dome, was retiring, when one of the chief of the attendants, who stood nearest

the throne, advancing, beckoned Abudah forward. The merchant obeyed with trembling, and, as he came forward, bowed himself to the ground; which the royal personage perceiving, who sat on the throne, spake thus to him:

“Fear not, Abudah; thou hast ever been a favourite of the genius of riches. I am thy friend, and this journey which thou hast undertaken in honour of me, in hope here to find the talisman of the great Oromanes, should not go unrewarded.

“And first lead Abudah,” said he to the genius who had presented the merchant, “through all my stores, and let him view the riches of the earth—a sight that so many thousands long ardently to enjoy.”

The inferior genius obeyed; and, taking Abudah by the hand, he led him toward a royal palace, facing the eastern side of the dome. Here, as Abudah entered the palace, the walls of which were of the purest silver, with windows of crystal, he beheld incredible heaps of that precious metal, all seemingly composed like branches of trees.

“What thou seest here,” said the genius, “is trifling; for these heaps, which seem to lie on the surface of the ground, really are of the same depth with the centre of the earth: so that of this metal alone there is laid up more in value than all the visible riches of the world.”

The genius next carried Abudah to a second palace, built of pure gold, having windows like the first. Here, also, Abudah beheld the like profusion of gold; which, like the silver, continued down to the centre. Next he was shown, in a huge building of adamant, a cistern filled with the fragments of all manner of precious stones and diamonds.

“These, also,” said the genius, “are not terminated but by the centre of the earth. Now,” continued he, “as you observed in the two first palaces, the silver and gold are the little branches which drop from the trees of this vegetable valley of riches; as all things on earth are subject to decrease, which are here carefully collected (for the rich are not exempt from toil), and placed in these repositories, the bottoms of which, at the centre of the earth, are grated, and let out sparingly these smaller fragments: so likewise of the

jewels, which fall like fruit from the trees, and break into little pieces; these are all thrown together to serve the earth; but none above such a size are admitted, nor indeed could they pass through the grating below. Thus these metals and jewels mixing with the earth, and being diffused in its bowels, are at length stopped by rocks and stones, and so form mines in different parts of the world, each requiring the industry and labour of man that they may be brought the more sparingly into the world."

Abudah, having viewed these things, returned, and being presented to the genius of riches—"Now," said the genius, "bring forth the iron chest, wherein it is said the talisman of Oromanes is lodged." At the command of the genius, ten of an inferior order brought in a huge chest with fifty locks upon it: the chest itself was of iron, and bound round with the strongest bands, which were harder than adamant. "There," said the genius to Abudah, "there is thy reward: return to Baghdad, and live in peace all the days of thy life."

"Must I, then," replied Abudah, "O beneficent genius! carry with me the chest also? or is it permitted that I take from thence the talisman of Oromanes?"

"Wouldst thou, then," replied the genius, "take it from its place of security? Whilst thou dost possess the chest, the talisman is thine own, and the force of man cannot bereave thee of it. Why, then, should curiosity prevail over security? It is written in the chronicles of time that he who possesseth the talisman of Oromanes shall be happy: seek not, therefore, to disentangle the talisman from its present state of security, till it fail thee of its promised efficacy. Take, however, these fifty keys; but beware lest thy curiosity alone tempt thee, for what mortal can say if its refulgence be not too much for man to behold?"

Having thus said, the genius commanded Abudah to lie down on the chest, and immediately his eyes closed, and not till the morning after did he awake, and find himself in a tent, on the plain where he had left his immense caravan; but now he found but forty camels and forty servants to attend him.

Abudah inquired of his servants, what became of the riches and attendants that had travelled from Baghdad with him to that plain; but they could give no answer. They said, indeed, that they had heard of such a caravan, and that they had for some time missed their master from Baghdad; and that although they went overnight to their rest in his house at Baghdad, they found themselves with the tents and forty camels, laden with provision, on that plain in the morning; and that, coming into his tent, they saw him sleeping on an iron chest, and had removed him to the sofa. "And is the chest here?" cried Abudah. "Here is, sir," replied the slave that spoke, "an iron chest of prodigious size, and secured with many locks."

Abudah immediately arose; and though he could not unravel the mysteries of his journey, yet seeing the chest, and finding the keys which the genius had given him, he was contented, and ordered them to strike their tents, and begin their march for the city of Baghdad. The chest was by long poles made fast to four camels, which were placed in the centre of the caravan.

The mind of Abudah, though in possession of the chest, was yet not without its apprehensions that the wild Arabs might come down upon his little party, and bereave him of his treasure. The first day, the caravan reached a pool of water, and on its banks the careful Abudah ordered his retinue to pitch their tents, and unload the camels from their burdens; and at the same time placed four of his slaves as sentinels, toward the four different quarters of his encampment; and ordered the chest, for the greater security, to be buried in the sand under his tent, while he endeavoured to compose himself for slumber. Nor were his fears unreasonable, for at the hour of midnight a small party of Arabs stole down toward them, in order to encamp there for the benefit of the water.

Abudah had notice from his slave who looked toward the west, of their approach, and was likewise informed that their number was small; but such was his anxiety and irresolution, and fear of losing his treasure or his life, that he dared not

order them to be attacked, or prepare for flight. During this ineffectual altercation and struggle of Abudah with his fears, one of the slaves, more daring than the rest, finding his master fearful, encouraged his comrades, and, marshalling them in order, led them toward the robbers.

The Arabs, who were not more than twenty in number, at sight of a force so much superior, turned their backs, and left Abudah's slave in quiet possession of their tents. But now the slave, seeing the Arabs flying from before him, and observing the fear of his master, and the great concern that he had for the iron chest, addressed himself to the rest of the slaves, and, declaring what immense treasures there might lie hid in that chest, seeing their master had left Baghdad to search for it, and had it secured with so many locks, persuaded them to rob Abudah, and depart with the riches to some other country, where they might enjoy the fruits of their rapine. This being easily agreed to, they all in a body advanced to the tent of Abudah, who came out to meet and thank them for their gallant behaviour.

The bold slave thus made answer to his master's thanks:

"The danger, O Abudah! of defending thy riches contained in the iron chest with many locks fell all upon thy slaves; while thou, who wert to enjoy the comfort of those riches, didst lie trembling in thy tent: wherefore, we, who have borne the burden, mean also to share the profits with thee; but that thou mayest see that we are just, one equal share shall be thy portion, and the rest belongs to those who have preserved to thee even the share that will be appointed thee." These words being ended, without any regard to either the threatenings or prayers of Abudah, they dug up the chest; and, having cleared away the sand, demanded of him the keys of the fifty locks.

Abudah, finding them inexorable, besought them that they would at least give him a day to consider of their proposal.

"What!" replied the bold slave, "a day? Why, merchant, long ere that will a thousand Arabs be upon us, invited by those that fled; and we shall suffer death, and you and all entirely lose the valuable possessions which are doubtless

contained in that strong chest of iron." It was in vain that, in return, the merchant assured them that there was nothing therein but a poor talisman, whose virtues they could not know; and promised them all liberty and riches if they arrived safe in Baghdad with the chest. They had gone too far to trust his promises; and the slave who was their ringleader, ordering all to retire, left Abudah for half an hour to think of their proposal.

Abudah, as soon as they had left him, threw himself upon the chest, as one who was grasping all that was dear to him, and with a loud sigh, began to lament his fate, when, as before, a deep sleep overaking him, he sunk motionless on his treasure. At midnight he awaked, and turning his eyes around, perceived he was in the apartments of his seraglio in Baghdad, and that his wife was sleeping near him on the sofa. The recollection of his happy escape immediately got possession of his mind; and he doubted not but he should find his chest as he had done before. Wherefore, before he saluted, or indeed thought of, his wife, taking one of the sweet-scented lamps that always were burning in the centre of his apartment, he perceived the chest in the very corner where, before, the box which caused him so much uneasiness used to remain fixed.

Abudah, now feeling for and taking out the fifty keys, thought himself the happiest of mankind. The danger which he conceived the talisman might be in from lying in a chest so conspicuous, and which he had already experienced, determined him, at all hazards, to unlock with his fifty keys the iron chest, and take the talisman out, and always wear it concealed about him. With this view, he began to try the first key, which, to his amazement, would fit neither of the fifty locks. At this he began to suspect that either the genius of riches had mistaken, which he could hardly suppose, or that some evil genius had changed them in his bosom. "However," said he to himself, "perhaps, as one key will open none, one also may open all"; so taking one by one, he tried them all; but neither of the fifty keys would open a single lock.

Abudah, at this discovery, flung himself on the sofa, and

began to lament his miserable fate. But he soon resolved to try the keys a second time: "for," said he, "some key I have possibly missed, and such a treasure cannot be expected without much labour and pains." At this he rose up, and was going toward the chest, when, starting at a noise in the centre of the room, he beheld the little box, which had been the first cause of all his grief, and was saluted by the old hag, who hobbled out from her confinement, and began to terrify the afflicted merchant in the following terms:

"O senseless Abudah! to hope that the talisman of Oromanes might be bought with riches. Thou hast indeed a chest, but thou hast neither the means, nor canst thou force open this chest to search for thy treasure: what then art thou the better for thy possession, or happier for thy chest of iron? It will, indeed, convey thee where thou desirest, and thou mayest rest upon it; but waking, thou feelest the tortures of anxiety, and feelest them the sharper because thou fearest to lose what thou canst not enjoy: go, then, and search till thou findest the keys of the fifty locks; but be not so senseless as to suppose that the genius would have parted with the treasure could he have made any use of it. In a far different country must thou hope to find those keys which will unlock that chest—a joyous country where serenity ever dwells and pleasure reigns eternal.

"A short respite will I give thee; but ere this moon be passed, let me find you active, or I shall invent double horrors to surround you." Having thus said, the box closed, and in an instant Abudah beheld it mounted on the chest, which he vainly hoped would have driven such a troublesome guest from his house.

And now Selima, his wife, awaking, beheld with surprise her husband, Abudah, drowned in tears by her side. She instantly pressed him in her arms, and, in transports, inquired by what happy fate he was returned.

"Why, know ye not," replied Abudah, "that the third morning, as I mounted the car which the traveller had prepared for me, and was arrayed in my best vestments of gold and diamonds, having a procession the length of two

days before me, and such a numerous retinue of all the nobles of Baghdad, and having archers innumerable attending my splendid caravan, which was moving toward the valley—”

“O my dear Abudah,” said Selima, interrupting him, “with what madness hath that wicked enchanter possessed you! What car? what vestments? what procession doth my lord talk of? There came, indeed (brought by those who called themselves your friends), a poor wretch here, who has embezzled the greater part of your riches, and who often talked in private with you: and this continued for some months, during which time you never attended to the speech of your friends, but seemed wrapped up in that specious villain, who at last took you to the room fronting the gateway of the city, and there for two days you continued looking out, and seemed to be in raptures, talking of more riches than the world contains; and the third day, though he still continued by you, you persisted he was gone. Yet he went forth, and you followed him, and getting into a little vehicle, he placed himself behind you, and your distressed family have from that day lamented your absence.”

At this recital, Abudah turned his face on the sofa, and spake no more for several hours. At last, rising from the sofa, “Fool, indeed, that I was!” said he, “to trust the account of a miserable impostor, or believe that the talisman of Oromanes might be purchased with riches!”

“Oh, rather,” replied Selima, “may my lord find peace in this city, and comfort from his family, who adore him.”

“It was there,” answered the merchant, “that I once hoped to find it; but satiety, which I will not suffer to breed disgust, forces me at least to be indifferent to the pleasures which surround me. No, Selima, I have a nocturnal monitor, who will not permit me to rest till I have made myself master of the talisman of the perfect Oromanes. It is some knowledge to perceive our errors; and, at least, I am nearer the possession of the talisman, as my last journey, though it has not given me the talisman itself, has yet furnished me with the means of obtaining it.”

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Having thus spoke, he seemed for a time easy and resigned, and endeavoured by love and tenderness to sooth the affliction of the weeping Selima. The moon passed in all those endearments which holy love inspires, when the persecuted merchant was again awakened by his midnight hag, and commanded to pursue his journey after the talisman of Oromanes.

Abudah was about to reply, when on a sudden he heard the most ravishing music, and immediately subtle and precious perfumes filled the chamber, and a small cloud gathering from the roof descended, and, expanding, produced to his view a most exquisite beauty, habited like the eternal houris, bedecked with chaplets of delicate ever-living flowers, holding in one hand a crystal cup, and with the other pressing out the sparkling juice from a swelling cluster of delicious grapes.

"Here, faithful Abudah!" began the lovely form, "receive from these humble hands the cup which will inspire you with the knowledge of the talisman of Oromanes; quaff off this delicious draught, and reclining yourself on the iron chest, that faithful treasure will, at a wish, convey you to those happy realms where, without a guard, the keys of all thy pleasures are preserved."

At these words, with grace ineffable, she advanced to the transported merchant; who with thrilling joy received from her ivory hands the rich sparkling draught, and drank it off with mad delight. The houri immediately disappeared, and Abudah, falling senseless on the chest, resigned himself to sleep, and to a second adventure.

The Second Adventure of the Merchant Abudah, in the Groves of Shadaski

Abudah, awaking at the cheerful sound of innumerable birds who sat around him and strove for mastery in their sweet notes, found himself lying in a lovely pavilion, strewn with fresh lilies and roses, and filled with the most ravishing perfumes; the downy sofa on which he reclined was of the finest silk, wrought with curious devices, and executed with

such life and spirit that flowers seemed in the mimic work to spring forth from under him. The rising sun, which appeared over the blue distant hills, and warmed the awaking day; the choristers of the groves, whose melody was softened by the gentle motion of the air; the unspeakable elegance of the pavilion, which seemed formed by the powers of harmony; and the delicious fragrance of the air—transported the merchant with the most pleasing sensations: he could not for some time believe his existence, but supposed that he was still under the influences of the delightful vision which had the night before taken possession of him. He turned his eyes on all sides to meet with new delights, which, though sumptuous and costly, owed more lustre to their delicacy and disposition than to the expensive materials out of which they were formed.

But if such were the ravishing delights within, Abudah thought them much realized when he was convinced he was awake; and by stepping forward out of the pavilion, he beheld every enchanting object that art and nature could unite. The pavilion itself stood upon a rising mount, in the midst of a most beautiful green, and was partly shaded by some upright palms, and a scattered grove of oranges and citrons, which on all sides, by beautiful brakes, gave a view of the neighbouring paradise. The centre of the pavilion opened to the lawn, which was beset with elegant tufts of the most delightful verdure.

Blushing and transparent fruits peeped from between the foliage, and every coloured, every scented flower, in agreeable variety, intermingled with the grass, and presented to Abudah's eyes the garden-work of luxuriant nature. Here roses, with woodbines entwined, appeared in beauteous contention; here luscious grapes adorned the barren branches of the stately elm, while beneath strayed the rich flocks, or birds of various feather, some in numbers upon the ground, and some paired in trees, which added a new variety to the scene. At the bottom of the lawn ran a clear and transparent stream, which gently washed the margin of the green, and seemed to feed it as it passed. On the other side a grove of

myrtles, intermixed with roses and flowering shrubs, led into shady mazes, in the midst of which appeared the glittering tops of other elegant pavilions, some of which stood just on the brink of the river; others had wide avenues leading through the groves; and others were almost hidden from the sight by the intervening woods.

Abudah, directing his steps towards the stream, found there an elegant barge, manned by thirty beautiful youths, whose garments were of azure, trimmed with gold. They beckoned the happy merchant, and received him with the utmost affability into their bark; then all at once plying their refulgent oars, they made the crystal flood sparkle with their ready strokes. The boat rode lightly on the buxom stream, and as it passed through the meanders of the current, every moment presented a new and striking prospect of beauties to the delighted Abudah: hanging rocks of different hues; woods of spices, and perfumes breathing sweetness over the cool stream; fruits reflected in double lustre in the clear waves; shrubs dropping their roses on them as they passed; flocks and herds standing gazing at their own images in the deep; others drinking of the transparent waters; and some, more satisfied, frisking on the lawns, or chasing each other in sport among the trees.

At length the stream, growing wider, opened into a spacious lake, which was half surrounded with a rising hill, on which might be seen, intermixed with groves, various gay pavilions, palaces, theatres, rotundas, obelisks, temples, pillars, towers, and other curious marks of elegance and luxury. Various pleasure-boats were sailing on the surface of the lake, some with gaudy banners fanning the winds, others with pleasing structures for shade and entertainment: in one boat gay music; in another banquets; in a third desserts of the finest fruit, viands, cooling liquors; and gay company in all, who looked more blooming than the sons of the genii or the daughters of the fairies. At the extremities of the swelling hill ran glittering cascades; and over the pendant rocks dropped down the most luxuriant vines, whose modest leaves attempted in vain to hide their luscious and transparent fruit

from the curious eye of the observer. At the extremity of the lake, which, by its pure waters, exposed the yellow golden sand on which it wantoned, two streams ran toward the right and left of the hill, and lost themselves amidst the groves, pasturage, lawns, hillocks, and romantic scenes of the adjacent country; where lofty gilded spires, swelling domes, and other curious labours were partly concealed and partly discovered by the blue expanse of sky, which at last seemed blended with the country, and terminated the prospect of the groves of Shadaski.

The beautiful watermen, who in alternate song kept time with their oars, were now almost at the further side of the lake, and in the centre of the shore where Abudah had beheld the mixed groves, temples and pavilions. A little creek, shaded with myrtles and cedars, was the place where Abudah was destined to land. Here, as he approached, ten beauteous fair ones, dressed like the genii of the woods, stood ready to receive him, which they did with the most amiable and pleasing address.

The boat, having landed the merchant, shot again swiftly over the lake, and mixed with the gay pageants on the water, while the fair strangers invited Abudah toward the palaces which were scattered on the hill.

Having passed through several fragrant avenues of trees, laden either with shade, fruit, or flower, they brought him toward an elegant building, whose front faced the lake from whence they came; here, amidst parterres and beds of flowers, a broad plat led them to the entrance of the palace, where all the lavish ornaments of art and sculpture were displayed in the most refined symmetry; light polished shafts, airy devices, highly finished entablatures, and other fanciful decorations, formed the building, which was more calculated to give the ideas of pleasure than magnificence, and had more ease than labour conspicuous.

Towards this mansion the ten beauties led the way, and introduced Abudah into a grand hall adorned with lively groups of delicate statues, in every variety of attitudes; some

representing the lovely wood nymphs; some the beauties of the flood; others engaged in the chase.

Between the statues were pictures of every conceivable delight: the luscious banquet; the wild effects of the enlivening grape; the various pleasures of the seasons; the country and the court; the rural swains; the gentle fair; the mixed dance; and the joys of sweet retirement. These were all so lively in their different colours and complexions that they seemed to the eyes of Abudah as moving pictures.

The merchant was then led into an inner apartment, whose walls were one entire mirror, which reflected the ten beauties ten thousand ways, and ravished the senses of Abudah beyond the power of description. From this apartment a door opened into a spacious rotunda, lighted from the dome by the sun, and the sides supported by emblematic pillars. In the middle of this rotunda Abudah beheld a bath, and round it were eleven doors, into one of which the ten beauties directed the merchant, while they prepared for him a luxurious bath of warm and sweet-scented waters.

His attendants then directed him to the other side of the rotunda, to a chamber furnished with the most airy and fanciful dresses. Here Abudah was presented with a pink suit, embroidered with myrtle twigs of silver and flowers of pearl; after which he was sprinkled with sweet-smelling essences, and presented with a fragrant wash, which renewed his complexion, and gave him a second youth.

From this chamber a door opened to a spacious saloon: here Abudah was invited to seat himself, and immediately the ten fair beauties appeared, laden with dishes conaining every luxury and every rarity. Abudah and his fair company began the banquet, while invisible genii administered to them rich sparkling wines, high sauces, congealed liquors; fruits of every kind—the nectarine, the Persian apple, the lordly pine, the luscious grape, the cooling pomegranate, the juicy pear were heaped before them, till nature was not only satisfied, but tired with profusion. Then followed the full and racy wines, forbidden indeed by Mahomet, but not forbidden in

the groves of Shadaski; the sweetmeats and preserves, and every luxury which could stimulate the jaded appetite.

During this repast, the beautiful companions of Abudah began to challenge each other with lively songs and innocent blandishments; while the rapturous merchant, with sparkling eyes, beheld each with equal admiration. The banquet bringing on satiety, after washing they arose, and his lovely train led Abudah, the evening drawing on, into the gardens of the palace.

After walking by several cooling fountains and sweet-smelling groves, they came to a magnificent terrace, crowded with gay youths and maidens, in the most fantastical masquerades. All nations might be seen upon this variegated terrace, and the beauties of every clime; conversation was here animated, the pleasures of life being the universal topic. Cooling liquors, fruits, cakes, creams, and wines were spread on the flowery banks on each side the terrace, and in arbours of oranges and myrtles, or sweet jasmines; behind the trees and shrubs were placed large bands of music, sometimes inspiring, and sometimes melting, the hearts of their auditors.

The sun was setting just as Abudah had gained the centre of this extensive terrace, for his companions had left him to join what company he pleased. Here he perceived on a large green, planted round with lofty palms, under which grew every kind of shrub, a most extensive building, of an oblong form, and supported by seven hundred magnificent pillars, where the crowd from the terrace were retiring. Abudah entered with the rest, and advanced into the room, which was lighted up with numberless lustres, and furnished all round with silken canopies, each having under it sofas of the richest velvet. Here the gay assembly, as soon as the music from the gallery struck up, began the dance, nor could the infatuated merchant refrain from the enlivening motion. Thus passed the fleeting hours, till exercise renewed their appetites for the banquet.

On a sudden, while each fair one and her partner were resting from the dance, a noble banquet was spread, to which Abudah was about to rise, when his partner, pulling him by

his garment, bid him wait till their queen honoured the assembly with her presence. Ere long the softest music began to sound, a hundred choristers in masquerade habits entered the assembly, singing; these were followed by forty young maidens, scattering roses and violets around; after which came forward, under a canopy supported by twelve beautiful boys, their beauteous queen: at her approach the company arose, and with the utmost adoration prostrated themselves before her.

When the queen was seated on a throne at the upper end of the room, and the banquet was about to begin, she ordered her maidens to find out the stranger who came yesterday to visit her dominions. Immediately Abudah was brought before her, who prostrating himself at her feet, she, with a smile, gave him her hand, and commanded him to rise.

“O happy Abudah!” said the queen, “whom the fates have ordained to bring into these delightful regions the chest of the valley of Bocchim! The superior genii, envying the happiness which we independent genii enjoy, contrived to divide the keys and the chest, which, as tradition declares, contains the talisman of Oromanes; and thou, O Abudah! art the mortal destined to unite them—worthy, Abudah, for such service, of the love of thy slaves. Come, then, thou prince of our hopes, and share with us the pleasures of these happy groves.”

She then commanded her companions to pay Abudah the honours they used to pay her; and, with a pressing tenderness, obliged him to share her throne. Abudah now conceived himself the happiest of mankind: the captivating charms of the queen, and her tender reception of him, overwhelmed him with exquisite sensations. After the hilarious festivities of the banquet, the company retired, and the room was all hushed and silent. Thus passed away the night in the groves of Shadaski: the morning brought reflection and satiety; and Abudah, with some impatience, besought the queen to surrender him the keys of the iron chest.

“My ever-loved Abudah,” replied the queen, “behold the

chest in the centre of my temple, and here are the keys for my adventurous hero; go, happy Abudah! and purchase a perpetuity of pleasures, by the possession of the talisman of joy-giving Oromanes."

Abudah, having received the keys, jumped forward from the pavilion to the middle of the temple, and, like a man just entering on a new pursuit, with great impatience began to open the fifty locks. The locks, being only touched by the keys, flew from their staples, and the merchant, in a few minutes, had conquered forty-nine of the obstacles of his happiness. As he was opening the last—"O queen!" said he, "come forward, and see me finish this desirable adventure!" The last lock tumbled off just as the queen arrived at the chest, and Abudah besought her to share with him the pleasures of exploring the treasures of the chest. But no sooner did the merchant stoop to open the lid of the iron chest than a sudden darkness ensued, and in a moment the loud thunder cracked around him, and streams of crooked lightnings, with horrid blaze, encircled the astonished Abudah.

The shrieks and cries of the once gay set, who were indulging under the canopies, next struck his ears: some, already blasted by the lightning, withered away; others the ruins of the temple, falling in huge fragments, half buried in the earth; the rest, in madness running to and fro in despair, tore each other to pieces. The red angry lightning still continuing, Abudah, in the utmost anguish, looked toward the queen; when, O fearful sight! he saw her soft form parching and contracting by the flames, and her whole body diminishing, till, by degrees, instead of eyes brimful of love, he beheld the little old hag, with fury flashing from her looks.

"Wretch, as well as fool!" said she, with a voice that pierced his inmost sense, "how darest thou to presume to seek the talisman of Oromanes amidst the vanities and intemperance of this filthy grove? But I leave you to enjoy the situation you are so fond of: be this dungeon of intemperance your prison: here wander, and contemplate the pleasures you have chosen."

Thus saying, she struck Abudah with her crutch, and vanished from his sight: the touch of her noxious crutch filled him with aching pains, and the dead bodies and the groans of those dying around him inspired the wretched merchant with the utmost horror and despair. He wandered for a long time in what he now believed an endless cavern, without light; and, to add to his wretchedness, every step he took, he trod on some venomous creature. The serpents hissed at him as he passed; the toads spat malignant fire; and the asps, twining round his legs, spewed their venom on him, and marked Abudah with a thousand blotches. Thus continued he wandering to and fro, with great caution, about the dismal cavern, not more tormented with the groans of others than his own dismal and heart-aching thoughts, which made him weep and tremble every step he took. After many weary searches for an end, or place to escape, he felt something larger than common seize him by the leg; upon which the poor wretch supposed he was in the grip of an enormous serpent, and began shrieking with fear and terror, when a voice, like that of despair, spoke as follows:

“What wretch art thou, who yet remainest alive in this cavern of desolation and death?”

Abudah, though still in terror, was yet somewhat comforted to find some companion in his miseries, and thus answered him:

“I am, indeed, a wretch, misled in my searches after the talisman of Oromanes!”

“What,” answered the voice; “wast thou fool enough to suppose that vicious pleasure was the road to that noble jewel? It were then,” continued the voice, “an easy purchase; but rough is the path and high the mount on which that treasure is preserved.”

“Alas!” answered Abudah, “it matters not to me where or how this talisman is disposed, who am thus for ever enclosed in these walls of wretchedness.”

“We may rise, but cannot sink lower,” answered the voice, “when we are at the bottom; and perhaps the most barren ground will yield the richest mine: be thou but resolved to

tread the crooked and laborious path, and I will instruct thee, for within these caverns begins the winding ascent."

"O friend, or genius, or whatsoever else thou art!" returned the merchant, "place me but in the track, and no danger shall deter me; for what has he to fear who is beyond hope?"

"Take, then," answered the voice, "thy way as the cavern descends; and fear not to stoop in order to rise, for in the lowest part of this cavern is situated the opening you must ascend."

As the voice ended, Abudah found his feet at liberty, and began to feel out for the cavern's descent. The lower he went, the more filth and stench he found; to which, submitting with patience, he, by a long passage, sometimes crawling under rugged arches, sometimes wading in mud and dirt, and in total darkness, attained the end of the cavern, where he stumbled on some narrow steps, but could see no light, and was nearly suffocated with the noisome vapours. The winding ascent was so intricate, and clogged with dirt and rubbish, that the merchant worked like a mole in the dark; but by his industry he gained ground considerably; yet, what most tormented him was that, as often as he endeavoured to mount, the steps would slip from under him, and he would come tumbling down with a weight of dirt upon him, and then had all his work to do over again. Nothing but his intolerable situation and lost condition could have supported the merchant in this odious undertaking; but meanness and wretchedness know no evils greater than themselves.

After various labours, Abudah arrived at a little kind of resting-place, from whence the steps began to enlarge, and by degrees he perceived from above a glimmering light; to which ascending, the nearer he drew to it, the plainer he could hear a confused sound of voices echoing from the top, which increased as he rose, till he could plainly distinguish it must proceed from some great concourse of people without. When he had reached the uppermost step, over which a hole opened sufficient for a man to crawl through, the clamours without were so terrifying, that he feared to proceed: at last,

considering that death must be the consequence of remaining in the cavern, he boldly ventured forth.

The Merchant Abudah's Third Adventure, in the Kingdom of Tasgi

No sooner did the merchant Abudah appear through the opening of the cavern, than ten thousand voices cried out at once: "Long live our sultan, whom the mountains of Tasgi have brought forth!" And Abudah, looking around, saw an infinite concourse of people round the mountain, and beyond them a most plentiful country, with cities and towns scattered among the valleys which opened to his view.

A number of eunuchs and vizirs stepped forward to disengage Abudah from the mouth of the cavern, who was so spent with his infirmities, sores, and fatigue that he was obliged to be supported. Immediately a princely robe was thrown over him, and a costly turban put upon his head; the concourse still crying out, with ecstasy and rapture: "Long live our sultan, whom the mountains of Tasgi have brought forth!"

Silence being commanded, the grand-vizir, with a long train, came toward Abudah; and, with all the people, prostrating himself before the merchant, thus addressed himself to Abudah:

"Behold, O thou, before whose presence even the sun is darkness! behold, O wonder of mankind! most sacred progeny of Tasgi! thou miracle of beauty! thou mirror of perfection! thou most glorious sultan of earthly princes! thou diamond of nature! thou guardian of the world! behold thy prostrate slaves, whose wish is only to lie down as thy footstools, and to be trodden under thy feet as the dust of the plain! Thine, O sultan! is all earthly happiness! thine, every perfection of body and mind! thine, all power, from the mountains of thy parent Tasgi, to the parching deserts of Shezrallah, which forbid the approach of the stranger to the kingdoms of our invincible sultan. Rule, therefore, thy slaves, according unto thy pleasure; and know but one will in the

plains and cities which, by thy permission and bounty, thy slaves inhabit!"

As the grand-vizir, still prostrate with the people, uttered these words, they all with one voice repeated: "O sultan! whom the mountains of Tasgi have brought forth, rule thy slaves according to thy pleasure!"

Abudah, filled with conceit and bloated with pride, had almost forgot his pains and infirmities in this flattering applause; he set his foot on the neck of the vizir with the utmost haughtiness, and commanded him to conduct him to the seraglios of his ancestors. A number of slaves and eunuchs brought a magnificent throne of ivory, with a canopy of golden embroidery thrown over it, into which Abudah ascended, and was borne on the shoulders of the grandes and vizirs of his new-acquired kingdom. The retinue, winding round the hill, brought Abudah in sight of an extensive encampment, which, after the eastern manner, was of different colours; one division yellow, one blue, another white, some red, some green, and all adorned with silver or gold. In the centre of this splendid armament stood the royal tent, which alone with the lustre of the gold and lively blue velvet of which it was composed, and looked rather like a palace than a tent.

Here Abudah was seated on his throne, and the nobles having done obeisance, Abudah commanded all but the grand-vizir to depart. The rest being gone, the grand-vizir, again prostrating himself before Abudah, cried out: "May my lord, the sultan of Tasgi, ever rule over Harran his slave!"

"Harran," answered Abudah, "arise, and declare to me the cause of this encampment, and why the armies of Tasgi are thus scattered on the plains."

"Our renowned sultan Rammasin," replied the vizir Har-
ran, "made it his custom to take the field in summer, to terrify his foes; but, in the midst of this campaign, it pleased the powers who preside over the mountains of Tasgi to call him from us, and bless us with the presence of my lord, before whom I stand. For since the time that the descendants

of Mahomet involved our kingdom in perpetual bloodshed, we have been warned by the oracles of Tasgi to expect a king from the womb of the mountain, that no division of families, or contention among brethren, might disturb the peace of these happy kingdoms."

"And who," said Abudah, "are the neighbours of my kingdom beyond these mountains?"

"They are," replied the vizir, "O sultan! a harmless, inoffensive race, which was the cause that the sultan Rammasin would not make war upon them, although their territories extend to the sea-coast, and would be a noble addition to the kingdom of the sultan of Tasgi."

"Rammasin, then," answered Abudah, "wanted a nobleness of soul, to sit down contented with less than he might have enjoyed; but Abudah, your present sultan, will give their lands to the slaves of Tasgi, and extend his dominions even over the waves and the tempest."

"My royal master will thereby," answered the vizir, "gain the hearts of his soldiers, who have long pined in the inglorious lethargies of peace."

"Go, bid the trumpets sound, then," said Abudah, "and let it be proclaimed in the camp, that your sultan Abudah will revenge the injuries which the inhabitants of Tasgi have received from their perfidious neighbours. Go, Harran, and denounce war against the—"

"Shakarahs," said Harran, bowing, "who have insulted the mountains of Tasgi."

Abudah was going on, but his pains and weakness obliged him to order them to prepare an inner tent for his reception.

While the eunuchs and slaves were attending their new sultan, his vizir Harran caused the royal mandate to be proclaimed within the encampment, and commanded the leaders of the army to be assembled together, to deliver to them the orders of the sultan Abudah.

The whole kingdom of Tasgi was rejoiced at the news of their sultan's expedition against the helpless and innocent Shakarahs; so little do subjects weigh the merits of war! and the old and decrepit parents stirred up their children to

engage in a service where cruelty and destruction were honoured with the titles of virtue and the love of their country. Ere the sun began to smile upon the harvests of the Shakarabs, the tents of Abudah were moving to destroy them; the loud cymbals were clanging in the air; and the brasen trumpets, with their shrill notes of liveliness, seemed to inspire the armies of Tasgi with a thirst of glory, and not of blood. The order and discipline of the troops, the regularity of their march, and the sprightliness of their looks utterly disguised the rapacious purposes of the royal plunderer; who, though but just master of one kingdom, was so eager to get possession of a second, that he destroyed many of his men in forcing a march over the mountains which nature had placed as the boundaries of their nation.

The Shakarabs, having notice of their motions, sent an embassy to meet the sultan of Tasgi: beseeching to know the cause of his coming; making the humblest professions of peace; and offering, if any thing had offended him, to make the fullest satisfaction they were capable of; and imploring him that he would not make war upon a nation who were ever the friends of the Tascites, and to whom that kingdom had never declared any hostile intention.

To these humble remonstrances Abudah replied that he was not to be taught and directed by such base slaves as the Shakarabs; and that whatever intention he might have had originally in entering their kingdom, he now declared he came to punish the insolence of that people who dared send such dictating embassies to the sultan of Tasgi. He then commanded the ambassadors to be driven from the encampment, and ordered his army to begin their hostilities on the presumptuous Shakarabs.

The leaders of the armies of Tasgi being ignorant and imperious, every kind of tyranny and cruelty was practised, till the wretched Shakarabs being made prisoners, and their wives and families ravished or murdered, the sultan Abudah returned to the kingdom of Tasgi with the spoils of the conquered country, amidst the acclamations of the army and its leaders; who were so lavish of their praises and adula-

tions, that Abudah esteemed himself at least equal to the prophet of Mecca.

After Abudah arrived at the metropolis of Tasgi, his vizirs came to inquire of him where he would bestow the miserable Shakarahs, most of whom they had led home in chains. Abudah was for some time doubtful of their fate, and was at last going to order a general execution, when he recollected the iron chest which was buried in the mountains of Tasgi.

"Let the Shakarahs," said the sultan Abudah, "be condemned to work in the mountains of Tasgi, till they find an iron chest with fifty locks."

At these words the grand-vizir Harran bowed before the sultan, and said: "Will my lord dare to send the Shakarahs into the womb of Tasgi, which his own subjects are forbidden to approach?"

"Take the rebel Harran," said Abudah, in indignation, "and let his head be severed from his body, and his tongue let the dogs devour."

The other vizirs gladly saw this execution performed on Harran, and returned to the sultan, and said: "Far be it that a monarch of the east should be governed by his slaves. Be the will of the sultan Abudah for ever obeyed, as it is in the destruction of the traitor Harran, as it is in the labours of the Shakarahs in the mountains of Tasgi!"

Abudah hourly sent his vizirs to inspect the miners in the mountains, who returned with accounts of the death of thousands, over whom the mountain crumbled, and smothered them in its caverns.

The Tasgites, jealous of their mountain, which they supposed was somewhat divine, began to murmur at the impiety of their sultan; which, when Abudah knew, he commanded the leaders of his army to chastise them, and to put every tenth man throughout his kingdom to the sword. At length the fainting Shakarahs dug out the chest of iron, and brought it to Abudah, who commanded every engine of force to be applied to it to break it open, but in vain; the chest resisted all their endeavours, and would not yield to the utmost force the art of man could bring against it.

Abudah then published a reward to any that should make keys to fit the locks. This several undertook, and succeeded; but as soon as one lock was opened, it shut while the artificer was employed about the second. Abudah, puffed up with pride, was enraged at this disappointment, and commanded fifty men to take the fifty keys, and all attempt it at once, which they did, and were all immediately struck dead: he then commanded a second fifty; but none but his army were near him, for the rest were fled from the tyrant's presence. Abudah now ordered fifty soldiers to approach; when the leaders of the army, moved by his cruelties, and seeing he was about to sacrifice his army as well as his subjects, uniting together, came toward him in a body; which Abudah perceiving, and expecting no mercy, leaped on the chest, and trusted himself to its saving power. Immediately the chest moved aloft in the air, and Abudah, being stupefied and giddy, fell into a deep sleep, and was wafted far from the army and kingdom of Tasgi.

*The Merchant Abudah's Fourth Adventure, among
the Sages of Nema*

Abudah found himself on the iron chest, beneath a rock which hung over him and was covered with a pleasant shade of palms; at a little distance a gentle rill ran bubbling over the stones, and took its course along a narrow valley, which on either side was bounded by rocks and verdant hills. Here, as he eyed the rural scene, and reflected on his escape from Tasgi, he observed a venerable sage gently moving forward along the valley, and, to appearance, directing his steps toward the rock under which he was sitting. Abudah's conscience was so alarmed at the sight of a human form, which during his tyrannical reign he had so often defaced, that he strove to hide himself even from the approach of a weak old man; but, the sage still advancing with ease and composure, Abudah, after some hesitation, suffered him to join him.

The sage, with great obsequiousness, bowed before Abudah, who had still the royal turban upon his head, and

the ensigns of the regal power about his shoulders, and said, "O prince! who deignest to visit these retreats of learning and philosophy, whether thou art he whose knowledge was universal, the glory of the East, the sagest of sages, the indefatigable Solomon, or whether thou art here arrived from any neighbouring realm in quest of science, and art willing to honour our school with thy august presence, permit one of the lowest of the sons of knowledge to conduct you to the temple and seat of learning, which the great Solomon here founded in the desert for the investigation of truth and the discoveries of nature. This vale, which is our only retreat from the sultry sun or the wide-extended desert, winds round to the entrance of our seminary, where every science is taught, and all the fountains of knowledge are disclosed."

As he spoke these words, the sage led the way; and Abudah, somewhat recovered from his hurry and confusion, said within himself, "O prophet! how blindly have I wandered! yet here, surely, among these springs of knowledge and learning, is the talisman of Oromanes to be discovered!"

Abudah, arriving with the sage at the end of the valley, beheld the mansions of philosophy. A grand portico first presented itself to his view, built after the model of the Grecian architecture; to this, with the sage, he ascended by a grand flight of steps, and, entering the doors of the inner portico, found himself in a spacious hall. "Here," said the sage, "must even kings remain, till the director of his seat of learning is acquainted with the arrival of a stranger, and his motives for seeking entrance into the sacred college of science."

"Give, then, this message," answered Abudah, "to your director: That the sultan of Tasgi," for Abudah's penitence had not entirely humbled his pride, "studious of knowledge, seeks, in this philosophic seat, to find the talisman of the perfect Oromanes." The sage, after having made obeisance to the supposed sultan, went in quest of the director, and left Abudah in the hall, where were many other candidates for admission into the college of philosophy, and each had his particular sage or introducer.

Abudah's instructor shortly returned. "Our director," said he, "rejoices to find so great a monarch studious of truth, and bids me declare, as is customary, that the talisman of Oromanes is the ultimate end of all our researches, and therefore invites the sultan of Tasgi to seek it, in whatever science he thinks most likely to contain it. But," added the sage, "happily for the sultan of Tasgi, he has met with Abraharad, who can unfold to him the secrets of nature, and teach him in what recesses the talisman of Oromanes is enclosed."

"And are you, then," answered Abudah, "the renowned Abraharad, whom my subjects of Tasgi have often described to me as the man who knew the properties of all herbs and roots, and the minerals of all the earth?"

"These, O prince!" replied Abraharad, "are the plainest precepts of nature; but I will unfold to thee such of her secrets as none, since the magnificent Solomon, have been allowed to view: for what was Oromanes, the founder of this talisman, but the magician of fire, the great alchymist of the first and most powerful element! However, I will not waste your time in words, when I can work wonders to convince you. Descend then, O prince! with me, into the area of this inner building, in which every science has its separate offices and apartments, and I will bring you to the knowledge of the inmost secrets of nature and art."

Abudah, rejoicing in his new acquaintance, followed Abraharad into an extensive court, surrounded by porticos, in each of which he beheld several sages teaching their respective disciples.

Abraharad led Abudah to the portico of his own science, where many were busied in the various branches of his art. "Even in this vestibule," said Abraharad, "could I surprise the sultan of Tasgi; but I lead him at once to the mysteries of science." So saying, he opened a door that led to an inner apartment; and Abudah entering, the alchymist closed the door of his laboratory. While Abudah's attention was diverted by the variety of instruments and apparatuses which he beheld in this mimic shop of nature, the alchymist began to order his materials, and set them in furnaces; compounding

salts and earths and spirits, and varying his experiments according as he saw occasion.

