

DROWER'S FOLK-TALES OF IRAQ



Drower's Folk-Tales of Iraq

PART I

BY

E. S. DROWER

PART II

BY

JORUNN JACOBSEN BUCKLEY



GORGAS PRESS

2007

First Gorgias Press Edition, 2007

Copyright © 2007 by Gorgias Press LLC

All rights reserved under International and Pan-American Copyright Conventions. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise without the prior written permission of Gorgias Press LLC.

Published in the United States of America by Gorgias Press LLC, New Jersey

ISBN 978-1-59333-360-7



GORGIAS PRESS

46 Orris Ave., Piscataway, NJ 08854 USA

www.gorgiaspress.com

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standards.

Printed in the United States of America

Part I

by
E. S. Drower



Lili, the Baghdad Christian woman who told many of the stories in this volume

To the
WOMEN OF 'IRAQ
with warm friendship
and admiration

INTRODUCTION

IT is a privilege to introduce to the public a work which breaks, as far as I know, entirely fresh ground, for no writer, European or Arab, has attempted to collect the traditional fairy tales of Mesopotamia. A number of Kurdish stories have been published, notably by Soane, Edmonds, and Ivanow. In *Persian Tales* (1919) Lt.-Col. D. L. R. and Mrs. Lorimer have published a comprehensive selection of tales translated from Bakhtiari and Persian originals, whilst Mr. H. D. Barnham's amusing *Tales of Nasr-ed-Din Khoja* (1923) have their roots in Turkish soil, and are scarcely older than their author, who was Court Jester to Timur the Lame in the fifteenth century. To the student of folk-lore, however, Mesopotamia is almost virgin soil.

The stories here recorded are equalled in range and interest only by *Persian Tales*, and appear in some respects to be of even greater antiquity. They have been admirably translated, and in their present form should be no less welcome to antiquaries than to children. Ruskin once said: 'All inferior poetry is an injury to the good . . . and in general adds to the weight of human weariness in a most woeful and culpable manner.' These stories are exempt from such a charge, for the form in which they are told is as vivid as when they first fell from the lips of the narrator.

In 'Iraq as elsewhere such legends as have survived have in the course of centuries been polished by the stream of time. They owe their freshness in part to the qualities of clarity and conciseness that the Arabic tongue shares with Greek and Latin, and in part to the fact that the professional story-teller was wont to exercise an economy of words, supplemented with gestures the absence of which makes Englishmen seem so impassive to the rest of the world.

What memories do such stories call up from the past—memories of our own childhood, and of our own children

—and of every generation from the beginning of time! 'We know,' said Max Müller, Taylorian Professor in the University of Oxford, 'that all the most vital elements of our knowledge and civilization—our languages, our alphabets, our figures, our weights and measures, our art, our religion, our traditions, our very nursery stories, come to us from the East . . . but for the rays of Eastern light . . . Europe . . . might have remained for ever a barren and forgotten promontory of the primeval Asiatic continent.' This work is an important new contribution, which perhaps no one but the talented authoress could have made, to our knowledge of the undercurrents of Eastern life and thought.

The reference at page 254 to the mechanical man of iron, which was wound like a clock, may seem comparatively modern, but the story may well be a thousand years old, for Firdausi records the construction, by the order of Alexander the Great, of an iron horse on wheels, deriving its motive power from naphtha, which moving rapidly forward, struck terror into the ranks of the enemy and scattered the elephants. Elsewhere are enshrined references to practices, now long since forgotten, which were in vogue long before the days of Alexander.

I must, however, leave to scholars the task of collating these stories with Indian, Persian, and European collections, and perhaps with Semitic and Sumerian archetypes. Meanwhile, with the confidence born of personal experience, I place on record my belief that these stories will be as welcome in the nursery as in the drawing-room, and as valuable to the student of the East as any historical work.

A. T. WILSON.

PREFACE

REALIZING one day that I was in the second decade of my sojourn in 'Iraq, I asked myself if I could make any useful contribution, however slight, to the sum of knowledge about the country. I have an advantage in being a woman, since my countrymen in 'Iraq are for the most part workers employed in official or commercial activities, and therefore with limited time and often little opportunity, to devote themselves to matters not vital to politics, business, history, or science. Moreover, as men, they are shut off from the family life of a large part of the community. As a woman I can enter where they could not, and so am free to study the country from an aspect denied to them.

