

Our Little Middle Eastern Cousins

Jewish, Persian, Turkish

VOLUME SIX

MARY HAZELTON WADE
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Our Little Middle Eastern Cousins

Jewish, Persian, Turkish

Volume 6

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Libraries of Hope

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Our Little Jewish Cousin

Mary Hazelton Wade

Illustrated by L.J. Bridgman



Esther

Preface

In whatever direction you may travel – north, south, east, or west – you will doubtless meet some of your little black-eyed Jewish cousins. They live among us here in America. They also dwell in the countries far away across the wide ocean.

Why are they so scattered, you may ask. Is there no country which is really theirs, and which is ruled over by some one they have chosen? Is there not some place where they can gather together happily whenever they please? The answer is always no.

They cannot say of this land or of that, "It is ours," for they are homeless. Palestine, which was once theirs, is now in the hands of the Turks. Jerusalem, the city they love best in the whole world, is in the power of those who look with scorn upon the Jewish people.

For many centuries they have been scattered far and wide. Their children learn to speak the language of the country where they happen to be born. They play the games and dress in the fashion of that country.

What is it that keeps them Jews? It is their religion, and their religion alone. It binds them as closely together now as it did in the days when they worshipped in the great temple at Jerusalem, two thousand years ago.

These Jewish cousins would say to us, "Our people have suffered greatly. Yet they do not lose courage. Our parents tell us stories of the glorious past, over and over again. They will not let us forget it, and they teach us to hope for the time when Jerusalem will again be ours, and a new temple, in which we shall be free to worship, will stand upon the spot where the old one was destroyed."

CHAPTER I

The Place of Wailing

"Come, Esther! Come, Solomon! I am waiting for you," cried a woman's voice.

The two children were in the courtyard, but, when they heard their mother calling, they ran into the house at once.

They knew why they were called, for it was Friday afternoon. Every week at this time they went to the "Place of Wailing" with their parents to weep over the troubles of their people and to think of the old days of Jerusalem, before the Romans conquered the city.

"Esther, your hair needs brushing. Solomon, make your hands and face as clean as possible," said their mother, as she looked at the children.

She loved them very dearly. She was proud of them, too. Solomon was a bright, clever boy, quick in his studies, while Esther was really beautiful. Her glossy black hair hung in

long curls down her back. Her black eyes were soft and loving. Her skin was of a pale olive tint, and her cheeks were often flushed a delicate pink.

Her mother looked tenderly at her as she brushed the little girl's hair.

"Mamma, grandma says I look ever so much as you did when you were my age," said Esther, as she trudged by her mother's side down the narrow street.

"Yes, yes, my child, I have heard her say so. But never mind your looks or mine now. Think of where we are going."

It was a hot walk. The sun was shining brightly. The street, the stone houses, everything around shone dusty gray in colour. There were no sidewalks. When a camel drew near with his load, or a horseman passed by, Esther had to walk close to the walls of the houses for fear the animals would rub against her.

She was born in this old city of Jerusalem. She had never been far away from it, and knew little of the wide streets and broad sidewalks found in many other cities.

She had sometimes heard her father and mother talk of

their life in Spain. They came from that country before Esther and her brother were born. It was a long journey, but they had said, "We cannot be happy anywhere except in Jerusalem. That alone is the home of our people."

Esther's father might have grown rich in Spain. He was a trader. He understood his business well. But in Jerusalem it was harder for him to get money.

What a strange name for the place where the family were going this afternoon! But it well deserved to be called "The Place of Wailing." It was a dark, dreary court with stone walls on three sides of it. Many Jews were already there when Esther and her people arrived.

Some of them were seated on the ground. They were weeping bitterly and rocking their bodies to and fro. Others, with sad faces, were reading from the Hebrew Bible. Still others were kissing the wall and bumping it with their foreheads. Some parts of the rock had actually been worn smooth by the lips of those who had come here week after week and year after year. For they really believed it was a part of the old temple wall.

Little Esther, with her glossy black curls, did just what

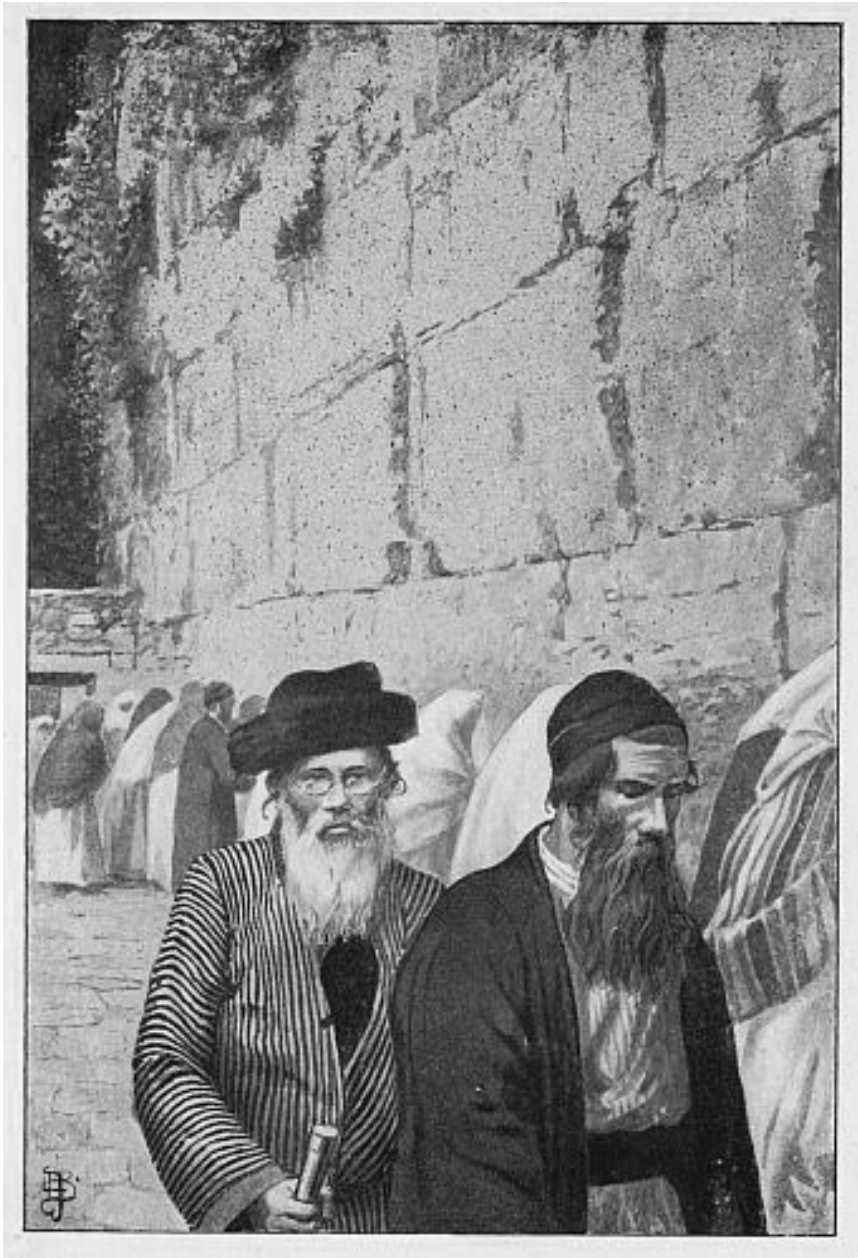
she saw the others do. The tears began to fall from her eyes as she went close up to the wall and kissed the cold gray stone.

Did all of these people really feel as bad as they seemed to do? Certainly. For they were grieving that Jerusalem was no longer great and no longer theirs. It was now in the hands of the Turks, but, long before they came, the Romans had taken the city from the Jews, after a long and bitter fight.

Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath. It is their holy day, and the time when they rest from work. On Friday afternoon they begin to prepare for the Sabbath. Hundreds of the Jews in Jerusalem gather at the Place of Wailing at that time. They not only weep and read from their Bible, but they also pray to the Lord to take their country out of the hands of their enemies and give it back to them.

As Esther walked home she looked up at the mosque of Omar. It is the Turks' grandest place of worship in the city. Her father told her that it stands on the very spot where Solomon's wonderful temple was built.

"That temple was the most beautiful one ever seen by men," said the Jew. "Its brightness was enough to dazzle the



"It was a dark, dreary court with stone walls on three sides of it."

eyes of those who looked upon it. Its walls were plated with gold. The very gate was golden.

"A beautiful golden vine, with clusters of grapes as large as a man's body, was draped over the gate. The floor was paved with gold. Golden lilies were carved upon the pillars and mouldings.

"There was no door. But there was a reason for this. It was to show that the heavens are always open. They are closed to no one."

"And now, papa, nothing is left of that beautiful building," said Esther.

"Not one stone, my dear. But we Jews all hope the time will come when it will be rebuilt."

"It was not the first temple which was destroyed by the Romans when they took Jerusalem, was it?"

"Oh, no. The second temple had been standing in its place for hundreds of years at that time. It was wonderfully beautiful, too. Herod the Great spent vast sums of money on it. It was the wonder of every one who looked upon it. But our enemies destroyed it, as you well know."

That evening, while Esther and her brother sat by their

father's side, he told them the story of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the brave men and women who tried to save it.

The Jews had feared for some time that something dreadful would happen. They had seen strange visions. While the feast of the Passover was taking place, the great temple was filled with a light like that of noonday. And this happened at the ninth hour of the night.

Something else quite as wonderful as this took place. The bronze door of the Gate Beautiful opened of itself at the sixth hour of the night. Yet this very gate was so heavy that twenty men could scarcely move it, even when the great iron bolts had been drawn.

Esther looked up at her father with surprised eyes as he told of these things. But when he spoke of seven chariots that drove across the sky, and of the armies the frightened people saw in the clouds, she was still more astonished.

"I should think our soldiers would have lost courage before they were attacked," she exclaimed.

"Not so, Esther. But listen, my child, as I describe the mighty Roman army that soon drew near Jerusalem.

Multitudes of Syrians had joined them, and these led the way as they came marching up the heights.

"Titus, the Roman general, followed the Syrians. The spearmen came with him. Next came the legions with their terrible short swords and the trumpets that filled the air with word of their approach.

"Every footman among the Romans was armed with a sword, a lance, and a shield. Besides these, he carried with him a saw, axe, hook, pickaxe, and enough food to last him for three days. The horsemen were also furnished with everything they needed for battle or for a long siege.

"This great army steadily drew nearer and nearer. Do you think the brave soldiers guarding our city trembled with fear as they looked forth from the watch-towers and saw them?"

"Not so, father. A Jew fears nothing."

"You are quite right. But now, let us return to Jerusalem as she stood then. A triple wall, thirty feet high, had been built around the city, except where it was separated from the rest of the country by deep ravines. One wall was quite enough to protect it in such places. Many watch-towers had been set up around the city. It seemed impossible to take it

by surprise at any point.

"The temple stood on Mount Moriah in all its glory. But it was not a temple alone. It was also a strong fortress."

"How could the Romans take the city, even if their numbers were so great?" asked Solomon.

"They could never have won, except for one thing. Our people were not wholly united. A party of them under the high priest, Ananus, felt there was no hope. They believed it would be wisest to give up at once and make peace.

"But the others said, 'No, we will fight to the end, and will drive our enemies from the city.' If every one had felt from the first as these did, all would have been well. It was too late when the different parties agreed to work for one end.

"The Romans threw immense stones into the city. They cut down the trees in all the country round, and made towers from which they hoped to fire and destroy the buildings inside the walls.

"They succeeded, for they soon made an opening in the outer wall. Then the second wall gave way before the mighty force. And all this time those Romans, who were stationed

across from the city on the Mount of Olives, were throwing such huge stones from their great engines that the houses and people inside Jerusalem were being destroyed, both by day and by night.

"Worse still! they began to lack food and to suffer from starvation. They could not hold out much longer. The time soon came when the last wall was broken down and Titus marched through the streets of the city.

"It was very strange that it was the anniversary of the day when the first temple was destroyed by the soldiers of Babylon.

"'It is on fire! The glorious temple is burning!' cried our people, as they saw the flames. A Roman soldier had kindled the fire without the knowledge of Titus, who had not wished to injure this wonder of the whole world.

"Some of the priests threw themselves into the flames. Before it was destroyed, Titus, with his captains, entered the holy place. The Roman general cried, 'It is more beautiful than I even imagined. Its riches are a perfect marvel.'

"The golden candlesticks and tables and cups, the sweet spices of which the priests made incense, the precious

stones, were laid at the feet of the conqueror."

"What did he do with all this wealth?" asked Esther.

"He carried most of it back to Rome. But he rewarded the bravest of his soldiers with crowns of gold and chains of silver.

"He had fought for many days before Jerusalem gave up. In that time the country around us had been ruined. The forests had been cut down for the making of engines of war. The herds of cattle had been killed to furnish food for the army of Titus. The harvests had been gathered for the same purpose. As for the people themselves, more than a million were killed and the rest were made the slaves of the Romans."

"Don't feel bad, papa," said Esther, lovingly. "That was a very long time ago."

"Yes, Esther, but our people have been scattered over the world ever since then. We shall never be happy till we are once more the rulers of this city."

"Mother told me a story, the other day," said Solomon, who had not spoken for a long time. "It was about a family who lived here when Titus appeared before our gates. I think

she told it to make me brave."

"What is the story, Solomon?" asked his father.

"There was a brave man in our city. He was of noble blood and true to his faith. He had a faithful wife and seven sons. You shall hear how brave and true they were.

"The Roman army began the terrible siege. Before it was over, the brave noble was killed, but his wife and children lived. After Titus entered the city, he heard of this family. He ordered them to be brought before him.

"As they stood in his presence he spoke to each in turn. He offered them freedom if they would give up their faith and bow down before his gods. But not one of them hesitated. They had not a single thought of giving up their faith in the one living God. No, not for the sake of life.

"One by one they were led away to death. At last, only the youngest son was left before the conqueror. Titus was moved to pity for the beautiful boy. He really wished to save him. He said, 'My child, see! I will drop my ring for the sake of the gods. If thou wilt pick it up, thy life shall be spared.'

"The boy looked up at him firmly. He answered, 'It shall lie there where you dropped it. I am afraid of no living man.

I fear only the thought of life without the One God.'"

"Of course, he followed his brothers. But what became of the mother?" asked Esther.

"She begged to die with her sons. She said Abraham had built one altar on which to sacrifice to God. She had built seven! And she spoke truly."

"It is a noble story of noble people," said the children's father. "There were many like them in that old time. Let us hope there are still many in the world."

CHAPTER II

The Gazelle

"Shall I help?" asked Solomon.

"Yes, indeed. Take the seeds in the skirts of your coat and come along," was the answer.

Solomon and Esther were visiting some friends in a village near Jerusalem. It was the month of December and the time to plant the crops in Palestine.

"After we have scattered the grain," Solomon's friend Levi said, "the camel shall help us plough the ground. Then the seed will take care of itself."

It did not surprise Solomon to hear of a camel drawing a plough.

Levi's camel was as useful to him as horses are to farmers in America. Solomon and Esther had been at their friend's many times when the great, slow, clumsy animal helped his master about the farm and garden.

"He isn't handsome, but I love the dear old fellow," said Levi. "He is more patient than most camels. I know he is slow beside some of his fellows, but he cannot help that." Levi stroked the camel's head.

"There, see! He likes to have me notice him as well as my new pet."

The camel bent his head down toward his master, with a look that said as plainly as words, "I love you, master, for you are kind to me."

"What is the new pet, Levi?" asked Solomon.

"When I get through my sowing, you may go into the house and call Esther. Then you two shall see it together."

Solomon could hardly wait for Levi to finish his work. But at last the seeds were all scattered.

"I won't go at the ploughing just yet. I am tired, and it is warm. We will rest awhile. I know you are anxious to find out what I have to show you. I got it for my wife, Rebecca."

Levi was a young man and had been married only a short time. He was very fond of his pretty wife, and liked to have surprises for her. He led the way to the house where Esther was talking with Rebecca.

"Solomon wishes to see our new pet," he said. "Have you told Esther about it?"

"Not yet. We will all go together," answered the young Jewess.

They went out to the stable and Levi pointed to a bed of straw over in the corner. There something lay curled up and sound asleep.

"It's a gazelle. Oh, what a beauty!" cried Esther. "It's only a baby still."

"I never saw such a little one before," said Solomon. "May I take it up in my arms?"

The gazelle waked up at the sound of voices. It opened its soft, dark eyes with a frightened look.

"It is very shy," said Rebecca. "But we pet it so much it will soon get over its fear. You children ought to see it run and frolic with me."

"Here, little one, come and eat," said the gazelle's mistress, in a low, sweet voice.

It sprang up and started toward Rebecca. But, when it had come half-way, it became frightened again at the sight of the visitors. The food looked too tempting, however, and

it came to Rebecca's side.

"I believe no other animal has as beautiful eyes as the gazelle. It is certainly the most graceful of all creatures," said Levi.

"See how white its breast is!" said Esther. "The dear little thing! Mayn't I hold it for just a minute?"

"Certainly, dear."

Rebecca was very fond of Esther and her brother. She loved to have them visit her. She picked up the gazelle and put it in the little girl's lap as soon as she had seated herself on a pile of straw.

Esther patted the gazelle tenderly. "It is better than any doll. I wish I had one of my own. I should love it dearly."

"I cannot stop any longer now," said Levi. "My old camel is wondering why I don't go to work. Are you coming with me, Solomon?"

"Of course I am," answered the boy, and the two started for the field.

"What shall we do with ourselves?" asked Rebecca, when she and Esther had been left alone.

"Oh, I know what you would like," she went on. "We

will go over into our neighbour's orchard. He is gathering olives, and we will watch him."

"I would like that ever so much," answered her little visitor.

It took them only a few minutes to get to the olive orchard. The owner and his sons were heating the branches with long sticks, and knocking off the fruit to the ground. Two women were busily at work gathering the olives in baskets. As soon as a basket was filled, it was carried away and emptied, and then brought back to be filled again.

It was surprising how quickly the women gathered their loads. Then away they would step with their baskets on their heads, walking as easily and gracefully as though they were free of all burdens whatever.

"Come on and help us," they cried to Rebecca and Esther. "The more at work the merrier we shall be. There are two empty baskets under that tree."

The visitors were soon busy trying to see if they could fill their baskets as quickly as the others did.

"I am not tempted to eat the olives," said Esther. "They are too bitter. But I am very fond of them after they are

pickled."

"So are we all," answered one of the women. "I don't know how we should get along without olives and the oil we make from them."

"They say the Christians not only eat that unclean animal, the pig, but they also use its fat for cooking, just as we use olive oil," said Rebecca.

"Ugh! What a horrid idea. I should be afraid to eat anything in the house of a Christian, for fear of being poisoned," cried Esther. "Mamma has told me they sometimes die of diseases we Hebrews never have. It is probably because they eat pork and use lard."

"No doubt of it, Esther," answered Rebecca. "It is a wise law of our religion that forbids us to eat any food obtained from the hog."

"We must not stop to talk too much, though. See! our friends are getting ahead of us."

Nothing more was said for some time.

"It is surprising how quickly we finished," said one of the women to Rebecca, as the last basket was emptied. "It is because our friends gave us so much help. Won't you come

to the house with us now and have a luncheon?"

"No, thank you," answered Rebecca. "It is nearly supper time, and I must go home and do some cooking."

"I am anxious to see the dear little gazelle again," said Esther.

As she walked back to her friend's house Rebecca told her stories about wild gazelles.

"They like to keep together," she said. "They are very fond of each other's company. While they are feeding, one of them stands on guard to see if any enemies are stealing upon them. If he hears a sound that means danger, he gives the alarm and away the flock flees like the wind."

"I have often heard father speak of being as fleet as a gazelle," said Esther. "But what are its worst enemies?"

"The lion and the leopard, I suppose. Poor little creature! If a lion takes it by surprise, there is little hope for its life. Its only chance is in flight.

"There are times when less dangerous animals come upon a herd of gazelles, and then they make a stand to defend themselves. They gather in a close mass, with the mothers and little ones in the centre. The males make a ring

on the outside, pointing their horns toward the enemy."

"Isn't it wonderful they should be so wise? How did you learn so much about gazelles, Rebecca?"

"Levi told me. But I must hurry now to get supper. We are going to have something nice."

Rebecca was a good cook. Although Esther was quite hungry from being out-of-doors so much, it did not seem very long before a roast goose and a dish of onions were steaming on the supper table.

"It is ready just in time, Levi," said his wife, as her husband and Solomon came into the house.

"I am quite tired, but the smell of the supper is enough to make me forget all about it. Tired as I was, though, I stopped to feed my faithful camel."

"How old is he?" asked Solomon.

"My father had him before he was six months old, and that was twenty years ago. I was a little fellow just toddling about then. So, you see, the camel and I grew up together."

"It is no wonder you love him, Levi," said Solomon. "I don't believe I ever saw a baby camel."

"Isn't it hard work training a camel to obey you, and to

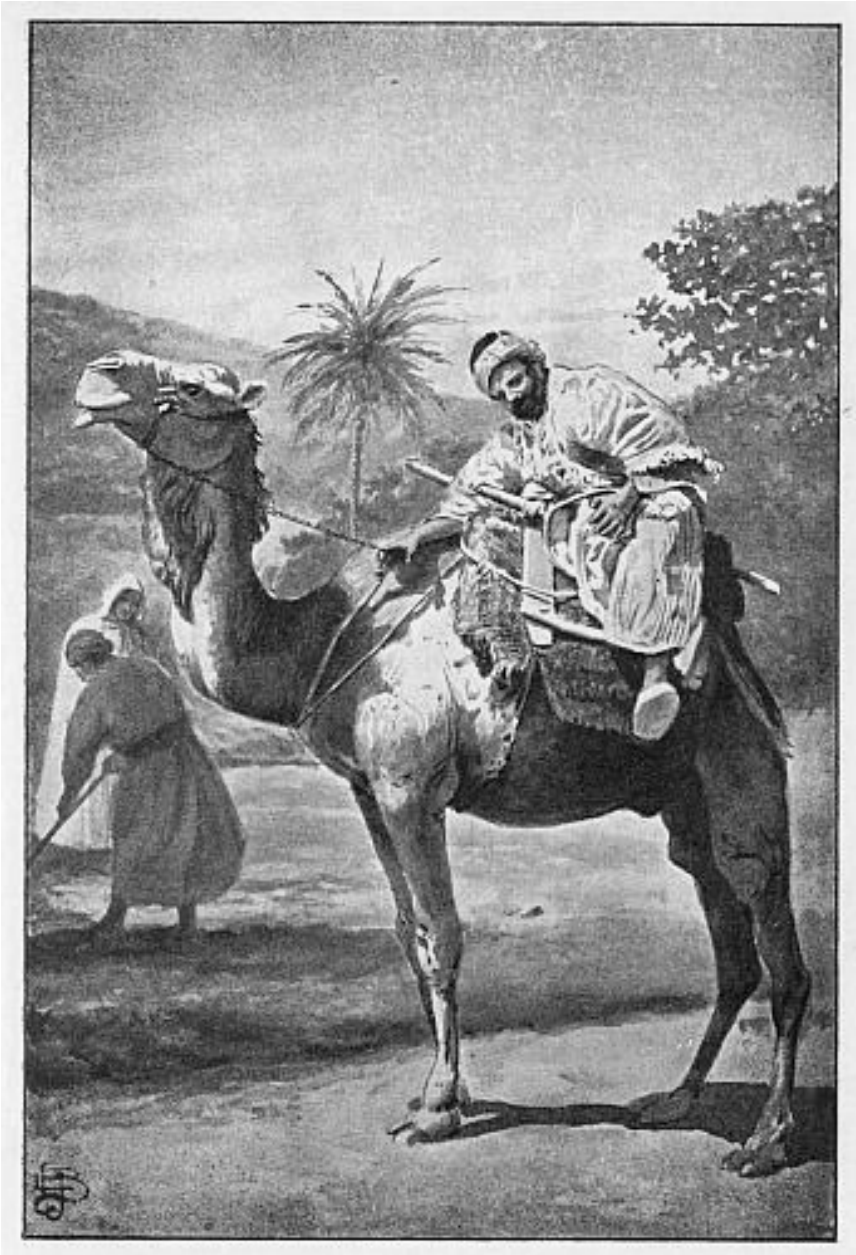
kneel at your command?"

"Father said he had to use a great deal of patience at first. The camel kicked and fought and grumbled before he could be made to bend his knees. Even now, he scolds a good deal about obeying, as you children know."

"Esther and I saw a camp of Bedouins on our way here," said Solomon. "They were tending a flock of beautiful sheep. One of the shepherds was holding a new-born lamb in his bosom."

"Those fierce Bedouins are tender to their flocks, but cruel to men," said Levi. "You cannot trust them for a moment. They look down upon us village people. But in our hearts we scorn them."

"They are dreadful thieves," said Rebecca. "When I was up in Jerusalem, the other day, I heard a story about a Bedouin woman who went last summer into a rich man's garden. The owner of the place was just coming into the entrance when he met the woman with a basket of lettuce on her head. She was a relation of one of his servants. He stopped and asked her several questions about her errand there. She told him she had just been to his place to try to



Levi and His Camel

sell her lettuce, but she could not do it, as the garden contained all his family could use.

"The gentleman supposed she was telling the truth. What was his surprise, then, when he found out after she was safe out of sight that the woman had stolen every head of lettuce out of his garden!"

"It is just like the deceitful creatures," said Levi. "I dislike the sight of them."

"Are you going to have much honey this year?" asked Solomon.

"Yes, I have several swarms of bees, and I hope they will do well."

"It won't be long before we shall have some fresh honey," said Rebecca. "Then you children must pay us another visit, for I know you like sweet things."

"I wish we didn't need to go home to-morrow. But mother said we mustn't stay here any longer this time. By and by, though, there will be more wild flowers to pick, and I had rather be here then. I love to get big bunches of tulips and poppies and trim the house with them."

"How many red flowers we have here in Palestine!" said

Rebecca.

She did not know that Christian travellers from other parts of the world speak of them as the "Saviour's Blood Drops." They are sure to notice the fields dotted with brilliant scarlet flowers.

"Do you want me to tell you a story of King Solomon?" asked Levi. "Your speaking of the honey and the flowers put it into my mind."

"Of course we do," said both children.

"Very well, then. It is about the visit of the Queen of Sheba with her generals and armies. As she approached, the great king received her sitting on his throne in that wondrous palace of which you have heard so much.

"'Is he as wise as people say?' the queen said to her attendants. 'I will find this out for myself.'

"Now it happened that her subjects were noted for their skill in making artificial flowers. Those who made it their business to study flowers could not tell the difference between real ones and these imitation ones, they were so perfect.

"The queen decided to test King Solomon's wisdom in

this matter. She ordered two beautiful wreaths to be prepared. One was to be made of real flowers and the other of artificial ones. Taking the two wreaths in her hands, she presented herself before the king.

"'Choose one of these for yourself,' she said.

"There seemed to be no choice as to which he would take, although he looked at them closely. But his wise mind told him there must be some difference. The birds and insects could tell him which one to take. He looked out of a window and saw honey-bees in the garden below. Then he knew what to do. He ordered the window to be opened. The breeze carried the odour of the flowers out to the bees and they came flying into the room.

"You can easily guess they alighted on the wreath of real flowers. The artificial ones did not attract them in the least. Then Solomon spoke.

"'The bees have told me which wreath to choose,' he said."

"The Queen of Sheba found out that the king was truly wise, didn't she?" said Solomon.

"Yes, Solomon, and you who are named for him should

always remember what the Queen of Sheba learned--that there is one thing worth more than riches or beauty."

"And that is wisdom," said Rebecca, softly.

CHAPTER III

The Feast of the Passover

It was the first evening of the seven days set apart to celebrate the deliverance of the Jews from their bondage in Egypt and their safe passage to a new home of their own.

Solomon and Esther were dressed in their Sabbath clothes. So were their father and mother. The house was trimmed as though for a wedding.

"Is the table ready?" Esther's mother asked the servant.

"Quite ready. Everything is in its place, I think," was the answer.

The children's father led the way, and the family gathered around the table. There were lettuce and cress, unleavened bread, wine, and a meat bone which was carefully covered with a fine cloth.

Solomon and his father began to chant. They rocked themselves to and fro at the same time. This motion of their bodies was to express as well as possible the words of the psalm, "All my bones shall praise thee."

When the chant was finished, the master of the house cut a slice from a loaf of bread shaped like a crescent.

"These two pieces of bread," he said, solemnly, "are like the shores of the Red Sea. But now, as I join them together again, it seems as though we could see the waves sweeping over Pharaoh's host."

He then took one-half the loaf and, putting it in a napkin, tied it on Solomon's shoulders. There it remained till the ceremony was over. Everybody drank some wine, and then another chant was sung. After that, they ate some lettuce and jam and chanted again.

Esther's father now took some bread, spread it with jam, wrapped it in lettuce and wound cress around it. He gave some of it to each one to eat. This was done in memory of the ten plagues of Egypt.

The service was not finished until every one had eaten eggs. This was a sign of mourning that their temple had been

destroyed.

Solomon and Esther understood the meaning of all that was done this evening. They had been carefully taught the history of the "Chosen People," as they liked to call themselves. But at this festival their father once more repeated many of the stories of the olden time.

He said, "We do not celebrate this festival exactly as our forefathers did. They always sacrificed a lamb. They were also careful to eat no leavened food for the whole seven days. We follow the rule about unleavened bread still, and we look upon the first and last days as holy. You must never do labour of any kind on these two days."

Then he went on to tell the story of the first Passover, and how Pharaoh, as the ruler of Egypt was called, wished to keep the Hebrews in bondage. He was building two treasure-cities, and he needed great numbers of workmen to make the bricks. He did not wish the Hebrews to join his enemies or leave the country.

He was a stern ruler, and he made his slaves work very hard. Yet they had many children. The Pharaoh did not like this. He feared they would become too powerful. So he

ordered that every new-born boy among them should be killed.

It happened at this time that a little boy was born in a family where there were already two children. This new baby was a boy, and was given the name of Moses. The mother of the child was fearful lest he should be discovered and killed by the cruel Pharaoh. She hid him as best she could for three months. Then she thought: "The danger grows greater every day. I must make some new plan to save him."

She placed the baby in a little cradle or ark, and carried him down to the shore of the river, where she hid him in the reeds. She told her daughter Miriam to stay near her brother and watch over him. Then she went away.

A little while after this, who should come but the noble princess, Pharaoh's daughter. She was going to bathe in the river. It was not long before she spied the smiling baby in the bulrushes. She was so pleased with the little fellow that she said, "I will adopt the child."

Then the little Miriam came to her side and told the princess she knew of a good nurse. In this way it came about that Moses' own mother was hired to take care of the baby.

