



Turkish Tales

Retold by Patrick Healy

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1. How the Hodja Saved Allah

Not far from the famous Mosque Bayezid an old Hodja kept a school, and taught his students lessons from the Book of Books. He had such good understanding of human nature that by a glance at his pupil he could at once tell how long it would take him to learn a quarter of the Koran. He was known over the whole Empire as the best reciter and teacher of the Sacred Writings of the Prophet. For many years this Hodja, famed far and wide as the Hodja of Hodjas, had taught in this little school. The number of times he had recited the Book with his pupils is beyond counting

Swaying to and fro one day as fast as his old age would let him, and reciting to his pupils the latter part of one of the chapters he paused at the following sentence: "And he that spends his money in the ways of Allah is likened unto a grain of wheat that brings forth seven sheaves, and in each sheaf an hundred grains; and Allah gives double to whom He pleases." As his pupils, one after the other, recited this verse to him, he wondered why he had overlooked its meaning for so many years. Fully convinced that anything given to Allah was an investment that brought great rewards, he dismissed his pupils, and putting his hand into his bag proceeded to count his money.

Carefully he counted and then recounted his money, and found that if invested in the ways of Allah it would bring a return of no less than one thousand piasters.

"Think of it," said the Hodja to himself, "one thousand piasters! One thousand piasters! Oh my God! A fortune."

So, having dismissed his class, he went out, his bag of money in his hand, and began distributing its contents to the needy that he met in the highways. Before many hours had passed the whole of his savings was gone. The Hodja was very happy for now he was the creditor in Allah's books for one thousand piasters.

He returned to his house and ate his evening meal of bread and olives, and was content.

The next day came. The thousand piasters had not yet arrived. He ate his bread, he imagined he had olives, and was content.

The third day came. The old Hodja had no bread and he had no olives. He suffered the pangs of hunger. So when the end of the day had come, and his pupils had departed to their homes, the Hodja, with a full heart and an empty stomach, walked out of the town, and soon got beyond the city walls.

There, where no one could hear him, he grieved over his sad fate, and the great calamity that had befallen him in his old age.

What sin had he committed? What great wrong had his ancestors done, that the fury of the Almighty had fallen on him?

"Ah! Allah! Allah!" he cried, and beat his chest.

As if in answer to his cry, the howl of the dreaded Fakir Dervish came over across the plain. In those days the Fakir Dervish was a terror in the land. He knocked at the door, and it was opened. He asked, and received food. If refused, the penalty was often death.

The Hodja's cries were now greater than ever; for should the Dervish ask him for food and the Hodja have nothing to give, he would certainly be killed.

"Allah! Allah! Allah! Guide me now. Protect one of your faithful followers," cried the frightened Hodja, and he looked around to see if there was any one to rescue him from his perilous position. But not a soul was to be seen, and the walls of the city were five miles away. Just then the howl of the Dervish again reached his ear, and in terror he tried to flee. As luck would have it he came upon a tree, up which, although stiff from age and weak from hunger, the Hodja, with wonderful agility, scrambled and, trembling like a leaf, awaited his fate.

Nearer and nearer came the howling Dervish, till at last his long hair could be seen floating in the air, and with rapid strides he headed for the very tree the Hodja was in.

On and on he came, his wild yell sending his blood cold and leaving his face as pale as a sheet.

To his utter dismay, the Hodja saw the Dervish approach the tree and sit down under its shade.

Sighing deeply, the Dervish said in a loud voice, "Why have I come into this world? Why were my forefathers born? Why was anybody born? Oh, Allah! Oh, Allah! What have you done! Misery! Misery! Nothing but misery to mankind and everything living. Shall I not be avenged for all the misery my father and my father's fathers have suffered? I shall be avenged."

Striking his chest a loud blow, as if to emphasize the decision he had come to, the Dervish took a small bag that lay by his side, and slowly proceeded to untie the leather strings that bound it. Taking out from it a small image, he gazed at it a moment and then addressed it in the following terms:

"You, Job! You bore much; you have written a book in which your history is recorded; you have earned the reputation of being the most patient man that ever lived; yet I have read your history and found that when real affliction oppressed you, you cursed God. You have made men believe, too, that there is a reward in this life for all the afflictions they suffer. You have misled mankind. For these sins no one has ever punished you. Now I will punish you," and taking his long, curved sword in his hand he cut off the head of the figure.

The Dervish bent forward, took another image and, gazing upon it with a contemptuous smile, thus addressed it:

"David, David, singer of songs of peace in this world and in the world to come, I have read your sayings in which you advise men to lead a righteous life for the sake of the reward which they are to receive. I have learned that you have misled your fellow-mortals with your songs of peace and joy. I have read your history, and I find that you have committed many sins. For these sins and for misleading your fellowmen you have never been punished. Now I will punish you," and taking his sword in his hand he cut off David's head.

Again the Dervish bent forward and took out an image which he addressed as follows:

"You, Solomon, are reputed to have been the wisest man that ever lived. You had command over the Genii and could control the legion of the demons. They came at the bidding of your signet ring, and they trembled at the mysterious names to which you spoke. You understood every living thing. The speech of the animals of the field, of the birds of the air, of the insects of the earth, and of the fishes of the sea, was known unto you. Yet when I read your history I found that in spite of the vast

knowledge that was given to you, you committed many wrongs and did many foolish things, which in the end brought misery into the world and destruction to your people; and for all these no one has ever punished you. Now I will punish you,” and taking his sword he cut off Solomon’s head.

Again the Dervish bent forward and took from the bag another figure, which he addressed thus:

“Jesus, Jesus, prophet of God, you came into this world to atone, by giving your blood, for the sins of mankind and to bring unto them a religion of peace. You founded a church, whose history I have studied, and I see that it set fathers against their children and brother against one another; that it brought strife into the world; that the lives of men and women and children were sacrificed so that the rivers ran red with blood unto the seas. Truly you were a great prophet, but the misery you caused must be avenged. For it no one has yet punished you. Now I will punish you,” and he took his sword and cut off Jesus’ head.

With a sorrowful face the Dervish bent forward and took another image from the bag.

“Mohammed,” he said, “I have slain Job, David, Solomon, and Jesus. What shall I do with you? After the followers of Jesus had shed much blood, their religion spread over the world, was acceptable to man, and the nations were at peace. Then you came into the world, and you brought a new religion, and father rose against father, and brother rose against brother; hatred was sown between your followers and the followers of Jesus, and again the rivers ran red with blood and you have not been punished. For this I will punish you. By the beard of my forefathers, whose blood was made to flow in your cause, you too must die,” and with a blow the head of Mohammed fell to the ground.

Then the Dervish prostrated himself to the earth, and after a silent prayer rose and brought forth from the bag the last figure. Reverently he bowed to it, and then he addressed it as follows:

“Oh, Allah! The Allah of Allahs. There is but one Allah, and you are He. I have slain Job, David, Solomon, Jesus, and Mohammed for the foolishness that they have brought into the world. You, God, are all powerful. All men are your children, you created them and brought them into the world. The thoughts that they think are your thoughts. If all these men have brought all this evil into the world, it is your fault. Shall I punish them and allow you to go unhurt? No. I must punish you also,” and he raised his sword to strike.

As the sword circled in the air the Hodja, hidden in the tree, forgot the fear in which he stood of the Dervish. In the excitement of the moment he cried out in a loud voice, “Stop! Stop! He owes me one thousand piasters.”

The Dervish reeled and fell senseless to the ground. The Hodja was overcome at his own words and trembled with fear, convinced that his last hour had arrived. The Dervish lay stretched upon his back on the grass like one dead. At last the Hodja took courage. Breaking a twig from off the tree, he threw it down on the Dervish’s face, but the Dervish made no sign. The Hodja took more courage, removed one of his shoes and threw it on the outstretched figure of the Dervish, but still the Dervish lay motionless. The Hodja carefully climbed down the tree, gave the body of the Dervish a kick, and climbed back again, and still the Dervish did not stir. At length the Hodja descended from the tree and placed his ear to the Dervish’s heart. It did not beat. The Dervish was dead.

“Ah, well,” said the Hodja, “at least I shall not starve. I will take his garments and sell them and buy

myself some bread.”

The Hodja commenced to remove the Dervish's garments. As he took off his belt he found that it was heavy. He opened it, and saw that it contained gold. He counted the gold and found that it was exactly one thousand piasters.

The Hodja raised his eyes to heaven said, “Oh God, you have kept your promise, but,” he added, “not before I saved your life.”

2. The Folly of Woman is Better Than the Wisdom of Man

There lived in Constantinople an old Hodja, a learned man, who had a son. The boy followed in his father's footsteps and went every day to the Mosque, seated himself in a secluded spot and engaged in the study of the Koran. Every day he could be seen seated, swaying his body to and fro, and reciting to himself the verses of the Holy Book.

The dearest wish of a student is to be able to recite the entire Koran by heart. Many years are spent in memorizing the Holy Book.

When Abdul turned nineteen he had, by the most diligent study, finally succeeded in mastering three-fourths of the Koran. At this achievement his pride rose, his ambition was fired, and he was determined to become a great man.

The day that he reached this decision he did not go to the Mosque, but stopped at home, in his father's house, and sat staring at the fire burning in the grate. Several times the father asked, "My son, what do you see in the fire?"

And each time the son answered, "Nothing, father."

He was very young; he could not see.

Finally, the young man picked up courage and said what was on his mind.

"Father," he said, "I wish to become a great man."

"That is very easy," said the father.

"And to be a great man," continued the son, "I must first go to Mecca." For no Muslim has fulfilled all of the obligations of his faith unless he has made the pilgrimage to the Holy City.

The father simply replied, "It is very easy to go to Mecca."

"How, easy?" asked the son. "On the contrary, it is very difficult; for the journey is costly, and I have no money."

"Listen, my son," said the father. "You must become a scribe, the writer of the thoughts of other people, and your fortune will be made."

"But I do not have the implements necessary for a scribe," said the son.

"All that can be easily arranged," said the father; "your grandfather had an ink-horn; I will give it to you. I will buy you some writing-paper, and we will get you a box to sit in. All that you need to do is to sit still, look wise and your fortune will be made."

And indeed the advice was good. For letter-writing is an art which only a few possess. Abdul was thrilled at the advice that he had been given, and lost no time in carrying out the plan. He took his grandfather's ink-horn, the paper his father bought, got himself a box and began his career as a scribe.

Abdul was young, he lacked experience, but believing himself wise he tried to surpass the advice of

his father.

“To look wise,” he said, “is not sufficient; I must have some other attraction.”

And after much thought he hit upon the following idea. Over his box he painted a sign: “The wisdom of man is greater than the wisdom of woman.” People thought the sign was very clever, customers came, the young Hodja took in much money and he was happy.

This sign one day attracted the attention of a Turkish lady. Seeing that Abdul was a handsome youth, she went to him and said, “Hodja, I have a difficult letter to write. I have heard that you are very wise, so I have come to you. To write the letter you will need all your wit. Moreover, the letter is a long one, and I cannot stand here while it is being written. Come to my house at three this afternoon, and we will write the letter.”

The Hodja was overcome with admiration for his fair client, and surprised at the invitation. He was enchanted, his heart beat wildly.

He had never talked with a woman outside of his own family circle. To be admitted to a lady's house was in itself an adventure.

Long before the appointed time, the young Hodja gathered together his reeds, ink, and sand. With excited steps he made his way to the house. Lattices covered the windows, a high wall surrounded the garden, and a gate barred the entrance. Three times he raised the massive knocker.