I turned to notes I had made about 'Iraqi customs, occupations, crafts, superstitions, practice of magic, and much else, and found amongst them several stories written down as I had heard them. These reminded me that just as there is still below the soil of 'Iraq a wealth of archaeological material as yet untouched, so there is, on the lips of the people of a country which was up to the time of the world-war remote from Western influence, a folk-lore, hitherto uncollected, which must have its origins in the earliest times. 'Iraq has been termed the Cradle of Mankind, and if this is the case, one would expect to find traces of some of the stories which amused Mankind in his cradle, some of the lullabies which soothed him, some of the bogies which frightened him.

Folk-lore is the youngest of all the sciences: she is also the most modest, since she acts as useful handmaid to her elder sisters, history, anthropology, mythology, and kindred sciences, and intelligent analysis of folk-lore yields precious fragments of information which illuminate dark corners in our knowledge of the human family, its customs, beliefs, and wanderings.

I once saw a string of amber in a shop near the British Museum, each bead of which contained a fly. Similarly, in

the stories and legends of 'Iraq the skilled reader will perceive embalmed amid all the nonsense and fancy, scraps of mythology, religion, saga, and tribal custom far older than the fable which clothes them. In the very fact that such and such a folk-story appears in other countries may lurk information as to a race migration, a foreign conquest, a trade route, or the like.

The folk-stories of 'Iraq come from many varied sources, for 'Iraq, lying as it does between Near East and Far East, has been one of the world's highways and battle-grounds.

Wave after wave of migration, conquest, and settlement have surged over it, Sumerian, Chaldaean, Cassite, Assyrian, Persian, Arab, and Turkish; each race in turn contributing something of its religious beliefs, customs, sagas, and traditions to the folk-lore of the country. Merchant caravans in their slow progress from the Mediterranean seaboard or cities of Cathay or India, Jewish captives, negro settlers and slaves, travellers, and wandering gipsies must all have added to 'Iraqi folk-lore and distributed it. Stress must be laid particularly on the instrumentation of imported slaves, for part of a slave's duty is to entertain his owner by tale and song. Lastly, in Moslem times, we have the yearly caravans of pilgrims passing to and fro, and colonies of pilgrims in the holy cities, such as Karbala and Najaf.

It is not surprising, therefore, if the folk-stories and folk-lore of 'Iraq are of a very composite nature, and much of the material gathered here is already familiar to students of folk-lore, if only in translations from the Persian, Armenian, and Turkish, not to mention the more universally known Grimm. In my notes I call attention to a few of these parallels. It is rarely that a whole story is transplanted from one nation to another; indeed, it would seem rather as though incidents in stories were drawn from the same lucky-bag. Intercourse between Persia, Armenia, Syria, Turkey, and 'Iraq has been continuous, and it would be surprising if there were not a common stock of legend. But it is useful to see what the



Gipsy entertainers in an encampment of tribesmen

individual genius of each people makes of the same raw material.

As soon as I concentrated upon this particular form of research I discovered how delightful the quest can prove. Not only did it bring me into touch with a great many interesting and pleasant personalities, but it gave me an excuse for wandering about the country, and experiencing the charming hospitality of tribal shaikhs and other persons.

The art of story-telling, an old one in the East, is declining in 'Iraq, and in the towns few, almost none, of the present generation possess it. Story-telling up till twenty years ago was a lucrative profession and a recognized accomplishment. Men story-tellers sat in the coffee-houses or sūqs and were paid, or received gratuities, for their recitations; women story-tellers were always welcome in the harems. Now, the cinema and gramophone have replaced the story-teller in the towns, and though in most families there is to be found an old slave, dependant, or relative who tells tales in the family circle, even these are becoming few, and much of the folk-lore which has been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation will gradually be forgotten altogether. When wireless is added to the cinema and gramophone, the process will be accelerated, for the 'Iraqi is quick to profit by all such Western inventions, and before long the very tribesmen in the desert will be listening-in to concerts and possibly political propoganda broadcast from some Near or Middle Eastern radio station.