As he grew up in the king's palace, his mother told Moses all about himself and his people. He was very carefully taught, and soon showed that he was "mighty in words and deeds."

It happened one day that Moses saw one of the overseers cruelly beating an Israelite. He was so angry that he killed the overseer. Then he had to flee to save his own life from the wrath of Pharaoh. He went into the desert not far from the Red Sea, and there he stayed for forty years.

He became a shepherd. Once while he was tending his sheep, he saw a strange sight. It was a burning bush. That in itself was nothing to wonder at. But the strange part of it all was that the bush looked as though it were in flames, yet it did not really burn up. It was a sign from Heaven!

As Moses looked at the bush, he heard a voice. It cried, "Take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground."

He listened in wonder as he next received a command from God to seek the ruler of Egypt, who was now treating the people of Israel with great cruelty. He must give the Pharaoh a message. It was this -- that God commanded Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt and into the

desert.

At first Moses feared to do this. But the Lord caused some miracles to be performed before his eyes. Then he had faith, and became brave enough to do as God commanded him.

He went with his brother Aaron to the ruler of Egypt. He told him that he had received word from Heaven ordering him to lead the people of Israel out into the desert to take part in a feast.

The cruel Pharaoh did not believe in God. He was angry with Moses and refused to let the people go.

Moses now showed the power the Lord had given him. He lifted his rod and commanded ten plagues to come down on the land of Egypt. This was to punish the Pharaoh and force him to free the Israelites.

One by one the plagues fell upon the country. The waters were changed to blood, and great numbers of frogs appeared upon the land. Besides these creatures, there were swarms of lice, flies, and other pests.

The people of Egypt became sick. The land was covered with darkness. The Pharaoh was frightened and promised to

let the Israelites leave his country. Then the darkness lifted and the plagues ceased. But as soon as this happened, the Pharaoh broke his promise.

The troubles began again. Pharaoh made fresh promises, only to break them again as soon as the plagues stopped.

At last, God sent an angel into Egypt to kill all the first-born of the people. The Israelites, however, were not to be harmed. Moses told them to smear their door-posts with the blood of a lamb.

The angel moved from house to house, doing as the Lord had directed. But when he came to a door-post marked with the blood of a lamb, he passed it by, and no one within was harmed.

Esther's father told the story that evening, as though the children had never heard it before. Yet they had listened to it every year since they could remember.

The blood of a lamb! Yes, the people in olden time had good reason to sacrifice a lamb at the Passover.

It was well named the Passover, in memory of the angel's passing over the homes of the Chosen People.

CHAPTER IV

The Orphan

"Dear me! How my head aches," said Esther. "I do wish those dogs would stop barking."

The little girl had been ill for two or three days. The hot days of summer had brought on a fever. The doctor had said, "Keep the child quiet. All she needs is rest. She has played too much in the sunshine."

But how could poor little Esther have quiet? The street dogs were noisy enough in the daytime, but when night came, it seemed as though every single one was wide awake and quarrelling with his neighbours.

"They have no home, and are almost obliged to fight, to get enough to eat. I am sorry for them," said Esther's mother.

She felt more kindly to the dogs than most of the people

in Jerusalem. They would have been glad to have the city rid of the creatures.

These street dogs look very much like foxes. They have no homes of their own and almost no friends. Those living in one part of the city are always ready to carry on war against those of every other part.

"Let us take Esther up on the roof," said the little girl's father, one evening. "It is such a hot night, she cannot rest in this close room."

Esther felt better almost as soon as she had been carried up and settled on a soft couch. The roof of the stone house where she lived was flat. Most of the houses around her were built in the same way. Many of the neighbours spent their evenings on the roofs, and often moved from one roof to another to make calls on each other.

Esther had been up there only a few minutes before she had a caller. It was a little girl about her own age. She told Esther some news about one of their playmates. She said:

"Only think of it! Miriam's father has just died. You know, Esther, her mother died so long ago that she doesn't even remember her. What will become of her now? There is

no one in the world to take care of her."

Esther was very fond of Miriam, and her heart was full of pity.

She thought of her own comfortable home and then of the many Jews in the city who were very, very poor. Perhaps Miriam would become a beggar! It was a dreadful thought.

Just then Esther's mother came up on the roof. She was dressed in a beautiful yellow robe. A rich girdle belted it in at the waist. She wore large golden hoops in her ears, and a heavy chain around her neck.

"Mamma is as lovely as a queen," thought Esther. "I know papa isn't rich. Still, he has enough and to spare, and we have many nice things. I will ask him and mamma to adopt Miriam. Then I shall have a sister of my own.

"Mamma, dear, I have just heard about Miriam, and now I want to ask you something. Will you take her for your little daughter?"

The mother sat down beside the sick girl. Her face wore a gentle smile.

"My dear, I am glad the thought came to you. You are a sweet, loving child. Do you know, your father and I have just

been talking about this very thing. There is nothing our Church praises more highly than the adoption of an orphan. It is called 'A good work.' So we have decided to add one more to our little family."

Esther clapped her hands with joy. "I know I shall get well at once," she cried. "The fever will go away, for I sha'n't have time to think of it."

It was just as she had said. It seemed as though she began to get better from that very moment. She had so much to do trying to entertain her new sister, she did not think of herself.

Miriam was sad at first. She could not help remembering she was an orphan. But her new father and mother were so kind to her, and Solomon and his sister tried so hard to make her happy, she soon forgot to be lonesome and sad.

One day a message came from Rebecca and Levi. They wished all the children to come and visit them. Rebecca wrote:

"We have a new pet, and I know you will be fond of it. It is a beautiful Syrian sheep. Its wool is a soft brown and yellow. Its tail is very broad and flat. It is so tame, it follows

me wherever I go.

"Besides," the letter went on, "we have quantities of fresh figs now, and I know you children are very fond of them."

"May we go, mother? Please say 'yes,'" asked Esther.

"If your father is willing," was the answer. "I shall be very lonesome, but it will do you all good to leave the city for awhile and visit our kind friends."

That evening, Esther and Miriam ran to meet their father.

"I wish father had a little farm," said Esther, as the two girls walked arm in arm down the street. "I should think it would be ever so much easier than being a trader."

"I spoke about that once to my other father," said thoughtful little Miriam. "He said that in the good old times our people were generally shepherds or farmers. But nowadays they are almost all traders.

"It is because those who do not believe as we do have treated us so cruelly. They have made it hard for us to hold land. We have been forced to become traders. Our people are scattered all over the world. Father said there is hardly a country without some of them."

"Let us ask papa to tell us stories of old times to-night," said Esther. "There, I see his scarlet robe away down the street now."

CHAPTER V

The Jews of Long Ago

"May we go to Levi's, papa dear?" asked Esther, when the evening meal was over and the children were gathered with their parents on the housetop. "Mamma said she was willing, but we must ask you."

"I think it would be very pleasant for you, and I know Levi and Rebecca like to have you there. Yes, you may go."

"I knew you would say yes. And now we want to ask you something else. Will you tell us some stories of long ago, before our city was destroyed?"

"I suppose you would like best to hear about the children, Esther?"

"Of course, papa."

"They were very happy. Their parents were as wise and tender in caring for them as they are to-day.

"When they were yet quite young, they began to study the books of wisdom of our people. They went to school every day. There was one saying they heard over and over again. It was this, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.'

"'Our houses are not for us alone,' their parents said, and taught them this beautiful saying, 'Let thy house be wide open, and let the poor be the children of the house.'

"There were many pilgrim feasts in those days. People came to Jerusalem to worship in the temple and to take part in the sacred festivals. Yet it is said that not one of these pilgrims ever felt the need of entertainment. The houses were open for all.

"Only think of it! It was a common thing to walk along the street and see curtains hanging in front of the doors. This was a sign that there was still room for guests. Some people went so far as to say, 'There should be four doors to every house. Then travellers could be welcomed from every direction.'"

"What kind of houses did the people live in?" asked Solomon.

"There were small cottages where the poor lived, for

there were some, of course, who did not have much of this world's goods. Then there were the houses of the middle class. These were built of brick or stone. And besides these there were the elegant marble homes of the rich, built around beautiful courtyards.

"The houses had flat roofs paved with stone or brick. They were made to slant down a little, so as to let the rain-water run off through pipes into the cistern below. These cisterns were needed in the old days just as much as now, on account of the long months when no rain fell and the country became so dry.

"A railing was built around each housetop. In this way it was made into a comfortable resting-place for the family and their friends. It was cool and quiet."

"We follow the same fashion," said Esther.

"Yes, but in the old times I suppose it was used even more than now. The older people often went up there to pray. Meetings were sometimes held there. It was also a good place to watch for the enemy.

"The rich people often had wide and costly stairs built up to the roof from the street. You can imagine the boys and

girls running over these stairs in a game of chase or hide-and-seek."

"How did the people of two thousand years ago furnish their houses?" asked Miriam.

"Very much as we do now. They had couches, chairs and tables, and there were often many soft cushions for the head and arms. The people used candlesticks and lamps, exactly as we do.

"But I promised to talk most about the children. They took part with their parents in family prayer every night and morning. They washed and prayed before every meal. After it, they gave thanks to God for his kindness to them. As each Sabbath came around, the children looked forward to it as though they were going to welcome a king. It was a time of rest and joy.

"When the father came home on the eve of the holy day, he found the house trimmed up as though for a feast. The Sabbath lamp was lighted. The table was spread with the richest feast the family could afford. Before doing anything else, the father blessed each child with the blessing of Israel. The little ones felt that something beautiful and holy was

about to take place.

"They were quite willing to give up their play for the next day. They would have something better."

"You have taught us all these things, papa," said Esther.

"I know it, my dear. But I tell them again so that you may see we have not changed much since the old days.

"The children looked forward to the feast-days with joyful delight. It is hard to say which they liked best."

"They must have loved the Feast of the Dedication," said Miriam.

"Why, Miriam?"

"On account of the many candles. It is so pleasant to watch a great number of them burning at once."

"Yes, children always love lights and brightness. The first evening of the feast, a candle was lighted for each one in the house. The second evening, two were lighted, and so on to the eighth night."

"But the Feast of Esther brings more sport," said Solomon.

"You are just like every other boy, Solomon. You like noise and fun," said his father.

"But, think a moment, children. Must not the Feast of the Passover have been the greatest one of all?"

"It was then that the father repeated the whole history of the Children of Israel to his listening children. They loved to hear it. It seemed to them as though they were really following the Chosen People in their wanderings. They looked upon Moses receiving the commandments from Heaven. As they shut their eyes, they saw in their minds the waters of the Red Sea parting to let the Children of Israel pass across in safety. Then, again coming together, the waves closed over their enemies and destroyed them."

"Father, you tell us the stories as well as any one possibly could," said Solomon.

"I do my best, Solomon. But in the olden days the children were brought nearer to heaven by their visits to the temple.

"Think of that glorious building and its walls shining with gold! It seems as though I could see the throng of white-robed priests and hear the blasts they sounded on their silver trumpets.

"Listen! A chant from the Psalms rings through the great

building. It sounds like heavenly voices." Esther's father closed his eyes and became silent. The children were filled with awe as they sat quietly beside him.

"I wish I could have lived in the long ago," thought Esther. "The temple must have seemed like a part of heaven brought to earth."

"Now we will repeat the night prayer and go to rest," said the father.

CHAPTER VI

Queer Sights

"Would you like to go shopping with me?" said Esther's mother, the next afternoon. "I must buy some things you children will need to carry with you on your visit."

Esther and Miriam jumped up from their play. They were always ready to go shopping. They liked to see the pretty things in the shops.

Esther's mother had made herself ready for her walk by fastening a bright red shawl over her head. She never wore a hat or a bonnet, as do her American sisters.

"We will go to the market first," she told the children. "I wish to buy some fruit."

It was quite a long walk, but there was so much to see on the way, Esther and Miriam did not think of that.

"Do see that drove of donkeys," exclaimed their mother,

after they had entered one of the principal streets. "They are laden with goatskins filled with water, I suppose. Listen, children! Their Arab driver is calling to them."

"O-ar! o-ar! derak! derak!" sounded the driver's voice.

A small boy running down a byway mimicked the Arab.

"O-ar! o-ar! derak! derak!"

"See that solemn old camel," said Esther. "He is laden with stones. They must be very heavy. Poor old fellow! I don't blame him for growling at his master for trying to hurry him up."

"His growl rattles so, it seems to come from his inmost stomach," said the mother, laughingly.

"Baksheesh! baksheesh!" yelled a beggar sitting cross-legged against the wall of a house. The man was ragged and dirty. He held a tin pail before him. Kind-hearted people had dropped money, fruit, and vegetables into it as they passed by.

"There are many poor people of our own faith here in the city," said Esther's mother, as they went on their way. "They really suffer for lack of food. That man is a Turk. It may be that he is really as poor as he looks, and needs all the

help he can get. But it is quite possible he has a comfortable home, and only begs because it is an easy way of getting a living."

"Look, mamma, at that woman of Bethlehem," said Miriam. "I know her by the dress."

Miriam pointed to the dark blue robe. Stripes of bright red, mixed with gold, reached down the sides. The sleeves were large and long, and trimmed in the same way. The woman's white veil hung down from a tall cap.

"How heavy her cap must be," said Esther. "It is like a crown."

"All the coins she owns are sewed on her cap," answered the mother. "It tells every one just how rich she is."

"I don't see how she does her work if she wears that robe all the time," said Miriam. "The sleeves are so large, I should think they must be in the way."

"She probably ties them together behind her. I have been told that is the way. She can use them as pockets."

"I don't see how men ever get used to carrying such big loads," said Esther.

She pointed to two porters who were bent nearly double.

Their loads were strapped upon cushions fastened on their backs, and held in place by straps around their heads.

"Each of those men must have almost as much of a load as a camel carries," said Esther's mother. "It seems almost impossible, but it is true. It is a hard life, a very hard life."

While she was speaking they entered the market. The eyes of the little girls were kept busy looking at the many different things of interest.

There were Arabs in charge of camels laden with melons, grapes and figs. There were women selling vegetables, and at the same time taking care of their babies. There were patient donkeys longing to be freed from their loads of goods which their masters were trying to sell.

"Mamma, mamma!" whispered Esther. "There is a baby gazelle in the basket on that woman's head. It is even smaller than the one I saw at Rebecca's. I suppose she is trying to sell the little thing."

"Look at the woman beside her," said Miriam. "She looks very tired. I suppose she has walked several miles from her own village with her baskets of fruit. Her baby boy sits on her shoulders, crowing and laughing at every one who passes

by."

"Come, children. We will go now to some shops where I must buy things not sold here," said Esther's mother.

She led the way out of the market and they entered a crowded street. There were Turks in their flowing robes, Arabs, Armenians, Syrians, and Jews. Almost all were gaily dressed, and many of them were handsome. The Arabs were either barefooted, or else they wore red or yellow slippers.

"They lift their feet as though they were passing over a desert," said Esther to Miriam, as they went by some Arabs.

"I should think they would suffer from the heat," answered her sister. "Their heads look so big, I'm sure they have two or three caps under their turbans."

"Perhaps they think the more clothing they wear, the better the heat will be kept out," said their mother, who heard what they were talking about.

"Here is the shop I was looking for. We will go in."

She led the way into a sort of cave cut into the soft rock. It was a dark, dingy little place. There were shelves around the sides of it. In the middle was a sort of counter, where the storekeeper sat with his goods around him.



A Woman of Bethlehem

As Esther's mother entered, he slowly took his pipe from his mouth and stopped his gossiping with a friend who sat outside on the pavement. He was in no hurry, however. He acted more like a king on his throne than a trader who had to sell cloth for a living.

"Yellow plush, is it?" he asked. "Ah! I have some beautiful, beautiful. It is the very thing."

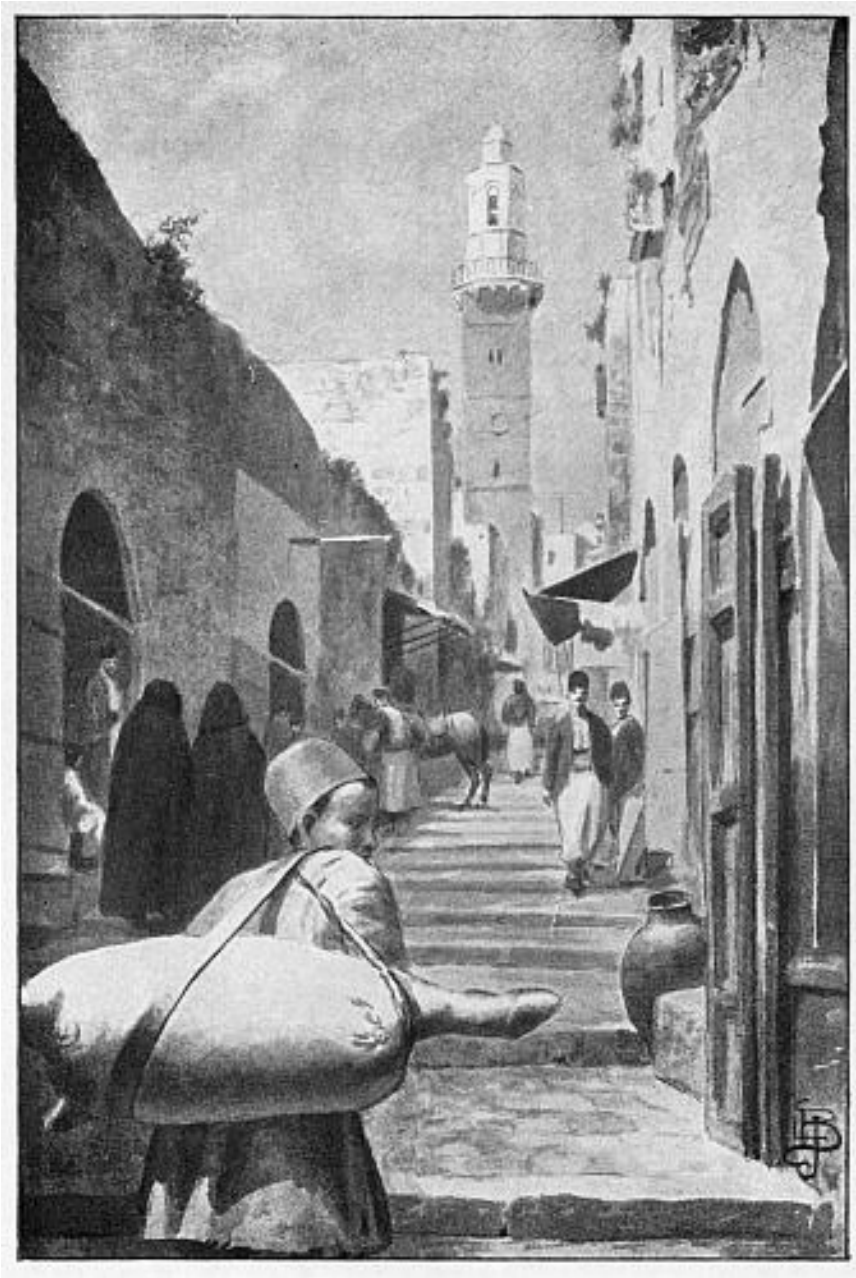
But his customer was not easily satisfied, and after she had finally picked out the piece she wished, there was a long talk about the price. Both were satisfied at last. The plush was cut off and wrapped up, and the storekeeper was left to his own pleasure.

Esther's mother still had some errands to do, so they visited several other stores. They were not all in caves, however, but most of them were small and dark.

At last, everything needed was purchased and the lady and children started homeward.

"Look at the sky," said Esther. "Isn't it beautiful tonight?"

The sun was almost setting. The clouds were turning a rosy red. They were so bright that the city itself seemed to



A Street in Jerusalem

share in their glory.

"Jerusalem the Blessed!" said Miriam, in a low voice.

"There is papa. We are late about getting home and so is he," said Esther. "Now we can have his company."

Her father had already seen his wife and the girls, and was smiling at them.

It was a warm evening, yet he wore his fur-trimmed, round velvet hat over the tight-fitting cap that never left his head in the daytime. A long lock of hair hung down on each side of his face, as it always did after he was dressed for the day.

"Bless you, my little ones," he said, as Esther and Miriam each seized a hand. "Now tell me what you have seen while you were shopping."

The children chattered as they do everywhere in the world. They described the market and the people, the camels and the shopkeepers.

"We were coming to your store when we found how late it was. Then we thought it would be closed, and you on your way home. And so you were," said Esther, laughingly.

By the time the children had reached their own door,

they were so tired they thought only of bed and sleep. They were even too tired to care about their supper.

"But you must not slight your night prayer," said their father, soberly.

Esther's and Miriam's eyes winked and blinked a good many times before they got through the prayer.

"It never seemed so long before, except when I was sick," Esther told her adopted sister, when they were at last stretched on their beds. "And, do you know, Miriam," she added, sleepily, "I believe Solomon doesn't always repeat it all. He says our people have so many prayers he gets tired of them sometimes. Isn't that dreadful?"

But Miriam was already sound asleep, and did not answer.

CHAPTER VII

The Cave

"Which way did you come?" asked Levi, as he helped the two little girls down from the ass's back. Solomon had walked by their side all the way.

"We passed through the Jaffa gate and then took the shortest way down here into the valley," said Esther.

Jerusalem is surrounded by walls. There are seven gates through which the city may be entered or left. But the Jaffa and Damascus gates are the ones most used.

"We saw a Bedouin riding a beautiful horse. He was in full dress, and looked just elegant," said Solomon. "I should like to own a horse like his."

"Tell me how he was dressed," said Rebecca.

"His long, wide cloak must have been quite new. I could tell, because the yellow stripes looked so clean and bright.

The shawl bound around his head and hanging down over his shoulders was pure white," said Miriam.

"His high red leather boots were the handsomest part of his dress. There were tassels at the sides, of course," interrupted Solomon. "But his sash! You ought to have seen the shining dagger and the pistol that were stuck in it. My! the man looked as though he were ready to meet any one.

"His horse was a beauty, too. She was decked with red woollen tassels that reached clear to the ground. She snorted and stepped off with the spirit of a war-horse. You know the tassels are useful in keeping off the flies. There are such swarms of them the poor beasts suffer very much."

"But come along, children, I know you want to have a romp under the trees. You need not stay here talking any longer."

While Levi was speaking, Rebecca put her arm around Miriam's waist and tried to make her feel at home. She had not been to Jerusalem since the little orphan had come to live with Esther and Solomon.

"She is a sweet child," she thought. "Not as strong as Esther nor as brave as Solomon. But she will be grateful for

kindness. I feel sure of that when I look into her eyes."

In a few minutes Rebecca and Levi were playing with their young company as though they were children themselves.

"To-morrow we will have a little picnic, and I will take you to a cave you have never visited," promised Levi, as his young visitors were bidding him good night.

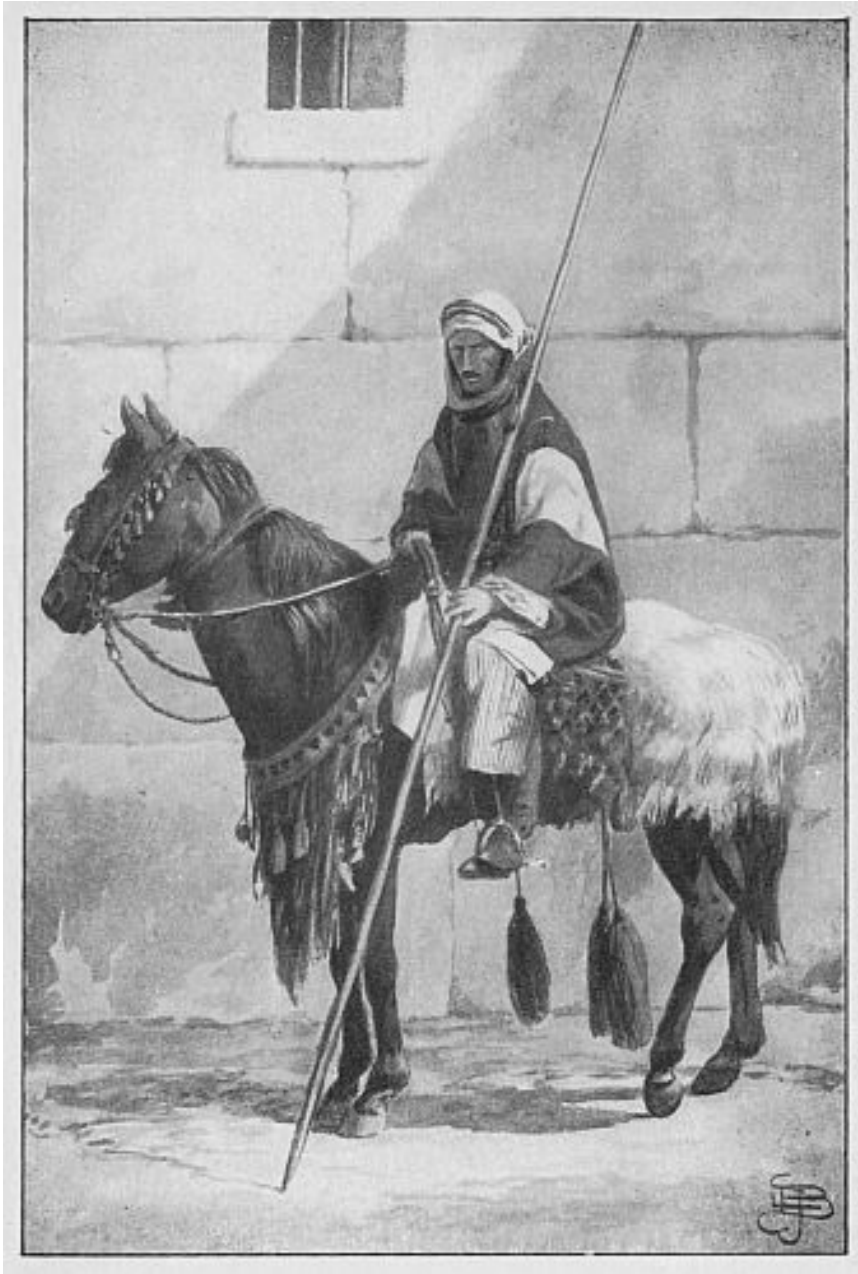
"It is a pleasant walk there, and not so far as to tire us," added Rebecca.

The next morning was bright and clear. The breakfast was soon eaten, after which, Esther and Miriam helped Rebecca clean up the house and prepare the lunch they were to carry.

While they were waiting for Levi and Solomon to finish some farm work, the little girls had a chance to pet the gazelle and the tame sheep of which Rebecca had written them.

At last they were all ready to start. It was a pleasant walk, as Rebecca had said, yet there were several rough and rather wild places to pass through.

"Almost all the caves around here are made of



A Bedouin

limestone," said Levi. "It is so soft that the rains wear great hollows in the rocks."

"Did you ever go to the cave of Adullam, Levi?" asked Solomon.

"Yes, once when I was a boy. It is beyond Bethlehem. I had heard father speak of it. He told me that King David hid there with four hundred of his followers."

"Four hundred! It must be a very big cave, then," said Esther.

"You would think so, if you once got inside. There is one hall that is thirty-eight yards long. There are several passages leading into it. Some are so low that one has to crawl through them on his hands and knees. Others spread out into large chambers. Many of these chambers are very beautiful. The water has trickled down the walls and worn the soft limestone into the loveliest patterns."

"How could you see, Levi? Wasn't it dark inside the cave?" asked Solomon.

"Of course it was, but every one in the party carried a lighted torch or candle. The torches gave light enough to show the beautiful ornaments."

"There is our own cave ahead of us," said Rebecca. "Of course I mean it is the one we are to visit," she added, with a laugh.

All the children could see was a great mass of rocks on the side of a hill. As they drew nearer, they spied a small hole near the ground.

"Must we crawl through that hole?" asked Esther, with a shiver.

"It is larger than you imagine," replied Levi. "Besides, you only have to crawl a few feet. After that the way opens up quite suddenly. I will go first with my torch. Then you can all follow."

"I'm afraid," Miriam whispered to Esther. She did not wish Solomon to hear her. She feared he would make fun of her.

"Hold on to my hand and have courage. I will go ahead of you," was the answer.

One by one, they passed through the opening.

"Isn't this fun!" cried Solomon as they all stood in the chamber worn out of the rocks.

"It makes me feel queer to think of being underground,"

said Esther.

"Hark! What's that noise?" said Miriam, in a frightened voice.

"It's only a family of bats we have taken by surprise. They are not used to callers," said Levi.

The bats were more frightened than Miriam. They flew about in a blind way. Several times they almost brushed against the faces of Rebecca and Levi, the tallest ones in the party.

"Ugh! I don't like bats," said Miriam. "I am going outside."

"Just wait a minute until I see if there are any pretty decorations on the walls. Look! Here is just what I was searching for."

Levi held his torch up near the roof.

"Isn't it beautiful? How can Nature work in such a regular pattern?" said Rebecca, half to herself.

"It is because she is the handmaiden of the Lord," replied Levi, reverently.

After they had left the cave and were once more out in the bright sunshine, the children were allowed to choose a

place for the picnic dinner. They had brought water for bathing the hands and face as well as for drinking. Levi had told them before they started that there was no well or spring near the place.

After they had washed and prayed, they were all ready to enjoy the nice luncheon Rebecca had prepared.

"Tell us stories about King David, won't you, please Levi?" asked Solomon. "When you spoke of the cave of Adullam this morning you said David hid there with a great many of his followers. I suppose that made me think of him now."

"I should like nothing better," said Levi, stretching himself out on the ground. "But would you all like to hear about the 'Sweet Singer of Israel'?"

"Indeed we would," sounded a chorus of voices.

CHAPTER VIII

The Sweet Singer of Israel

"Very well, then. Let us go back to the days of long ago, long, even, before the destruction of our beloved city. Let us seek David on the hillsides, tending his flocks with loving care.

"One day a visitor came to the house of Jesse, David's father. This visitor was no other than the prophet Samuel. He had received a command from the Lord telling him to take a vial of oil and seek the house of Jesse.

"'There,' said the Lord, 'you will find the new king who is to succeed Saul.'

"Samuel hastened to obey. When he reached Jesse's house, he asked to see his sons. One by one passed before him till the eighth son, David, appeared. Then the voice of the Lord again spoke to Samuel. It said:

"'Arise, anoint him, for this is he.'

"As soon as the prophet had anointed David with the oil, the young man was filled with the spirit and power of God. At the same time, they left King Saul, who did many foolish and bad deeds after this.

"But what of David? Did he go out into the world and declare himself the future king of Israel? Not so. He continued to live his peaceful, quiet life as a shepherd. He learned to sing, and play upon the harp. He now showed himself indeed the 'Sweet Singer of Israel.'