“Who is there?” called a voice from within.

“The scribe,” was the reply.

The gate was unbarred, and the Hodja permitted to enter. He was ushered into the apartment of his fair client.

The lady welcomed him cordially.

“Ah! Hodja I am glad to see you; please sit down.”

The Hodja nervously pulled out his writing-implements.

“Do not be in such a hurry,” said the lady. “Refresh yourself; take a cup of coffee, smoke a cigarette, and we will write the letter afterwards.”

So he lit a cigarette, drank a cup of coffee, and they fell to talking. Time flew; the minutes seemed like seconds, and the hours were as minutes. While they were thus enjoying themselves there suddenly came a heavy knock at the gate.

“It is my husband, ” cried the lady. “What shall I do? If he finds you here, he will kill you! I am so frightened.”

The Hodja was frightened too. Again there came a knock at the gate.

“I know what to do,” and taking Abdul by the arm, she said, “You must get into the box,” indicating a large chest in the room. “Quick, quick, if you value your life utter not a word, and I will save you.”

Abdul now, too late, saw his foolishness. It was his lack of experience; but driven by the sense of danger, he entered the chest; the lady locked it and took the key.

A moment afterwards the husband came in.

“I am very tired,” he said; “bring me coffee and a pipe.”

“Good evening, husband,” said the lady. “Sit down. I have something to tell you.”

“Bah!” said the husband; “I want none of your woman’s talk; ‘the hair of woman is long, and her wits are short,’ says the proverb. Bring me my pipe.”

“But, husband,” said the lady, “I have had an adventure today.”

“Bah!” said the husband; “what adventure can a woman have—forgot to paint your eyebrows or color your nails, I suppose.”

“No, husband. Be patient, and I will tell you. I went out today to write a letter.”

“A letter?” said the husband; “to whom would you write a letter?”

“Be patient,” she said, “and I will tell you my story. So I came to the box of a young scribe with beautiful eyes.”

“A young man with beautiful eyes,” shouted the Husband. “Where is he? I’ll kill him!” and he drew his sword.

The Hodja in the chest heard every word and trembled.

“Be patient, husband. I said I had an adventure, and you did not believe me. I told the young man that the letter was long, and I could not stand in the street to write it. So I asked him to come and see me this afternoon.”

“Here? To this house?” thundered the husband.

“Yes, husband,” said the lady. “So the Hodja came here, and I gave him coffee and a cigarette, and we talked, and the minutes seemed like seconds, and the hours were as minutes. All at once came your knock at the gate, and I said to the Hodja, ‘That is my husband; and if he finds you here, he will kill you.’”

“And I will kill him,” screamed the husband, “where is he?”

“Be patient, husband,” said the lady, “and I will tell you. When you knocked a second time, I suddenly thought of the chest, and I put the Hodja in.”

“Let me at him!” screamed the husband. “I’ll cut off his head!”

“O husband,” she said, “what a hurry you are in to slay this handsome youth. He is your prey. He cannot escape you. The youth is not only in the box, but it is locked, and the key is in my pocket. Here it is.”

The lady walked over to the husband, stretched out her hand and gave him the key.

As he took it, she said:

“Fooled you!”

“Bah!” said the husband, in disgust. He threw the key on the floor and left the room, slamming the door behind him.

After he had gone, the lady took up the key, unlocked the door, and let out the trembling Hodja.

“Go now, Hodja, to your box,” she said. “Take down your sign and write instead: ‘The wit of woman is twice the wit of man,’ for I am a woman, and in one day I have fooled two men.”

3. The Lady and the Unjust Magistrate

It is in Constantinople, the custom of the refuse-gatherer to go about the streets with a basket on his back, and a wooden shovel in his hand, calling out ‘refuse removed.’

A certain refuse-collector, had, over five years of hard work, amassed the sum of five hundred piasters. He was afraid to keep this money on him; so hearing the Magistrate of Stamboul highly and reverently spoken of, he decided to entrust his hard-earned savings to the Magistrate’s keeping.

Going to the Magistrate, he said, “Oh learned and righteous man, for five long years have I labored, carrying the dregs and dross of rich and poor alike, and I have saved a sum of five hundred piasters. In another two years I shall have saved a further sum of at least one hundred piasters, when I shall return to my country and be with my wife and children again. In the meantime you will be granting a favour to your servant, if you will consent to keep this money for me until the time for departure has come.”

The Magistrate replied, “You have done well, my son; the money will be kept and given to you when required.”

The poor refuse-collector, well satisfied, departed. But after a very short time he learned that several of his friends were about to return to their province, and he decided to join them, thinking that his five hundred piasters were ample for the time being, ‘Besides,’ said he, ‘who knows what may or may not happen in the next two years?’ So he decided to depart with his friends at once.

He went to the Magistrate, explained that he had changed his mind, that he was going to leave for his country immediately, and asked for his money. The Magistrate called him a dog and ordered him to be whipped out of the place by his servants. Alas! What could the poor refuse-collector do! He wept in despair, as he counted the number of years he must yet work before seeing his loved ones.

One day, while moving the dirt from the house of a wealthy family, his soul uttered a sigh which reached the ears of the lady of the house, and from the window she asked him why he sighed so deeply. He replied that he sighed for something that could in no way interest her. The lady’s sympathy was excited, and after much persuasion, he finally, with tears in his eyes, related to her his great misfortune. The lady thought for a few minutes and then told him to go the following day to the Magistrate at a certain hour and again ask for the money as if nothing had happened.

The lady in the meantime gathered together a quantity of jewelry, to the value of several hundred pounds, and instructed her favorite slave to come with her to the Magistrate and remain outside whilst she went in, instructing her that when she saw the refuse-collector come out and learned that he had gotten his money, to come in the Magistrate’s room hurriedly and say to her, “your husband has arrived from Egypt, and is waiting for you at home.”

The lady then went to the Magistrate, carrying in her hand a bag containing the jewelry. With a profound bow she said, “Oh Magistrate, my husband, who is in Egypt and who has been there for several years, has at last asked me to come and join him there; these jewels are of great value, and I hesitate to take them with me on so long and dangerous a journey. If you would kindly consent to keep them for me until my return, or if I never return to keep them as a token of my esteem, I will think of you with lifelong gratitude.”

The Lady then began displaying the rich jewelry. Just then the refuse-collector entered, and bowing low, said, "Oh master, your servant has come for his savings in order to return to his country."

"Ah, welcome," said the Magistrate, "So you are going already!" and immediately ordered the treasurer to pay the five hundred piasters to the refuse-collector.

"You see," said the Magistrate to the lady, "what confidence the people have in me. This money I have held for some time without receipt or acknowledgment; but immediately it is asked for it is paid."

No sooner had the refuse-collector gone out of the door, than the lady's slave came rushing in, crying, "Madam! Madam! Your husband has arrived from Egypt, and is anxiously awaiting you at home."

The Lady, in well-feigned excitement, gathered up her jewelry and, wishing the Magistrate a thousand years of happiness, departed.

The Magistrate was thunderstruck, and thoughtfully said, "Allah! Allah! For forty years have I been judge, but never has this happened before."

4. Hadji and his Wife

Hadji was a married man, but even Turkish married men are not invulnerable to the charms of other women. It happened one day that a charming lady came to his shop to purchase some spices. After she had left, Hadji could not drive from his mind's eye, either her image, or her attractive power. He was further greatly puzzled by a tiny black bag containing twelve grains of wheat, which the Lady had evidently forgotten.

Hadji remained in his shop until late that night, in the hope that either the Lady or one of her servants would come for the bag, and thus give him the excuse for seeing her again or at least of learning where she lived. But Hadji was doomed to disappointment, and, much preoccupied, he returned to his home. There he sat, unresponsive to his wife's conversation, thinking, and no doubt making mental comparisons between her and his visitor.

Hadji remained downcast day after day, and at last, giving way to his wife's pleading to share his troubles, he frankly told her what had happened, and that ever since that day his soul was in his visitor's bondage.

"Oh husband," replied his wife, "do you not understand what that black bag containing the twelve grains of wheat means?"

"Alas! No," replied Hadji.

"Why, my husband, it is plain, plain as if it had been told. She lives in the Wheat Market, at house No. 12, with a black door."

Much excited, Hadji rushed off and found that there was a No. 12 in the Wheat Market, with a black door, so he promptly knocked. The door opened, and who should he behold but the lady in question. She, however, instead of speaking to him, threw a basin of water out into the street and then shut the door. Hadji, with mingled feelings of gratitude to his wife for having so accurately directed him, but none the less surprised at his reception, lingered about the doorway for a time and then returned home. He greeted his wife more pleasantly than he had for many days, and told her of his strange reception.

"Why," said his wife, "don't you understand what the basin of water thrown out of the door means?"

"Alas! No," said Hadji.

It means that at the back of the house there is a running stream, and that you must go to her that way."

Off rushed Hadji and found that his wife was right; there was a running stream at the back of the house, so he knocked at the back door. The Lady, however, instead of opening it, came to the window, showed a mirror, reversed it and then disappeared. Hadji lingered at the back of the house for a long time, but seeing no further sign of life, he returned to his home much dejected. On entering the house, his wife greeted him with: "Well, was it not as I told you?"

"Yes," said Hadji. "You are truly a wonderful woman! But I do not know why she came to the window and showed me a mirror both in front and back, instead of opening the door."

“Oh,” said his wife, “that is very simple; she means that you must go when the face of the moon has reversed itself, about ten o’clock.” The hour arrived, Hadji hurried off, and so did his wife; the one to see his love, and the other to inform the police.

Whilst Hadji and his charmer were talking in the garden the police seized them and carried them both off to prison, and Hadji’s wife, having accomplished her mission, returned home.

The next morning she baked a quantity of cakes, and taking them to the prison, begged entrance of the guards and permission to distribute these cakes to the prisoners, for charities sake. This being a request which could not be denied, she was allowed to enter. Finding the cell in which the lady who had infatuated her husband was confined, she offered to save her the disgrace of the exposure, provided she would agree never again to look upon Hadji, the merchant, with envious or loving eyes. The conditions were gratefully accepted, and Hadji’s wife changed places with the prisoner.

When they were brought before the judge, Hadji was thunderstruck to see his wife, but being a wise man he held his peace, and left her to do the talking, which she did most vigorously, vehemently protesting against the insult inflicted on both her and her husband in bringing them to prison, because they chose to converse in a garden, being lawfully wedded people. As witnesses, she called upon the watchman and the priest of the district and several of her neighbors.

Poor Hadji was dumfounded, and, accompanied by his better half, left the prison, where he had expected to stay at least a year or two, saying: “Truly you are a wonderful woman.”

5. How the Junkman Travelled to Find Treasure in His Own Yard

In one of the towers overlooking the Sea of Marmora in the ancient city of Stamboul, there lived an old junkman, who earned a modest living in gathering cinders and useless pieces of iron, and selling them to blacksmiths.

He often thought about his fate that had reduced him to the task of daily laboring for his bread to make a shoe, perhaps for a donkey. Surely he might at least be permitted to ride the donkey. Every night, as he slept, he dreamt of wealth and luxury. But with the dawning of the day came reality and increased longing.

He often called on the spirit of sleep to reverse matters, but in vain; with the rising of the sun began the gathering of the cinders and iron.