“Patience and perseverance, O sultan!” said Abraharad, “are the tools of an alchymist; without these he could not work, as hidden causes so often vary and perplex his operations. The secret which I am now preparing is what gave the great Demogorgon power to dissolve all nature: but as it is a tedious process, and the furnace as yet gives but the third degree of fire, I will show you what great effects lie hidden in the meanest causes, that you may conquer the prejudices which custom may have rooted in your mind against any particular modifications of matter; for the whole earth that you view is one confusion of materials, out of which, by separation, conjunction, assimilation, unity, or disjunction, may every appearance of nature, and many which she has never discovered, be formed. You see the seed drawing to itself atoms, capable of forming wood and various fruits: from this seemingly tasteless earth arises first the harsh, then the sour, and, lastly, the luscious grape, concocted, meliorated, and perfected in these different stages by the subtile alchymy of the sun. You see in others, the bitter, the salt, the tart, and the sweet, all drawn from the same earthly bed or well: so likewise, O sultan! is the generation of all things; the semen is a kind of standard which marshals each under its particular banner. Now, as these are all, by affections and sympathies of size or quality, naturally led by these causes to conjunction and unity, so also have they all aversions, that is to say, particles discordant which are capable of separating them, whereby their cohesion, unity, and substance is destroyed, and they themselves are rendered discontinuous and resolvable into their first principles or rude atoms: thus, what we call corruption is really no more than a new modification of matter, which, according as it is agreeable to our senses and perceptions, we call by names conveying agreeable or disagreeable ideas. Thus the ferment of the grape we call a making, or creation, of wine; and the ferment of vegetables, which resolve themselves to a kind of muck or manure, we call putrefaction, though they are begun by one and the same

process in nature; so again the change of an egg into one living animal or bird we call breeding; but the change of another, by staleness, into a thousand maggots, we call corruption. But yet, whatever may be our notions and ideas, they are never lost or destroyed materially, though they are formally; all returns to the common bed of nature, and there lies dormant, till called forth by sufficient causes into different forms.

“Hence it is, O sultan! that the alchymist, taking this universal bed as the groundwork of his science, and acting, as nature does, by the force of the nobler and more vivifying elements, teaches mankind the powers of separation and composition; and hence he is able to proceed or move backward in his work, and can either stop, reduce, or drive forward the matter which he guides. Thus, O sultan! you perceive those two bottles of transparent liquors; you see, by mixing them, they instantly change and become red: so the small plant which you set in water, though fed by that element only, produces green leaves. Now these waters may again be rendered transparent by other mixtures, may be disunited, and reduced to their former state; or by other additions, you see, I render them blue, or black, or green, or yellow; yet all these beautiful colours and phenomena are caused by a few common and natural causes.”

Abraharad then ordered the laboratory to be darkened, and immediately the sultan beheld, among vivid flashes, this writing in fire upon the walls: “The sultan of Tasgi will be satisfied.” At this sight Abudah was transported; whereupon Abraharad said: “O sultan! let not appearances either slacken or too rashly inspire your researches: this luminous appearance is natural, drawn from the most refuse of materials, and may serve to convince you that wonders lie hidden in the most disagreeable formations of matter. But I see the colours arising in the furnace, all that is bright to the eye! What flashes of red, blue, green, yellow, purple, white, arise from my work! brighter, O sultan! than the rubies or the emeralds of thine empire!”

Abudah looked at the furnace, and saw the most glorious colours arising from the crucibles of Abraharad.

"These," continued the sage, "are signs that my universal menstruum is near perfection; and now all nature will be opened before me."

"What," answered Abudah, "is the mixture you are making in the furnace an universal solvent?"

"Yes," said Abraharad, "it is."

"Then," replied the merchant Abudah, "the talisman of Oromanes will soon be my own."

"It may possibly," resumed the sage, "require some time to seek out where it is deposited."

"That," said Abudah, "I know; for it is enclosed in the iron chest which you saw me sitting upon under the rock, which has hitherto resisted every application of force or art."

"Hast thou, then, O royal sultan!" cried Abraharad, "the chest of adamant with fifty locks, said to contain that precious jewel, that philosophic talisman, which can give life, immortality, riches, honour, and happiness to the possessor? But see, my work is finished; the bluish vapour rises, and my menstruum, the key of nature, is completed. Let us, then, hasten with it to this chest, and release the treasure of my royal sultan."

"Rather," replied Abudah, "will I go and bring it here, which by its virtues I am able to perform, and Abraharad shall exercise his authority over this stubborn matter, and reduce it to its former atoms." Abudah then, leaving the sage, returned to his chest, and, seating himself thereon, was, at a wish, conveyed with his treasure into the laboratory.

The sage Abraharad, having viewed the chest with rapture, took out his crucible, full of the universal menstruum.

"Alas," said Abudah, "O sage! be not deceived. Can that which dissolves everything be confined by a crucible?"

The sage grew pale at the merchant's reproof; and, with the utmost vexation, threw his menstruum on the ground, where the harmless liquor continued, without altering itself or the earth that supported it.

"Alas!" said Abudah, "where now is alchymy!"

"I have a cold fusion," answered Abrahahad, "though a hot one is denied me; for I will send the lightning, which melts the sword and leaves the scabbard unhurt, through that stubborn piece of mechanism."

A new apparatus being now fixed, the sparks and flashes began to issue through the sides of the adamant; and Abrahahad, exulting and impatient to hasten the effect of his mimic lightning, stepped nearer to the chest, when the flash, altering its course, drove violently through the temple of the sage Abrahahad, and reduced him to ashes. At this dreadful catastrophe, Abudah, whose hopes were raised to the highest pitch, ran out of the laboratory with frantic wildness, and filled the area with his groans and complaints. Here, as he wandered about, tormented by passion and disappointment, a sage, with a steady and composed mien, advanced from one of the porticos toward him, and, with great seeming unconcern, said: "O wretch! why will you neglect the possession of the talisman of Oromanes, which it is in your power to enjoy?"

"Canst thou assure me of that?" answered Abudah, in transports.

"I can assure you," replied the sage, "that you are at present incapable of making use of it."

"And therefore it is, I suppose," said Abudah, "that I am thus for ever deceived, when I think it within my grasp."

"It is even so," answered the sage.

"Then teach me, O friendly sage!" continued the merchant, "how I may come to the true enjoyment of this valuable treasure?"

"Must not happiness," said the sage, "be seated in the mind?"

"It must, it must!" replied Abudah, "and I have neglected my mind, to search for it among bodily enjoyments. Oh, what a new scene have you, O greatest of sages! opened to my view! But proceed, O heavenly instructor! and perfect the cure you have begun."

"Cool and moderate your grief this night," answered the sage Gherar, "and to-morrow, if I find you dispassionate, I

will unmask your mind, which at present is beset by worldly objects." Thus saying, the sage Gherar introduced Abudah among his scholars, and provided him apartments in his portico.

Early the next morning, the sage Gherar attended Abudah, and led him forth toward the valley that fronted the building dedicated to science and instruction.

"How delightful," said Gherar, "are the sweet dews that are again rising at the call of the morning sun! The groves seem, like man, refreshed by the silence of the night; and the grass is capable, by this relief from nature, to stand against the fiery beams of the noon."

"It is, indeed," answered Abudah, "a glorious morning, and looks more like a new creation than a scene which has already lasted such numberless ages. Oh, how happily might man spend his days in such sweet retirements!—no cares to molest him, no storms to beat upon him, no human desolations to suffer from!"

"Such," answered Gherar, "are the dreams of folly, and the conceits of infirmity. Conscious of your weakness, I led you to this scene in order to convince you how incapable you are of happiness: if the brightness of the sun and the vapours of the morning can so affect you with pleasure, the want of them will be painful unto you. In these gratifications the soul is totally passive, and must be fed by the senses: thus she is taught to rejoice at the wanton touches of a finger, at the tickling of a luxurious palate, at the odours of a fading flower, at the sounding undulations of the circumambient air, or at the accidental objects that play upon the eyes of a trifling circumscribed animal.

"But the purity and immortality of the soul teaches the philosopher to govern the corruptions of the flesh, and not to suffer the body to be the master of the mind: the momentary pleasures or evils of life are alike indifferent to him who, conscious of his perfections, and complete in his own virtues and immortality, can smile amidst the horrors of dissolving nature, and preserve a firmness and indifference when even the whole earth is crumbling to its original chaos: and if

these things affect not his self-fortified breast, how little will he regard the common accidents and vexations of life! If he drops a limb, his immortal part is nevertheless unimpaired; if he suffers hunger, still his mind is fed with never-failing pleasures; if power throws its arbitrary chains around him, his soul is still free, and can mock the tyrant's rage, and defy his malice. In short, O Abudah! the true philosopher is capable of every pleasure, and released from every ill; the beauty of virtue has eternal charms for his contemplation and possession; the changes of mortality have nothing that can move, transport, or disquiet him; he neither hopes nor fears; he neither admires nor dreads; and always wears within his breast a contentment more invariable and unshaken than all the treasures upon earth, because nothing earthly can disquiet him."

As the sage Gherar spoke these words with a heart-felt pride, Abudah, transported at his doctrines, was about to answer, when a fierce tiger bursting from the thicket, with eyes flashing dreadful fires, and a mouth begrimed with human gore, sprung violently toward the sage and his pupil. Abudah, who had not so entirely forgot his worldly wisdom as to stand perfectly undaunted, leaped into the brook that divided the vale, and swum across, as knowing the tiger would not follow him through the water. Having reached the opposite bank, he looked toward the sage Gherar, whom he saw running with the utmost precipitation before the voracious tiger; but his flight was vain, the monster overtook him, and leaping upon the sage, tore him limb from limb, while Gherar filled the woods and the valleys with his piteous cries and lamentations. "Alas!" sighed the merchant Abudah, as he beheld the wretched end of Gherar, "how vain is it for weakness to boast of strength! or for man, who is infirm, to deny the reality of what he must hourly feel! To boast of a power over nature is, I see, the end of philosophy, which should only with wonder contemplate what it cannot scan; much less ought the reptile man to vaunt itself superior to the blessings or scourges of Him who is the ruler of the universe."

GOLDEN CITIES, FAR

With these reflections Abudah arose, and being fearful to venture on the other side of the brook, he advanced up a lawn, which, winding between two mountains, brought the merchant into a spacious plain, where he beheld innumerable flocks feeding upon its surface, and the shepherds and shepherdesses tending their innocent charge. "Here," said Abudah to himself, "here is neither pomp, nor luxury, nor vanity; here is rural peace, and quietness, and tranquillity, which know no sorrow."

As thus Abudah mused within himself, he advanced toward the shepherds and their flocks; when one passing near him immediately ran with the utmost precipitation among the rest, crying aloud: "Fly, fly, O my wandering and distressed friends! for the tyrant of Tasgi, not content with driving us out of the land of Shakarah, is come down to bereave us also of our flocks and herds."

Abudah was touched to the soul at this scene of distress and confusion, which his former passions had occasioned, and called to the poor wanderers to stay; but they, fearful and lamenting, drove their flocks along the plain, and with dread looked back, expecting to see again the cruel armies of the Tsgites.

One old venerable bramin alone, unable through age to follow the Shakarahs, whom he had for many years instructed, sat, with a majestic composure, on a square stone which stood at the entrance of his cell. As Abudah advanced, he rose, and made obeisance, saying: "Know, O sultan! I rise not to the tyrant of Tasgi, but I bow before him whom it has pleased Allah to set over his people. But wherefore shouldest thou seek to do evil that thou mayest reap good? Are then bad actions capable of salutary ends, and is evil predominant that purity may triumph? Alas, O sultan! not such are the means of obtaining the talisman of the great and perfect Oromanes: purity and perfection, such as man may attain unto, true virtue and benevolence, and a faithful religion, are the means of possessing that treasure. Hasten, therefore, O man! to the tomb of the prophet, and there confess the follies and iniquities of thy researches; and learn from that fountain

of purity and truth the will of Him who ordained you to this hitherto ineffectual toil."

"Good and pious bramin," replied Abudah, "much have I abused both the gifts of Providence and you, and your poor, innocent, and distressed nation; but direct me in my journey to Medina, for I seem higherto to have trodden on enchanted ground."

"The chest of adamant will convey you to Medina," answered the bramin.

"I left it," replied Abudah, "in the mansions of philosophy, which may not be found without crossing the brook, and risking the fury of the tiger."

"There is," answered the bramin, "a path that leads from hence, round the brook, to the back of that mansion, into which a small bridge will carry you over the brook; and may Mahomet prosper your undertaking!"

Abudah then took leave of the sage, assuring him that the Tasgites knew not of his place of retreat, and that he might rest with the Shakarahs safely there for no evil was intended them. The bramin blessed Abudah as he parted.

The sultan-merchant hastened to the seminaries of learning, where, taking possession of his chest, he threw himself on it, in full assurance that he should awake in the temple of Medina. In a short time the merchant Abudah found himself in an awful mosque, reclining on the chest of adamant: on one side stood the box which used to haunt his chamber with the diminutive hag; and on the other, a large cistern of water. Presently, with mildness in his aspect, stood the genius Barhaddan before him. "At length," said he, "Abudah, receive the true keys of the adamantine chest."

At these words, the merchant Abudah approached the genius; and, having prostrated himself before him, received the long-expected keys.

"Begin," said Barhaddan, "O Abudah! and search for thy treasure."

Abudah obeyed; and in a moment the locks of the chest flew open. Abudah, with a consciousness and dread, lifted up the lid of the chest; when instantly flew out a thousand

feathers, so that they covered the whole pavement of the mosque.

"Now," continued Barhaddan, "put in thine hand and draw forth the contents of the chest." Abudah obeyed; and first he took up a beautiful but bleeding hand, with a curious bracelet of diamonds.

"That hand," said Barhaddan, "was severed from the body of a fair sultana, by a slave who could not unlock the bracelet. Dost thou think, Abudah, the wearer was the happier for that ornament?"

As Abudah was going to draw again, out stepped a poor wretch, laden with his bags of gold, trembling and looking behind. Next, on a sudden, a gay youth, with a poniard, stabbed the miser to the heart; upon which several women, in loose attire, came and shared with him the spoil, and began dancing and singing. These were followed by a crowd, among whom was a crowned head, who ordered his soldiers to fall on them and destroy them; then came a superior force, and put a bowstring around the neck of him that was crowned, and another stripped the crown from his head. After these came several madmen: some with wings on their shoulders; some with wheels, which they strove always to keep in motion; some looking unto the skies; some drawing circles in the air with straws; some jabbering ridiculous notions that the same quantity was both more and less than itself.

When these were passed, Barhaddan asked Abudah: "Dost thou understand these things?"

"I understand by them," answered the merchant, "and also by my travels, that neither riches, nor gaiety, nor honour, nor power, nor science, nor learning, nor obscurity, is free from the common accidents of life; and that, therefore, these can never lead us to the perfect talisman of Oromanes."

"What didst thou understand by the feathers?" said Barhaddan.

"I knew not their meaning," answered Abudah.

"They," continued the genius Barhaddan, "were the thousand light, airy, inconsistent hopes and wishes which lie on the top of every man's heart, which have some kind of

tendency to the talisman, and so they are the first on the top of the chest."

"And now, O merchant Abudah!" said Barhaddan, "art thou convinced that the talisman of Oromanes could not be treasured among such refuse as these? Shut down, therefore, the chest, and attend with silence to the scene which will follow." Abudah obeyed, standing like a mute with his hands before him.

"Now, thou wicked hag," said Barhaddan, "thou evil genius, who lovest to torment and mislead mankind, come forth." At these words, the little box fell to pieces, and the hag came trembling out on her crutches before Barhaddan.

"I know," said the pure genius, "thy implacable nature, and that thou delightest only in mischief and evil; but, that you may have some awe for those who regard mankind, stand here, and see me purge the man whom thou hast enslaved with worldly thoughts and desires."

Barhaddan then commanded Abudah to wash himself in the cistern; which having performed, he ordered him a second time to open the chest of adamant. Abudah obeying, looked in, and saw only a little book, which Barhaddan bid him read, and he read these words aloud:

"Know, O man! that human nature, which is imperfect, cannot attain to perfection; that true happiness, which is the real talisman of Oromanes, being immortal, can be enjoyed by immortals alone: that man, being a creature, is subject to the commands of his Creator; and therefore a knowledge of his will, and a faithful obedience to it, should be the first and last pursuit of mortality, till it please the Eternal Power to remove him from trial to perfection, from earthly misery to the eternal happiness of a glorious paradise." As he ended these words, Abudah fell prostrate in the mosque, and adored the Eternal Power above, which the genius seeing, commended him.

Then Barhaddan, turning to the hag: "Go," said he, "false and wicked genius, into that chest, and there, for fifty years, contemplate the happiness you are so anxious to recommend." The hag trembled and obeyed; the chest closed with

violence; the locks fastened themselves on; and the whole was taken up like a whirlwind, and vanished away.

Abudah then looked round to thank the friendly genius, but he was gone, and, what surprised him more, he found himself on his bed at Baghdad, and his wife and family weeping around him. As he moved, Selima, in transport, ran to him, and asked him if the life were in him.

"In me!" said Abudah; "why, woman, I have been traveling these three months; I have seen various countries and kingdoms; I have—but would I had not!—been crowned a sultan!"

"Oh," interrupted Selima, "my lord raves again! Thy children and servants know, O Abudah! that for four days thou hast slept upon this sofa, and we feared you were dead."

"Was what I have seen a dream?" cried the merchant Abudah; "then blessed be the prophet! who has added unto me knowledge without guilt. But now, my lovely Selima," said Abudah, "I am released from those terrors and uneasinesses which have made me a burden to thee and myself. Yes, Selima, I have learned to be content—the utmost man must expect on earth; I have learned to be obedient to Alla, to love and cherish my family, and to do good to mankind." At these words, he again embraced his wife and children, and the day was spent in domestic endearments; nor lived there a happier or more resigned and cheerful family in Baghdad than in the house of the merchant Abudah.

PART III:
MEDIEVAL
LORE AND
LEGEND



I'll tell ye, 'tis not vain, nor fabulous
(Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance),
What sage poets, taught by th' heavenly Muse,
Storied of old in high immortal verse
Of dire chimeras and enchanted isles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to hell.
—John Milton, *Comus*

Introduction to the Fifth Tale: Wars of the Giants of Albion

When Homer glorified the tragic fall of the heroic Trojans, he started one of the earliest of all literary fads.

The Trojans were, if anything, even nobler than the Greeks. The Greeks squabbled amongst themselves and conducted feuds; the Trojans were doomed and tragic heroes who fought gloriously but lost. One was obviously supposed to admire them and to regret their downfall.

E. R. Eddison has the same pattern with his wars of Witchland and Demonland in *The Worm Ouroboros* (1922). The lords of Demonland win, and one identifies with them from the first; but the Witches fight bravely and courageously, and one cannot help respecting them and feeling a little sorry when they are defeated (which is why Eddison's trick ending is so artistically valid and emotionally satisfying).

After Homer came one Publius Vergilius Maro, a Roman poet better known as Virgil. He cleverly observed that the sympathies of readers had been on the side of the Trojans and when he came to write his own great epic, the *Aeneid*, he took for his hero a minor Trojan character, Aineias (whom Homer had mentioned briefly in the second book of the *Iliad*), turned him into a valiant hero, made him the leader of a band of exiled Trojans wandering about after the destruction of their homeland, and had them eventually settle in Italy and become the ancestors of the Romans—with Rome itself clearly identified as a sort of "second Troy."

Which did not at all hurt the sales of the *Aeneid*;

it promptly became the central classic of Roman literature.

It was a first-rate idea, and it caught on. When the Frankish-Gothic tribes of Gaul became civilized and began making up their own mythological history of the founding of France, they traced the genealogy of their kings back to another wandering Trojan exile, one Francus.

The fashion now well established, the British writers did the same thing. In the early eleven-hundreds, a Welsh clergyman who wrote in Latin under the name of Galfredi Monumetensis (Geoffrey of Monmouth) wrote a splendid pseudo-history of the ninety-nine Kings of Britain in which he traced the British line from Prince Brute, the great-grandson of Aeneas. Geoffrey, of course, was merely following the literary fad mentioned above, in making the Trojan heroes the founders of London, of the British kingdom, and so on. But in so doing, almost incidentally, he started a literary fad of his own: he created the Arthurian legend.

Other writers dealt with King Arthur both before and after him. Nennius wrote his *Historia Britonum* about 826 and William of Malmesbury his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* in 1125. But it was old Monumetensis who hit the big time by writing what the 12th century could plausibly regard as the greatest best seller of the era.

In the last half of the 12th century the Arthurian stories burst across Europe like a deluge, in the wake of Geoffrey's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, whose success was as dazzling as its popularity was instantaneous.

Geoffrey wrote it while serving as a secular Augustinian canon at Saint George's college (in Oxford castle); he went on to become bishop of Saint Asaph's two or three years before his death in 1154.

Even before he died, it became obvious that he had fathered a new movement in literature. Geoffrey Gaimar was the first to imitate the great *Historia* with his *Estorie des English* (c. 1147), and Wace, in his *Roman de Brut*, was partly translating and partly

paraphrasing the *Historia*. Layamon's *Brut* came in the next century; it and the rhyming English chronicle of Robert of Gloucester followed Geoffrey too. Indeed, four hundred years after the death of Geoffrey, his *History of the Kings of Britain* served as the source for the earliest English tragedy, *Gorboduc*.

To say nothing of *King Lear* . . . or Milton's *Comus*, for that matter.

And the cycle Geoffrey started back in the early 1100's is still going strong in our own time. You probably have read *The Once and Future King* . . .

I had originally intended to include something from Geoffrey of Monmouth in *Dragons, Elves and Heroes*. But I was unable to find a translation that pleased me. However, as was the case with the young American writer, Richard Hodgens, whose translation from the *Orlando Furioso* appears elsewhere in this book, I received a letter from Wayland Smith shortly after *Dragons* was published.

Wayland Smith is a young British writer of sword and sorcery. He wrote me saying he enjoyed *Dragon, Elves, and Heroes*, but bemoaned the absence of early Arthurian materials, preferably from Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the book. I replied with the suggestion that he render a portion of it himself, from the First Book, if possible.

Hence the following tale, done especially for *Golden Cities, Far* and not previously published.

He has not precisely translated this segment from the Latin. Instead, he has reworked and slightly modernized an early English translation done by Aaron Thompson in 1718. Smith's retelling consists of almost all of the First Book, and begins with the opening of Chapter 3.

**Wars of the Giants of Albion
From the Welsh
Historia Regum Britanniae
by Geoffrey of Monmouth
In a New Version by Wayland Smith**

*1. Brute, Being Banished after the
Killing of His Parents, Goes
into Greekland*

After the Trojan War, Aeneas, flying with his son Ascanius from the destruction of their city, sailed to Italy. There he was honorably received by King Latinus, which raised him the envy of Turnus, King of the Rutulians, who thereupon made war against him. Upon their engaging in battle, Aeneas got the victory, and having killed Turnus obtained the Kingdom of Italy, and with it Lavinia the daughter of Latinus.

After Aeneas' death, Ascanius succeeded to the Kingdom, built Alba upon Tiber, and begat a son named Sylvius, who in pursuit of a private amour, took to wife a niece of Lavinia, whom he got with child.

His father, Ascanius, coming to the knowledge of it, commanded his Magicians to consult of what sex the damsel had conceived. When these mages had studied the event by Art Magick, they told him she was big of a boy, who would kill his father and mother and, after traveling over many countries in his banishment, would at last arrive at the highest pitch of glory. Nor were the wise men mistook in their predictions, for at the time of travail the woman brought forth a son, and died at his birth; but the child was delivered to a nurse and called Brute.

At length, after thrice five years had gone by, the youth accompanied his father in hunting and killed him undesigned-

ly by the shot of an arrow. For as the servants were driving up the deer towards them, Brute leveled a shot at them and smote his father Sylvius, under the breast. Upon the death of his father, Brute was expelled from Italy, his kinsmen being enraged at him for so heinous a deed. Thus banished he went into the land of the Greeks, where he found the posterity of Helenus, son of Priam, kept in slavery by Pandrasus, King of the Grecians. For after the destruction of Troy, Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, had brought thither in chains Helenus and many others, and to revenge upon them the death of his father, had given command for their perpetual captivity.

Brute, finding they were by descent his own countrymen, took up his abode amongst them, and began to distinguish himself by his conduct and bravery in war, and thus gained the affection of kings and commanders, and above all, of the young men of the country. For amongst the wise he was as wise as he was valiant when amongst the valiant, and he was esteemed a person of great generosity, for that he bestowed among them all the gold and silver and ornaments he won in battle.

His fame therefore spreading over many nations, the Trojans from all parts began to flock to him, desiring under his command to be freed from their servitude to the Grecians, which they affirmed might easily be done, seeing that they had by now so multiplied in their captivity that their number was seven thousand strong, besides women and children.

There was likewise then in Greekland a noble youth, by name Assaracus, who favored their cause. For he was descended on his mother's side from the Trojans, and he had in them the fullest confidence that by their assistance he might be able to oppose the designs of the Grecians. For his brother had a quarrel with him for attempting to deprive him of three castles his father at his death had given unto him, against which claim his brother argued for that Assaracus was but the son of his father and a Trojan concubine. The brother himself was a Grecian on both his father and his mother's side, and he had prevailed with the King of the Grecians who now espoused his cause.

*II. Brute Triumphs over Pandrasus
and Takes His Daughter to Wife*

When, therefore, Brute saw how great were the numbers of the warriors who begged to serve under his banner, and how strong were the castles of Assaracus which lay open to him for the mere acceptance thereof, he granted the request of all.

And, thus chosen their Duke and commander, he assembled the surviving Trojans from every quarter of the earth, save those who now ruled in Italy, and filled the strongholds of Assaracus with fighting men. But he himself with Assaracus and a large body of men retired to the woods and the hills and dispatched a letter to the King of Greekland in these words:

“Prince Brutus, Duke and General of those who be left of the Trojan people, to Pandrasus, King of the Grecians, sendeth greeting. As it was beneath the dignity of a nation descended from the illustrious race of Dardanus to be treated in your Kingdom otherwise than the nobility of their birth required, they have betaken themselves to the coverts of the wood. For they prefer living after the manner of wild beasts, upon flesh and herbs, with the enjoyment of liberty, rather than to continue to dwell, even in the greatest luxury, under the yoke of your slavery. If this giveth aught of offense to your Majesty, impute it not to them, but pardon it; since it is the common sentiment of every captive to be desirous of regaining his former dignity. Let pity, therefore, move you to bestow upon them the right to inhabit the thickets of the woods to which they have retired to avoid slavery. But if you deny them this favor, then by your permission and assistance, let them depart into some foreign country.”

With daring, resourcefulness, and not a little bloodshed, Prince Brute frees the surviving Trojans from the grip of Pandrasus. He takes the King of Greekland captive, thus wresting a vow of freedom from that monarch, who cannot help but admire the courtesy and martial prowess of the young con-

*queror, upon whom he bestows his own daughter,
Ynogene, as wife.*

Then said Pandrasus, in answer to their demands, "Since my ill fate has delivered me and my brother Antigonus into your hands, I can do no other than grant your petition, lest a republic may cost us our lives, which are now entirely in your power. In my opinion the advantage and pleasure of life is preferable to all other considerations; therefore wonder not that I am willing to redeem my own at so great a price. Yet it seems a matter of comfort to me that I am to give my daughter to so noble a youth, whose descent from the illustrious race of Priam and Anchises is clear, both from that greatness of mind that appears in him and the certain accounts we have had of it. For who less than himself could have released from their chains the banished Trojans, when reduced under slavery to so many and great princes? Who else could have encouraged them to make head against the Grecians? Or with so small a body of men, have vanquished so numerous and powerful an army, and taken their king prisoner in the engagement? And therefore since this noble youth has gained so much glory by the opposition he has made me, I gave him my daughter Ynogene, and also gold, silver, ships, corn, wine and oil, and whatever you shall find necessary for your voyage. If you shall alter your resolution, and think fit to continue among the Grecians, I grant you the third part of my kingdom for your habitation; if not, I will faithfully perform my promise, and for your greater security will stay as a hostage with you till I have made it good."

*III. Departing from Greekland, Brute
Falls upon a Desert Island Where
He Is Told by the Oracle of Diana
What Realm He Is to Rule Over*

Thus, the agreement being confirmed, Pandrasus held a council and directed messengers to all the shores of Greekland to get ships together; which done, he delivered them to the Trojans, and there were three hundred and twenty-four

vessels in all, laden with all manner of provision and victuals. He then married his daughter to Brute and made also a present of gold and silver to each man according to his quality.

When everything was performed, the King was set at liberty, and the Trojans now released from his power set sail with a fair wind. But Ynogene, standing upon the stern of the ship, swooned away several times in the arms of Brute, and with many sighs and tears she lamented leaving her parents and the country of her birth, nor ever turned her eyes from the shore while it was in sight. Brute endeavored to assuage her grief by kind words and embraces intermixed with kisses, and ceased not from these blandishments till she grew weary of crying and fell asleep.

The winds continued fair for two days and a night together, when at length they arrived at a certain island called Leogecia, which had been formerly laid waste by the incursions of pirates, and was thus uninhabited. Brute, not knowing this, sent three hundred armed men ashore to see who dwelt in the island; but finding nobody, they killed several kinds of wild beasts which they encountered in the groves, and came to a desolate city, in which they found a temple of Diana. Now in this temple was an image of the Goddess that gave responses to the questions of those who aforetime had come to consult the Will of Heaven.

At last, loading themselves with the prey they had taken in the hunt, they returned to their ships and gave their companions an account of the island and of the deserted city. They made advice to the Prince that he enter into the desolate city, and after offering sacrifices, to inquire of the deity of the island what nation the Gods had set aside for them to dwell in and to rule. By the common consent of all, therefore, Brute, together with Gerion the Augur and twelve sage elders of the Trojans set forward towards the temple, and with all thing needful for the sacrifice.

Arriving at the empty city, they bound garlands about their brows, as the ancient rites required, and entered into

the sanctuary, where they set three fires to the three gods—that is, to Jupiter and to Mercury, as well as to Diana.

Unto each divinity was made his own especial sacrifice, and Brute himself approached the ruined altar of Diana; in his hands he bore a consecrated vessel filled with wine intermixed with the blood of a white hart. With his features upturned to the eidolon atop the altar, he broke the silence with these words:

“Woods-goddess whom the savage boar doth dread,
 Thou who may roam at will the windy sky
 And the infernal mansions of the dead,
 Turn thy gaze down to earth, I pray thee: I
 Would learn the untold secret of my fate.
 Tell me what region I and all my band
 Shall make our own, and I shall dedicate
 Tall temples to thee in that unkown land.”

These verses nine times chanted, he circumambulated the altar thrice, poured wine into the sacrificial fires, stretched out upon the hart skin which he had spread before the altar, and composed himself for slumber. He fell at once into a deep and magical sleep under the influence of the Goddess.

About the third hour of night, wherein mortals sometimes are visited in their deepest slumbers, there came before him the apparition of the Goddess which stood before him in the likeness of a radiant and lovely woman, and which spake unto him the following oracle:

“O Brute, there lies beyond the bounds of Gaul
 An island deep amidst the western sea,
 Which once a race of giants held in thrall,
 But which Olympus hath preserved for thee.
 Sail on, and you shall reach that happy shore,
 Where Trojan hands shall raise a second Troy
 And found a realm to last forever more,
 Which seas shall not confine nor time destroy.”

The apparition dissolved; the oracular vision ended; and upon awakening from his sleep, the Prince was for some time

in doubt as to whether it had been but a vain dream he had beheld, or a true and prophetic visitation of the living Goddess herself, foretelling the island of his destiny, wherever he and the sons of his loins should reign forever. At last he summoned his companions and apprised them from first to last of all that had befallen him in the night.

Upon hearing the oracle, they much rejoiced, and urgently bade him return to the ships, thus while the winds still favored them, to hasten their voyage deeper into the world's west, in pursuit of the destined kingdom the Goddess had sworn was to be their new homeland.

Thus without further delay they rejoined the other Trojans and set sail again, and after a course of thirty days, came to the Afric coast. From thence they came to the Philenian Altars, and to Lake Salinae, and sailed betwixt Ruscicada and the Mountains of Azarae, where they encountered the attack of pirates with great peril, but won through to the victory and continued on their journey enriched with the plunder they had borne off from the hapless corsairs.

IV. Brute Enters Aquitain with Corineus

From thence, passing the river Malus, they arrived at Mauritania, where at last for want of provisions they were obliged to go ashore. Dividing themselves into several bands, they laid waste that whole country. When they had well revictualled their ships, they steered for the Columns of Hercules, where they saw many of those sea monsters called Syrens, which surrounded their ships and well-nigh overturned them; howbeit they made shift to elude the coils and clutches of the creatures, and came into the Tyrrhenian Sea, upon the shores of which they found four nations descended from those of the banished Trojans who had attended Antenor in his flight. The name of their Prince was Corineus, excellent in counsel, mighty in strength and valiance, so that in battle even against Giants he carried away the victory as if he had but fought against a child.

When the nations of Corineus understood the lineage and

high princely birth of Brute, they joined company with him and those under his governance, and these, from the name of their mighty leader, were afterwards known as the Cornish folk. It was this same Corineus that was henceforth in all encounters of more strong aid to Brute than any other man of his company.

They sailed from thence to Aquitain, and entering the mouth of the Loire, cast anchor. Here they lay at anchor for seven days and explored the lie of the land. Goffarius Pictus was at that time King of the country, and learning of the arrival upon his shores of a foreign nation with a great fleet, dispatched envoys to inquire if they wished peace or war. These ambassadors on their way towards the anchorage therefore encountered the mighty Corineus, who had just landed with two hundred warriors to seek venison in the groves. They accosted him and demanded who had given leave for him to enter the forests of their king and slay the game thereof. Corineus made answer that there ought to be no occasion to ask leave to hunt; whereupon one of their number, Imbertus by name, growing incensed at such short words, loosed an arrow at the Trojan. Corineus avoided the flying shaft and sprang upon the rash and misfortunate legate, and with his great bow stove in his skull. The rest fled to bear the news of this disaster to Goffarius, who, taking the matter sorely to heart, forthwith raised a mighty host, and marched upon the Trojans to revenge the murder of his ambassador.

Brute, upon hearing rumor of his coming-hence, set guard upon the fleet, saw to it that all the women and the children were safe aboard, and set forth with the rest of his host to face the enemy.

When at length the conflict was engaged, a bloody battle ensued, and with fierce fighting a great portion of that day was spent. Corineus was ashamed that the Aquitans should so bravely stand their ground against the assault of the Trojans; so, taking heart and gathering his men aside, he broke in upon the very thickest of the foemen, where he made such red slaughter on every hand that at last he had cut his way

directly through the cohort, which broke and fled. In this savage encounter he lost his sword, but snatched up a battle-axe someone had let fall, and with this he clove in twain anyone that stood in his path. Brute, and all those who fought on either side, were amazed at his courage and prowess; as he brandished his battle-axe among the fleeing warriors and struck terror into their hearts, he thundered out his challenge:

“Whither fly ye, cowards? Base wretches, whither do ye fly? Stand your ground that ye may face Corineus! What! For shame! Do so many thousands of you flee before one man? Fly, then, but take comfort in this—that you fly from one before whom even the Tyrrhenian Giants could not stand, but fled in awe, or fell to strew the plain in hill-like heaps of slaughtered flesh!”

*V. Goffarius is Routed by Prince
Brute the Trojan*

At these words one of the foe, a lord by name Subardus, turned back with three hundred warriors to do battle with Corineus. But that mighty man of war, with his shield, warded off their blows and swung up his great axe and brought it whistling down in such a stroke that he all but cleft Subardus in two halves. And then forthwith he made to charge the rest and made terrible slaughter with his whirling axe which never tired of drinking deep of the blood of the slain.

To and fro in their midst he rushed about, receiving the blows of all bravely, and returning as good as he got, if not indeed better, until he had slaughtered great numbers of them. Some had their hands and arms, some their very shoulders, and some their heads or their legs, all cut off by his horrible blade. All fought against him, ringing him about with a hedge of glittering steel.

Brute, seeing Corineus thus beset, sped with a band of Trojans to render assistance to the beleaguered champion. And thus the battle was renewed again with vigor. Loud cries

ascended to heaven, and great numbers fought on every hand, and many brave warriors fell that day on both sides of the conflict.

But in some small time it was clearly seen that the Trojans had gained the victory, and soon Goffarius and his Aquitans were put to flight. The King, after narrowly escaping the victorious Trojan host, fled to the further parts of Gaul to procure succor among such princes as were either related or known to him. At that time Gaul was subject to twelve princes who, with equal authority, possessed the governance of the vast nation. These brother princes received him courteously and promised, one and all, to assist his cause that the foreign invader might be thus expelled from the coasts of that land.

VI. Brute Wastes Aquitain with Fire and Sword

Brute, in joy for the victory, enriched his brave Trojans with the arms and ornaments of the slain foemen and then, dividing them into several bodies of equal size, marched deeper into the country to lay it waste lest Goffarius raise another host and catch him unawares.

At his command, cities were wrapt in flame and much treasure borne off from the blackened rubble thereof, and the citizens dispersed to every hand. Amidst this course of destruction and plunder, Prince Brute approached the place whereat now standeth the city of Tours.

As soon as he had searched out a convenient site for his purpose and explored several routes of safe retreat, should occasions require, he established the Trojan camp upon this level height. Brute kept steady watch, for even now the host of Goffarius, filled out with the levy of his brother Kings and the Gaulish princes, approached with a great army which, ere long would challenge him to battle. Having pitched his camp, Brute expected within two days to close in conflict with the host of Goffarius, nor did he fear the battle, as he gave much

trust to the warmanship and the courage of the hardy Trojans under his command.

VII. Goffarius Battles the Trojans

Hearing that the Trojan army was camped in these parts, Goffarius ceased not from the march by day and night until his scouts were within sight of the Trojan host.

Riding forth, Goffarius viewed the encampment with a stern look and a disdainful smile. "O wretched destiny!" he cried. "Have these base exiles dared to camp within my very kingdom? Arm, warriors, and rage through their ranks: we shall slaughter these foreigners like sheep, and from their survivors we shall make a kingdom of slaves."

At these words, the host of Goffarius and his brother kings arranged their forces into twelve legions and advanced upon the Trojan camp. Brute, noting their approach, drew his strength up in order and marched forth to meet them, having given his warriors directions for their conduct and set forth the order of the assault and the defense. At the beginning of the attack, the Trojans had the clear advantage, and made dire inroads upon the numbers of the foe.

The battle sways back and forth; the Trojans are forced back into their camp, and are besieged during the night. With dawn, Brute marched forth and Corineus, who had concealed himself and a number of his men in the woods, came to his aid at a timely moment and broke the host of Goffarius.

Brute was in debate for some time whether to continue the war any longer, but at last he chose to return to the ships with his legions, and, victorious thus far, to continue in quest for the island of the Oracle, of which the Goddess had foretold. So without further delays, they repaired to the fleet and, loading the ships with the plunder of the looted towns, set sail with a fair wind toward the promised island, and arrived at the shores of Totnes.

VIII. The Division of Albion

The island was in those days called Albion, and it was inhabited not by mortal men, but by Giants.

Despite the presence of this savage and monstrous race, the pleasant situation of the land, the plenteous rivers well-furnished of fish, and the engaging prospect of the greenwood made Brute and all his wandering host very desirous to make their habitation in this island. Hence they began a tour of the island, and in their passage through all the provinces they forced the Giants to lumber from their path and to conceal themselves in the caves and secret places of the mountains.

The tour completed, the Prince then divided the country amongst the nations of the Trojans, and the warriors, setting aside the edged and fearsome implements of war, began to till the ground, and construct habitations, and to tame the rude wilderness; to such degree that in a very little time the country took upon it the appearance of a civilized nation that had long been inhabited by men.

Since they were no longer men of Troy, but men of this island Albion, the exiles began to call themselves The People of Brute; hence our word "Britons", and the isle itself they named Britain, after Prince Brute. This derivation of the name was intended in respect to their noble and courageous leader, in order to perpetuate his memory. And from thence afterwards the language of the nation, which at first bore the name Trojan, or rough Greek, was called British. But Corineus, in imitation of this custom, called that part of the island which fell to his share Corinea, after his own name; and though he had his choice of all the several parts of the island in which to settle his nation, he preferred this particular country, which is now called in Latin Cornubia, either from its being horn-like in contour, or from the corruption of its original name, Corinea. Hence, Cornwall.

Now, in that province of Corinea were a very great number of Giants, and it became the favorite diversion of Corineus to encounter these monsters in single combat. Among the same, there was one detestable monster, by name Goe-

magot, who was twelve cubits in stature, and of such prodigious strength that at one shake he could pull up an oak as it had been a hazel wand. On a certain day when Brute was holding a solemn festival to the gods, in the port where they first had landed, this Giant with some score of ogreish companions came in upon the Britons, among whom they made a dreadful slaughter. But the Britons at last assembling together in a body, put them to the rout and killed them all, every one, save only the aforesaid Goemagot. A dreadful creature, he was captured alive, on order of Prince Brute, who desired to witness a combat between the monster and his friend Corineus, who took great pleasure in such battles.

Corineus, overjoyed at this, prepared himself, threw aside his weapons, and challenged the snarling Giant to a wrestling bout. At the beginning of the encounter, Corineus and the Giant, standing front to front, strongly fettered each other in their arms; panting loudly for breath, they each strove to crush the other alive. But Goemagot presently grasped Corineus in such a manner as to seize him with all his might and broke three of his ribs, two on his right side and one on his left. At which Corineus, highly enraged, roused up his full strength, and snatching the Giant up upon his broad shoulders, ran with him as fast as he was able for the weight, until he reached the shore, and there, getting on top of a great rock, he hurled down the savage monster into the sea; where, falling by the sides of craggy rocks, he was cruelly torn to pieces, coloring all the sea with his blood.

The place where he fell, taking its name from the Giant's fall, is known as Lam-Goemagot—that is, Goemagot's Leap—to this day.