"He began to show power in other ways, too. Many times the fierce lions and savage bears came creeping upon his flocks. Many times David met and overpowered them with the strength given to him by the Lord."

"It seems as though I can see him guarding his flocks," said Solomon, as Levi stopped talking to rest for a moment. "His beautiful black eyes are looking out into the night and watching for danger. He looks at his sleeping sheep to see if all are safe. Then he hears the sound of foes drawing near and springs to meet them."

"I like best to think of him with a tiny lamb in his arms,"

said Esther. "He holds it lovingly against his breast, as though he would say, 'I will save you from all harm, poor, helpless creature.'"

Levi now went on with his story.

"While David was still tending his flocks, King Saul was waging war upon the Philistines, the bitter enemies of our people. They became more and more daring, until at last they gathered on the side of a mountain right here in Israel.

"Three of David's brothers were fighting in Saul's army and went out to meet the Philistines. David often went to the camp to visit his brothers. He happened to be there once when a Philistine giant marched forth and dared any Israelite to fight with him.

"There was no one who felt able to say, 'I am not afraid; I accept your challenge.'

"'No one,' did I say? At first, this was true, for every one in Saul's army kept silent. But when David saw this, he felt the spirit of the Lord stir within him. He arose, saying, 'I will meet you.'

"He was now led before Saul, and there, in the presence of the king, he said he had faith that God would save him

from harm, even from the hand of the giant. At first, Saul thought:

"'It is of no use for this young shepherd to go out alone to meet the giant. He will only lose his life.'

"But when he heard what David said, he changed his mind. He got out a strong suit of armour, and even helped him to put it on. David was not used to such things. The armour weighed him down so that he staggered and almost fell. He said:

"'It would be better for me to carry only such weapons as I know. Let me take my shepherd's staff and the sling I have used so often in meeting the wild beasts.'

"He was allowed to do as he chose. He went forth to meet the giant with nothing to help him save his staff and sling.

"And what did the giant, Goliath, say when he saw the young shepherd draw near? He spoke in scornful words. But he suddenly became silent as David sent a stone from his sling that passed through his forehead and entered his brain. As soon as David saw the success of his shot, he rushed to the giant's side, seized his sword, and cut off his head.

"The watching Philistines were filled with fear. They

began to flee. But Saul's army followed and overtook them and killed great numbers.

"All Israel now began to praise David. Saul, too, was filled with delight. He declared he was willing David should marry his elder daughter after a while.

"Now the king, as you know, often did wild and foolish things. This was, perhaps, because he gave way to fits of bad temper. When he learned of David's power to play and sing, he often asked the young shepherd to quiet his angry feelings with the sweet music of his harp and voice.

"He was very fond of David in those days, but after a while he became jealous when he heard the constant praises of the people. They said, 'Saul hath slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands.'

"His anger was now turned against the brave shepherd. At one time, he threw his spear at David. It was when the lad was playing on his harp. But Saul failed to do what his wicked heart desired. The Lord was protecting the future king of Israel.

"Again he tried to kill David, and again he failed. Saul must have thought that it was of no use, so now he sought

to injure the young man in a different way. He gave the daughter he had promised David to another lover.

"But Saul soon found that his younger daughter loved David. He now said:

"'You may have Michal if you will first kill one hundred Philistines.' He only said this because he hoped David would be killed by the enemy."

"I know what David did," exclaimed Solomon, who could keep still no longer. "He went out and destroyed two hundred Philistines, instead of one hundred."

"Yes," said Levi, "and he brought back the spoils and laid them at the feet of Saul. The king was now obliged to have David for a son-in-law. But he hated him as much as ever.

"So he told his son Jonathan and some of his attendants to kill him. Now Jonathan, as you must know, loved David as a brother. He did all in his power to make his father feel more kindly toward him. He had almost succeeded, when Saul was seized with a new spirit of madness. All his wicked feelings came back, and he hired some bad men to take David by surprise when he was asleep, and kill him.

"Somehow or other, Michal heard of the plot. She

warned David, and he fled from the palace. But Michal did not stop here. She made the shape of a man and placed it in David's bed. In this way the bad men who came to kill him were deceived.

"I am rather tired, Rebecca," said Levi, when he had got this far in his story. "Won't you go on and tell the children about David's flight?"

"Certainly," said his wife. In her sweet, clear voice she made a picture of David hiding near Ramah. "But he was not safe, for Saul heard where he was. He sent men there to take him prisoner. A strange thing happened on their way. They were overcome by the spirit of the Lord, and they did not dare seize David.

"When Saul was told how they had failed, he went himself in search of David. But he, too, was overpowered by the spirit of the Lord. And what do you think happened? Instead of harming him, he asked David to come back to the palace.

"But David did not feel sure that Saul was a true friend. He thought it would be the wisest thing for him to see Jonathan first and ask him to find out how his father really

felt.

"Jonathan was a true friend. It did not take him long to learn that Saul was as much an enemy as ever. He must now let David know about it, and prevent his return to the palace. He knew where David was hiding, but he did not dare seek him out.

"Instead of that, he started from the palace to go shooting. He took a boy with him. When he had come close to the place where his friend was hidden, he began to shoot. He spoke to the boy from time to time. He used such words as to let the listening David know that the king was no more his friend than ever."

When Rebecca had got thus far, Miriam looked a little perplexed.

"I don't see how David could understand what he meant," she said.

"He had agreed with Jonathan that certain words should mean certain things, my dear."

"Oh, I see now. Go on with the story, please."

Rebecca smiled pleasantly, and went on.

"David prepared to flee at once. But he had no arms or

food. He must have both.

"He went to the house of the High Priest. When he had entered, he told him he had come with a message from the king. He asked for the sword of Goliath, which was in the High Priest's keeping. He also asked for five sacred loaves of shewbread, which no one dared to eat except the priests.

"When these had been given him he hurried away. He had one adventure after another. It was about this time that he hid in the cave of Adullam. His brothers and a great many other Israelites joined him there.

"While he was hiding in the cave of Adullam, the prophet of God came to him, telling him to go into the land of Judah. He started at once to obey the prophet's command. Saul heard where he was and followed him. On his way, the king heard how David had been helped by the High Priest. He was so angry that he ordered not only the High Priest to be killed, but also his eighty-five helpers, and all the people of the town in which he lived.

"The son of the High Priest managed to escape. He fled to David and told him the sad story. You can imagine how bad David felt when he learned what had happened through

his own deceit. But his mind was kept busy with plans to keep out of Saul's reach, for the king followed him from place to place.

"One night while David was hiding in a cave, the king stopped to rest at that very spot. Little did he dream who was so near him. While he lay sleeping David crept to his side and cut off a piece of his cloak. He might have killed Saul at this time, but he had too great a heart.

"The next day, just as the king was riding away in his chariot, David appeared in the mouth of the cave. He held up the piece he had cut from Saul's cloak. Then the king knew he had been in David's power. He saw how generously he had been treated. He felt such shame that he determined to do the young man no more harm. But his heart soon grew wicked again and once more he began to persecute him.

"David again showed him how generous he was. He crept into Saul's tent one night. The king's army was encamped all around him. Only a servant went with David on this dangerous trip.

"No one saw them as they stole along. No one heard them as David stepped to the side of the sleeping Saul and

seized his spear and cup; then away they sped till they reached the hilltop opposite the one where Saul had taken his stand.

"David now cried out in a loud voice to wake the sleeping army. He showed the cup and spear he had taken away from Saul's tent. Saul saw that David had spared his life a second time. He was again filled with gratitude.

"But David had learned not to trust him. He sought a home among the Philistines and helped them in their wars. They treated him with great kindness and their king became his true friend.

"Not long after this, the Philistines went out to battle against Saul. David was not with them at this time. It was a sad day for the Israelites. They were badly beaten and Saul's sons were killed. Yes, even David's faithful friend Jonathan lost his life. Saul was overcome with sorrow. He threw himself upon his sword and died by his own hand.

"When David heard the news he felt very sad. He mourned bitterly over the death of Jonathan. But this could not be helped now, and there was much work to do for his people.

"The Israelites were in a pitiful state. The Philistines had most of the country in their power. A leader was needed. That leader was at hand. It was David, the hero, the Sweet Singer.

"'How just he is!' said the people. 'How brave he is!' all cried.

"Not long after this he was crowned King of Israel. At first, he lived in Hebron, but afterward he went to Jerusalem, where a beautiful palace was built for him and his family. And now he went on and became great, for the Lord God of hosts was with him."

Rebecca bowed her head as she said these words.

"Let us chant one of the psalms of David," said Levi. "It is a good way to end our afternoon."

Rebecca began the words of the beautiful twenty-third psalm. The others joined their voices with hers.

THE END.

Our Little Persian Cousin

E. Cutler Shedd

Illustrated by Diantha W. Horne



“He carried it home on his shoulder.”

Preface

Persia is mostly a tableland, from which rise many high mountains. In the winter come storms of snow and rain; in the spring the ground is green with grass and bright with many flowers; but in the late summer and fall it is dry and hot. Over the mountains wander the Kurds, who live in tents, and drive with them the great flocks of goats and sheep whose milk gives them food and from whose wool they weave their clothing and rugs. In many of the valleys are villages. Here live the busy Persian peasants, who have brought the water in long channels from its bed in the valleys to water their fields and orchards. Where plenty of water is found there are towns and cities.

Over two thousand years ago the kings of the Persians were the most powerful in the world, and ruled all the country from India to Europe. Some of them helped the Jews, as is told in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah in the

Old Testament. Two of them tried to conquer Greece, but the brave Greeks defeated their armies in the famous battles of Marathon and Salamis. Many years later the Greeks themselves under Alexander the Great invaded Persia and won its empire. But the Persians afterwards regained the power, and for five centuries held their own against the armies of the Roman emperors.

Suddenly great armies of Arabs poured out from the wide desert land of Arabia, eager to conquer the world, and to bring others to accept the new religion taught by their prophet, Muhammad. Thousands of them entered Persia. They induced the Persians to forsake their own religion, called fire worship, and to become Muhammadans.

Six hundred years passed, when new and more terrible invaders spread over the land. These were armies of horsemen armed with bows, who came in thousands from the wide plains of Siberia. They were the ancestors of the Turks. They destroyed a great many villages and cities, and killed tens of thousands of the Persians. Even yet, after more than five hundred years, one may see in Persia ruins made by them. A great many Turks still live in northern Persia.

The Persians are now a weak and ignorant nation; but the most progressive of them are trying to secure good schools and to improve their country in other ways.

CHAPTER I

Karim Arrives

Every one in the house of Abdullah was smiling on the day when a boy was born. Even Ashak the donkey, as he was bringing big bundles of wheat from the field, did not get half as many pokes as usual from the nail pointed stick that took the place of a whip, and was actually let alone for a whole afternoon to eat the dead grass and crisp thistles by the roadside.

Old Bajee, who was caring for the baby, ran as fast as she could to be the first to tell the news to Abdullah, calling out all the way, "Good news! a boy! a boy!"

"Praise be to God!" exclaimed Abdullah, and gave her a piece of silver money worth half a dollar. Laughing from joy she clutched this tight in her fist, and almost touched the ground with her forehead as she bowed to him. She had

never owned half a dollar at one time except twice before in her life.

Abdullah hurried to the little shop around the corner and bought a loaf of sugar and some tea, and the tea urn, or samovar, was soon steaming. His neighbours — all men — came to congratulate him. Some brought raisins as a present, some melons. One brought another small loaf of sugar.

"May his foot be blessed!" they said. (They meant the baby's foot.) "This is light to your eyes!" "May you be the father of eight boys and no girls!"

Said Abdullah, "Praise be to God!" and gave them all small tumblers of tea that was nearly boiling and as sweet as sugar could make it.

Meantime the women were coming to see the baby. Old Bajee had rubbed him all over with salt; then she had tied a dark handkerchief over his eyes and wrapped him up in strips of cotton cloth and a little quilt. He was now lying by his mother. She was thinking about the Evil Eye — an evil spirit or fairy who was always trying to do bad things — and looked anxiously at the baby's arm.

"Where is the charm, Bajee?" she asked.

"Yes," said a neighbour, "he needs a charm at once, for he is so very pretty."

"Oh, don't say that," exclaimed the mother; "the Evil Eye will hurt him if you do. Bring the charm."

Bajee brought a piece of paper on which the mullah (or preacher) had written a prayer asking the angels to keep the Evil Eye away, and putting this in a tiny bag she tied it to the baby's right arm. "That prayer will frighten the Evil Eye," she said.

All this seemed very interesting to Almas. How delightful it was to have a baby brother. She wondered why her uncle Mashaddi had not seemed greatly pleased when a baby girl had come to his house two weeks before. No one had even called to congratulate him. But now her father was getting up a dinner party, and they were roasting a whole lamb for it, and cooking, oh! so many other delicious things. She could smell the onions even from the street, so she asked her grand-mother for something good.

Grandmother laughed and said, "The front door cried for three days when you were born. But God gave you to us,

and we are not sorry."

Then she gave Almas a big piece of bread with rice and meat heaped upon it, and some omelet mixed with molasses.

Meantime mother was sleeping with baby by her side. Her last words had been, "Bajee, be sure to keep the light burning, so that the evil spirits will be afraid and not get the baby."

When baby was just a week old, the preacher, whom they called the mullah, came to give him a name. He brought the holy book which was their Bible, and which they called the Koran. No one in that village believed in Jesus Christ in the way in which Christians do, but were in religion what we call Muhammadans. The mullah stood over the baby and read out of this Koran in a loud, sing-song voice.

Baby was frightened, and cried.

The mullah did not stop, but next made a long prayer in words which no one else could understand, because he was speaking in Arabic, the holy language which Muhammad, the prophet who had composed the Koran, had spoken. Then he called out, "Your name is Karim!"

Almas thought it was quite a funny sight to see his long

red beard wagging back and forth while he made such strange sounds, and so she broke into a laugh, at which her father turned and struck her. She went out crying softly. She did not like the mullah. Why had he come to frighten baby? He had not named her little cousin. Old Bajee had shouted in her ear, "Your name is Fatima!" and that was all.

After this Karim was laid in a very narrow cradle without any sides, and long strips of cloth were wrapped around and around him and under the bottom of the cradle. His arms were tied down, and a calico curtain kept the light out. He lay in this dark little place nearly all the time for the first six months, generally asleep.

Although Abdullah was very proud of him, he hardly noticed him for over a month, because the evil spirits would wonder what he was looking at and come to see.

Once a day baby's mother would build the fire for cooking, and the room would fill with smoke, because there was no chimney, but only a hole in the middle of the ceiling. At first he cried every time, for the smoke made his eyes smart with pain. His mother put some medicine upon them when she saw how red they had become, and asked Bajee

what the matter was.

"How can I tell?" said Bajee. "Babies always have sore eyes."

When the curtain was loose and it was not too dark the flies came to visit him. There seemed to be hundreds of them, and they walked all over his face and even into his mouth, but were especially fond of his red eyes and gathered in black rows around them. He winked and winked, but they did not care. Then he would begin to cry.

After a while mother would come to fix the curtain and rock the cradle, or perhaps — and this was the best of all — she would undo the wrappings and take him in her arms for a few minutes, singing, "My dear baby! my sweet baby! You are my father! and the father of my father!" She meant that she thought as much of him as of her grandfather, and every one always talked as if people cared more for a grandfather than for any one else.

CHAPTER II

Karim's Relatives and Home

One day Karim's mother, whom he was now learning to call "Nana," said to father Abdullah, "Master, your boy — may his eyes have light! — is now five months old, and ought to come out of his cradle. Buy some calico, and I will make another shirt for him. Do not buy red or any bright colour, so that the Evil Eye may not think him too pretty and so become jealous and strike him."

She made the shirt so short that his fat brown legs were bare to the knee.

When he could crawl around in the house sister Almas watched him. It was too dark for him to see much, for all the light came from the door, when that was open, and from the hole, about a foot square, in the middle of the ceiling, where the smoke at last went out. The door was so low that Nana had to stoop every time she went through it. The walls

were black from the smoke, which Karim now found poured out each morning from a hole in the floor about as big as a large barrel. Nana did the cooking with the fire which she kept burning in this hole.

One afternoon Karim looked down, and found that its bottom was all bright with light which came from glowing red lumps. It was the prettiest thing he had ever seen, and he grasped the edge and leaned away over to see still better. Just then Almas screamed and jerked him back by his foot so suddenly that the skin of his hands was scratched by the rough edge. Of course he cried.

Nana came running in, and snatching him up exclaimed between her sobs, "Awy! my precious! he might have fallen in!" Then she struck Almas, so that she, too, cried.

After this Karim had to be satisfied with the bright light shining in through the hole above his head, and with the two round trays which, leaning against the wall, shone like polished silver until at last the smoke darkened them. They remained so until the next year, when a man came from the city and polished them over again.

In the daytime there were large piles of bedclothes tightly

rolled up near the cradle. A few rugs lay folded beside them. There were no tables or chairs or bedsteads, and the floor was simply the hard earth. In the corner were a few green bowls, and some wooden spoons and copper plates. These were the dishes for the meals. Just across from the door stood a wooden chest, half as high as the room. This was where all the flour was put in the autumn, when Abdullah had packed it down carefully by stamping upon it with his bare feet. Near it was a door opening into darkness, through which Karim was afraid to crawl.

When he tired of these things, he looked at the chickens — an old rooster dressed in red and black, but without any tail (he had never had any), and two or three clucking old biddies in sober gray, besides a half dozen others, hungry looking, half grown, with long legs. Like the flies, they came into the house whenever the door was open. If Nana left any food standing even for a minute she had to cover it. They came at meal time as regularly as if they had been invited, and fought with each other for the scraps of bread or bits of gristle that Abdullah threw away. Several times the rooster snatched the piece of bread which Karim was eating right

out of his hand; but when he laid the bread down to crow for the biddies, one of the half grown chickens caught it up and ran around the room with it, chased by all of his hungry brothers.

The family got up every morning when it was just beginning to become light. All but Karim were busy nearly the whole of the day. When the sun was two or three hours high — no one had a clock — Abdullah came in for breakfast.

At meal time Nana brought the large tray that took the place of a table, and Abdullah set it upon the floor and laid upon it two or three sheets of bread which looked a good deal like brown paper, and was as thick as heavy pasteboard. It was made of whole wheat flour and tasted very good. Nana poured the soup out of a small kettle into one of the green bowls. Sometimes the soup was mixed with pieces of meat and onions, and was red with pepper; sometimes it was made of curded milk and greens. There were also onions and salted cheese and red peppers for side dishes, with cucumbers and melons and other fruits in summer.

Abdullah sat down on the floor upon his heels and ate alone, until Karim was old enough, when he always ate with

"Dada," as he called his father, while Nana and Almas waited upon them. They never dreamed of eating with Dada, for that would have been very impolite, but when he had finished they sat down and ate what was left.

There were no knives and forks — what were fingers made for? — and no plates or tumblers, for all ate out of the same bowl and drank from the same water jug.

Between meals Nana was very busy. First came the milking of the cow; then the bedclothes must be rolled up and the stable cleaned out, and there was sweeping and churning to be done. The water must be brought upon her back in a heavy jar from the spring. In winter the cotton and wool was spun into yarn and knit into bright coloured socks, and in summer she helped Abdullah gather the cotton or the tobacco, and worked in the orchard or wheat-field. In the fall she swept up the leaves which fell from the trees growing on the edges of the streams and carried them home on her back to be stored for kindling.

While Nana was working she usually went barefoot. She had large black eyes, and she made them bright by putting a powder into them. She painted a black streak across her

eyebrows to make them darker. Her black hair, hanging in long braids down her back, was banged in front, and was covered by a large handkerchief which she wore all the time. Very carefully, once a month, she dyed her hair and coloured with red the tips of her finger and toe nails.

Because she was careful about all these things and was somewhat fleshy and had red cheeks, her neighbours thought her beautiful; that is, the women thought so. The men hardly ever saw her face, because she always drew something over it whenever any man except Dada came near.

The men never asked him, "How is your wife and little girl?" which would have insulted him, but always said, "How is your boy?" and sometimes, perhaps, "How is the mother of your boy?"

Still Dada was really proud of her, but of course he was careful not to let her see it, "for," he said, "she is a woman, and must be kept under." He seldom called her by any sweet name, but when he wanted to praise her called her simply "the mother of Karim," and thought that, alone, was enough.

CHAPTER III

Karim Goes Exploring

In pleasant weather Nana tied Karim upon Almas' back and sent her out of doors to carry him around. He was so fat that her back often ached, yet when a woman asked her if she was not tired she exclaimed, "Why, of course not! He is my brother." However, they were all so anxious to see him walking that he soon became bow-legged.

He now found what was to be seen out of doors. The yard was small, and there was no grass in it, nothing but the bare earth. When it rained the cattle tramped it into a deep black mud, which made a splendid place to sit in and play. Across the yard was the door of the stable, where the donkey and the cow and two buffalos lived with a few goats. In front was a wall six feet high.

Just before the front door of the house was a small porch,

where the big dog and the chickens spent the most of their time. The calves came there, too, and the dog, but he never dared to come into the house. Nana explained that he was "unclean," and the mullah said that it was a wicked thing to allow "unclean" animals to come into the living rooms. Karim liked to hit the dog, who always let him do just what he wanted.

One day when Nana was away, suddenly a fierce barking and snarling was heard, mixed with shouts. Almas ran out to find that a stranger had stepped into the yard, and that the dog had caught him by the ankle and would not let go, although the man was hitting hard with his heavy walking stick. Almas was then only eight years old, but she put her foot on the dog's neck and raised her fist. The dog growled angrily before he obeyed her and slunk away. Some neighbours now came running in.

"Did you not know better than to enter a yard when no one was in sight?" said they to the stranger.

Then Mashaddi had Almas cut off some hairs from the shaggy neck of the dog. He took these hairs into the house and burned them, and brought the ashes to the stranger,



“He was so fat that her back often ached.”

who seemed very grateful.

"Thanks to you, if God will, the wound will heal very fast," he said, as he sprinkled the ashes on it and wrapped it around with an old piece of cloth. "Not even a doctor could give me better medicine than this."

The cat was allowed to come into the house, and was often there at dinner time with the chickens. Sometimes Almas petted her a little, and Nana threw her some food once in a while, but even they tried to hit her if she got in their way. She spent the most of the day hiding under the piles of fuel and in the dark stable in the Hay. The dogs were anxious to chase her, and the boys were making bets as to who could hit her oftenest. Abbas was bragging because he had done it twice, for she was hard to hit, because she had practised dodging all of her life.

The door which opened into the dark from the family living room led to the store room. Karim often followed his mother when she went in, holding a lighted wax dip. There were no old trunks with newspapers and letters, because no one of the family had even seen a newspaper and no one but Dada had ever learned to read. Instead, there were big

wooden shovels, plows, sickles and a pickax. In the autumn grapes hung in long clusters from the ceiling.

The baskets and jars were carefully covered, but Nana used to open them for Karim if he cried hard enough, and let him feel and taste what was in them. Most of the baskets were full of raisins. Two held red peppers. Some jars held salted cheese, and some were filled with butter, which felt very cool and soft. The pickled cucumbers tasted good, and best of all was the molasses.

One day Nana had just taken the heavy cover off from the molasses jar, when she found that she had forgotten a dish. She went out to get it, and Karim was left alone. He pulled the molasses ladle out of the jar and tried to get its bowl to his lips, all dripping as it was. It was half as long as he, and somehow hit him fairly in the eyes, filling them with molasses instead of his mouth. He screamed and ran through the door, dropping the ladle as he went.

Nana ran quickly to Karim. "My darling," she cried, "light of my eyes! Did the molasses hurt my darling? We shall beat the jug. See!" and she took the broom and started for the store room.

Just then Almas appeared in the door.

"Why did you not watch Karim?" Nana cried angrily. "We shall whip you, too! See" — she added to Karim — "shall we whip this naughty girl because she let the molasses hurt you?"

"No," said Karim, picking up a stick, "it was the jug. We shall whip it."

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Nana, "how kind he is to his sister."

Karim felt very much grown up as he thrashed the jug, while Nana laughed proudly because he showed so much spirit, and Almas looked on with smiles because it was the jug that was being whipped, and not herself. The jug was the only one that did not care.

CHAPTER IV

The Evil Eye Strikes Karim

Karim at this time happened to have only the shirt that he was wearing. He had never had more than two at one time, and one had dropped to pieces from age the week before. Nana had not found time as yet to finish a new one. The shirt was a dirty brown, although if one could have examined the seams he would have found that it had once been a dark red with black stripes. Now, with the molasses streaks, it looked fairly black.

Nana decided that it must be washed at once, for Dada might not like to see his son looking so very dirty, so she took him with her to the pool when she went for water that morning. She washed the shirt thoroughly, while he stood beside her shivering in the cool breeze. When at last it looked somewhat cleaner she wrung the water from it as well as she could, and put it back upon him to dry. Karim fairly

howled with cold as he trotted along by her side, and when they reached home, to comfort him, she gave him two cucumbers and some of the raisins that he liked so well.

That afternoon he began to cough severely, and his head was very hot. Nana pulled at her hair in her anxiety.

"The Evil Eye has struck him!" she exclaimed. "The charm fell off from his neck when I washed his shirt, and I did not notice it for some time. The Evil Eye must have struck him then. Why did I not keep him dressed in Fatima's clothes, so that the Evil Eye would think him a girl, and not notice him? or rub his face with ashes, so that he would look ugly? Awy! What can I do?"

"Get up," said Grandmother, "run to the mullah, and have him write another charm; perhaps it will frighten the Evil Eye away."

Nana did so.

Said the mullah, as he gave her the roll of paper, "If there are twenty evil spirits in your son, they will all run away when you tie this prayer around his neck. It is worth fifty cents."

Nana began to cry. "What can I do, O holy man?" she said, "I have only twenty-seven cents, and my son will die."

"Take comfort, my daughter," replied the mullah, "I am God's servant, and He is merciful. The twenty-seven cents are enough."

But that night Karim nearly choked in his coughing. Dada looked very anxious. "Women are donkeys," he said, "and so are mullahs. I will go for the barber."

The barber looked grave. "See the black blood. I will take it out, and he will get well." He cut a vein with his razor, and caught the blood in a bowl, but Karim became worse. The next morning Dada hurried to the best doctor in the village. He looked at the boy a long time.

"Bring me this afternoon," he said, "fifty cents, and that hen with a white tail" — he pointed to the largest of the old biddies — "and with its blood and a mouse's eye I will make a medicine which will cure him. If it does not, take back your money."

When he had gone Bajee and some other women came to see Nana.

"My uncle once was sick like this," said Bajee, "and an old woman told grandmother to take a rooster and cut it in two, and tie the warm, bleeding pieces upon his breast. That

made him well."

"My brother," said an old woman, "was cured of a cough by lying in the oven for the whole of one morning."

So Karim spent the afternoon lying upon the warm ashes in the hole where the cooking was done, with the bleeding body of the old rooster pressed tightly against his chest, while the charms were still about his neck and the doctor's medicine at hand. That evening he was much better.

Nana insisted that he was cured because of the mullah's charm; Grandmother believed in the dead rooster, while Dada went to thank the doctor and give him a lamb for a present.

It was some days before Karim was himself again, and as he was fretful his grandmother amused him with stories.

Here is one of them. The others were very similar to this.

The Fox and the Wolf

A fox started to travel to the city of Mashad, because he knew that he was a wicked fox, and such a good man was buried in that city that simply visiting his grave was enough to make one good. On the way he met a wolf, who asked

him where he was going.

He replied, "I am a wicked fox and am going to Mashad to be made good."

The wolf said, "I am very bad, too, and ought to go there. Let me go with you."

They went on together, and after a while met a bear.

"Where are you going?" he asked, and when they had told him he wished to go with them.

As they made their journey they came to a country where there was nothing to eat. They all became very hungry; so hungry that the fox and the bear dropped behind, as the three were walking, and, suddenly jumping upon the wolf when he did not expect it, caught him with their teeth in the neck and killed him. Then they each took a part of the body and began to eat. The bear ate until nothing but bones was left, but the fox took some of his meat while the bear was not looking and hid it in a dark corner of a cave near by.

After a while they both began to feel hungry again, for the wolf had been so lean that there was not much of a meal to be made off of him. The fox went into the corner of the

cave where he had hidden the meat, and soon the bear heard him smacking his lips very loudly.

He was very much surprised, and asked, "What can you have found to eat?"

"O bear," said the fox, "I was so hungry that I have pulled out my left eye, and am eating it, and you cannot think how good it tastes."

"That is quite an idea!" said the bear, and he pulled out his own left eye, and ate it.

But he was soon very hungry again. Then he heard the fox in the corner once more smacking his lips very loudly, and he exclaimed, "What on earth can you be eating now?"

"O bear," said the fox, "I was so hungry that I pulled out my other eye and am eating it."

"How smart the fox is to think of such things!" thought the bear, and he pulled out his own right eye and ate it.

Then the fox got a long pole, and taking hold of one end he told the bear that if he would take hold of the other end he would lead him (since he was blind) to a place where he would find plenty to eat. But he led him to the edge of a very high rock.

"O bear," he said, "there is a large, fat sheep right in front of you. Now jump!"

The bear jumped, and fell so hard upon the stones below that it killed him.

Then the fox ate the body of the bear, and it made him strong enough to go on and reach Mashad, where he visited the grave of the holy man and so was made good.

CHAPTER V

Karim at Work and Play

The village where Karim lived lay at the mouth of a little valley. Down this valley ran a stream of sparkling water that came out of the ground about a quarter of a mile above the village. This was not a spring, but a "kareez," for beyond it could be seen a long line of pits, joined at the bottom by an underground channel, through which the water ran. The road lay by their side, and in two places the path divided, a part passing on each side of a pit.

Once while Karim lay flat on the ground looking over the smooth sides at the water trickling across the bottom of the pit, he asked, "Doesn't any one ever fall in?"

"Why should he?" replied Dada. "Can't you see the hole plainly enough?"

"But suppose it was dark?"

"At night honest men are in bed, and robbers know the

roads. But if God wills that a man shall fall in, why, he will fall in, and cannot help himself. It is Fate."

The stream ran down the valley past an orchard of apricot and cherry trees. By its side were willow trees, with short, thick trunks, and a row of poplars, that seemed to Karim the tallest trees he could think of. Then it ran into the village pond. Twice a week all the water was let out of this pond, to be used in watering the fields, but it soon filled up again.

When Karim was seven years old Dada began to send him here with his cousin, Ali, to wash the two big black Indian buffalos which he and Mashaddi used for plowing. It was hard to say who enjoyed it the most, the buffalos, who dearly loved the water, or the boys, who rode upon their broad backs, and splashed and swam about during the warm summer evenings as long as they pleased.