One night he dreamt that he begged this night-time visitor to change his night to day, and the spirit said to him, "Go to Egypt, and it shall be so."

This encouraging phrase haunted him by day and inspired him by night. So obsessed was he with the thought that when his wife said to him, from the door, "Have you brought home any bread?" he would reply, "No, I have not gone; I will go tomorrow;" thinking she had asked him, "Have you gone to Egypt?"

At last, when friends and neighbors began to pity poor Ahmet, he one morning left his house, saying, "I go! I go! To the land of wealth!" And he left his wife wringing her hands in despair, while the neighbors tried to comfort her. Poor Ahmet went straight on board a boat which he had been told was headed for Alexandria in Egypt, and assured the captain that he was summoned there, and that he was obliged to take him. And so Ahmet was taken to Alexandria.

Arriving in Alexandria, Ahmet roamed far and wide, going as far as Cairo, in search of the luxuries he had enjoyed in the land of Dreams, which he had been promised to enjoy in the sunshine, if he came to Egypt. Alas! For Ahmet; the only bread he had to eat was that which was given him by sympathetic people. Time passed and his crusts of bread were few and far between.

Wearied of life and suffering, he decided to ask God to let him die, and wandering out to the Pyramids he begged the stones to have pity and fall on him. It happened that a Turk heard this prayer, and said to him, "Why so miserable, father?"

"Yes, my son," said Ahmet. "Far away in Stamboul, with the help of God, I managed as a junkman to feed my wife and myself; but here am I, in Egypt, a stranger, alone and starving, with possibly my wife already dead of starvation, and all this through a dream."

"Alas! Alas! My father! That you at your age should be tempted to wander so far from home and friends, because of a dream. Why, were I to obey my dreams, I would at this present moment be in Stamboul, digging for a treasure that lies buried under a tree. I can even now, although I have never been there, describe where it is. In my mind's eye I see a wall, a great wall, that must have been built many years ago, and supporting or seeming to support this wall are towers with many corners, towers that are round, towers that are square and others that have smaller towers within them. In one of these towers, a square one, there live an old man and woman, and close by the tower is a large

tree, and every night when I dream of the place, the old man tells me to dig and find the treasure. But, father, I am not such a fool as to go to Stamboul and seek to verify this. It is an oft-repeated dream and nothing more. See what you have been reduced to by coming so far.”

“Yes,” said Ahmet, “it is a dream and nothing more, but you have interpreted it. You have encouraged me; I will return to my home.”

And Ahmet and the young stranger parted, the one grateful that it had pleased God to give him the power to revive and encourage a drooping spirit, and the other grateful to God that when he had despaired of life a stranger should come and give him the interpretation of his dream. He certainly had wandered far and long to learn that the treasure was in his own garden.

Ahmet in due course, much to the astonishment of both wife and neighbors, returned home.

To all questions as to where he was and what he had been doing, he would answer: “A dream sent me away, and a dream brought me back.”

And the neighbors would say, “Truly he must be blessed.”

One night Ahmet went to the tree, provided with spade and pick that he had borrowed from a neighbor. After digging a short time a heavy case was dug up, in which he found gold, silver, and precious jewels of great value. Ahmet replaced the case and earth and returned to bed, much lamenting that it had pleased God to give women, more especially his wife, with a long tongue, long hair, and very short wits. Alas! He thought, if I tell my wife, I may be hung as a robber, for it is against the laws of nature for a woman to keep a secret. Yet, becoming more generous when thinking of the years of toil and hardship she had shared with him, he decided to try and see if, by chance, his wife was not an exception to other women. Who knows, she might keep the secret. To test her, at no risk to himself and the treasure, he conceived a plan.

Crawling from his bed, he went out and bought an egg. The next morning he showed this egg to his wife, and said to her, “Alas! I fear I am not as other men, for evidently in the night I laid this egg; and, wife, if the neighbors hear of this, your husband, the long-suffering Ahmet, will be beaten, hanged, and burned to death.”

And without another word Ahmet, with a sack on his shoulder, went out to gather the cast-off shoes of horse, ox, or donkey, wondering if his wife would prove an exception in this, as she had in many other ways, to other women.

In the evening he returned, heavily laden with his finds, and as he neared home he heard rumors, terrible rumors, that a certain Ahmet, who had been considered a holy man, had done something that was unknown in the history of man, even in the history of hens—that he had laid a dozen eggs.

Needless to add that Ahmet did not tell his wife of the treasure, but every day went out with his sack to gather iron and cinders, and invariably found, when separating his finds of the day, in company with his wife, at first one, and then more gold and silver pieces, and now and then a precious stone.

6. How Chapkin Halid Became Chief Detective

In Balata there lived, some years ago, two scoundrels, called Chapkin Halid and Pitch Osman. These two young rascals lived by their wits and at the expense of their neighbors. But they had ever-increasing difficulties in getting the few piasters they needed daily for bread and beer. They had tried several schemes in their own neighborhood, with exceptionally poor results, and were almost disheartened when Chapkin Halid came up with an idea that seemed to offer every chance of success. He explained to his chum Osman that Balata was “played out,” at least for a time, and that they must go elsewhere to satisfy their needs. Halid’s plan was to go to Stamboul, and pretend to be dead in the main street, while Osman was to beg for the funeral expenses of his friend Halid.

Arriving in Stamboul, Halid stretched himself on his back on the pavement and covered his face with an old sack, while Osman sat himself down beside the supposed corpse, and every now and then bewailed the hard fate of the stranger who had met with death on the first day of his arrival. The corpse prompted Osman whenever the coast was clear, and the touching tale told by Osman soon brought contributions for the burial of the stranger. Osman had collected about thirty piasters, and Halid was seriously thinking of a resurrection, but was prevented by the passing of the Grand Vizier, who, upon inquiring why the man lay on the ground in that fashion, was told that he was a stranger who had died in the street. The Grand Vizier then gave instructions to an Imam, who happened to be passing, to bury the stranger and come for the money to the palace.

Halid was carried off to the Mosque, and Osman thought that it was time to leave the corpse to take care of itself. The Imam laid Halid on the marble floor and prepared to wash him prior to burial. He had taken off his turban and long cloak and got ready the water, when he remembered that he had no soap, and immediately went out to get some. No sooner had the Imam disappeared than Halid jumped up, and, putting on the Imam’s turban and long cloak, went to the palace. Here he asked admittance to the Grand Vizier, but this request was not granted until he told the nature of his business. Halid said he was the Imam who, with the instructions received from his Highness, had buried a stranger and that he had come for payment. The Grand Vizier sent five gold pieces (twenty piasters each) to the supposed Imam, and Halid made off as fast as possible.

No sooner had Halid departed than the cloakless Imam arrived in breathless haste, and explained that he was the Imam who had received instructions from the Grand Vizier to bury a stranger, but that the supposed corpse had disappeared, and so had his cloak and turban. Witnesses proved this man to be the genuine Imam of the quarter, and the Grand Vizier gave orders to his Chief Detective to capture, within three days, on pain of death, and bring to the palace, this fearless evil-doer.

The Chief Detective was soon on the track of Halid; but the latter was on the keen lookout. With the aid of the money he had received from the Grand Vizier he successfully evaded the clutches of the Chief Detective, who was greatly frustrated. On the second day he again got scent of Halid and was determined to follow him till an opportunity offered for his capture. Halid knew that he was being followed and understood the intentions of his pursuer. As he was passing a pharmacy he noticed there several young men, so he entered and explained to the druggist, as he handed him one of the gold pieces he had received from the Grand Vizier, that his uncle, who would come in presently, was not right in his mind; but that if the druggist could manage to soak his head and back with cold water, he would be all right for a week or two. No sooner did the Chief Detective enter the shop than, at a word from the druggist, the young men seized him and gave him a good soaking. The

more the detective protested, the more the druggist consolingly explained that it would soon be over and that he would feel much better, and told of the numerous similar cases he had cured in the same manner. The detective saw that it was useless to struggle, so he allowed himself to be treated. In the meantime Halid made off. The Chief Detective was so disheartened that he went to the Grand Vizier and asked him to behead him, as death was preferable to the annoyance he had received and might still receive at the hands of Chapkin Halid. The Grand Vizier was both furious and amused, so he spared the Chief Detective and gave orders that guards be placed at the twenty-four gates of the city, and that Halid be seized at the first opportunity. A reward was further promised to the person who would bring him to the palace.

Halid was finally caught one night as he was going out of the Cannon Gate, and the guards, rejoicing in their capture, after considerable discussion decided to tie Halid to a large tree close to the Guard house, and thus both avoid the loss of sleep and the trouble of watching over so terrible a character. This was done, and Halid now thought that his case was hopeless. Towards dawn, Halid saw a man with a lantern walking toward the Church, and rightly concluded that it was the priest going to make ready for the early morning service. So he called out in a loud voice:

“Priest! Brother! Priest! Brother! Come here quickly.”

Now it happened that the priest was a poor hunchback, and no sooner did Halid see this than he said, “Quick! Quick! Priest, look at my back and see if it has gone!”

“See if what has gone?” asked the priest, carefully looking behind the tree.

“Why, my hump, of course,” answered Halid.

The priest made a close inspection and declared that he could see no hump.

“A thousand thanks!” fervently exclaimed Halid, “then please undo the rope.”

The priest set about to free Halid, and at the same time earnestly begged to be told how he had got rid of the hump, so that he also might free himself of his deformity. Halid agreed to tell him the cure, provided the priest was prepared to pay a certain small sum of money for the secret. The priest agreed, and the latter immediately set about tying the hunchback to the tree, and further told him, on pain of breaking the spell, to repeat sixty-one times the words: ‘Esserti! Pesserti! Sersepeti!’ if he did this, the hump would certainly disappear. Halid left the poor priest religiously and earnestly repeating the words.

The guards were furious when they found, bound to the tree, a madman, as they thought, repeating incoherent words, instead of Halid. They began to untie the captive, but the only answer they could get to their host of questions was ‘Esserti, Pesserti, Sersepeti.’ As the knots were loosened, the louder the priest in despair called out the charmed words. No sooner was the priest freed than he asked God to bring down calamity on the destroyers of the charm that was to remove his hunch. On hearing the priest’s tale, the guards understood how their prisoner had got free, and sent word to the Chief Detective. This gentleman told the Grand Vizier of the unheard-of cunning of the escaped prisoner. The Grand Vizier was amused and also very anxious to see this Chapkin Halid, so he sent criers all over the city, giving full pardon to Halid on condition that he would come to the palace and confess in person to the Grand Vizier. Halid obeyed the summons, and came to kiss the hem of the Grand Vizier’s garment, who was so favorably impressed by him that he then and there

appointed him to be his Chief Detective.

7. How Ahmet the Cobbler Became the Chief Astrologer

Every day, year after year, Ahmet the cobbler sat in his tiny cabin and stitched old shoes. To do this was his fate, and he was content. His business was quite sufficient to provide the necessities of life for both himself and his wife. And had it not been for a coincidence that occurred, in all probability he would have mended old boots and shoes to the end of his days.

One day Ahmet's wife went to the baths, and while there she was much annoyed at being obliged to give up her compartment, owing to the arrival of the Harem and retinue of the Chief Astrologer to the Sultan. Much hurt, she returned home and vented her fury upon her innocent husband.

"Why are you not the Chief Astrologer to the Sultan?" she said. "I will never call or think of you as my husband until you have been appointed Chief Astrologer to his Majesty."