All the tales in this volume are in actual circulation to-day. Many of them are lacking in finish and construction, many of them show palpable gaps, but I have tried to reproduce faithfully as far as possible the spirit and manner in which they were told, and have striven throughout not to be over-free in translation but to follow the Arabic as nearly as I could. Some stories are verbally translated, but not all, for amateur shorthand, scribbled while the stories were being told, was only adequate when the narrators spoke slowly and paused sentence by

sentence. These narrators included all kinds and classes of people: a Cabinet Minister, schoolmasters, Moslem and Christian ladies, their servants and slaves, tribesmen and tribeswomen. They were not all of equal skill. The best narrator I met with was a Baghdad Christian woman, though a Moslem lady of tribal origin, a charming woman of much artistic ability, came very near her in proficiency. The Christian, an illiterate, one-eyed woman of between fifty and sixty, became lost to her surroundings from the moment she squatted on the floor and embarked upon her tale. She was a good actress and employed gesture and change of voice to aid her graphic and racy speech. She had her stories, she said, from her grandmother, who was fond of relating them, and declared that these stories, heard when she was very young, were the only ones she could remember accurately. Among other stories I took down from her lips was the well-known classic from the *Thousand Nights and One Night* entitled 'The Story of Hasan of Al Basrah'. Space forbade me to include her version in this volume, but it was interesting to find how close the oral tradition keeps to the written word. I was careful not to read the original story until I had set down the tale as she told it.

I made my collection in Baghdad, Mosul, and the desert north of Mosul, but not, I am sorry to say, in Basrah or the South. I hope in the future to be able to gather some folk-lore in Southern 'Iraq. Mr. John Van Ess, whose *Spoken Arabic of Mesopotamia* is a standard work, and who knows 'Iraq and the 'Iraqis better than any living European or American, tells me that the South is rich in folk-tales and that the practice of voodoo amongst the black slaves there deserves study.

Now as to the form of the stories. At the beginning of the recital it is usual to utter some verselet such as (among Moslems),

Hnāk, ma hnāk
Ya 'āshqān an Nabī
Sallu' alaih

'Here, not here,
Oh lovers of the Prophet,
Pray for Him,'

to which the audience reply in chorus,

Elf as salāt

Was salām 'alaik ya rasūl Allah;

'A thousand prayers

And peace upon thee, oh Prophet of God;'

while both Moslems and Christians employ the formula:

*Kān u ma kān (or kān ma kān)*¹

'Ala Allah at Tuklān

'It was and it was not.

(Our) reliance is upon God.'

Conventional tags and verselets occur in the course of the story, and at its conclusion comes another little jingle such as,

Kunna 'adkum wa jīna

Wad daff umgarg'a wal 'arūs hazīna.

'We were with you and came back

And the tambourine is rattling and the bride sad.'

or,

Hadhal hechāya

Nusha chedhbāya (Nusfha kadhab)

Wa lo baitna qarīb

Kunt ajīb likum

Tubeg hummus wa tubeg azbīb.

'This story is half-lie,

And were our house near,

I'd bring you a dish of beans and a dish of raisins.'

These tags will appear from time to time in their proper places.

The matter of the tales is, as I have said, very varied. It might seem easy to classify the tales into groups of

¹ *Kān u ma kān*, or *kān ma kān*. It is difficult to find the true translation for this tag, the literal translation being somewhat unmeaning. A local name for folk-tales is 'Kān mā kān stories' and the tag may come from some classical source. Turkish and Armenian stories sometimes open 'There was was not' (a king, man, &c.), much as we begin 'Once upon a time'. I think the purpose of the rhyme is twofold, first to imply that the story is a fanciful one, and second to invoke God's name against malign influences which might be conjured up by the narration, especially when the jānn appear in it.

'nursery' tales, 'nursery' jingles, animal fables, tales of the Grimm *Household Tales* type, tales of the *Arabian Nights* type, and anecdotes told about supernatural beings by people who believe them to be true experiences; or they might be divided according to probable origin. But I found my attempts to arrange the stories into categories unsatisfactory, and so I have left them in no rational order at all, merely stating some particulars about the narrator of each tale at the end of the volume. At the end of the volume too will be found such notes as do not actually elucidate the text, but rather the matter of the stories, and references to a few collections of Persian, Armenian, and Turkish folk-tales which contain parallel stories.

Practically every tale set down here is of some type well known to folk-lorists, such, for example, as the stories in which *jānn*, or fairy-folk, don at will the appearance of birds, a type familiar to us in the legend of the Swan Maidens.¹ When one finds them in 'Iraq, one is bound to recall the bird-men of the early cylinder-seals, and the representations of men dressed in bird's plumage which one finds from time to time on Sumerian objects. Again, the description of the condition of the dead in the underworld in the Babylonian epic of the Descent of Ishtar into the dark realm 'where dust is their food and earth their eating', is significant:

They see not light and sit in darkness,
They are dressed like a bird with a garment of wings.