Dada soon gave Karim other work as well. He took him to the field and lifted him up upon the yoke between the buffalos. Here Karim sat all day, to keep the yoke by his weight from pressing against the throats of the buffalos as they slowly drew the plow back and forth across the field.

Next Dada sent him to watch the cows as they grazed in the open meadow in the lowland, or among the dried grasses on the hillside. Here he spent whole days with the other boys, going swimming and playing "marbles." For marbles they used the bones from the joints of sheep's legs.

The next year, in early summer, Dada told him to keep the birds away from the cherries and apricots in the little orchard, by shouting and clapping two. boards together. At first this was great fun, but he became very tired of it in a few days, and his voice grew hoarse and rough. Then came harvest time, and he went out to the hot field and carried water to the reapers, and rode upon the straw cutter or swept up the grain upon the smooth threshing floor until he was so tired that he could hardly stand.

About this time he fell sick again. His head ached and he was hot with fever. The doctor wrote a prayer with the blood of a lamb, and Nana burned the paper and poured the ashes into a cup of water which she made Karim drink, but it did no good. He lay on the floor on a thin mattress dressed in his every-day, dirty clothes, and the flies kept settling on his eyes and mouth.



“Here Karim sat all day.”

Nana and Grandmother were as kind as they knew how to be. They took great pains to get the tongue of a starling, for a woman said that this would cure him, but, instead, he became worse. At last he broke out with the smallpox.

"All have the smallpox," said Grandmother, when she saw this; "what can we do?"

Some of the neighbours brought their young children to see him. "They must all have this sickness," was their reason, "and it is best that they have it now, when they are young." In this way Fatima caught the disease, and died.

Hers was a dreary little funeral. The house was filled with the noise of the sobs and wailing of her mother, who was nearly frantic with grief, and with the cries of a few of her friends. No one thought of flowers, and there was no music. As the funeral was that of a girl, only three men walked behind the body when Mashaddi carried it to the grave. Of course no women went with him, for that was not the custom.

Soon after Karim got over the smallpox he began to go to school for a part of the year. He was proud of this, because a great many of the boys were too poor to go to school. As

for the girls, of course people never sent them. What would be the use? "Teach a girl! You might as well try to teach a cat," they thought.

The teacher was the mullah. On the first day of school he and his eight pupils came to Karim's home to welcome him. All were dressed better than usual. Karim looked very gay in a brand new coat of bright blue. Dada met the teacher with a present of three chickens. Then the boys marched to the school in a straggling line, the teacher at the head, the older boys chanting in a loud voice a song they had been taught, and the three youngest carrying the chickens dangling by the legs.

The school house was the mosque, or Muhammadan church. The room was large and bare. Straw mats covered the floor. There were no blackboards or maps or desks; indeed, most of the boys had never even seen a lead pencil. The mullah sat upon his heels on a rug by the window with a long stick in his hand. The boys sat upon the mats, facing him.

"You must come to school before breakfast," said the mullah. "If any one eats any food before coming to his

lessons I shall pull out his ears."

If a boy was at all tardy he exclaimed, "You silly animal, hah! Have you been eating, and so are late?"

"Oh no, indeed I did not eat anything!"

"Put out your tongue!"

Once Karim's breath smelled of onions, and the mullah gave him so sharp a tap that he felt it for an hour.

They studied a little arithmetic, but spent most of the time learning to write the Persian language, and to read from the Koran. As the Koran was printed in the Arabic language, which none of the boys knew, at first they did not understand what it meant, although the mullah explained a great many things to them. It was very important to learn to recite a good many chapters from this holy book, even if one could not understand what he recited. No one could pray to God in a way that was pleasing, the mullah said, unless he repeated in his prayer parts of these chapters, which the holy prophet Muhammad long ago had brought down from heaven.

Studying the Persian language was more interesting work. In a short time Karim was given stories to read which

told of the wonderful deeds of King Solomon, who talked with the birds and made the spirits of the air obey him. He also read other interesting stories, very much like those to be found in the "Arabian Nights' Tales."

While they were studying, the boys all swayed their bodies forwards and back and read from their books in a loud sing-song tone. If a boy became tired he did not dare to stop. Karim did so once, but a stroke from the mullah's stick and his question, "a Son of a dog, why are you not studying?" made him yell out with the loudest.

He soon learned not to ask questions. Once when there had been a slight earthquake shock he asked what it was that had made the earth shake.

"The ox," said the mullah, "which holds up the earth upon his twenty-one horns has become angry, and is shaking his horns."

"What is he angry at?" asked Karim.

"God knows, and He has not told us," said the mullah.

"I wonder what the ox stands upon," added Karim, after a minute.

"If it were right for us to know God would have told us,"

was the answer. "Such questions are irreverent, and fools ask them. Pray to God to forgive you, and then begin your study again."

When Karim was eleven years old Almas was married. The friends of the bridegroom came to the house, and were given a good dinner. Almas was so bundled up that no one could recognize her. Then they put her on a horse, and in a noisy procession led her off to her new home. She now lived in a village ten miles away, and Karim saw her only two or three times a year. He missed his sister for a long time, because she had always waited upon him so carefully.

As the wedding occurred a little before the great festival of "Norooz," that helped him forget his loss. "Norooz," or the festival for the new year, came in the early spring, when everyone was glad that winter had gone. Mashaddi said that the world came to life then. A few days before the festival Karim's head was shaved, and the nails of his fingers and toes were coloured red. He was given a new suit of clothes exactly like Dada's in cut, and when dressed in them looked like a little old man. "But then," said Nana, "he is almost grown up now, and ought to look so."

She arranged plates full of nuts, raisins, dried apricots, quinces, figs, dates and candy (there must be seven kinds of food, and their names must each begin with an S) and Karim took these as presents to the mullah and to a few other friends. Dada bought some sugar, tea, tobacco and candy, and all was ready.

The festival lasted for a week. On the first day Dada and Karim (now that he was old enough) sat upon their heels in the room to receive callers. Each caller, as he entered, bowed low and said, "Peace be to you! May the festival be a happy one."

"May you be fortunate," replied Dada.

"How is your health?" asked the caller.

"Praise be to God, we are well."

Then, sitting down, they talked together, and took turns smoking from the water-pipe. After the third cup of tea had been served the caller rose and said good-bye.

The greatest fun was on Tuesday evening, when the roofs of the village were alight with blazing pin wheels, Roman candles, small volcanoes and rockets.

Children's Day was also a lively time. Several of the

young men of the village dressed up as clowns. They had some musicians with cymbals with them, and went about saying and doing absurd things. Karim and his school mates dressed themselves up like robbers, with beards made of cotton, and canes for spears, and went to the mullah's house.

"Give us some money, or we will rob you!" they shouted.

He laughed, and gave them enough to buy a plenty of candy.

CHAPTER VI

A Trip to the City

One evening Dada said, "Shahbaz has just come from the city, and says that they are paying twenty-five shahis a batman for wheat. If God is willing, I and Karim will get Hussain's donkeys, and take in our wheat to sell to-morrow."

Early next morning each donkey was loaded with two of the black sacks of wheat, excepting one donkey, which was saddled and carried two empty jars, for Dada intended to buy some molasses in the city. To the saddle was fastened a jug of water and a red handkerchief filled with bread and cheese. None of the animals had on a bridle. Dada and Karim started very early, going as fast as one could walk, and taking turns at riding the saddled donkey.

The road lay over a dry and sandy plain six miles wide, which it took nearly three hours to cross. The sun rose when

they were half way over, and soon there was only the deep blue sky and blazing sun above, and the hot, parched ground, with bare, rugged mountains in the distance. The only green place in sight was that made by the trees around their own village, now looking like a dark band against the yellow hills.

Karim looked back later, and was astonished to see what appeared like a large lake, bordered by many trees, instead of the village and the plain. He called to Dada, who hardly looked around, but said, "The evil spirits do this to deceive you."

Then, for an hour more, they climbed a slope up the mountain-side. It was tiresome work, and Dada had to grunt "uh! uh!" at the donkeys harder than ever, and prod them with the nail pointed stick. A few stunted bushes were growing among the bare rocks and thirsty gullies. One small tree was passed, half covered by tattered bits of cloth tied to its branches.

Dada carefully tore off a faded strip from his ragged coat, and fastened it to a twig. "There is no water," he said, "and yet this tree is always green. It is a spirit who does this. Let



"The sun rose when they were half way over."

us give him an offering of respect." Karim felt afraid, and did the same.

At last they went down a steep slope into a valley. Here was a spring of cold water. Around it were willow trees, and nearby melon and cucumber patches, and an orchard of mulberries and apricots. They unloaded the donkeys and for a shahi bought a melon from the man who was in charge. They then untied the handkerchief and sat down on the ground to eat. After the meal they stretched themselves at full length under the trees, and were lulled to sleep by the deep "boom, boom" of the bells that swung from the necks of some camels who had just passed with their heavy loads.

In an hour Dada waked Karim and they started again. Soon the road grew wider. All of the streams were now spanned by bridges, while on every side were vineyards and orchards. They met many people, and many droves of donkeys, and at last entered a long avenue bordered by willow trees. At its end was the gate of the city.

In front of the gate the road crossed a ditch forty feet wide and in some places half full of water covered with a thick green scum, where the frogs were singing cheerily.

Behind this was a wall, half in ruins, with broken down towers here and there. Inside the city gate the street was about fifteen feet wide, and one could not see anything on either side except high walls of dried earth, with here and there a gate or a narrow alley. There was a narrow sidewalk, but people did not seem to care much whether they used it or walked in the middle of the street.

In a few minutes they had passed more donkeys than there were in the whole of their village. Some carried baskets of grapes, some looked like moving piles of yellow straw, and a few were loaded with dripping lumps of ice carried in black bags. Some were dragging poles whose ends were for ever getting under one's feet. One had a dead sheep strapped to its back. These were small, mouse coloured, half starved donkeys, like the one on which Karim had been riding, without any ambition or pride, but jogging along because their drivers would prod them if they stopped. They passed a few larger donkeys as well, with handsome saddles, ridden by well-dressed men in long brown robes and white turbans, who were mullahs, or by women who were so bundled up that one could not see even their eyes.

In a corner was a group of beggars sitting in the dirt, dressed in rags. Some of them were holding up the stumps of their arms, or pointing to their blinded eyes.

"Give me money for food!" was their cry. "May God bless your sons! For the Prophet's sake, give me a shahi!"

It was a pitiful sight, yet very few paid any attention to them.

At a turn of the crooked street Karim and Dada came upon three shops. The goods of one were spread upon a platform next to the sidewalk, and the shopkeeper sat upon his heels behind within reach of everything. Dead sheep were hung up by their legs before another shop, and a dead ox was lying upon the sidewalk upon its own hide, spread flat on the ground. At the third a blacksmith was shoeing a horse, and everyone had to dodge by with an eye upon the horse's heels.

Fifteen or twenty people were gathered around a man with long, uncombed hair and fierce, wild eyes who carried a small ax in his hand, and was waving it about and talking loudly in a singsong tone, while a boy was going around with a carved cocoanut shell, asking for shahis.

Dada said that he was a "darvish" or holy man who was telling stories about the saints.

Suddenly two horsemen appeared, shouting, "Khabardar! Khabardar!"

The blacksmith dropped the shoe and gave the horse a blow that sent him against the wall, and the holy man with his audience spread in a row along the side of the street. Dada in a great hurry crowded the donkeys down one of the alleys. They were none too soon, for almost at once a large crowd of blue coated horsemen armed with guns turned the corner. Their horses pranced and snorted, while the men cursed some of the people because they could not squeeze themselves flatter against the wall. One of them struck a man, who did not even say a word in return.

And now there came something more wonderful than even Karim's grandfather had "seen in a dream," as he told Nana later. It was drawn by two spirited horses, which no one was riding, but a man held them back by long straps, and they went wherever he guided them. The thing itself was a great box of polished black colour, with a door, and with soft cushioned seats inside, upon which were sitting two

splendidly dressed men. This box was carried on wheels that seemed much too light to support it, and which made no noise at all as they went around. The only wheels Karim had ever seen before had no spokes, and were each almost as heavy as a man, and creaked so that they could be heard a quarter of a mile away. He was so astonished that he did not notice that every one bowed low until he felt a sharp blow from behind, and a "Bow low, you fool!"

Then he bobbed so quickly that his hat rolled off into the road. No one moved to get it, and in silent misery he watched one of the horses crush it. It was a new hat, and Dada bought him only one new hat each year.

When the horsemen had all passed he picked the hat up. There was a hole in the soft crown, and it was stained with mud. As he was wiping it off Dada came up, so angry that he struck him with his stick. Some boys who saw this laughed at him. Dada did not comfort him at all, but exclaimed, "I have a fool for a son! Why do you stand gaping like a donkey at the wagon of the governor? If that man had not made you bow to the governor, and to the prince riding with him, some of the horsemen might have noticed it.

Then we both would have been seized, and probably beaten. All my wheat would have been taken from me, and perhaps I would have had to pay some money to keep from being put into prison."

CHAPTER VII

Karim's Religion

Sometimes Karim went to the mosque with Dada in the early morning on Friday.

The mullah had told him, "The prophet Muhammad has advised that every one should bathe on Friday and then come on foot to the mosque to prayers, and be reverent during the service. God will give a great reward to the person who does this."

The mosque was a plain building, with one large room and a porch in front. The room was bare, except for a few mats and a small pulpit. When any one entered he took off his shoes as a mark of respect, but kept on his hat.

During the service those present repeated aloud with the mullah prayers and chapters from the Koran. Then the mullah preached a short sermon.

The mullah got up early every morning in the week and went upon the roof of the mosque. Here, as the day was breaking, in a very loud and musical voice he chanted the "Call to Prayer." This was in the Arabic language, so that Karim for a long time did not know what it meant, although he had heard it so often that he could repeat most of it by heart.

But at school he learned that it meant, "God is most great! God is most great! I declare that there is no God but God, and that Muhammad is the messenger of God. Come to prayer! Come to the refuge! God is most great! Prayer is better than sleep. God is most great!"

In school Karim had also been taught the Creed, "I testify that there is no God but God. I testify that Muhammad is the prophet of God, and that Ali is the ruler appointed by God."

Although he had been taught these things, the mullah said that he was still a boy, and that boys were not expected to do all that God commanded. But when Karim was thirteen years old the mullah said, "You have reached the age when the Recording Angel begins to write down in his

book whatever you do, whether it is good or bad, so you must begin carefully to perform good deeds, that they may help to save you from the evil deeds you will do, and thus permit you to enter heaven. I have taught you the prayers that you ought to say each day, and the way in which you must wash yourself before saying them."

Karim felt quite proud to be thought so old, and began to copy Abdullah, who was more careful about his prayers than many of his neighbours. Abdullah bought for his son a little rug and a bit of dried clay that came from the holy city Mecca, where the prophet Muhammad had lived. Each morning, at the time of the Call, Karim repeated his prayers, standing, and kneeling just as Dada did, and touching his forehead to the bit of clay when he bowed.

Somewhat later came the month of Ramadan. During this month it was against the law for him to eat or drink anything, or even to smoke a pipe, from dawn until late in the evening. Of course it was very hard to obey this rule, but it was thought wicked to disobey it. What made it harder was that Karim had to work during the morning. In the afternoon he slept some, and longed for the sun to set. As

soon as he heard the crack of the gun that announced the time when it was right to take food he hurried into the house. Here was a good meal, all steaming hot, prepared by Nana. How they all did eat!

Dada always sent some of the food to Bajee, the poor widowed woman who lived down the street. Whenever a beggar appeared, he fed him, too.

"We must give alms," he said, "if we wish to enter heaven, for our holy prophet has so commanded."

At the close of the month came the great Week of Mourning, or Muharrem. When Karim was still a little boy Nana had taken him with her to the mosque each day during this week. They had sat outside in the street and listened to the mullah as he told the sacred story of the death of the holy Husain.

He explained how the rightful ruler had been Ali, after the death of the prophet Muhammad, long ago, because Ali was the prophet's son-in-law, having married his daughter Fatima. But wicked men had made Umar the ruler instead of Ali, and even yet the people of Turkey, and the Turkmans, and many who lived in India and Africa believed

that Umar was a holy man. When Ali died his sons Hassan and Husain should have become rulers. Hassan soon died; the men of the city Kufa then promised to honour Husain if he should come to them. Husain believed them, and came from the city Mecca with his family, guarded only by a few warriors. But when he came near Kufa no one came to help him. Instead, the wicked governors of that city actually dared to come out with a great many soldiers and attack him, although he was the grandson of the prophet Muhammad. The men with Husain were too few to conquer, yet he did not surrender, because he was the grandson of the prophet and the rightful ruler, and none of his warriors ran away, but together they died fighting bravely against their wicked enemies.

As the mullah told in his sermons how Husain was killed, first some women began to moan, and later all burst into loud sobs, while the tears streamed down their faces. The most devout caught these tears in little long necked bottles, to keep them for medicine.

"God is pleased with us because we weep for Husain," Nana explained, "and because of our tears for Husain He

gives us all the good things that come to us during the year. And the mullah says that if we weep for our lord Husain the martyr God will take away all our sins."

"In the cities," added Dada, "they have processions in memory of our lord Husain."

"I saw the processions in the city last year," broke in Mashaddi. "They were wonderful. First came men bearing the two black banners of the mosque. Then followed others playing funeral music on drums and fifes. After them walked the mullahs and holy men. Then came a long line of men and boys, marching two by two. They were beating their breasts in time with the music, and chanting a dirge that was so strangely stirring and yet so full of tears that I can never forget it. Indeed, I found myself running out to join the marchers, while my eyes were blinded with weeping. There were two little girls and a woman on horseback, with straw on their heads and collars of wood on their necks. They represented, you know, the wife and children of Husain, who were captured by his enemies when he had been killed. Boys walked alongside, throwing straw into the air. The woman's collar represented iron fetters, and the straw was a

sign of grief.

"In some of the other processions there were men beating their breasts with chains, and crying out as they marched, 'Awy! Hassan! Awy! Husain!' After them came some men with white cloths spread over their shoulders. They carried swords in their hands, and as they marched they cut their faces so that the blood ran down."

"Why did they cut themselves?" asked Karim.

"Because it is a very holy thing to do," replied Dada, "almost as holy as to visit the grave of our lord Husain at the city Kerbella."

"I saw a boy on horseback," continued Mashaddi, "with a dagger in his hand, and his face was bloody from the cuts he was giving himself. How they can do it I cannot see. God gives them the power to forget their pain. Sometimes friends walk alongside with sticks in their hands to dull the blows, and so keep them from injuring themselves too much. But they say that if a man dies from his cuts God takes him straight to heaven."

CHAPTER VIII

Karim's Good Fortune

One evening Dada asked Karim, "How would you like to travel, as Mashaddi did, who was once a soldier of the Shah, and was blessed by a visit to the sacred shrine of the holy Imam Reza when the Shah sent his regiment to Mashad to frighten the Turkmans. Wouldn't you like to be called 'Mashaddi,' too?"

"It would be splendid," replied Karim. "Only yesterday Mashaddi was telling me about this shrine. The room inside is just covered with gold and silver and bright stones, and splendid rugs. The blessings the Imam gives to those who visit it cannot be counted.

"But the mullah says that the tomb of the Imam's sister, Fatima, in the city Kum is almost as holy, and it is much nearer. The dome of its roof is covered with flashing gold,

and inside is a silver gate, with tiles of such beautiful colours that he can't describe them. And Mashaddi has seen the palace of the Shah at Teheran, too. He says that he saw a throne covered over with carved gold, and everywhere in this gold are set flashing emeralds and rubies and other precious tones. Mashaddi called it the 'Peacock Throne,' and said that the great Nadir Shah brought it from India when he went to that country with an army to fight the Great Mogul!

"But I cannot travel — the Shah isn't asking for soldiers now."

"That is so," said Dada. "But the mullah has taught you how to behave before khans (noblemen). Our agha (master) is coming here in a few weeks, and I am going to take you to call upon him."

"Our agha is a kind master," broke in Nana. "It happened the last time he came that he passed Abbas' field when he was tying up the sheaves. Of course Abbas hurried to put a sheaf in the road before him as a present. The agha threw two silver coins into the sheaf for Abbas! That is a good deal better than the copper shahis one usually gets."

"He is a just man," added Dada. "He doesn't eat up all

that the poor have, like the master of Hissar. The people there can never pay all that man wants, especially since the poor harvest seven years ago. That man had his servants put some wheat in each house. Of course the people cooked and ate it — poor things, they were hungry. Then he told them that because they had eaten up his wheat they owed him money for it. The interest they pay each year is one fifth of what they owe. But he cannot get it from most of them, although his ferashes (officers) have thrashed the men so that they went limping about for two weeks. Our agha takes only what is due, one tenth of the crop, and his servants don't take very much, either. Ahmad was the only man he had bastinadoed last year, and Ahmad was trying to cheat him. He said that he had no money, when really he did have some buried in a bowl in a corner of his house."

"They say that our agha may even become the governor," added Shahbaz, who had just come in. "I heard in the city last week that the Shah had given him the title 'The Good Fortune of the State.'"

"May God so will!" said Dada. "He will be as good a governor as Rashid Khan, the 'Glory of the King's Court.'

When he was governor a woman could walk safely from here to the city with a purse full of gold in her hand. I remember that once I saw the heads of two thieves stuck on the tops of poles before his house. He cut off the hands of a lot of rascals, too. But it isn't so now. Only last week some Kurds stole five cows from the herd of Hissar. The foolish boys had taken the animals up into the hills, where no men were near."

"Karim has learned to read our language, and to behave properly," said Grandmother. "Perhaps he will find grace in the eyes of the agha, so that he may want him as a servant."

"O Dada, do you think that could be?" cried Karim.

"I shall beg this of the agha," said Dada, "and the mullah has promised to help me. If God will, we shall find favour, and all our faces will be made white with joy."

On the next day a horseman arrived, to announce that the agha himself would come within a week. When the horseman reached the door of Abdullah's house, Abdullah met him with low bows, and said, "This is no longer my house, but yours. I am your servant."

The rider got off his horse and went into the house. Here

Nana had ready as tasty a supper as she could cook.

The next day the "white beards" (old men who manage village affairs) came to call. They brought two large trays piled high with apples, grapes and pears, with a coat of blue broadcloth, and one toman in money. Now for three days everyone was busy. The agha's house was swept, carpets were put down, and plenty of food made ready for cooking. Most important of all, the money tax was collected. This must be paid to the agha because he was the master of the village. Abdullah was the "kedkhoda" or village head.

Sometimes the taxes made him and the white beards very anxious, for all the money must be collected. But this year the harvest had been a good one, and only three men told Abdullah that they could not pay what was expected. The white beards were much displeased.

They said, "You will make our faces black before our agha. We shall have to tell him, 'These three men only did not pay.' What he will do God knows. Our agha has many ferashes."

The three men cried, and their wives screamed and tore their hair. They offered to pay one half, or three quarters,

but the white beards only replied, "We must leave it to the agha."

Finally, on the day before the agha arrived, the last shahi due was paid to Abdullah.

The master looked very much pleased the next afternoon, when Abdullah and the white beards, with many bows, offered him the taxes in full, with a present of ten tomans and three large baskets of grapes besides.

"You have made my face white," he said. "And you, kedkhoda; in all of my villages I have no one better than you. You have made my eyes to shine; speak, then, that I may make your face white. What wish have you?"

"O agha!" replied Abdullah, "what we have done is nothing, it is dirt, and we are as the dirt under your feet. And yet, since you have stooped to notice me, and have filled my mouth with sugar by your words, I have indeed a request, that I shall make, since you so command.

"I have a son. He is a worthless boy, indeed, and yet he has studied long with our mullah, and has read the holy Koran, and the books of the poets. If he could live with you, if only to sweep the straw for your horse's stall, why, then,

indeed you would lift my head to the clouds and fill my mouth with laughing."

"Is he with you?" asked the agha.

"Let him enter."

The man at the door called Karim, who was waiting outside, dressed in a new blue broadcloth coat. As he entered he bowed low, and then stood at the end of the room, politely covering his hands in his coat-sleeves.

"What is your name?" asked the agha.

"Thanks to God, your servant's name is Karim."

"Which of our poets have you read?"

"A few of the pearls of wisdom of Sheikh Sa'adi have lodged in my skull, thanks to the thumpings of our mullah."

"Indeed," added Abdullah, proudly, "he is not stupid. If it please you, he can recite well."

"It is well," said the agha. "Let me hear you, my lad."

So Karim recited a poem, in a sing-song voice, as he had been trained by the mullah.

As he closed the agha rubbed his hands with pleasure. "This is wonderful! Who would have expected such knowledge in a village peasant? You say that the mullah

taught you. He shall have a reward for such faithful service. And you," he added, turning to Abdullah, "your request is granted. Nasr'ullah, my groom, will find a place for your son with him."



The Governor’s Palace

CHAPTER IX

Karim Leaves Home

When the agha went back to the city to become its governor Karim bade good-bye to his parents and went with him. He was one of the stable boys for Nasr'ullah the groom.

He now lived on the grounds of the governor's palace. One entered these grounds through large gates of wood. The gateway was faced with bright red brick arranged in pretty patterns.

Then came a large court yard, paved with stone, and surrounded with rooms for Nasr'ullah and those who helped him. In one of these Karim slept. A large doorway nearby led to a long line of stalls, where twenty riding horses were kept, with their saddles, saddle cloths and bridles hanging ready for use at a half hour's notice.

From this court yard a small gate way opened into

another and larger yard. Here were broad walks paved with flat stones and bordered with little plots of green grass, rose bushes and small beds of bright yellow and red flowers. A few mulberry trees gave a pleasant shade. There were two great stone rimmed tanks full of water.

Around this court yard were many rooms. The reception room was large, with white walls and windows of stained glass. Its floor was covered with richly coloured carpets. The tea room had soft divans along the walls, with wide windows to catch the breeze. There were also rooms for the governor's son, Ardashir Khan, and for the mirza (secretary) who taught him, and for the servants. Beyond were the kitchens, where the men in charge always kept tea and food ready, because no one could tell just when a visitor might come with his attendants.

In all about fifty men had work to do about the palace. All of them were given their meals, and many slept there.

Behind the great court yard was another yard, almost as large, into which Karim never entered, as it was reserved for the ladies of the governor's family, and for the women and girls who served them.

The court yard was shaded by tall chenars (a kind of sycamore), and had in it streams of water, plots of grass, rose bushes, flower beds, and a grape arbour.

In the branches of the chenars, thirty feet above the ground, were two nests of the "Hajji Legleg," or stork. This bird was called "hajji," or "pilgrim," because storks fly away each fall and always return to their nests in the spring. They were never disturbed, because they were said to bring good luck. They reminded Karim of his own village, where two pairs of storks had made their nests for years. He had heard of one village where there were twenty or thirty nests, on the trees, walls, and even on the roofs of the houses.

He had often watched the parent storks, one at a time, brooding over the blue eggs or feeding their young. Father Stork used to feed the mother while she was sitting, dropping from his bill into hers such tidbits as live frogs or snakes captured from the little swamps near the river, and around the ponds. As soon as the three or four young storks had hatched the father and mother took turns in their work. One stayed at home and guarded the children, while the other hunted for food. When the hunter came in sight of

the nest he made a great noise clapping with his bill, for storks have no call, and his mate answered him. The young storks made a low sound something like a kitten's mews as they sat with their long bills wide open, waiting for breakfast to drop in; they spent much time, too, leaping up and down in their nests like Jacks-in-the-box, exercising their wings.

CHAPTER X

Karim Goes to Market

Karim's first work was to help take care of the horses. It was not always easy, for they were splendid animals, high spirited and vicious, and ready to break away, if possible, in order to get into a fierce fight with each other. After Karim learned to ride, he asked Nasr'ullah if he could not be one of the attendants of Ardashir Khan, the agha's son, on his horseback rides.

"I can let you have a horse," said Nasr'ullah, "but I have no good saddle to spare. The khan is very particular."

"May I go if I get a new saddle?" asked Karim, eagerly.

"If God will, I am willing," said Nasr'ullah.

So Karim got his money and started to the shops or "bazaars." He went down the narrow street and past the graveyard, with its rude slabs of untrimmed stone, and on to

the bazaars. Here the street was roofed over by a row of little domes, with round openings above for light and air. It was crowded with people. There were women wrapped in shapeless masses of blue cloth, with faces carefully covered; long robed "sayids" with green turbans on to show that they were descendants of the prophet Muhammad; peasants passed in old and ragged coats; city men in blue broadcloth and tall black hats, and Kurds from the mountains, wearing bright coloured coats, baggy trousers, and wide red belts, in which were thrust big daggers.

Here, in a corner, sat a man roasting "kabobs," bits of meat which he deftly wrapped in flaps of bread and sold. The purchasers took them in their fingers and ate them at once. Here were shops where a dozen men were making a great noise hammering out brass vases, bowls and tea urns. Just beyond were the shops of the saddle makers. There Karim saw just the saddle he wanted. He stepped to the edge of the shop and looked at it. The shop keeper looked up from the strap he was cutting.

"Peace be to you," said Karim.

"Peace be to you," replied the shop keeper, eyeing

Karim's good coat and new hat. "With God's blessing have you come. I can see by your looks that you are a good rider and know good saddles. Let me show you this one. It is fit for King Solomon himself."

"I am looking for a saddle," replied Karim, feeling pleased, "and it must be a good one, suited to an attendant of Ardashir Khan, the son of the governor. But I am not as rich as King Solomon, and cannot buy saddles fitted for him."

"Indeed, may I be your sacrifice!" cried the shop keeper. "This saddle is a very poor gift, but take it, for you are a servant of our good governor, whom I hope God will bless. It is a present. My eyes for it, just command me, and it's yours."

"O no," said Karim, "of course I could not rob you so. I shall buy it, and pay you good money. What's your price?"

"No!" insisted the shop keeper, "take it. It is yours, with God's blessing."

"I cannot," said Karim. "I will buy it. What is your price?"

The shop keeper looked disappointed. "If you won't take the saddle as a present," he said, "you must name your own

price. I can sell nothing to the servant of our governor, whom I hope God will bless. Name a price, my soul; anything, and it is yours."

"Since you say I must name a price," said Karim, feeling rather at sea, "I will give one toman."

"What!" screamed the shop keeper, "only one toman for a saddle fit for the hero Rustem! What pack horse's saddle would cost so little? Ten tomans could not buy it."

"Fit for Rustem, indeed!" said Karim, scornfully. "My master's mule driver would be ashamed to ride on it. See how the leather is worn, here, and here, and here. One toman is too much, but my master is generous, and so I must be. Take eleven krans, and thank God."