IX. The Building of New Troy by Brute Upon the River Thames

Prince Brute, having thus at last seen his kingdom, entered upon the plan to construct a city, and in order to be about it, set to traveling throughout his realm to search out the most convenient location. And coming to the river Thames, he

walked along the shore and at last pitched upon a place very fit for his purpose. Here he therefore built a city, which he called New Troy, under which name it continued a long time after, till at length by the natural corruption into which names fall with time, the original name became decayed into Trinovantum, from Troy-novant.

But afterwards when Lud, the brother of Casseballaunus, who waged war against Julius Caesar, obtained the government of the kingdom, he surrounded it with stately walls and with towers of admirable workmanship and ordered it to be known thenceafter by his name, Kaer-Lud—that is, the City of Lud. Now this thing became afterwards the occasion of a great quarrel betwixt him and another brother, Nennius, who took very heinously his abolishing of the ancient name of Troy in the country. Of this quarrel Gildas the Historian has given a large account—for which reason I choose to pass over it lightly, for fear of debasing by my poor account of it what so great a writer has so eloquently related.

After Brute had completed the building of that city, he made choice of the citizens who were to dwell therein, and he prescribed them laws for their peaceful governance.

At this time Eli the Priest ruled in Judea, and the Ark of the Covenant had been seized by the Philistines. The descendants of Hector reigned in Troy, having driven out the children of Antenor. In Italy reigned Sylvius Aeneas, the son of Aeneas and uncle of Brute, he being the third of the Latin kings.

Introduction to the Sixth Tale: Forty Singing Seamen

That most fabulous and splendid of all monarchs, Prester John, was a sparkling ornament to the imaginative literature of the Middle Ages. So much so that his glittering realm shines on in the pages of modern writers like Alfred Noyes.

Somewhere around 1165 A.D., three men, splendid monarchs in their own right, received a letter from the fabulous Oriental potentate. They were the German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comnenus, and the Pope.

In his missive, Prester John told of his power, his wealth, and of his religion. He was a Christian; he was the only Christian emperor in Asia. Seventy-two kings paid tribute to his throne, and his monarchy extended across the Three Indias. His realm was inhabited by curious beasts:

. . . in Our lands be beeres and Lyons of
dyvers colours as ye redd, grene, black,
and white. And in Our land be also Unicornes
and these Unicornes slee many Lyons . . . also
there dare no Man make a lye in ou Our
lande, for if he dyde he sholde incontynent
be sleyn.

He went on to add that among his subjects were wild people, horned people, one-eyed people, people with eyes in front and in back, centaurs, fauns, satyrs, pygmies, giants forty ells tall, cyclops, and the phoenix.

That law which says liars are to be slain obviously does not extend to the Emperor.

Historians and scholars in general have cooked up all sorts of theories about Prester John, whom he

might have been, and why that letter was written, but nobody really knows.

Prester John became a popular figure in medieval romance and legend. Ariosto put him in the *Orlando Furioso*, and in our own day, Alfred Noyes wrote this charming ballad around him.

Noyes was a British poet very popular with an earlier generation, at a time when ballads such as *Abdul-a-Bulbul Amir* were the rage, and Gilbert and Sullivan were writing their classic political satires set to music. Noyes' fame, along with most of his bouncing, jingly verse, seems somewhat to have dimmed in recent years. His verses have been called naive and simple, and those that were written in the tradition popular at the time certainly were. But there were also, among the best of them, pure singing lyrics of haunting beauty. You probably know his most famous ballad, "The Highwayman."

Forty Singing Seamen
A modern English ballad on an old legend
by Alfred Noyes

I

Across the seas of Wonderland to Mogadore we plodded,

Forty singing seamen in an old black barque,

And we landed in the twilight where a Polyphemus nodded

With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow
 through the dark!

For his eye was growing mellow,

Rich and ripe and red and yellow,

As was time, since old Ulysses made him
 bellow in the dark!

Chorus: Since Ulysses bunged his eye up with a pine-torch
 in the dark!

MEDIEVAL LORE AND LEGEND

II

Were they mountains in the gloaming or the giant's ugly
shoulders

Just beneath the rolling eyeball, with its bleared
and vinous glow,

Red and yellow o'er the purple of the pines among the
boulders

And the shaggy horror brooding on the sullen slopes be-
low,

Were they pines among the boulders
Or the hair upon his shoulders?

We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't know.

Chorus: We were simple singing seamen, so of course we
couldn't know.

III

But we crossed a plain of poppies, and we came upon a
fountain

Not of water, but of jewels, like a spray of leaping fire;
And behind it, in an emerald glade, beneath a golden moun-
tain,

There stood a crystal palace, for a sailor to admire;

For a troop of ghosts came round us,

Which with leaves of bay they crowned us,

Then with grog they well nigh drowned us, to the depth of
our desire!

Chorus: And 'twas very friendly of them, as a sailor can
admire!

IV

There was music all about us, we were growing quite forget-
ful

We were only singing seamen from the dirt of London-
town,

Though the nectar that we swallowed seemed to vanish
half regretful

As if we wasn't good enough to take such vittles down,

When we saw a sudden figure,

GOLDEN CITIES, FAR

Tall and black as any nigger,
Like the devil—only bigger—drawing near us with a
frown!

Chorus: Like the devil—but much bigger—and he wore
a golden crown!

V

And “What’s all this?” he growls at us! With dignity we
chaunted,

“Forty singing seamen, sir, as won’t be put upon!”

“What? Englishmen?” he cries, “Well, if ye don’t mind being
haunted,

Faith ye’re welcome to my palace. I’m the famous
Prester John!

Will ye walk into my palace?

I don’t bear ’ee any malice!

One and all ye shall be welcome in the halls of Prester
John!”

Chorus: So we walked into the palace and the halls of
Prester John!

VI

Now the door was one great diamond and the hall a hollow
ruby—

Big as Beachy Head, my lads, nay bigger by a half!

And I sees the mate wi’ mouth agape, a-staring like a booby,

And the skipper close behind him, with his tongue out like
a calf!

Now the way to take it rightly

Was to walk along politely

Just as if you didn’t notice—so I couldn’t help but laugh!

Chorus: For they both forgot their manners and the crew
was bound to laugh!

VII

But he took us through his palace and, my lads, as I’m a
sinner,

We walked into an opal like a sunset-coloured cloud.

MEDIEVAL LORE AND LEGEND

"My dining-room," he says, and, quick as light we saw a dinner

Spread before us by the fingers of a hidden fairy crowd;
And the skipper, swaying gently
After dinner, murmurs faintly,

"I looks to-wards you, Prester John, you've done us very proud!"

Chorus: And we drank his health with honours, for he *done* us *very* proud!

VIII

Then he walks us to his garden where we sees a feathered demon

Very splendid and important on a sort of spicy tree!
"That's the Phoenix," whispers Prester, "which all
edicated seamen

Knows the only one existent, and *he's* waiting for to flee!
When his hundred years expire
Then he'll set hisself a-fire

And another from his ashes rise most beautiful to see!"

Chorus: With wings of rose and emerald most beautiful to see!

IX

Then he says, "In yonder forest there's a little silver river,
And whosoever drinks of it, his youth shall never die!

The centuries go by, but Prester John endures for ever
With his music in the mountains and his magic on the sky!
While *your* hearts are growing colder,
While your world is growing older,

There's a magic in the distance, where the sea-line meets
the sky."

Chorus: It shall call to singing seamen till the fount o' song
is dry!

X

So we thought we'd up and seek it, but that forest fair defied
us.

GOLDEN CITIES, FAR

First a crimson leopard laughs at us most horrible to see,
Then a sea-green lion came and sniffed and licked his chops
and eyed us,
While a red and yellow unicorn was dancing round a tree!
We was trying to look thinner,
Which was hard, because our dinner
Must ha' made us very tempting to a cat o' high degree!
Chorus: Must ha' made us very tempting to the whole
menarjeree!

XI

So we scuttled from that forest and across the poppy mead-
ows
Where the awful shaggy horror brooded o'er us in the
dark!
And we pushes out from shore again a-jumping at our
shadows,
And pulls away most joyful to the old black barque!
And home again we plodded
While the Polyphemus nodded
With his battered moon-eye winking red and yellow
through the dark.
Chorus: Oh, the moon above the mountains, red and yellow
through the dark!

XII

Across the seas of Wonderland to London-town we blun-
dered,
Forty singing seamen as was puzzled for to know
If the visions that we saw was caused by—here again we
pondered—
A tittle in a vision forty thousand years ago.
Could the grog we *dreamt* we swallowed
Make us *dream* of all that followed?
We were only simple seamen, so of course we didn't know!
Chorus: We were simple singing seamen, so of course we
could not know!

PART IV:
THE
CAROLINGIAN
CYCLE



“Perhaps this is what it means, to be a truly great King: that after you are dead they sing songs about you for a thousand years.”

—Guiscard, *Vita Caroli*

Introduction to the Seventh Tale: The Shadowy Lord of Mommur

There was once a man named Karl who became king of the Franks. He was a good man, an intelligent and farsighted administrator, a born soldier, and he became a great king. So great, in fact, that the French nation, which eventually evolved out of his Frankish people, called him Karl the Great, which in French is *Charlemagne*.

During his reign (which began in the year 768 A.D.) there was a small battle of no particular consequence to history; it took place at a pass in the Pyrenees, (the mountains between France and Spain), at a place called Roncevalles, on the fifteenth of August in the year 778. In that battle an obscure, minor Frankish nobleman, Count Hrodlandt, Warder of the Breton Marches, fell. The uncouth Frankish sound of his name was unpleasing, so the latter-day French jongleurs smoothed it down to something more musical: Roland. From such raw materials as these, immortal literature is made and splendid songs are sung.

Charlemagne was a remarkable man. He stood six feet tall, was a superb swimmer, with a splendid athletic physique, large expressive eyes, and a merry disposition. Rather surprisingly for a Frankish monarch at the beginning of the Dark Ages, he knew Greek, German, and Latin. Also, surprisingly for a monarch who never bothered to learn to read or write, he fetched a monk from distant Eboracum to found a school in his capital; and the noble music of Virgil, the wisdom of Aristotle, and the science of Ptolemy found a home in the forests of Frankland. He

built a library too, and a cathedral. He was truly a great king. In fact, he was the greatest man of his race to emerge in Europe from the dim, far days when the Roman legions came a-conquering to hack a place for their eagles in the continent-wide forests of Gaul and Germania, until the dawn of the Renaissance.

When he died in 814, it seemed that all he had so laboriously built up died with him, for his dynasty, the Carolingian, was short lived, and the empire he constructed did not very long survive its founder. But Charlemagne became a legend, and legends have far longer lives than nations; his has flourished now for a thousand years and more.

The reason is that after his reign—a glorious golden time of peace, power, and prosperity—came the Dark Ages. What had been the realm of Charlemagne was swept by civil war, invasion, and endless conflict. Cities were burned, palaces sacked, cathedrals gutted, and the populace of entire nations scattered and driven afar.

To these people, the age of Charlemagne as they looked back on it, seemed like a bright, glorious dream; and the further it receded into the past, the brighter and more glorious it became to them, until at last it took on the stature of a Golden Age. And Charlemagne became, not just a great king, but the world's mightiest emperor; not just an enlightened and devout monarch, but a great Saint; he ruled, they said, for centuries, and about him the storytellers and the singers of heroic song gathered a galaxy of superb knights and champions—the Twelve Peers, they called them, and the greatest of them all was the magnificent hero, the perfect knight, Roland of Roncesvalles.

The obscure Frankish border-lord became the peer and paragon of all knightly virtues; he battled against Giants and Moors and Saracens, the tellers of tales related; he overcame vile magicians and wicked sorcerers. He bore the enchanted sword Durendal; once no less a hero than Trojan Hector had wielded that

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famous blade in war; only the invulnerable Achilles had withstood its razor edge.

Out of a minor battle in that pass in the Pyrenees came a splendid ringing epic, *La Chanson de Roland*. No one knows for certain the name of the anonymous genius who created *The Song of Roland* back in the eleventh century, but it has become the national epic of France, just as the *Odyssey* is the national epic of Greece and the *Aeneid* was the national epic of the Romans.

It is one of the world's great poems, and even as was the case with the works of Homer and Virgil, it had a host of imitators. They had a bit of trouble in composing sequels to the *Chanson*, however: in that poem the heroes who stood and fought and fell beside Roland and his comrade Oliver were slain to the last man. To sequelize the epic, they were forced either to go backwards in time and write of the boyhood exploits of the various heroes (which they did: see epics such as the *Enfances Roland*, *Enfances Ogier*,) or to move forward into the future and invent more "Peers."

This they did also, compiling a list of second-string Peers to replace the fallen Paladins: Thierry of Anjou, Huon of Bordeaux, Berat de Mondidier, William the Scot, Aubri the Burgundian, and so forth.

Thus around the legendary reign of Charlemagne, using for its nucleus the great eleventh century *Song of Roland*, an entire national literature of heroic epics came into being. Before the craze for Carolingian *chansons* died out, more than one hundred epic poems had been written, and many of them are quite vigorous and delightful works of literature, although none approaches the sublime lyric purity, strength and freshness of *Roland*.

As for the great *Huon of Bordeaux*, it was first composed some time after 1191, say the authorities, and reached its final form in the early years of the 13th century. Around 1540, when Henry the Eighth was on the English throne, Sir John Bourchier published his great translation, and the *Huon* enjoyed a

tremendous popularity among the British. The version included here has been revised and modernized by Robert Steele; it was first published on May 13, 1895, which happens to be the same year in which William Morris published his immortal romance, *The Wood Beyond The World*—that history-making novel which was the first modern work of heroic fantasy laid in an imagined worldscape of the author's own invention.

The later history of that gallant knight, Huon of Bordeaux, is most illustrious. When Rudyard Kipling came to write his two fairy books, *Puck of Pook's Hill* and *Rewards and Fairies*, he extrapolated from the fact of Oberon's fondness for the chivalrous young hero and postulated that after Oberon wearied of wielding the royal scepter of shadowy Mommur, he adopted Huon as his heir, and thus the next ruler of Faerie was King Huon the Mortal. A charming notion, and I, for one, am willing to accept it.

Many other fantasy authors have found much to admire in the great *Huon*. Such were C. S. Lewis, who praised it for its "fantastic realism," and the contemporary novelist Andre Norton, who used the romance as the basis for her durable and interesting novel *Huon of the Horn*, which was published in 1951.

My selection from the Robert Steele version of *Huon* begins in the first half of the poem. The young knight, Huon, son of Duke Seguin, has accidentally slain Charlot, one of the sons of the aged Emperor Charlemagne, and has been banished from the kingdom; Charlemagne is enraged at the killing and wishes the death of the blameless youth, but "pardons" him on the condition that he go to Babylon and visit the court of Admiral Gaudys, whereupon he must steal three kisses from the Emir's daughter, Esclarmonde, and tear out a handful of her father's beard as well as extracting four of his back teeth.

Of course, this would be tantamount to suicide; even the boldest hero can hardly expect to—literally!—beard the pagan monarch of Babylon in his very palace and escape unscathed. But Huon has nothing

to lose by accepting the wily emperor's "pardon," and so he agrees to these absurd and dangerous conditions.

We pick the story up as young Huon approaches Babylon. He has met an old graybeard in the desert, a fellow countryman named Gerames, to whom he has just told the tale of his woes and of his adventures on the road thither. The old man tells his tale as well.

The Shadowy Lord of Mommur
From the French Romance
Huon of Bordeaux
Translated by Sir John Bourchier and
Retold by Robert Steele

When Huon had heard the knight's tale, he had great joy, and embraced him and said how often he had seen Guyer, his brother the provost, "weep for you; and when I departed from Bordeaux I delivered to him all my lands to govern, wherefore I require you shew me your name."

"Sir," quoth he, "I am called Gerames, and now I pray you shew me your name."

"Sir," quoth he, "I am named Huon, and my younger brother is called Gerard. But tell me, I pray you, how one may travel from this place to Babylon."

"Yea, Sir," quoth Gerames. "You can go thither by two ways; the safest way is a forty days' journey, and the other is but fifteen days'. Yet I counsel you to take the long way, for if you take the shorter way, you must pass through a wood, sixteen leagues in length; but the way is so full of magic and strange things that such as pass that way are lost. In that wood abideth the King of Faerie, named Oberon: he is but three feet high, and crooked shouldered, but he hath an angelic visage, so that there is no mortal man that seeth him

but that taketh great pleasure in beholding his face. You shall no sooner be entered into that wood, if you go that way, but he will find the way to speak with you, and if you speak to him you are lost for ever: and you will ever find him before you so that it shall be in a manner impossible that you can escape from him without speaking to him, for his words are so pleasant to hear that there is no mortal man that can well escape without speaking to him.

“If he see that you will not speak a word to him, he will be sore displeased with you, and ere you can get out of the wood he will cause rain and wind, hail and snow, and he will make marvellous tempests with thunder and lightning, so that it shall seem to you that all the world shall perish; and you shall see before you a great running river, black and deep. But you may pass it at your ease, and it shall not wet the feet of your horse, for all is but fantasy and enchantment that the dwarf has made, to the intent to have you with him, and if you can keep yourself without speaking to him, you may then well escape. But, Sir, to eschew all perils, I counsel you to take the longer way, for I think you cannot escape from him, and then are you lost for ever.”

When Huon had well heard Gerames he had great marvel, and great desire in himself to see that dwarf king of the fairies, and the strange adventures that were in the wood: so he said to Gerames that for any fear of death he would not leave that way, seeing he might come to Babylon in fifteen days; for in taking the longer way he might perchance find more adventures, and since he was forewarned that with keeping his tongue from speaking he might abridge his journey, he said that he would surely go that way, whatsoever befell.

“Sir,” quoth Gerames, “you shall do your pleasure, for which ever way you take, it shall not be without me; I shall bring you to Babylon to the Admiral Gaudys, I know him right well, and when you be come thither you shall see there a damsel, the fairest in all India as I have heard say, and the sweetest and met courteous that ever was born: she it is that you seek, for she is daughter to the Admiral Gaudys.”

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When Huon had heard how Gerames was minded to go with him, he was thereof right joyful, and thanked him for his courtesy and service, and gave him a goodly horse, whereon he mounted. So they rode together until they came to the wood, to the place which King Oberon haunted most. There Huon was weary of travail, and famine, and heat, for he and his company had endured two days without bread or meat, so that he was so feeble that he could ride no further. Then he began piteously to weep, and complained of the great wrong that King Charlemagne had done to him, but Garyn and Gerames comforted him and had great pity on him, for they knew well that by reason of his youth, hunger oppressed him more than it did them of greater age, so they alighted under a great oak to search for some fruit to eat, and let their horses go to pasture.

While they were thus alighted, the dwarf of the fairies, King Oberon, came riding by, wearing a gown so rich that it were marvel to recount the riches and fashion thereof, and garnished with precious stones, whose clearness shone like the sun. He had a goodly bow in his hand, so rich that it could not be esteemed, and his arrows after the same sort, and these had such a property that they could hit any beast in the world he wished for. Moreover, he had about his neck a rich horn, hung by two laces of gold so rich and fair that never was seen such a one: it was made by four fairies in the island of Cephalonia. One of them gave to the horn this power, that whosoever heard the sound thereof, if he were in the greatest sickness in the world, he should forthwith be whole and sound: the lady that gave this power to the horn was called Gloriande. The second lady was called Transeleyne; she gave to this horn the power that whosoever heard it, if he were in the greatest famine in the world, he should be satisfied as well as if he had eaten all that he could wish for, and likewise for drink as well, as if he had drunk his fill of the best wine in the world. The third lady, named Margale, gave to this horn a yet greater gift, and that was that whosoever heard it, though he were never so poor or feeble or sick, he should have such joy in his heart that he should sing and

dance. The fourth lady, named Lempatrix, gave to this horn such a gift that whosoever heard it, if he were a hundred days' journey off, should come at the pleasure of him that blew it, far or near. So King Oberon, who knew well, and had seen the fourteen companions, set his horn to his mouth and blew so melodious a blast that the fourteen, being under the tree, had so perfect a joy at their hearts that they all rose up and began to sing and dance.

"Ah," quoth Huon, "what fortune is come to us? Methinks we are in Paradise. Right now I could not sustain myself for lack of meat and drink, and now I feel myself neither hungry nor thirsty. From whence may this come?"

"Sir," quoth Gerames, "know for truth this is done by the dwarf of the fairies, whom ye shall soon see pass by you. But, Sir, I require you on jeopardy of your life that you speak to him no word, without you purpose to abide ever with him."

"Have you no doubt of me," quoth Huon, "seeing I know the jeopardy."

Therewith the dwarf began to cry aloud, and said:

"Ye fourteen men that pass by my wood, God keep you all. I desire you to speak with me, and I conjure you thereto by Almighty God, and by the Christendom that you have received, and by all that God has made, answer me."

*How King Oberon Gave Huon a Cup and
Horn, and How He Made Use of Them*

Hearing the dwarf speak, Huon and his company mounted their horses, and rode away as fast as they were able, not speaking any word, and the dwarf was sorrowful and angry, seeing them ride away, so he set one of his fingers on his horn, out of which there issued a wind and a tempest so great that it bore down the trees. Therewith came a great rain and hailstorm, and it seemed that heaven and earth had fought together, and that the world should be ended: the beasts in the woods brayed and cried, and the fowls of the air fell down dead for the fear that they were in; all creatures

were afraid in that great tempest. Then suddenly a great river appeared before them, that ran swifter than the birds did fly; and the water was black and perilous, and made such a noise that it might be heard ten leagues away.

"Alas," quoth Huon, "I see well that we be all lost, we shall here be oppressed, without God have pity on us: I repent me that ever I entered into this wood, I had better have travelled a whole year than have come hither."

"Dismay you not," quoth Gerames, "all this is done by the dwarf of the fairies."

"Well," quoth Huon, "I think it best to alight from our horses, for we shall never escape from hence, but we shall all be oppressed."

Then Garyn and the other companions had great marvel, and were in fear.

"Ah, Gerames," quoth Huon, "you shewed me well that it was great peril to pass this wood; I repent me that I did not believe you."

Then they saw on the other side of the river a fair castle environed by fourteen towers, and on every tower was a belfry of fine gold by seeming, which they looked at a long time. By the time they had gone a little by the river side they lost sight of the castle, which was clean vanished away, whereof Huon and his company were sore abashed.

"Huon," quoth Gerames, "be not dismayed at all this which you see, for it is done by the crooked dwarf of the fairies, and all to beguile you. He cannot harm you if you speak no word; howbeit, ere we depart from him he will make us all abashed, for soon he will come after us like a madman because you will not speak to him; but I require you, as in God's name, be not afraid, but ride forth securely, and ever beware of speaking to him a word."

Then they rode to pass the river and found there nothing to hinder them, and so rode five leagues.

"Sir," quoth Huon, "we may well thank God that we be thus escaped this dwarf, who thought to have deceived us. I was never in such fear in my life, God guard us."

Thus they rode, talking of the little dwarf who had done them so much trouble.

When Gerames understood that the company thought they were escaped from the dwarf, he began to smile, and said: "Sirs, make no vaunt that ye be out of his power, for I believe you shall soon see him again."

As soon as Gerames had spoken the words, they saw before them a bridge which they must pass, and they saw the dwarf on the other side. Huon saw him first, and said: "I see the devil who hath done us so much trouble."

Oberon heard him, and said: "Friend, thou dost me injury without cause, for I am neither devil nor evil creature. I am a man as others be, but I conjure thee by the Divine puissance to speak to me."

Then Gerames said: "Sirs, for God's sake let him alone, nor speak a word to him, for by his fair language he may deceive us all, as he hath done many another; it is a pity he hath lived so long."

Then they rode at a good pace, and left the dwarf alone sore displeased that they would not speak to him; so he took his horn and set it to his mouth and blew it; and when Huon and his company heard it they had no power to ride any further, but they all began to sing. Then Oberon the dwarf said:

"Yonder company are fools and proud, since for any salutation that I can give them they disdain to answer me. But by the God that made me, ere they escape me the refusal of my words shall be dear bought."

So he took again his horn and struck it three times on his bow, and cried out aloud: "Ye my men, come appear before me."

Then there came to him four hundred men of arms and demanded of Oberon what was his pleasure, and who had displeased him.

"Sirs," said Oberon, "I shall shew you, howbeit I am grieved to shew it. Here in this wood fourteen knights have passed who disdain to speak to me; but that they shall not

mock me, they shall dearly buy their refusal; wherefore I will that you go after them and slay them all, let none escape."

Then one of his knights said: "Sir, for God's sake, have pity of them."

"Certainly," quoth Oberon, "I cannot spare them, seeing they disdain to speak to me."

"Sir," quoth Gloriande, "for God's sake, do not as you say, but, Sir, work by my counsel, and after do as it please you. Sir, I counsel you, yet once again go after them, for if they do not speak, we shall slay them all; for surely, Sir, if they see you return again to them, they shall be in great fear."

"Friend," quoth Oberon, "I shall do as you have counselled me."

All this while Huon and his company had-riden off again, and Huon said:

"Sirs, we are now about five leagues from the dwarf. I never in my life saw a creature so fair in the visage; I have great marvel how he can speak of God Almighty, if he is a devil of hell, and since he spake of God, methinks we ought to speak to him, for I think such a creature can have no power to do us any ill. I think he is not past the age of five years."

"Sir," quoth Gerames, "as little as he seemeth, although you take him for a child, he was born forty years before the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Surely," quoth Huon, "I care not what age he be of, if he come again, ill hap come to me if I keep my speech from him; I pray you be not displeased."

After they had ridden fifteen miles, suddenly Oberon appeared to them, and said:

"Sirs, are ye not yet advised to speak to me? Yet again I am come to salute you in the name of the God that made and formed us, and I conjure you by the power that He hath given me that ye speak to me; for I repute you for fools to think thus to pass through my wood and disdain to speak to me. Ah, Huon, I know thee well enough, and whither thou wouldst go. I know all thy deeds—thou didst slay Charlot, and after discomfit Amaury; and I know the message that

Charlemagne hath charged thee to say to the Admiral Gaudys, the which thing is impossible to be done without my aid, for without me, thou shalt never accomplish this enterprise. Speak to me, and I shall cause thee to achieve thine enterprise, and when thou hast done thy message, I shall bring thee again to France in safe-guard. I know the cause that thou wilt not speak to me; it is by reason of old Gerames who is thee with thee. Therefore, Huon, beware of thyself, go no further, for I know well it is three days past since thou didst eat any meat to profit thee; if thou wilt believe me, thou shalt have enough of such sustenance as thou wilt wish for. And so soon as thou hast dined, I will give thee leave to depart, if it be thy pleasure; of this have no doubt."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "ye be welcome."

"Ah," quoth Oberon, "thy salutation shall be well rewarded. Know for truth thou didst never make salutation so profitable for myself: thou mayst thank God that He hath sent thee that grace."

When Huon had well heard Oberon, he had great marvel, and demanded if it were true that he had said.

"Yea, truly," quoth Oberon, "of that make no doubt."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "I have great marvel for what cause you have desired to speak with us."

"Huon," quoth Oberon, "know that I love thee well because of the truth that is in thee, and since I naturally love thee, if thou wilt know who I am, I shall shew thee. My mother was the lady of the Secret Isle, sometime beloved of the fair Florimont of Albany. But because his mother spied on them, she departed and left Florimont her lover in great weeping, and never saw him after. Then she returned into her land and married after, and had a son who in his time was King of Egypt, named Anectanabus; he it was who fostered Alexander the Great, and met his death by him. After many years Julius Caesar passed by the sea as he went into Thessaly, where he fought with Pompey. In his way he passed by Cephalonia, where he fell in love with my mother, because she shewed him that he should discomfit Pompey, as

he did, and thus have I shewn you that Caesar was my father. At my birth there was many a prince of the fairies, and many a noble lady that came to see my mother. But amongst them there was one who was not content, because she was not sent for as well as the others, and when I was born, she gave me a gift that when I should pass three years of age I should grow no more, but be as you see me now; and when she had thus done, and saw how she had served me by her words, she repented herself, and would recompense me another way. Then she gave me another gift, that I should be the fairest child that ever nature formed, as thou mayst see me now; and another lady of Fairyland named Transeleyne gave me a gift that I do know all that any man can know or think, good or ill. The third lady, to do more for me, and to please my mother better, granted me that there is no country so far but that if I will wish myself there, I shall be there at once with what number of men I list, and moreover, if I will have a castle or a palace at my own device, it shall be made at once, and as soon gone again when I list; and what meat or wine I wish for, I have it at once; and also I am King of Mommur, which is four hundred leagues from hence, and if I list, I can be there at once. Know for truth thou art arrived at a good port; I know well thou hast great need of meat, for these three days thou hast had but small sustenance, but I shall cause thee to have enough. I demand of thee, whether thou wilt have meat and drink here in this meadow, or in a palace, or in a hall, command as thou wilt, and thou shalt have it for thee and thy company."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "I will follow your pleasure, and never do nor think the contrary."

"Huon," quoth he, "as yet I have not shewed thee all the gifts that were given me at my birth. The fourth lady gave me that there is no bird nor beast, be they never so cruel, but if I will have them, I may take them in my hand; and also, I shall never seem older than thou seest me now, and when I shall depart out of this world my place is prepared in Para-

dise: well I know that all things created in this mortal world must needs have an end."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "such a gift ought to be well kept."

"Huon," quoth Oberon, "well were you counselled when you spake to me; you had never before so fair an adventure: shew me by thy faith if thou wilt eat, and what meat thou wilt have, and what wine thou wilt drink."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "so that I have meat and drink, I care not what it is, that my company and I may be rid of our famine."

Then Oberon laughed at him and said: "Sirs, all ye sit down in this meadow and doubt not that what I shall do is done by the might of our Lord God."

Then Oberon began to wish, and said to Huon and his company: "Sirs, rise up quickly;" the which they did, and saw before them a fair and rich palace, garnished with chambers and halls, hung with rich cloth of silk beaten with gold, with tables set ready, full of meat. When Huon and his company saw the rich palace before them they had great marvel, but Oberon took him by the hand and with him mounted up into the palace. There they found servants ready, bringing to them basins of gold, garnished with precious stones, and they gave water to Huon, and he sat down at the table. Oberon sat at the head of the table, on a bench of ivory richly garnished with gold, and that seat had such virtue given it by the fairies, that if any man tried to poison him who was sitting on it, as soon as he came near he fell dead.

Now Huon began to eat at a great pace, but Gerames had small wish to eat, for he believed that those who ate would never depart thence. When Oberon saw this, he said:

"Gerames, eat and drink, for as soon as thou hast eaten, thou shalt have leave to go when thou list"; so Gerames was joyful, and began to eat and drink, for he knew that Oberon would not do otherwise than he had said. After the company had well dined, Huon said to King Oberon:

"Sir, when it shall be your pleasure, I pray you give us leave to depart."

"Huon," quoth Oberon, "I am right well content so to do, but first I will shew you some of my jewels"; then he called Clariand, a knight of the fairies, and said:

"Friend, go and fetch me my cup," and he did his commandment. And when Oberon had his cup in his hand he said to Huron: "Sir, behold ye well, see that this cup is empty."

"That is true, Sir," quoth Huon.

Then Oberon set the cup on the table, and said to Huon: "Behold the great power that God hath given me, and how that I may do my pleasure," and he made a sign over the cup three times, and at once the cup was full of wine.

"Lo, Sirs," quoth he, "ye may well see that this is done by the grace of God, yet I shall shew you the great virtue that is in this cup, for if all the men in the world were here assembled together, and the cup were in the hands of any man out of deadly sin, he might drink thereof his fill, but whosoever offers his hand to take it when he is in deadly sin may not drink out of it. If thou canst drink therefore of it, I offer thee the cup."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "I thank you, but I fear I am not worthy to drink thereof, nor to touch the cup. Never have I heard of such a noble vessel; yet know for truth I have confessed all my sins, and repented what evil I have done, and I do pardon and forgive all men, whatsoever injury hath been done to me, and I know not that I have done wrong to any creature, and I hate no man." So saying, he took the cup in both his hands and set it to his mouth, and drank of the good wine that was therein at his pleasure.

When Oberon saw that he was right glad, and came and embraced Huon, saying that he was a noble man: "I give thee this cup as it is; for the dignity of the cup be thou ever true and faithful, for if thou wilt work by my counsel, I shall aid thee and give thee succour in all thine affairs; but as soon as thou makest any lie, the virtue of the cup will be lost and lose its bounty, and beside that, thou shalt lose my love and aid."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "I shall be right wary thereof, and now I require you suffer us to depart."

"Stay yet," quoth Oberon, "for I have another treasure which I will give thee, because of the truth and nobleness in thee. I will give thee a rich horn of ivory, which thou shalt bear with thee. As soon as thou dost blow this horn I shall hear thee wherever I am, and I will come at once to thee with a hundred thousand men of arms to succour and aid thee if need be. One thing I command thee on pain of losing my love, and on jeopardy of thy life: sound not this horn without thou hast great need thereof; if thou do otherwise, I vow I shall leave thee in as great poverty and misery as ever man was, so that whosoever shall see thee in that case shall have pity on thee. Now depart freely, and God be your guide."

Then Huon took leave of King Oberon, and trussed up all his baggage, and put his cup in his bosom, and the horn about his neck, and they all took their leave of the King, and Oberon weeping embraced Huon, who marvelled why he wept, and said:

"Sir, why do you weep?"

"Friend," quoth Oberon, "you may well know, you have two things with you that I love dearly. God aid you; more I cannot speak to you."

Thus the fourteen knights departed, and rode forth until they saw before them a great deep river, and when they could find no guide nor passage at which to cross, they wist not what to do, until suddenly they saw a servant of King Oberon pass by them bearing a rod of gold in his hand. Without speaking of any word he entered into the river, and took his rod and struck the water therewith three times, and the water withdrew both sides in such a wise that there was a path where three men might ride abreast: that done, he departed again without speaking of any word. Then Huon and his company entered into the water and so passed through without any danger, and when they were through it they looked behind them and saw the river close again, and run as it was accustomed to do.

"By my faith," quoth Huon, "I think we be enchanted. Surely King Oberon hath done this, but seeing we are thus

escaped out of peril, I trust we shall have no fear from henceforth."

Thus they rode together singing, and oftentimes they spake of the great marvels that they had seen King Oberon do; and as they rode, Huon beheld on his right hand and saw a fair meadow well garnished with herbs and flowers, and in the midst thereof, a clear fountain. Then Huon rode thither and alighted, and they let their horses pasture while they spread a cloth on the green grass, and set thereon the meat that King Oberon had given them at their parting, and they drank the drink that they found in the cup.

"By my faith," quoth Huon, "it was a fair adventure for us when we met Oberon, and I spoke to him. He hath shewed me great tokens of love when he gave me such a cup. If I may return into France in safety, I shall give it to Charlemagne, who shall make great feast therewith, and if he cannot drink from it, the barons of France will have great joy thereof."

Then again he repented him of his own words, and said: "I am a fool to think or say thus, for as yet I cannot tell what end I shall come to. The cup that I have is worth more than two cities, but as yet I cannot believe that there is such virtue in the horn as Oberon hath said, nor that he may hear it so far off. Whatsoever fortune fall, I will assay if it hath such virtue or no."

"Ah, Sir," quoth Gerames, "beware what you do; you know well what charge he gave you when we departed; certainly you and we both are lost if you trespass his commandment."

"Surely," quoth Huon, "I will assay it whatsoever fortune fall"; so he took the horn and set it to his mouth, and blew it so loud that the wood rang, and Gerames and the others began to sing and make great joy, and Garyn said:

"Fair nephew, blow still," and Huon blew till Oberon, who was in his wood fifteen miles off, heard him clearly, and said:

"Ah, I hear my friend blow whom I love best in the world; what man is so hardy as to do him any ill? I wish myself with him with a thousand men at arms"; and at once he was near

to Huon with his company. When Huon and his friends heard the host, and saw Oberon come riding on before, they were afraid, and it was no marvel, seeing the commandment that Oberon had given them before.

Then Huon said: "Ah, Sirs, I have done ill, now I see well that we cannot escape, but that we be likely to die."

"Certainly," quoth Gerames, "you have well deserved it."

"Hold your peace," quoth Huon, "dismay you not; let me speak to him."

Therewith Oberon came to them and said: "Huon, accursed be thou; where are they that will do thee any ill? Why hast thou broken my commandment?"

"Ah, Sir," quoth Huon, "I shall shew you the truth. We were sitting right now in the meadow, and did eat of that you gave us. I believe I took too much drink out of the cup that you gave me, the virtue of which we well assayed. Then I thought to assay also the virtue of the rich horn to the intent that if I should have any need of it, I might be sure thereof. Now I know for truth that all you have shewed me is true; therefore, Sir, in the honour of God, I require you to pardon my trespass. Sir, here is my sword, strike off my head at your pleasure; for well I know without your aid I shall never achieve mine enterprise."

"Huon," quoth Oberon, "the goodness and great truth that are in thee constrain me to give thee pardon: but beware, from henceforth be not so hardy as to break my commandment."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "I thank you."

"Well," quoth Oberon, "I know surely that thou hast much to suffer as yet; for thou must pass through a city named Tormont, wherein there is a tyrant called Macaire, and yet he is thine own uncle, brother to thy father, Duke Seguin. When he was yet in France he thought to have murdered King Charlemagne, but his treason was known, and he would have been slain if thy father, Duke Seguin, had not been alive. He was sent to the Holy Sepulchre to do his penance for the ill that he had done, and after he was there he renounced the faith of our Lord God, and took on him the

pagan law which he hath kept ever since so sorely that if he hear any man speak of our Lord God, he will pursue him unto the death. Whatever promise he maketh, he keepeth none, therefore I advise thee trust not in him, for surely he will put thee to death if he may, and thou canst not escape if thou go by that city. I counsel thee, take not that way if thou be wise."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "for your courtesy, love, and good counsel I thank you, but whatsoever fortune fall to me, I will go to mine uncle; and if he be such an one as you say, I shall make him to die an ill death. If need be, I shall sound my horn, and I am sure you will aid me at my need."

"Of that you may be sure," quoth Oberon, "but one thing I forbid thee: sound not the horn without thou be hurt, for if thou do the contrary, I shall so martyr thee that thy body shall not endure it."

Then Huon took leave of King Oberon, and said: "Sir, I have marvel why you weep; I pray you shew me the cause why you do it."

"Huon," quoth Oberon, "the great love that I have for thee causeth me to do it, for hereafter thou shalt suffer so much ill and travail that no human tongue can tell it."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "you shew me many things not greatly to my profit."

"Sure," quoth Oberon, "and yet thou shalt suffer more than I have spoken of, and all by thine own folly."

After that Oberon was departed; Huon and his company mounted on their horses, and so rode forth until they came to the city of Tormont. When Gerames, who had been there before, saw the city, he said to Huon:

"Ah, Sir, we be ill arrived here; we are in the way to suffer much trouble."

"Be not dismayed," quoth Huon, "for by the grace of God, we shall right well escape; for whom God will aid no man can hurt."

Then they entered into the city, and as they came to the gate, they met a man with a bow in his hand, who had been

sporting without the city. Huon rode foremost and saluted him in the name of God.

"Friend, what call you this city?"

The man stood still and had marvel what men they were that spake of God, and said: "Sirs, the God in whose name you have saluted me keep and defend thee from evil. Howbeit I desire you, inasmuch as ye love your lives, speak softly that ye be not heard, for if the lord of this city know that ye be Christian men, he will slay you all. Sirs, you may trust me, for I am christened, but I dare not be known, I have such fear of the duke."

"Friend," quoth Huon, "I pray you shew me who is lord of this city, and what is his name?"

"Sir," quoth he, "he is a false tyrant; when he was christened he was named Macaire, but he hath renounced God, and now he is so fierce and proud that he hateth nothing so much as them that believe in Jesus Christ. But, Sir, I pray you shew me whither you will go."

"Friend," quoth Huon, "I go to the Red Sea, and from thence to Babylon. I would tarry this day in this city, for I and my company are sore weary."

"Sir," quoth he, "if you will believe me, you will not enter into this city to lodge, for if the duke know it, none can save your lives; therefore if it be your pleasure, I shall lead you another way beside the town."

"Sir," quoth Gerames, "for God's sake, believe him that counselleth you so truly."

"Know for truth," quoth Huon, "I will not do thus. I see well it is almost night, the sun is low; therefore I will lodge this night here in this town, for a good town should never be forsaken, whatsoever befall."

"Sir," quoth the strange man, "seeing it is so, for the love of God I shall bring you to a lodging where ye shall be well and honestly lodged in a good man's house, that believeth in God. His name is Gonder, provost of the city, and he is well beloved of the duke."

"Friend," quoth Huon, "God reward thee."

So the man went on before, through the town till he came

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to the provost's house, whom they found sitting at his gate. Huon, who was a fair speaker, saluted him in the name of God and the Virgin Mary. The provost rose up and beheld Huon and his company, and had marvel what they were, seeing they saluted him in the name of God, then he said:

"Sirs, ye be welcome, but in God's name, I desire you to speak softly that ye be not heard, for if the duke of this city knew you, ye would be utterly lost, but if it please you to tarry this night here in my house, for the love of God, all that I have in my house shall be yours to do therewith at your pleasure: I abandon all to you. I thank God I have in my house food enough that if ye bide in my house a year, ye shall not need to buy anything without."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "for this fair proffer I thank you"; and so he and his company alighted, and the servants of the house took their horses and set them up, while the host took Huon and Gerames and the others, and brought them to their chambers to dress; thence they came into the hall, where they found the tables set and covered, and so sat down and were richly served with divers meats.

When they were done and risen, Huon called Gerames and said: "Go in haste into the town and get a crier, and cause it to be cried in every market-place and street, that whosoever would come and sup at the provost's house, as well noble as simple men, women and children, rich and poor, and all manner of people of whatever estate or degree they be, should come freely, and nothing pay, neither for meat nor for drink, whereof they should have as they wished."

Also he commanded Gerames that he should buy all the meat he could get in the town, and pay ready money for the same.

"Sir," quoth Gerames, "your pleasure shall be done."