Ahmet thought that this was another mood of the woman which in all probability would disappear before morning, so he took small notice of what his wife said. But Ahmet was wrong. His wife persisted so much in his giving up his present means of earning a livelihood and becoming an astrologer, that finally, for the sake of peace, he agreed to do as she asked. He sold his tools and collection of old boots and shoes, and, with the money purchased an inkwell and paper. But this, alas, did not make him an astrologer, and he explained to his wife that this mad idea of hers would bring him to an unhappy end. She, however, could not be moved, and insisted on his going to the highway, there to practice the art, and thus ultimately become the Chief Astrologer.

In obedience to his wife's instructions, Ahmet sat down on the highroad, and his downcast spirit sought comfort in looking at the heavens and sighing deeply. While in this condition a lady in great excitement came and asked him if he communicated with the stars. Poor Ahmet sighed, saying that he did.

"Then please tell me where my diamond ring is, and I will both bless and handsomely reward you."

The Lady, with this, immediately squatted on the ground, and began to tell Ahmet that she had gone to the bath that morning and that she was positive that she then had the ring, but every corner of the baths had been searched, and the ring was not to be found.

"Oh, astrologer, for the love of God, use your eyes to see the unseen."

"Madam," replied Ahmet, "I see a hole," referring to a hole he had noticed in her baggy trousers. Up jumped the lady, exclaiming, "A thousand holy thanks! You are right! Now I remember! I put the ring in a crack of the cold water fountain." And in her gratitude she handed Ahmet several gold pieces.

In the evening he returned to his home, and giving the gold to his wife, said: "Take this money, wife; may it satisfy you, and in return all I ask is that you allow me to go back to the trade of my father, and not expose me to the danger and suffering of trudging the road shoeless."

But her determination was unmoved. Until he became the Chief Astrologer she would neither call him nor think of him as her husband.

In the meantime, owing to the discovery of the ring, the fame of Ahmet the cobbler spread far and

wide. The tongue of the Lady never ceased to sound his praise.

It happened that the wife of a certain Lord had taken a valuable diamond necklace, and as a last resource, the Lord determined, seeing that all the astrologers, and diviners had failed to discover the article, to consult Ahmet the cobbler, whose praises were in every mouth.

The Lord went to Ahmet and, in fear and trembling, the wife who had taken the necklace sent her slave to overhear what the astrologer would say. The Lord told Ahmet all he knew about the necklace, but this gave no clue, and in despair he asked how many diamonds the necklace contained. On being told that there were twenty-four, Ahmet, to put off the evil hour, said it would take an hour to discover each diamond, consequently would the Lord come the next day at the same hour when he would perhaps be able to give him some news.

The Lord departed, and no sooner was he out of earshot, than the troubled Ahmet exclaimed in a loud voice:

“Oh woman! Oh woman! What evil influence made you go on the wrong path, and drag others with you! When the twenty-four hours are up, you will perhaps repent! Alas! Too late. Your husband gone from you forever! Without a hope even of being united in paradise.”

Ahmet was referring to himself and his wife, for he fully expected to be cast into prison on the following day as an impostor. But the slave who had been listening gave another interpretation to his words, and hurrying off, told her mistress that the astrologer knew all about the theft. The good man had even bewailed the separation that would inevitably take place. The Lord's wife was distracted, and hurried off to plead her cause in person with the astrologer. On approaching Ahmet, the first words she said, in her excitement, were, “Oh learned priest, you are a great and good man. Have compassion on my weakness and do not expose me to the anger of my husband! I will do whatever you may order, and bless you five times daily as long as I live.”

“How can I save you?” innocently asked Ahmet. “What is decreed is decreed!”

“If you won't pity me,” continued the Lady, in despair, “I will go and confess to my Lord, and perhaps he will forgive me.”

To this appeal Ahmet said he must ask the stars for their views on the subject. The Lady inquired if the answer would come before the twenty-four hours were up. Ahmet's reply to this was a long and concentrated gaze at the heavens.

“Oh Sir, I must go now, or the Lord will miss me. Shall I give you the necklace to return to the Lord without explanation, when he comes tomorrow for the answer?”

Ahmet now realized what all the trouble was about, and for a fee, he promised not to reveal her theft on the condition that she would at once return home and place the necklace between the mattresses of her Lord's bed. This, the grateful woman agreed to do, and departed calling blessings on Ahmet, who in return promised to use his influence on her behalf.

When the Lord came to the astrologer at the appointed time, he explained to him, that if he wanted both the necklace and the thief or thieves, it would take a long time, as it was impossible to hurry the stars. But if he would be content with the necklace alone, the horoscope indicated that the stars would oblige him at once. The Lord said that he would be quite satisfied if he could get his

diamonds again, and Ahmet at once told him where to find them. The Lord returned to his home not a little skeptical, and immediately searched for the necklace where Ahmet had told him it was to be found. His joy and astonishment on discovering the long-lost article knew no bounds, and the fame of Ahmet the cobbler was on every tongue.

Having received handsome payment from both the Lord and the Lady, Ahmet earnestly begged his wife to stop and not bring down sorrow and calamity upon his head. But his pleadings were in vain. Resigned to his fate, all he could do was to consult the stars, and after some thought give their communication, or say that the stars had, for some reason, refused to communicate on the subject.

It happened that forty cases of gold were stolen from the Imperial Treasury, and every astrologer having failed to get even a clue as to where the money was or how it had disappeared, Ahmet was approached. Poor man, his case now looked hopeless! Even the Chief Astrologer was in disgrace. What his punishment might be he did not know—most probably death. Ahmet had no idea of the numerical importance of forty; but concluding that it must be large he asked for a delay of forty days to discover the forty cases of gold. Ahmet gathered up the implements of his art, and before returning to his home, went to a shop and asked for forty beans—neither one more nor one less. When he got home and laid them down before him he appreciated the number of cases of gold that had been stolen, and also the number of days he had to live. He knew it would be useless to explain to his wife the seriousness of the case, so that evening he took from his pocket the forty beans and mournfully said, “Forty cases of gold,—forty thieves,—forty days; and here is one of them,” handing a bean to his wife. “The rest remain in their place until the time comes to give them up.”

While Ahmet was saying this to his wife one of the thieves was listening at the window. The thief was sure he had been discovered when he heard Ahmet say, “And here is one of them,” and hurried off to tell his companions.

The thieves were greatly distressed, but decided to wait till the next evening and see what would happen then, and another of the number was sent to listen and see if the report would be verified. The listener had not long been stationed at his post when he heard Ahmet say to his wife: “And here is another of them,” meaning another of the forty days of his life. But the thief understood the words otherwise, and hurried off to tell his chief that the astrologer knew all about it and knew that he had been there. The thieves consequently decided to send a delegation to Ahmet, confessing their guilt and offering to return the forty cases of gold intact. Ahmet received them, and on hearing their confession, accompanied with their condition to return the gold, boldly told them that he did not require their aid; that it was in his power to take possession of the forty cases of gold whenever he wished, but that he had no special desire to see them all executed, and he would plead their cause if they would go and put the gold in a place he indicated. This was agreed to. He no longer feared the loss of his head. At last the final bean was given to his wife, and Ahmet was summoned to the Palace. He went, and explained to his Majesty that the stars refused both to reveal the thieves and the gold, but whichever of the two his Majesty wished would be immediately granted. The Treasury being low, it was decided that, provided the cases were returned with the gold intact, his Majesty would be satisfied. Ahmet conducted them to the place where the gold was buried, and amidst great rejoicing it was taken back to the Palace. The Sultan was so pleased with Ahmet that he appointed him to the office of Chief Astrologer, and his wife attained her desire.

The Sultan was one day walking in his Palace grounds accompanied by his Chief Astrologer; wishing to test his powers he caught a grasshopper, and holding his closed hand out to the astrologer

asked him what it contained. Ahmet, in a pained tone, answered the Sultan by a much-quoted proverb: “Alas! Your Majesty! The grasshopper never knows where its third leap will land it,” meaning himself and the dangerous hazard of guessing what was in the clenched hand of his Majesty. The Sultan was so struck by the reply that Ahmet was never again troubled to demonstrate his powers.

8. The Wise Son of Ali Pasha

A **servant** of his Majesty Sultan Ahmet, who had been employed for twenty-five years in the Palace, begged permission of the Sultan to allow him to retire to his native home, and at the same time asked for a pension to enable him to live. The Sultan asked him if he had not saved any money. The man replied that owing to his having to support a large family, he had been unable to do so. The Sultan was very angry that any of his servants, should, after so many years' service, say that he was penniless. Disbelieving the statement, and in order to make an example, the Sultan gave orders that Hassan should leave the Palace in the identical state he had entered it twenty-five years before. Hassan had everything he had, the accumulation of a quarter of a century, confiscated, and distributed amongst the Palace servants. Poor Hassan, without a penny in his pocket, and dressed in the rough costume of his native province, began his weary journey homeward on foot.

In time he reached the suburbs of a town in Asia Minor, and seeing some boys playing, he approached them, sat on the ground, and watched their pastime. The boys were playing at state affairs: one was a Sultan, another his Vizier, who had his cabinet of Ministers, while close by were a number of boys bound hand and foot, representing political and other prisoners, awaiting judgment for their imaginary misdeeds. The Sultan, who was sitting with worthy dignity on a throne made of branches and stones, beckoned to Hassan to come near, and asked him where he had come from. Hassan replied that he had come from Stamboul, from the Palace of the Sultan.

“That’s a lie,” said the mock Sultan, “no one ever came from Stamboul dressed in that fashion, much less from the Palace. You are from the far interior, and if you do not confess that what I say is true, you will be tried by my Ministers, and punished accordingly.”

Hassan, partly to participate in their boyish amusement, and partly to unburden his aching heart, related his sad fate to his youthful audience. When he had finished, the boy Sultan, Ali by name, asked him if he had received his twenty-five years. Hassan, not fully grasping what the boy said, replied, “Nothing! Nothing!”

“That is unjust,” continued Ali, “and you shall go back to the Sultan and ask that your twenty-five years be returned to you so that you may plough and till your land, and thus make provision for your old age.”

Hassan was struck by the sound advice the boy had given him, thanked him and said he would follow it to the letter. The boys then separated, to return to their homes, never dreaming that the seeds of destiny of one of their number had been sown in play. Hassan, retracing his steps, reappeared in time at the gates of the Palace and begged admittance, stating that he had forgotten to communicate something of importance to his Majesty. His request being granted, he humbly asked, that, as his Majesty had been dissatisfied with his long service, the twenty-five years he had devoted to him should be returned, so that he might labor and put by something to provide for the inevitable day when he could no longer work. The Sultan answered, “That is well said and just. As it is not in my power to give you the twenty-five years, the best I can grant you is a pension. But tell me, who advised you to make this request?”

Hassan then related his adventure with the boys while on his journey home, and his Majesty was so pleased with the judgment and advice of the lad that he sent for him and had him educated. The boy studied medicine, and distinguishing himself in the profession ultimately rose to be Doctor Ali

Pasha.

He had one son who was known as Doctor Ali Pasha's son. He studied calligraphy, and became so proficient in this art, now almost lost, that his imitations of the Imperial decrees were perfect facsimiles of the originals. One day he took it into his head to write a decree appointing himself Grand Vizier, in place of the reigning one. He took the decree to the government offices and there and then installed himself. By chance the Sultan happened to drive through Stamboul that day, in disguise, and noticing considerable excitement and cries of "Long live my Sultan" amongst the people, he made inquiries as to the cause of this unusual occurrence. His Majesty's informers brought him the word that the people rejoiced in the fall of the old Grand Vizier, and the appointment of the new one, Doctor Ali Pasha's son. The Sultan returned to the Palace and immediately sent one of his courtiers to the government offices to see the Grand Vizier and find out the meaning of these strange proceedings.