"This is the way you servants of the khans laugh at my beard, and grind the faces of us who are poor. The leather alone of this saddle cost more than eleven krans. If I sold it for seven tomans, I would be giving it away."

"Your beard indeed saves you," said Karim, "for it is long, and I must treat you with respect. For the sake of your beard I'll offer fifteen krans."

"It is plain you are a country bumpkin, and do not know

what saddles are worth," said the shop keeper. "Ask any one of these merchants here, and he will tell you that if I sell the saddle for six tomans I shall lose money. But our governor, your master, is a good man. For his sake take it for five and a half."

In reply Karim offered two tomans.

The shop keeper came down to five.

They kept on disputing in this way until at last Karim bought the saddle for three tomans. He carried it home on his shoulder, and began to brag to the other servants about his bargain.

But the groom laughed at him.

"The shop keeper was right," he said, "you are a bumpkin. Why did you tell him you were a servant of the governor? They sell saddles like this in the bazaars every day for two tomans."

CHAPTER XI

Karim at the Palace

Nasr'ullah was true to his promise, for he saw that Karim was large for his age, and had already learned how to manage horses.

Ardashir Khan, the agha's son, was very fond of riding, and was often in the saddle. Sometimes there was simply a ride across country to the hills, made gay by feats of horsemanship. The young khan and his friends, with their servants, rode madly at full speed in small circles, or pretended to get into a fight and fired their guns when at full run. At other times there was a party to hunt quail or partridge with the aid of falcons and dogs.

But one of the pleasantest excursions was to a garden-house, surrounded by tall trees and grassy lawns. Here the young khans, in a cool porch beside a pool of clear water,

drank the tea prepared by their servants, and smoked the pipe, while they enjoyed each other's jokes and stories.

One story of which no one seemed to tire, if it was well told, was about the disappointments of the lovers Leila and Majnoun.

The Story of Leila and Majnoun

Leila was the beautiful daughter of a chieftain who camped with his followers in tents, and wandered over the country, going wherever he could find water and grass for his flocks of sheep. Once he stopped near a village where dwelt a noble young man, Majnoun. Leila lived a freer life than the women and girls who were in the villages, and was allowed to wander over the hillsides with uncovered face; in this way she happened to meet Majnoun. They fell deeply in love with each other, and often met among the lonely hillside rocks. Leila's father did not know of this, or he would have been displeased, for Majnoun was not a chieftain, like himself.

One day Majnoun was astounded to find the place empty where the chief's tent had been. It seemed hopeless to find

him, for no one knew in which direction he had gone, but Majnoun did not give up. He left his father's house and wandered through all the neighbouring region, searching for the encampment. Although his search was in vain, he loved Leila so that he could not give up, but wandered in all directions searching eagerly for her.

The weeks lengthened to months, and the months to years, but still he could not find her.

Meantime Leila was as much distressed as was Majnoun. But it was impossible for her to search, for she was a woman, and must remain at home. All she could do was to weep in secret and sing songs or compose little verses that told of her grief.

After a time the chief of another tribe, who had heard of Leila's beauty, came with many horsemen and splendid presents to ask her father if he might marry her. Her father was much pleased, but poor Leila was heart broken. When her father heard that she was unwilling to be married he became angry.

"My daughter is of age," he said, "and her suitor is wealthy and of high rank. What more can she want? She

must be married to the chief."

So the wedding was celebrated with a great deal of expense, and every one was very happy except the bride.

There was now no hope for Leila, but she could not forget her lover. Long years passed, and she heard nothing of Majnoun. Yet she did not forget him. She used to wander alone over the mountain side near her husband's tents, singing of her disappointment.

One day she heard her song answered by a well-remembered voice, singing, like her, of a long lost love. And so at last they had found each other. But it was a very sad meeting. Leila was too honourable to disgrace her husband and herself by running off with Majnoun, and he was too noble to wish her to do so. They could only express their grief in song, and then bid farewell to each other for ever.

After Karim had become well acquainted with the governor's servants he persuaded Musa, who had charge of such matters, to allow him to be one of the men who waited upon the agha when he had callers. Karim stood at the door with hands covered until it was time to bring in the tea or "kalian," or water pipe, in which the smoke was drawn first

through water and then through a long tube to cool it. Karim brought it in and silently placed it before a guest, who took a few whiffs, and then passed it to the man next him. This man did the same, and in this way the pipe was passed along the whole line of guests, sitting against the walls on either side of the governor.

The tea was served in little tumblers. It was made with plenty of sugar, and was so hot that the guest made a noise when drinking it, drawing in air to keep from scalding his mouth.

The governor usually treated his guests very politely, although he did not rise as they entered, because he was of higher rank than they.

When he wished to show very great honour to a caller he beckoned to him to come and sit by his side. He kissed him on both cheeks, and asked him quickly, "Is your health good? Is your appetite good? Are you healthy, and fat? Your coming is delightful. Your arrival is most pleasant. You have come on my eyes."

But he was not always so gracious. Once a very rich khan called, bringing a letter which he wished to present. It

happened that he was very near-sighted, and usually wore glasses. But to wear glasses when calling on the governor would have been impolite, so he took them off before entering. It was an amusing sight to see his eyes rolling as he walked up the carpet trying to pick out the governor from among the callers who were seated by him. To have given the letter to the wrong man would have been a great insult. Luckily, he made no mistake, and, bowing low, handed the governor the letter. The governor opened and read it, then tore it up and threw it out of the window, and began to converse again with the other callers. Meantime the khan stood patiently waiting, for to speak without being first spoken to was impolite, and to leave without permission an insult.

At last he said to the governor, "With your permission, may I be excused?"

"You were excused before you came," replied the governor.

So the khan managed to get away, backing all the way to the door (to turn around would be improper), and bowing again and again.

CHAPTER XII

Sohrab and Rustem

The governor's mirza (or secretary) was very friendly with Karim, and allowed him to read his books. He had a fine copy of the "Shah Nameh" or "Book of Kings," by the great poet Firdousi. It was very large, and full of stirring poetry describing the wonderful deeds of kings and heroes who lived long ago. The greatest of them was Rustem. At eight years of age he was as strong as any hero of that time. This is one of the famous stories that Karim most enjoyed.

The Story of Sohrab and Rustem

Rustem once went on a hunting trip that led him to the boundaries of Persia. Becoming tired after a long day's chase, he lay down to sleep, leaving his splendid horse Rakush to graze nearby. Some Tartar robbers, creeping up,

led away the horse. Rustem, when he awoke, followed the hoofprints until he arrived at the kingdom of Samengan. Its king came to meet the hero, and promised to give back his horse if he became his guest. While here Rustem met the king's daughter, the princess Tamineh. They fell in love and were married with great splendour.

It was not possible for Rustem to live long with his bride, because he was needed by his lord, the king of Persia. He was compelled to leave Tamineh before he could even see the baby that was born. But he sent them a splendid present.

The baby was a boy, and Tamineh said to herself, "If Rustem hears that his child is a boy he will send for him, and leave me desolate." So she told the messenger who brought the present that the child was a girl. Tamineh named her son Sohrab. As he grew up he became very strong and brave. When he was ten years old she told him that his father was Rustem, but added, "If you let this be known Rustem's enemies will try to kill you, for he is hated by many warriors here, because he has beaten them in battle."

When Sohrab was fourteen years old he was as strong as the greatest warrior. He now declared that he intended to

conquer Kaoos, the king of Persia, and to make Rustem king in his stead. King Afraysiab, who was a great enemy of the Persians, heard of this plan. He thought to himself, "Sohrab is the only hero strong enough to meet Rustem. If I can keep him from recognizing Rustem perhaps he will kill him as a foe." So he sent word to Sohrab that he would join with him in the war. But secretly he told his generals, Human and Bahman, that they should not permit Sohrab to recognize Rustem, and that if they could they should bring the two together in battle.

When the armies met, these generals arranged with King Kaoos that two champions, one for each side, should meet in single combat. The king selected his greatest hero, Rustem, as the champion for the Persians. Sohrab, of course, was chosen by Afraysiab's generals to fight against him.

Sohrab suspected that his foe was Rustem, and when they met begged him to tell his name, but Rustem refused. Twice they fought, and twice Sohrab conquered. But he was moved by a strange love for his foe, and, though victor, spared his life.

And now the third and last day of the struggle arrived.

As Sohrab was putting on his armour he looked at the Persian hero, and said to Human, "See how strong and brave my foe appears! just such a man as my mother said that Rustem is. He surely is Rustem."

"Not at all," replied Human, "I know Rustem's appearance well. That horse, it is true, looks like Rakush, but is less strong and beautiful."

The champions now approached each other.

Sohrab, again in doubt, spoke, "Let us sit here as friends, for my heart is drawn to you. Be as generous as I am, and tell me who you are! Say, are you Rustem, whom I long to know?"

"Away with your excuses!" cried Rustem. "We meet to fight. I claim the struggle."

"Old man," said Sohrab, "you refuse to listen to me. Then take care for yourself!"

Each now tied his horse, tightened his belt, and rubbed his arms and wrists in angry excitement, for the struggle was to be by wrestling. And now the heroes meet and clasp; in the terrible strain they seem like raging elephants. The

ground grows black with the blood and sweat that drops from their straining bodies. Sohrab threw himself forward with a sudden spring and seized his enemy around the belt. Rustem, feeling his strength give way, fell heavily to the ground. Sohrab leaned over to kill him, but Rustem cried out, "Hold! Do you not know the law? It gives the beaten man a second chance."

This was a crafty lie. Sohrab believed it. He left his foe, and went proudly back to the cheering ranks of his friends. Careless he waited, and made no preparation for the next fight. But Rustem went to a stream, and bathed his limbs, and prayed for the strength that once had been his.

The two then met again. Sohrab scornfully exclaimed, "You dare to meet me, do you? Are you looking for a death with honour, because you have been beaten so often? But you care not, old man, for the truth, and perhaps you have another trick to try. Twice already have I spared you just because you are old."

"You are young and haughty," replied Rustem, "but perhaps my aged arm will yet subdue your pride."

Then they rushed to the fight, tugging and bending, and

twisting their great limbs, until Rustem with a mighty effort grasped Sohrab. Bending his back, he hurled him to the ground. But he knew that he was not strong enough to keep him there, so he quickly drew his dagger and stabbed him.

Sohrab writhed in pain as he said, "Do not now boast in your pride; I have brought this upon myself. Fate ordered that you should kill me. O, if only I could have seen my father! My mother told me how to recognize him, and I sought for him. My only wish is to see him, and here I die alone! But do not hope to escape him! Wherever you flee, Rustem in sorrow and anger will pursue you."

Rustem shook with horror at these words. His brain reeled; at last with a groan he cried, "Prove you are mine! For I am Rustem!"

Sohrab stared wildly at him, and said, "If you are Rustem, you have indeed a cruel heart, else you would have known me long ago. Take from my arm its coat of mail, and see there the golden bracelet you left with my mother."

Rustem tore off the mail; at the sight of the gleaming bracelet he fell to the ground, crying, "By my own hand my son, my son is killed!"

Lying in the dust, with groans, in his despair he tore his hair and clothing.

Meantime the sun had set, and Rakush, forgotten by his master, started for the camp and entered the ranks of the waiting Persians. They saw the empty saddle, and in fear galloped to the battle ground.

The dying Sohrab heard the tramp of their horses, and said, "Let peace come from my death. Beseech King Kaoos to spare the Tartar army, for they are not to blame. I am to blame. I sought to find you. And how often did I look for my father Rustem, and how sure I felt that you were he. But you denied it, and yet I could not kill you. Now Fate has disappointed all my hopes, and stained your hands with my life blood."

The soldiers approached, and horror came upon them as they saw the agony of Rustem.

"Here ends the war," he said to them; then, looking at his dying son, he groaned, "Oh what a curse has come upon a parent's head!"

In his despair he drew his weapon, to kill himself, but the Persian captains seized his arm.

Then, arousing, he exclaimed to the chief Gudurz, "Hasten! hasten to King Kaoos, and beg of him the medicine he has that yet will save my son! Remind him of my deeds for him, and entreat that he send it for my sake." Gudurz galloped to the king, but the cruel king replied, "Can I forgive that shameless boy, who scorned me with my army, and sought my throne? Only a fool would save the life of such a foe."

Gudurz returned with this bitter message. Rustem then left his dying son, and hastened himself to the king. But while he was yet on the way a messenger brought word that Sohrab was dead.

CHAPTER XIII

New Opportunities

Often the governor had dinner parties for his friends. These were always a delight to Karim, who helped to make the room ready. First the servants spread upon the richly woven carpet a coloured cloth that covered the entire centre of the long room. Along the edges of this cloth a man next spread the large flaps of thin whole wheat bread. Then the centre was filled with all kinds of good things to eat. There were large plates heaped high with pilav, well buttered and mixed with bits of orange and spices, and topped with pieces of well cooked chicken.

Nearby in other dishes were bits of mutton in spiced gravies. The yellow curry, in saucers, was placed near the rice, all ready to be mixed with it. Other dishes held cold rice, cooked in milk and sugar until it was almost solid. Often there were large dishes of cucumbers, tomatoes, or

apples, with their centres cut out and filled with spiced meats and thoroughly cooked. There were side dishes of sweet preserves, and of red peppers.

The guests left their shoes at the door, and sat down on the floor next to the table cloth. Each rested on his heels, flattening out the instep. He was careful not to move his legs at all during the meal, no matter how tired they became, because that would suggest that he was not enjoying the entertainment. Each guest was also careful to sit further from the governor than other guests of higher rank. If he did not, the guest whose place he had taken would probably have disgraced him by making him get up and change his seat.

When the eating began every one was busy. Each tore off little pieces of bread, and with their help took the meat or rice from the dishes. There were no separate plates, or knives or forks. Once in a while the governor with his own hand poked a piece of food into the mouth of the guest who sat next to him. This was a great compliment. The servants went softly about in stocking feet, seeing that the dishes were kept full.

When all had eaten enough, the table cloth was cleared, and sherbet, or sweetened water, was brought in, with plates of candy and small sweet cakes. Karim carried around a pitcher of water, while another servant went with him, carrying a basin and towel. Each guest washed his hands. By this time many in the room were laughing and chatting. Sometimes the conversation was kept up for several hours, until tea and the kalian had been passed around.

Meantime the servants, in another room, were having a splendid feast with the food left by the guests. So much was cooked that there was always plenty to spare. When they finished eating, the dishes were passed out to the hostlers; lastly, the hostlers passed on the scraps to the beggars waiting at the gate, so that nothing was lost.

One day when Karim was sitting alone in the mirza's room, a stranger entered.

"Peace be to you," said Karim.

"May you have peace. Is not the mirza in?"

"He has been called by the agha — whose life God will lengthen! — and is very busy."

"Has he no time, then, to write a letter for me? Do you

know of any one who can compose a good letter?"

"Indeed," replied Karim, who wanted to show what he knew, "the mirza, when I help him, says that my writing is second only to his. If my letter does not please you, come again when the mirza is not busy. What is your need?"

"Yesterday," said the man, "a merchant sent me some splendid pomegranates. He has made my face to shine, and I wish to thank him. I wish also to beg him to send me some more."

Karim opened the pen case, and took out a reed pen, which he sharpened and smoothed. Then he took a roll of paper, trimmed it with the scissors, and rubbed its edges with saffron. Putting the paper on his knee as he sat on the floor he began to write, pushing the pen across the paper from right to left.

When he was through he read the letter to the man.

"That is just the kind of letter I want," he said.

"Very well," said Karim, "I shall seal it. Where is your seal?"

He took the man's seal, engraved on a bit of agate, and after wetting it with the thick ink, pressed it on the paper.

Then he folded the letter and handed it to the man, who thanked him many times, and offered him ten shahis in payment.

When Karim told the mirza what he had written the latter said, "You have learned quickly from me how to compose well. Let me keep on teaching you, and you will become almost as skillful as I."

This is a translation of the letter that Karim composed:

"My kind, honourable and respected master, whose honour I hope may last:

"Just when my weak mind was planning to ask you about the state of your health, which is so important to us, the noble, famous and wise Sayid Ibrahim (I hope that his life may be lengthened!) unexpectedly gave me your kind letter. When I opened the letter it seemed to me that I was uncorking a bottle of rose-water. When its perfume of love reached the nose of my soul, because it brought me the news of your good health, I was as full of joy as I could be. And by showing me your favour, that is, by sending me the pomegranates, you have made me very glad. I hope that you will always gladden my heart with this kind of favour, each



"Putting the paper on his knee as he sat on the floor."

year sending me the happy news of your own good health. My longing eye is all the time looking up the street.

"I wish this letter to carry some sign of my love, so I am sending you with it a pair of gloves. Wear them, please, for the sake of remembering me.

"Rashid."

CHAPTER XIV

Two Important Events

Karim used to go back several times a year to spend a week or two with Abdullah and Nana. They were always delighted to see him and to hear of his new life, and much pleased with the presents he brought.

On one of these visits Nana asked him whether he did not wish to become betrothed. Karim at once felt very bashful, but at last told his mother whom he was thinking of, and she promised to speak to Abdullah about it. She did so that very afternoon.

"Master," she said, "you know that your son is now fifteen years old, and ought to be betrothed. He told me this morning that he wishes us to ask Shahbaz if he will not let him marry his daughter Kadija."

"K'choo!" sneezed Dada, and then blinked at the sun, for good luck. Both waited quietly for a minute, and then Nana exclaimed, "Awy! What bad luck! God has shown us that we should not ask for Kadija."

"There are other girls," said Dada, and after a long talk that evening with Karim they decided to ask Suleiman for his daughter.

Next morning Dada started out to ask Mashaddi to tell his mother to see Suleiman about this. On the way he greeted Husain.

"Peace be to you."

"May you have peace," replied Husain. "Where are you going?"

"What luck!" muttered Dada, and went back home again.

"Why have you come back so soon?" asked Grandmother in surprise.

"That fool Husain asked me a question that brings bad luck," said Dada, "so of course I came back to start out over again. A person cannot be too careful at a time like this."

"We seem to be having bad luck about it all," replied

Grandmother. "I had hoped that Kadija was the right girl, but of course, since you sneezed only once, she —"

"K'chee! K'choo!" broke in Nana.

"Praise be to God!" exclaimed Grandmother. "We were talking of Kadija, and Nana sneezed twice. You know that means the best of luck. Let us ask for her."

Shahbaz was much pleased when Mashaddi's mother told him what Abdullah was hoping for. When Abdullah learned this he sent rice and meat and butter to Shahbaz' house, and later came himself with Mashaddi and a few other friends, carrying as presents, among other things, a ring and a pair of shoes, and a large tray covered with candy, with a red handkerchief spread over the top.

"Peace be to you, my brothers," said Shahbaz.

"May you have peace," replied Abdullah. "I have come to ask whether you are willing to marry the light of your eyes, your daughter Kadija, to my son Karim."

"You show me so much more honour than I can possibly deserve in asking this," said Shahbaz, politely, "that I am too much overcome to trust myself to answer you. I must ask my mother and my brother about it."

He went in to ask them, and came back in fifteen minutes, all smiles.

"My daughter is like a pair of shoes to your son," he said.

"Praise be to God!" exclaimed Abdullah, and sent the ring in to Kadija, who of course was keeping out of sight of the men.

Her grandmother put it upon the girl's finger, thus showing that she was now betrothed to Karim. Then the men all sat down to a dinner cooked from the food Abdullah had sent.

After this Abdullah was careful to send a present to Shahbaz once in a while — a chicken, or a lamb, or a toman or two. It would have been more improper than ever for Karim to visit Kadija, now that they were betrothed. As she did not know how to read he could not send her notes, but had to trust that Nana or Grandmother would tell Kadija what he wished her to know. This was very hard to bear whenever he was at home on a visit, but there was no help for it.

One day the mirza said, "Karim, you know about that dog of a Kurd, Sheikh Tahar, who captured the governor's

soldiers among the mountains, coming on them while they were asleep, and who robbed the village of Dizza. Now he has sent a letter to the governor in which he asks that some one be sent to talk with him and make peace. The governor is going to send Abbas Khan. He wants a mirza to go with him. I have taught you to compose and write well. I am old; why should I trot about among the mountains to please that dog of a Kurd? The work will be an honour to you. Let me recommend you."

So it came about that a few days later Karim was riding over the plain towards the mountain pass with Abbas Khan and his forty horsemen. Each man carried a breech-loading gun, with a pistol at the pommel and a dagger in his belt.

The road passed over the flat plain, by a river, now running quietly below high banks in its wide and stony bed, for it was late in the summer. In the spring, after the rains, the bed was filled from bank to bank with an angry torrent of muddy water. Crossing a bridge, with arches of red brick, and small towers at either end, built by a rich man as a good deed, to help him enter heaven when he died, they entered the village where they were to stop for the night.

The kedkhoda and village white beards met them with many bows.

Almost every house had one or more guests that night. Karim and the major who commanded the forty horsemen were together in a room that had a rude framework of poles along one side. From its top stretched downwards a long line of woollen threads of different colours. On the little stools in front, the women of the house sat while hour after hour for days at a time they patiently wove in and out the coloured wool thread that slowly built up a beautiful Persian carpet. None of these women had ever read a book telling how to weave, or had ever seen a pattern of the bright figures they wove into the rug. They had learned the patterns by practice under the direction of their mothers. Their mothers had learned them in the same way. And now the girls were sitting before the loom and learning by practice to weave the same patterns.

A small boy told them some interesting news.

"People say," he said, "that the king of the fleas lives in this village with half the fleas of the plain. We don't mind them, but many travellers can't sleep."

Karim laughed at this. He had never bothered himself much about such little things, but before morning he was quite ready to believe the boy.

CHAPTER XV

Among the Kurds

They started early the next morning. The road first led through a plain, between rice fields flooded with water from a large ditch. Next it wound past vineyards with bunches of white and purple grapes, and fields of glistening wheat stubble. Then, passing up a long valley, they crossed uplands covered with thick rich grass, quite different from the bare hills so often seen. In the distance grazed large flocks of sheep, guarded by Kurdish shepherds, stern, wild-looking men, with baggy trousers and jackets of many colours, and large peaked felt hats.

Each had several daggers in his belt. They were followed by dogs as large and almost as fierce, as wolves.

Beyond, on entering a little valley, they suddenly came upon the tents of an encampment of Kurds. The tents were

of thick black felt, long and irregular in shape, and held up by a great many poles. The flaps were partly open for the air. There was not much to be seen inside; rugs here and there lay on the ground, and bedding was rolled in large bundles. A few dishes and kettles were near the hearth, and here and there hung large sheep skins sewed into a rounded shape and filled with milk ready to be churned.

On the poles hung guns and daggers, and bridles for the horses, with the saddles and saddle-cloths beneath. The horses themselves were grazing near by, each tethered by his leg with a rope to a stake. When the Persians appeared the women and children rushed into the tents, from which they looked out on the party, the dogs barked fiercely, and the few men who were lounging around with their guns handy scowled darkly when they replied to the major's "Peace be with you."

They stopped for the night in a village at the foot of a small cliff, on whose crest were the ruined walls of a castle. Karim walked up to see it.

The wall, of cobble stone, had once been about twelve feet high and went around that part of the crest not



A Kurdish Shepherd

protected by the cliff. Within were the tumbled walls of houses, and three large cracked cisterns, meant to catch rain water. On the farther side was the arched opening to an underground passage, whose round top here and there had been uncovered by the rains, so that he traced it stretching down the brown hillside to a spot below covered with green grass. Near him, in the wall, was a gateway, protected by a tower of cut stone. Near this tower was a strange recess that seemed cut into the rock.

The village boys with Karim said that this was a holy place, because the prophet Ali had been there. He had been flying through the air when going home from a visit to a holy shrine, and had stopped to rest. As he leaned back against the rock he pushed it in and so made the recess. He was able to do such a wonderful thing because he was a very holy man.

That evening Karim heard the story of the destruction of the castle. Here it is:

About fifty years before, the castle was the home of a Kurdish chief, or sheikh, who gave a great deal of trouble to the governor in the city. He robbed the villages and the

caravans, and never paid taxes or gave any presents to the governor. The governor did not have enough soldiers to punish the sheikh, so at last the ruler of the province came with an army and besieged the castle. He placed guards on all sides, so that no one could go in or come out. He put a cannon on a large white stone on the hillside opposite, and fired at the castle. This troubled the sheikh very much, but still he did not surrender. So the Persians called the peasants who lived in the villages nearby and asked them how the sheikh was able to get water to drink. Some peasants told about the secret passage down to water, but as it was carefully covered no one knew just where to find it. So the Persian ruler took a mule, and ordered that for several days it be given plenty of food, but no water to drink. In this way the mule became very thirsty. Then the ruler ordered his men to lead it slowly around the castle. When the mule had been led almost all the way around it suddenly stopped and began pawing the ground, because it smelled water. Here the Persians dug into the earth, and found the secret passage way.

Then the sheikh in the castle called his men together,

with their wives and children, who were with them. He told them that there was no more hope, for they had no water, but that they must not fall alive into the hands of the cruel Persians. Still, he said, he would not ask them to kill their own wives and children. He would let these surrender if they wished to, but not a man must surrender. The women cried out that they would rather die than be taken prisoners. And so they rushed with their children to the cliff and threw themselves over it to death — all except one, whose clothes broke the fall. The men opened the castle gate, and, rushing out, fought fiercely until all had been killed by their foes.

CHAPTER XVI

Rumours of War

The next day for three hours they climbed up a rocky valley, and then crossed a high ridge, from whose summit they saw a plain at the foot of snow-capped mountains.

"Those mountains," said Abbas Khan, "are Sheikh Tahar's fort. Whenever we beat him in a fight he hides among their rocks. What can we do?" Going down the steep slopes in zigzags, they crossed some low hills, and entered the plain. A village lay on its edge, at the foot of some hills. The top of one of these hills was surrounded by a high adobe wall. The people of this village looked very wretched; they were wearing clothes that were in rags and tatters. The houses were without window or door frames, and as one peered through the gaping doors he saw nothing but the bare floors. No cattle or sheep could be seen. This was the

village that Sheikh Tahar had robbed.

Next morning the kedkhoda told the story to Abbas Khan. Karim, as mirza, wrote down what was said.

"The Kurds," said the kedkhoda, "had told some of us that they were going to rob us. At first we did not believe it. But three days before the great attack forty of them suddenly came down upon our shepherds, who were pasturing our two thousand sheep on the hills. The ten shepherds came running for help to the village. We hurried out, thirty of us, but it was too late. The next day some men told us that the Kurds were planning to attack us within two days. The white beards talked it over, and we decided to carry everything that we could into the walled fort on the hill. We were busy doing this all the next day, until the ground inside was covered with boxes, bundles, plows, yokes, piles of wheat, jars, and everything else we had. We drove in the few cattle and sheep we had left, with our geese and chickens and donkeys. That evening our watchmen saw many Kurds on a hill nearby. The next morning there seemed to be hundreds of them. They got on that hilltop yonder, which, as you see, is higher than the fort, and fired at us. We all crowded up

beneath the wall nearest to them, where they could not hit us with their bullets. Then the Kurds came up to the wall, yelling like devils, and threw stones over its top. They came tumbling so thick that we could hardly stay next to the wall at all — but to move away meant to be shot. We had guns, but what use were they? If we had killed any of the Kurds they would have killed us later. We had no water, and what help could come to us? So one of our old men crept to the gate to try and talk with them; they shot him dead. Another climbed a ladder against the wall near the place where some men from a nearby village were throwing stones at us — he knew them well — to beg them to speak for us to the Kurds; he fell over with a bullet in his head. So we just opened the gate and let them in. They rushed through it like a lot of wolves, with yells of joy, and began at once to snatch at everything they could. They took everything, boxes of clothing, the wedding outfits of our brides, the head-dresses of our women, with the strings of money on them, the cows and sheep and wheat. If they could not unlock a box they smashed it open. They made us take off our shoes and coats and give them up. At last, when there was not anything else

left, they formed in two long lines outside the gate, and made us all pass one by one between. If anyone saw something one of us had that he wanted he snatched it. And so we got away, and ran to our houses, weeping, and some of us bleeding from wounds. There we found everything stripped bare, as you see. Now we have nothing left but these houses, and they are all empty."

All the men of the village in the room now burst out crying, and the women outside sobbed and wailed and pulled at their hair.

"Do not weep," said Abbas Khan. "The governor will command the people in the other villages to give you food and clothes, and will send you wheat to plant in your fields. He will surely punish the Kurds, because they have laughed at his beard, and he is a lion among men."

The next day they rode across the plain to a large village. The roofs of the houses here were little above the surface of the ground. In the house where Karim spent the night the animals lived in the same room with the men, and so helped to keep it warm. He found it hard to sleep. Two lambs shut under a large basket bleated pitifully for a long time. Next

some animal startled him from a doze by beginning to lick his hand. Very early in the morning the rooster in the room began to crow, and kept it up at intervals until dawn. Worst of all, he could only grumble to himself and not wring the rooster's neck, even though he was the servant of the governor. He did not dare to make trouble, because the villagers here, unlike those near the city, were not much afraid of the governor, and not at all afraid of a fight.

CHAPTER XVII

Sheikh Tahar

That afternoon ten Kurds rode into the village. Their three leaders were gaily dressed in baggy red trousers and blue and crimson jackets. They wore broad crimson sashes, and red silk streamers floated from their turbans. All were armed with rifles and several daggers apiece, while three carried long lances as well. Abbas Khan met them at the door of the house where he was staying, and the leaders followed him inside, where they sat together on the cushions at one end, while a row of well-armed Persians sat around the walls.

Outside, in the yard, four Kurds stood by the horses. The Persian soldiers gathered around them, and as one Kurd could speak the Persian language a lively conversation soon began.

"Our agha is very angry," said one, "and will never rest until your chief has eaten dirt before him."

"Wallah!" said the Kurd, "if he wants him to eat dirt, let him catch him."

"But your chief knows well that he cannot fight with the Persians," was the reply. "Because he has trapped a few sons of dogs when they were asleep, does he think he can face the cannon and horsemen our agha will send against him? Wah! if he is wise he will eat a mouthful of dirt now, instead of many handfuls later. Is he stronger than was Ismail Agha?"

"We all know of Ismail Agha," replied the Kurd. "My cousin's wife's uncle was there when he was killed. Your general came with his horsemen to the foot of the hill where the Agha's castle was built. He sent up two khans to ask him to come down. The khans swore by all that was holy that no harm would come to him, and said that they themselves would stay at the castle gate as hostages if he went. He was an honest man and believed them. He rode down the hill with only ten horsemen with him. After a while the Kurds at the castle gate heard the sound of guns. The two Persian khans — sons of liars — with faces full of joy exclaimed,

'Peace has been made. They are shooting off their guns for joy. Let us ride down and join in the celebration.' We Kurds are honest fellows; we did not shoot them, but turned to mount our horses — and they galloped off and left us. The Kurds pursued, but only to meet the agha's ten horsemen coming at breakneck speed with the news that Ismail Agha was dead. The general had received him very politely, but as he turned to mount his horse after the talk was over a Persian shot him from behind. But Sheikh Tahar will not be caught in that way."