In short, the bird has always been symbolical of the soul, and the story of the Thorn-seller, with its other-world bridegroom coming in the guise of a bird, recalls both the Sumerian dwellers in the underworld and the legend of Lohengrin. The likeness to the latter and other folk-tales of the sort is heightened when the bird-man in the Arab story vanishes from the ken of his human bride the instant that his name and nature are proclaimed.

There is one great difference between fairy-tales told to an 'Iraqi child and those told in an English nursery. The

¹ Cf. *The Science of Fairy Tales*, by E. S. Hartland, Chap. X, 'Swan-maidens'.

English nurse or mother does not believe in the existence of fairies or ogres, whereas the 'Iraqi story-teller very often does. To the vast mass of the population of 'Iraq, exceptions being only found amongst the small educated minority, the supernatural beings which appear in tale and anecdote really exist. On the other hand, I have lived over ten years in the country and have never heard a ghost tale. I do not say that they do not exist, but I personally never heard one, and when one hears of a house that is *maskūn*, or haunted, it is never haunted by the dead, only by *jinn*. I have asked some of the women the reason, and their reply is usually something like this: 'Why should the dead return? When they are dead, they go to their proper place.' This is curious, seeing that Sumerian and Babylonian literature is full of belief in ghosts and of directions how to propitiate them. But traces of the ancient ghost-cult do linger in a few of the stories such as 'The Story of the Boy and the Deyus', again proving the survival of ideas in folk-stories after they have disappeared from popular belief.

It will be necessary to say something of the various supernatural beings which appear in these pages. Western readers are already familiar with the *jinni*, *'afrū*, and *ghūl* which appear so often in the pages of the *Arabian Nights*, but they may know less of other demons and ogres which figure in the pandemonium of the 'Iraqis, such as the *s'ilūwa*, the *deyu*, the *dāmi*, the *se'ir*, the *tantal*, the *tābi'a*, the *ūm es sabyān*, and the *qarīna*.

I will only deal here with such of these mythological beings as occur in the stories, for I hope to discuss the folklore of 'Iraq more exhaustively in a future book.

The *s'ilūwa* occupies much the same role in 'Iraqi legend as the witch or ogress in Western fairy-tales. She is a water-spirit, for she dwells in the river or in caves near running streams. Her body is covered with long hair, her breasts are pendant, reaching her knees, and when she wishes to suckle her children, whom she carries on her back, she throws her breasts over her shoulder. In shape, she is like a woman, but is represented sometimes as

having a fish's tail instead of two legs. She is fond of human flesh, but at the same time she has a partiality for human lovers. She is mortal like all the creations of Allah, except the angels, and she fears iron. Judging from some of the many stories about the *s'ilūwa*, I am inclined to think that this demon is a composite myth made out of some ancient river-goddess cult and the anecdotes which African slaves have told of the great apes.¹

Another river demon is called the *ferij agra'a*. He is fond of playing tricks on fishermen and river-dwellers, but does not seem to be such a dangerous being as the *s'ilūwa*.

Like her, he has either a fish's tail or weak legs. He resembles an old man, but his head is red and bald and the hair of his beard is green. A Shammari tribesman once told me that a shaikh camped beside the Euphrates, noticing that his mare which had formerly been tireless and strong, became weak and dispirited, had some pitch smeared one night on her back. The next morning they found a *ferij agra'a* astride her, struggling in vain to flee away after his nocturnal ride. The shaikh's people fell on the monster and killed it with their knives. An appearance resembling this demon was reported in a Baghdad paper as lately as August 1922.

The *dāmi* is a half-bestial ogress which haunts the outskirts of towns. Like Babylonian and Assyrian demons,

¹ One day when speaking about *s'ilūwāt* to my head-servant, a Bahreini, I said to him, 'Are there such creatures near Bahrein?' He replied that there were, and that people were sometimes attacked by them in the desert. I asked, 'Have you ever seen one?' He replied, 'Yes.' I asked him to tell me how and where, and to my surprise, he answered, 'In London, when I went there with Faisal Ibn Saūd.' (The man had been attached to Faisal Ibn Saūd's suite when he visited London at the end of the War.) Pressed for details, he continued, 'Mr. Philby took us one day to a large garden where there were many animals. There were *s'ilūwāt*, two of them, male and female, in a box, and the box was adorned with adornment. No one was allowed to come near them but one, an Englishman, who guarded them.'