The courtier was announced, and the Grand Vizier ordered him to be brought into his presence. Directly he appeared in the doorway, he was greeted with: "What do you want, you black dog?"

Then turning to the numerous attendants about, he said, "Take this dog to the slave market, and see what price he will bring."

The courtier was taken to the slave market, and the highest price bid for him was fifty piasters. On hearing this, the Grand Vizier turned to the courtier and said, "Go and tell your master what you are worth, and tell him that I think it too much by far."

The courtier was glad to get off, and communicated to his Majesty the story of his strange treatment. The Sultan then ordered his Chief courtier, an important person in the Ottoman Empire, to call on the Grand Vizier for an explanation. At the government offices, however, no respect was paid to this high dignitary. Ali Pasha received him in precisely the same manner as he had received his subordinate. The chief was taken to the slave market, and the highest sum bid for him was five hundred piasters. The self-appointed Grand Vizier ordered him to go and tell his master the amount some foolish people were willing to pay for him.

When the Sultan heard of these strange proceedings he sent a signed letter to Ali Pasha, commanding him to come to the Palace. The Grand Vizier immediately set out for the Palace and was received in audience, when he explained to his Majesty that the affairs of State could not be managed by men not worth more than from fifty to five hundred piasters, and that if radical changes were not made, certain ruin would be the outcome. The Sultan appreciated this earnest communication, and confirmed the appointment, as Grand Vizier, of Ali Pasha, the son of the boy who had played at state affairs in a village of Asia Minor.

9. The Merciful Magistrate

There lived once near Ispahan a tailor, a hard-working man, who was very poor. So poor was he that his workshop and house together consisted of a wooden cottage with just one room.

But being poor is no protection against thieves, and so it happened that one night a thief entered the hut of the tailor. The tailor had driven nails in various places in the walls on which to hang the garments that were brought to him to mend. While he was looking about for something to steal, the thief struck against one of these nails and put out his eye.

The next morning the thief appeared before the magistrate and demanded justice. The magistrate then sent for the tailor, stated the complaint of the thief, and said that in accordance with the law, 'an eye for an eye,' it would be necessary to put out one of the tailor's eyes. As usual, however, the tailor was allowed to plead in his own defence, whereupon he addressed the court, "Oh great and mighty magistrate, it is true that the law says an eye for an eye, but it does not say my eye. Now I am a poor man, and a tailor. If the Magistrate puts out one of my eyes, I will not be able to carry on my trade, and so I shall starve. Now it happens that there lives near me a gunsmith. He uses just one eye with which he squints along the barrel of his guns. Take his other eye, oh magistrate, and let the law be satisfied."

The magistrate was favorably impressed with this idea, and accordingly sent for the gunsmith. He repeated to the gunsmith the complaint of the thief and the statement of the tailor, whereupon the gunsmith said, "Oh great and mighty magistrate, this tailor doesn't know what he is talking about. I need both of my eyes; for while it is true that I squint one eye along one side of the barrel of the gun, to see if it is straight, I must use the other eye for the other side. If, therefore, you put out one of my eyes you will take away from me the means of livelihood. It happens, however, that there lives not far from me a flute-player. Now I have noticed that whenever he plays the flute he closes both of his eyes. Take out one of his eyes, oh magistrate, and let the law be satisfied."

Accordingly, the Magistrate sent for the flute-player, and after repeating to him the complaint of the thief, and the words of the gunsmith, he ordered him to play upon his flute. This the flute-player did, and though he tried hard to control himself, he did not succeed, but, as the result of long habit, closed both of his eyes. When the Magistrate saw this, he ordered that one of the flute-player's eyes be put out, which being done, the magistrate spoke as follows, "Oh flute-player, I saw that when playing upon your flute you closed both of your eyes. It was thus clear to me that neither was necessary for your livelihood, and I had intended to have them both put out, but I have decided to put out only one in order that you may tell other men how merciful the magistrates are.

10. King Kara-Kush of Bithynia

A King of Bithynia, named Kara-kush, who was blind in one eye, was considered in his day a reasonable, just, and sensitive man. He administered justice upon the basis of the law, ‘An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth’.

It happened that a weaver by accident put out the eye of a man. He was brought before the King or magistrate, for in those days the Kings acted as magistrates, who promptly condemned him, in accordance with the law, to the loss of an eye. The weaver pleaded touchingly, saying, “Oh magistrate! I have a wife and a large family, and I support them by throwing the shuttle from the right to the left, and again from the left to the right; first using the one eye and then the other. If you remove one of my eyes, I will not be able to weave, and my wife and children will suffer the pangs of hunger. Why not, in the place of my eye, remove that of the hunter who uses just one eye in exercising his profession, and to whom two eyes are unnecessary?”

The magistrate was impressed, acknowledged the justice of the weaver’s remarks, and the hunter was immediately sent for. The hunter being brought, the magistrate was greatly rejoiced to notice that the hunter’s eyes were exactly the same color as his own. He asked the hunter how he earned his living, and receiving his answer that he was a hunter, the magistrate asked him how he shot. The hunter in reply demonstrated the manner by putting up his arms, his head to a side, and closing one eye. The magistrate said the weaver was right and immediately sent for the surgeon to have the eye removed. Further, the magistrate thought that he might profit by this and have the hunter’s eye placed in his own socket. The surgeon set to work and prepared the cavity to receive the hunter’s eye. This done with a skilled hand, the surgeon removed the hunter’s eye and was about to place it in the prepared socket, when it accidentally slipped from his fingers to the ground, and was snatched up by a cat. The surgeon was terrified and madly ran after the cat, but alas, the cat had eaten the eye. What was he to do? On the inspiration of the moment he snatched out the eye of the cat, and placing it in the Magistrate’s head, bound it up.

Sometime after the surgeon asked the Magistrate how he saw.

“Oh,” replied the Magistrate, “with my old eye I see as usual, but strange to say, the new eye you placed in my head is continually searching and watching for rat holes.”

11. The Prayer Rug and the Dishonest Steward

A poor porter brought to the Pasha of Stamboul his savings, consisting of a small canvas bag of silver dollars, to be kept for him, while he was absent on a visit to his home. The Pasha, being a kind-hearted man, consented, and after sealing the bag, called his steward, instructing him to keep it till the owner called for it. The steward gave the man a receipt which stated that he had received a sealed bag containing money.

When the poor man returned, he went to the Pasha and received his bag of money. On reaching his room he opened the bag, and to his horror found that it contained, instead of the silver dollars he had put in it, copper coins, which are about the same size as silver dollars. The poor porter was miserable, his hard-earned savings gone.

He at last gathered courage to go and put his case before the Pasha. He took the bag of copper coins, and with trembling voice and beating heart he assured the Pasha that though he had received his bag apparently intact, on opening it he found that it contained copper coins and not the silver dollars he had put in it. The Pasha took the bag, examined it closely, and after some time noticed a part that had apparently been repaired by a master-hand. The Pasha told the porter to go away and come back in a week. In the meantime he would see what he could do for him. The grateful man departed, uttering prayers for the life and prosperity of his Excellency.

The next morning after the Pasha had said his prayers kneeling on a most magnificent and expensive rug, he took a knife and cut a long tear in it. He then left his home without saying a word to anyone. In the evening when he returned he found that the tear had been so well repaired that it was with difficulty that he discovered where it had been. Calling his steward, he demanded who had repaired his prayer rug. The steward told the Pasha that he thought the rug had been cut by accident by some of the servants, so he had sent to the Bazaar for the tailor, Mustapha, and had it mended.

“Send for Mustapha immediately,” said the Pasha, “and when he comes bring him to my room.”

When Mustapha arrived, the Pasha asked him if he had repaired the rug. Mustapha at once replied that he had mended it that very morning.

“It is indeed well done,” said the Pasha; “much better than the darn you made in that canvas bag.”

Mustapha agreed, saying that it was very difficult to mend the bag as it was full of copper coins. On hearing this, the Pasha gave him a present and told him to leave. The Pasha then called his steward, and not only forced him to pay the porter his money, but fired him from his service, where he had been employed for many years.

12. The Goose, The Eye, The Daughter, and The Arm

A man decided to have a feast, so he killed and stuffed a goose and took it to the baker to be roasted. The magistrate of the village happened to pass by the oven as the baker was basting the goose, and was attracted by the pleasant and appetizing odor. Approaching the baker, the magistrate said it was a fine goose; that the smell of it made him quite hungry, and suggested that he had better send it to his house. The baker refused, saying, "I cannot. It does not belong to me."

The Magistrate assured him that was no difficulty. "You tell Ahmet, the owner of the goose, that it flew away."

"Impossible!" said the baker. "How can a roasted goose fly away? Ahmet will only laugh at me, your honour, and I will be thrown into prison."

"Am I not a Judge?" said the magistrate, "fear nothing."

At this the baker agreed to send the goose to the magistrate's house. When Ahmet came for his goose the baker said, "Friend, your goose has flown away."

"Flown?" said Ahmet, "what lies! Seizing one of the baker's large shovels, he lifted it to strike him, but, as fate would have it, the handle put out the eye of the baker's boy, and Ahmet, frightened at what he had done, ran off, closely followed by the baker and his boy, the latter crying, "My eye!"

In his hurry Ahmet knocked over a child, killing it and the father of the child joined in the chase, calling out, "My daughter!"

Ahmet, rushed into a mosque and up a minaret. To escape his pursuers he leaped from the parapet, and fell upon a vender who was passing by, breaking his arm. The vender also began pursuing him, calling out, "My arm!"

Ahmet was finally caught and brought before the magistrate, who no doubt was feeling contented with the world, having just enjoyed the delicious goose.

The magistrate heard each of the cases brought against Ahmet, who in turn told his case truthfully as it had happened.

"A complicated matter," said the magistrate. "All these misfortunes come from the flight of the goose, and I must refer to the book of the law to give just judgment."

Taking down a large volume, the magistrate turned to Ahmet and asked him what number egg the goose had been hatched from. Ahmet said he did not know.

"Then," replied the Magistrate, "the book writes that such a phenomenon was possible. If this goose was hatched from the seventh egg, and the mother also from the seventh egg, the book writes that it is possible for a roasted goose, under those conditions, to fly away."

"With reference to your eye," continued the Magistrate, addressing the baker's lad, "the book provides punishment for the removal of two eyes, but not of one, so if you will consent to your other eye being taken out, I will condemn Ahmet to have both of his removed."

The baker's lad, not appreciating the force of this argument, withdrew his claim.

Then turning to the father of the dead child, the Magistrate explained that the only situation for a case like this in the book of the law, was that he take Ahmet's child in its place, or if Ahmet had no child, to wait till he got one. The bereaved parent not taking any interest in Ahmet's present or prospective children also withdrew his case.

These cases settled, there remained just the vender's, who was furious at having his arm broken. The magistrate talked on the justice of the law and its far-seeing provisions, that the vender at least could claim compensation for having his arm broken. The book of the law provided that he should go to the very same minaret, and that Ahmet must station himself at the very same place where he had stood when his arm was broken; and that he might jump down and break Ahmet's arm.