"You know well," quoth the host, "that I have abandoned to you all that is in my house; therefore, Sir, you shall not need to seek for anything further; take of my goods at your pleasure."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "I thank you. I have money enough to furnish what we need, and also, Sir, I have a cup of great

virtue; for if all the people that are within this city were here present, they should have drink enough from it, for it was made in Fairyland."

When the host heard Huon he began to smile, and believed that these words were spoken in jest, so Huon foolishly took the horn of ivory from his neck and took it to his host to keep, saying:

"Host, I take you this to keep, for it is a precious thing; therefore keep it safely, that I may have it again when I ask for it."

"Sir," quoth he, "I shall surely keep it, and when it please you it shall be ready"; and so he took the horn and laid it up in a coffer; but after there fell such an hour that Huon would rather have had it than all the goods in the world, as ye shall hereafter hear.

Thus when Gerames had this commandment of Huon, he went into the city and caused it to be cried in divers places as he was commanded, and when the cry was made, there was no beggar, vagabond nor ribald, juggler nor minstrel, old nor young, but came to the provost's house; and they were in number more than four hundred. And Gerames bought up bread, meat, flesh, and other victuals, all that he could find in the city, and paid for it; thus the supper was dressed and every man seated at the tables. Huon served them with his cup in his hand pouring out into each man's pot from his own, and yet ever his cup was full. Now, when the people had well eaten and drunken, and their brains were warmed with the good wine, some began to sing, and some to sleep at the table, and some beat the boards with their fists, so that it was a marvel to see the way they behaved, and Huon had thereof much joy. The same time, the duke's steward came into the town to buy his master's supper, but he could find neither bread nor flesh, nor any other victuals, whereof he was sore displeased. Then he demanded the cause why he found no victuals as he was accustomed to do.

"Sir," quoth the butchers and bakers, "a young man is lodged in the house of Gonder the provost who hath made to be cried in all the city that all beggars and ribalds should

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come to sup at his lodgings, and he hath bought up all the victuals that he could get in the town."

Then the Paynim, in great despite, went to the palace to the duke and said:

"Sir, I can get nothing in the town for your supper: there is a young man lodged in the provost's house that hath bought up all the victuals to give a supper to all the beggars, vagabonds and ribalds that can be found in the town."

When the duke understood that, he was sore displeased, and swore by Mahound that he would go and see that supper, and commanded all his men to be ready in harness to go with him. As he was going out of his palace, a traitor who had stolen secretly out of the provost's house, where he had been at supper, said:

"Sir, know for truth there is in your provost's house a knight who hath given a supper to all people that would come thither, and, Sir, this knight hath a cup worth more than all this city, for if all the people that live between east and west should lack drink, they should all have enough, for as often as the cup is emptied it fills again at once."

When the duke heard that, he had great marvel and said such a cup were good for him, and swore by Mahound that he would have that cup.

"Let us go thither, for my will is to have that cup. All those knights shall lose their horses and baggage; I will leave them nothing."

He went forth with thirty knights and stopped not till he came to the provost's house, and found the gates open. When the provost perceived him he came to Huon, and said:

"Ah, Sir, you have done ill; here is come the duke in great displeasure. If God has not pity on you, I cannot see how you can escape from death."

"Dismay you not," quoth Huon, "for I shall speak so fair that he shall be content"; and with a merry cheer he came to the duke, and said:

"Sir, ye be welcome."

"Beware," quoth the duke, "come not near me, for no Christian man may come into my city without my license,

wherefore thou must know that ye shall all lose your heads, and all that ye brought hither."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "when you have slain us you shall win but little thereby; it were great wrong for you so to do."

"I shall tell thee," quoth the duke, "why I will do it, that is because ye be Christian men. Show me by thy faith why hast thou assembled all this company here to supper."

Quoth Huon: "I have done it because I am going to the Red Sea, and these poor men will pray to God for me that I may return in safety. Sir, this is the cause that I have made them to sup with me."

"Well," quoth the duke, "great folly hast thou spoken, for thou shalt never see fair days; you shall all lose your heads."

"Leave all this, Sir," quoth Huon, "I pray you and your company, sit down and eat and drink at your pleasure, and I shall serve you as well as I can; and then, if I have done any wrong, I will make you amends in such wise that you shall be content, for if you do me any hurt, it shall be but a small conquest for you. Methinks, Sir, if you would do nobly, you should somewhat forbear us, for I have heard say you were once christened."

Then the duke said to Huon: "Thou hast said well; I am content to sit, for as yet I have not supped"; and he commanded every man to be disarmed, and to sit down at the table; the which they did. So Huon and Gerames served them, and they were well served at that supper, and after Huon took his cup and came to the duke, and said:

"Sir, see you not here this cup, the which is void and empty?"

"I see well," quoth the duke, "there is nothing therein."

Then Huon made the sign of the cross over the cup, and straightway it was full of wine; so he took the cup to the duke, who had great marvel thereof, but as soon as he took the cup in his hands it was void again.

"What," quoth the duke, "thou hast enchanted me."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "I am no enchanter, but this for the sin that you are in. Set down the cup, for you are not worthy to hold it; in an evil hour were you born."

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"How art thou so bold," quoth the duke, "to speak thus to me? Thou art but a proud fool; thou knowest well it lieth in my power to destroy thee, and there is no man dare say the contrary. I pray thee, tell me thy name, and where thou wert born, and whither thou goest, and of what kin thou art."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "for anything that may fall to me I shall not hide my name nor kindred. I was born at Bordeaux on the Garonne, son to Duke Seguin, who is dead seven years and more."

When the duke heard how Huon was his nephew, he said: "Ah, nephew, sone of my brother, why hast thou taken in this city any other lodging than mine? Shew me whither thou wilt go."

"I am going to Babylon," quoth Huon, "to the Admiral Gaudys, to do to him a message from King Charlemagne of France, because I slew his son there." So he shewed his uncle all his adventure, and how the King had taken away his land, nor should he have it again till he had done his message to the admiral.

"Fair nephew," quoth the duke, "in like wise was I banished the realm of France; but since then I have renounced the faith of Jesus Christ, and I have married in this country a great lady, by whom I have lands to govern, whereof I am lord. Nephew, I will that thou come and lodge with me in my castle, and to-morrow you shall have some of my barons to conduct you till you come to Babylon."

"I thank you, Sir," quoth Huon, "since it is your pleasure, I will go with you to your palace." Then Gerames came quietly and said to him: "Sir, if you go thither, you may perhaps repent yourself." "It may well be," quoth Gonder the provost.

Then Huon ordered to truss all their gear and to make ready their horses, and took with him his cup, but he left still his horn with the provost; so he went with his uncle to his castle, and lay there all night. The next morning Huon came to his uncle to take his leave.

"Fair nephew," quoth the duke, "I pray you tarry till my barons come that shall conduct you on your journey." "Sir,"

quoth Huon, "since it pleases you I am content to abide." Then they sat down to dinner.

*How Huon Escaped from His Uncle
and Slew a Giant in His Tower*

When this traitor duke saw his nephew seated at the table, he called to him a lord born in France, named Geoffrey, who went out of France with him, and had also denied the law of Christ, and was of his secret council. Then he said to him:

"Friend, go and arm seven score Paynims, and cause them to come hither. Let them slay my nephew and all that are with him, for if one escape, you shall lose my favour."

"Sir," quoth Geoffrey, "your will shall be done."

So he went into a chamber where there were two hundred suits of armour hanging; but when he came there he said to himself:

"Alas, this villain traitor would slay the son of his brother, who when I was in France did me once a great courtesy, for I should have been dead and slain if Duke Seguin, his father, had not succoured me. It is but right that I should help his son for what he did to me. Confound me, if he have any ill for me, but I shall rather cause the false duke to dearly buy the treason that he would do to his nephew."

Now, at that time there were in the castle seven score French prisoners taken upon the sea, and the duke kept them in prison to the intent to put them to death, he was so cruel against all Christian men. But God, Who never forgetteth His friends, succoured them. This Geoffrey went to the prisoners and said to them:

"If you would save your lives, come out and follow me."

Then they came out straightway, and he brought them into the chamber, where the armour was hanging, and caused them all to be armed.

"Sirs," said he, "if you have courage and will to issue hence, it is time now to shew your manhood."

"We shall do your commandment," quoth they, "and die in the quarrel, to come out of bondage into freedom."

When Geoffrey heard them, he was right joyous, and said: "Know surely that there is here in this palace at dinner the son of Duke Seguin of Bordeaux, nephew to the duke, lord of this house. Once was this lord christened, but he hath denied the faith of our Lord God Jesus Christ, and hath commanded me to arm seven score Paynims to come and slay his nephew and his company."

When they were all armed, and swords by their sides, they followed Geoffrey to the palace, and when they entered, Huon said to his uncle: "Sir, these men in armour that have come into the hall, are they those you have commanded to come and conduct me on my journey?"

"Huon," quoth the duke, "it is otherwise than thou thinkest, thou shalt surely die, there is no remedy, thou shalt never see fair day again."

Then he said: "Step forth, Sirs; look that no Christian men escape you, but let them all be slain."

When Huon saw the malice of his uncle and his false treason, he was sore abashed, and rose up suddenly and set his helm on his head and took his sword in his hand. Then Geoffrey came in and cried: "Said Denis, ye noble Frenchmen, take heed that no Paynim escapes alive, but slay them all."

The Frenchmen drew out their swords and fought with the Paynims on all parts, so that within a short time they were all slain. The duke saw that these were no Paynims, since they slew his men, and was in great fear of his life, and fled away into a secret chamber. When Huon perceived that they were Frenchmen who had thus succoured him, he pursued the duke with his sword in his hand, all bloody with the blood of the Paynims he had slain. The traitor duke saw that his nephew followed him, and fled from chamber to chamber till he came to a window opening upon the garden side, and so leapt out thereat and ran away, whereof Huon and Geoffrey and the other Frenchmen were right sorrowful. They closed the gates and raised the bridges, to the intent that they should not be surprised, and then they came into the hall to make acquaintance with one another, whereof they had much

joy, but if God had not helped them, their joy would have been turned into sorrow. When the duke came into the town he made a cry that all men able to bear arms should come to him; and he, with all that he could raise, came before the palace, more than ten thousand persons, and they all swore the death of the Christians. When the duke saw he had such a number he was joyful and commanded his engines and ladders to be raised up on ever part, and with picks and mattocks they broke down a corner tower. The Christians within defended them valiantly, but their defence would have availed them little if our Lord God had not helped them. When Huon knew the danger he was in, he was sore displeased, and said:

"I ought to be sore annoyed when I see that we be thus kept in by my uncle. I fear me we shall never more see good days."

Then Gerames said: "For the love of God, Sir, blow now your horn."

"It is not in my power to do it," quoth Huon, "for the provost Gonder hath it in keeping."

"Ha, Huon," quoth Gerames, "in an evil hour we came acquainted with you, for now by your folly and pride we are in the way of destruction."

As they were thus devising, Gonder the provost came to the duke and said: "Sir, I have great marvel that you thus destroy your own palace; great folly you do therein; I would counsel you leave this assault, and let there be a peace made between you and your nephew on the condition to let him and his company go safely away."

"Provost," quoth the duke, "I pray thee go and do the best that thou canst. I will do as thou dost counsel me."

Then the provost came to the palace and said to Huon: "Sir, for God's sake speak, with me."

"Who art thou?" quoth Huon.

"I am your host the provost, and I require you, inasmuch as ye love your lives, keep well this palace."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "for your good counsel I thank you, and I desire you, for the love you bear me, and in that you

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would help to save my life, give me again the horn of ivory that I gave you to keep; for without that I cannot escape death."

"Sir," quoth the provost, "it is not far from me"; and so he took it out of his bosom and delivered it to Huon in at a window on the garden side.

When Huon saw that he had his horn of ivory again, he was joyful; and no marvel, for it was the security for his life. He set it to his mouth, and began to blow it, but Gerames said:

"Ah, Sir, you should never discover your secrets so easily, for if this provost had been untrue, he might have told all your secrets to the duke, and you would have been lost. Also, Sir, I beg you not to blow your horn as yet, for you be not yet hurt; King Oberon commanded you so at his parting."

"Why," quoth Huon, "am I to tarry till I be slain? Surely I will blow it without any longer delay."

And so he blew it sore, till the blood came out of his mouth; and all that were in the palace began to sing and dance, and the duke and all those that were at the siege of the palace could not do otherwise. Then King Oberon, who was in his city of Mommur, said:

"I hear my friend Huon's horn blow; I know well he hath some business on hand. I wish myself where the horn was blown with a hundred thousand armed men."

He had no sooner made this wish but he was in the city of Tormont, and he and his men fell on the Paynims and slew them till their blood ran down the streets like a river, but first he made it to be cried that as many as would receive baptism their lives should be saved, so that thereby many were christened. When Huon saw King Oberon come to the palace he went and thanked him for his succour at that time of need.

"Friend," quoth Oberon, "as long as you believe and do what I tell you, I shall never fail to succour you in all your affairs."

Thus all that were in the town and would not believe on God were slain, and the duke was taken and brought to the

palace, to Huon, who was right joyful to see his uncle taken. Then the duke said:

“Fair nephew, I pray you have pity on me.”

“Ah, untrue traitor,” quoth Huon, “thou shalt never depart hence alive; I shall never respite thy death.”

Then with his sword he struck off his uncle’s head, and made his body to be hanged over the walls of the town, that his ill deeds might always be had in memory and be an example to all others. Thus that country was delivered from the traitor.

When all was done, King Oberon said to Huon: “My dear friend, I will take my leave of thee. I shall not see thee again till thou hast suffered so much pain and ill and poverty and mis-ease that it will be hard to speak of; and all through thy own folly.”

When Huon heard that, he was all afraid and said: “Sir, methinks you say great wrong, for in all things I will observe your commandment to my power.”

“Friend,” quoth Oberon, “seeing thou wilt do so, remember then thy promises. I charge thee, on pain of thy life and losing for ever my love, be not so hardy as to take the way to the tower of Dunother. It is a marvellous great tower standing on the seaside. Julius Caesar caused it to be made, there was I long nourished. Thou never didst see a tower so fair or better garnished with chambers and glass windows and rich tapestry hangings within. At the entry of the gate are two men of brass, each of them holding in their hands a flail of iron, wherewith they beat day and night without cease, by such a measure that when the one striketh with his flail, the other is lift up ready to strike; and they beat so quickly that a swallow flying cannot pass by unslain. Within this tower is a giant named Angolafer; he took from me the tower and a noble suit of armour of such virtue that whosoever hath it on his body cannot be hurt or weary, nor can he be drowned with water, nor burned by fire. Huon, my friend, I charge thee go not that way, as thou fearest my displeasure, for against that giant thou canst make no resistance.”

“Sir,” quoth Huon, “know for truth that day I departed

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out of France I took on me a vow that I should never eschew any adventure I might hear of, though it were never so perilous, for any fear of death. I had rather die than not fight that giant; there is no man shall hinder me, and I will conquer again your noble armour; it shall do me good service hereafter; it is a thing not to be forsaken; and if I have need of your aid, I shall blow my horn, and you will come and help me."

"Huon," quoth Oberon, "if thou breakest the horn in blowing it, thou shalt have no aid from me."

"Sir," quoth Huon, "you may do your pleasure, and I shall do mine."

Then Oberon departed with out more speech, and Huon abode in the city, which he gave to Geoffrey and to the provost his host, with all the land that his uncle held. Then he made him ready, and took gold and silver plenty, and took leave of Geoffrey and of his host, and of all other, and he and his company departed, riding over hills and dales, night and day, bound for the City of Babylon and the fulfillment of his vow.

Introduction to the Eighth Tale: Olivier's Brag

I suppose an author who died as recently as 1924 hardly has a place in a book such as *Golden Cities, Far*. After all, this compendium is largely devoted to ancient writers of classical antiquity and the Middle Ages. But Anatole France demonstrates that the Carolingian mythos is yet a living force in literature; and, candidly, this story is so much fun that I could not bear to leave it out.

Anatole France was born in Paris on April 16, 1844, and his real name was Jacques Anatole Thibault. For thirty years he dominated French letters; as the *Encyclopædia Britannica* puts it, "No reputation since Voltaire's has been found comparable with his."

His style is lucid, graceful, almost voluptuous. His variety is enormous: from the bawdy Tudor gusto of *At the Sign of the Reine Pédauque*, to the Cabelian irony and wit of *The Revolt of the Angels*, to the exotic and febrile intensity of his historical-philosophical romance, *Thaïs*, which Massenet turned into a successful opera.

He died at the age of eighty in Tours; like Voltaire, his last years were filled with glory. In his old age he was revered across the western world as a genius and a patriarch, and three years before his death he received the Nobel Prize for literature.

As far as I can tell, the story of "Olivier's Brag" is an invention of its author. If it can be traced to some incident in the body of the Carolingian cycle, it will take someone far more deeply read in that

literature than myself to do it. I suspect it is merely a jest, a humorous anecdote.

This is the first bit of Anatole France we have included in the Adult Fantasy Series thus far, but it will not be the last. Some time in 1971 I hope to publish that witty and sparkling and very Cabellian fantasy, *The Revolt of the Angels*, under the Sign of the Unicorn's Head.

Olivier's Brag
A Modern Treatment of a Carolingian
Legend
by Anatole France
Translated by Alfred Allinson

The Emperor Charlemagne and his twelve peers, having taken the palmer's staff at Saint-Denis, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. They prostrated themselves before the tomb of Our Lord, and sat in the thirteen chairs of the great hall wherein Jesus Christ and his Apostles met together to celebrate the blessed sacrifice of the Mass. Then they fared to Constantinople, being fain to see King Hugo, who was renowned for his magnificence.

The King welcomed them in his Palace, where, beneath a golden dome, birds of ruby, wrought with a wondrous art, sat and sang in bushes of emerald.

He seated the Emperor of France and the twelve Counts about a table loaded with stags, boars, cranes, wild geese, and peacocks, served in pepper. And he offered his guests, in oxhorns, the wines of Greece and Asia to drink. Charlemagne and his companions quaffed all these wines in honour of the King and his daughter, the Princess Helen. After supper Hugo led them to the chamber where they were to

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sleep. Now, this chamber was circular, and a column, springing in the midst thereof, carried the vaulted roof. Nothing could be finer to look upon. Against the walls, which were hung with gold and purple, twelve beds were ranged, while another, greater than the rest, stood beside the pillar.

Charlemagne lay in this, and the Counts stretched themselves round about him on the others. The wine they had drunk ran hot in their veins, and their brains were afire. They could not sleep, and fell to making brags instead, and laying of wagers, as is the way of the knights of France, each striving to outdo the other in warranting himself to do some doughty deed for to manifest his prowess. The Emperor opened the game. He said:

"Let them fetch me, a-horseback and fully armed, the best knight King Hugo hath. I will lift my sword and bring it down upon him in such wise it shall cleave helm and hauberk, saddle and steed, and the blade shall delve a foot deep underground."

Guillaume d'Orange spake up after the Emperor and made the second brag.

"I will take," said he, "a ball of iron sixty men can scarce lift, and hurl it so mightily against the Palace wall that it shall beat down sixty fathoms' length thereof."

Ogier, the Dane, spake next.

"Ye see yon proud pillar which bears up the vault. Tomorrow will I tear it down and break it like a straw."

After which Renaud de Montauban cried with an oath:

"'Od's life! Count Ogier, whiles you overset the pillar, I will clap the dome on my shoulders and hale it down to the seashore."

Gérard de Rousillon it was made the fifth brag.

He boasted he would uproot single-handed, in one hour, all the trees in the Royal pleasance.

Aimer took up his parable when Gérard was done.

"I have a magic hat," said he, "made of a sea-calf's skin, which renders me invisible. I will set it on my head, and to-morrow, whenas King Hugo is seated at meat, I will eat up his fish and drink down his wine, I will tweak his nose and

buffet his ears. Not knowing whom or what to blame, he will clap all his serving-men in gaol and scourge them sore,—and we shall laugh.”

“For me,” declared Huon de Bordeaux, whose turn it was, “for me, I am so nimble I will trip up to the King and cut off his beard and eyebrows without his knowing aught about the matter. ’Tis a piece of sport I will show you to-morrow. And I shall have no need of a sea-calf hat either!”

Doolin de Mayence made his brag too. He promised to eat up in one hour all the figs and all the oranges and all the lemons in the King’s orchards.

Next the Duc Naisme said in this wise: “Be my faith! I will go into the banquet hall; I will catch up flagons and cups of gold and fling them so high they will never light down again save to tumble into the moon.”

Bernard de Brabant then lifted his great voice:

“I will do better yet,” he roared. “Ye know the river that flows by Constantinople is broad and deep, for it is come nigh its mouth by then, after traversing Egypt, Babylon, and the Earthly Paradise. Well, I will turn it from its bed and make it flood the Great Square of the City.”

Gérard de Viane said:

“Put a dozen knights in line of array. And I will tumble all the twelve on their noses, only by the wind of my sword.”

It was the Count Roland laid the twelfth wager, in the fashion following:

“I will take my horn, I will go forth of the city and I will blow such a blast all the gates of the town will drop from their hinges.”

Olivier alone had said no word yet. He was young and courteous, and the Emperor loved him dearly.

“Olivier, my son,” he asked, “will you not make your brag like the rest of us?”

“Right willingly, sire,” Olivier replied. “Do you know the name of Hercules of Greece?”

“Yea, I have heard some discourse of him,” said Charlemagne. “He was an idol of the misbelievers, like the false god Mahound.”

"Not so, sire," said Olivier. "Hercules of Greece was a knight among the Pagans and King of a Pagan kingdom. He was a gallant champion and stoutly framed in all his limbs. Visiting the Court of a certain Emperor who had fifty daughters, virgins, he wedded them all on one and the same night, and that so well and thoroughly that next morning they all avowed themselves well-contented women and with naught left to learn. He had not slighted ever a one of them. Well, sire, an you will, I will lay my wager to do after the fashion of Hercules of Greece."

"Nay, beware, Olivier, my son," cried the Emperor; "beware what you do; the thing would be a sin. I felt sure this King Hercules was a Saracen!"

"Sire," returned Olivier, "know this—I warrant me to show in the same space of time the selfsame prowess with one virgin that Hercules of Greece did with fifty. And the maid shall be none other but the Princess Helen, King Hugo's daughter."

"Good and well," agreed Charlemagne; "that will be to deal honestly and as a good Christian should. But you were in the wrong, my son, to drag the fifty virgins of King Hercules into your business, wherein, the Devil fly away with me else, I can see but one to be concerned."

"Sire," answered Olivier mildly, "there is but one, of a truth. But she shall win such satisfaction of me that, an I number the tokens of my love, you will to-morrow see fifty crosses scored on the wall, and that is *my* brag."

The Count Olivier was yet speaking when lo! the column which bare the vault opened. The pillar was hollow and contrived in such sort that a man could lie hid therein at his ease to see and hear everything. Charlemagne and the twelve Counts had never a notion of this; so they were sore surprised to behold the King of Constantinople step forth. He was white with anger and his eyes flashed fire.

He said in a terrible voice:

"So this is how ye show your gratitude for the hospitality I offer you. Ye are ill-mannered guests. For a whole hour have ye been insulting me with your bragging eagers. Well, know

this,—you, Sir Emperor, and ye, his knights; if to-morrow ye do not all of you make good your boasts, I will have your heads cut off.”

Having said his say, he stepped back within the pillar, which shut to again closely behind him. For a while the twelve paladins were dumb with wonder and consternation. The Emperor was the first to break the silence.

“Comrades,” he said, “’tis true we have bragged too freely. Mayhap we have spoken things better unsaid. We have drunk overmuch wine, and have shown unwisdom. The chiefest fault is mine; I am your Emperor, and I gave you the bad example. I will devise with you to-morrow of the means whereby we may save us from this perilous pass; meantime, it behoves us to get to sleep. I wish you a good night. God have you in his keeping!”

A moment later the Emperor and the twelve peers were snoring under their coverlets of silk and cloth of gold.

They awoke on the morrow, their minds still distraught and deeming the thing was but a nightmare. But anon soldiers came to lead them to the Palace, that they might make good their brags before the King’s face.

“Come,” cried the Emperor; “come, and let us pray God and His Holy Mother. By Our Lady’s help shall we easily make good our brags.”

He marched in front with a more than human majesty of port. Arriving anon at the King’s Palace, Charlemagne, Naisme, Aimer, Huon, Doolin, Guillaume, Ogier, Bernard, Renaud, the two Gérards, and Roland fell on their knees and, joining their hands in prayer, made this supplication to the Holy Virgin:

“Lady, which art in Paradise, look on us now in our extremity; for love of the Realm of the Lilies, which is thine own, protect the Emperor of France and his twelve peers, and give them the puissance to make good their brags.”

Thereafter they rose up comforted and fulfilled of bright courage and gallant confidence, for they knew that Our Lady would answer their prayer.

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King Hugo, seated on a golden throne, accosted them, saying:

"The hour is come to make good your brags. But an if ye fail so to do, I will have your heads cut off. Begone therefore, straightway, escorted by my men-at-arms, each one of you to the place meet for the doing of the fine things ye have insolently boasted ye will accomplish."

At this order, they separated and went divers ways, each followed by a little troop of armed men. Whiles some returned to the hall where they had passed the night, others betook them to the gardens and orchards. Bernard de Brabant made for the river; Roland hied him to the ramparts; and all marched valiantly. Only Olivier and Charlemagne tarried in the Palace, waiting, the one for the knight that he had sworn to cleave in twain, the other for the maiden he was to wed.

But in very brief while a fearful sound arose, awful as the last trump that shall proclaim to mankind the end of the world. It reached the Great Hall of the Palace, set the birds of ruby trembling on their emerald perches and shook King Hugo on his throne of gold.

'Twas a noise of walls crumbling into ruin and floods roaring, and high above the din blared out an ear-splitting trumpet blast. Meanwhile messengers had come hurrying in from all quarters of the city, and thrown themselves trembling at the King's feet, bearing strange and terrible tidings.

"Sire," said one, "sixty fathoms' length of the city walls is fallen in at one crash."

"Sire," cried another, "the pillar which bare up your vaulted hall is broken down, and the dome thereof we have seen walking like a tortoise toward the sea."

"Sire," faltered a third, "the river, with its ships and its fishes, is pouring through the streets, and will soon be beating against your Palace walls."

King Hugo, white with terror, muttered:

"By my faith! these men are wizards."

"Well, Sir King," Charlemagne addressed him with a smile on his lips, "the Knight I wait for is long of coming."

The King sent for him, and he came. He was a knight of stately stature and well armed. The good Emperor clave him in twain, as he had said.

Now while these things were a-doing, Olivier thought to himself:

"The intervention of Our Most Blessed Lady is plain to see in these marvels; and I am rejoiced to behold the manifest tokens she vouchsafes of her love for the Realm of France. Not in vain have the Emperor and his companions implored the succour of the Holy Virgin, Mother of God. Alas! I shall pay for all the rest, and have my head cut off. For I cannot well ask the Virgin Mary to help me make good *my* brag. 'Tis an enterprise of a sort wherein 'twould be indiscreet to crave the interfeence of Her who is the *Lily of Purity*, the *Tower of Ivory*, the *Guarded Door* and the *Fenced Orchard-Close*. And, lacking aid from on high, I am sore afraid I may not do so much as I have said."

Thus ran Olivier's thoughts, when King Hugo roughly accosted him with the words:

" 'T is now your turn, Count, to fulfil your promise."

"Sire," replied Olivier, "I am waiting with great impatience for the Princess your daughter. For you must needs do me the priceless grace of giving me her hand."

"That is but fair," said King Hugo. "I will therefore bid her come to you and a chaplain with her for to celebrate the marriage."

At church, during the ceremony, Olivier reflected:

"The maid is sweet and comely as ever a man could desire, and too fain am I to clip her in my arms to regret the brag I have made."

That evening, after supper, the Princess Helen and the Count Olivier were escorted by twelve ladies and twelve knights to a chamber, wherein the twain were left alone together.

There they passed the night, and on the morrow guards came and led them both before King Hugo. He was on his throne, surrounded by his knights. Near by stood Charlemagne and the peers.

"Well, Count Olivier," demanded the King, "is your brag made good?"

Olivier held his peace, and already was King Hugo rejoiced at heart to think his new son-in-law's head must fall. For of all the brags and boasts, it was Olivier's had angered him worst.

"Answer," he stormed. "Do you dare to tell me your brag is accomplished?"

Thereupon the Princess Helen, blushing and smiling, spake with eyes downcast and in a faint voice, yet clear withal, and said,—*"Yea!"*

Right glad were Charlemagne and the peers to hear the princess say this word.

"Well, well," said Hugo, "these Frenchmen have God and the Devil o' their side. It was fated I should cut off none of these knights' heads. . . . Come hither, son-in-law"—and he stretched forth his hand to Olivier, who kissed it.

The Emperor Charlemagne embraced the Princess and said to her:

"Helen, I hold you for my daughter and my son's wife. You will go along with us to France, and you will live at our Court."

Then, as his lips lay on the Princess's cheek, he rounded softly in her ear:

"You spake as a loving-hearted woman should. But tell me this in closest confidence—did you speak the truth?"

She answered:

"Sire, Olivier is a gallant man and a courteous. He was so full of pretty ways and dainty devices for to distract my mind, *I* never thought of counting. Nor yet did *he* keep score. Needs therefore must I hold him quit of his promise."

King Hugo made great rejoicings for his daughter's nuptials. Thereafter Charlemagne and his twelve peers returned back to France, taking with them the Princess Helen.

PART V
FABULISTS
AND
FAIRY TALES



***“Faerie contains many things besides elves
and fays, dwarfs, witches, trolls, giants
or dragons: it holds the seas, the sun, the
moon, the sky, and the earth, and all things
that are in it: tree and bird, water and stone,
wine and bread, and ourselves, mortal men.”***

—J. R. R. Tolkien, *On Fairy-Stories*

Introduction to the Ninth Tale: The White Bull

Never let people tell you the world is not getting better and better all the time.

Back in the 5th century B.C., a fellow names Socrates ambled about the streets of Athens, asking questions. He questioned the righteousness of the government, the piety of priests, the judgment of generals, the morality of politicians, the virtues of orthodoxy, and the veracity of religious tradition. This was bad enough, but he committed the supreme sin: he made people *think for themselves*.

So the citizenry, stung to fury, hauled him into court and made him drink the cup of hemlock in the year 399.

A while later—the 18th century—another fellow, who called himself Voltaire, loitered around the garrets and salons of Paris scribbling plays, philosophical tracts, verses, lampoons, stories, satires, romances, pamphlets, and all sorts of things. In a droll, witty manner, he questioned the righteousness of government, the piety of priests, the judgment of generals, the morality of politicians, the values of the bourgeoisie, the virtues of orthodoxy, and the veracity of religion. He, too, made people think for themselves.

And what happened? Voltaire was acclaimed as the first intellect of his age by kings and emperors; he numbered among his friends the most prominent celebrities of Europe—Richelieu, Cagliostro, Madame Pompadour, Frederick of Prussia; he made a fortune, retired to a beautiful estate at Ferney on the shores of Lake Geneva, and died in 1778 rich, respected, and famous, at the ripe age of eighty-four.

It looks as if the frail and flimsy thing we call civilization might have learned a bit in the two thousand ninety-three years between the death of Socrates and the birth of Voltaire.

Not much, though: the priests remained venal; the politicians corrupt; the government self-righteous; and so on. But at least they stopped knocking off their "gadflies" and began venerating them.

Voltaire was born in Paris on November 21, 1694, and his name was really Françoise Marie Arouet. I really don't know just why he wrote under a pseudonym, but French writers have always been fond of doing things like that. Rabelais wrote *Gargantua and Pantagruel* under the delicious name of "Alcofribas Nasier;" Jacques Thibault wrote under the name of "Anatole France;" and so on.

When I selected his romance "The Princess of Babylon" for *Dragons, Elves, and Heroes* last year, I did not know the meaning of the pseudonym, "Voltaire." I have since found out that it is an anagram of "Arouet l. j." which stands for "Arouet le jeune" or "Arouet the young." It seems that in his day French, just like Latin, used *U* interchangeably with *V*, and *I* interchangeably with *J*.

Voltaire had an inventive, playful mind, and he adored playing little tricks with words. He once went out of his way to spend the night in a French village named Pécu, for the sole reason that he could then send the following message to his friends: "OPQRST."

In French, it seems, you would pronounce those letters about the same as the phrase "*Au Pécu resté*"—that is, "stopped over at Pécu." He reminds me of Cabell; it's exactly the sort of game Cabell used to play in his books.

Perhaps I am inordinately fond of *The Romances of Voltaire*. I have read them over and over with gusto, finding delight in their freshness and impudence and good humor. Voltaire has a brilliant wit and a light, delicate hand with satire that is rare. He is full of learned allusions to literature and classical mythology,

as is James Branch Cabell. And his prose has a lean, taut narrative line that I admire: it is never fat or heavy. His polished, sparkling surface reminds me of Jack Vance. And his imaginative invention and flow of fantasy ideas makes him a rare delight.

I hope you share my enthusiasm for his delectable romances. The tale I have chosen for *Golden Cities, Far* is one of the best. Sometime in 1971 or 1972 I hope to include a full-length collection of Voltaire in the Adult Fantasy Series: the title will most likely be *Zadig, and Other Marvels . . .*

The White Bull From *The Romances* of Voltaire

I

How the Princess Amasidia Meets a Bull

THE princess Amasidia, daughter of Amasis, King of Tanis in Egypt, took a walk upon a highway of Pelusium with the ladies of her train. She was sunk in deep melancholy. Tears gushed from her beautiful eyes. The cause of her grief was known, as well as the fears she entertained lest that grief should displease the king, her father. The old man, Mambres, ancient magician and eunuch of the Pharaohs, was beside her, and seldom left her. He was present at her birth. He had educated her, and taught her all that a fair princess was allowed to know of the sciences of Egypt. The mind of Amasidia equaled her beauty. Her sensibility and tenderness rivaled the charms of her person; and it was this sensibility which cost her so many tears.

The princess was twenty-four years old; the magician, Mambres, about thirteen hundred. It was he, as every one knows, who had that famous dispute with Moses, in which

the victory was so long doubtful between these two profound philosophers. If Mambres yielded, it was owing to the visible protection of the celestial powers, who favored his rival. It required gods to overcome Mambres!

Amasis made him superintendent of his daughter's household, and he acquitted himself in this office with his usual prudence. His compassion was excited by the sighs of the beautiful Amasidia.

"O, my lover!" said she to herself, "my young, my dear lover! O, greatest of conquerors, most accomplished, most beautiful of men! Almost seven years hast thou disappeared from the world. What God hath snatched thee from thy tender Amasidia? Thou art not dead. The wise Egyptian prophets confess this. But thou art dead to me. I am alone in the world. To me it is a desert. By what extraordinary prodigy hast thou abandoned thy throne and thy mistress?—thy throne, which was the first in the world—however, that is a matter of small consequence; but to abandon me, who adores thee! O, my dear Ne——"

She was going on.

"Tremble to pronounce that fatal name," said Mambres, the ancient eunuch and magician of the Pharaohs. "You would perhaps be discovered by some of the ladies of your court. They are all very much devoted to you, and all fair ladies certainly make it a merit to serve the noble passions of fair princesses. But there may be one among them indiscreet, and even treacherous. You know that your father, although he loves you, has sworn to put you to death should you pronounce the terrible name always ready to escape your lips. This law is severe; but you have not been educated in Egyptian wisdom to be ignorant of the government of the tongue. Remember that Hippocrates, one of our greatest gods, has always his finger upon his mouth."

The beautiful Amasidia wept, and was silent.

As she pensively advanced toward the banks of the Nile she perceived at a distance, under a thicket watered by the river, an old woman in a tattered gray garment, seated on a hillock. This old woman had beside her a she-ass, a dog, and

a he-goat. Opposite to her was a serpent, which was not like the common serpents; for its eyes were mild, its physiognomy noble and engaging, while its skin shone with the liveliest and brightest colors. A huge fish, half immersed in the river, was not the least astonishing figure in the group; and on a neighboring tree were perched a raven and a pigeon. All these creatures seemed to carry on a very animated conversation.

"Alas!" said the princess in a low tone, "these animals undoubtedly speak of their loves, and it is not so much as allowed me to mention the name of mine."

The old woman held in her hand a slender steel chain a hundred fathoms long, to which was fastened a bull who fed in the meadow. This bull was white, perfectly well-made, plump, and at the same time agile, which is a thing seldom to be found. He was indeed the most beautiful specimen that was ever seen of his kind. Neither the bull of Pasiphae, nor that in whose shape Jupiter appeared when he carried off Europa could be compared to this noble animal. The charming young heifer into which Isis was changed would have scarce been worthy of his company.

As soon as the bull saw the princess he ran toward her with the swiftness of a young Arabian horse who pricks up his ears and flies over the plains and rivers of the ancient Saana to approach the lovely consort whose image reigns in his heart. The old woman used her utmost efforts to restrain the bull. The serpent wanted to terrify him by its hissing. The dog followed him and bit his beautiful limbs. The she-ass crossed his way and kicked him to make him return. The great fish remounted the Nile and, darting himself out of the water, threatened to devour him. The he-goat remained immovable, apparently struck with fear. The raven fluttered round his head as if it wanted to tear out his eyes. The pigeon alone accompanied him, from curiosity, and applauded him by a sweet murmur.

So extraordinary a sight threw Mambres into serious reflections. In the meanwhile, the white bull, dragging after him his chain and the old woman, had already reached the princess, who was struck with astonishment and fear. He

threw himself at her feet. He kissed them. He shed tears. He looked upon her with eyes in which there was a strange mixture of grief and joy. He dared not to bow, lest he should terrify the beautiful Amasidia. He could not speak. A weak use of the voice, granted by heaven to certain animals, was denied him; but all his actions were eloquent. The princess was delighted with him. She perceived that a trifling amusement could suspend for some moments even the most poignant grief.

"Here," said she, "is a most amiable animal. I could wish much to have him in my stable."

At these words the bull bent himself on his knees and kissed the ground.

"He understands me," cried the princess. "He shows me that he wants to be mine. Ah, heavenly magician! ah, divine eunuch! Give me this consolation. Purchase this beautiful bovine. Settle the price with the old woman, to whom he no doubt belongs. This animal must be mine. Do not refuse me this innocent comfort."

All the ladies joined their requests to the entreaties of the princess. Mambres yielded to them, and immediately went to speak to the old woman.

II

How the Wise Mambres, Formerly Magician of Pharaoh, Knew Again the Old Woman, and Was Known by Her

"Madam," said Mambres to her, "you know that ladies, and particularly princesses, have need of amusement. The daughter of the king is distractedly fond of your bull. I beg that you will sell him to us. You shall be paid in ready money."

"Sir," answered the old woman, "this precious animal does not belong to me. I am charged, together with all the beasts which you see, to keep him with care, to watch all his motions, and to give an exact account of them. God forbid

that I should ever have any inclination to sell this invaluable animal."

Mambres, upon this discourse, began to have a confused remembrance of something which he could not yet properly distinguish. He eyed the old woman in the gray cloak with greater attention.

"Respectable lady," said he to her, "I either mistake, or I have seen you formerly."

"I make no mistake, sir," replied the old woman. "I have seen you seven hundred years ago, in a journey which I made from Syria into Egypt some months after the destruction of Troy, when Hiram the second reigned at Tyre, and Nephel Keres in ancient Egypt."

"Ah! madam," cried the old man, "you are the remarkable witch of Endor."

"And you sir," said the sorceress, embracing him, "are the great Mambres of Egypt."

"Oh, unforeseen meeting! memorable day! eternal decrees!" said Mambres. "It certainly is not without permission of the universal providence that we meet again in this meadow upon the banks of the Nile near the noble city of Tanis. What, is it indeed you," continued Mambres, "who are so famous upon the banks of your little Jordan, and the first person in the world for raising apparitions?"

"What, is it you, sir," replied Miss Endor, "who are so famous for changing rods into serpents, the day into darkness, and rivers into blood?"

"Yes, madam, but my great age has in part deprived me of my knowledge and power. I am ignorant from whence you have this beautiful bull, and who these animals are that, together with you, watch round him."

"The old woman, recollecting herself, raised her eyes to heaven, and then replied:

"My dear Mambres. We are of the same profession, but it is expressly forbidden me to tell you who this bull is. I can satisfy you with regard to the other animals. You will easily know them by the marks which characterize them. The serpent is that which persuaded Eve to eat an apple, and to

make her husband partake of it. The ass, that which spoke to your contemporary Balaam in a remarkable discourse. The fish, which always carries its head above water, is that which swallowed Jonah a few years ago. The dog is he who followed Raphael and the young Tobit in their journey to Ragusa in Media, in the time of the great Salamanzar. This goat is he who expiates all the sins of your nation. The raven and the pigeon, those which were in the ark of Noah. Great event! universal catastrophe! of which almost all the world is still ignorant. You are now informed. But of the bull you can know nothing."

Mambres, having listened with respect, said:

"The Eternal, O illustrious witch! reveals and conceals what he thinks proper. All these animals who, together with you, are entrusted with the custody of the white bull, are only known to your generous and agreeable nation, which is itself unknown to almost all the world. The miracles which you and yours, I and mine, have performed, shall one day be a great subject of doubt and scandal to inquisitive philosophers. But happily these miracles shall find belief with the devout sages, who shall prove submissive to the enlightened in one corner of the world; and this is all that is necessary."

As he spoke these words, the princess pulled him by the sleeve, and said to him, "Mambres, will you not buy my bull?"

The magician, plunged into a deep reverie, made no reply, and Amasidia poured forth her tears.

She then addressed herself to the old woman.

"My good woman," said she, "I conjure you, by all you hold most dear in the world, by your father, by your mother, by your nurse, who are certainly still alive, to sell me not only your bull, but likewise your pigeon, which seems very much attached to him.

"As for the other animals, I do not want them; but I shall catch the vapors if you do not sell me this charming bull, who will be all the happiness of my life."