I said, 'What you saw were monkeys, Mubārak.'

He replied, 'No, *khatūn*, monkeys we saw there, too, many of them, but these were of the nature of man.'

The Arabic for gorilla is *جؤج* *ghūl* (anglicè, ghou), indicating again that the Arabs take the larger apes for demons.

its usual food is dirt, refuse, and leavings of all kinds, though it has also a liking for human flesh. In 'Iraqi folk-tales it often takes the role assigned in European fairy-stories to the wolf.

The *qarīna* is a female demon. She will attach herself to a man, draw away his affection from his wife or bride, and even have children by him. An unmarried man is often thought to have a *qarīna*¹ as his wife. Amorous dreams are put down to intercourse with her. She is supposed to be very jealous and to injure any human woman on whom her human lover may have set his affections. She also steals or kills babies. It has been pointed out by Mr. Campbell-Thompson that she is probably the direct descendant of the Babylonian *ardat līlī*.²

The *deyu* is another rustic demon who haunts woods or desolate places. He and his female counterpart occur so often in these pages that their habits may be gathered from them.

The *se'ir* was described to me by a Shammar tribesman as haunting desolate places and ruins, especially Hatra. In appearance, he said, it was a very old man with a beard to its knees, one eye, very long teeth with iron on them, and toe-nails of iron. It devours human beings. I have only heard of this demon from the Shammar: in Baghdad and the south it is not apparently known. In Mr. Campbell-Thompson's *Semitic Magic*, p. 57, I find:

'It appears from several poetical passages of the Old Testament that the Northern Semites believed in demons of a precisely similar kind—hairy beings (*se'irim*), nocturnal monsters (*lilith*), which haunted waste and desolate places in fellowship with jackals and ostriches.'

To judge from the story told me by the Shammar, this ogre is related to the Cyclops of Greek legend.

I hope that 'Iraqis who read this book will be kind enough to furnish me with any information which may be in their possession about all these creatures of the night, for 'Iraq is a vast storehouse of folk-lore and legend. In

¹ In Armenian folk-tales she is called the *Al*.

² R. Campbell-Thompson, *Semitic Magic*, pp. 67 and 77.

offering these tales, drawn from my own imperfect and always growing collection, to a British public, I hope to prove how rich the country is in such treasure. I have not printed here stories which are obscene, but those given are unbowdlerized. I deemed it better to offer the stories in their natural form, without paraphrase or excuse.

I wish to thank most warmly those friends who have aided me in my work. The story-tellers head the list, and kind people like Madame Tatheossian, Shaikh 'Ajil al Yawir, and members of the Naqib's family who have put me into touch with them. Next comes 'Abd al Aziz Beg Mudhaffar, who was good enough to take a warm interest in the collection and to verify the correctness of the various tags of verse in dialect. To Sir Arnold Wilson, who was the first European to whom I showed this collection, I am most grateful, in the first place for his great kindness in contributing an introduction to this book, and secondly for much helpful suggestion and encouragement. I must also thank Professor Alfred Guillaume, for valuable advice on certain points of Arabic transcription and translation which were referred to him when the book was in proof.

CONTENTS

Note on transliteration	xxiii
I. The Crazy Woman	1
II. The Goat and the Old Woman	7
III. Three Little Mice	10
IV. The Sparrow and his Wife	12
V. Dungara Khsheybān	14
VI. The Crystal Ship	20
VII. The Old Couple and their Goat	27
VIII. Shamshūm al Jabbār	30
IX. Husain an Nim-Nim	36
X. The Blackbeetle who Wished to get Married	40
XI. The Thorn-seller	45
XII. The Blind Sultan	58
XIII. Jarāda	74
XIV. The Stork and the Jackal	80
XV. 'It is not the Lion's Fur Coat!'	83
XVI. Two stories of Abu Nowās	85
XVII. A story of the Khalīfa Hārūn ar Rashid	87
XVIII. Another story of the Khalīfa	89
XIX. The Tricks of Jānn	91
XX. It was Enough to bewilder the Lion	93
XXI. Two Nursery Rhymes	95
XXII. The Bitter Orange	98
XXIII. Tale told by a Shammar Tribesman	103
XXIV. Shammar Stories. I.	105
XXV. Shammar Stories. II.	108
XXVI. Shammar Stories. III.	112
XXVII. Hājir	114
XXVIII. The Woman of the Well	120
XXIX. Hasan the Thief	127
XXX. Moses and the Two Men	141