"But be it understood," concluded the magistrate, "if you break his leg instead of his arm, Ahmet will have the right to ask someone to jump down on you to break your leg."

The vender not seeing the force of the Magistrate's proposal, also withdrew his claim.

Thus ended the cases of the goose, the eye, the daughter, and the arm.

13. The Forty Wise Men

Many years ago, there lived and worked for the welfare of the people, an organized body of men. All that we know of them today, through our fathers, is that their forefathers chose from among them the wisest, most sincere, and experienced forty men. These forty were named the Forty Wise Men. When one of the forty passed away the remaining thirty-nine consulted and chose from the community him whom they thought capable, and worthy of guiding and of being guided, to add to their number.

Not only did they administer justice to the oppressed, and give to the needy; but their very existence had the most beneficial effect on the community. Because each competed with the other to be worthy of being nominated for the vacancy when it occurred. No-one was too low to be admitted, no-one was too high to become one of the 'Forty.' Here all were equal.

In the town of Scutari, over the way, there lived a Dervish. His advice to the rash was always good, his sole object, apparently, in life was to become one of the Forty Wise Men, who presided over the people and protected them from all ills.

The years went on, and still without a reward he remained patient, contenting himself with the idea that the day would come when the merit of his actions would be recognized by God. However, the day did come, and the Dervish's great desire had every appearance of being realized. One of the Forty Wise Men having accomplished his mission on earth departed this life. The remaining thirty-nine, who still had duties to fulfill, consulted as to whom they should call to aid them in their work. A decision was made in favor of the Dervish. They considered how he had worked among the poor in Scutari; ever ready to help the needy, ever ready to counsel the rash, ever ready to comfort and encourage the despairing. It was decided that he should be nominated. A deputation consisting of three, two to listen, and one to speak was named, and with the blessing of their brethren, for success, they entered a boat and were rowed to Scutari. Arriving at the Dervish's gate, the spokesman addressed the would-be member of the Forty Wise Men:

“Brother your actions have been noted and we come to put a proposition to you, which, after consideration you will either accept or reject as you think best. We would ask you to become one of us. We are sent here by, and are the representatives of, the sages who preside over the people. Brother, we number in all one hundred and thirty-eight in spirit;—ninety-nine, having accomplished their task in the flesh, have departed; thirty-nine, still in the flesh, endeavor their duty to fulfill. And it is the desire of the one hundred and thirty-eight souls to add to us you, in order to complete our number of laborers in the flesh. Brother, your duties, which will be everlasting, you will learn when with us. Consider it, and we will return at the setting of the sun of the third day, to receive your answer.”

And they turned to depart. But the Dervish stopped them, saying, “Brothers, I have no need to consider the subject for three days, seeing that my inmost desire for thirty years, and my sole object in life has been to become worthy of being one of you. In spirit I have long been your brother, in the flesh it is easy to comply, seeing that it has been the spirit's desire.”

Then the spokesman answered, “Brother, you have spoken well.” Brother, first of all your possessions must be sold and turned into gold. Every earthly possession you have must be represented by a piece of gold. Therefore see to that; we have other duties to fulfill, but will return

before the sun sets in the west.”

The Dervish set about selling all his goods; and at the closing of the day, he had disposed of everything and stood waiting with nothing but a sack of gold.

The three wise men returned, and, on seeing the Dervish, said, “Brother, you have done well. Let us go.”

A boat was waiting, and the four entered. Silently the boat glided over the smooth surface of the river, and the occupants sat in silence. After some time, the spokesman, turning to the Dervish, said, “Brother, give me that sack, representing everything you possess in this world.”

The Dervish handed the sack as he was told, and the wise man solemnly rose, and holding it up high, said, “With the blessing of our brother Mustapha,” and dropped it where the current is strongest. Then, sitting down, resumed his silence.

Before long the boat was brought to the shore, the four men made their way up the steep hill. A few minutes’ walk brought them to the mosque of the Forty Wise Men. The spokesman turned to the Dervish, and said, “Brother, faithfully follow,” and then passed through the doorway. They entered a large, vaulted chamber. Round this hall were forty boxes of the same shape and size.

Our friend stood in the centre of the hall. He was afraid to breathe. He did not know whether to be happy or sad, for having come so far.

As he stood there thinking, one of the curtains was raised, and there came out a very old man, his white beard all but touching his belt.

Solemnly and slowly he walked over to the opposite side, and following him came thirty-eight more, the last apparently being the youngest.

Chill after chill went coursing down the spine of the astonished would-be brother, while these men moved about in the unbroken silence, as if talking to invisible beings; now embracing, now clasping hands, now bidding farewell.

The Dervish closed his eyes, opened them. Were these things so? Yes, it was no dream, no hallucination. Yet why did he hear no sound?

Each of the brethren now took his place beside a box, but there was one vacancy; no one stood at the side of the box to the left of the youngest brother. Making a profound bow, which all answered, the old man silently turned, raised the curtain, and passed into the darkness, each in his order following. As one in a trance, the Dervish watched one after another disappear. The last raised the curtain, but before vanishing, turned (it was the spokesman), and whispered, “Brother, follow!” and stepped into the darkness.

These words acted upon the Dervish like a spell; he followed.

Up, up, the winding stairway of a minaret they went. At last they arrived, and to the horror of the Dervish, what does he see? One, two, three, disappear over the parapet and his friend the spokesman, with, “Brother, faith, follow!” also vanished into the inky darkness.

Again the words of the brother spokesman acted upon the Dervish like magic. He raised his foot to

the parapet, and, in faltering decision, jumped up two or three times. He jumped once, twice, three times, but each time fell backward instead of forward. He hesitated again. He was not equal to the test. So, with a great weight on his heart, he descended the winding stairs of the minaret. He had reached his zenith only in desire, and was now on his decline.

Lamenting, like a weak mortal that he was, for not having followed, he again entered the hall he had just left, with the intention, no doubt, of departing.

As he stood the curtain moved, and the old man entered, and as before, the silence was unbroken. Again each took his place beside a box, again the old man bowed, with the simultaneous response of the others. Again they gestured as if talking to invisible beings of some calamity which had befallen them which they all regretted.

The old man went and opened the box that stood alone. From this he took, the identical bag of gold that had been dropped into the river some hours ago. The spokesman came forward and took it from the hand of the old man. The Dervish now no longer believed that he was he himself, and that these things were taking place. He understood nothing, he knew nothing.

Coming forward, the spokesman spoke to the Dervish, "Friend and brother in the flesh, but weak in spirit, you have proved yourself unworthy to give that which you have not yourself,—Faith!

"Go back into the world, back to your brothers; you cannot not be one of us. One hundred and thirty-nine in the spirit have regretfully judged you as lacking in faith, and not having a sheltered apartment within yourself, you cannot not shelter others. No man can give that which he does not have.

And the Dervish was led out into the street, a lone and solitary man; he had his all in his hand—a bag of gold.

14. How the Priest Knew That it Would Snow

A Turk travelling in Asia Minor came to a Christian village. He journeyed on horseback, was accompanied by a black slave, and seeming to be a man of importance, the priest of the village offered him hospitality for the night. The first thing to be done was to conduct the traveller to the stable, so that he could see his horse attended to and comfortably stalled for the night. In the stable was a magnificent Arab horse, belonging to the priest, and the Turk gazed upon it with envious eyes, but nevertheless, in order that no ill should befall the beautiful creature and to counteract the influence of the evil eye with certainty, he spat at the animal. After they had dined, the priest took his guest for a walk in the garden, and in the course of a very pleasant conversation he informed the Turk that the next day there would be snow on the ground.

“Never! Impossible!” said the Turk.

“Well, tomorrow you will see that I am right,” said the priest.

“I am willing to stake my horse against yours, that you are wrong,” answered the Turk, who was delighted at this opportunity which gave him a chance of securing the horse. After some persuasion the priest accepted his wager, and they separated for the night.

Later on that night, the Turk said to his slave, “Go, Sali, go and see what the weather says, for truly I want our good host’s horse.”

Sali went out to make an observation, and on returning said to his master, “Master, the heavens are like unto your face,—without a frown and many kindly sparkling eyes, and the earth is like that of your black slave.”

“It is well, Sali, ‘it is well. What a beautiful animal that is!’”

Later on, before retiring to rest, he sent his slave on another inspection, and was gratified to receive the same answer. Early in the morning he awoke, and calling his slave, who had slept at his door, to see if any change had taken place.

“Oh master!” reported Sali, in trembling tones, “Nature has reversed herself, for the heavens are now like the scowling face of your slave, and the earth is like yours, white, entirely white.”

“What a terrible thing. Then I have lost not only that beautiful animal but my own horse as well. Oh pity! Oh pity!”

He gave up his horse, but before parting he begged the priest to tell him how he knew it would snow.

“My pig told me as we were walking in the garden yesterday. I saw it put its nose in the heap of manure you see in that corner, and I knew that to be a sure sign that it would snow the next day,” replied the priest.

Deeply mystified, the Turk and his slave proceeded on foot. Reaching a Turkish village before nightfall, he sought and obtained shelter for the night from the Imam, the Muslim priest of the village. While having the evening meal he asked the Imam when the feast of the Bairam would be.

“Truly, I do not know! When the cannons fire, I will know it is Bairam,” said his host.

“What!” said the traveller, becoming angry, “you an Imam,—a learned man,—and don’t know when it will be Bairam, and the pig of the Greek priest knew when it would snow? Shame! Shame!”

And becoming much angered, he declined the hospitality of the Imam and went elsewhere.

15. The Metamorphosis

Hussein Agha was much troubled in spirit and mind. He had saved a large sum of money in order that he might make the pilgrimage to Mecca. What troubled him was that after having carefully provided for all the expenses of this long journey there still remained a few hundred piasters left over. What was he to do with these? True, they could be distributed amongst the poor, but then, might not he, on his return, require the money for even a more meritorious purpose?

After much consideration, he decided that it was not God's wish that he should at once give this money to charity. On the other hand, he felt convinced that he should not give it to a brother for safe keeping, as he might be inspired, during Hussein's pilgrimage, to spend it on some charitable purpose. After a time, he thought of a kindly neighbor, and decided to leave his savings in the hands of this man. After some thought, he decided not to put temptation in the way of his neighbor. He therefore took a jar, at the bottom of which he placed a small bag containing his surplus wealth, and filled it with olives. This he carried to his neighbor, and begged him to take care of it for him. Ben Moïse of course agreed, and Hussein Agha departed on his pilgrimage, contented.

On his return from the Holy Land, Hussein, went to Ben Moïse and asked for his jar of olives, and at the same time presented Ben Moïse with a rosary of Yemen stones, to thank him for the safe keeping of the olives, which, he said, were exceptionally tasty. Ben Moïse thanked him, and Hussein departed with his jar, well satisfied.

During the absence of Hussein Agha, it happened that Ben Moïse had some distinguished visitors. Unfortunately, however, he had no appetizer to offer. Ben Moïse thought of the olives and immediately went to the cellar, opened the jar, and took some of them, saying, "Olives are not rare; Hussein will never know the difference if I replace them."

The olives were excellent, and Ben Moïse again and again helped his friends to them. Great was his surprise when he found that instead of olives, he brought forth a bag containing a quantity of gold. Ben Moïse could not understand this, but kept the gold and said nothing to anyone.

Arriving home, poor Hussein Agha was upset to find that his jar contained nothing but olives. In vain he protested to Ben Moïse.