The major now interrupted, saying, "But our agha does not fight in that way. He does not use tricks. He has cannon, and horsemen, and he fights in the open."

"I know you have cannon," said the Kurd, "yet still we do not fear. By tricks you win. But they will not succeed against Sheikh Tahar. Do you know the story of the Kurdish fox and the Persian fox?

"Once these two foxes met. The Kurdish fox said to the Persian fox, 'How many tricks do you know?'

"The Persian fox replied, 'I know twenty-six. How many do you know?'

"'I know only one,' said the Kurdish fox, 'but it is all I need.'

"They walked on together until the Persian fox saw a piece of meat and snapped at it. He found himself caught in a trap.

"'My brother!' he cried in distress, 'what can I do? Come and help me!'

"'Why do you want help?' said the Kurdish fox, 'use your twenty-six tricks.'

"'Really, my brother,' said the Persian fox, 'not a single one of them is of any use against this trap.'

"'Well, then,' said the Kurdish fox, 'I will tell you the one trick that I know. To-morrow the owner of the trap will come. You must pretend to be dead. I shall lie down near at hand, and also pretend to be dead. He'll take your foot out of the trap. You must still pretend to be dead. He'll see me; then he'll drop you and come to get me. Then you jump up and run, and I'll run, too. So we'll both be free.'

"So the one trick of the Kurdish fox was better than the twenty-six tricks of the Persian fox."

The next day Abbas Khan ordered all to be ready to ride

out to meet Sheikh Tahar, who had promised to come down for a talk. Everyone was busy, seeing that the rifles were ready for use, the pistols loaded, and the saddle girths strong; the horses were given a good breakfast; in short, everything was put in order, for no one knew just what they might have to do — talk, fight, or run away.

About noon all was ready, and they started. The cavalrymen amused themselves and kept up their courage by galloping in great circles.

As they approached the mountain, the Kurdish horsemen came in sight from behind a hill; they, too, were galloping in all directions and brandishing their spears. As they drew nearer both sides gathered into close groups, and rode on in silence.

There were about seventy-five men with Sheikh Tahar. Most of these were on horseback, dressed in baggy red trousers, wide red sashes, with scarlet and blue jackets, and wide turbans of red silk. Each man was a sort of walking arsenal, with long lines of cartridges, a Martini Henry rifle, and silver hiked daggers or swords. But some of the footmen were dressed in very ragged clothes and two of them carried

old flintlock guns.

When the parties were a few hundred feet apart both stopped. After a few minutes Abbas Khan with five Persians rode forward. On the other side Sheikh Tahar with five of the gayest clothed Kurds also rode forward. The sheikh was a young man, with a heavy moustache and piercing, cruel eyes. When they met all twelve dismounted. Some Persian grooms and Kurdish footmen ran forward and led the horses off a little distance. One man spread a carpet on the ground. On this the two leaders sat down. They seemed very glad to see each other, for they kissed one another on the cheeks several times. After some conversation the servants brought tea, which they drank together. Karim noticed that two tea urns and two sets of tumblers were used, and that each leader was careful to have his tea made and poured into his own glass by his own man. Then they stood up, kissed each other again, bowed low, and each edged carefully away to his own company, while every man in sight kept his rifle cocked.

On the way back Karim asked the major what the sheikh had said.

He replied, "Sheikh Tahar said that he knew how just a man our agha was, and how full of mercy, and how brave. He loved him so much that when he found out from the prisoners he had captured that they were the agha's soldiers he could not keep the tears from his eyes. He had not fought the Persian soldiers because he hated them, but because they had attacked him. Why did the Persians believe the lies that Sheikh Rakhim had told? Sheikh Rakhim was his enemy, and had killed ten of his men. He had revenged himself by killing fifteen men in return. Sheikh Rakhim for this reason had told lies to the Persians and had persuaded them to send soldiers against him.

"Then Abbas Khan asked him why he had attacked and robbed the village. He said that the people of that village had killed two of his men the year before. Besides, they had helped Sheikh Rakhim's men, who were really the enemies of the Persians, although they pretended to be their friends. Abbas Khan said that he was delighted to hear this from Sheikh Tahar's own lips. He said that our agha had sent soldiers against him because the ruler of the province had believed the lies told by Sheikh Rakhim. But the ruler now



Sheikh Tahar and His Horsemen

had learned what a mistake he had made. Our agha was anxious to see Sheikh Tahar and give him the honour he deserved. Would he not come down to the plain, near the city, and meet the agha, and be honoured by him?

"Sheikh Tahar replied that he did not deserve such honour, but if his good friend the governor commanded, it was his part to obey, and he would be pleased to come if he could. But his brothers were very angry because the Persians had killed some of their men. He was afraid that he could not persuade them to let him come down. He would come if he could, for he loved the agha."

"Do you think he will come?" asked Karim.

"God knows," said the major. "I only know that Abbas Khan is a big liar, but that Sheikh Tahar is a bigger one."

CHAPTER XVIII

A Battle and What Came of It

The next day Abbas Khan with his company started again for the city, which they reached after a quiet journey. The mirza read Karim's reports, and changed them where necessary, so that they would be in proper form. Then he read them to the governor.

"The agha was very angry," he told Karim afterwards, "when I read how the village was robbed, and he had me write a letter to Sheikh Tahar saying that if he did not come to the city within a week he would send up an army against him."

Eight days later all was astir about the palace, for the agha had ordered four thousand men with four cannon to the mountains. Karim did not go with them. However, the major told him afterwards about the fight.

"When we reached the plain at the foot of the mountains," he said, "Sheikh Rakhim came to our general. He had four hundred men with him, and declared that every one of the four hundred had taken an oath to capture Sheikh Tahar either dead or alive. He also said that he knew where the sheikh was hiding. Our general gave him a fine horse for a present.

"Two days later we advanced from the village toward a mountain. We saw Sheikh Rakhirr's Kurds galloping around at the foot of the mountain, and heard their guns. Between us and them was a large building. Our general told us to attack it, because Sheikh Tahar was inside it. So we spread out in a long irregular line, and went slowly ahead, shooting at the building all the while. They brought up one of the cannon, too, and boomed away, but somehow the gunners did not seem able to hit the building. It took us an hour to get close to it, and we kept shooting at it until its walls were full of bullet marks, and some of the soldiers had no ammunition left. But not a shot, or any sound or movement, came in reply. Finally, when we were quite near, the general ordered us to charge. My heart was in my throat,

but I just shut my eyes and ran forward to the wall, thinking every step would be my last. But I heard nothing, and so, rushing to the door, I kicked it open, and looked in. I saw no one inside. Others came up, and we rushed in, and looked into all the corners, but the house was empty. Not a sign of a Kurd, not even an empty cartridge shell, could we find. That was all there was of the battle.

"We waited up there a week longer, but no one could tell us where Sheikh Tahar was. So we have come home again."

A few months after this, Karim bade good-bye to his friends at the palace, and went back to his home to prepare for his wedding. The agha sent him a fine piece of Persian shawl, and a handsome present of money, and the mirza and Nasr'ulla gave him a farewell dinner. He had an equally pleasant welcome when he reached his father's house the next evening, for everyone was delighted to see him.

Here soon all were active in preparing for the wedding. Kadija busied herself with embroidering nearly twenty small caps, and knitting over a dozen pairs of red and yellow socks, which were to be given to Karim's friends. Abdullah and Nana made a trip to the city with the parents and uncle of

Kadija to buy her wedding dresses. Since Karim paid for them Kadija's parents spent just as much money as Abdullah allowed, and of course he did not like to object at such a time. They bought a skirt of bright green silk, another of yellow satin, and three of bright coloured calico, with one jacket made of Persian shawl, and another of Damascus silk.

Karim accompanied his parents to the city, and went to the palace to call upon the mirza. He was surprised to find the court yard full of Kurds. The mirza was very glad to see him, but could not entertain him long.

"Come again another day," he said, "and I will invite our friends in to have some tea with you. Just now we are busy entertaining your old friend Sheikh Tahar."

"How is that?" asked Karim in astonishment. "I thought that the governor had sworn that he would never rest until the sheikh was brought to him in chains."

"So he has," replied the mirza, "and you remember how he sent up an army to capture him, and how the sheikh escaped only by making himself so small that no one could see him. But what can the agha do? This Kurdish fox, when he ran away from the agha's cannon, went down to the city

of Kerbella, and there he made so many prayers at the grave of the holy martyr Husain that the chief mullah of Kerbella gave him a letter which explained how holy a man he had become, and how wrong it would be for anyone to injure him. He came back with this letter, and what can one do? All the mullahs and people would be angry if the governor did not respect it. The ruler of the province has telegraphed that the sheikh is pardoned for what he did, and now the agha is giving him a great dinner, and I must be off to write an order making him the governor of six villages, including the one he robbed. And a gold star is being sent to him by the Shah, and a title, 'The Sword of the Kingdom.' Our agha hopes that this will keep him from giving more trouble. Gold stars to pin on one's breast are cheaper than fighting. The ammunition the soldiers wasted on that empty house cost the price of fifty stars and twenty dinners."

CHAPTER XIX

Farewell to Karim

As the time for Karim's wedding approached, the man who studied the skies was asked by Abdullah to find out what day would be the best for the wedding.

"The stars show me," he said, "that it must not occur upon the first day or upon the middle day of the month, or for three days after the full moon. These days will be sure to bring bad luck."

The mullah then went to the house of Shahbaz. Kadija stood behind a curtain, so that he could not see her — for that was the custom. He read some verses from the Koran, and then made a prayer. After this he asked,

"Kadija, daughter of Shahbaz, are you willing to marry Karim, the son of Abdullah?"

"Yes," she whispered from behind the curtain.

"Very well," said the mullah, "since you yourself say that you are willing, no one can now object." And he thrust a paper, stating this, under the curtain.

The wedding celebration lasted three days, and was held in Abdullah's house. There was plenty to eat, and plenty of music, made by a fife and drum for the boys and young men to dance by in the yard; the girls and women danced inside the house. Everybody in the village came to congratulate Abdullah, and to take dinner. From all the villages nearby the beggars swarmed outside in the dust of the street; they, too, were given something to eat.

On the last day Karim's friends came on horseback to Shahbaz' house to take away the bride to the house of Abdullah. Each carried a chicken as a present. Her mother threw a thick red veil over Kadija, so that no one could see her, and they led her out and placed her upon a horse. Then the procession started, a man walking on either side of Kadija to keep her from falling, while another led the horse. The crowd began to shout and yell, and to fire off guns and pistols.

The noisy procession first went to the house of the

mullah, who scattered raisins for good luck over Kadija's head. Then they passed on to the house of a khan, the agha's tax collector, who happened to be in the village. He threw copper shahis into the street, and laughed heartily at the boys when they fell over each other trying to pick them up.

And so at last they reached Abdullah's house, where Karim, standing upon the roof, tried to hit his bride with three red apples, which he threw while the crowd cheered.

Lastly the men took Kadija from the horse and she was led into the house. This completed the ceremony. Here, for the first time since they had become engaged to be married, Karim spoke to his bride.

THE END.



Karim and His Bride

Our Little Turkish Cousin

Mary Hazelton Wade

Illustrated by L.J. Bridgman



Osman

Preface

In Europe and Asia there are two countries separated from each other by a narrow strip of water. One of these is spoken of as Turkey in Europe, and the other as Turkey in Asia. They are held together under one ruler called the Sultan. He has absolute power over his people, and can do with them as he likes. One word from his lips is enough to cause the death of any of his subjects. None dare to disobey him.

It is because his rule is not the best and wisest, and also because his kingdom is always in danger from the countries around it, that the Sultan is often spoken of as "The Sick Man of Europe."

Our little Turkish cousin lives in the city of Constantinople, not far from the Sultan's palace. He does

not understand why some of his people live in wealth and luxury, while so many others spend their lives in begging for the food and clothing they must have. He has no thought but that the Sultan of Turkey is as great and noble as the ruler of any other land.

The child is brought up to love ease and comfort, the daintiest food and the richest clothing. He feels sorry for the poor and the homeless, but he does not know how to truly help them. He hears little about other countries where every one is free and can claim just treatment as his right. But as he grows older he may, perhaps, think for himself, and do some noble deed to save his country and make his people better and happier.

Let us open the doors of our hearts to him, and let him feel our love and sympathy.

CHAPTER I

Osman

Of course Osman cannot remember his first birthday. He is a big hoy now, with brown eyes and soft, dark hair. Ten years have rolled over his head since he lay in the little cradle by the side of his mother's grand bedstead.

He made an odd picture — this tiny baby in cotton shirt and quilted dressing-gown. His head was encased in a cap of red silk. A tassel of seed-pearls hung down at one side. Several charms were fastened to the tassel. His mother thought they would keep harm and danger away from this precious baby boy.

He could not have felt very comfortable. His nurse had straightened out his arms and legs, and bound them tightly with bandages. After dressing him, she placed him in his little bed and covered him with several quilted wrappers.

Last of all, a thin, red veil was spread over this little Turkish baby.

Do you think he could have enjoyed himself very much? I don't.

He was ready for visitors now. First of all, the proud and delighted father must come in to see his child. A boy, too! The grave man was doubly pleased when he thought of this. As he looked for the first time upon the tiny form done up in so many wrappers, he could hardly tell whether the boy was big or little, fat or thin.

He bent down over the cradle and lifted the child into his own strong arms. Holding him tenderly, he carried him from the room. He stopped just outside the door. There he stood for a few moments while he repeated a short prayer and whispered the name "Osman" three times in the baby's ear.

This was the only christening the Turkish boy would ever receive. Osman would be his name for the rest of his life; and a fine name it was, his mother and friends all agreed.

When the baby was three days old, there was a grand celebration at his home.

Certain old women, called "bringers of tidings," went from one house to another where the lady friends of Osman's mother had their homes. Wherever they stopped, these old women left bottles of sherbet made of sugar-candy, spices, and water. As they presented the sherbet, they told of the good news about the new baby, of the name his father had given him, and of the feast to be held at Osman's home.

"Do come, do come. You will surely be welcome. You will be glad to see the child and rejoice with his mother."

In this way the invitations were given; and so it happened that many ladies found their way to Osman's house on the day named. No special hour was set for their visit. But, from morning till night, people were coming and going.

It was easy enough for passers-by to know something of interest was taking place inside. They could hear the band of music playing lively airs as the ladies drove up to the door and entered the house.

All the visitors wore long cloaks, with veils over their faces, hiding everything except their soft, dark eyes. For it is still the fashion in Turkey that no lady shall be seen away from her home with her face uncovered.

Very few of these visitors came alone. They were attended by their slaves and servants, laden with baskets. These baskets were very pretty. They were trimmed with flowers and ribbons, and filled with all sorts of delicious sweets.

Of course they were presents for the new baby's mother. She lay in her grand state bed, smiling softly as the ladies came up, one by one, to greet her. Before they entered her chamber, they took off their veils and cloaks in an outside room.

"Mashallah! May the child live long and be happy," said the visitors, as they bent over the young mother. At each kind wish, she kissed the hands of the speaker. This was her way of thanking them. Strange to say, the ladies seemed hardly to notice the baby himself, in whose honour they had come to the house.

Do not think for a moment they had forgotten the tiny bundle done up in quilted cotton. No, indeed. But the anxious mother believed some bad fortune might come to Osman if he were examined too closely. She would worry if her friends should fondle the child or pay him much attention.

This is the reason most of them pretended not to see him. A few, however, were so curious they could not resist stopping for a moment at the cradle. But, instead of saying, "Oh, the darling little fellow!" or, "What a bright-looking child!" or other kind words, they exclaimed, "The ugly little creature!" "What stupid eyes he has!" or some such unpleasant thing.

Would you believe it? Osman's mother seemed really pleased as she listened. She said to herself, "Well, if they praised my child, I should think they were trying to hide some bad wish. That very wish would bring an accident to my darling, sooner or later. No, I like best to hear them speak as they do. I know they do not mean what they say."

The visitors were in no hurry to leave Osman's home. They made themselves comfortable on the soft couches. They laughed and chatted together while they ate ices and rich cakes, and sipped coffee or sherbet.

The refreshments were of many kinds, for the baby's father was rich and held a high office under the Sultan, as the ruler of Turkey is called.

If Osman had been born in a poor family, his parents

would have had a celebration just the same. The feast would not have been as rich, but coffee and fruits would have been served, at any rate, and the visitors would probably have enjoyed themselves just as much.

When Osman was eight days old, there was another great ceremony at his house. He received a bath. The ladies who were invited could join in the bath if they liked, as well as his mother. There would be music and refreshments and a general good time.

The baby was bathed first. His mother's turn came next.

A Turkish bath is not like that of other people, as perhaps you have heard. A long time is spent before it is finished. On this great day in Osman's life, it was even longer than usual. Many songs were sung, and the visitors stopped several times to eat refreshments.

All this sounds odd to us, but the rich ladies of Turkey have little to do except to ride and make calls, bathe in their own homes or at the public bath-houses, meet together for picnics or some entertainment.

Osman grew so fast it seemed to his mother only a short time before he was able to toddle about without the help of

his nurse. The carpets were soft and thick, so he did not get hurt even if he fell. The beautiful colours of the carpets amused his baby eyes.

He was awake every morning soon after sunrise, but this did not trouble his parents. They were early risers, too. The boy's father liked to have plenty of time for sipping coffee and smoking his pipe before leaving home for the day.

There was no such thing as breakfast. The family ate only two real meals in the whole day. But the early morning was a pleasant time. There was no jumping up from the table after a hasty meal. There was no rushing for the train after a hurried kiss and good-bye to wife and baby. Oh, no, none of these things are done in Turkey.

Osman's father dressed himself in a comfortable, loose gown, and seated himself cross-legged on a rug. He clapped his hands and a slave appeared with the steaming coffee, which was placed on a low stand nearby. Then the baby's mother poured out the coffee and, handing it to her husband, sat down on a cushion at his feet.

Osman, still in his nightclothes, toddled about, nibbling a sweet-cake.

The slave who had brought the coffee was now busy in tidying the room. First of all, mattresses and wadded coverlets must be stowed away in a cupboard. There was no bedstead. Such a clumsy piece of furniture had been used in the house but once. That was when the young mother lay in state to receive her friends when Osman was born.

Would you believe it! the baby's mother was still wearing her wadded night-dress. She often kept it on for hours after she got up in the morning.

"It is so comfortable," she thought. "Why should I hurry to dress myself for the day?"

After the coffee, the father took his pipe and lighted it with a tiny piece of charcoal. Now for a comfortable smoke. As he puffed away at his pipe, the room was quiet except for little Osman's prattle. He was trying to tell his father and mother about his play-things.

After a while the sober Turk laid down his pipe, and said, "It is time for business."

The dressing-gown was taken off, and street clothes were put on. What a grand-looking gentleman he was now, with his long beard hanging over his snow-white shirt-front, his

embroidered vest, and wide, loose trousers.

He lifted Osman up for a kiss, and, with a deep bow to his wife, he left home for the day.

CHAPTER II

School

"Mamma, mamma, I am so glad it has come at last!" said little Osman, early one bright spring morning.

"Yes, yes, my darling," answered his mother. "It is a good time; I am glad, too."

What made Osman wake up sooner than usual this morning? What caused his eyes to look so bright? Why was the nurse taking such pains with his hair and dress?

He was going to school for the first time in his life. His sixth birthday had come and gone, and his father had said: "It is time for my little boy to do something besides play. He must learn to read our good books, and understand the use of numbers."

The important day was set and the teacher was told about the new pupil. Word was also sent to the priest.

Osman's father spent some time in choosing a pony on which his boy should first ride to school. At last he decided on one of an iron-gray colour and very handsome.

"What beautiful trappings!" exclaimed Osman, when the pony arrived at the door. "Oh, you dear, kind father to get them!"

Any boy would be pleased to ride on a pony decked out in such a gay manner.

The pony had no sooner arrived than the whole school appeared at the door. The children were dressed in their best clothes to do honour to the new pupil.

The priest took his place in front of the young company. They instantly bent low while he made a short prayer. After this, Osman was lifted to the back of the pony, the other children formed in double line, and the procession started out for the school.

But it did not move quietly. Hymn after hymn was sung by the little ones in strong, clear voices as they went along.

The grown-ups whom they passed smiled and said to themselves, "A child is on his way to school for the first time. It is a glad day. May he grow wise and be happy."

What an odd-looking schoolroom it was that Osman soon entered; neither seats nor desks could be seen. Three divans, as the big, soft Turkish couches are called, stood along the wall. The children squatted cross-legged on these, side by side.

After they had taken their places, the teacher sat down in front of his little class and began to hear their lessons.

Each child had by this time opened his book and begun to recite. Not one of them at a time. Oh, no, indeed! They spoke together in high, sharp voices. How could the schoolmaster understand what they said?

He did not seem to have any trouble, however, and kept the children busy. They read from the Koran, which is the sacred book of their people, they recited numbers, and they wrote.

You remember they had no desks. The poor little things had to hold their copy-books in their laps, and it was tiresome work. Their pens were made of reeds, and sponges took the place of ink-wells.

Before the children were dismissed, the master told them a story which interested Osman very much.

"I will repeat it to my mother," he said to himself. "The story teaches us not to seem surprised, no matter what may happen. My father has spoken of this very thing. It is not polite to be astonished. That is what he has often said."

As the little boy rode homeward, he saw a man sitting cross-legged at the street corner. Two veiled women stood in front of him. They were eagerly watching the man as he wrote. From time to time he stopped as one of the women told him something more she wished him to put into the letter.

"He is a street scribe," thought Osman. "They will pay him for that letter. They do not know how to write. That is why they get him to do it. How quickly he makes the letters, and how easily he holds his pen. I hope it won't be long before I can write as well as he does."

Such a scribe is often seen in the streets of Constantinople, the city where Osman lives. There are many people there who can neither read nor write. Fine ladies are not ashamed to stop at a scribe's little stand and ask him to write letters for them, as these people were doing.

Osman's school was only a short distance from home,

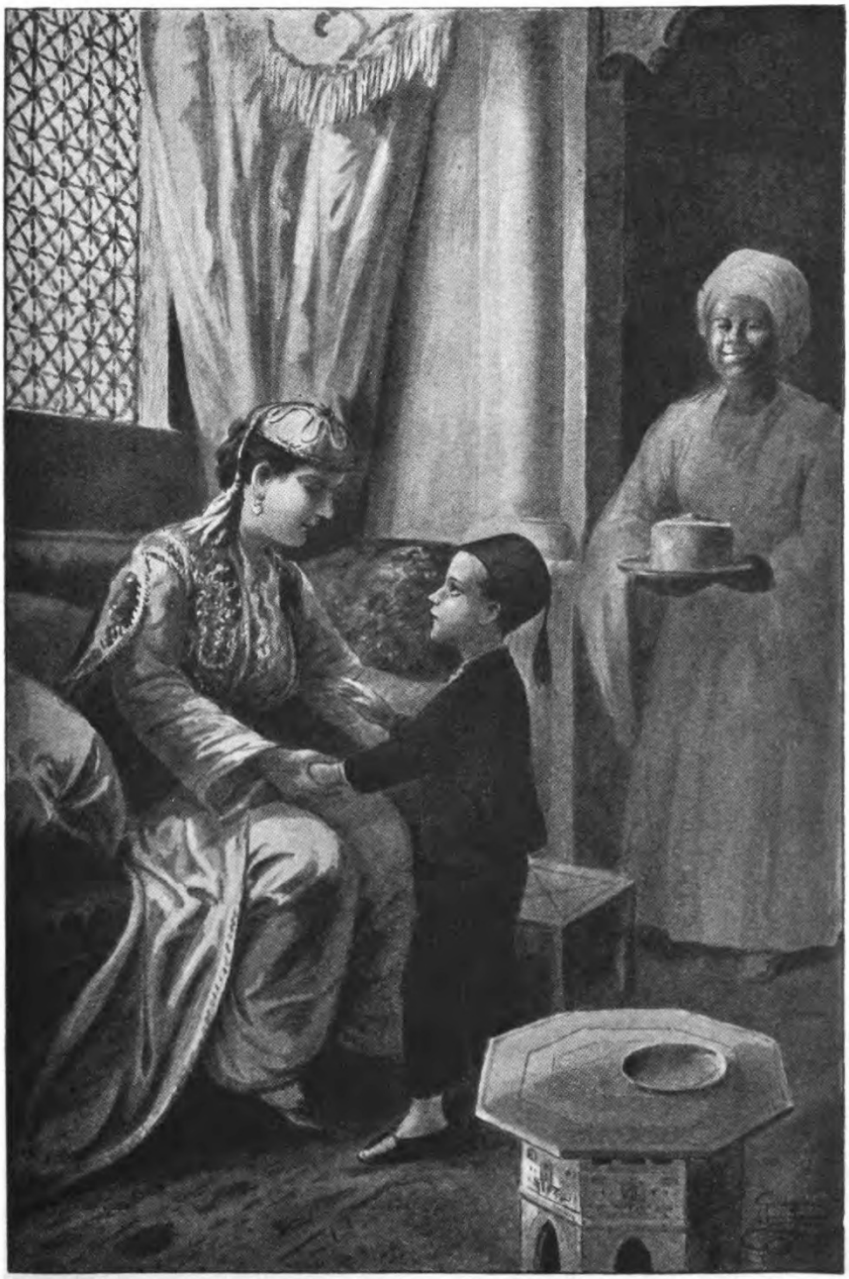
and he was soon at his own gate. The moment he arrived, the door was opened by an old black slave, who had been watching for the darling of the house.

"I'd like to stop and tell you what I've been doing this morning, but I can't now," said Osman. "I must tell mother first."

The little boy ran up the stairs to his mother's rooms. In another moment he was seated on a divan beside her and talking faster than one often hears among the quiet people of his country.

Lunch was soon brought, and, you may be sure, the little boy was ready for it. There was a dish of pilaf, of course. It was made of nicely cooked rice and butter, and was delicious. Then there was a juicy melon, and fresh figs, besides cakes sweetened with honey, candy, and many other nice things.

Osman's mother is as fond of sweet things as her little boy, and she is ready to eat them at any time. The lunch was served at an odd little table. Indeed, it could hardly be called a table — it was a small, low stand, about eight inches above the floor. The dishes were brought in one at a time, and



Osman and His Mother

placed on the stand.

Osman and his mother ate the pilaf with their fingers, from the same dish. But they did not hurry. The grains of rice were picked up so daintily with their finger-tips, they were hardly soiled by the touch of the food.

"We will wash now," Osman's mother said, as the lunch was finished. A queer basin was at once brought by a servant, and held in front of the lady. In the middle of the basin was a little stand holding a cake of soap, while underneath was a sort of well. This was to receive the water as it left the basin. As Osman's mother held out her hands, one servant slowly poured the water over them, while another held an embroidered towel ready for her use.

It was Osman's turn next. No matter how much he wished to hurry out to play, he must not rise from his cushion till his hands were bathed.

"Wash before eating and afterward," is a law of the Koran. Osman thinks it would be as wicked to break this rule as to tell a wrong story, or take anything belonging to another.

As soon as the hand-washing was over, the little boy

started for the courtyard to watch his tame pigeons and play with his friend Selim.

Osman's house is divided into two parts. His father's rooms are down-stairs. A separate door leads into them from the street. No woman ever enters these rooms. Even the servants who take care of them are men. The boy's father receives his gentlemen friends in this part of the house. It is here that he talks over business with his visitors. Sometimes he holds dinner parties in these rooms, but they are only for men. He even has a separate courtyard and garden. Osman may come here if he likes, but the real home of the family is upstairs in his mother's rooms.

This part of the house is very beautiful. Rich curtains hang in the doorways. Soft and heavy rugs are placed here and there on the floors. Divans with soft cushions stretch along the sides of the walls, under the latticed windows.

Yes, every window is covered with latticework, so that no one passing along the street below can see the faces of the persons within these upper rooms. This is the fashion of the country. Poor women of Turkey! They seem to us almost like prisoners, but they have been brought up to think of their

life as the most natural and best in the world. They may go outdoors whenever they like, so long as a veil is worn over the face. But no man, unless he is a very near relative, must enter the part of the house where the women and children have their home.

CHAPTER III

The Fire

"Listen, listen, Osman. What is all the noise about?" exclaimed Selim. It was toward the end of the afternoon, and both boys were growing tired of play.

"It's a fire. Don't you see the police? They are hurrying along with pails of water on their heads. Then, look quickly down the street! Smoke is coming out of that building. Let's ask nurse to go with us."

In another moment Osman had run into the house and out again, with old black Fatima trotting after as fast as she could move. She hurriedly pulled her veil over her face. Then, taking each boy by the hand, she led them through the gate, and joined the crowd of people who were going in the direction of the fire.

Everybody looked gay and happy. Why shouldn't they

have a good time? The fire did not happen through any fault of theirs. It would be a grand sight, and the onlookers might as well enjoy it.

There were no fire-engines in the city. The policemen brought pails of water, but these did little good.

And now, not only columns of smoke are bursting through the windows and doorways, but flames are leaping and dancing along the openings. See! Those who are still inside the burning house are throwing out cushions and mats, curtains and pillows, into the street. Such furnishings can be saved, even if the building is destroyed.

The watching crowd seize these articles and at once make themselves comfortable. A number of women sit down on a pile of soft rugs and prepare to enjoy the show, as if they were at the theatre. Not far off is a group of men, who stand chatting and smoking. The balconies of neighbouring houses are filled with gazing crowds.

The street peddlers soon begin to arrive. They bring trays of sweetmeats, sherbets, and other good things. As they elbow their way through the crowd, they act as though the fire had been started on purpose to give them a chance to

sell their goods.

Still the fire rages; the timbers creak; the walls begin to totter; the roof gives way, and falls inward with a crash. In a few moments more, only a heap of charred wood is left in the place of a fine house.

It might have been saved if firemen could have been here with their engines. But they are unknown, as yet, in this great city of the Turks, where many buildings are destroyed by fire every year.

"Come, come, children," said Fatima, "it is late. The shadows are beginning to fall. Osman, your father is surely home by this time and will wonder where you are."

While the old woman hurried the boys along, they ate fig paste they had bought off a peddler.

No doubt you, children of other lands, have eaten fig paste, too. But perhaps you have never thought of the people who invented it. It is a Turkish sweetmeat, and Osman thinks it is delicious when freshly made by a candy merchant in his city.