XXXI.	Al Gumeyra (Little Moon)	142
XXXII.	The Three Dervishes and the Wonderful Lamp	145
XXXIII.	The King and the Three Maidens, or the Doll of Patience	157
XXXIV.	The Merchant's Daughter	162
XXXV.	Wudayya (Little White Shell)	183
XXXVI.	The Poor Girl and Her Cow	187
XXXVII.	The Prince and the Daughter of the Thorn- seller	194
XXXVIII.	Uhdeydān, Uch'eybān, and Unkheylān	205
XXXIX.	Melek Muhammad and the Ogre	210
XL.	Er Rūm	219
XLI.	The Cotton-carder and Kasilūn	224
XLII.	Bunayya	231
XLIII.	The Cat	246
XLIV.	The Fish that Laughed	253
XLV.	The Honest Man	263
XLVI.	The Generous Man and the Niggardly Man	267
XLVII.	The Boy and the Deyus	275
XLVIII.	The Shepherd and his Brother	287
NOTES		293

LIST OF PLATES

Lili, the Baghdad Christian woman who told many of the stories in this volume	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Gipsy entertainers in an encampment of tribesmen	<i>facing p. x</i>
A corpse being taken to burial at Najaf	” 34
Digging a well in the desert west of Mosul	” 34
Building a kelek on the Tigris. Photograph by Mr. R. Gorbold	” 36
Thorn-gatherers	” 64
A kibabchi, Baghdad	” 64
Weaving grass mats, Karbala	” 96
A grass rope maker (<i>fattāl</i>), Hillah	” 96
The great tent of Shaikh ‘Ajil al Yawir	” 106
Shammar tribesmen	” 106
The coffee-maker in the guest-tent	” 110
The women’s quarters in a Shammar shaikh’s tent	” 110
An encampment of poor Bedu	” 134
A Bedawi woman grinding corn	” 134
A Shammar girl	” 138
A cobbler, Baghdad	” 160
An oasis pool, Shithātha	” 176
A street in Baghdad with jutting windows (<i>shenāshīl</i>)	” 198
Spinning cotton	” 198
Shammar tribesmen eating	” 236
A shaikh’s wife and her servants	” 236
A hawker, Najaf	” 258
A fisherman on the Tigris, throwing his net. By permission of Messrs. Abbosh & Co., Baghdad	” 258
A Bedawi shepherd, Northern ‘Iraq	” 288

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

ALL the stories in this collection (with the exception of four, Stories XIV, XX, XXXIII, and XLV) were related to me in Arabic. The language was the vulgar colloquial dialect of 'Iraq, and as such I have tried to reproduce it in the verselets and quotations. An attempt to reproduce dialect must necessarily be exposed to criticism, and is far from easy. I have tried to reproduce Arabic and other Oriental words in the way that they were spoken, but in general have endeavoured to give the reader the clue to the literary word or root (where it exists). It is no service to truth to force these stories of the people into a mould which has been disused for centuries in common talk. There is not one dialect and pronunciation, but many. Even in Baghdad, the Christians, Jews, and Moslems all pronounce their words differently and employ their own corruptions of speech, and this is further accentuated because the women still further exaggerate differences and employ words rarely used by men. The leading characteristics of the dialect are as follows:

- (1) *k* ك is rendered *ch*.
- (2) *q* ق becomes *g* or *j*.
- (3) The vulgar reverse their syllables in speaking, e. g. *ta* becomes *at*, *mu* becomes *um*, and so forth.
- (4) Other vulgarisms are mispronunciations, e. g. *jīna* for *j'īna*, *khō* for *hadha al*, *'ad* for *'and*, &c.
- (5) The use of Persian and Turkish words, such as *khōsh* and *chōl*. These are used throughout the country and by well-educated and ill-educated alike.
- (6) A plentiful use of the diminutive, e. g. *shuwāiyib* (little old man).