"My friend," he would reply, "you gave me the jar, saying it contained olives. I believed you and kept the jar safe for you. Now you say that in the jar you had put some money together with the olives; perhaps you did, but is it not that the jar you gave me? If, as you say, there was gold in the jar and it is now gone, all I can say is, the stronger has overcome the weaker, and that in this case the gold has either been transformed into olives or into oil. What can I do? The jar you gave me I returned to you."

Hussein admitted this, and fully appreciated that he had no case against him, so he returned to his home.

That night Hussein mingled in his prayers a vow to recover his gold at no matter what cost or trouble.

In his younger days Hussein had been a pipe-maker, and many were the pipes of exceptional beauty

that he had made. The art that had fed him for years was now to be the means of recovering his money.

Hussein met Ben Moïse everyday but he never again referred to the money, and further more, Hussein's sons were always in the company of Ben Moïse's only son, a lad of ten.

Time passed, and Ben Moïse entirely forgot about the jar, olives, and gold; not so Hussein. He had been working. First he had made an effigy of Ben Moïse. When he had completed this image to his satisfaction, he dressed it in the identical manner and costume he usually wore. He then purchased a monkey. This monkey was kept in a cage opposite the effigy of Ben Moïse. Twice a day regularly the monkey's food was placed on the shoulders of the Jew, and Hussein would open the cage, saying: "Go to your father ". At a bound the monkey would plant himself on the shoulders of the effigy, and would not be dislodged until its hunger had been satisfied.

In the meantime Hussein and Ben Moïse were greater friends than ever, and their children were likewise playmates. One day Hussein took Ben Moïse's son to his home and told him, much to the lad's joy, that he was to be their guest for a week. Later on Ben Moïse called on Hussein to know the reason for his son's not returning as usual at sundown.

"Ah, my friend," said Hussein, "a great calamity has befallen you! Your son, alas, has been transformed into a monkey, a furious monkey! So furious that I was compelled to put him into a cage. Come and see for yourself."

No sooner did Ben Moïse enter the room in which the caged monkey was, than it set up a howl, not having had any food that day. Poor Ben Moïse was thunderstruck, and Hussein begged him to take the monkey away.

Next day Hussein was summoned to the court, the case of Ben Moïse was heard, and Hussein was ordered to return the child at once. This he vowed he could not do, and to convince the judges he offered to bring the monkey caged as it was to the court, and they would see for themselves that the child of Ben Moïse had been transformed into a monkey. This was agreed to, and the monkey was brought. Hussein took special care to place the cage opposite Ben Moïse, and no sooner did the monkey catch sight of him than it set up a scream. Hussein Agha then opened the cage door, saying: "Go to your father," and the monkey with a bound and a yell embraced Ben Moïse, putting his head, in search of food, first on one shoulder of Ben Moïse and then on the other. The judges were thunderstruck, and declared their inability to give judgment in such a case. Ben Moïse protested, saying that it was against the laws of nature for such a metamorphosis to take place, whereupon Hussein told the judges of an example of some gold pieces turning into olives, and called upon Ben Moïse to witness the truth of his statement. The judges, much perplexed, dismissed the case, declaring that provision had not been made in the law for it, and there being no precedent to their knowledge they were unable to give judgment.

Leaving the court, Hussein informed Ben Moïse that there would still be pleasure and happiness in this world for him, provided he could change the olives back into gold. Needless to add that Ben Moïse handed the money to Hussein, and the son of Ben Moïse returned to his home none the worse for his transformation.

16. Kalaidji Avram of Balata

Balata, situated on the Golden Horn, is mostly inhabited by people of the poorer classes, who make their livelihood as tinsmiths, tinkers, and hawkers.

Here, there lived a certain tinsmith called Kalaidji Avram. Having rather a large business, his neighbors, especially those who lived nearest, were always complaining of the annoying smoke and disagreeable odor of ammonia which he used in tinning his pots and pans.

Opposite Avram's place the village guard-house was situated, and the chief, a soldier, often had disputes with Avram about the smoke. Avram would invariably reply, "I have my children to feed and I must work; and without smoke I cannot earn their daily bread."

The Soldier, much annoyed, cultivated a dislike for Avram and a thirst for revenge.

It happened that a man one day came to the soldier and said to him, "Do you want to make a fortune? If so, you have the means of doing this, provided you will agree to halve with me whatever is made."

The Soldier, on being assured that he had to just say a word or two to a person he would name and the money would be forthcoming, accepted the conditions. The man then said, "All you have to do is to go up to a funeral procession that will pass by here tomorrow on its way to the cemetery outside the city, and order it to stop. It is against the religion of these people for such a thing to happen, and the priest will offer you first ten, then twenty, and finally one hundred and ten thousand piasters to allow the funeral to proceed. Half will be for you to compensate you for your trouble and the other fifty-five thousand piasters for me."

This, as the man had told him, seemed very simple to the soldier. The next day, true enough, he saw a funeral, and immediately went out and ordered it to stop. The priest protested, offering first small bribes, then larger and larger, till ultimately he promised to bring to the captain one hundred and ten thousand piasters for allowing the funeral to proceed.

That evening, as agreed, the priest came and handed the money to the captain. Then taking another bag containing a second one hundred and ten thousand piasters, he said, "If you will tell me who informed you that we would pay so much money rather than have a funeral stopped, you can have this further sum."

The Soldier immediately thought of Avram, the tinsmith, and accused him as his informant, and the priest, satisfied, paid the sum and departed.

Avram disappeared nobody knew where. The priest said that death had taken him for his own as a punishment for stopping him while on a journey.

The accomplice of the soldier came a few days later for his share of the money. The soldier handed him the fifty-five thousand piasters, and at the same time said, "Of these fifty-five thousand piasters, thirty thousand must be given to the widow and children of Avram, and I advise you to give it willingly, for Avram has taken your place."

17. How Mehmet Ali Pasha of Egypt Administered Justice

An Egyptian merchant was in the habit of borrowing, and sometimes of lending money to an Armenian merchant of Cairo. Receipts were never exchanged, but at the closing of an old account or the opening of a new one they would simply say to each other, I have debited or credited you in my books, as the case might be, with so much.

On one occasion the Armenian lent the Egyptian the sum of twenty-five thousand piasters, and after the usual acknowledgment the Armenian made his entry. A reasonable time having passed, the Armenian sent his greetings to the Egyptian. This, in Eastern etiquette, meant, 'Kindly pay me what you owe.' The Egyptian, however, did not take the hint but returned greetings to the Armenian. This was repeated several times. Finally, the Armenian sent a message requesting the Egyptian to call upon him. The Egyptian, however, told the messenger to inform the Armenian merchant, that if he wished to see him, he must come to his house. The Armenian called upon the Egyptian, and requested payment of the loan. The Egyptian brought out his books and showed the Armenian that he was both credited and debited with the sum of twenty-five thousand piasters. The Armenian protested, but in vain; the Egyptian maintained that the debt had been paid.

In the hope of recovering his money, the Armenian had the case brought before Mehmet Ali Pasha of Egypt, a clever and learned judge. No witnesses, however, could be found to prove that the money had either been borrowed or repaid. It was thought that perhaps the Armenian had forgotten. Before dismissing the case, however, Mehmet Ali Pasha called in the Public Weigher and ordered that both the Armenian and Egyptian merchants be weighed. This done, Mehmet Ali Pasha took note of their respective weights. The Egyptian weighed one hundred and fifty pounds and the Armenian one hundred and eighty pounds. He then dismissed them, saying that he would send for them later on.

The Armenian waited patiently for a month or two, but no summons came from the Pasha. Every Friday he tried to meet the Pasha so as to remind him of the case, but with no avail; for the Pasha, seeing him from a distance, would turn away his head or otherwise purposely avoid catching his eye. At last, after about eight months of anxious waiting, the Armenian and the Egyptian were summoned to appear before the court. Mehmet Ali Pasha, in opening the case, called in the Public Weigher and had them weighed again. On this occasion it was found that the Armenian had decreased, now only weighing one hundred and twenty pounds, for worry makes a man grow thin; but the Egyptian, on the contrary, had put on several pounds. These facts were gravely considered, and the Pasha accused the Egyptian of having received the money and at once ordered the brass pot to be heated and placed on his head to force a confession. The Egyptian did not care to submit to this fearful ordeal, so he confessed that he had not repaid the debt, and had to do so then and there.

18. How The Farmer Learned to Cure His Wife

There once lived a farmer who understood the language of animals. He had obtained this knowledge on condition that he would never tell anyone, and if he did reveal the secret the penalty would be certain death.

One day he happened to listen to a conversation his ox and his horse were having. The ox had just come in from a weary and hard day's work in the rain.

"Oh," sighed the ox, looking over to the horse, "how fortunate you are to have been born a horse and not an ox. When the weather is bad you are kept in the stable, well fed, groomed every morning, and brushed every evening. Oh that I were a horse!"

"What you say is true," replied the horse, "but you are very stupid to work so hard."

"You do not know what it is to be beaten with a stick and yelled at, or you would not accuse me of being stupid to work so hard," replied the ox.

"Then why don't you feign sickness," continued the horse.

On the following day the ox decided to try this trick, but he was filled with guilt when he saw the horse led out to take his place at the plough. In the evening, when the horse was brought to the stable very tired, the ox sympathized with him, and regretted his being the cause, but at the same time expressed astonishment at his working so hard.

"Ah, my friend, I had to work hard; I can't bear the whip; the thought of the hideous crack! crack! makes me shiver even now," answered the horse.

"But leaving that aside, my poor horned friend," proceeded the horse, "I am now most anxious for you. I heard the master say tonight that if you were not well in the morning, the butcher was to come and slaughter you."

"You need not worry about me, friend horse," said the ox, "as I much prefer the yoke to chewing the cud of guilt."

At this point the farmer left the animals and entered his home, smiling at his own craftiness. Meeting his wife, she at once inquired as to the cause of his happy smile. He put her off, first with one excuse then with another, but to no avail. The more he protested, the stronger her inquisitiveness grew. Her unsatisfied curiosity at length made her ill. The endeavors of the numerous doctors brought to her assistance were as useless as the spells of the wise men from far and near, and as powerless to remove the spell as were the amulets, the charms, and the abracadabras thought of and written by holy men. The evil curiosity gnawed at her, and she pined away. The poor farmer was disturbed. Rather than see her die, he at last decided to tell her, and forfeit his own life to save hers. Deeply dejected, he sat at the window gazing, as he thought, for the last time on the familiar surroundings. Of a sudden he noticed his favorite rooster, followed by his numerous hens, sadly strutting about, only allowing his favorites to eat the food he discovered, and ruthlessly driving the others away. To one he said, "I am not like our poor master, to be ruled by one or twenty of you. He, poor man, will die today for revealing his secret knowledge to save her life."

“What is the secret knowledge?” asked one of the wives; and the rooster flew at her and thrashed her mercilessly, saying at each vigorous blow, “That is the secret, and if our master only treated the mistress as I treat you, he would not need to give up his life to-day.”

And as if maddened at the thought, he beat them all in turn. The master, seeing and appreciating the effect from the window, went to his wife and treated her in precisely the same manner. And this did what neither doctors, wise men, nor holy men could do—it cured her.

19. The Language of Birds

There once lived a Hodja who understood the language of birds, but refused to teach others. One young man was very persistent in his desire to know the language of these sweet creatures, but the Hodja was inflexible.