The old woman respectfully kissed the fringe of her gauze robe, and replied:

"Princess, my bull is not to be sold. Your illustrious magician is acquainted with this. All that I can do for your service is to permit him to feed every day near your palace. You may caress him, give him biscuits, and make him dance about at your pleasure; but he must always be under the eyes of all these animals who accompany me, and who are charged with the keeping of him. If he does not endeavor to escape from them, they will prove peaceable; but if he attempt once more to break his chain, as did upon seeing you, woe be unto him. I would not then answer for his life. This large fish, which you see, will certainly swallow him, and keep him longer than *three* days in his belly; or this serpent, who appears to you so mild, will give him a mortal sting."

The white bull, who understood perfectly the old woman's conversation, but was unable to speak, humbly accepted all the proposals. He laid himself down at her feet; he lowed softly; and, looking tenderly at Amasidia, seemed to say to her, "Come and see me sometimes upon the lawn."

The serpent now took up the conversation. "Princess," said he, "I advise you to act implicitly as mademoiselle of Endor has told you."

The she-ass likewise put in her word, and was of the opinion of the serpent.

Amasidia was afflicted that this serpent and this ass should speak so well; while a beautiful bull, who had such noble and tender sentiments, was unable to express them.

"Alas," said she, in a low voice, "nothing is more common at court. One sees there every day fine lords who cannot converse, and contemptible wretches who speak with assurance."

"This serpent," said Mambres, "is not a contemptible wretch. He is perhaps the personage of the greatest importance."

The day now declined, and the princess was obliged to return home, after having promised to come back next day at the same hour. Her ladies of the palace were astonished, and understood nothing of what they had seen or heard. Mambres made reflections. The princess, recollecting that the serpent called the old woman Miss, concluded at random that

she was still unmarried, and felt some affliction that such was also her own condition. Respectable affliction! which she concealed, however, with as much care as the name of her lover.

III

How the Beautiful Amasidia Had a Secret Conversation with a Beautiful Serpent

THE beautiful princess recommended secrecy to her ladies with regard to what they had seen. They all promised it, and kept their promise for a whole day.

We may believe that Amasidia slept little that night. An inexplicable charm continually recalled the idea of her beautiful bull. As soon, therefore, as she was at freedom with her wise Mambres, she said to him; "O, sage! this animal turns my head."

"He employs mine very much," said Mambres. "I see plainly that this bovine is very much superior to those of his species. I see that there is a great mystery, and I suspect a fatal event. Your father, Amasis, is suspicious and violent; and this affair requires that you conduct yourself with the greatest precaution."

"Ah!" said the princess, "I have too much curiosity to be prudent. It is the only sentiment which can unite my heart with that which preys upon me on account of the lover I have lost. Can I not know who this white bull is that gives me such strange disquiet?"

Mambres replied. "I have already confessed to you, frankly, that my knowledge declines in proportion as my age advances; but I mistake much if the serpent is not informed of what you are so very desirous of knowing. He does not want sense. He expresses himself with propriety. He has been long accustomed to interfere in the affairs of the ladies."

"Ah! undoubtedly," said Amasidia, "this is the beautiful serpent of Egypt, who, by fixing his tail into his mouth, becomes the emblem of eternity; who enlightens the world

when he opens his eyes, and darkens it when he shuts them."

"No, Miss."

"It is then the serpent of Esculapius?"

"Still less."

"It is perhaps Jupiter under the figure of a serpent?"

"Not at all."

"Ah, now I see, I see. It is the rod which you formerly changed into a serpent?"

"No, indeed, *it is* not; but all these serpents are of the same family. This one has a very high character in his own country. He passes there for the most extraordinary serpent that was ever seen. Address yourself to him. However, I warn you it is a dangerous undertaking. Were I in your place, I would hardly trouble myself either with the bull, the she-ass, the he-goat, the serpent, the fish, the raven, or the pigeon. But passion hurries you on; and all I can do is to pity you, and tremble."

The princess conjured him to procure her a *tetê-à-tetê* with the serpent. Mambres, who was obliging, consented, and making profound reflections, he went and communicated to the witch in so insinuating a manner the whim of the princess that the old woman told him Amasidia might lay her commands upon her, that the serpent was perfectly well bred, and so polite to the ladies that he wished for nothing more than to oblige them, and would not fail to keep the princess's appointment.

The ancient magician returned to inform the princess of this good news; but he still dreaded some misfortune, and made reflections.

"You desire to speak with the serpent, mademoiselle. This you may accomplish whenever your highness thinks proper. But remember you must flatter him; for every animal has a great deal of self-love, and the serpent in particular. It is said he was formerly driven out of heaven for excessive pride."

"I have never heard of it," replied the princess.

"I believe it," said the old man.

He then informed her of all the reports which had been spread about this famous serpent.

GOLDEN CITIES, FAR

"But my dear princess, whatever singular adventures may have happened to him, you never can extort these secrets from him but by flattery. Having formerly deceived women, it is equitable that a woman in her turn should deceive him."

"I will do my utmost," said the princess; and departed with her maids of honor. The old woman was feeding the bull at a considerable distance.

Mambres left Amasidia to herself, and went and discoursed with the witch. One lady of honor chatted with the she-ass, the others amused themselves with the goat, the dog, the raven, and the pigeon. As for the large fish that frightened every body, he plunged himself into the Nile by order of the old woman.

The serpent then attended the beautiful Amasidia into the grove, where they had the following conversation:

SERPENT: You cannot imagine, mademoiselle, how much I am flattered with the honor which your highness deigns to confer upon me.

PRINCESS: Your great reputation, sir, the beauty of your countenance, and the brilliancy of your eyes have emboldened me to see for this conversation. I know by public report (if it be not false) that you were formerly a very great lord in the empyrean heaven.

SERPENT: It is true, miss, I had there a very distinguished place. It is pretended I am a disgraced favorite. This is a report which once went abroad in India. The Brahmins were the first who gave a history of my adventures. And I doubt not but one day or other the poets of the north will make them the subject of an extravagant epic poem, for in truth it is all that can be made of them. Yet I am not so much fallen but that I have left in this globe a very extensive dominion. I might venture to assert that the whole earth belongs to me.

PRINCESS: I believe it, for they tell me that your powers of persuasion are irresistible, and to please is to reign.

SERPENT: I feel, mademoiselle, while I behold and listen to you, that you have over me the same power which you ascribe to me over so many others.

PRINCESS: You are, I believe, an amiable conqueror. It is

said that our conquests among the fair sex have been numerous, and that you began with our common mother, whose name I have unfortunately forgotten.

SERPENT: They do me injustice. She honored me with her confidence, and I gave her the best advice. I desired that she and her husband should eat heartily of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. I imagine in doing, so necessary to the human race was this that I should please the ruler of all things. It seemed to me that a tree was not planted to be entirely useless. Would the supreme being have wished to have been served by fools and idiots? Is not the mind formed for the acquisition of knowledge and for improvement? Is not the knowledge of good and evil necessary for doing the one and avoiding the other? I certainly merited their thanks.

PRINCESS: Yet they tell me that you have suffered for it. Probably it is since this period that so many ministers have been punished for giving good advice, and so many real philosophers and men of genius persecuted for their writings that were useful to mankind.

SERPENT: It is my enemies who have told you these stories. They say that I am out of favor at court. But a proof that my influence there has not declined is their own confession that I entered into the council when it was in agitation to try the good man Job, and I was again called upon when the resolution was taken to deceive a certain petty king called Ahab. I alone was charged with this honorable commission.

PRINCESS: Ah sir! I do not believe that you are formed to deceive. But since you are always in the ministry, may I beg a favor of you? I hope so amiable a lord will not deny me.

SERPENT: Mademoiselle, your requests are laws; name your commands.

PRINCESS: I entreat that you will tell me who this white bull is, for whom I fell such extraordinary sentiments, which both affect and alarm me. I am told that you would deign to inform me.

SERPENT: Curiosity is necessary to human nature, and especially to your amiable sex. Without it they would live in the most shameful ignorance. I have always satisfied, as far

as lay in my power, the curiosity of the ladies. I am accused indeed of using this complaisance only to vex the ruler of the world. I swear to you that I could propose nothing more agreeable to myself than to obey you; but the old woman must have informed you that revealing of this secret will be attended with some danger to you.

PRINCESS: Ah! it is that which makes me still more curious.

SERPENT: In this I discover the sex to whom I have formerly done service.

PRINCESS: If you possess any feeling, if rational beings should mutually assist each other, if you have compassion for an unfortunate creature, do not refuse my request.

SERPENT: You affect me. I must satisfy you; but do not interrupt me.

PRINCESS: I promise you I will not.

SERPENT: There was a young king, beautiful, charming, in love, beloved—

PRINCESS: A young king! beautiful, charming, in love, beloved! And by whom? And who was this king? How old was he? What has become of him? Where is his kingdom? What is his name?

SERPENT: See, I have scarce begun, and you have already interrupted me. Take care. If you have not more command over yourself, you are undone.

PRINCESS: Ah, pardon me, sir. I will not repeat my indiscretion. Go on, I beseech you.

SERPENT: This great king, the most valiant of men, victorious wherever he carries his arms, often dreamed when asleep, and forgot his dreams when awake. He wanted his magicians to remember and inform him what he had dreamed, otherwise he declared he would hang them; for that nothing was more equitable. It is now seven years since he dreamed a fine dream, which he entirely forgot when he awoke; and a young Jew, full of experience, having revealed it to him, this amiable king was immediately changed into an ox for—

PRINCESS: Ah! It is my dear Neb——

She could not finish; she fainted away. Mambres, who listened at a distance, saw her fall, and believed her dead.

IV

How They Wanted to Sacrifice the Bull and Exorcise the Princess

Mambres runs to her weeping. The serpent is affected. He, alas, cannot weep, but he hisses in a mournful tone. He cries out, "She is dead." The ass repeats, "She is dead." The raven tells it over again. All the other animals appeared afflicted, except the fish of Jonah, which has always been merciless. The lady of honor, the ladies of the court, arrive and tear their hair. The white bull, who fed at a distance and heard their cries, ran to the grove, dragging the old woman after him, while his loud bellowings made the neighboring echoes resound. To no purpose did the ladies pour upon the expiring Amasidia their bottles of rose-water, of pink, of myrtle, of benzoin, of balm of Gilead, of amomum, of gilly-flower, of ambergris. She had not as yet given the smallest signs of life. But as soon as she perceived that the beautiful white bull was beside her, she came to herself, more blooming, more beautiful and lively, than ever. A thousand times did she kiss this charming animal, who languishingly leaned his head on her snowy bosom. She called him, "My master, my king, my dear, my life!" She throws her fair arms around his neck, which was whiter than the snow. The light straw does not adhere more closely to the amber, the vine to the elm, nor the ivy to the oak.

The sweet murmur of her sighs was heard. Her eyes were seen, now sparkling with a tender flame, and now obscured by those precious tears which love makes us shed.

We may easily judge into what astonishment the lady of honor and ladies of her train were thrown. As soon as they entered the palace, they related to their lovers this extraordinary adventure, and every one with different circumstances, which increased its singularity, and which always contributes to the variety of all histories.

No sooner was Amasis, King of Tanis, informed of these events, than his royal breast was inflamed with just indignation. Such was the wrath of Minos when he understood that his daughter Pasiphae lavished her tender favors upon the father of the Minotaur. Thus raged Juno when she beheld Jupiter caressing the beautiful cow Io, daughter of the river Inachus. Following the dictates of passion, the stern Amasis imprisoned his unhappy daughter, the beautiful Amasidia, in her chamber and placed over her guard of black eunuchs. He then assembled his privy council.

The grand magician presided there, but had no longer the same influence as formerly. All the ministers of state concluded that this white bull was a sorcerer. It was quite the contrary. He was bewitched. But in delicate affairs they are always mistaken at court.

It was carried by a great majority that the princess should be exorcised, and the old woman and the bull sacrificed.

The wise Mambres contradicted not the opinion of the king and council. The right of exorcising belonged to him. He could delay it under some plausible pretense. The god Apis had died lately at Memphis. A god ox dies just like another ox. And it was not allowed to exorcise any person in Egypt until a new ox was found to replace the deceased.

It was decreed in the council to wait until the nomination should be made of a new god at Memphis.

The good old man, Mambres, perceived to what danger his dear princess was exposed. He knew who her lover was. The syllables Nebu—, which had escaped her laid open the whole mystery to the eyes of this sage.

The dynasty of Memphis belonged at that time to the Babylonians. They preserved this remainder of the conquests they had gained under the greatest king of the world, to whom Amasis was a mortal enemy. Mambres had occasion, for all his wisdom, to conduct himself properly in the midst of so many difficulties. If the king Amasis should discover the lover of his daughter, her death would be inevitable. He had sworn it. The great, the young, the beautiful king of whom she was enamoured, had dethroned the king her father, and

Amasis had only recovered his kingdom about seven years. From that time it was not known what had become of the adorable monarch—the conqueror and idol of the nations—the tender and generous lover of the charming Amasidia. Sacrificing the white bull would inevitably occasion the death of the beautiful princess.

What could Mambres do in such critical circumstances? He went, after the council had broken up, to find his dear foster-daughter.

“My dear child,” he says, “I will serve you; but I repeat it, they will behead you if ever you pronounce the name of your lover.”

“Ah! what signifies my neck,” replied the beautiful Amasidia, “if I cannot embrace that of Nebu——? My father is a cruel man. He not only refuses to give me a charming prince whom I adore, but he declares war against him! and after he was conquered by my lover, he has found the secret of changing him into an ox. Did one ever see more frightful malice? If my father were not my father, I do not know what I should do to him.”

“It is not your father who played him this cruel trick,” said the wise Mambres. “It was a native of Palestine, one of our ancient enemies, an inhabitant of a little country comprehended in that crowd of kingdoms which your lover subdued in order to polish and refine them.

“Such metamorphoses must not surprise you. You know that formerly I performed more extraordinary. Nothing was at that time more common than those changes which at present astonish philosophers. True history, which we have read together, informs us that Lycaon, king of Arcadia, was changed into a wolf; the beautiful Calista, his daughter, into a bear; Io, the daughter of Inachus, our venerable Isis, into a cow; Daphne into a laurel; Sirinx into a flute; the fair Edith, wife of Lot—the best and most affectionate husband and father ever known in the world—has she not become, in our neighborhood, a pillar of salt, very sharp tasted, which has preserved both her likeness and form, as the great men attest who have seen it? I was witness to this change in my

youth. I saw seven powerful cities, in the most dry and parched situation in the world, all at once transformed into a beautiful lake. In the early part of my life, the whole world was full of metamorphoses.

"In fine, madam, if examples can soothe your grief, remember that Venus changed Cerastes into an ox."

"I do not know," said the princess, "that examples comfort us. If my lover were dead, could I comfort myself by the idea that all men die?"

"Your pain may at least be alleviated," replied the sage, "and since your lover has become an ox, it is possible from an ox he may become a man. As for me, I should deserve to be changed into a tiger or a crocodile if I did employ the little power I have in the service of a princess worthy of the adoration of the world—if I did not labor for the beautiful Amasidia, whom I have nursed upon my knees, and whom fatal destiny exposes to such rude trials."

V

How the Wise Mambres Conducted Himself Wisely

The sage Mambres having said every thing he could to comfort the princess, but without succeeding in so doing, ran to the old woman.

"My companion," said he to her, "ours is a charming profession, but a very dangerous one. You run the risk of being hanged, and your ox of being burned, drowned, or devoured. I don't know what they will do with your other animals; for, prophet as I am, I know very little; but do you carefully conceal the serpent, and the fish. Let not the one show his head above water, nor the other venture out of his hole. I will place the ox in one of my stables in the country. You shall be there with him, since you say that you are not allowed to abandon him. The good scape-goat may upon this occasion serve as an expiation. We will send him into the desert loaded with the sins of all the rest. He is accustomed to this ceremony, which does him no harm; and every one

knows that sin is expiated by means of a he-goat, who walks about for his own amusement. I only beg of you to lend me immediately Tobit's dog, who is a very swift greyhound; Balaam's ass, who runs better than a dromedary; the raven and the pigeon of the ark, who fly with amazing swiftness. I want to send them on an embassy to Memphis. It is an affair of great consequence."

The old woman replied to the magician:

"You may dispose as you please of Tobit's dog, of Balaam's ass, of the raven and the pigeon of the ark, and of the scape-goat; but my ox cannot enter a stable. It is said that he must be always made fast to an iron chain, be always wet with the dew of heaven, and eat the grass of the field, and his portion be with the wild beasts.

"He is entrusted to me, and I must obey. What would Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah think of me, if I trusted my ox to any other than to myself? I see you know the secret of this extraordinary animal, but I have not to reproach myself which having revealed it to you. I am going to conduct him far from this polluted land, toward the lake Sirbon, where he will be sheltered from the cruelties of the king of Tanis. My fish and my serpent will defend me. I fear nobody when I serve my master."

"My good woman," answered the wise Mambres, "let the will of God be done! Provided I can find your white bull again, the lake Sirbon, the lake Maris, or the lake of Sodom, are to me perfectly indifferent. I want to do nothing but good to him and to you. But why have you spoken to me of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah?"

"Ah! sir," answered the old woman, "you know as well as I what concern they have in this important affair. But I have no time to lose. I don't desire to be hanged. I want not that my bull should be burned, drowned, or devoured. I go to the lake Sirbon by Canopus, with my serpent and my fish. Adieu."

The bull followed her pensively, after having testified his gratitude to the beneficent Mambres.

The wise Mambres was greatly troubled. He saw that

Amasis, king of Tanis, distracted by the strange passion of his daughter for this animal, and believing her bewitched, would pursue everywhere the unfortunate bull, who would infallibly be burned as a sorcerer in the public place of Tanis, or given to the fish of Jonah, or be roasted and served up for food. Mambres wanted at all events to save the princess from this cruel disaster.

He wrote a letter in sacred characters, to his friend, the high priest of Memphis, upon the paper of Egypt, which was not yet in use. Here are the identical words of this letter:

“Light of the world, lieutenant of Isis, Osiris, and Horus, chief of the circumcised, you whose altar is justly raised above all thrones! I am informed that your god, the ox Apis, is dead. I have one at your service. Come quickly with your priests to acknowledge, to worship him, and to conduct him into the stable of your temple. May Isis, Osiris, and Horus keep you in their holy and worthy protection, and likewise the priests of Memphis in their holy care.

“Your affectionate friend,
“Mambres.”

He made four copies of this letter, for fear of accidents, and enclosed them in cases of the hardest ebony. Then calling to him his four couriers, whom he had destined for this employment (these were the ass, the dog, the raven, and the pigeon), he said to the ass, “I know with what fidelity you served Balaam, my brother. Serve me as faithfully. There is not an unicorn who equals you in swiftness. Go, my dear friend, and deliver this letter to the person himself to whom it is directed, and return.”

The ass answered: “Sir, as I served Balaam, I will serve you. I will go, and I will return.”

The sage put the box of ebony into her mouth, and she swiftly departed. He then called Tobit’s dog.

“Faithful dog,” said Mambres, “more speedy in thy course than the nimble-footed Achilles, I know what you performed for Tobit, son of Tobit, when you and the angel Raphael

accompanied him from Nineveh to Ragusa in Medea, and from Ragusa to Nineveh, and that he brought back to his father ten talents, which the slave Tobit, the father, had lent to the slave Gabellus; for the slaves at that time were very rich. Carry his letter as it is directed. It is much more valuable than ten talents of silver."

The dog then replied: "Sir, if I formerly followed the messenger Raphael, I can with equal ease execute your commission."

Mambres put the letter into his mouth.

He next spoke in the same manner to the pigeon, who replied:

"Sir, if I brought back a bough into the ark, I will likewise bring you back an answer."

She took the letter in her bill, and the three messengers were out of sight in a moment. Then Mambres addressed the raven:

"I know that you fed the great prophet Elijah, when he was concealed near the torrent of Cherith, so much celebrated in the world. You brought him every day good bread and fat pullets. I only ask of you to carry this letter to Memphis."

The raven answered in these words:

"It is true, sir, that I carried every day a dinner to the great prophet Elijah the Tishbite. I saw him mount in a chariot of fire drawn by fiery horses, although this is not the usual method of traveling. But I always took care to eat half the dinner myself. I am very well pleased to carry your letter, provided you make me certain of two good meals every day, and that I am paid money in advance for my commission."

Mambres, angry, replied:

"Gluttonous and malicious creature, I am not astonished that Apollo has made you black as a mole, after being white as a swan, as you was formerly before you betrayed in the plains of Thessaly the beautiful Coronis, the unfortunate mother of Esculapius. Tell me, did you eat ribs of beef and

pullets every day when you were ten whole months in the ark?"

"Sir," said the raven, "we had there very good cheer. They served up roast meat twice a day to all the fowls of my species who live upon nothing but flesh, such as the vultures, kites, eagles, buzzards, sparrow-hawks, owls, tarsels, falcons, great owls, and an innumerable crowd of birds of prey. They furnished, with the most plentiful profusion, the tables of the lions, leopards, tigers, panthers, hyenas, wolves, bears, foxes, polecats, and all sorts of carnivorous quadrupeds. There were in the ark eight persons of distinction (and the only ones who were then in the world), continually employed in the care of our table and our wardrobe: Noah and his wife, who were about six hundred years old, their three sons and their three wives. It was charming to see with what care, what dexterity, what cleanliness, our eight domestics served four thousand of the most ravenous guests, without reckoning the amazing trouble which about ten or twelve thousand other animals required, from the elephant and the giraffe, to the silk-worm and fly. What astonishes me is that our purveyor, Noah, is unknown to all the nations of whom he is the stem, but I don't much mind it. I had already been present at a similar entertainment with Xesustres, king of Thrace. Such things as these happen from time to time for the instruction of ravens. In a word, I want to have good cheer, and to be paid in ready money."

The wise Mambres took care not to give his letter to such a discontented and babbling animal; and they separated very much dissatisfied with each other.

But it is necessary to know what became of the white bull, and not to lose sight of the old woman and the serpent. Mambres ordered his intelligent and faithful domestics to follow them; and as for himself, he advanced in a litter by the side of the Nile, always making reflections.

"How is it possible," said he to himself, "that a serpent should be master of almost all the world, as he boasts, and as so many learned men acknowledge, and that he nevertheless obeys an old woman? How is it that he is sometimes called to

the council of the Most High, while he creeps upon earth? In what manner can he enter by his power alone into the bodies of men, and that so many men pretend to dislodge him by means of words? In short, why does he pass with a small neighboring people for having ruined the human race? And how is it that the human race are entirely ignorant of this? I am old; I have studied all my life; but I see a crowd of inconsistencies which I cannot reconcile. I cannot account for what has happened to myself, neither for the great things which I long ago performed, nor those of which I have been witness. Every thing well considered, I begin to think that this world subsists by contradictions, *rerum concordia discors*, as my master Zoroaster formerly said."

While he was plunged in this obscure metaphysical reasoning—obscure like all metaphysics—a boatman, singing a jovial song, made fast a small boat by the side of the river, and three grave personages, half clothed in dirty tattered garments, landed from it; but preserved, under the garb of poverty, the most majestic and august air. These strangers were Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah.

VI

How Mambres Met Three Prophets and Gave Them a Good Dinner

These three great men who had the prophetic light in their countenance knew the wise Mambres to be one of their brethren by some marks of the same light which he had still remaining, and prostrated themselves before his litter. Mambres likewise knew them to be prophets, more by their uncouth dress than by those gleams of fire which proceeded from their august heads. He conjectured that they came to learn news of the white bull; and conducting himself with his usual propriety, he alighted from his carriage and advanced a few steps toward them, with dignified politeness. He raised them up, caused tents to be erected, and prepared a dinner,

of which he rightly judged that the prophets had very great need.

He invited the old woman to it, who was only about five hundred paces from them. She accepted the invitation, and arrived leading her white bull.

Two soups were served up, one *de Bisque*, and the other *à la reine*. The first course consisted of a carp's tongue pie, livers of eel-pouts, and pikes; fowls dressed with pistachios, pigeons with truffles and olives; two young turkeys with gravy of cray fish, mushrooms, and morels; and a chipotata. The second course was composed of pheasants, partridges, quails, and ortalons, with four salads; the epergne was in the highest taste; nothing could be more delicious than the side dishes; nothing more brilliant and more ingenious than the dessert. But the wise Mambres took great care to have no boiled beef, nor short ribs, nor tongue, nor palate of an ox, nor cow's udder, lest the unfortunate monarch near at hand should think that they insulted him.

This great and unfortunate prince was feeding near the tent; and never did he feel in a more cruel manner the fatal revolution which had deprived him of his throne for seven long years.

"Alas!" said he, to himself, "this Daniel, who has changed me into a bull, and this sorceress, my keeper, make the best cheer in the world; while I, the sovereign of Asia, am reduced to the necessity of eating grass, and drinking water."

When they had drunk heartily of the wine of Engaddi, of Tadmora, and of Schiras, the prophets and the witch conversed with more frankness than at the first course.

"I must acknowledge," said Daniel, "that I did not live so well in the lion's den."

"What, sir," said Mambres, "did they put you into a den of lions? How came you not to be devoured?"

"Sir," said Daniel, "you know very well that lions never eat prophets."

"As for me," said Jeremiah, "I have passed my whole life starving of hunger. This is the only day I ever ate a good meal; and were I to spend my life over again, and had it in

my power to choose my condition, I must own I would much rather be comptroller-general or bishop of Babylon than prophet at Jerusalem."

Ezekiel cried, "I was once ordered to sleep three hundred and ninety days upon my left side, and to eat all that time bread of wheat, and barley, and beans, and lentils, cooked in the strangest manner. Still I must own that the cookery of Seigneur Mambres is much more delicate. However, the prophetic trade has its advantages, and the proof is that there are many who follow it."

After they had spoken thus freely, Mambres entered upon business. He asked the three pilgrims the reason of their journey into the dominions of the king of Tanis. Daniel replied, "That the kingdom of Babylon had been all in a flame since Nebuchadnezzar had disappeared; that according to the custom of the court, they had persecuted all the prophets, who passed their lives in sometimes seeing kings humbled at their feet, and sometimes receiving a hundred lashes from them; that at length they had been obliged to take refuge in Egypt for fear of being starved."

Ezekiel and Jeremiah likewise spoke a long time, in such fine terms that it was almost impossible to understand them. As for the witch, she had always a strict eye over her charge. The fish of Jonah continued in the Nile, opposite to the tent, and the serpent sported upon the grass. After drinking coffee, they took a walk by the side of the Nile; and the white bull, perceiving the three prophets, his enemies, bellowed most dreadfully, ran furiously at them, and gored them with his horns. As prophets never have anything but skin upon their bones, he would certainly have run them through; but the ruler of the world, who sees all and remedies all, changed them immediately into magpies; and they continued to chatter as before. The same thing happened since to the Pierides; so much has fable always imitated sacred history.

This incident caused new reflections in the mind of Mambres.

"Here," said he, "are three great prophets changed into

maggies. This ought to teach us never to speak too much, and always to observe a suitable discretion."

He concluded that wisdom was better than eloquence, and thought profoundly as usual when a great and terrible spectacle presented itself to his eyes.

VII

How King Amasis Wanted to Give the White Bull to be Devoured by the Fish of Jonah, and Did Not Do It

Clouds of dust floated from south to north. The noise of drums, fifes, psalteries, harps, and sackbuts was heard. Several squadrons and battalions advanced, and Amasis, king of Tanis, was at their head, upon an Arabian horse caparisoned with scarlet trappings embroidered with gold. The heralds proclaimed that they should seize the white bull, bind him, and throw him into the Nile, to be devoured by the fish of Jonah; "for the king our lord, who is just, wants to revenge himself upon the white bull, who has bewitched his daughter."

The good old man Mambres made more reflections than ever. He saw very plainly that the malicious raven had told all to the king, and that the princess ran a great risk of being beheaded.

"My dear friend," he said to the serpent, "go quickly and comfort the fair Amasidia, my foster-daughter. Bid her fear nothing whatever may happen, and tell her stories to alleviate her inquietude; for stories always amuse the ladies, and it is only by interesting them that one can succeed in the world."

Mambres next prostrated himself before Amasis, king of Tanis, and thus addressed him:

"O king, live for ever! The white bull should certainly be sacrificed, for your majesty is always in the right; but the ruler of the world has said, this bull must not be swallowed up by the fish of Jonah till Memphis shall have found a god to supply the place of him who is dead. Then thou shalt be

revenged, and thy daughter exorcised, for she is possessed. Your piety is too great not to obey the commands of the ruler of the universe."

Amasis, king of Tanis, remained for some time silent and in deep thought.

"The god Apis," said he, at length, "is dead! God rest his soul! When do you think another ox will be found to reign over the fruitful Egypt?"

"Sire," replied Mambres, "I ask but eight days."

"I grant them to you," replied the king, who was very religious, "and I will remain here the eight days. At the expiration of that time I will sacrifice the enemy of my daughter."

Amasis immediately ordered that his tents, cooks, and musicians should be brought, and remained here eight days, as it is related in Manethon.

The old woman was in despair that the bull she had in charge had but eight days to live. She raised phantoms every night in order to dissuade the king from his cruel resolution; but Amasis forgot in the morning the phantoms he had seen in the night; similar to Nebuchadnezzar, who had always forgotten his dreams.

VIII

How the Serpent Told Stories to the Princess to Comfort Her

Meanwhile the serpent told stories to the fair Amasidia to soothe her. He related to her how he had formerly cured a whole nation of the bite of certain little serpents, only by showing himself at the end of a staff. He informed her of the conquests of a hero who made a charming contrast with Amphibion, architect of Thebes. Amphibion assembled hewn stones by the sound of his violin. To build a city he had only to play a rigadon and a minuet; but the other hero destroyed them by the sound of rams' horns. He executed thirty-one powerful kings in a country of four leagues in length and four in breadth. He made stones rain down from

heaven upon a battalion of routed Amorites; and having thus exterminated them, he stopped the sun and moon at noon-day between Gibeon and Ajalon, in the road to Beth-horon, to exterminate them still more, after the example of Bacchus, who had stopped the sun and moon in his journey to the Indies.

The prudence which every serpent ought to have did not allow him to tell the fair Amasidia of the powerful Jephthah, who made a vow and beheaded his daughter, because he had gained a battle. This would have struck terror into the mind of the fair princess. But he related to her the adventures of the great Sampson, who killed a thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass, who tied together three hundred foxes by the tail, and who fell into the snares of a lady, less beautiful, less tender, and less faithful than the charming Amasidia. He related to her the story of the unfortunate Sechem and Dinah, as well as the more celebrated adventures of Ruth and Boaz; those of Judah and Tamar; those even of Lot's two daughters; those of Abraham and Jacob's servant maids; those of Reuben and Bilhah; those of David and Bath-sheba; and those of the great king Solomon. In short, every thing which could dissipate the grief of a fair princess.

IX

How the Serpent Did Not Comfort the Princess

"All these stories tire me," said Amasidia, for she had understanding and taste. "They are good for nothing but to be commented upon among the Irish by that madman Abbadie, or among the Welsh by that prattler d'Houteville. Stories which might have amused the great, great, great grandmother of my grandmother, appear insipid to me who have been educated by the wise Mambres, and who have read *Human Understanding* by the Egyptian philosopher named Locke, and the *Matron of Ephesus*. I choose that a story should be founded on probability, and not always resemble a dream. I desire to find nothing in it trivial or

extravagant; and desire above all, that under the appearance of fable there may appear some latent truth, obvious to the discerning eye, though it escape the observation of the vulgar."

"I am weary of a sun and of a moon which an old beldam disposes of at her pleasure, of mountains which dance, of rivers which return to their sources, and of dead men who rise again; but I am above measure disgusted when such insipid stories are written in a bombastic and unintelligible manner. A lady who expects to see her lover swallowed up by a great fish, and who is apprehensive of being beheaded by her own father, has need of amusement; but suit my amusement to my taste."

"You impose a difficult task upon me," replied the serpent. "I could have formerly made you pass a few hours agreeably enough, but for some time past I have lost both my imagination and memory. Alas! what has become of those faculties with which I formerly amused the ladies? Let me try, however, if I can recollect one moral tale for your entertainment.

"Five and twenty thousand years ago King Gnaof and queen Patra reigned in Thebes with its hundred gates. King Gnaof was very handsome, and queen Patra still more beautiful. But their home was unblest with children, and no heirs were born to continue the royal race.

"The members of the faculty of medicine and of the academy of surgery wrote excellent treatises upon this subject. The queen was sent to drink mineral waters; she fasted and prayed; she made magnificent presents to the temple of Jupiter Ammon, but all was to no purpose. At length a—"

"Mon Dieu!" said the princess, "but I see where this leads. This story is too common, and I must likewise tell you that it offends my modesty. Relate some very true and moral story, which I have never yet heard, to complete the improvement of my understanding and my heart, as the Egyptian professor Lenro says."

"Here then, madam," said the beautiful serpent, "is one most incontestably authentic.

“There were three prophets all equally ambitious and discontented with their condition. They had in common the folly to wish to be kings; for there is only one step from the rank of a prophet to that of a monarch, and a man always aspires to the highest step in the ladder of fortune. In other respects, their inclinations and their pleasures were totally different. The first preached admirably to his assembled brethren, who applauded him by clapping their hands; the second was distractedly fond of music; and the third was a passionate lover of the fair sex.

“The angel Ithuriel presented himself one day to them when they were at table discoursing on the sweets of royalty.

“ ‘The ruler of the world,’ said the angel to them, ‘sends me to you to reward your virtue. Not only shall you be kings, but you shall constantly satisfy your ruling passions. You, first prophet, I make king of Egypt, and you shall continually preside in your council, who shall applaud your eloquence and your wisdom; and you, second prophet, I make king over Persia, and you shall continually hear most heavenly music; and you, third prophet, I make king of India, and I give you a charming mistress who shall never forsake you.’

“He to whose lot Egypt fell began his reign by assembling his council, which was composed only of two hundred sages. He made them a long and eloquent speech, which was very much applauded, and the monarch enjoyed the pleasing satisfaction of intoxicating himself with praises uncorrupted by flattery.

“The council for foreign affairs succeeded to the privy council. This was much more numerous; and a new speech received still greater encomiums. And it was the same in the other councils. There was not a moment of intermission in the pleasures and glory of the prophet king of Egypt. The fame of his eloquence filled the world.

“The prophet king of Persia began his reign by an Italian opera, whose choruses were sung by fifteen hundred eunuchs. Their voices penetrated his soul even to the very marrow of

the bones, where it resides. To this opera succeeded another, and to the second a third, without interruption.

“The king of India shut himself up with his mistress, and enjoyed perfect pleasure in her society. He considered the necessity of always flattering her as the highest felicity, and pitied the wretched situation of his two brethren, of whom one was obliged always to convene his council and the other to be continually at an opera.

“It happened at the end of a few days, that each of these kings became disgusted with his occupation, and beheld from his window certain wood cutters who came from an ale-house, and who were going to work in a neighboring forest. They walked arm in arm with their sweet-hearts, with whom they were happy. The kings begged of the angel Ithuriel, that he would intercede with the ruler of the world, and make them wood-cutters.”

“I do not know whether the ruler of the world granted their request or not,” interrupted the tender Amasidia, “and I do not care much about it; but I know very well that I should ask for nothing of any one, were I with my lover, with my dear Nebuchadnezzar!”

The vaults of the palace resounded this mighty name. At first Amasidia had only pronounced Ne——, afterwards Neb——, then Nebu——. At length passion hurried her on, and she pronounced entire the fatal name, notwithstanding the oath she had sworn to the king, her father. All the ladies of the court repeated Nebuchadnezzar, and the malicious raven did not fail to carry the tidings to the king. The countenance of Amasis, king of Tanis, sank, because his heart was troubled. And thus it was that the serpent, the wisest and most subtle of animals, always beguiled the women, thinking to do them service.

Amasis, in a fury, sent twelve alguazils for his daughter. These men are always ready to execute barbarous orders, because they are paid for it.

X

*How They Wanted to Behead the Princess
and Did Not Do It*

No sooner had the princess entered the camp of the king, than he said to her: "My daughter, you know that all princesses who disobey their fathers are put to death; without which it would be impossible that a kingdom could be well governed. I charged you never to mention the name of your lover, Nebuchadnezzar, my mortal enemy, who dethroned me about seven years ago, and disappeared. In his place, you have chosen a white bull, and you have cried 'Nebuchadnezzar.' It is just that I behead you."

The princess replied: "My father, thy will be done, but grant me some time to bewail my sad fate."

"That is reasonable," said King Amasis, "and it is a rule established among the most judicious princes. I give you a whole day to bewail your destiny, since it is your desire. To-morrow, which is the eighth day of my encampment, I will cause the white bull to be swallowed up by the fish, and I will behead you precisely at nine o'clock in the morning."

The beautiful Amasidia then went forth in sorrow, to bewail her father's cruelty, and wandered by the side of the Nile, accompanied with the ladies of her train.

The wise Mambres pondered beside her, and reckoned the hours and the moments.

"Well! my dear Mambres," said she to him, "you have changed the waters of the Nile into blood, according to custom, and cannot you change the heart of Amasis, king of Tanis, my father? Will you suffer him to behead me to-morrow, at nine o'clock in the morning?"

"That depends," replied the reflecting Mambres, "upon the speed and diligence of my couriers."

The next day, as soon as the shadows of the obelisks and pyramids marked upon the ground the ninth hour of the day,

the white bull was securely bound, to be thrown to the fish of Jonah; and they brought to the king his large sabre.

"Alas! alas!" said Nebuchadnezzar to himself, "I, a king, have been a bull for near seven years; and scarcely have I found the mistress I have lost, when I am condemned to be devoured by a fish."

Never had the wise Mambres made such profound reflections; and he was quite absorbed in his melancholy thoughts when he saw at a distance all he expected. An innumerable crowd drew nigh. Three figures of Isis, Osiris, and Horus, joined together, advanced, drawn in a carriage of gold and precious stones, by a hundred senators of Memphis, preceded by a hundred girls, playing upon the sacred sistrums. Four thousand priests, with their heads shaved, were each mounted upon a hippopotamus.

At a great distance appeared with the same pomp, the sheep of Thebes, the dog of Babastes, the cat of Phoebe, the crocodile of Arsinoe, the goat of Mendez, and all the inferior gods of Egypt, who came to pay homage to the great ox, to the mighty Apis, as powerful as Isis, Osiris, and Horus united together.

In the midst of the demigods, forty priests carried an enormous basket, filled with sacred onions. These were, it is true, gods, but they resembled onions very much.

On both sides of this aisle of gods, people, marched forty thousand warriors, with helmets on their heads, scimitars upon their left thighs, quivers at their shoulders, and bows in their hands.

All the priests sang in chorus, with a harmony which ravished the soul, and which melted it:

*"Alas! alas! our ox is dead—
We'll have a finer in its stead."*

And at every pause was heard the sound of the sistrums, of cymbals, of tabors, of psalteries, of bagpipes, harps, and sackbuts.

Amasis, king of Tanis, astonished at this spectacle, beheaded not his daughter. He sheathed his scimitar.

XI

Apotheosis of the White Bull. Triumph of the Wise Mambres. The Seven Years Proclaimed by Daniel Are Accomplished. Nebuchadnezzar Resumes the Human Form, Marries the Beautiful Amasidia, and Ascends the Throne of Babylon

"Great king," said Mambres to him, "the order of things is now changed. Your majesty must set the example. O king! quickly unbind the white bull and be the first to adore him."

Amasis obeyed, and prostrated himself with all his people. The high priest of Memphis presented to the new god Apis the first handful of hay; the Princess Amasidia tied to his beautiful horns festoons of roses, anemonies, ranunculuses, tulips, pinks, and hyacinths. She took the liberty to kiss him, but with profound respect. The priests strewed palms and flowers on the road by which they were to conduct him to Memphis. And the wise Mambres, still making reflections, whispered to his friend, the serpent:

"Daniel changed this monarch into a bull, and I have changed this bull into a god!"

They returned to Memphis in the same order, and the king of Tanis, in some confusion, followed the band. Mambres, with a serene and diplomatic air, walked by his side. The old woman came after, much amazed. She was accompanied by the serpent, the dog, the she-ass, the raven, the pigeon, and the scape-goat. The great fish mounted up the Nile. Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah, changed into magpies, brought up the rear.

When they had reached the frontiers of the kingdom, which are not far distant, King Amasis took leave of the bull Apis, and said to his daughter:

"My daughter, let us return into my dominions, that I may behead you, as it has been determined in my royal breast, because you have pronounced the name of Nebuchadnezzar,

my enemy, who dethroned me seven years ago. When a father has sworn to behead his daughter, he must either fulfill his oath, or sink into hell for ever; and I will not damn myself out of love for you."

The fair princess Amasidia replied to the King Amasis:

"My dear father, whom it pleases you go and behead; but it shall not be me. I am now in the territories of Isis, Osiris, Horus, and Apis. I will never forsake my beautiful white bull, and I will continue to kiss him till I have seen his apotheosis in his stable in the holy city of Memphis. It is a weakness pardonable in a young lady of high birth."

Scarce had she spoken these words, when the ox Apis cried out:

"My dear Amasidia, I will love you whilst I live!"

This was the first time that the god Apis had been heard to speak during the forty thousand years that he had been worshipped.

The serpent and the she-ass cried out, "the seven years are accomplished!" And the three magpies repeated, "the seven years are accomplished!"

All the priests of Egypt raised their hands to heaven.

The god on a sudden was seen to lose his two hind legs, his two fore legs were changed into two human legs; two white strong muscular arms grew from his shoulders; his taurine visage was changed to the face of a charming hero; and he once more became the most beautiful of mortals.

"I choose," cried he, "rather to be the lover of the beautiful Amasidia than a god. I am Nebuchadnezzar, King of Kings!"

This metamorphosis astonished all the world, except the wise Mambres. But what surprised nobody was that Nebuchadnezzar immediately married the fair Amasidia in the presence of this assembly.

He left his father-in-law in quiet possession of the kingdom of Tanis; and made noble provision of the she-ass, the serpent, the dog, the pigeon, and even for the raven, the three magpies, and the large fish; showing to all the world that he knew how to forgive as well as to conquer.