"The fire has waked up every dog in this quarter," said Fatima, fretfully, as she hurried the children along. She was

right in saying so, for "Bow-wow-wow, bow-wow-wow," could be heard in every direction. Even as she spoke, the old nurse stumbled against a big dog that was rushing past her and barking furiously.

"Hurry up, old fellow! Catch him, catch him!" cried Osman, turning around to watch. "Fatima, don't you see what is the matter? He is driving a strange dog out of the street. I hope he will succeed."

Just as Osman spoke, a half-dozen other dogs came tearing along, eager to join in the chase. There was small chance for the stranger, who was now running with all his might. His tongue was hanging from his mouth, and his tail was thrashing from side to side between his legs.

Poor homeless dogs of Constantinople! There are thousands of them. Yes, it is the very truth. There are scores of thousands of them.

Those big, gaunt, yellow creatures live in the streets and byways, under the door-steps and in the graveyards. They feed on the garbage thrown out from the kitchens, but sometimes get a little choicer food through the kindness of the people.

"Kill a dog without real need of doing so! No, no," Osman's father would say, very solemnly. "It is the law of our religion that we should kill nothing living if we can possibly help it. Let the dogs live.

"Besides, they are useful creatures. They keep our streets clean of all decaying matter. By doing this, fevers and many other kinds of illness are prevented. The poor animals are a real blessing."

"I know where there are some new-born puppies," said Selim, as he was leaving Osman for the night.

"Where? Let's go and see them now. Is it near here?" cried his little friend.

"Yes, it's only a few steps."

"No, no, children," broke in Fatima, "you ought to be in your own homes this very moment. Wait till morning, and I will go with you before school-time."

"Are their eyes open yet? Does their mother seem fond of them? How many are there?" asked Osman.

But Fatima did not give Selim a chance to answer. She had already rung the bell at the door of his house, and a servant had appeared to take charge of him.

So, without stopping for anything except a kind wish to Selim for his peace and happiness, she led her own little charge home. His father had reached there before him, and was all ready to talk over the day's doings with his only child.

As the Turk sat smoking that evening, Osman described the fire he had seen, and told of the hunted dog he had met on the way home.

"He ought to have known better than to come into a strange quarter," said the boy. "It was all he could expect. Any dog that remains at home is not troubled by the others. I love the creatures; don't you, papa? They are gentle and quiet and clever.

"Yes, Osman, the city would not seem like home without our yellow-haired dogs. Before you were born, however, the Sultan thought it would be wise to clear our streets of them. Great numbers were taken to an island near the coast."

"Did they die there from want of food, papa?"

"Oh, no. They were too wise to stay there and starve. They all swam back to the city. Our people were so pleased, the dogs have never been troubled since then."

"I love the dogs because they are not only gentle, but they

do not forget a kindness. They are grateful creatures," said Osman's mother. "I have a friend who told me the story of an English lady living here in our city. She had a small terrier she had brought back with her after a visit to England.

"I suppose, Osman, you know that our dogs are always ready to attack one of a different breed?"

"Yes, mamma."

"Well, it happened one day that this little terrier escaped from his home and got out into the street among the dogs of the city."

"Did they kill him?"

"No, indeed. But they had a reason for being friendly to him. The English lady and her family had always been kind to them, and had often fed them. Not only this, but she had seen that pans of water were placed in the street on hot days, so the dogs should not suffer from thirst. They were grateful to her, and seemed to feel that her pet terrier was also a friend.

"After this, the lady allowed her dog to play with the others as much as he liked. He was always well treated. But he did not have sense enough to keep in his own street. One

day he wandered off into another quarter, and he was instantly attacked. His dog friends heard the noise and rushed after him. When they got to him, he was surrounded on all sides by his enemies.

"It would have gone hard with him, if one brave friend had not seized him by the neck and rushed home with him. He did not stop till he reached the lady's house, where he dropped the terrier on the door-step.

"Even then, he and his comrades did not go away. There they waited till the owner appeared, when they tried to explain, as well as poor doggies can, what had happened."

"What noble fellows they were," said Osman, when his mother had finished the story. "I shall love them more than ever." Then the little boy went on to tell of the family of puppies Selim had discovered.

"I will go to see them early to-morrow morning, and will carry some food to the mother," he said. "I love puppies. They are beautiful little things, and their hair is as soft as silk."

Osman loved pets as much as any other boy in the wide world, and he was always ready to take a family of puppies

into his heart. His parents taught him, however, that it was not good to handle them. “The dog is an unclean animal,” said the boy’s father. “Be kind to him and love him, but touch him as little as possible.”

CHAPTER IV

The Picnic

It was a beautiful summer day. The sun was shining brightly on the glossy leaves of the olive-trees in Osman's garden, and the plants were loaded with blossoms.

Osman had just picked a bunch of flowers when he heard his mother's voice.

"How would you like a day by the Sweet Waters of Europe, my child?"

The little boy looked in the direction of the voice. His mother was moving slowly down the garden path.

"That would be lovely, mamma, but can't Selim go with us?"

"Certainly, and I have sent word to some of my friends to join us, too. We will have a merry time. I am tired of the house, and I long for a row on the beautiful river. Let Fatima

go for Selim, and make yourself ready at once.''

The little boy's mother was already dressed for the excursion. So, while the servants were preparing the lunch and Osman was getting ready, she sat down on a cushion under the trees and idly waited.

She was richly clad in a pink silk mantle with wide sleeves and deep cape. It was so long it reached down to her ankles.

A small, bright-coloured cap, trimmed with pearls, was fitted closely to her head. The thin muslin veil, fastened to this cap, was brought around her face so no part of it could be seen except her soft, kind eyes.

She did not have long to wait before her friends and Selim arrived to join in the day's outing. The slaves, with wraps and carpets were also ready, and, at a sign from their mistress, the party started out.

How queerly the ladies walked! They waddled along in a clumsy fashion with their skirts tucked up under their mantles and around their waists. They looked like shapeless bundles moving along in loose trousers and clumsy overshoes.

It was only a few steps to the waterside, where boats were

waiting for them. The boatmen first helped the ladies to get in and seat themselves on soft cushions; next came the two boys, and, last of all, the servants.

When every one was comfortably settled, and umbrellas had been raised over the ladies' heads to protect them from the strong sunlight, the men bent to their oars and they were off.

The boats were light and very graceful. They were of a kind the Turks call kaiks. They sped onward through the water as the men gave long, strong pulls at the oars.

On and on they went, now rapidly as the river widened; again, they moved more slowly as they entered a narrow stretch of water, almost filled with the boats of other pleasure-seekers.

Sometimes they were obliged to pass under a little wooden bridge. Then it was fun for Osman and Selim to reach up and see if they could touch the floor of the bridge before they left it behind them.

Pretty houses stood here and there on the banks of the river, or groves of trees that seemed to say, "Stop here and rest awhile. I will give you shade and comfort."

But still the rowers kept on, as though their arms would never get tired. They did not speak, these sober-faced men. Each wore a red fez on his head, which made him look hot and uncomfortable in the strong sunshine.

There was a time when all Turks wore soft turbans, which are the best and most comfortable covering for the head. But times are changed now. The great Sultan likes the fez best, and the turban is seen more and more seldom as the years pass by.

At last the party reached a spot where Osman's mother decided to stop. It was a favourite picnic-ground for the people of Constantinople. A pretty grove of trees was growing close to the shore, while, nearby, tiny coffee-houses stood here and there in the meadows.

"I hear sweet music," said Osman. "Listen, mamma."

"Yes, it is a wandering player. After we get settled, we will pay him to play for us," answered his mother.

The ladies made themselves comfortable on the rugs their servants spread under the trees. The children wandered about as they liked.

"Sweet Waters of Europe" is a good name for this part of

the river. It was a pleasant place, and everything about them looked fresh and inviting.

"Osman, let's see what that man is showing," cried Selim, after the boys had listened to some music and eaten the ices they had bought at a stand.

The children joined a crowd of people gathering around a showman.

It was a puppet-show, something like the Punch and Judy one sees in England and America. But the funny little figures acted out a very different play. It must have been amusing, for every one laughed heartily.

Before the day was over other showmen came along, each with a different exhibition of his own. Then there were men who performed tricks, and others who had candies and dainties to sell.

As for the ladies, you must not think they sat quietly on their mats all day long. Oh, no indeed! They laughed and romped, they sang and danced, they ate candies and cakes as freely as the children themselves. The serious ways of the city were quite forgotten.

But at last the shadows of evening began to fall.

"Come, come, we must start for home," cried Osman's mother. "I must certainly be home by sunset to greet my husband."

They made haste to start, and in a few minutes they had taken their places in the boats and were moving back toward the great city.

As it came into view once more, it looked almost like a fairy city. The soft light of the late afternoon bathed the tall spires and minarets, which reached up toward the sky like long, slender needles.

Here and there were grand buildings of white marble, while the whole place was dotted with groves of dark cypress-trees.

Yes, it looked very, very beautiful, but when the boats were left behind, and the narrow, dirty streets were reached again, it did not seem possible it could be the same place the party had seen from the water.

There was no likeness to fairy-land now. The hungry dogs, the ragged beggars, the tumble-down houses in the very midst of the fine buildings, make the stranger feel sad.

But Osman is so used to these sights, they do not trouble

him. This city, the greatest one of his people, always seems grand and beautiful to him.

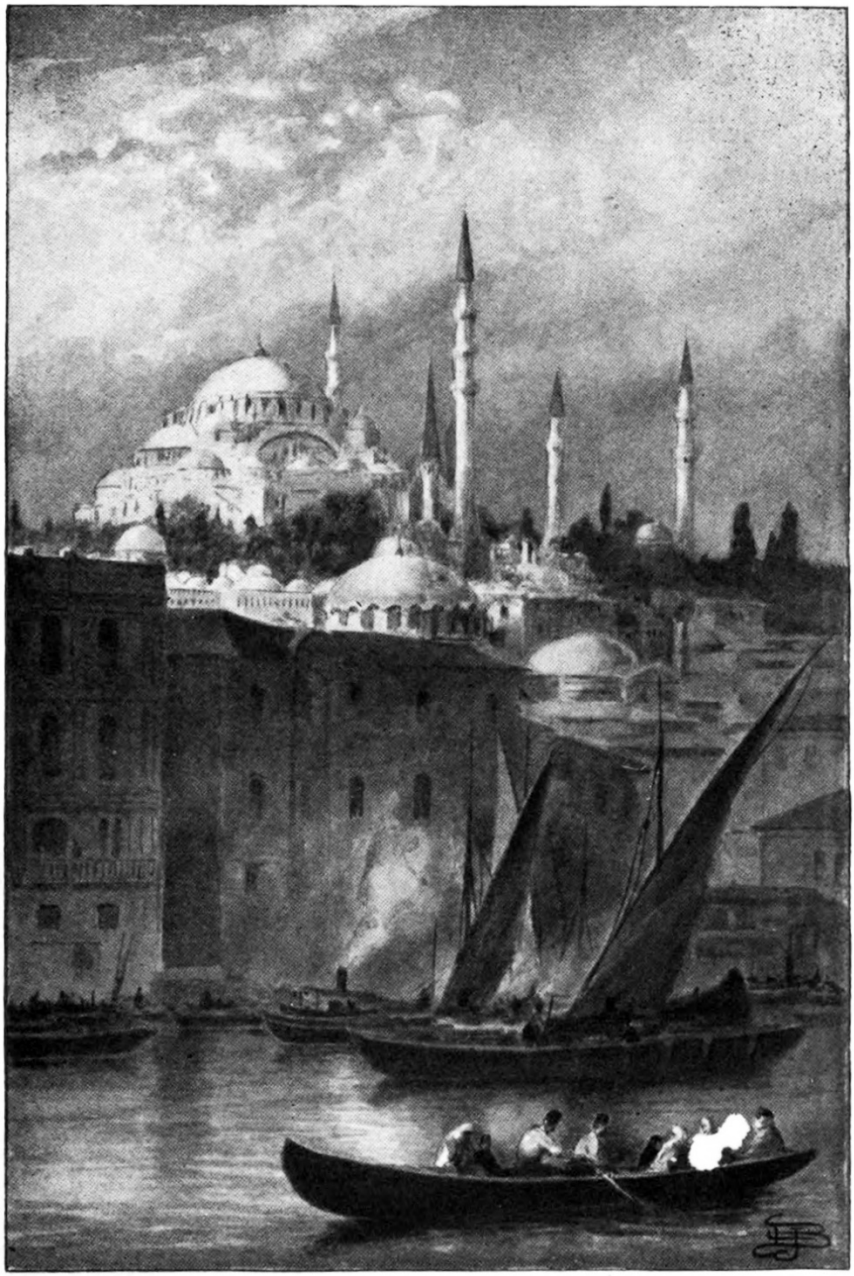
On the evening after the picnic, Osman's mother said to her husband, "I have invited a party of my friends to lunch with me to-morrow."

The Turks do little visiting after sunset. The ladies often spend the day with each other, but are seldom away from home at dinner-time.

The next morning, after their master had gone away for the day, and Osman had started for school, the servants began to make ready for the party.

As soon as the first guest arrived, a pair of shoes belonging to Osman's mother was placed outside the door of her room. If her husband should happen to come home during the day, he would see these shoes. He would know by this sign that his wife had lady visitors. It would not be polite for him to enter her rooms during their stay in the house.

The lunch-hour soon came. The hostess led her friends into the dining-room. They seated themselves on the soft cushions placed by the servants around the low stand.



“It looked almost like a fairy city.”

There was a spoon, and also a piece of bread, at each lady's place. On the centre of the stand was a leather pad on which hot dishes would be set as they were brought in.

But when the ladies sat down there was no food to be seen, except the pieces of bread, some saucers containing olives, bits of cucumber, melons, and radishes.

And now the slaves moved from one guest to another, bringing a basin of water and towels. Each one must bathe her hands before eating, as well as afterward, whether alone or in the grandest company.

It was a pleasure to watch them. As the stream of clear water fell slowly into the basin, each one rubbed her fingers gracefully and daintily, and then dried them on the fine linen towel held out by the watchful servant.

When this had been done by every one, Osman's mother clapped her hands, and a tureen of thick, creamy soup was brought in and set on the leather pad.

The hostess politely waved her hand toward her principal guest. She was inviting her to be the first one to dip her spoon into the soup. After this, the other ladies joined in, all eating together from the same dish.

After a few mouthfuls, the hostess made a sign to the slave to remove the soup and bring in another dish. Before the meal was over there would be sixteen courses, at least, and, therefore, it would not be well to eat much of any one of them.

The guests ate a little of every course. But, between the courses, they nibbled at the olives, cucumbers, and different sweet-meats.

More than once, Osman's mother broke off a choice bit of food with her finger, and held it up to the mouth of one of her friends. It was a very polite attention, and her visitor was pleased.

"How rude some people in the world are about eating," said one of the ladies. "They use the most clumsy things in their hands. They call them knives and forks. And besides, I have heard they do not wash before and after each meal. Ugh! It makes me shiver to think of their unclean ways."

"Yes, they are certainly not neat, and they are very awkward, if all I have heard about them be true," said another visitor. "They should study the ways of our people."

At last the luncheon was ended. The hostess led the way

into the drawing-room, where coffee was now served.

They were having a merry time, laughing and chatting, when Osman entered the room. His face showed he had something he wished to tell. Making a low bow to the ladies, he turned to his mother and said:

"Oh, mamma, I just saw a cat fall ever so far. She was on the roof of that old building behind our house. She fell down, down to the ground. And, mamma, I thought she would be killed. But she came down softly on her feet and ran off as if she hadn't been hurt the least bit. How is it that a cat can do such a thing? No other animal is like her, I'm sure."

His mother laughed and turned to one of her friends. "Won't you tell my little boy the story of Mohammed and the cat?" she asked. "We should all be pleased to listen, and perhaps there are some here who do not know it."

The rest of the company nodded their heads. "Yes, do tell it," said one after another.

"Very well, little Osman," said the lady whom the boy's mother had asked. "You shall have the story. I trust you will remember it whenever you think of the Holy Prophet.

"Mohammed once travelled a long, long distance over the desert. He became very tired, and at last he stopped to rest. As he did so, he fell fast asleep.

"Then, sad am I to tell it, a wicked serpent glided out from among the rocks and drew near the Prophet. It was about to bite him, when a cat happened to come along. She saw the serpent and what it was about to do; she rushed upon it and struggled and fought. The serpent defended itself with all its strength and cunning, too. Great was the battle. But the cat killed the snake.

"As it was dying, the wicked creature hissed so horribly that the noise awakened Mohammed, and he saw at once that the cat had saved his life.

"'Come here,' he said. As the cat obeyed him, the holy man stroked her lovingly three times. Three times he blessed her, saying these words:

"'May peace be yours, O cat. I will reward you for your kindness to me this day. No enemy shall conquer thee. No creature that lives shall ever be able to throw thee on thy back. Thou art indeed thrice blessed.'"

"And is this the reason a cat always falls on her feet?"

asked Osman.

"Even so, my little friend. Perhaps after this story you will feel more loving toward those soft-footed creatures," said the lady.

Osman made a low bow and thanked her for her kindness in telling the story. He was about to leave the room when another of the visitors reached out her hand and softly patted his shoulder.

"Sit down beside me, my child. I have a story to tell the company. Stay and hear it, if your dear mother is willing."

"May I, mamma?" he asked.

"Certainly, Osman, if you are good and quiet."

The little boy at once settled himself beside the lady who had asked him to stay. This is the story he heard.

The Wood-Cutter and Fortune

Once upon a time there was a wood-cutter who lived in the forest with his wife and two children. He was very poor. Day after day, and year after year, he went out into the midst of the wood and worked hard chopping down the trees and cutting them up for fire-wood.

After he had cut all the logs he could fasten upon the backs of his two mules, he went with them to the nearest town and sold his wood.

As each year came to an end, the poor wood-cutter was no richer than he was at the beginning. When twenty such years had passed by, he began to feel quite hopeless.

"What is the use of working so hard?" he said. "Perhaps if I stay in bed from morning until night, Fortune will take pity on me. I will try it, at any rate."

The next morning, therefore, the wood-cutter stayed in bed, as he had promised himself he would do. When his wife found he did not get up, she went to wake him.

"Come, come," she cried, "the cock crowed long since. You are late."

"Late for what?" asked her husband.

"Late for your work in the forest, to be sure."

"What is the use? I should only gain enough to keep us for one day."

"But, my dear husband, we must take what Fortune gives us. She has never been very kind to us, I must admit."

"I am tired and sick of the way she has treated us. If she

wishes to find me now, she must come here. I will not go to the wood to seek her any more."

When she heard these words, the wood-cutter's wife began to weep bitterly. She thought of the empty cupboard. She was afraid of hunger and cold.

Neither his wife's pleadings nor her tears had any effect on the wood-cutter. He would not rise from the bed. In a little while a man came to the door of the cottage, and said:

"Friend Wood-cutter, will you help me with your mules? I have a load to move."

But the wood-cutter would not get up. "I have made a vow to stay in my bed, and here I shall stay," he answered.

"Then, will you let me take your mules?" asked the neighbour.

"Certainly, help yourself," said the wood-cutter.

The neighbour took the mules and went away. It happened that he had found a rich store of treasure in his field, and he needed the mules to carry it for him to his home.

But, alas for him! The animals were safely loaded and had nearly reached his house, when some armed policemen

came that way. The man knew the law of the Sultan, by which he claimed all treasure-trove for himself.

There was only one thing for him to do, that is, if he did not wish to be killed for taking the treasure for himself. He must flee.

Away he ran as fast as he could move, leaving the mules to go where they chose.

You can easily guess they turned toward their own home. They soon reached it in safety.

When the wood-cutter's wife saw them standing in front of the door with their heavy loads, she rushed to her husband and begged him to get up and look into the matter.

But he still refused.

He had vowed to stay in bed till Fortune should visit him, and stay he would.

His wife, seeing something must be done, went out to the mules and began to cut the cords binding the sacks.

Of course you know what happened then. Out fell a perfect shower of gold pieces. The ground was soon covered with a golden carpet, richer than the most precious stores of the great East.

"A treasure! A treasure!" cried the woman, as she rushed to her husband's bedside. "Fortune has truly come to our home. Husband, you did right in waiting for her here. Look and see how rich we are now."

It was certainly time for the wood-cutter to get up, for he had kept his vow. As he looked at the piles of gold pieces, he said:

"I was quite right, dear wife. One must wait for Fortune. She is very fickle. You will never catch her if you run after her. But, if you wait for her, she will surely come to you."

When the story was ended, one of the ladies pointed to the clock.

"My dear friend," she said, turning to Osman's mother, "I have had a most delightful day. But it is now late in the afternoon. I must bid you farewell."

As she rose to go, the other ladies followed her example, each one thanking the hostess for the pleasant day spent with her.

CHAPTER V

Gipsies

"I wish you had been with me this afternoon, Osman," said his father, as his little boy ran to meet him.

"What did you see, papa? Please tell me all about it."

"I went to walk with a friend. We wandered on and on until we came to a large field near the city walls. The field was alive with gipsies, who were having some sort of a holiday. They were dressed in their gayest colours and were having a dance."

"Outdoors in that field, papa?"

"Yes, Osman, and it was a very pretty sight. A number of the men were squatting on the ground in a circle. Those were the musicians. They played on different kinds of instruments. There were drums, flutes, and mandolins.

"The players banged away with no kind of time, but the

gipsies seemed to enjoy it, notwithstanding."

"How did they dance, papa?"

"The men kept by themselves, each one moving separately. But the women danced together. They all beat time with their hands. At the same time they kept saying, 'Oh, Oh, Oh,' as they moved about.

"When the dance was ended, the gipsies went over to a corner of the field where a feast was being prepared. Great fires had been kindled. Huge kettles of rice were boiling there, and whole sheep were being roasted.

"Many of the young gipsies were handsome. Their eyes were dark and sparkling, and their teeth were of a pearly white. But the old women were wrinkled and ugly. Their long, thin fingers made me think of witches."

"The gipsies dress in the old style of our country, don't they, papa?"

"Yes, you always see them with large, baggy trousers, short jackets, and turbans wound around their heads. The men wear bright-coloured waistbands, stuck full of pistols and daggers."

"I feel scared, papa, only to hear you speak of such

things."

"How foolish that is, Osman. The gipsies would do you no harm. They mind their own affairs pretty well. To be sure, we do not love these people, but there is nothing to fear from them.

"They have chosen to live among us, and, although they go away in large companies and travel all over Europe, they are sure to come back here."

"Where did they come from in the first place, papa?"

"A long time ago, I believe, they lived in the far East, or in Egypt. They speak a queer language, made up of Hindi and Greek, as well as Turkish words."

Just then, Osman's mother came into the room.

"Father has just been telling me about a feast held by the gipsies this afternoon, mamma."

"Indeed! And did any of the women offer to tell you your fortune?" asked the lady, as she turned toward her husband.

"They were having too good a time among themselves to notice any outsider," he answered. "At any other time I should have been bothered by them. I can't tell you how many times this year I have been asked to show the palm of

my hand and cross it with silver.

"The silver is the pay for the fortune-telling, isn't it?" asked Osman.

"Certainly; a gipsy wouldn't give you a moment of her time unless she were paid for it," said his mother.

"When I was a young girl, I loved to have my fortune told. One day a beautiful young gipsy girl came to the door of my house. Of course, she asked to tell my fortune.

"I spread out the palm of my hand and she looked at it a long time with her bright black eyes. She seemed to study the lines as though she were reading. At last, she began to speak slowly in a low voice. And, would you believe it! she described your father, Osman, although I had never seen him at that time. She told me he would be my husband."

Osman's father smiled a little and then said, "The less we have to do with these strange people, my son, the better. It is very easy for these fortune-tellers to make one or two guesses that afterward turn out to be true. But we have talked enough about the gipsies for one day. Let us speak of something else."

"Then tell me about our great ruler, whom you serve,"

said Osman. "I like to hear about the palace and the Sultan's little children who live in a city of their own inside of our great one."

The people of Turkey seldom speak of Osman's city as Constantinople, the name given it by the Christians. They prefer to call it "The Town."

"Yes, the palace and the buildings belonging to it really make a city by themselves," said his father. "It is a beautiful place, with its lovely gardens and parks. There is a lake in the midst of the park, and the Sultan sometimes sails around it in an elegant steam launch.

"The palace is of white marble, as you know, Osman. The furniture is of ebony inlaid with ivory. The curtains and carpets are of the brightest colours, and are rich and heavy."

"There is a theatre, as well as a great many other buildings, isn't there, papa?"

"Yes, Osman. It is decorated in the richest colours. The Sultan's seat is in the front part of the gallery."

"He has many children, hasn't he?"

"Yes, and he loves them dearly. He often spends the evening with them and plays duets on the piano with his



"'She told me he would be my husband.'"

favourites. The building where they live with their mothers is in the park. I have been told it is very beautiful."

"The Sultan has many, many wives, I have heard mother say."

"It is true. And each wife has a great number of slaves as well as other attendants. Sometimes his wives drive through the city in elegant carriages."

"But the Sultan never leaves the palace grounds, except on the two great times each year, does he?"

"Never, except at those times, Osman. But any one can get permission to see him as he rides on horseback to the mosque in his grounds, where he worships."

"It is a beautiful sight, papa. You know you have taken me there to see him. The lines of soldiers, all in red fezzes, reach from the door of the palace to the snow-white mosque. The Sultan himself looks so grand as he rides along!

"The troops cheer him as he passes them and enters the mosque, but everybody else is very, very quiet. I suppose they feel somewhat as I do, papa. I'm not exactly afraid. But he is such a great and powerful ruler, it doesn't seem as if I could move or make a sound while I look at him."

Dear little Osman! Our far-away cousin has never heard how the people of other countries speak of Turkey. They call it the "Sick Man of Europe." They think it is a pity the Sultan has such power in the land. They say:

"Turkey is the only country in Europe that does not believe in the Christian faith. Its most important city is on the shores of a strait through which a great deal of trade is carried from all parts of the world. These are some of the reasons different countries would like to get control of Turkey and its great city. They all look toward it with longing eyes.

"Besides these things, the Sultan himself is not a good ruler for his people. He has many wives and hundreds of slaves. Many of his people follow his bad example and buy slaves, both black and white."

But little Osman knows nothing of what is said about the Sultan and the people of his land. It has never entered his head that it is wrong to buy and sell human beings.

His mother is kind to her slaves, and does not make them work hard. Sometimes, too, she frees one of her slave women. They are happy, she thinks.

"But, dear little Osman," you would say, "it is the *right* of every one to be free. Perhaps when you grow up you will see this, and help to make things different in your country."

Let us go back now to the little boy and his father as they sat talking of the Sultan and his palace.

"He dresses very plainly," said the Turk. "But in the old days, the ruler's garments were very rich, and his fez fairly blazed with diamonds. If you had lived then, Osman, your eyes would have been dazzled when you looked at him."

"I wish I could have seen some of the things my grandmother has described," answered his son. "But I'm glad I wasn't living during the revolution of the janizaries. Everybody must have been scared then.

"Is it really true that Sultan Mahmoud's old nurse saved his life by hiding him away in an oven?"

"Yes, but he wasn't Sultan then. He was the heir to the throne, however."

"What made the trouble, papa?"

"Sultan Selim III was a wise ruler. He wished to improve his country. At one time the janizaries were the best trained and most useful troops. They were chosen from the

Christians who were taken captive in war.

"But after awhile, men with no training and with selfish motives managed to get into their ranks. Sultan Selim knew they were harmful to the Empire, and intended to disband them. They found out what he was about to do, took the city and palace by surprise, and killed the good Selim.

"As soon as his son's old nurse heard the uproar, she hurried to Mahmoud and said, 'Come with me at once; your life must be saved.' She led him to an old furnace in the palace and begged him to get inside.

"'No matter what happens, nor who calls your name, do not make a sound until I speak to you,' she told him.

"He did as she said. Hour after hour, he stayed quietly inside the furnace while his father and many of his friends were being cruelly killed.

"The Sultan's enemies hunted everywhere for him, but he was nowhere to be found. They called his name coaxingly, but he knew better than to answer any one else than his old nurse, so he did not make a sound.

"In the meanwhile, the old woman was patiently watching. When the janizaries had gone away, she went to

the door of the furnace and whispered to Mahmoud. She told him he now had a chance to gather his men about him and seize the government.

"There was not a moment to lose; Mahmoud was quite a young man, but he had a strong nature. His wonderful eyes showed that.

"He came out from his hiding-place and succeeded in gaining control of the city. The wicked janizaries were conquered, but Mahmoud had a sad and troubled reign. Blessed be his memory!"

CHAPTER VI

A Turkish Bath

"Osman, you may go with me to the public bath-house," said his father, one bright morning. "I have business at the bazaar to-day, and we will go there afterward. You can have a good bath."

Osman was delighted. A whole day with his father was a great treat. Besides, it pleased him to think of a visit to the public bath-house.

There was a large marble bath-room in his own home, and there were furnaces underneath to heat it. There were servants to wait upon him as he bathed. "Yet the public bath is better still," thought Osman, "and I love to go there." Probably you have all heard of Turkish baths. They are so delightful that people in America and other countries have copied them from the Turks. They have built similar bath-

houses in their cities.

"Are we to drive or walk, papa?" asked Osman.

"We will drive. The carriage will be here in a few moments."

After a short drive they drew up in front of a large and handsome building. It was the public bath-house.

The first room entered by Osman and his father was a large hall. It was open overhead to let in the fresh air. There was a raised platform around the sides. This platform was covered with a soft carpet and divided into small dressing-rooms. Each visitor would have one of these for himself.

A fountain was playing in the middle of the hall, making sweet music as the water fell into the marble basin.

"Go into one of those little rooms and take off your clothing, Osman," said his father.

The little boy was soon ready for the bath. The attendant had wound three bright-bordered towels around him. One of these was tied about his waist, the second was twisted into a turban around his head, while the third one was thrown over his shoulders. He would not catch cold, for the towels were thick and warm. He wore wooden slippers on his feet.

Now for the warm chamber.

Osman knew what was coming. He went at once to the marble platform in the middle of the room. There he stretched himself on a soft mattress which the attendants placed for him.

They began to rub his feet and limbs very gently. How pleasant and restful it was! The little boy soon began to perspire. This was the time for moving him into a still warmer room, called the hot chamber.

Here Osman was rubbed briskly with a camel's-hair glove after a bowl of water had been poured over his body.

"Oh, how good this is," he thought, sleepily, when scented water was brought in, the attendant using the soft fibres of the palm in bathing him with the fragrant water. It was very, very pleasant.

There was no hurry. Hot clothing was laid on the boy when this last bathing was over; cold water was poured over his feet and he was taken to the cooling-room. Here he could lie on a soft, pleasant couch as long as he wished.