In despair, the young man went to the woods at least to listen to the pleasant chirping of the birds. Little by little he was able to understand their meaning, till finally, he understood them to tell him that his horse would die. On returning from the woods, he immediately sold his horse and went and told the Hodja.

“Oh Hodja, why will you not teach me the language of birds? Yesterday I went to the woods and they warned me that my horse would die, thus giving me the chance to sell it and avoiding the loss.”

The Hodja was silent, but would change his mind.

The following day the young man again went to the woods, and the chirping of the birds told him that his house would be burned. The young man hurried away, sold his house, again went to the Hodja and told him all that had happened, adding, “See, Hodja Sir, you would not teach me the language of the birds, but I have saved my horse and my house by listening to them.”

On the following day, the young man again went to the woods, and the birds chirped him the sad news, that on the following day he would die. In tears the young man went to the Hodja for advice.

“Oh Hodja Sir! Alas! What am I to do? The birds have told me that tomorrow I must die.”

“My son,” answered the Hodja, “I knew this would come, and that is why I refused to teach you the language of birds. Had you accepted the loss of your horse, your house would have been saved, and had your house been burned, your life would have been saved.”

20. The Swallows Advice

A man one day saw a swallow and caught it. The bird pleaded hard for freedom, saying, “If you let me go, your gain will be great, for I will give you three pieces of advice that will later be of use to you.”

The man listened to the bird and let it go. Flying to a tree close by it perched on a branch, and said, “Listen to the three pieces of advice that will guide you. The first is, do not believe things that are incredible; the second is, do not attempt to stretch out your hand to a place you are unable to reach; and the third advice I give you is, do not be sad for a thing that is past and gone. Take this advice and do not forget it.”

The bird then tempted the man, saying, “Inside of me there is a large pearl of great value; it is both magnificent and splendid, and as large as the egg of an eagle.”

Now, hearing this, the man regretted having let the bird go, the color of his face went pale, and he at once stretched out his hand to catch the swallow, but the latter said to the foolish man, “What! Have you already forgotten the advice I gave you, and the lie which I told you, have you believed? I had fallen into your hands, yet you were unable to keep me, and now you regret the past for which there is no remedy.”

21. We Do Not Know What the Dawn May Bring

The Minister of War, hurriedly, called the chief blacksmith of the Army and ordered him to have two hundred thousand horseshoes made immediately. The blacksmith was horrified, and explained that to make such a quantity of horseshoes, both time and workers would be required. The Minister replied, "It is the order of his Majesty that these two hundred thousand horseshoes be ready by tomorrow; if not, your head will pay the penalty."

The poor blacksmith replied, that knowing now that he was doomed he would be unable to make even a fifth of the number. The Minister would not listen to reason, and left in anger, repeating the order of his Majesty.

The blacksmith retired to his home deeply dejected. His wife tried to encourage and comfort him, saying, "Cheer up, husband, drink your wine, eat your bread, and be cheerful, for we do not know what the dawn may bring."

"Ah!" said the blacksmith, "the dawn will not bring two hundred thousand horseshoes, and my head will pay the penalty."

Late that night there was a tremendous knocking at his door. The poor blacksmith thought that it was an inquiry as to how many horseshoes were already made, and trembling with fear went and opened the door. What was his surprise, when on opening the door and inquiring the object of the visit, to be greeted with, "Hurry, blacksmith, let us have sixteen nails, for the Minister of War has been suddenly removed to Paradise by the hand of God."

The blacksmith gathered, not sixteen but forty nails of the best he had, and, handing them to the messenger, said, "Nail him down well, friend, so that he will not get up again, for had not this happened, the nails would have been required to keep me in my coffin."

22. Old Men Made Young

In Psamatia, an ancient Armenian village near the Seven Towers, there lived a certain blacksmith, whose custom it was to curse the devil and his works regularly five times a day instead of praying to God. He argued that it is the devil's fault that man needed to pray. The devil was angered at being persistently cursed, and decided to punish the blacksmith, or at least prevent him causing further trouble.

Taking the form of a young man he went to the smith and was taken on as an apprentice. After a time the devil told the smith that he had a very poor way of earning a living, and that he would show him how money was to be made. The blacksmith asked what he, a young apprentice, could do. Thereupon the devil told him that he had a great gift: the power to make old men young again. Though doubtful, after continued assurance the smith allowed a sign to be put above his door, stating that old people could be restored to youth. This extraordinary sign attracted a great many people, but the devil asked such high prices that most went away, preferring age to parting with so much money.

At last one old man agreed to pay the sum demanded by the devil, whereupon he was promptly thrown into the furnace, the master-smith blowing the bellows. After a time of vigorous blowing the devil raked out a young man. The fame of the smith extended far and wide, and many elderly people came to regain their youth. This profitable business went on for some time and at last the blacksmith, thinking to himself that it was not a difficult thing to throw a man into the furnace and rake him out from the ashes restored to youth, decided to do away with his apprentice's services, but kept the sign above the door.

It happened that the captain of the army, who was a very old man, came to him, and after bargaining for a much more modest sum than his apprentice would have asked, the blacksmith thrust him into the furnace as the devil, his apprentice, used to do, and worked at the bellows. He afterwards raked in the fire for the young man but he only raked out ashes. He was horrified, but what could he do?

The devil in the meantime went to the head of the army and the police, and informed them of what had taken place. The poor blacksmith was arrested, tried, and condemned to be hanged, as it was proved that the captain was last seen entering his shop.

Just as the blacksmith was about to be executed, the devil again appeared before him in the form of the apprentice, and asked him if he wished to be saved; if so, that he could save him, but on one condition only,—that he ceased from cursing the devil five times a day and pray as other people prayed. He agreed. Then the apprentice called in a loud voice to those who were about to execute him, "What are you doing with this man? He has not killed the captain; he is not dead, for I have just seen him entering his home." This was found to be true, and the blacksmith was freed, learning the truth of the proverb, 'Curse not even the devil.'

23. The Bribe

There once lived in Stamboul a man and wife who were so well matched that though married for a number of years their life was one of ideal harmony. This troubled the devil very much. He had destroyed the peace of home after home; he had successfully created, between husband and wife, father and son and brothers, the chasm of envy wide and deep. In this one little home alone he failed in spite of his greatest efforts. One day the devil was talking to an old woman, when the man who had thus far baffled him passed by. The devil groaned at the thought of his repeated failures. Turning to the old woman he said, "I will give you as a reward a pair of yellow slippers if you make that man quarrel with his wife."

The old woman was delighted, and at once began to scheme and work for the desired slippers. At a time when she was sure to find the lady alone, she went and begged for food, weeping at her sad fate at being a lonely old woman whose husband was long since dead. She appealed to the lady for compassion. The lady was very generous to the old woman, each day giving her something; so much so, that the thought that her good husband might think her extravagant often gave her some uneasiness.

One day the old woman looked into the shop-door of the good woman's husband and planted the first evil seed by calling out, "Ah! If men only knew where the money they work for from morning till night goes, or knew what their wives did when they were away, some homes would not be so happy."

The evil woman then went on her way, and the good shopkeeper wondered why she had said these words to him. A passing thought suggested that it was strange that recently his wife had asked him several times for a few extra piasters. The next day, the old woman as usual begged from her victim. She hugged the good woman before departing, taking care to leave the imprint of her blackened hand on her the good woman's back. The old woman then again went to the shop, looked at her victim's husband, and said, "Oh! How blind men are! They only look in a woman's face for truth and loyalty; they forget to look at the back where the stamp of the lover's hand is to be seen."

As before, the old woman disappeared. But the mind of the shopkeeper was troubled and his heart was heavy. In this oppressed state he went home, and as soon as he could he looked at his wife's back, and was horrified to see there the impression of a hand. He got up and left his home, a broken-hearted man.

The devil was deeply impressed at the success of the old woman, and hurried to keep his promise. He took a long pole, tied the pair of slippers at the end, and hurried off to the old woman. Arriving at her house he called out to her to open the window. When she did this, he thrust in the pair of yellow slippers, begging her to take them, but not to come near him; they were hard-earned slippers, he said; she had succeeded where he had failed; so that he was afraid of her and was anxious to keep out of her way.

24. How the Devil Lost His Wager

A peasant, ploughing his field, was panting with fatigue, when the devil appeared before him and said, "Oh, poor man! You complain about your life and it's no wonder. Your work is more suitable for an animal than a man. Now I have made a wager that I shall find a contented man; so give me the handle of your plough so that I can do the work for you."

The peasant agreed and the devil touched the oxen and in one turn of the plough all the furrows of the field were opened up and the work finished.

"Is it well done?" asked the devil.

"Yes," replied the man, "but seed is very dear this year."

In answer to this, the devil shook his long tail in the air, and lo, little seeds began to fall like hail from the sky.

"I hope," said the devil, "that I have won my bet."

"Bah," answered the peasant, "what's the good of that? These seeds might be lost. You do not take into consideration frost, winds, drought, damp, storms, diseases of plants, and other things. How can I judge as yet?"

"Look," said the devil, "in this box are both sun and rain, take it and use it as you please."

The peasant did so and it worked well, for his corn soon ripened and up to that time he had never seen so good a harvest. But the corn of his neighbors had also prospered from the rain and sun.

At harvest time the devil came, and saw that the man was looking with envious eyes at his neighbor's fields where the corn was as good as his own.

"Have you been able to obtain what you desired?" asked the devil.

"Alas!" answered the man, "all the barns will break down under the weight of the harvest. The grain will be sold at a low price. This fine harvest will make me sit on ashes."

While he was speaking, the devil had taken an ear of corn from the ground and was crushing it in his hand, and as soon as he blew on the grains they all turned into pure gold. The peasant took up one and examined it attentively on all sides, and then in a despairing tone cried out, "Oh, my God! I must spend money to melt all these and send them to the mint."

The devil wrung his hands in despair. He had lost his wager. He could do everything, but he could not make a contented man.

25. The Effects of Wine

Bekri Mustafe, who lived during the reign of Sultan Selim, was a celebrated drunkard, and perhaps at that time the only drunkard in Turkey. Consequently, he was often the subject of conversation in circles both high and low. It happened that his Majesty the Sultan spoke to Bekri one day, and he asked him what pleasure he found in drinking so much wine. Bekri replied that wine was a godsend to man; that it made the deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, and the poor rich, and that he, Bekri, when drunk, could hear, see, and walk like two Bekris. The Sultan, to verify the truth of this statement, sent his servants into the city to bring back four men, the one blind, the other deaf, the third lame, and the fourth poor. When these were brought, his Majesty ordered wine to be served to them in company with Bekri. They had not been drinking long when the deaf man said, "I hear the sound of great rumbling."

And the blind man replied, "I can see him; it is an enemy who seeks our destruction."

The lame man asked where he was, saying, "Show him to me, and I will quickly kill him."

And the poor man called out, "Don't be afraid to kill him; I've got his blood money in my pocket."

Just then a funeral happened to pass by the Palace buildings, and Bekri got up and ordered the solemn procession to stop. Removing the lid of the coffin, he whispered a few words into the ear of the dead man, and then putting his ear to the dead man's mouth, gave an exclamation of surprise. He then ordered the funeral to proceed, and returned to the Palace.

The Sultan asked him what he had said to the dead man, and what the dead man replied.

"I simply asked him where he was going and from what he had died, and he replied he was going to Paradise, and that he had died from drinking wine without bread."

The Sultan understanding what he wanted ordered that a feast should be immediately served.