GOLDEN CITIES, FAR

The old woman had a considerable pension placed at her disposal.

The scape-goat was sent for a day into the wilderness, that all past sins might be expiated; and had afterwards twelve sprightly goats for his companions.

The wise Mambres returned to his palace, and made reflections.

Nebuchadnezzar, after having embraced the magician, his benefactor, governed in tranquillity the kingdoms of Memphis, Babylon, Damascus, Balbec, Tyre, Syria, Asia Minor, Scythia, the countries of Thiras, Mosok, Tubal, Madai, Gog, Magog, Javan, Sogdiana, Aroriana, the Indes and the Isles; and the people of this vast empire cried out aloud every morning at the rising of the sun:

"Long live great Nebuchadnezzar, king of kings, who is no longer an ox!"

Since that time it has been custom in Babylon, when the sovereign, deceived by his satraps, his magicians, treasurers or wives, at length to acknowledge his errors, and amends his conduct, for all the people to cry out at his gate:

"Long live our great king, who is no longer an ox."

Introduction to the Tenth Tale: The Yellow Dwarf

Does it seem odd, including an old French fairy tale—children's reading, surely!—in a volume of what is ostensibly "Adult Fantasy"?

If it does, pause to consider that it is only a relatively recent change in taste which has relegated such tales to the children's shelves of the library. Originally they were neither written for nor intended for children, but for adults, and very sophisticated adults, at that.

Madame d'Aulnoy (or to be formal about it, Marie Catherine le Jumel de Barneville de la Motte, Baronne d'Aulnoy) was born about 1650. At sixteen she married Baron d'Aulnoy; she and her husband became involved in various political troubles, and for a time, she fled with her mother, the Marquise de Gudaigne, first to England, then to Spain. Eventually she returned to France, where she promptly became one of the glories of 17th century French fiction.

Madame d'Aulnoy wrote a number of books: inferior romances, a sort of travel novel told in letters, and historical writings, all of which are long since forgotten. But happily she also wrote, in 1698, a wonderful book of fairy tales called *Contes nouvelles ou les Fées à la Mode* (which means something like "New Fairy Tales in the Popular Style"). This collection of twenty-four delightful tales, written rather in the manner of her contemporary, the master fairy-tale-teller Charles Perrault, and deriving to some degree from the *Pentamerone* of Giovanni Battista Basile, nevertheless brought something fresh, new, original, and delightful to an ancient craft.

What our authoress had done was to take the old,

traditional fairy tale and revise the form in a droll, polished, elegant, and witty style; she found the old folk-tale in the world of rude peasants, mud huts, gloomy forests, and crumbling castles, and she reformed this milieu into the glittering, cosmopolitan court of Louis XIV. In so doing, she became the direct progenitrix of all the delicious "fairy kingdom" stories that would later evolve from her example—among such my two personal favorite children's books, Thackeray's *The Rose and the Ring*, and Andrew Lang's wonderful *Prince Prigio*.

Madame d'Aulnoy died in 1705, but her collection of fairy tales has not ever been permitted to perish. Andrew Lang (1844–1912), the classical scholar and critic who edited the perennially popular "color fairy books," which began with *The Blue Fairy Book* in 1889, adored her as a child and included most of her best stories, such as "The White Cat" and "The Yellow Dwarf," in his books. The color fairy books are all still in print, and thus she is still being read today.

"The Yellow Dwarf" is one of her finest stories. If it is not entirely original with her, well, neither were *Grimm's Fairy Tales* original with Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm; that it is a perfectly splendid story you shall soon discover for yourself. Andrew Lang thought it one of the best stories in the world. He lovingly included it in that first book, *The Blue Fairy Book*; a testimonial to the high opinion he had of this tale can be found by glancing down the list of the *other* stories he included in that first of all the color fairy books. They are probably the most famous and beloved stories in the world: "Cinderella," "Aladdin," "Sleeping Beauty," "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," "Rumpelstiltskin," "Little Red Riding-Hood," "Beauty and the Beast," "Jack the Giant-Killer," "Bluebeard," "Hansel and Gretel."

Wise, and witty, and full of wonders, "The Yellow Dwarf" is certainly an adult work of fiction. Why, it even has an *unhappy* ending!

And in 1893, one hundred and ninety-five years after it was first published, Lang paid it perhaps the

greatest tribute a story can be paid—that of imitation. For when he came to write *Prince Ricardo*, the sequel to *Prigio*, he brought his heroic Pantouflian into conflict with none other than the Yellow Dwarf himself, still vigorous nearly two centuries after his birth in the sparkling imagination of a gifted Frenchwoman.

The Yellow Dwarf
From the French
Contes Nouvelles ou les Fées
 by Madame D'Aulnoy

Once upon a time there lived a queen who had been the mother of a great many children, and of them all only one daughter was left. But then she was worth at least a thousand.

Her mother, who since the death of the king, her father, had nothing in the world she cared for so much as this little princess, was so terribly afraid of losing her that she quite spoiled her, and never tried to correct any of her faults. The consequence was that this little person who was as pretty as possible and was one day to wear a crown, grew up so proud and so in love with her own beauty that she despised every one else in the world.

The queen, her mother, by her caresses and flatteries, helped to make her believe that there was nothing too good for her. She was dressed almost always in the prettiest frocks, as a fairy or as a queen going out to hunt, and the ladies of the court followed her dressed as forest fairies.

And to make her more vain than ever, the queen caused her portrait to be taken by the cleverest painters and sent it to several neighboring kings with whom she was very friendly.

When they saw this portrait they fell in love with the

princess—every one of them; but upon each it had a different effect. One fell ill, one went quite crazy, and few of the luckiest set off to see her as soon as possible; but these poor princes became her slaves the moment they set eyes on her.

Never has there been a gayer court. Twenty delighted kings did everything they could think of to make themselves agreeable, and after having spent ever so much money in giving a single entertainment thought themselves very lucky if the princess said: "That's pretty."

All this admiration vastly pleased the queen. Not a day passed but she received seven or eight thousand sonnets, and as many elegies, madrigals, and songs, which were sent her by all the poets in the world. All the prose and the poetry that was written just then was about Bellissima—for that was the princess' name—and all the bonfires that they had were made of these verses, which crackled and sparkled better than any other sort of wood.

Bellissima was already fifteen years old and every one of the princes wished to marry her, but not one dared to say so. How could they when they knew that any of them might have cut off his head five or six times a day just to please her, and she would have thought it a mere trifle, so little did she care? You may imagine how hard-hearted her lovers thought her; and the queen, who wished to see her married, did not know how to persuade her to think of it seriously.

"Bellissima," she said, "I do wish you would not be so proud. What makes you despise all these nice kings? I wish you to marry one of them, and you do not try to please me."

"I am so happy," Bellissima answered; "do leave me in peace, madam. I don't want to care for any one."

"But you would be very happy with any one of these princes," said the queen, "and I shall be very angry if you fall in love with any one who is not worthy of you."

But the princess thought so much of herself that she did not consider any one of her lovers clever or handsome enough for her; and her mother, who was getting really angry at her determination not to be married, began to wish that she had not allowed her to have her own way so much.

At last, not knowing what else to do, she resolved to consult a certain witch who was called the Fairy of the Desert. Now, this was very difficult to do, as she was guarded by some terrible lions, but happily the queen had heard a long time before that whoever wanted to pass these lions safely must throw to them a cake made of millet flour, sugar-candy, and crocodile's eggs. This cake she prepared with her own hands, and putting it in a basket, she set out to seek the fairy. But as she was not used to walking far, she soon felt very tired and sat down at the foot of a tree to rest, and presently fell fast asleep. When she awoke she was dismayed to find her basket empty. The cake was all gone! and to make matters worse, at that moment she heard the roaring of the great lions, who had found out that she was near and were coming to look for her.

"What shall I do?" she cried; "I shall be eaten up," and being too much frightened to run a single step, she began to cry and leaned against the tree under which she had been asleep.

Just then she heard some one say: "H'm! h'm!"

She looked all round her and then up at the tree, and there she saw a little tiny man who was eating oranges.

"Oh! queen," said he, "I know you very well, and I know how much afraid you are of the lions, and you are quite right too, for they have eaten many other people; and what can you expect, as you have not any cake to give them?"

"I must make up my mind to die," said the poor queen. "Alas! I should not care so much if only my dear daughter were married."

"Oh! you have a daughter," cried the yellow dwarf (who was so called because he was a dwarf and had such a yellow face and lived in the orange-tree). "I'm really glad to hear that, for I've been looking for a wife all over the world. Now if you will promise that she shall marry me, not one of the lions, tigers, or bears shall touch you."

The queen looked at him and was almost as much afraid of his ugly little face as she had been of the lions before, so that she could not speak a word.

"What! you hesitate, madam?" cried the dwarf. "You must be very fond of being eaten up alive."

And as he spoke, the queen saw the lions, which were running down a hill toward them.

Each one had two heads, eight feet, and four rows of teeth, and their skins were as hard as turtle-shells and were bright red.

At this dreadful sight the poor queen, who was trembling like a dove when it sees a hawk, cried out as loud as she could: "Oh! dear Mr. Dwarf, Bellissima shall marry you."

"Oh, indeed!" said he disdainfully. "Bellissima is pretty enough, but I don't particularly want to marry her—you can keep her."

"Oh! noble sir," said the queen in great distress, "do not refuse her. She is the most charming princess in the world."

"Oh! well," he replied, "out of charity I will take her; but be sure you don't forget that she is mine."

As he spoke a little door opened in the trunk of the orange-tree; in rushed the queen only just in time; and the door shut with a bang in the faces of the lions.

The queen was so confused that at first she did not notice another little door in the orange-tree, but presently it opened and she found herself in a field of thistles and nettles. It was encircled by a muddy ditch, and a little further on was a tiny thatched cottage, out of which came the yellow dwarf with a very jaunty air. He wore wooden shoes and a little yellow coat, and as he had no hair and very long ears, he looked altogether a shocking little object.

"I am delighted," said he to the queen, "that as you are to be my mother-in-law, you should see the little house in which your Bellissima will live with me. With these thistles and nettles she can feed a donkey which she can ride whenever she likes; under this humble roof no weather can hurt her; she will drink the water of this brook and eat frogs—which grow very fat about here; and then she will have me always with her, handsome, agreeable, and gay as you see me now. For if her shadow stays by her more closely than I do I shall be surprised."

The unhappy queen, seeing all at once what a miserable life her daughter would have with this dwarf, could not bear the idea and fell down insensible without saying a word.

When she revived, she found to her great surprise that she was lying in her own bed at home, and what was more, that she had on the loveliest lace nightcap that she had ever seen in her life. At first she thought that all her adventures, the terrible lions, and her promise to the yellow dwarf that he should marry Bellissima must have been a dream, but there was the new cap with its beautiful ribbon and lace to remind her that it was all true, which made her so unhappy that she could neither eat, drink, nor sleep for thinking of it.

The princess, who in spite of her willfulness really loved her mother with all her heart, was much grieved when she saw her looking so sad, and often asked her what was the matter, but the queen, who didn't want her to find out the truth, only said that she was ill, or that one of her neighbors was threatening to make war against her. Bellissima knew quite well that something was being hidden from her—and that neither of these was the real reason of the queen's uneasiness. So she made up her mind that she would go and consult the Fairy of the Desert about it, especially as she had often heard how wise she was, and she thought that at the same time she might ask her advice as to whether it would be as well to be married or not.

So with great care she made some of the proper cake to pacify the lions and one night went up to her room very early, pretending that she was going to bed; but instead of that, she wrapped herself up in a long white veil and went down a secret staircase and set off all by herself to find the witch.

But when she got as far as the same fatal orange-tree and saw it covered with flowers and fruit, she stopped and began to gather some of the oranges—and then putting down her basket, she sat down to eat them. But when it was time to go on again the basket had disappeared, and though she looked everywhere, not a trace of it could she find. The more she

hunted for it the more frightened she got, and at last she began to cry. All at once she saw the yellow dwarf.

"What's the matter with you, my pretty one?" said he. "What are you crying about?"

"Alas!" she answered; "no wonder that I am crying, seeing that I have lost the basket of cake that was to help me to get safely to the cave of the Fairy of the Desert."

"And what do you want with her, pretty one?" said the little monster, "for I am a friend of hers, and for the matter of that, I am quite as clever as she is."

"The queen, my mother," replied the princess, "has lately fallen into such deep sadness that I fear that she will die; and I am afraid that perhaps I am the cause of it, for she very much wishes me to be married, and I must tell you truly that as yet I have not found any one I consider worthy to be my husband. So for all these reasons I wished to talk to the fairy."

"Do not give yourself any further trouble, princess," answered the dwarf. "I can tell you all you want to know better than she could. The queen your mother has promised you in marriage—"

"Has promised me!" interrupted the princess. "Oh! no. I'm sure she has not. She would have told me if she had. I am too much interested in the matter for her to promise anything without my consent—you must be mistaken."

"Beautiful princess," cried the dwarf suddenly, throwing himself on his knees before her, "I flatter myself that you will not be displeased at her choice when I tell you that it is to me she has promised the happiness of marrying you."

"You!" cried Bellissima, starting back. "My mother wishes me to marry you! How can you be so silly as to think of such a thing?"

"Oh! it isn't tht I care much to have that honor," cried the dwarf angrily, "but here are the lions coming; they'll eat you up in three mouthfuls and there will be an end of you and your pride."

And, indeed, at that moment the poor princess heard their dreadful howls coming nearer and nearer.

"What shall I do?" she cried. "Must all my happy days come to an end like this?"

The malicious dwarf looked at her and began to laugh spitefully. "At least," said he, "you have the satisfaction of dying unmarried. A lovely princess like you must surely prefer to die rather than by the wife of a poor little dwarf like myself."

"Oh! don't be angry with me," cried the princess, clasping her hands. "I'd rather marry all the dwarfs in the world than die in this horrible way."

"Look at me well, princess, before you give me your word," said he. "I don't want you to promise me in a hurry."

"Oh!" cried she, "the lions are coming. I have looked at you enough. I am so frightened. Save me this minute or I shall die of terror."

Indeed, as she spoke she fell down insensible, and when she recovered she found herself in her own little bed at home; how she got there she could not tell, but she was dressed in the most beautiful lace and ribbons and on her finger was a little ring, made of a single red hair which fitted so tightly that try as she might she could not get it off. When the princess saw all these things and remembered what had happened, she, too, fell into the deepest sadness, which surprised and alarmed the whole court, and the queen more than any one else. A hundred times she asked Bellissima if anything was the matter with her, but she always said that there was nothing.

At last the chief men of the kingdom, anxious to see their princess married, sent to the queen to beg her to choose a husband for her as soon as possible. She replied that nothing would please her better, but that her daughter seemed so unwilling to marry and she recommended them to go and talk to the princess about it themselves; so this they at once did. Now, Bellissima was much less proud since her adventure with the yellow dwarf, and she could not think of a better way of getting rid of the little monster than to marry some powerful king, therefore she replied to their request much more favorably than they had hoped, saying that

though she was very happy as she was, still to please them she would consent to marry the King of the Gold Mines. Now, he was a very handsome and powerful prince who had been in love with the princess for years, but had not thought that she would ever care about him at all. You can easily imagine how delighted he was when he heard the news, and how angry it made all the other kings to lose forever the hope of marrying the princess; but after all Bellissima could not have married twenty kings—indeed, and she had found it quite difficult enough to choose one, for her vanity made her believe that there was nobody in the world who was worthy of her.

Preparations were begun at once for the grandest wedding that had ever been held at the palace. The King of the Gold Mines sent such immense sums of money that the whole sea was covered with the ships that brought it. Messengers were sent to all the gayest and most refined courts, particularly to the court of France, to seek out everything rare and precious to adorn the princess, although her beauty was so perfect that nothing she wore could make her look prettier. At least, that is what the King of the Gold Mines thought, and he was never happy unless he was with her.

As for the princess, the more she saw of the king the more she liked him; he was so generous, so handsome and clever, that at last she was almost as much in love with him as he was with her. How happy they were as they wandered about in the beautiful gardens together, sometimes listening to sweet music! and the king used to write songs for Bellissima. This is one that she liked very much:

In the forest all is gay
When my princess walks that way.
All the blossoms then are found
Downward fluttering to the ground,
Hoping she may tread on them.
And bright flowers on slender stem
Gaze up at her as she passes,
Brushing lightly through the grasses.

Oh! my princess, birds above
 Echo back our songs of love,
 As through this enchanted land,
 Blithe we wander, hand in hand.

They really were as happy as the day was long. All the king's unsuccessful rivals had gone home in despair. They said good-by to the princess so sadly that she could not help being sorry for them.

"Ah! madam," the King of the Gold Mines said to her, "how is this? Why do you waste your pity on these princes, who love you so much that all their trouble would be well repaid by a single smile from you?"

"I should be sorry," answered Bellissima, "if you had not noticed how much I pitied these princes who were leaving me forever; but for you, sire, it is very different: you have every reason to be pleased with me, but they are going sorrowfully away, so you must not grudge them my compassion."

The King of the Gold Mines was quite overcome by the princess' good-natured way of taking his interference, and throwing himself at her feet, he kissed her hand a thousand times and begged her to forgive him.

At last the happy day came. Everything was ready for Bellissima's wedding. The trumpets sounded, all the streets of the town were hung with flags and strewn with flowers, and the people ran in crowds to the great square before the palace. The queen was so overjoyed that she had hardly been able to sleep at all, and she got up before it was light to give the necessary orders and to choose the jewels that the princess was to wear. These were nothing less than diamonds, even to her shoes, which were covered with them; and her dress of silver brocade was embroidered with a dozen of the sun's rays. You may imagine how much these had cost, but then, nothing could have been more brilliant except the beauty of the princess! Upon her head she wore a splendid crown; her lovely hair waved nearly to her feet; and her stately figure could easily be distinguished among all the ladies who attended her.

The King of the Gold Mines was not less noble and splendid. It was easy to see by his face how happy he was, and every one who went near him returned loaded with presents, for all round the great banqueting hall had been arranged a thousand barrels full of gold and numberless bags made of velvet embroidered with pearls and filled with money, each one containing at least a hundred thousand gold-pieces, which were given away to every one who liked to hold out his hand, which numbers of people hastened to do, you may be sure—indeed, some found this by far the most amusing part of the wedding festivities.

The queen and the princess were just ready to set out with the king when they saw advancing toward them from the end of the long gallery two great basilisks dragging after them a very badly made box; behind them came a tall old woman, whose ugliness was even more surprising than her extreme old age. She wore a ruff of black taffeta, a red velvet hood, and a farthingale all in rags, and she leaned heavily upon a crutch. This strange old woman, without saying a single word, hobbled three times round the gallery, followed by the basilisks; then, stopping in the middle and brandishing her crutch threateningly she cried:

“Ho, ho, queen! Ho, ho, princess! Do you think you are going to break with impunity the promise that you made to my friend the yellow dwarf? I am the Fairy of the Desert; without the yellow dwarf and his orange-tree my great lions would soon have eaten you up, I can tell you, and in Fairyland we do not suffer ourselves to be insulted like this. Make up your minds at once what you will do, for I vow that you shall marry the yellow dwarf. If you don't, may I burn my crutch!”

“Ah! princess,” said the queen, weeping, “what is this that I hear? What have you promised?”

“Ah! my mother,” replied Bellissima sadly, “what did you promise yourself?”

The king of the Gold Mines, indignant at being kept from his happiness by this wicked old woman, went up to her, and threatening her with his sword, said:

"Get away out of my country at once and forever, miserable creature, lest I take your life and so rid myself of your malice."

He had hardly spoken these words when the lid of the box fell back on the floor with a terrible noise, and to their horror, out sprang the yellow dwarf, mounted upon a great Spanish cat. "Rash youth!" he cried, rushing between the Fairy of the Desert and the king. "Dare to lay a finger upon this illustrious fairy! Your quarrel is with me only. I am your enemy and your rival. That faithless princess who would have married you is promised to me. See if she has not upon her finger a ring made of one of my hairs. Just try to take it off, and you will soon find out that I am more powerful than you are!"

"Wretched little monster!" said the king, "do you dare to call yourself the princess' lover and to lay claim to such a treasure? Do you know that you are a dwarf—that you are so ugly that one cannot bear to look at you—and that I should have killed you myself long before this if you had been worthy of such a glorious death?"

The yellow dwarf, deeply enraged at these words, set spurs to his cat, which yelled horribly and leaped hither and thither—terrifying everybody except the brave king, who pursued the dwarf closely, till he, drawing a great knife with which he was armed, challenged the king to meet him in single combat, and rushed down into the courtyard of the palace with a terrible clatter. The king, quite provoked, followed him hastily, but they had hardly taken their places facing one another, and the whole court had only just had time to rush out upon the balconies to watch what was going on, when suddenly the sun became as red as blood, and it was so dark that they could scarcely see at all. The thunder crashed and the lightning seemed as if it must burn up everything; the two basilisks appeared, one on each side of the bad dwarf like giants mountains high, and fire flew from their mouths and ears until they looked like flaming furnaces. None of these things could terrify the noble young king, and the boldness of his looks and actions reassured those who

were looking on, and perhaps even embarrassed the yellow dwarf himself; but even his courage gave way when he saw what was happening to his beloved princess. For the Fairy of the Desert, looking more terrible than before, mounted upon a winged griffin and with long snakes coiled round her neck, had given her such a blow with the lance she carried that Bellissima fell into the queen's arms bleeding and senseless. Her fond mother, feeling as much hurt by the blow as the princess herself, uttered such piercing cries and lamentations that the king, hearing them, entirely lost his courage and presence of mind. Giving up the combat, he flew toward the princess to rescue or to die with her, but the yellow dwarf was too quick for him. Leaping with his Spanish cat upon the balcony, he snatched Bellissima from the queen's arms, and before any of the ladies of the court could stop him, he had sprung upon the roof of the palace and disappeared with his prize.

The king, motionless with horror, looked on despairingly at this dreadful occurrence, which he was quite powerless to prevent, and to make matters worse his sight failed him; everything became dark; and he felt himself carried along through the air by a strong hand.

This new misfortune was the work of the wicked Fairy of the Desert, who had come with the yellow dwarf to help him carry off the princess, and had fallen in love with the handsome young King of the Gold Mines directly she saw him. She thought that if she carried him off to some frightful cavern and chained him to a rock, then the fear of death would make him forget Bellissima and become her slave. So as soon as they reached the place she gave him back his sight, but without releasing him from his chains, and by her magic power, she appeared before him as a young and beautiful fairy and pretended to have come there quite by chance.

"What do I see?" she cried. "Is it you, dear prince? What misfortune has brought you to this dismal place?"

The King, who was quite deceived by her altered appearance, replied:

"Alas! beautiful fairy, the fairy who brought me here first

took away my sight, but by her voice I recognized her as the Fairy of the Desert, though what she should have carried me off for I cannot tell you."

"Ah!" cried the pretended fairy, "if you have fallen into her hands, you won't get away until you have married her. She has carried off more than one prince like this, and she will certainly have anything she takes a fancy to." While she was thus pretending to be sorry for the king he suddenly noticed her feet, which were like those of a griffin, and knew in a moment that this must be the Fairy of the Desert, for her feet were the one thing she could not change, however pretty she might make her face.

Without seeming to have noticed anything, he said, in a confidential way:

"Not that I have any dislike to the Fairy of the Desert, but I really cannot endure the way in which she protects the yellow dwarf and keeps me chained here like a criminal. It is true that I love a charming princess, but if the fairy should set me free my gratitude would oblige me to love her only."

"Do you really mean what you say, prince?" said the fairy, quite deceived.

"Surely," replied the prince; "how could I deceive you? You see it is so much more flattering to my vanity to be loved by a fairy than by a simple princess. But even if I am dying of love for her, I shall pretend to hate her until I am set free."

The Fairy of the Desert, quite taken in by these words, resolved at once to transport the prince to a pleasanter place. So making him mount her chair, to which she had harnessed swans instead of the bats which generally drew it, away she flew with him. But imagine the distress of the prince when, from the giddy height at which they were rushing through the air, he saw his beloved princess in a castle built of polished steel, the walls of which reflected the sun's rays so hotly that no one could approach it without being burned to a cinder! Bellissima was sitting in a little thicket by a brook, leaning her head upon her hand and weeping bitterly, but just as they passed, she looked up and

saw the king and the Fairy of the Desert. Now, the fairy was so clever that she could not only seem beautiful to the king, but even the poor princess thought her the most lovely being she had ever seen.

"What!" she cried, "was I not unhappy enough in this lonely castle to which that frightful yellow dwarf brought me? Must I also be made to know that the King of the Gold Mines ceased to love me as soon as he lost sight of me? But who can my rival be whose fatal beauty is greater than mine?"

While she was saying this, the king, who really loved her as much as ever, was feeling terribly sad at being so rapidly torn away from his beloved princess, but he knew too well how powerful the fairy was to have any hope of escaping from her except by great patience and cunning.

The Fairy of the Desert had also seen Bellissima, and she tried to read in the king's eyes the effect that this unexpected sight had had upon him.

"No one can tell what you wish to know better than I can," said he. "This chance meeting with an unhappy princess for whom I once had a passing fancy before I was lucky enough to meet you has affected me a little, I admit, but you are so much more to me than she is that I would rather die than leave you."

"Ah! prince," she said, "can I believe that you really love me so much?"

"Time will show, madam," replied the king; "but if you wish to convince me that you have some regard for me, do not, I beg of you, refuse to aid Bellissima."

"Do you know what you are asking?" said the Fairy of the Desert, frowning and looking at him suspiciously. "Do you want me to employ my art against the yellow dwarf, who is my best friend, and take away from him a proud princess whom I can but look upon as my rival?"

The king sighed, but made no answer—indeed, what was there to be said to such a clear-sighted person? At last they reached a vast meadow, gay with all sorts of flowers; a deep

river surrounded it and many little brooks murmured softly under the shady trees, where it was always cool and fresh. A little way off stood a splendid palace, the walls of which were of transparent emeralds. As soon as the swans which drew the fairy's chariot had alighted under a porch, which was paved with diamonds and had arches of rubies, they were greeted on all sides by thousands of beautiful beings, who came to meet them joyfully singing these words:

When Love within a heart would reign,
Useless to strive against him 'tis.
The proud but feel a sharper pain,
And make a greater triumph his.

The Fairy of the Desert was delighted to hear them sing of her triumphs. She led the king into the most splendid room that can be imagined and left him alone for a little while, just that he might not feel that he was a prisoner; but he felt sure that she had not really gone quite away, but was watching him from some hiding-place. So walking up to a great mirror he said to it: "Trusty counselor, let me see what I can do to make myself agreeable to the charming Fairy of the Desert; for I can think of nothing but how to please her."

And he at once set to work to curl his hair, and seeing upon a table a grander coat than his own, he put it on carefully. The fairy came back so delighted that she could not conceal her joy.

"I am quite aware of the trouble you have taken to please me," said she, "and I must tell you that you have succeeded perfectly already. You see it is not difficult to do if you really care for me."

The king, who had his own reasons for wishing to keep the old fairy in a good humor, did not spare pretty speeches, and after a time he was allowed to walk by himself upon the sea-shore. The Fairy of the Desert had by her enchantments raised such a terrible storm that the boldest pilot would not venture out in it, so she was not afraid of her prisoner's being able to escape; and he found it some relief to think sadly

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over his terrible situation without being interrupted by his cruel captor.

Presently, after walking wildly up and down, he wrote these verses upon the sand with his stick:

At last may I upon this shore
Lighten my sorrow with soft tears.
Alas! alas! I see no more
My love, who yet my sadness cheers.

And thou, O raging, stormy sea,
Stirred by wild winds, from depth to height,
Thou hold'st my loved one far from me,
And I am captive to thy might.

My heart is still more wild than thine,
For fate is cruel unto me.
Why must I thus in exile pine?
Why is my princess snatched from me?

O lovely nymphs, from ocean caves,
Who know how sweet true love may be,
Come up and calm the furious waves
And set a desperate lover free!

While he was still writing, he heard a voice which attracted his attention in spite of himself. Seeing that the waves were rolling in higher than ever he looked all round him, and presently saw a lovely lady floating gently toward him upon the crest of a huge billow, her long hair spread all about her; in one hand she held a mirror, and in the other a comb, and instead of feet she had a beautiful tail like a fish, with which she swam.

The king was struck dumb with astonishment at this unexpected sight, but as soon as she came within speaking distance, she said to him: "I know how sad you are at losing your princess and being kept a prisoner by the Fairy of the Desert; if you like I will help you to escape from this fatal

place, where you may otherwise have to drag on a weary existence for thirty years or more."

The King of the Gold Mines hardly knew what answer to make to this proposal. Not because he did not wish very much to escape, but he was afraid that this might be only another device by which the Fairy of the Desert was trying to deceive him. As he hesitated, the mermaid, who guessed his thoughts, said to him:

"You may trust me; I am not trying to entrap you. I am so angry with the yellow dwarf and the Fairy of the Desert that I am not likely to wish to help them, especially since I constantly see your poor princess, whose beauty and goodness make me pity her so much, and I tell you that if you will have confidence in me, I will help you to escape."

"I trust you absolutely," cried the king, "and I will do whatever you tell me; but if you have seen my princess, I beg of you to tell me how she is and what is happening to her."

"We must not waste time in talking," said she. "Come with me, and I will carry you to the castle of steel, and we will leave upon this shore a figure so like you that even the fairy herself will be deceived by it."

So saying, she quickly collected a bundle of sea-weed, and blowing it three times she said, "My friendly sea-weeds, I order you to stay here stretched upon the sand until the Fairy of the Desert comes to take you away." And at once the sea-weeds became like the king, who stood looking at them in great astonishment, for they were even dressed in a coat like his, but they lay there pale and still as the king himself might have lain if one of the great waves had overtaken him and thrown him senseless upon the shore. And then the mermaid caught up the king and away they swam joyfully together.

"Now," said she, "I have time to tell you about the princess. In spite of the blow which the Fairy of the Desert gave her, the yellow dwarf compelled her to mount behind him upon his terrible Spanish cat; but she soon fainted away with pain and terror and did not recover till they were within the walls of his frightful castle of steel. Here she was received by the prettiest girls it was possible to find, who had

been carried there by the yellow dwarf, who hastened to wait upon her and showed her every possible attention. She was laid upon a couch covered with cloth-of-gold, embroidered with pearls as big as nuts."

"Ah!" interrupted the King of the Gold Mines, "if Bellissima forgets me and consents to marry him, I shall break my heart."

"You need not be afraid of that," answered the mermaid; "the princess thinks of no one but you, and the frightful dwarf cannot persuade her to look at him."

"Pray go on with your story," said the king.

"What more is there to tell you?" replied the mermaid. "Bellissima was sitting in the wood when you passed and saw you with the Fairy of the Desert, who was so cleverly disguised that the princess took her to be prettier than herself; you may imagine her despair, for she thought that you had fallen in love with her."

"She believes that I love her!" cried the king. "What a fatal mistake! What is to be done to undeceive her?"

"You know best," answered the mermaid, smiling kindly at him. "When people are as much in love with one another as you two are they don't need advice from any one else."

As she spoke, they reached the castle of steel, the side next the sea being the only one which the yellow dwarf had left unprotected by the dreadful burning walls.

"I know quite well," said the mermaid, "that the princess is sitting by the brook-side just where you saw her as you passed, but as you will have many enemies to fight with before you can reach her; take this sword; armed with it you may dare any danger and overcome the greatest difficulties; only beware of one thing—that is, never to let it fall from your hand. Farewell; now I will wait by that rock, and if you need my help in carrying off your beloved princess, I will not fail you, for the queen, her mother, is my best friend, and it was for her sake that I went to rescue you."

So saying, she gave the king a sword made from a single diamond, which was more brilliant than the sun. He could not find words to express his gratitude, but he begged her to

believe that he fully appreciated the importance of her gift, and would never forget her help and kindness.

We must now go back to the Fairy of the Desert. When she found that the king did not return, she hastened out to look for him, and reached the shore with a hundred of the ladies of her train, loaded with splendid presents for him. Some carried baskets full of diamonds; others golden cups of wonderful workmanship, and amber, coral, and pearls; others again balanced upon their heads bales of the richest and most beautiful stuffs, while the rest brought fruit and flowers and even birds. But what was the horror of the fairy, who followed this gay troop, when she saw stretched upon the sands the image of the king which the mermaid had made with the sea-weeds! Struck with astonishment and sorrow, she uttered a terrible cry and threw herself down beside the pretended king, weeping and howling and calling upon her eleven sisters, who were also fairies and who came to her assistance. But they were all taken in by the image of the king, for clever as they were, the mermaid was still cleverer, and all they could do was to help the Fairy of the Desert to make a wonderful monument over what they thought was the grave of the King of the Gold Mines. But while they were collecting jasper and porphyry, agate and marble, gold and bronze, statues and devices, to immortalize the king's memory, he was thanking the good mermaid and begging her still to help him, which she graciously promised to do as she disappeared; and then he set out for the castle of steel. He walked fast, looking anxiously round him and longing once more to see his darling Bellissima, but he had not gone far before he was surrounded by four terrible sphinxes, who would very soon have torn him to pieces with their sharp talons if it had not been for the mermaid's diamond sword. For no sooner had he flashed it before their eyes than down they fell at his feet quite helpless, and he killed them with one blow. But he had hardly turned to continue his search when he met six dragons covered with scales that were harder than iron. Frightful as this encounter was, the king's courage was unshaken, and by the aid of his wonderful sword

he cut them in pieces one after the other. Now he hoped his difficulties were over, but at the next turning he was met by one which he did not know how to overcome. Twenty-four pretty and graceful nymphs advanced toward him, holding garlands of flowers with which they barred the way.

"Where are you going, prince?" they said; "it is our duty to guard this place, and if we let you pass, great misfortune will happen to you and to us. We beg you not to insist upon going on. Do you want to kill twenty-four girls who have never displeased you in any way?"

The king did not know what to do or to say. It went against all his ideas as a knight to do anything a lady begged him not to do; but as he hesitated a voice in his ear said:

"Strike! strike! and do not spare, or your princess is lost forever!"

So without replying to the nymphs, he rushed forward instantly, breaking their garlands and scattering them in all directions; and then went on without further hindrance to the little wood where he had seen Bellissima. She was seated by the brook, looking pale and weary, when he reached her, and he would have thrown himself down at her feet, but she drew herself away from him with as much indignation as if he had been the yellow dwarf.

"Ah! princess," he cried, "do not be angry with me. Let me explain everything. I am not faithless or to blame for what has happened. I am a miserable wretch who has displeased you without being able to help himself."

"Ah!" cried Bellissima, "did I not see you flying through the air with the loveliest being imaginable? Was that against your will?"

"Indeed it was, princess," he answered; "the wicked Fairy of the Desert, not content with chaining me to a rock, carried me off in her chariot to the other end of the earth, where I should even now be a captive but for the unexpected help of a friendly mermaid, who brought me here to rescue you, my princess, from the unworthy hands that hold you. Do not refuse the aid of your most faithful lover." So saying, he threw himself at her feet and held her by her robe. But,

alas! in so doing, he let fall the magic sword, and the yellow dwarf, who was crouching behind a lettuce, no sooner saw it than he sprang out and seized it, well knowing its wonderful power.

The princess gave a cry of terror on seeing the dwarf, but this only irritated the little monster; muttering a few magical words, he summoned two giants, who bound the king with great chains of iron.

"Now," said the dwarf, "I am master of my rival's fate, but I will give him his life and permission to depart unharmed if you, princess, will consent to marry me."

"Let me die a thousand times rather," cried the unhappy king.

"Alas!" cried the princess, "must you die? Could anything be more terrible?"

"That you should marry that little wretch would be far more terrible," answered the king.

"At least," continued she, "let us die together."

"Let me have the satisfaction of dying for you, my princess," said he.

"Oh, no, no!" she cried, turning to the dwarf; "rather than that I will do as you wish."

"Cruel princess!" said the king, "would you make my life horrible to me by marrying another before my eyes?"

"Not so," replied the yellow dwarf; "you are a rival of whom I am too much afraid: you shall not see our marriage." So saying, in spite of Bellissima's tears and cries, he stabbed the king to the heart with the diamond sword.

The poor princess, seeing her lover lying dead at her feet, could no longer live without him; she sank down by him and died of a broken heart.

So ended these unfortunate lovers, whom not even the mermaid could help, because all the magic power had been lost with the diamond sword.

As to the wicked dwarf, he preferred to see the princess dead rather than married to the King of the Gold Mines; and the Fairy of the Desert, when she heard of the king's adventure, pulled down the grand monument which she had built,

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and was so angry at the trick that had been played her that she hated him as much as she had loved him before.

The kind mermaid, grieved at the sad fate of the lovers, caused them to be changed into two tall palm trees, which stand always side by side, whispering together of their faithful love and caressing one another with their interlacing branches.

PART VI:
THE GREAT
ROMANCES



“Amadis of Gaul is among prose romances what *Orlando Furioso* is among metrical romances: not the oldest of its kind, but the best.”

—Robert Southey

Introduction to the Eleventh and Twelfth Tales: Arcalaus The Enchanter and The Isle of Wonders

Perhaps you may recall, in Part I, Chapter VI, of *Don Quixote*, the scene in which the Curate and the Barber are going through the immense library of extravagant romances, the reading of which has made the ingenious gentleman of La Mancha foolish with dreams of impossible chivalrous exploits. The two worthy villagers are tossing out the books which have been so dangerous an influence on poor old Quixote, purging his library of unwholesome reading matter.

Of all the tomes these self-righteous censors consigned to the bonfire, only three were spared—because even they did not have the heart to burn them. And first and foremost of these was *Amadis of Gaul*. Speaking through his character of the Barber, Cervantes hailed this paragon of all romantic and heroic fantasies in these ringing yet simple words: "This is the best of all the books of this kind that have ever been written."

Amadis, tradition records, was written in Portuguese by an obscure knight, one Vasco de Lobeira, sometime in the late thirteen-hundreds. The date, the authorship, and for that matter, even the original language (Portuguese or Spanish) are all open to question. Some authorities incline towards ascribing authorship to a Galician knight, João de Lobeira, who frequented the court of Portugal between 1258 and 1285.

What is *not* open to question is the extraordinarily compelling power, the drama, spectacular imagination, and fantastic scenery of this peer of all the great romances. In praise thereof, Cervantes joins many an-

other distinguished literary figure. Ariosto and Montaigne admired it, and the Italian romancer, Torquato Tasso called it "the most beautiful and perhaps the most profitable story of its kind that can be read." In our own day, writers as widely different as theologian-philosopher C. S. Lewis and popular Sword-and-Sorcery novelist Michael Moorcock have spoken of it highly.

Setting aside all quibbles of scholarship and accepting the traditional account of its authorship for this brief introduction, Vasco de Lobeira was born at Oporto, fought in the battle of Aljubarrota, and won his knighthood on the battlefield from the hand of King Joã̃m himself. He is said to have died in 1403 at Elvas. Sometime before that, he completed his *Amadis of Gaul*; if it was composed during the reign of Fernando, then it was completed before 1383. But certainly it was written after Edward III laid claim to the French crown.

In those days, the court of Windsor was the most splendid and glittering in all Europe. This may be what prompted Lobeira to lay his fantastic romance in the imaginary reign of Lisuarte, King of Britain, a monarch whose reign somehow had escaped the notice of all other chroniclers, including Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Rather as Geoffrey, Wace, Layamon, Chrestien, and Malory surrounded the court of King Arthur with a fabulous assemblage of heroes, (the Knights of the Round Table), and as the French *jongleurs* and Italian romancers surrounded the throne of Charlemagne with a glorious company of peers, Lobeira set out to create an entire age of chivalry and heroic romance out of his own imagination, with no discernible recourse to established folklore or tradition.

Amadis himself is, of course, the peer and paladin of all the knightly fellowship who hail the throne of Lisuarte, but there are others. Don Galvanes and his nephew Agrayes; and Florestan and Galaor, the brothers of Amadis; Landasin the Sword-Player and Don Guilan the Pensive; Nicoran of the Perilous Bridge,

Gandalac the Good Giant, Palomir and Dragonis, Madancil of the Silver Bridge, Sir Listoran of the White Tower, Gavarte of the Perilous Vale, Norandel, Arcamon the Brave . . . and a host of others, each with his own characteristics, his own adventures, his own amours.

What Lobeira did was to create a whole world and an age as rich and full and glorious as that of Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*; but Malory did not make it all up himself. He took most of it from other books. That Lobeira's work is wholly invented is a testimonial to one of the most brilliant imaginary geniuses in popular literature, and a perfectly astounding achievement.

For the scope, the range, the variety, and the richness of his fantastic romance, and for its originality, I can place Lobeira beside no one else in the entire range of literature, except for Tolkien. And *that* is high praise indeed.

Amadis is about four times the length of the average novel, and innumerable spurious continuations and sequels were tacked onto it, carrying the tale on for many generations and resulting in a "novel" that must be, if considered one single work, the longest ever written.

Hence, the story is enormously complicated, and I will give a brief preface here which brutally simplifies a complex, extraordinarily rich tapestry of wars, quests, adventures, love affairs, intrigues, plots, invasions, and everything else you could possibly think of.

Amadis was the son of Princess Elisena, the daughter of Garinter of Lesser Britain, born out of formal wedlock (like King Arthur) via a liaison with King Perion of Gaul.

Through various misunderstandings, Amadis was abandoned to the sea in an ark as a babe (like Moses); he was found by a friendly Scots knight named Gandales who raised him to manhood with his own son, Gandalin (as the boy Arthur was raised by Sir Ector side by side with Ector's true son, Sir Kay).

Not knowing the infant's real name or his lineage,

the good knight called him "the child of the Sea" (just as Gareth was called "Blanchmains" during his boyhood apprenticeship, for lack of a genuine name).

Growing to manhood, Amadis journeys to Britain to become a champion in the noble fellowship of heroes who serve King Lisuarte. He meets and falls in love with Oriana, a high-born princess. He becomes the most renowned knight and champion in the world (like Lancelot du lac).