After a good rest, how the blood danced through every part of his body! Tired! It did not seem as though he could

ever be tired again in his life. He was ready for any amount of walking and sightseeing.

"Father," he said, as they left the building and turned into one of the busiest streets, "I think a bath is one of the pleasantest things in the whole world."

"It almost makes a new man out of an old one," answered the serious Turk.

He never called himself a Turk, however. He would feel insulted to hear us speak of him in that manner. He would say, "I am an Osmanli, that is, a subject of the empire founded by Osman."

Osman, the founder of the empire, is also called Otman, so the subjects are sometimes spoken of as Ottomans, and their country as the Ottoman Empire.

Now let us go back to our little Osman and his father.

"See that poor beggar," whispered the little boy. "May I give him a coin, papa?"

It was a sickly-looking old man who filled Osman's heart with pity. He was very dirty, and his clothes were torn and ragged, although they were gay with bright colours. As he leaned against the side of a fountain, he made a picture you

would like to paint. He kept crying, "Baksheesh, baksheesh," to the passers-by.

What a beautiful fountain it was! It had a wide roof, giving a pleasant shade. There were gilded gratings all around it, worked in lovely patterns — roses and honeysuckles and trailing vines.

Brass drinking-cups, hanging around the sides, seemed to say, "Come, thirsty traveller, come and drink."

What a fluttering and cooing there was over the roof. At least a hundred pigeons were flying about, fearless and happy. No one would harm them, not even the ragged street boys who were playing about the fountain and ready for any mischief.

After Osman had given a silver coin to the beggar, his father pointed to the fountain, and said, "Look, my child, at the beautiful pattern of the grating."

"How pretty the gilded flowers are," answered Osman. "I love to see them. But, papa, there are ever so many fountains in our city. Nearly half of them are as pretty as this one. I believe there is hardly a street without one."

"I knew a very good man who died a few months ago. He

left his money to be used in building a fountain. It was a kind deed. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, indeed, papa. There are always people and animals who are thirsty. It is a comfort to have fresh water at hand, especially if it is a warm day."

As Osman was speaking, he heard a sound of music. Looking down the street, he saw two gipsies coming toward him. The man was playing on a bagpipe, and leading a tame bear. The woman was dressed in bright colours. She was beating a tambourine.

"Isn't it pretty music, papa? Oh, do look at the bear," cried Osman. "He is doing some tricks."

His father was in no hurry, so he and Osman joined the crowd who gathered around the gipsies. The bear danced in time to the music, and did other amusing things.

Osman tossed him a coin, which he carried to his master. This pleased the others, and they threw him some more coins.

"At this rate, the gipsies will go home to-night quite rich," laughed Osman's father, as they passed on. "We will go to the bazaar now. I must attend to some business there

before it is much later."

"See that man with the tiger's skin over his shoulders," said Osman, a few minutes later. "He is clothed in rags, but he isn't a beggar, is he?"

"No, indeed, Osman. He is without doubt a wise man of our own faith, who prefers to be poor. He has probably come to the city to visit some holy tomb, in order to keep a vow he has made. He may have travelled many hundreds of miles. You should honour him, my little boy."

Osman and his father still moved through the crowd of busy people. They passed many Greeks and Armenians, who carry on a large share of the business of the city. There were also Englishmen and Americans, who were seeing the sights of this strange, lively place.

There were serious-looking Mohammedan priests in white and green turbans, with their eyes bent down to the ground. There were water-carriers with big jars on their backs, and sweetmeat-sellers with scales on which they were ever ready to weigh out the rich candies of Turkey.

As for dogs and beggars, there were hundreds of them, without a doubt.

"There is the bazaar, papa. I can see it on the hilltop beyond us."

It was an immense building of a brownish gray colour. You might almost call it a city in itself.

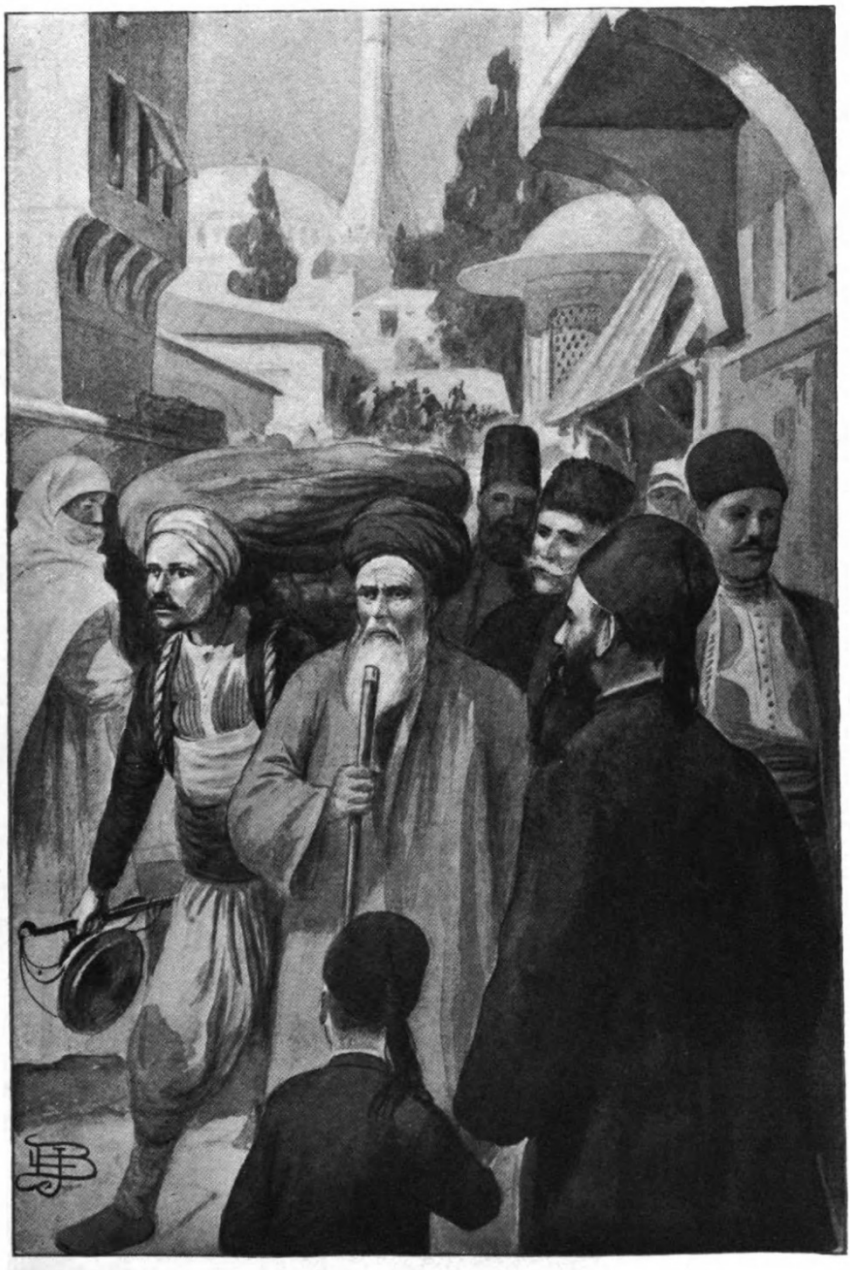
As Osman and his father began to climb the hill, they made their way between many stands and tiny booths where goods were for sale. Everything looked inviting, and Osman saw several things he wished to buy.

"See those lovely grapes, papa. I should like to carry some of them home," said the boy. But his father would not stop.

"We will not buy anything till we reach the bazaar," he said. "You will see enough there to tempt you, I do not doubt."

They passed on, and soon reached the entrance of the great building. It was quiet and dark inside, and there were many narrow little streets or passages, through which hundreds of people were moving. Each narrow passage was given up to the sale of some special thing.

The shopkeepers were from many different countries. There were shrewd Armenians, wily Greeks, Persians with



“Through the crowd of busy people.”

big caps on their heads, and Turks with long beards, squatting comfortably by their counters.

The high roof was over all. Light was given by great numbers of little domes shining in every direction through this city of shops.

It was very pleasant to Osman. He liked to watch the crowds and look at the many lights. He enjoyed the strange odours of the East. He never grew tired of looking at the rich and beautiful goods for sale — the goods of Europe, Asia, and Africa. Three continents seemed to meet in the great bazaar of Constantinople.

"Oh, papa, please look at these lovely stones. I should like to buy that necklace for mamma, she is so fond of amber."

But the boy's father replied, "Not to-day, Osman, not to-day."

Some queerly wrought swords now caught the boy's eye. They were made of the finest steel, and the handles were richly ornamented.

"How I wish I could have one of those for my very own, papa. Mayn't I please have one?"

"When you are a young man, Osman, we will look for the most elegant sword to be bought. But not now, my child."

Osman forgot his longing for a sword when he stood in front of a stand where perfumes were sold.

"We will buy some of this attar of roses. It will please your mother, and you may give it to her," said the father.

The Turks are fond of delicate perfumes, and there is none they like better than attar of roses, which is largely made in Turkey, and sent from there to other countries.

"Why does it cost so much?" asked Osman, as his father handed a gold coin to the shopkeeper.

"It is because only a few drops can be obtained from hundreds and hundreds of the flowers. Next year, you shall take a journey with me, Osman. I am going to the part of our country where the roses are raised for this purpose. It is a beautiful sight — the fields thickly dotted with the sweet-smelling blossoms. You shall then see how the people get fragrant perfume from the flowers."

"I'm getting so hungry, papa. Can't we get some lunch? That cheese makes my mouth water."

A man with a round wicker basket containing different kinds of cheese was going through the street and calling his wares.

"Hush, Osman." His father pointed to the tower of a small mosque.

High up in this tower stood a man crying out to all faithful believers of Mohammed. It was the call to prayer.

Five times each day this prayer-caller mounted the tower. Each time he cried out to the people who were within reach of his voice.

Osman and his father instantly turned toward the sacred city of Mecca, and, kneeling down right where they stood, repeated a short prayer.

Then they slowly rose and turned their steps toward a restaurant, where they could get a delicious lunch.

There were many other peddlers in the streets besides the cheese-seller. Some of the shoppers bought what they wished from these peddlers. They could get unleavened bread or biscuits, custards, ices, sherbet, sweetmeats, hot vegetables, and many other things.

But Osman's father said, "We can be more comfortable

in the restaurant. Besides, I should like a good dish of kebaby."

Kebaby! It was an odd name and an odd dish.

"It is very, very good," thought our little Turkish cousin, as he began to eat from the steaming soup-plate set before him.

The cook had placed tiny squares of unleavened bread in the bottom of the dish. Over this he had poured a quantity of sour cream, and last of all came little squares of hot meat. The dish was seasoned with salt, pepper, cardamom, and sumach.

"Good! Yes, very good," said Osman's father, as he tasted the kebaby. "There is nothing I like better."

When the lunch was over, he and his little son went to that part or the bazaar where carpets were sold. After many words about the price, a beautiful rug was purchased. Its colours were soft and rich. It was woven so closely it would last for many years. The shopkeeper had said it would be good for a lifetime, and he probably spoke the truth.

"Before we go home, will you take me out on the bridge of boats?" asked Osman. "It isn't far from the bazaar."

"Aren't you too tired?"

"No, indeed; the bath this morning made me ready for anything."

A short walk brought Osman and his father to the bridge of which he had spoken. It joins the main city of Constantinople and the suburb of Pera.

"It doesn't seem as though the bridge could be made of boats until we look over the sides, does it?" said Osman.

"No, dear. They are firmly chained together and covered with such strong planks that this bridge seems like any other. I must say I like to come here, myself. We can get such a fine view of the Golden Horn."

"Why do people call our harbour the Golden Horn?"

"It is shaped somewhat like a horn. Besides this, it is the channel through which many shiploads of the richest goods are carried. Think of the precious things you saw in the bazaar to-day, the beautiful gems, the spices, the silks, the shawls of camel's hair."

"I understand now. But look! There is a camel with a heavy load on his back. His master is leading him. I love camels."

"When I was a little boy," said his father, "my mother used to tell me stories of the old times. In those days there were none of the new-fashioned carriages in our streets. Only the gaily trimmed arabas, and sedan-chairs carried on men's shoulders could be seen."

"Mamma sometimes goes in a sedan-chair now," said Osman. "It must be a warm way of riding in summer-time, though. The close curtains keep out the air."

"You would have liked to see the camels in the old days, Osman. Merchants often travelled through the streets with whole processions of those animals. They went very slowly, to be sure, and they blocked up the streets. But camels are steady, faithful creatures, and are good beasts of burden."

"The dress of the people was much prettier long ago, wasn't it?"

"Indeed, it was. It is a shame so many of our people copy the fashions of other countries. The dress now looks stiff and ugly beside the loose robes and bright colours of the old times. But see, my child, the day has left us and I am tired. We must hasten homeward."

CHAPTER VII

The Wedding

"I wish I could have been there," thought Osman.

It was Friday morning, and the little boy was sitting beside his mother while she described the wedding-festival given in honour of two dear friends. She and her husband had spent all day Thursday at the bridegroom's house.

"It was a grand time, my little son. I wish you could have enjoyed it with us, but you were too ill to leave home," said Osman's mother, as she lovingly patted his cheek.

"Was there a great crowd, mamma?"

"Yes, indeed, for the young couple have hosts of friends. The ladies, of course, rode in carriages, and the men were on horseback. A band of music played lively tunes as we escorted the young bride to her new home.

"When we reached the house, the bride-groom stood

waiting in the doorway. He led his bride to the bower in the bridal chamber, and, leaving her there, went to the 'place of greeting' to receive his gentlemen friends."

"You helped in making the bower, didn't you, mamma?"

"Yes. I went to the new home on Monday, with other friends and the relatives of the bride. The wedding-outfit and the presents had already been brought by some trusty porters.

"After we had refreshed ourselves with a lunch of coffee and sweetmeats, we began to decorate the bridal chamber. We hung the bride's pretty dresses, her shawls and prayer-carpet, her embroidered sheets and towels, on cords fastened along the walls.

"Then we chose one corner of the room for the bower. We hung up fine embroideries and festoons of gauze, and fastened numbers of artificial flowers here and there in the draperies. When it was done it was lovely!"

Osman's mother sighed with delight as she thought of it.

"But our work did not stop there, my dear. Oh, no. We placed the most precious wedding-presents in glass cases, so every one could see and admire them. Then we hung

garlands of flowers on the walls of the room. It was very beautiful now.

"When this room was finished, we went into the next one and set up the new furniture and bedding, the beautiful candelabra, the smoking-set, and the kitchen ware."

"What did you do on Tuesday, mamma?"

"We went with the bride to the bath. When it was over, she put on borrowed clothing. Some bad fortune might come to her, if she did not follow this old custom."

"You spent Wednesday with the bride, too, didn't you?"

"Certainly, Osman. That is a very important day in the wedding-festival. I went to the bride's house quite early in the day, for we are very close friends. I helped her in receiving the bridegroom's mother and other relatives. All her special friends gathered there with me. We formed in a double row and helped the other guests up the stairs.

"I hope my dear Morgiana will be good friends with her new mother. As they sat side by side, the old lady passed sugar from her own mouth to that of her daughter-in-law."

"Why was that, mamma?"

"It was a token of the good feeling there will be between

them, Osman."

"Dear me, a wedding-festival is a grand thing, isn't it? I wish I could have gone Thursday with you and papa. That was the greatest day of all."

"Yes, it was a very pleasant time for every one. There was an entertainment in the place of greeting for the men, and another for the women in the bride's rooms. Some gipsy girls danced and sang for us and we had refreshments."

"What was the bride doing all this time, mamma?"

"As soon as the bridegroom had led her to the bridal bower and gone away, her veil was raised. We could now look at her beautiful face as much as we liked, and admire her wedding-gown and presents."

"Did many poor people come in to look at the pretty things?" asked Osman. His voice was rather sad as he said the word "poor." He pitied those who did not have a lovely home like himself, and plenty to eat and to wear.

"It is so hard to be poor and have to work hard from early morning till late at night," he often thought.

"Yes, indeed, Osman. The house was filled with people all day long. No one was turned away from the door,"

answered his mother. "I saw women in shabby clothing standing beside the most richly dressed ladies. They seemed to enjoy the festival very much."

"When did the bridegroom enter, mamma?"

"As soon as the evening prayer had been recited in the 'place of greeting.' Then the bridegroom hurriedly left his men friends and started for the bridal bower."

Osman began to laugh. "I know what the men did then, mamma. I have heard papa tell about it. They pelted the bridegroom with old shoes and struck his back many a sharp blow. No wonder he hurried up-stairs as fast as he could go."

The boy's mother smiled. "And I can tell you what happened after the door closed behind him, although we visitors now took our leave. I well remember my own wedding.

"The bride kissed his hand as he entered. He knelt down on her veil and made a short prayer. After this a mirror was held in front of the young couple by an old woman friend of the bride, so they could see their faces in it side by side.

"Then sugar was passed from the young man's mouth to that of the bride. It was a symbol of the sweetness of their

future life.

"But, my dear child, I have been so busy talking I did not notice the time. I must leave you to dress for the banquet at the home of our young friends. Run away and play with Selim."

CHAPTER VIII

The Children's Carnival

"Selim, Selim, you will be late if you don't hurry," called Osman.

He himself had been ready for five whole minutes, and was becoming impatient because his little friend was not in sight. So he ran across the street to Selim's house to find out what was the matter.

"I will be dressed in a minute or two," said Selim. Osman sat down to count his marbles while he waited.

The two boys were going to a children's carnival in the grand courtyard of a certain mosque. Their mothers would go with them. Hundreds and hundreds of children would gather there to make the most of this glorious spring day.

Osman had looked forward to this festival for a long time.

"Isn't it beautiful?" he exclaimed, when he and Selim, with their veiled mothers, entered the courtyard and joined the crowd of happy little people.

The children played one game after another. The boys had their tops and marbles, and did many wonderful things with them. Of course, refreshments were plentiful; there were delicious sweetmeats, sherbets, and other things the children loved. And all the time the mothers, sitting on their gay carpets, watched the boys and girls at their play, and seemed to enjoy it as much as the little ones themselves.

"I have had such a good time," Osman told his father that evening. "Papa, do you remember when you were a little boy like me, and went to children's carnivals?"

"Yes, as if it were only yesterday, my dear. Yet many years have passed away since I romped with my boy friends and played with tops and marbles. But I have something else to speak of, Osman. Would you like to go with me to-morrow to the mosque of Agia Sophia?"

"Oh, papa, yes, indeed. I love to go with you anywhere. But it is so beautiful there, I shall be more glad than usual."

Osman's people use the word "mosque" as we do the

word "church." Mosque means the place of prayer. The Turks build all their mosques in the same general way. They ornament them with domes and high-pointed spires called minarets.

When you visit Osman's home, you will see hundreds of these domes and minarets, for there are many mosques in his city.

"Papa, where is the oldest mosque in the world?" asked Osman.

"It is at Medina, in Arabia, on the very spot chosen by the great Prophet himself. A part of it is kept open to this day for all homeless people. That is, if they are believers in Mohammed. They can go there at any time and live in its shelter. It was the Prophet's wish."

"It would be nice if every mosque were like that one," said Osman. "When I grow up, I hope I may go to Medina and stand in the Mosque of the Prophet. He suffered very much, didn't he, papa."

"A great, great deal," Osman's father sighed. "He received his teachings direct from Heaven. We find those teachings in the Koran, our sacred book.

"Mohammed had many enemies who believed he was cheating his followers. They did not believe that Allah (God) taught him. They even said bad spirits were the cause of his teachings. His life was in danger many times. But he and his teachings were saved."

Osman's father bent his head, saying these words very slowly: "Allah is great, and Mohammed is his Prophet."

Osman repeated them after him. Then both father and son sat quiet for a few minutes. When the Turk spoke again, he said:

"It is bedtime for my little boy. Good night, my child." He bent down and kissed Osman, then motioned to his waiting nurse to go with him to his room.

The next day was clear and beautiful. Even the street dogs seemed quieter and happier than usual.

"It is good to be outdoors in the bright sunshine," said Osman, as he walked down the street with his father. They came in sight of the mosque at last. It was not beautiful to look at, but it was very, very large.

"Once there were no minarets rising from this mosque toward heaven," the boy's father told him. "Only the great

dome reached upward from the roof. That was when the Christians ruled over our city and worshipped in this building. But when it came into our hands, many changes were made."

"Why do we call it 'Agia Sophia,' papa?"

"It is sacred to 'Wisdom,' my child. The way to wisdom must be through prayer. But here we are at the doorway."

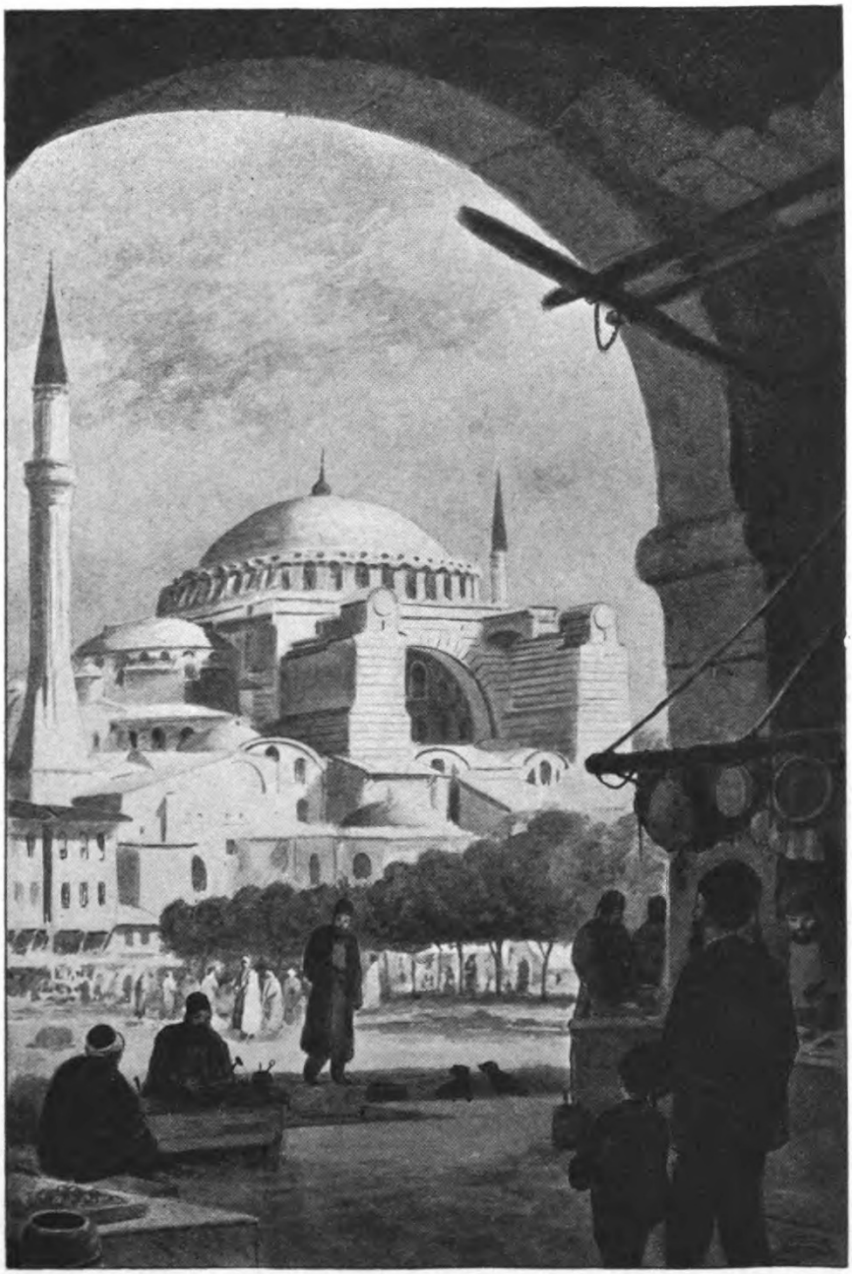
Osman and his father hastily took off their shoes and put on the big, soft slippers handed them by an attendant. Other people, who were about to enter, did the same thing.

There was a good reason for this. The dust of the street must not be brought in to soil the floor or carpets. They must be kept clean. During the service the people bow their heads to the floor itself many times.

"It always makes me wish to be quiet when I go there," Osman once told his mother. "I wonder how men could ever build such a great, great place of worship."

There were no altars, no images, no seats. But along the walls, there were slabs of marble of all sorts and colours. Pillars of rare and beautiful stones held up the roof.

"They have been polished so they shine like mirrors,"



"They came in sight of the mosque at last."

thought Osman, "and they are as beautiful as gems."

The floor of the mosque was strewn with prayer-rugs. They were arranged so the people who came to worship might all kneel toward the sacred city of Mecca.

"It is hundreds of years since Christians worshipped here," Osman's father had once told him. "They had altars of solid gold and shrines sparkling with precious jewels. Pictures of their saints were on the walls. But we, Osman, are taught not to have such paintings. A mosque should have no pictures of human shapes, nor of any other. For it is written: 'Thou shalt not make the likeness of anything.'

"When the great Sultan who conquered the Christians took possession of the city, he rode through this very building. It was crowded with people who had fled here for safety. The Sultan ordered that no blood should be shed. But he made the Christians the slaves of himself and his people.

"He changed the building into a place of worship fit for followers of Mohammed, saying, 'There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet.'"

"What was done with the altars and the images and

paintings, papa?"

"The altars and images were torn down. The walls were covered with a coating of reddish plaster, even as you see them to-day, and this hid the pictures from sight."

"I love to come here in Ramazan. The brightness dazzles my eyes. I wish I could count the great wheels of light hanging from the ceiling at that time."

Ramazan is the only part of the year when the mosque is brightly lighted. It is a strange festival, and lasts a whole month.

The days are given up to fasting, and the nights to services in the mosques, to feasts, and frolics. It is the only time in the year when Osman's mamma leaves her home after the sun has set, and goes to evening parties of her friends.

All through the month, the streets are alive each evening with lights and processions and gay parties. But from dawn to sunset the followers of Mohammed must eat no food whatever, although they may feast all night long if they wish to do so.

Rich people, such as Osman and his family, enjoy

turning day into night for a while. But it is not so easy dor the poor, who must work without eating through the whole day, no matter how hungry and faint they may become.

CHAPTER IX

The Two Friends

"Never forget your friends, Osman. I am glad you are so fond of Selim, although his family is poor. I hope you will always love him as you do now."

"Of course, papa. Selim is just like my brother. He always will be, too."

Osman looked up at his father with a little surprise. Forget Selim! He could not imagine such a thing.

"You ought to feel that way," said his father. "There is nothing so beautiful as friendship. I will tell you a true story about two boys who once lived in this very city."

Osman, with a happy smile, squatted on the rug by his father's side. There was nothing he liked better than a story.

"One of these boys," said the father, "was the son of a rich tobacconist. He was a Moslem, like ourselves, but his

dearest friend was a little Armenian, whose father was a poor bread-seller and a Christian. The two boys were always together in work and play. After a while, their parents began to think, 'This is not good. A Christian and a Moslem should not be such close friends. We must not let this go on any longer.'

"Neither reasoning nor scolding did any good.

"At last the rich boy's father, the Moslem, decided to send him out of Turkey. 'It is the only way to make Ibrahim forget Joannes,' he said to himself. 'Ibrahim is now fifteen years old. He is nearly a man. Yes, I must send him so far away he will forget all about his Christian playmate.'

"Ibrahim was told of the plan. What did he do? He rushed to Joannes's home and said to his friend, 'I am going away, Joannes. I must bid you good-bye.'

"'No, indeed,' answered Joannes. 'Where you go, I will go, too.'

"'But that cannot be. My father has arranged it so that I go into another country. I am to serve the Pasha of Bagdad. But I shall never forget you, Joannes. And when I come back to this city, I shall come as your true and loving friend.'

"The two boys embraced and kissed each other. Then Ibrahim went away. Soon after this he was sent far away to the city of Bagdad.

"He served the pasha so well that he soon held a high position. Years passed away and the pasha died. A surprise was now in store for Ibrahim. He himself was made pasha.

"But he longed for his old home. He wished to see his friend Joannes once more, for he had never been forgotten. He sent word to the Sultan, asking if he might visit this city for a short time.

"But the Sultan said, 'No; the country needs your care. Stay there and keep it in order.'

"More years passed away. Again the pasha asked permission to leave Bagdad that he might visit his old home. And again the Sultan refused.

"Soon after this, a strange thing happened. The Sultan became angry with his chief officer, the Grand Vizier. He had his head cut off, and, would you believe it, he sent for Ibrahim to come here to be Grand Vizier in his place.

"Ibrahim was hardly settled in his high position before he sent two of his body-guard to the narrow street where his

old friend used to live. They were told to find him and bring him before their master.

"When they came to the little store of the bread-seller, they went inside and asked for Joannes.

"He came forward in a great fright. What had he done that the Grand Vizier should send for him? He trembled as he declared he had done no wrong to any man, neither theft nor murder — no harm whatever.

"But the officers would not listen. Their master had ordered Joannes to be brought to him, and they must obey his command.

"He must go. There was no help. Joannes sent a sad farewell to his wife and children, for he fully expected he was about to meet death. His pitying friends and neighbours crowded around as he went with the officers from his little store.

"They brought him into the presence of the Grand Vizier. But poor Joannes did not dare to look in his face. He threw himself face downward on the floor, and begged that his life should be spared.

"'Arise!' said the Grand Vizier. 'I do not wish you harm.

I want to talk with you. Do you remember Ibrahim, your boy friend?'

"'Remember him! I loved him above all others. But he went away, and I never saw him again.'

"'I am he,' answered the great man, and he fell on Joannes's neck and kissed him. Then he reminded Ibrahim of the last words spoken before they parted.

"'I am still your friend,' he said. 'Behold, I will show you that I am.'

"He sent for his accounts, and then and there made Joannes his chief banker. He gave him charge of all his money. He sent him home in a grand uniform, on a fine horse, and with servants to attend him.

"You can imagine the surprise of Joannes's wife when he came home in such style.

"No, he had not been killed, after all. The poor woman fainted with joy at the glad sight.

But she soon came to her senses, and both she and her husband lived to enjoy the loving kindness of Joannes's old friend, now the Sultan's highest officer.

"That was friendship worth having, indeed."

"What a lovely story, papa. Maybe I shall grow up to show Selim how much I love him, too."

"It may be. Yes, it may be so. Or, possibly, Selim will have the chance to show you how deeply he cares for you, Osman. Who knows what changes will come to our country? Who knows, indeed!"

Osman's father became silent as he thought of the enemies of Turkey, and of what might happen to his loved country it they should band together against the Sultan and his power.

THE END.