In most of his adventures, Amadis goes armed with the Green Sword, a powerful enchanted weapon of fabulous history (like Roland's Durendal, Lancelot's Aroundight, Siegfried's Gram, and so on). This sword is brought to the castle of King Lisuarte by an old squire and his two companions. The scabbard of the magic sword is made of bone, but a strange green bone, like glistening emerald. The blade itself is unlike any other: half is bright steel, and half burns red as flame. The old squire relates that "only that knight who, of all knights in the world, doth love his lady best" can draw the Green Sword from its strange enchanted scabbard.

First, King Lisuarte attempts the deed, but only manages to withdraw the sword a handsbreadth out of the scabbard; Galaor withdraws it three-fingersbreadth; many others try but fail. Then Amadis draws the sword out easily. (The scene reminds one of the young Arthur and the Sword in the Stone: the greatest barons, nobles, knights and champions of Britain strove to draw the sword from stone and anvil; all failed; Arthur did it.)

This first adventure of the two I have selected for inclusion in *Golden Cities, Far* comes from the First Book of *Amadis of Gaul*, in the English prose translation done by Robert Southey and published in London in 1872. It develops a key character, that of the powerful enchanter, Arcalaus, who thenceforward becomes the sworn enemy both of the bold knight Amadis and of Lisuarte, his king.

Arcalaus, in fact, is as close to being the central villain of *Amadis of Gaul* as it is possible to be, in a

story so enormously complicated and with so vast a cast of characters.

The next episode, to which I have given the title "The Isle of Wonders," introduces another fixed point in the great romance, the magic island that becomes Amadis' own kingdom in later years—*Insula Firma*—"The Firm Island."

Lobeira's fabulous imagination here reaches back an age, to a people and an earlier epoch, with noble warriors and their beautiful women. Like Tolkien, the glorious Portuguese romancer realized that an imaginary world must be firmly anchored, not only in space, by invented geography, but also in time, by making up prior historical events and personages. This seems to me to represent a remarkably sophisticated conception for the 13th century.

From the very opening pages of the second book of *Amadis* is the second adventure that follows. I have called it "The Isle of Wonders."

When I began compiling material for the anthology *Dragons, Elves, and Heroes*, I wanted something from this greatest of all the romances, but at that time I did not own a copy of the Southey translation, which I have since uncovered in Providence, Rhode Island, during a book-hunting trip.

For that first anthology I used *Palmerin of England* in lieu of *Amadis*.

Now—here is *Amadis*.

Arcalaus The Enchanter
from the Portuguese *Amadis of Gaul*
Translated by Robert Southey

Chap. XVIII *Of the News Which Amadis Had of
 Don Galaor, His Brother, and How He Departed*

from the Court of King Lisuarte to Go in Quest of Him.

One day when Amadis was talking with the Queen Brisena, there came a damsel into the palace, who knelt before her and said, Madam, is there a knight here who bears the lions? The Queen, perceiving that she meant Amadis, answered, What would you with him? I bring him tidings of a new knight, who had made a braver beginning of chivalry than did ever knight before in all the islands. Say you so? said Brisena; now then, tell your tale, for here is the knight whom ye seek. Then said the damsel to Amadis, Sir, the fair child whom you knighted before the castle of Bradoyd, where you conquered the two knights of the bridge, and the three of the causey, and took the lord of the castle, and delivered by force of arms Urganda's friend, saluteth you by me, as being the man whom he reputeth his lord, and bids me say that he will strive to be a good man, or die in the attempt; and when he shall be such in prowess, he will tell you more of his affairs than you yet know; but if he fail to become such a one as you could esteem, he will still be silent. Then came tears into the eyes of Amadis, so that all the dames and damsels saw he was weeping, for he remembered his brother. Meanwhile the queen, desirous to hear what deeds of prowess the new knight had performed said to the damsel, I pray you continue your message, and tell us that brave beginning of chivalry you speak of. The damsel then related what she had seen at the rock of Galtares, which when she had done, the queen asked Amadis if he knew who the knight was! and Amadis told her it was his brother.

But Oriana, who sate too far off to hear what was said, was greatly displeased to see Amadis in tears, and she said to Mabilia, Call your cousin that we may know what hath happened; and when he came to them, she asked him, angrily, from whom the damsel could bring him news that should draw tears? But when he told her, she cried, Pardon me, my lord, that I suspected where there was no cause. Ah, lady, he replied, how can I pardon you who have never

offended; but if it please you, may I go and seek my brother? And this he said because he greatly desired to see him, and because he wished to seek adventures wherein renown might be won. Oriana answered, As God shall help me, I should greatly rejoice to see that knight here, and I freely permit you to seek him; but let it seem as if you went at the queen's command. Amadis then went to the queen, and said, I would, lady, that we had that knight in the king's company; yet, if he be not sought, it will be long before he will come. In God's name, replied Brisena, seek him then, but when you have found him forthwith return here.

On the morrow Amadis heard mass, and departed with only Gandalin. Towards the close of the second day, as he rode thro' a forest, he met a lady with two damsels and four esquires, and there was a litter with them, and they were all loudly lamenting. Lady, said Amadis, what have you in this litter? I have all my care and my sorrow, said she; a knight, my husband, who is wounded I fear to death. Then he approached the litter, and lifting a cloth that covered him beheld a goodly knight, but his face was all bruised and swoln, and it had many wounds. Sir knight, said he, from whom have you received this injury? but the knight turned his head a little, and made no reply. The lady answered, From a knight who keeps a bridge upon this road, and who hath thus wounded him in hatred to King Lisuarte, upon whom and all his companions he hath vowed revenge for the death of Dardan. Lady, said Amadis, lend me one of your squires, to guide me to him, for since for my sake your husband has been so wronged, it behoves me to avenge him. Ah, good knight, said she, God prosper you! So they each went their way, and Amadis rode on till he came to the bridge, and he saw the knight playing at tables with another, but quickly leaving his pastime, he mounted on horseback and rode towards Amadis, and cried, Stay, sir knight, you pass not the bridge till you have sworn! Sworn what? quoth Amadis. Whether you are of King Lisuarte's household; if so, you shall lose your head. That, said Amadis, is not quite so certain. I am of that household, the knight of the queen,

his wife, and have been so since I won the battle for a disherited lady. By my head, replied he of the bridge, thou shalt lose thine! for thou hast slain the best of my lineage. Hereupon they gave the spurs to their horses, and breaking their lances, met so furiously that the knight of the bridge was thrown to the ground; but, by reason the helmet of Amadis was displaced in the encounter, he had leisure to mount again, and to give his enemy three blows with the sword, before Amadis had adjusted the lacings; that done, he of Gaul requited him with one blow on the side of the neck, that sent his head dangling upon his breast. Now, said he to the squire, go tell your lady what you have seen.

Then Amadis rode on till he came to the end of the forest, and entered a fair plain and wide, and he was delighted with the green herbs that he saw on all sides. Presently there came up an ugly dwarf upon a palfrey, whom he asked whence he came? From the house of the Count of Clara. Have you seen there a young knight called Galaor? No, said the dwarf, but in three days I will show you the best knight in this land. Ah, dwarf, lead me then to him. That shall I do, if you will grant me a boon, and go with me where I shall appoint. This Amadis granted, hoping that the knight of whom he spake might be his brother. So they rode on together. The following day about noon they saw two knights fighting against one, and Amadis approached, and said, Sirs, may it please ye stay awhile, and tell me on what occasion your quarrel ariseth? At these words they ceased and one of them replied, Because this knight maintaineth that he alone is able to atchieve as great an enterprize as we two together. Certes, said Amadis, a slight causel for the goodness of the one diminisheth no jot of the other. They saw that he spake with good reason, and so ended their strife; and they then asked him if he knew the knight who conquered Dardan. Why ask ye? quoth Amadis.— Because we would gladly meet with him. I know not, he replied, whether your meaning be good or bad; but I saw him not long since in the court of King Lisuarte; and he took leave of them and went his way. The two knights conferred together a little and then galloped after him. He no sooner

heard them, than he turned and took his arms; he had no lance, neither had they, having broken them in their quarrel. Alas! my lord, quoth the dwarf, what will ye do? do you not see that that they are two? I shall defend myself if they attack me, replied Amadis; and by this they came up. Knight, said they, we beg a boon of you, and you must grant it if you would get from us. I shall grant it the sooner, replied Amadis, if it be reasonable. Tell us then, as a loyal knight, where we may find him by whom Dardan was slain. He who was now compelled to avow himself answered, I am he. They exclaimed at once, Ah, traitor, thou diest! and all fell upon him. But Amadis so bestirred himself, that only one of them escaped with life from the adventure. Ah, quoth the dwarf, I take a better with me for my boon than I had thought!

That night they lodged with a hermit, and had poor fare for their supper. In the morning about the hour of tierce, the dwarf showed him in a pleasant valley two tall pine-trees, and under them sate a knight all armed, upon a lusty courser, and two knights whom he had just dismounted, were endeavouring to catch their horses; and in the same shade another knight lay leaning on his helmet, having his shield by him; and there were twenty lances ready against the tree, and two horses ready caparisoned. There, said the dwarf, he who leans on his helmet is the good knight of whom I spake, Angriote of Estravaus, the best knight that I have heard report of.—Why keepeth he there so many lances? The dwarf answered, I can resolve ye: he loveth a lady of this country, who hateth him above all others; nevertheless, he hath prevailed so much in fight that her parents were constrained to give her to him. After he had gotten her into his power, he thought himself the happiest man in the world, but she told him it was no courtesy to take a damsel against her will, and that she never willingly would be his till he had performed one thing for her, which was that he and his brother should keep this Vale of Pines for a year against all errant knights, and force them to go to King Lisuarte's court, and confess there that she is more beautiful than their mistresses. And this she devised in her great hatred to him,

hoping that he would either be slain, or provoke many enemies who might protect her against him. For this cause they depart not hence all the day time, and at night retire to the castle upon yonder brow; three months have past in which time Angriote hath never set hand to spear against any knight, because his brother hath still been conqueror. At the entrance of the valley a squire met them, and said, Sir knight, you pass not on unless you confess the mistress of yonder knight to be fairer than your own. That lie shall I never utter, answered Amadis, and rode on.

Chap. XIX How Amadis Fought with Angriote of Estravaus and His Brother, and Conquered Them

When the brother of Angriote saw him coming, he took his arms and met him, saying, Certes, knight, great folly have you committed in not granting our demand! Wherewith they gave the career against each other; the shield of Amadis was pierced, but the lance broke against his corslet; his antagonist was thrown back, yet held he fast the reins till they broke, and he fell upon his neck in such plight that he knew nothing of himself. Hereon Amadis alighted and took off his helmet, and perceiving that he was in a swoon, drew him by the arm towards him; the knight then opened his eyes, and, fearing death, yielded. Amadis mounted again, for Angriote was already horsed, and had taken his arms, and sent a lance to him. Soon they encountered so gallantly, that the staves shivered, and both passed on, for they were good knights. Then Amadis seized his sword, but Angriote cried, We may have the sword battle anon, and to your cost; let us joust till yonder lances fail us, or till one be sent to the earth. And this he said, deeming that there was no knight in the world who could wield the sword better than himself. Sir, answered Amadis, I have what to do elsewhere, and cannot so long tarry.—What! would you escape so lightly? I pray thee one course more! They chose fresh spears, and met in the course so strongly that Angriote fell, and his horse upon him, and Amadis passing on fell over the horse of Angriote, and a part

of the spear which had gone through his shield, was driven by the fall through his harness and into the flesh, though but a little depth; but he rose lightly, as one who would brook no shame for himself and in his lady's cause, and plucked the truncheon out, and went to his antagonist sword in hand. Knight, said Angriote, thou art a brave youth; I beseech thee confess my lady is fairer than thine, before it be worse with thee. Such lie, quoth Amadis, shall my lips never utter. Then began a strife which could not long endure, for rather would Amadis have died than failed one jot in this quarrel, and he laid on so fiercely that neither the great strength nor skill of Angriote availed him; for the sword came now upon his head, now upon his body, that the blood sprang from more than twenty wounds. He, as he could, drew back.—Of a truth, knight, there is more worth in thee than man can think. Yield! quoth Amadis, else if we end the combat thy life also will be ended; and that should I repent, for I esteem of thee better than thou weenest. This he said for his great goodness in arms, and for the courtesy which he had used towards his mistress, having her in his power. Angriote, who could not chuse, gave himself up for vanquished, saying, Believe me, I not so much sorrow for my foil, as for the wreckful chance that I this day lose the thing which I love best. That shall you not, said Amadis, if I can help you, and the lady will be ungrateful if she acknowledge not your honourable pains in her defence. I promise you to employ my endeavours in your behalf, so soon as I return from a quest.—Where, sir, shall I find you?—In the court of King Lisuarte, answered Amadis. So he took leave of Angriote and passed on with the dwarf.

Five days they rode together, then the dwarf showed him a castle marvellously strong and pleasant.—There is Castle Valderin! within that hold you must perform the promise made to me; take your arms, for they suffer none lightly to go out who enter there. Amadis buckled on his helm and rode on first, the dwarf and Gandalin followed; they passed through the gate, and looked round, and could see no creature. The place is deserted, quoth Amadis. So, said the

dwarf, it seems.—Why then hast thou brought me here? Sir, said the dwarf, there was here the fiercest knight that ever I saw, and the strongest in arms, who in that porch slew two knights; the one was my master, and him he slew cruelly, as a man in whom there was no pity: the head of that traitor is the boon which I required. I have led here many knights to obtain vengeance, but for their sins they have either been slain or thrown into cruel prison. Thou doest the part of a loyal servant, said Amadis; yet oughtest thou to bring no knight here without telling him against whom he should fight. Sir, he answered, he is so known for one of the fierce, that if I had named him none would venture to accompany me,—it is Arcalaus, the Enchanter. Again Amadis looked round about if he might see anybody; he alighted and waited till vespers, then asked the dwarf what they should do? Sir, said he, the darkness is at hand: it is not good to tarry here. Nay trust me, answered Amadis, I will not budge hence till he come, or some one who can tell me tidings of him. I, said the dwarf, will not stay, lest he should see and know me. Yet shalt thou stay, quoth Amadis, for I will not excuse myself from the promise, if I may perform it. As thus they communed, Amadis espied a court somewhat farther on, wherein he entered and found no one, but he saw a dark place, with steps that went under ground. Let us see what is here, said he. For God's sake mercy! cried the dwarf, I would not for the world go down. But Gandalin caught him as he would have run away; Fear not, tall fellow! said he. And Amadis said, You shall not go till I have performed my promise, or till you see how it fares with me. Let me go, let me go! quoth the little wretch, I acquit the promise; for God's sake, let me go! Said Amadis, Thou shalt not say hereafter, I have failed in my promise. I desire thee not to discharge me of it. By my faith, I discharge you, said the dwarf, and I will wait for you in the road, to see if you come. Go then, and good luck go with thee, quoth the knight; I shall remain till morning. So the dwarf fled in haste.

Amadis went down the steps so far that he could see nothing; he came to a plain ground; it was utterly dark, yet

he proceeded, and groping along a wall, felt a bar of iron, whereto there hung a key, and he opened the padlock of the grate; then heard he a voice, saying, Ah, God! how long shall this misery continue? Ah, death! why delayest thou to come when thou art so needed? He listened awhile but heard no more; he then entered the vault, having his shield about his neck and the helmet laced, and the sword in his hand; and passing further he found himself in a great hall, where was a lamp burning, and he saw six armed men sleeping in one bed, and by them lay their shields and hatchets. One hatchet he took, and advanced. Anon more than a hundred voices were heard crying aloud, Lord God send us death and deliver us! Thereat was Amadis greatly astonished; and the men who were asleep awoke, and the one said to the other, Take a scourge and make those wretches silent who disturb us in our sleep! Aye, marry will I, said the other; and taking a scourge he rose, but seeing Amadis he stopt, and cried, Who goes there?—A strange knight. The man turned back and fastened the grate, and roused his comrades. Leave him to me, said the jaylor, and I will place him among the rest. This man was great and strong of limb, and taking his shield and hatchet, he advanced towards Amadis;—If you fear death lay down your arms, if not, expect what my hatchet will give thee! Both raised their hatchets at once, and at once both blows fell; the jaylor's entered far into the knight's helmet; the knight's pierced through the shield of his enemy, who drew back and so plucked the hatchet from his hand. Then Amadis drew his sword; the other grappled with him, confiding in his strength, but Amadis with the pummel of his sword drove at his face and broke his jaw, and shook him off; then followed that stroke with such another, that he never needed a surgeon. Then sheathing his sword, he recovered the hatchet from the shield, and so played his part with the other five, that only two escaped death by falling at his feet for mercy. Shew me then the prisoners! said Amadis; they led the way. Who lies here? said he, hearing a lamentable voice from a cell. A lady, said they, in great torments; and taking two keys from the jaylor's girdle, he unlocked the door; but she, who be-

lieved it was her old tormentor, exclaimed, Kill me, man, and do not inflict so many martyrdoms! O king, in an evil day was I beloved by you, since that love has cost me so dear! The tears came over the eyes of Amadis for great pity: Lady, said he, I am not he whom you think, but one who will if he can, deliver you; and he called for light, and when the soldier brought it, beheld a lady chained round the neck with a great chain, and her garments fretted and worn thro' to the skin. Wretched as you behold me, said she, yet am I the daughter of a king, and thus tortured for a king's sake. So he caused the chain to be taken off, and commanded garments to be brought her, and she covered herself with the scarlet mantle of the jaylor, and he led her from the prison.

There met them one at the grate, who called out to the soldier with the light, Arcalaus demandeth where the knight is that entered? whether he be dead or taken? At these words, the man let fall the torch with exceeding fear, and could make no reply. Villain! quoth Amadis, what fearest thou, being under my guard? Go on! Then they ascended the stairs, and came into the open court. The night was far spent, and the moon was clear above; but that poor lady, beholding the heavens, and feeling the air, fell on her knees, and cried, Ah, gentle knight, God protect thee and give thee thy reward!

Then Amadis raising her, looked round for Gandalin, and finding him not, he feared, and exclaimed, If the best knight in the world be slain, I will take such vengeance as never has been heard of. Presently he heard a cry, and following it found the dwarf hanging by one leg from a beam over a fire of stinking smoke, and near him Gandalin tied to a post. Him he was about to untie, but the squire cried, The dwarf first, for he is in worst case; and Amadis holding him in one hand while he cut the cord, set him on his feet; then set Gandalin at liberty, and said to him, In sooth, my friend, he who placed thee here did not love thee as I do. He went toward the castle, and found the portcullis down. Gandalin shewed him the place where his horse was stabled; he burst the door and took him out, then seated himself on a stone bench in

the wall with the lady, for tho' he wished to deliver the other prisoners, yet durst he not leave her. So there he awaited daylight; meanwhile he asked the lady, for what king's sake she had suffered. Sir, said she, Arcalaus mortally hates him, and therefore revenged himself upon me; he seized me in the presence of many friends, and covering me with a dark cloud carried me away, and from that time till now I have never seen daylight; and this he did as the worst evil he could do to my lover, King Arban of North Wales. Is it he? quoth Amadis; now God be thanked, for dearly do I love that knight! but now do I not so much pity you as before, since you have suffered for the sake of one of the best men in the world.

When it was day, a knight looked from a window and asked Amadis, Art thou he who hast slain my jaylor and my servants? Art thou he, answered Amadis, who so treacherously murderest knights and imprisonest dames and damsels? thou art the most disloyal and cruellest knight in the world!

As yet you know not all my cruelty, Arcalaus replied, and left the window; and soon they saw him enter the court well armed, upon a lusty courser. Now this was one of the largest knights in the world who were not giants, and Amadis looked at him with admiration, thinking that he must needs be of great strength. Why lookest thou at me so earnestly? quoth the Castellan.—Because thou wouldst be so good a knight were it not for thy foul disloyalty. I come in good time, quoth Arcalaus, to be preached at by one like thee! and with that he laid lance in rest, and ran the charge. The spears brake; horses and bodies met; and both horses were driven to the ground. Quickly the knights arose, and began a fierce combat which lasted long; at length the Catellan drew back, Knight, said he, thou art in the chance of death, and I know not who thou art: tell me that I may know, for I think rather to slay than take thee. My death, Amadis replied, is in the will of God, whom I fear; and thine is in the will of the devil, who is weary of helping thee, and will now let thy soul and body perish together. You ask my name: I am Amadis of Gaul, the knight of Queen Brisena. Then renewed they

their combat with fresh fury till about the hour of tierce, then Arcalaus waxed faint, and Amadis smote him down; and, as he rose, staggered him with another blow on the helmet, so that seeing himself near to die, he fled into the palace, and Amadis followed. But he running into a little chamber, at the door whereof stood a lady beholding the battle, took up a sword, for he had dropt his own in the court, and called to Amadis, Come in and finish the fight! This hall is larger, answered Amadis, let it be here. I will not come out, quoth the Castellan. What! quoth he of Gaul, thinkest thou so to save thyself? and placing his shield before him, he entered the chamber, his sword being raised to strike; immediately the strength of all his limbs was gone, and he lost his senses, and fell to the ground like a dead man. Thou shalt die by no other death than this, said Arcalaus; what say you, my lady, have I well avenged myself? and with that he disarmed Amadis, who knew nothing of what was doing, and put on the armour himself, and said to his lady, As you regard yourself, let none remove this knight till his soul shall have forsaken his body. Then he descended into the court, and said to her whom Amadis had delivered, Seek for some other to release you, for this champion is dispatched. And when Gandalin heard these words, he fell down senseless. Arcalaus took the lady, and led her where Amadis lay in that deadly trance; and she, seeing him in such plight, wanted no tears to express the abundance of her grief. As soon as he is dead, said Arcalaus to that other lady who was his wife, place this woman again in her prison. I will go to the court of King Lisuarte, and there relate how I performed this battle, upon condition that he who conquered should cut off his enemy's head, and within fifteen days publish his victory at that court. By these means none shall challenge me about his death, and I shall obtain the greatest glory in the world, having overcome him who conquered every one.

Then he went into the court, and ordered Gandalin and the dwarf to prison; but Gandalin reviled him with the names of traitor and villain, and provoked him to kill him, desiring death. Arcalaus made his men drag him by the leg to a

dungeon; If I killed thee, said he, thou wouldst endure no farther pain, and there thou shalt have worse than death.

He then mounted upon the horse of Amadis, and, accompanied by three squires, set forth for the court.

Chap. XX Of the Battle Which Amadis had with Arcalaus the Enchanter, and How He Escaped from His Enchantment

Grindalaya, the lady whom Amadis had delivered, made such dole over him as was pitiful to hear. The wife of Arcalaus comforted her so well as she could, for she was of disposition clean contrary to her husband, and always besought God in her prayers to turn his heart. As they were thus together, they saw two damsels enter the hall, each bearing in her hands many lighted candles, which they placed along the sides of the chamber wherein Amadis lay; the ladies who beheld them this while being neither able to speak nor move. One of the damsels took a book from a casket which she brought under her arm, and read from it aloud, and at times a voice answered her, and presently the answers were made by many voices together, as tho' an hundred, and all in the chamber. Then there came another book through the floor of the chamber, whirling as if driven by the wind, and it stopt at the feet of her who read, and she took and broke it into four parts, and burnt them at the sides of the chamber where the candles stood. Then she went to Amadis, and took him by the hand!—Arise, Sir, for you lie uneasily? and Amadis arose and cried, Holy Mary! what is this? I was well nigh dead. Certes, sir knight, replied the damsel, such a man as you should not perish in this sort, for by your hand must others die who better deserve it! and with that, without more words, both damsels returned thither from whence they came.

Then Amadis asked what had past, and Grindalaya told him all. I felt him disarm me, said he, but all seemed as in a dream. Then arming himself in the harness of Arcalaus, he said to his wife, look to this lady well till I return; and he

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went to deliver Gandalin. The men of Arcalaus seeing him thus armed, ran all ways; but he descended the steps, and through the hall where he had slain the jaylor, and so to the dungeon: a dreadful place it was for the captives: in length, an hundred times as far as a man's spread arms can reach; one only and a half of that span wide; dark, for neither light nor air could enter, and so full that it was crowded. Amadis came to the door and called, Gandalin! but he, who was like one dead, hearing the voice was greatly terrified, and made no answer, for he believed that his master was slain, and he himself enchanted. Gandalin? where art thou? again cried Amadis. O God! will he not answer? and he said to the prisoners, tell me for God's sake, is the squire living whom they have just now cast here? but then the dwarf knew his voice, and answered, Here we are! Thereat greatly rejoicing Amadis went to the lamp in the hall, and kindled torches and took them to the dungeon, and loosed Gandalin's chain, for he lay nearest the door, and bade him deliver his comrades.

They came from the dungeon, an hundred and fifteen men in all, of whom thirty were knights, and they followed Amadis, exclaiming, O fortunate knight! even so did our saviour go out from hell, leading away his servants whom he had delivered. Christ give thee thy reward! and, when they came to the sun-light and open sky, they fell upon their knees, and with lifted hands blest God who had given that knight strength to their deliverance.

Amadis seeing their faces so pale and overspent, that they seemed like dead rather than living creatures, was moved to exceeding compassion. One among them he remarked for his better shape and stature, who came forward and asked what they should call their deliverer; and hearing it was Amadis, replied that he also was of King Lisuarte's court, being by name Brandoyuas. Right glad was Amadis thereof, for he had often heard his good report, and the sorrow that there was for his loss. The other prisoners then confessed their bounden duty to him, and desired him to appoint what they should do, and he willed them each to do as he thought best.

They telling him that wherever they might be they should be at his command, departed; Brandoyuas and two squires only remaining with Amadis.

They now went to the wife of Arcalaus. Lady, said Amadis, for your sake, and the sake of these women, I forbear to set the castle on fire. She answered him weeping, God is witness of the trouble and grief I endure for my husband's evil ways; but I must obey him, and pray for his amendment; now I am at your mercy. Then Amadis requested arms for Brandoyuas, and fit garments for Grindalaya; Give them, said he, if it please you, at your free will: the horse and arms of Arcalaus I must take, for he hath taken mine, and with them a sword of more value than all this! This the dame willingly accorded, and she besought them to take food before they departed, and the best viands were brought forth that so short warning could afford. But Grindalaya could not eat, uneasy to be gone; whereat the knights smiled, and still more at the dwarf, who could eat nothing and scarcely could he speak, and his colour was gone. Dwarf, said Amadis, shall we wait for Arcalaus, that I may give thee the boon which you released? Sir, said he, so dear hath that cost me, that never while I live will I beg another: let us go before the devil comes back again. I cannot stand upon the leg he hung me by, and my nose is so full of the brimstone smoke of that fire that I can do nothing but sneeze. So after they had repasted they took leave of the dame, and she commending Amadis to God said, I pray God that there may be peace between my lord and you!

Certes, lady, quoth he, however that may be, there will be peace between you and me, for you have deserved it.

And the time came when these words greatly profited that lady.

They departed together, and on the second day separated, Grindalaya and Brandoyuas going to the court of Lisuarte; Amadis pursuing his search. And where wilt thou go, my friend? said he to the dwarf. I would remain and be your servant, quoth the dwarf, and he kissed the hand of Amadis as his master.

And henceforth he accompanied Amadis wherever in the world his adventures led him; and that was far, in truth, as ye shall all see.

The Isle of Wonders
From the Portuguese *Amadis of Gaul*
Translated by Robert Southey

Chap. I Here Beginneth the Second Book of Amadis of Gaul; and Because the Great Things Which Will Be Related in the Fourth Book Concerning Amadis Are All Relating to the Firm Island, It Behoves That in This Second It Should Be Related What This Island Was, and Who Left Those Enchantments and the Great Riches Which Were Therein

There was a king in Greece married to the sister of the emperor of Constantinople, by whom he had two fair sons, especially the elder, named Apolidon, who in his days had no equal for strength of body and courage of heart. He having a subtle genius, which is so seldom found with valour, gave himself to the study of the sciences and of all arts, so that he shone among those of his own time like the moon among the stars; especially he excelled in necromancy, whereby things that appear impossible are done. The king his father was very rich in treasure, but poor in life, by reason of his great age; and seeing himself at the point of death, he commanded that the kingdom should be given to Apolidon, as his eldest son, and his books and treasures to the other. The younger was not contented with this, and told his father so with tears, and complained that he was disinherited; but the old man, not knowing what to do, wrung his hands for pure sorrow. Then

that famous Apolidon, seeing his father's grief and the littleness of his brother, bade him take comfort, for he would accept the books and treasure, and relinquish the kingdom to his brother. Whereat the father gave him his blessing with many tears. So Apolidon took his inheritance, and fitted out certain ships, manning them with chosen knights, and set forth into the sea, trusting himself to Fortune, who seeing his great obedience to his father, and how he had thrown himself upon her mercy, resolved to requite him with glory and greatness. A fair wind carried him to the empire of Rome, where Siudan was then emperor, at whose court he abode some time, doing great feats in arms, till there grew a true affection between him and the emperor's sister, Grimanesa, who then flourished among all other women for beauty. So it was that as he was loving, even so was he loved, and as their loves might no other ways be indulged, they left Rome together, and set sail in Apolidon's fleet, and sailed till they came to the Firm Island. There Apolidon landed, not knowing what country it was, and pitched a tent upon the shore, and placed a couch there for his lady, who was weary of the sea. Presently there came down a fierce giant, who was lord of the island, with whom, according to the custom of the place, Apolidon was to do battle for the preservation of his lady and himself, and his company. It ended in such sort that the giant lay dead on the field, and Apolidon remained master of the island. When he had seen its strength, he neither feared the emperor of Rome, whom he had offended, nor all the world besides; and there he and Grimanesa, being greatly beloved by the islanders, whom he had delivered from their oppressor, dwelt in all happiness for sixteen years. During that time many rich edifices were made, as well with his great treasures, as with his surpassing wisdom, such as it would have been difficult for any emperor or king, how rich soever, to have completed. At the end of that time the emperor of Greece died without an heir, and the Greeks, knowing the great worth of Apolidon, and that by his mother's side he was of the blood and lineage of the emperors, elected him with one common consent to rule over them. He,

albeit he was enjoying all possible delights in his own island, yet, with Grimanesa's consent, accepted the empire; but she, before they left the island where she had enjoyed such rare happiness, requested her husband that he would work such a means by his great knowledge, that that island might never be possessed, except by a knight as excellent in arms and loyal in love as himself, and by a dame resembling her in beauty and truth.

Then Apolidon made an arch at the entrance of a garden, wherein there were all kinds of trees, and also four rich chambers, but it was so surrounded that none could enter, except by passing under the arch, over which he placed the image of a man made of copper, holding a trumpet in his mouth as if he would wind it. And in one of the chambers within he placed two figures, in the likeness of himself and his lady, the countenances and the stature like unto them, so true that they seemed alive; and near them he placed a bright stone of jasper; and about the distance of half a cross-bow shot, he made a perron of iron. Henceforward, said he, no man or woman who hath been false to their first love shall pass here, for yonder image shall blow from that trumpet so dreadful a blast with smoke and flames of fire, that they shall be stunned and cast out as dead. But if knight, or dame, or damsel come, worthy by virtue of true loyalty to finish this adventure, they shall enter without let, and the image shall make a sound so sweet that it shall be delightful to hear, and they shall see our images, and behold their own name written in the jasper. Grimanesa afterwards ordered some of her knights and ladies to make trial, and then the image blew the dreadful blast with smoke and flames of fire; whereat Grimanesa laughed, knowing them to be in more dread than danger. But yet, my lord, quoth she, what shall be done with that rich chamber wherein we have enjoyed such great contentment? He answered, You shall see. Then he made two other persons, one of stone, the other of copper; the stone one was placed five paces from the chamber, the copper one five paces farther off. Know now, said he, that henceforth in no manner, nor at any time, shall man or woman enter this

chamber till a knight come who surpasses me in prowess, or a woman exceeding you in beauty; they shall enter. He then placed these words in the copper perron: Knights shall advance here, each according to his valour; and in the stone perron, he wrote: Here none shall pass except the knight who exceeds Apolidon in prowess. And over the door of the chamber he wrote: He who surpasses me in prowess shall enter here, and be lord of the island. And he laid such a spell that none could approach within twelve paces of the chamber round about, nor was there any entrance but by the perrons.

Then he appointed a governor to rule the island, and collect the revenues, which were to be reserved for the knight who should enter the chamber; and he commanded that all who failed in attempting to pass the arch of lovers, should, without ceremony, be cast out of the island; but such as passed through were to be entertained and served with all honour. And farther, he appointed that all knights who attempted the adventure of the forbidden chamber and did not pass the copper perron should leave their arms there; but from those who advanced any way beyond it, only their swords should be taken. They who reached to the marble perron should leave only their shields, and if they penetrated beyond that, but failed to enter the chamber, they should lose only their spurs. From the dames and damsels who failed, nothing was to be taken, only their names should be placed upon the castle-gate, and an account how far they had advanced. Apolidon then said, When this island shall have another lord, the enchantment shall be dissolved, and all knights may freely pass the persons and enter the chamber; but it shall not be free for women, till the fairest shall have come, and lodged in the rich chamber with the lord of the island. These enchantments being thus made, Apolidon and his wife entered their ships, and passed over into Greece, where they reigned during their lives, and left children to succeed them.

*Cousin Agrayes Went Towards King Lisuarte, and
How by Adventure They Went to the Enchanted
Firm Island, and of What Befel Them There*

While Amadis remained with his comrades at the court of Sobradisa, his thoughts were perpetually fixed upon his lady Oriana; and, so thoughtful was he, and so often, both sleeping and waking, was he in tears, that all saw how he was troubled, yet knew they not the cause, for he kept his love silent, as a man who had all virtues in his heart. At length, not being able to support a longer absence, he asked permission of the fair young queen to depart, which she not without reluctance having granted, loving him better than herself, he and his brethren and their cousin Agrayes took the road towards King Lisuarte. Some days had they travelled when they came to a little church, and entering there to say their prayers, they saw a fair damsel, accompanied by two others, and by four squires who guarded her, coming from the door. She asked them whither they went. Amadis answered, Damsel, we go to the court of King Lisuarte, where, if it please you to go, we will accompany you. Thank you, quoth the damsel, but I am faring elsewhere. I waited because I saw you were armed like errant knights, to know if any of you would go and see the wonders of the Firm Island, for I am the governor's daughter, and am returning there. Holy Mary! cried Amadis, I have often heard of the wonders of that island, and should account myself happy if I might prove them, yet till now I never prepared to go! Good sir, quoth she, do not repent of your delay; many have gone there with the same wish, and returned not so joyfully as they went. So I have heard, said Amadis: tell me, would it be far out of our road if we went there?—Two days journey.—Is the Firm Island, then, in this part of the sea, where is the enchanted arch of true lovers, under which neither man nor woman can pass that hath been false to their first love? The damsel answered. It is a certain truth, and many other wonders are there. Then Agrayes said to his companions, I know not what you will do, but I will go with this damsel, and see these

wonderful things. If you are so true a lover, said she, as to pass the enchanted arch, you will see the likenesses of Apollidon and Grimanesa, and behold your own name written upon a stone, where you will find only two names written besides, though the spell hath been made an hundred years. In God's name let us go, quoth Agrayes, and I will try whether I can be third. With that, Amadis, who in his heart had no less desire and faith to prove the adventure, said to his brethren, We are not enamoured, but we should keep our cousin company who is, and whose heart is so bold. Thereto they all consented, and set forth with the damsel. What is this island! said Florestan to Amadis, tell me, sir, for you seem to know. A young knight whom I greatly esteem, replied Amadis, told me all I know; King Arban of North Wales: he was there four days, but could accomplish none of the adventures, and so departed with shame. The damsel then related the history of the enchantments, which greatly incited Galaor and Florestan to the proof.

So they rode on till sunset, and then entering a valley, they saw many tents pitched in a meadow, and people sporting about them; one knight, richly appavelled, who seemed to be the chief. Sirs, quoth the damsel, that is my father: I will go advertise him of your coming, that he may do you honour. When he heard of their desire to try the enchantment, he went on foot with all his company to welcome them, and they were honourably feasted and lodged that night. At morning they accompanied the governor to his castle, which commanded the whole island, for at the entrance there was a neck of land, only a bow-shot over, connected with the main land; all the rest was surrounded by the sea; seven leagues in length it was, and five broad, and because it was all surrounded by the sea, except where the neck of land connected it with the continent, it was called the Firm Island. Having entered, they saw a great palace, the gates whereof were open, and many shields hung upon the wall; about an hundred were in one row, and above them were ten, and above the ten were two, but one of them was in a higher nitch than the other. Then Amadis asked why they were thus ranked.

The governor answered, according to the prowess of those who would have entered the forbidden chamber; the shields of those who could not enter the perron of copper are near the ground; the ten above them are of those who reached it; the lowest of the two passed that perron, and the one above all reached to the marble perron, but could pass no farther. Then Amadis approached the shields to see if he knew them, for each had its owner's name inscribed; the one which was the highest of the ten bore a sable lion, with argent teeth and nails, and a bloody mouth, in a field sable: this he knew to be the shield of Arcalaus. Then he beheld the two uppermost; the lower bore, in a field azure, a knight cutting off the head of a giant; this was the shield of King Abies of Ireland, who had been there two years before his combat with Amadis; the highest had three golden flowers in a field azure; this he knew not, but he read the inscription, This is the shield of Don Quadragante, brother to King Abies of Ireland. He had proved the adventure twelve days ago, and had reached the marble perron, which was more than any knight before him had done, and he was now gone to Great Britain to combat Amadis, in revenge for his brother's death. When Amadis saw all these shields, he doubted the adventure much, seeing that such knights had failed.

They went out from the palace towards the Arch of True Lovers. When they came near, Agraves alighted and commended himself to God, and cried, Love, if I have been true to thee, remember me! and he past the spell; and, when he came under the arch, the image blew forth sweet sounds, and he came to the palace, and saw the likeness of Apolidon and Grimanesa, and saw also the jasper-stone, wherein two names were written, and now his own the third. The first said, Madanil, son of the Duke of Burgundy, atchieved this adventure; and the second was, this is the name of Don Bruneo of Bonamar, son to Vallados, Marquis of Troque; and his own said, This is Agraves, son to King Languines of Scotland. This Madanil loved Guinda, lady of Flanders. Don Bruneo had proved the enchantment but eight days ago, and she

whom he loved was Melicia, daughter to King Perion, the sister of Amadis.

When Agrayes had thus entered, Amadis said to his brethren, will ye prove the adventure? No, said they, we are not so enthralled that we can deserve to accomplish it. Since you are two, then, quoth he, keep one another company, as I, if I can, will do with my cousin Agrayes. Then gave he his horse and arms to Gandalin, and went on without fear, as one who felt that never in deed or in thought had he been faithless to his lady. When he came under the arch, the image began a sound far different and more melodious than he had ever before done, and showered down flowers of great fragrance from the mouth of the trumpet, the like of which had never been done before to any knight who entered. He past on to the images, and here Agrayes, who apprehended something of his passion, met him and embraced him; and said, Sir, my cousin, there is no reason that we should henceforth conceal from each other our loves. But Amadis made no reply, but taking his hand, they went to survey the beauties of the garden.

Don Galaor and Florestan, who waited for them without, seeing that they tarried, besought Ysanjo, the governor, to shew them the forbidden chamber, and he led them towards the perrons. Sir brother, said Florestan, what will you do? Nothing, replied Galaor: I have no mind to meddle with enchantments. Then amuse yourself here, quoth Florestan; I will try my fortune. He then commended himself to God, threw his shield before him, and proceeded sword in hand. When he entered the spell, he felt himself attacked on all sides with lances and swords, such blows and so many that it might be thought never man could endure them; yet, for he was strong and of good heart, he ceased not to make his way, striking manfully on all sides, and it felt in his hand as though he were striking armed men, and the sword did not cut. Thus struggling, he passed the copper perron, and advanced as far as the marble one, but there his strength failed him, and he fell like one dead, and was cast out beyond the line of the spell. When Galaor saw this he was displeased,

and said, However little I like these things, I must take my share in the danger! and bidding the squires and the dwarf to stay by Florestan, and throw cold water in his face, he took his arms and commended himself to God, and advanced towards the forbidden chamber. Immediately the unseen blows fell upon him, but he went on, and forced his way up to the marble perron, and there he stood; but, when he advanced another step beyond, the blows came on him so heavy a load, that he fell senseless, and was cast out like Florestan.

Amadis and Agrayes were reading the new inscription in the jasper, This is Amadis of Gaul, the true lover, son to King Perion—when Ardian the dwarf came up to the line, and cried out, Help! help, Sir Amadis, your brothers are slain! They hastened out to him, and asked how it was.—Sir, they attempted the forbidden chamber, and did not achieve it, and there they lie for dead! Immediately they rode towards them, and found them so handled as you have heard, albeit some little recovering. Then Agrayes, who was stout of heart, alighted, and went on as fast as he could to the forbidden chamber, striking aright and aleft with his sword, but his strength did not suffice to bear the blows; he fell senseless between the perrons, and was cast out as his cousins had been. Then Amadis began to curse their journey thither, and said to Galaor, who was now revived, Brother, I must not excuse my body from the danger which yours have undergone. Galaor would have withheld him, but he took his arms, and went on, praying God to help him. When he came to the line of the spell, there he paused for a moment, and said, O Oriana, my lady, from you proceeds all my strength and courage! remember me now at this time, when your dear remembrance is so needful to me! Then he went on. The blows fell thick upon him and hard till he reached the marble perron, but then they came so fast as if all the knights in the world were besetting him, and such an uproar of voices arose as if the whole world were perishing, and he heard it said, If this knight should fail, there is not one in the world who can enter.

But he ceased not to proceed, winning his way hardly, sometimes beaten down upon his hands, sometimes falling upon his knees; his sword fell from the hand, and, though it hung by a thong from the wrist, he could not recover it, yet holding on still, he reached the door of the chamber, and a hand came forth and took him by the hand to draw him in, and he heard a voice which said, Welcome is the knight who shall be lord here, because he passeth in prowess him who made the enchantment, and who had no peer in his time. The hand that led him was large and hard, like the hand of an old man, and the arm was sleeved with green satin. As soon as he was within the chamber it let go his hold, and was seen no more, and Amadis remained fresh, and with all his strength recovered; he took the shield from his neck and the helmet from his head, and sheathed his sword, and gave thanks to his lady Oriana for this honour, which for her sake he had won. At this time they of the castle who had heard the voices resign the lordship, and seen Amadis enter, began to cry out, God be praised, we see accomplished what we have so long desired. When his brethren saw that he had achieved that wherein they had failed, they were exceedingly joyful, because of the great love they bore him, and desired that they might be carried to the chamber; and there the governor with all his train went to Amadis, and kissed his hand as their lord. Then saw they the wonders which were in the chamber, the works of art and the treasures, such that they were amazed to see them. Yet all this was nothing to the chamber of Apolidon and Grimanesa, for that was such that not only could no one make the like; but no one could even imagine how it could be made; it was so devised that they who were within could clearly see what was doing without, but from without nothing could be seen within. There they remained some time with great pleasure; the knights, because one of their lineage was found to exceed in worth all living men, and all who for a hundred years had lived; the islanders, because they trusted to be well ruled and made happy under such a lord, and even to master other lands.

Sir, quoth Ysanjo, it is time to take food and rest for

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to-day; to-morrow, the good men of the island will come and do homage to you. So that day they feasted in the palace, and the following day all the people assembled and did homage to Amadis of Gaul as their lord, with great solemnities and feasting and rejoicing. As ever noble men and true love to pay homage to the valiant and the victorious of this world.

Introduction to the Thirteenth Tale: The Palace of Illusions

By the time the French *jongleurs* were tiring of working within the Carolingian mythos, and abandoned it for other heroic subjects (such as the early Crusades or the fabulous adventures of Alexander), the Italian romancers became enamored of the mythos and adopted it wholesale.

The first of these was Luigi Pulci (1432–1484), who wrote a burlesque on the heroic French epics, called *Morgante Maggiore*. Pulci was popular in his day but his popularity did not survive him, and his poem served mostly to pave the way for a more gifted romancer, Count Matteo Maria Boiardo (?1434–1494). Boiardo was a typical Renaissance poet who wrote in Latin and translated the classics, Herodotus and Xenophon. Casting about for something new, he settled on the French *chansons*; with a fine careless hand he remodeled them after his own wishes, selecting for his theme the love of Roland (the Italians called him “Orlando”) and a certain Princess from Cathay with the distinctly *un-Chinese* name of “Angelica.” The Count called his poem *Orlando Innamorato*—“Roland in Love”. It is not a very good poem, and it has not lived on; Roland is a tragic hero of epic stature, and when he is transformed into a love-struck simpleton he becomes close to ridiculous. But then, Boiardo was writing to amuse the jaded aristocrats of the court of Duke Ercole d’Este, and such an audience, we may presume, was far too sophisticated to be moved by the exploits of a tragic hero, even one of epic stature. Something of a dabbler, Boiardo did not ever finish his romance.

Then at last came the greatest of all the Italian romancers—in fact, the noblest poet of Italy until

Dante himself—Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1533). At first, his idea was to simply pick up the story where Boiardo had left off; but Ariosto was far too great a poet to be limited by the conceptions of a lesser artist, and he went far beyond his predecessor, composing a great romantic epic which he called the *Orlando Furioso*—the Madness of Roland.

The *Orlando* is a masterpiece, a great poem, a seminal work of very high order; and Ariosto was a brilliant and original writer of true genius. Genius usually does the unexpected and the unorthodox; hence Ariosto, rather than follow the tradition of his times and use Latin as his medium, went against convention—against even the advice of the eminent classical scholar Bembo—and wrote his magnificent fantastical romance in the living language of his day, Italian. It was an historic decision and one which would have enormous influence on the future popularity of the vernacular as the proper language for the epic.

But here I am, making the *Orlando Furioso* sound solemn and important and deadly serious; when it is actually one of the most sheerly delightful and brilliantly entertaining of all epic poems!

Ariosto transformed the world of the Carolingian romance into a fantastic fairyland filled with winged horses, trips to the moon, battles against weird monsters, sizzling love scenes, and spectacular supernatural effects. The pace of his poem is one of breathless action, and continuous movement. His pages are thronged with a gigantic cast of characters, and few of them are familiar to us from the French romances; Ariosto invented new characters as he needed them. Thus his story involves Malagigi the Dwarf Enchanter; Astolfo and his Flying Horse; Mandrocardo, the villainous Tartar; Atalante, the Magician of the Castle of Iron; Bradamante, the Lady Knight; Prester John; and scores of others. (Spenser, Voltaire, and Goethe were fascinated by Ariosto's glorious imagination and by his sense of color and drama; Spenser, in *The Faerie Queene* (ci. 1580), paid him

the compliment of imitation.)

Ariosto's nimble wit and rapid line kept his readers gasping. The *Orlando* gallops, flies, hurtles into action, and from one scene to another, with little time, if any, for speculation or explanation. It was begun about 1503, and it was overwhelmingly popular with the readers of his day. Its fame did not really decline until recently: as late as the middle of the 19th century "everyone" still knew it. Not a reader in ten thousand knows it today, and this is a great pity.

In an effort to give Ariosto something in the direction of a new chance, I devoted some five pages to *Orlando Furioso* in my recent book-length study of *The Lord of the Rings* and its author, *Tolkien; A Look Behind "The Lord of the Rings"* which Ballantine Books published in 1969. At the time, I had few hopes of actually rejuvenating the *Orlando*, for the main problem lay not with the talents of the Renaissance genius who wrote it, but with the modern reader himself. In these benighted days few of us are willing or able to sit through a novel-length poem without squirming.

And, alas! the only translations of the *Orlando* known to me are exquisitely unreadable attempts to put the Italian *ottava rima* into readable English verse. This is simply impossible—or, if not genuinely impossible, it will require the gifts of some unborn genius of the future, for no one has yet come along who can do the job.

But among the readers of my *Tolkien* was a young writer named Richard Hodgens, who wrote me a "fan letter" on that book. Hodgens is interested in Ariosto and is studying the Italian language, and during the course of a casual correspondence such as sometimes springs up between an author and one of his readers, the notion of his translating the *Orlando*—into English *prose*—was suggested. A delightful idea; a beautiful idea; for prose is easier to read and to make sense of than the tortured tangle of interlocked rhymes, which is what all previous English translators of Ariosto—or at least, those known to

me—have made of the task. I suggested to Hodgens that he think of performing the task, possibly for future publication in the Ballantine Book Adult Fantasy series. He sent me a sample that superbly did for Ariosto what Ariosto had so long needed—that is, it demonstrated the delightfully entertaining wit and fire and sheer storytelling power of the great romancer in the English language. And in 1971, if all goes well, the first English prose translation of the mighty *Orlando* will be published under the Sign of the Unicorn's Head.

Here follows the segment of the *Orlando* which Richard Hodgens first translated for me. Read it and see if you agree that Ariosto deserves a new chance to delight the readers of the 20th century, as he once thrilled the readers of his own era . . .

The Palace of Illusions
From the Italian *Orlando Furioso*
by Ludovico Ariosto
Translated by Richard Hodgens

*Come—I will tell you tales of knights and ladies
and wizards, of adventure and love and magic,
from those days when Charlemagne and his Peers
held a Christian Roman Empire—the few fields and
scattered citadels in the endless woods of Western
Europe—against the Moorish hordes who came out
of Africa and the south of Spain. . . .*

I

The pagan paladin, Ruggiero, soaring on that rare flying steed—the eagle-horse, the hippogriff—exhilarated by pure,

rushing air and by the way the world shrank, or spread, or swayed far below, flew from the east of India to the West in a few days. But he did not fly directly to Charlemagne's land, where Bradamante waited. Before, when the hippogriff had carried him, helpless, to the Indies at the orders of its old master, Atlante, the flight had been frightening. But now Ruggiero controlled the hippogriff, and he could not refrain from taking a little time to see the world: the frozen north of Asia, green England, fabled Hibernia, and beyond, to barren Ebuda. And, as he sailed over that last island, a naked princess chained to a rock by the sea detained him.

From high above, Ruggiero wondered if she was a statue—a perfect statue of pale pink alabaster and gold, the world's greatest work of sculpture—nude Andromeda, facing the ocean, her arms spread wide, fastened by the wrists to the naked rock. He leaned forward and pulled on the hippogriff's peculiar bit, to circle and descend to see this wonder of the world more closely.

He did not know that the cruel people of Ebuda fed damsels to a sea monster. He saw no one and nothing else along Ebuda's rocky coast. Not that he would have feared or hesitated, whoever or whatever else was there,—especially not after he caught sight of the damsel, even though she might be a statue. He was fully armed, and he carried Atlante's own shield strapped to the saddle and safely covered. That shield had been cut from a single unearthly gem, and when it was uncovered, its brilliance paralyzed anyone who saw it. So he had magic as well as mundane arms, to say nothing of his own strength and skill. And against other magic, he wore the world's only antimagical ring, which had been sent to him by Bradamante, the Christian lady knight he loved in spite of all opposition by the Moorish magician Atlante, who had brought him up. The antimagical ring did not weaken the hippogriff, for that great beast—with the head, forelegs and wings of a giant eagle and the hindquarters of a great horse—was not one of Atlante's magical productions, but a rare natural monster he had drawn from the frozen north and had raised and trained as carefully as he

had raised Ruggiero. Although indeed it was more obedient than its rider. Atlante himself used to ride it with nothing but a saddle, shouting directions or spells in its feathered ear. Atlante sent it to carry Ruggiero to the Indies in order to keep the boy from the world, from the war, from Bradamante, and from baptism. But now Ruggiero controlled it with the bit that the good fay Logistilla had fashioned for its great beak, and it obeyed him—though it had seemed rather reluctant to fly out over the Atlantic.

Now hovering just over the damsel exposed on the shore, Ruggiero clearly saw she was no artist's work, and standing there, facing the open sea, as naked as Nature made her, with nothing to veil the rose and lily of her flesh but the long, golden hair that fluttered in the gentle breeze, and the tears that splashed from her cheeks to her breasts, she seemed too perfect in her beauty even to be Nature's creation.

It was Angelica, the blonde Princess of Cathay, whose beauty had destroyed empires in the East, and who had come to Europe to destroy Charlemagne's,—Angelica, whose beauty distracted all the emperor's knights and drew pagan kings out of North Africa and the south of Spain, into France. But the merciless savages of Ebuda had seized her and chained her there that morning in order to feed their abominable sea beast, the orc. These inhospitable people believed in strange, ancient tales: how their ancestors had offended the Sea; how monsters had come up from the deeps at night to besiege them even in their citadels; and how they had learned to appease the Sea by offering it one beautiful woman a day. However true those tales might be, one huge orc still did swim off Ebuda, and every day it did come to shore to be fed. It was Angelica's beauty that now threatened her own destruction; the savages were sure it was great enough to satisfy the Sea for all time.

And seeing that unbelievable beauty, Ruggiero thought of his Bradamante, although he never had seen Bradamante without her armor; and seeing Angelica's eyes—when those tearful eyes caught his—he hardly could hold back his own

tears. The hippogriff set down, hoofs and claws on the wet sand by the rock, and Ruggiero said softly, "O my lady, you deserve to wear no chains but love's. You do not deserve this or any other evil. What monster could want to fetter and mark those beautiful hands!"

Angelica blushed at the way he looked down at her nakedness, and she would have covered her face with her hands if they had not been fastened to the stone. She hung her golden head, avoiding his eyes, and she sobbed for a moment before she could speak. Then she began, faintly, weakly, but she did not go on: there was a great noise in the deep. It was the orc.

The orc appeared and the ocean roared: the orc surfaced; half its bulk humped above the great, breaking waves; and it surged toward the shore like a tall ship driven by a rising wind, and it was not far away.

Angelica watched, half-dead with terror. She was not reassured by the strange knight's kindness. What could he do? Only offer a word of comfort before it was upon them.

Ruggiero spurred the rearing hippogriff and it sprang into the air over the surf. He held his lance, not in the rest, but overhand. He swooped down and struck the orc in the middle of the skull between its wide-set eyes. And the orc went on its way toward the rock where Angelica was chained.

I do not know what that thing resembled. It was a huge, dark mass surging like the sea itself. It was like no other animal I know, except for the head, with the cruel eyes and protruding tusks of a gigantic sow. The teeth were yellow and brown; the tongue was like rust; the eyes were black, yellow and blood red; and you would have thought the skin of the beast was a spotty brownish gray—but all that was only mould and slime. Ruggiero struck it and his lance only scraped away slime. It was like striking oozing, oily stone or iron. Beneath the slime, he saw emerald scales the size of the shields knights carry.

After the first, useless blow, the paladin wheeled back in air and made the second blow better. The orc did not even

notice. But it did see the shadow of the hippogriff's wings on the water, and it paused, and turned, leaving its certain, shore-bound prey to chase the dancing shadow. As it writhed furiously below, Ruggiero dropped to strike again and again, as an eagle attacks a snake—not where it can spit venom from its fangs, but on the spine, just behind the head, where it cannot see or turn and strike back. He used his lance; he tried his sword; but he could not pierce its rock-hard scales. . . .

It was like the assault of a fly against a dog. And the orc, evidently stung a little, noticed at last: it raised its snout and snapped at the hippogriff, instead of its shadow, like the dog at the fly. A fly is quick. But if those teeth close on it just once, the battle is over. The orc reared up after its tormentor again and again, and meanwhile it lashed the sea with its tail, raising such waves and spray that Ruggiero could not even tell if the giant eagle's wings still beat on air or if they wallowed in the water.

Ruggiero would have preferred a dragon ashore: he feared that if the spray flew so thickly much longer and soaked the giant eagles' feathers, both he and his steed would drown, at best. He pulled up, thinking it would be better to attack the monster with other arms. He decided to dazzle it with the blinding splendor enchanted in the lidded shield of Atlante. . . .

Praying that this magic would work against the immeasurable monster, he flew back to the beach, taking the antimagical ring from his finger, slipping it on Angelica's, so that the magic shield would not work against her.

Let me pause, here, to remind you of that unique ring and its power.

II

This was the Ring of Reason, which Angelica herself had carried into France—the ring that Brunello the dwarf had stolen from her—the ring that Bradamante had taken from

Brunello and sent with Melissa, the good sorceress, to the magic Eastern island of the evil fay Alcina. Alcina had taken Astolfo, Bradamante's cousin, the English prince. Then Atlante had sent Ruggiero to her on the hippogriff, and as soon as she saw him, she turned Astolfo into a tree, took Ruggiero instead, and intended to keep him.

But with that ring, both knights and many others were freed: Astolfo, and others who came before him, from the unnatural forms Alcina had given them when they bored her; and Ruggiero from the illusion that Alcina was good to look at, let alone love. Only magic made her desirable, and the ring dispelled all her magic. Alcina was actually about three feet tall, with all the signs of thousands of years of dissipation. With the ring, the knights escaped from her island to the island of the good fay Logistilla, who helped Ruggiero train the hippogriff.

As you know he still wore that ring, but now he gave it to Angelica because he feared it might dim the bright magic shield, and because he did not want to show the shield without protecting her bright eyes.

He did not know that the ring originally was hers, and he did not know that while it dispelled all other magic, it also had magic of its own. But as for Angelica, she was too terrified to notice it: the sea orc had turned and now followed where Ruggiero flew, or merely resumed its way to its living meal: it came more quickly, much closer, pushing half the sea before it so that waves broke on Angelica's thighs.

Ruggiero turned again, the hippogriff rearing out of the breaking surf, and he tore the cover from the shield and added another sun to the sky. The magic light flashed in the orc's piglike eyes, and it worked its magic as always: like a little fish in a poisoned stream, the orc rolled over and lay still in the subsiding tumult. Ruggiero flew to the attack again, using his spear and the hippogriff's hoofs on the exposed belly, where the scum was thin over smaller, pallid scales. And here the skin gave like mail or soft pulp, or liquid, but still he could not cut it.

Meanwhile the beautiful girl cried and begged him, "Come

back, in God's name, sir! Free me before the orc wakes up! Carry me away with you! Drown me in the middle of the ocean! Anything! But don't leave me here with the monster!"

So Ruggiero left the orc alive. He flew back to the beach and broke her chains. He caught her up and he spurred his steed. It sprang up, eager to gallop in the sky again—the knight in the saddle and the gleaming wet damsel behind. Ruggiero held one helpless, ivory arm tightly to his chest so that she would not fall. He kissed the marks the cruel chains had made. He turned and brushed the tears from her face and her breasts with his lips.

Ebuda, that evil island, dwindled below and into the west. Ruggiero no longer kept his intended course. He forgot about circling Spain. He forgot about Bradamante. He hardly noticed which way the hippogriff flew. But when he saw land appear—where Brittany juts into the sea—he forced it to put down on the shore.

By the sea there were groves of shady oaks, where nightingales lamented ancient outrage. They landed in a meadow with a spring, a stream, and here and there a solitary mound.

Ruggiero dismounted and raised his arms to Angelica. He saw how one breast and her hip now bore the imprint of his armor. He lifted her down, but did not let her go immediately. She protested faintly. He stepped back, tied the hippogriff to a tree in haste, and attempted to take off his armor. He could not control himself. And he could not control his hands. They trembled and fumbled at the hot, heavy, cumbersome plate and mail. He could not touch the nude beauty until he stripped, but he could not manage to strip.

One may control a great steed with a light rein, but it is not often easy to harness lust once it is aroused; one might as well expect to turn a bear from a honeypot—when he's already tasted it—as expect Ruggiero to be reasonable, now. Indeed, what reason did he have to refrain from taking his pleasure with the gentle Angelica in that solitary, comfortable spot? He was only seventeen. One could not expect him to think only of Bradamante, as before—or rather, as before and after the evil fay Alcina. Angelica's beauty was

far greater than Alcina's at her illusory best, and Angelica's was real. All that could restrain Ruggiero was his armor. He never knew it to take so long. Every time he succeeded in unfastening something, he seemed to jam a couple of other things in the process. He felt as if he would burn up in his armor.

Meanwhile Angelica, modestly covering herself with her hands, glanced down, noticed the ring for the first time, and realized that it was much like her own, so much, in fact, that it might be her own lost ring. Ruggiero's advances did not trouble her, now. She had been through that before, is to go through it again, has escaped, and will escape, as she did from young Ruggiero, now: Not certain whether it was a dream, not certain whether the ring was really hers, she raised it as in a dream to her lips, and it was real: she disappeared.

A princess of Cathay would not wander about the world by choice, not even to undo an empire, without a magic escape as well as protection from magic.

She disappeared from Ruggiero's sight and paid no attention to his loud complaints about her ingratitude. Invisible, Angelica wandered in the summery woods of Brittany, and soon found simple food and clothing and a gentle mare; then she wandered much longer, looking for a knight with self-control who might escort her back across Europe, across Asia, to Cathay.

III

When Ruggiero stopped complaining and stumbling about in his hot, half-undone armor, he found he had lost not only the girl, who was not his, and the ring, which he thought was Bradamante's, but also old Atlante's hippogriff and the paralyzing shield. While he could not slip out of his armor, the hippogriff had slipped the knot he had tied, and he had not even heard its great wings as it flew off.

He did not know where it had flown, but it had flown

ahead of him, and he was to follow and find it without knowing he did.

His losses crushed him, but he was most troubled by the loss of the precious ring—precious to him not so much for its powers, but more because it had been sent to him by his lady, who had forgiven his stay with Alcina. Immeasurably ashamed and sorry, he slung his arms across his back and began to trudge away from the sea, up the grassy slope of the shore, towards a wide, wooded valley, where he chose the widest, most marked and most inviting path in the middle of the deep, dim forest. He did not go very far down that path before he heard, to his right, where the trees grew very thick, a sudden noise: he heard the dreadful clash of arms.

He hurried through the trees and came upon a great battle fought in a narrow place by two who seemed bent on avenging unmentionable crimes, they fought so relentlessly—a savage giant and a knight in armor.

The knight seemed to be on the defensive, using shield more than sword, leaping about, dodging, while the giant held a heavy mace in both hands and swung it against him again and again. The knight's horse already lay in the path, its skull crushed.

Ruggiero immediately chose sides. He naturally hoped to see the knight win. But of course, he could not interfere. He stood by to wait and see. . . .

And he saw the square, strong-armed giant strike the knight's helmet with the great mace, saw the knight fall under that blow, saw the giant bend over and untie the dented helmet with one hand, holding the mace ready to crush the stunned victim's head. And so he saw the knight's face, and it was the beautiful face of his lady, Bradamante. . . .

Ruggiero immediately advanced on the giant with naked sword, shouting his challenge. But the giant did not wait for another fight. He took the unconscious girl in his arms, threw her over his shoulder, and carried her away like a wolf with a lamb or an eagle with a dove.

Now that Ruggiero saw how much his help was needed, he

went running after as fast as he could; but the giant led the way with such quick, long strides that Ruggiero barely could keep him in sight, much less help his lady.

So the one ran, the other followed, down the overshadowed, gloomy path, which went on—always widening—until it opened on a great meadow or garden in the wood. And in the midst of the garden a great palace glittered with polished marble and gilt.

So much for Ruggiero, for the moment.

IV

Now it is time for me to return to where I—and Ruggiero—left Bradamante's cousin, Charlemagne's Peer, the adventurous Astolfo of England: on the far, Eastern island of the good fay Logistilla, who lived in perpetual spring gardens high on arches carved of unearthly precious stone. By this time, Astolfo was most impatient with his long exile, eager to return to his own island in the West.

While Ruggiero trained the hippogriff, Logistilla had had a ship fitted out for Astolfo. A better ship never sailed the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, and the Persian Gulf. And she sent him with magic to escort him safely to land, because she still suspected that her evil sister Alcina might attempt to interrupt his voyaging.

When the good fay had arranged everything, she gave him permission to leave, instructing him in too many things to tell. And in order to evade enchantment, she gave him a beautiful, useful book. It told how to ward off and repair all enchantment—headings before and an index after—to indicate all the magic it dealt with in general and particular. She gave him a greater gift, too: a horn with a horrible sound.

I say that this horn had so horrifying a sound that wherever it was heard, everyone fled. The roar of wind, thunder and earthquake, compared to the roar of the horn, are nothing: there is no one it will not move; no one can bear it; everyone flees.

With many thanks in return, the good Englishman took

leave of Logistilla and boarded the ship with his horse, Rabicano. Leaving the port and the quieter waves, with a fortunate or magical wind astern, the ship glided into open sea, past a thousand beautiful islands scattered on both sides, and then along the rich, populous, perfumed coast of India, and around India.

Alcina did not pursue him for love or vengeance. She did not even notice his leaving the magic islands. It was not that she had taken another mortal youth as usual, but that she still wept for Ruggiero, and wished—for the first time in all her thousands of years—that she were not almost immortal and could die.

Logistilla's ship took harbor in the Gulf of the ancient Magi; then, safe on land from Alcina's possible vengeance, Astolfo continued his way without Logistilla's magic protection, except for the book and the horn. He rode Rabicano, a horse conceived of wind and flame, a horse who fed on pure air, a horse who trod so lightly that he left no trace of his passage, and moved so quickly that he could overtake wind or lightning.

Astolfo rode through Felix Arabia, rich in myrrh and the odors of incense, where, out of all the immense world, the only Phoenix chooses to nest; and he came to that sea that once avenged Israel, drowning Pharaoh and all his host, by divine consent; and then he proceeded to Egypt, along Trajan's Canal from that sea, through the desert, to the Nile.

And as he rode north beside that great river, an ancient man called out to warn him to cross to the west bank: "Beware Caligorant the giant! who catches thousands in his magic net! And devours them, blood and brains!"

But Astolfo wanted to try his horn.

Between the great river and the marshes, along the sandy bank, there was a narrow path. The solitary castle of Caligorant closed it to man, and all around were fixed the pieces of men. Just as the huntsmen in the mountains fix the skins, claws and heads of bears around their caves and cabins, the giant Caligorant displayed his own best catches. The bones of lesser men were scattered all around, and the sand was stiff

and brown with their blood. And as great men hang their palaces with cloth of gold or purple, he decorated his with the dead: there was no window, no turret, from which at least one human skin did not hang.

And Caligorant was standing at his gate, scarcely able to contain himself for joy as the knight showed himself in the distance. It was two months, and almost a third, since a knight had come that way.

Toward the marsh where the green reeds grew thickly, Caligorant hurried, planning to circle and come up behind the paladin to chase him into the net, which he kept buried in the dust of the pathway. He always did it that way. It always worked.

But on seeing Caligorant start through the reeds, the paladin halted so that he would not ride into the snare the old man had mentioned. Here he took his horn and sounded it, and the sound had its inevitable effect: it struck the giant with such terror that he turned and ran back towards his hideous castle—not that he could have stopped running even there. As it happened, he did not even reach the castle. Astolfo stood and still sounded the horn, wary of the net. The giant was too blinded by his fear of the sound of the horn to see where he was going, and it was he who tripped his own snare: he ran into the net and it sprang up, caught him, and laid him in the dust.

Astolfo, seeing that great mass fall, feeling safe himself, rode up quickly and dismounted with sword in hand to avenge the thousands and thousands that the giant had devoured and dismembered. But then he thought it would be cowardice more than virtue to execute a creature like that; for he found the giant so tightly bound in the net—hands and feet and head—that he could not even tremble in fear.

The god or wizard Vulcan had made that net, once upon a time. He had made it so artfully, of finest steel thread, that to try to unravel its weakest part would be fruitless labor. Vulcan made it to trap Mars and Venus in bed. Then Mercury stole it to catch the fay Chloris. He took her in the air over Egypt, and let the net fall. The net was preserved

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for ages in the Temple of Anubis at Canopus. Caligoran, three thousand years later, took it from the temple and burned the town. And when he took the castle by the river, he fixed the net in the sand so that every traveler fell into it. The barest touch triggered it, and it tied his victims tightly as he now found himself.

Astolfo took a chain, not from the net itself but from the giant's special arrangement. He tied the monster so that he could not loose his hands or his arms, then took him from the magic net, let him get up, and found him now very meek. He decided to lead him about, to show him in the country, at castles and in towns—and also the net, the most beautiful machine ever made with hammer and file. So he made the giant his squire, making him carry helmet, shield, and the metal net, and he led him in triumph, bringing joy and wonder down the Nile. All the people ran to see. Those who knew the giant rejoiced to see that the road was clear at last. And in Cairo, even those who did not know him asked each other how one so small could bind one so great.

Astolfo was no magician, but he always was lucky with magic, except for Alcina's taking him and turning him into a tree. He kept acquiring magic, one way or another. But he gave away the magic net, with the giant, in Jersusalem.

V

But remember Ruggiero? (Who did not have such luck.) I left him chasing the giant who carried the apparently unconscious Bradamante from the dark wood, across the meadow, through the garden, toward the proud palace. The palace was built of varied marbles finely worked, and the great gilded gate stood open. The giant ran right through that open gate and Ruggiero followed after.

As soon as he had stepped over the marble threshold he could see all the courtyard and the open galleries around it, but he could not see either the giant or the girl, and he could not imagine where they could be so quickly hidden away. He searched the entire palace—ground floor, upstairs, and be-

low—galleries, rooms, and halls—all gilt, silk and carpeting—and he could not find them, even though he made his thorough search four or five times. At last, suspecting they might be in the surrounding garden, meadow or wood, he went outside and looked for another exit and some trace of the giant's flight.

But suddenly he heard Bradamante calling for his help. He looked up and thought he saw her at a window, thought he saw the giant pull her out of sight. He rushed back into the palace, and again he could not find her.

And while he searched on fruitlessly, full of anguish, he met other knights and a few ladies, too, all looking for someone or something lost. All of them complained bitterly about the evil, invisible lord of the mansion, blaming him for their losses. And they could not leave that open cage, where they caught words or glimpses of whatever or whomever they thought they had lost—but never caught more. If they left, a glimpse or a word would call them back. Ruggiero knew some of these others, but recognized none of them there: the prisoners in that palace seemed to be strangers to one another, although many were not.

All this was a rare, new spell composed by old Atlante, the Moorish magician, so that Ruggiero might live safely—even if he must live in that sweet anxiety, sure that Bradamante was near and needed him, protected from Bradamante herself and the influence Atlante believed would threaten the boy with early death. Atlante's iron tower had not kept Ruggiero, and Alcina had not kept him, but Atlante plotted again.

Here he created simulations, impersonations, and gave all real things false appearances so that no one and nothing remained recognizable. And his magic drew not only Ruggiero, but all the others and anyone who came near—including the most famous knights of France—so that Ruggiero might not die by their hands, for here they would never know he was the great pagan knight, but took him for a harmless stranger, searching like themselves. Many of Atlante's victims

had been there for weeks or months. Atlante fed them magic and watched over them all.

Even Orlando, Charlemagne's greatest knight, was caught in that trap as he looked for Angelica, the Princess of Cathay. The great Orlando would have looked for her in Heaven and Hell if he had known the way. He had the will. But now he merely raged through that luxurious limbo, believing Angelica had been carried there by a giant, just as Ruggiero believed it of Bradamante.

But, at the time, neither Bradamante nor Angelica were there.

VI

The true Bradamante was far away, faithfully waiting for Ruggiero while she harassed the pagan horde that afflicted France. This was her duty as a Christian knight, and she executed it as faithfully as she waited for her pagan knight's return. But it did not relieve her anxiety. She lived in fear, not of the pagan enemy, for her own sake, but for that one pagan knight, Ruggiero. By day and night, raiding or resting, she imagined thousands of things that might happen to him, or that might already have happened. . . .

At last, on a day she spent alone, mourning his long absence or maybe mourning more—for all she knew—the sorceress Melissa, who had taken the antimagical ring to save him from Alcina, came riding back to her without him.

When Bradamante saw her coming alone, long after the time when Ruggiero ought to have returned, she trembled, turned pale, and could barely keep her feet, although the good witch came smiling, like a messenger with good news.

"Do not fear for Ruggiero, my lady," said Melissa: "He is alive and well and loves you as always. But he is not free. He is free of Alcina, but your old enemy has taken him, again. You must mount, and, if you still want him, you must follow me at once. I will show you the way, and tell you how to free him."

And she went on to tell of the magic error in which he and

so many others now lived: "On looking at the enchanter Atlante, they believe they see whomever they long for—lady, squire, friend—threatened and carried off. . . . So all of them follow and stay in his false palace, searching."

Then she said, "As soon as you come near you will meet him, but he will simulate Ruggiero's face and form perfectly. And he will seem threatened or captured and call for help, so that you will follow and fall into the trap where so many have fallen. Beware! Do not believe in him! You must try, not to save him, but to kill him. It will seem hard, I know, to kill a perfect semblance of your Ruggiero. But do not believe your eyes. The magic will blind you to the truth. Make up your mind, before I lead you to the place, and do not fail to kill him or you will be without him forever."

Bradamante was determined to be brave, to follow Melissa and this advice. For Melissa lived in the tomb where Merlin slept, and Merlin talked in his eternal, enchanted sleep. Since he knew everything, so did Melissa, sooner or later. It was Melissa who had told Bradamante where the hippogriff had carried Ruggiero, and told her to take the ring.

Now Melissa led the young lady paladin through cultivated fields and through forest, on a great journey in great haste, trying to alleviate the wearisome way with pleasant talk of the great race Bradamante would bear if she saved Ruggiero and married him: the House of Este. Melissa spoke of great men of Este at great length, till Bradamante asked about the ladies of the house, and then she told her about them: generation upon generation until Lucrezia Borgia. Meanhile she repeated, time and again, her explanation of the magic trap until, at last, they came near it, and Melissa would go no nearer. She warned and advised Bradamante once again, then left her to ride on alone.

And Bradamante had not gone more than two miles down the narrow path when she saw the false Ruggiero. Two ferocious giants menaced him, and when she saw his beautiful face and form in danger her faith in Melissa turned to suspicion. Suppose it were Ruggiero himself? Where was the antimagical ring Melissa supposedly took to him? Suppose

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Melissa had turned against them, had been against them from the beginning, and plotted to have Ruggiero murdered by the one who loved him so? She said to herself, "If this is not Ruggiero, . . . How can I believe anything, and take someone else's word?"

Then she heard his voice beg for her help, and the voice was also Ruggiero's. Calling her, he slackened his bridle and spurred his horse and raced away. The giants ran after, to hunt him down, and Bradamante followed, and they led her into the house of enchantment.

She no sooner entered the gate than she was lost, drowned, overwhelmed in the common error. Like the others, she searched the palace inside and out, and she did not rest night or day, so strong was the spell.

While they wandered, she often saw the true Ruggiero, and even spoke with him, but she never knew him and he never knew her. They had saved each other before, but both were helpless now. The trap was full, the plot complete.

VII

As for Angelica—the true invisible Angelica, not the false goddess Orlando and the others looked for in the trap, she now wore that ring that would have saved Ruggiero and Bradamante, you remember. And you remember that after leaving Ruggiero on the coast, she had stolen food, clothes and a mare, and now wandered in search of some knight to escort her back to fair Cathay. Almost any knight would do it, especially Orlando, but she was not sure which knight would do. She did not have to choose for a long time, however. So many seemed to have disappeared themselves. But at last she happened to come to the place where Atlante kept them. If she had not had her ring, it is difficult to imagine which knight she would have thought she saw, there, but with the ring, she saw them all, and not even Atlante saw her.

She came to the meadow. There was no garden or palace.

She saw armed knights and a few ladies wandering around and around a great dead tree that lay uprooted in the middle of the meadow. She saw all their steeds tied to the roots of the tree, feeding peacefully. She saw old Atlante crouching there, his eyes following Ruggiero about. She loosened the ring on her finger, caught glimpses of Atlante's illusions, and understood his trap. She saw Orlando and the others and could not make up her mind.

But finally she did decide to reveal herself to one knight—not Orlando. She accompanied her choice about the meadow awhile, and when she thought that no one else would see, she touched the ring to her red lips and let him see her lips, her face, her long, golden hair. He caught her in his arms. Before she could tell him what she wanted, Orlando himself and another knight suddenly came upon them. She slipped out of the lesser knight's arms, mounted her mare and fled across the meadow. Three at once would not do. Orlando and the others ran after. . . .

And Atlante saw them go, but could not stop them on account of the influence of the visible Angelica and her antimagical ring. But he did not care. He had Ruggiero and the lady who would take him.

I am not sure whether Ruggiero also saw Angelica then. But if he did, she did not tempt him, when he was looking for Bradamante, who needed his help.

When Angelica had tempted the three others into the woods, far from the false palace, so that they were no longer under its malign influence without her, she disappeared again. Orlando and the other knights looked around and recognized each other. They had quarreled over Angelica, and other things, before. They renewed their quarrels. Angelica decided the ring alone would have to do, and went on her way without Orlando or either of the others.

VIII

I left Astolfo in the Holy Land, and now I have no time to tell how he used his book, or of his shipwrecks, or of his trouble with the Amazons, or of his long ride on Rabicano up the valley of the Danube, down the valley of the Rhine. I can only say that he acquired a love for travel and that he came at last, one evening in the forest, to a clear fountain at the foot of a hill. Hot and thirsty, he took off his helmet, tied Rabicano in the leafy thicket, and went to drink.

He had not yet touched his lips to the water when a country boy emerged from the thicket, untied the horse, mounted and rode away. Astolfo heard the noise too late, raised his head, saw his loss, jumped up and went running after as fast as he could. The young thief did not exert himself or Rabicano, or they would have disappeared. Instead, he now slackened, now tightened the bit and rode on at a gallop or a good trot for an ordinary horse, and he looked back over his shoulder at Astolfo.

After a long race, they emerged from the woods before that secret retreat where so many noble lords were detained—without a prison, but worse than prisoners. The boy rode Rabicano right through the gate.

Because Astolfo was encumbered by shield, helmet and other arms, he followed far behind. But he arrived as well, and found that the boy and the horse had disappeared inside. He could see no sign of either, wherever he looked, and he looked through the palace all that night.

Confused and tired, he came to see that the site was enchanted and reminded himself of the little book that Logistilla had given him in India so that he would be able to extricate himself from such spells. He took it out, turned to the index, and noted that there were copious entries on the subject, *Enchanted Palace*. He turned to them and learned how to confuse the Enchanter and free his victims. Not only mortal victims; a spirit was also imprisoned in such places, held under the threshold, and by its power, the Enchanter made his impostures, deceptions, illusions for other men.

Raise the stone where the spirit was entombed, free it, and all the illusions would dissolve in smoke.

The English knight, eager to bring down so proud and vain an establishment, immediately went right to the threshold, bent over and tested the weight of the marble.

But Atlante was watching, suspicious of his new knight's reading, and as he saw him about to ruin his magic art, he assailed him with new spells.

Atlante now made him appear to the other inmates not merely as another singular stranger, but as a varied menace: a giant to one; two giants to another . . . All of them now saw Astolfo in the form that had appeared to them in the wood around the palace—in the guise of kidnapper, killer, rapist, traitor. All therefore turned on Astolfo. Ruggiero, Bradamante, and all the others came running toward him.

He probably would have died at that moment if he had paused to wonder, much less look it up in the book. And he did not have time to raise the great, heavy threshold. But he thought of his horn in time.

And as soon as he put the horn to his mouth and made it sound, all their anger turned to fear, and all of them turned and fled from him like doves at the sound of shooting.

No less Atlante himself: he scuttled out of his lair, as pale and frightened as the others. So the jailer fled with all his prisoners, and all their horses fled from the false stable. More than rope would be required to restrain them when they heard that horrible sound. They ran after their masters in all directions, Rabicano soon passing the others. In all the false palace, not a true cat or mouse remained behind when Astolfo blew the horn.

Then he raised the heavy threshold stone. Underneath, he saw a certain image and other things I do not describe for obvious reasons. What he found he defaced, smashed, obliterated as the book advised. And all the palace, except the single stone, dissolved in smoke and mist in the morning.

IX

Atlante, still fleeing though the terrible sound of the horn no longer reverberated in the wood, moaned, crumpled, and expired in a little haze like his palace: he had put too much into that last magic trap for Ruggiero.

X

Meanwhile Ruggiero and Bradamante, fleeing far off, paused and turned toward each other and saw what Atlante had hidden from them. For a moment they merely stood and looked at each other with wonder and delight. Then he embraced her, and she blushed, and he kissed her lips—plucking the first red blossom of their love—for the first time. For a long time, then, they kissed a thousand times more, holding each other tightly, in tears and laughter, feeling their hearts would burst with their happiness, regretting only the spell that had separated them while it held them together, while so many days had been lost—and regretting that very much.

Bradamante was inclined to grant her pagan lover everything he wanted as soon as possible; and so she told him—when she could speak again—that if he still did want to take the full flower of their love, he must ask her noble father properly, and first he must be baptized.

Ruggiero knew that all his forefathers had been Christian, though Atlante had taken him before he could be baptized; and he wanted to become a Christian for that reason as well as for her love; “For your love,” he answered, “I’d gladly bathe in fire, not just water.”

They agreed to go to Vallombrosa, an abbey known to be rich and beautiful and no less religious or courteous to all who came that way. And they set out immediately. But soon they came upon a young lady alone at the edge of the forest, sad and crying.

Ruggiero, courteous and kind to all, and especially to sad

young ladies, greeted her and asked her why she was weeping and alone.

She raised her tearful eyes to his and said, "Gentle sir, I weep for a beautiful boy condemned to death for committing fornication. He will be burned at the stake this afternoon, and I would rather not watch."

Bradamante, almost weeping like the unknown lady, looked at Ruggiero and said, "We must save him." Ruggiero looked at Bradamante and could not help burning with her own desire to save the unknown youth. "What are we waiting for?" he asked.

"Oh, there may not be time," said the lady, sobbing; "it may be too late."

"Then we must hurry," said Ruggiero; "You must not cry."

"And there is danger on the way," said the lady.

"No matter," he said, "I promise you."

And the beautiful couple took a new path, soon to be separated again by change and duty, but not by magic and not forever.

XI

I last left Astolfo in the open meadow where Atlante's palace dissipated in the air around him, leaving nothing except the marble threshold; and I left him without Rabicano, the horse faster than any other animal, except one; for Rabicano and all the coursers had fled, except that one.

He found it still tied to the fallen tree by a metal chain: the bewildered hippogriff, lured from its northern mountains long ago, sent to carry Ruggiero east of India, freed to carry him back. You remember how Ruggiero had left it loosely tied to a tree, that day when the naked Angelica shamed him, and how it had flown as she vanished. It had returned to its old master, to stay hidden with him until the power of his spells was broken and he was gone.

It no longer strained at the fallen tree, but stood still, only

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stirring its feathered wings, and beside it lay Atlante's magic, blinding, paralyzing shield, safely covered.

Nothing could please Astolfo more than the hippogriff. He had ridden it briefly in India; he had watched Ruggiero learn to ride it and had envied him. Now he went to the beast, saddled it, found its own peculiar bit among all the others hanging on that dead tree, took the shield, loosed the chain, mounted and flew, circling higher and higher over the forest of Brittany, and the sea—free to support Charlemagne and save ladies, save himself with the book and the horn and the shield—free to travel over land and sea and all the immense world.

First of all, he thought, he had better find poor Rabicano.

A Concluding Word

Our voyage through *Golden Cities, Far* is now ended, and I hope you have enjoyed these samples, however brief, from the wealth of fantastic and imaginative literature drawn from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Britain, France, Italy, and other lands.

Let me, however, point out that these excerpts are just that—excerpts. If you find particular delight in our selections from *Amadis of Gaul* or the *Arabian Nights*, the *Orlando Furioso* or Geoffrey of Monmouth, the *Egyptian papyri* or the *Chaldean epics*, let me urge you to pursue your delight still further by reading the complete works themselves, which can be found in many large public libraries or which are in some cases still in print.

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