The vowels also change in the spoken word, and more so in the South than in the North; for example Van Ess rightly gives the Basrawi *keteb* for the correct *kataba* (he wrote), while the Baghdad Moslem says *katab*. Everywhere *malik* (king) is pronounced *melek*, and it would be incorrect to transcribe the word in its literary form. For shortcomings in my efforts to reproduce tags and verselets as I heard them, I offer my apologies. I thought it better to risk writing rubbish than to force the verses into something which though grammatically correct, was certainly not what I heard.

For the transcription of Arabic I have, at the suggestion of my publishers, employed the system, slightly modified, to indicate dialect characteristics, recommended by the Royal Geographical Society. In

the vernacular the difference between a heavy consonant and a light consonant is barely perceptible to the untrained European ear, and the Arabic scholar will readily perceive the letter intended. I have retained certain Arabic words in the text, e.g. *sūq*, as the words 'market' or 'town' do not convey the meaning. The Indian word 'bazaar' comes nearer, but to use the Arabic word is preferable. Similarly, 'cloak' and 'coat' do not translate '*aba*' with any exactness.

I

THE CRAZY WOMAN

THERE was once a woman whose intellect was feeble. She was not possessed, but wanting. Her husband was a *raqq'a*, a cobbler, and he had a friend, a shepherd, who brought him one day two fleeces of wool from his sheep and said, 'Get an 'aba made with that for yourself.'

The cobbler replied, 'I am much obliged. Thank you!' and he took it home, and said to his wife, 'O woman, do you know who will spin this wool? I want to get it made into an 'aba.'¹

Answered she, 'Yes! I know.'

He gave her the wool, and where did she go? She walked to the ditch outside the South Gate, which was full of green water, and the frogs croaking in it, qurrutch! qurrutch! qurrutch! Krk! Krk!

The woman called to them, 'Cousins! My cousins!'

They answered, 'Qurrutch! Qurrutch! kk! kk!'

She thought they answered her, and said, 'I have brought you some wool for you to spin into an 'aba for my husband, can you do it?'

They answered, 'K-k! k-k! qurrutch! qurrutch!'

Asked she, 'And when shall I come for it?'

Said they, 'Qurrutch! k-k!'

Said she, 'Aye, a month! Good, I will come for it!' And she threw the two fleeces into the ditch, and then returned home.

Said her husband, 'Did you leave my wool to be spun?'

Answered she, 'Aye, husband, I left it with my maternal cousins!'

He thought to himself, 'I never heard that she had cousins, but perhaps she has!' and he said to her, 'When will they bring it?'

She replied, 'I am going to fetch it in a month's time.'

¹ The universal outer garment of the Arab. It is woven either of wool or of silk, and is embroidered at the neck and on the shoulders with gold thread. It is square in cut, and has wide sleeves.

The Crazy Woman

The month passed, and another month, and yet another month, and the man said to his wife, 'It is now three months and my 'aba is not ready, I will go with you and get it. Where do your cousins live?'

Said she, 'Near the South Gate!'

So they walked and walked, and came to the South Gate, and when the man asked where the house was, she pointed to the ditch, and said, 'My cousins live there!' while the frogs said, 'Krr-rr! kk-kk! qtsch! qurrutch!'

The man looked, and there he saw the two fleeces in the water, all green, and rotten, and spoiled! How angry he was! He beat her, crying, 'You crazy creature! You idiot! you fool!' and when they got back, he shut the door on her and went to bed, leaving her outside in the road, although it was growing dark. As for him, he went to sleep.

Dī! the night wore on until it was nearly midnight. The woman still sat by the road, and her husband was asleep inside. A cat passed by, and she thought that her husband had relented and sent the cat to fetch her in, so she said to the cat,

Fūti, fūti, mā āji!
B'ath 'aleya pishpish¹ khātūn
Mā āji!

'Go away, go away!
 He has sent Miss Pussy for me,
 I won't come!'

A little after that, a dog went by. The woman cried:

Eyhu! b'ath 'aleya aūsh-aūshera
Mā āji, mā āji!
Fūt, fūt!

'Goodness gracious! he has sent a Bow-wow for me now,
 But I won't come!
 So go away!'

Now it happened that a thief had been at work that night in the Sultan's house, and presently he came walking

¹ 'Pish!' is the exclamation used in shooing a cat away.

with the stolen treasure on the back of a camel. The camel strayed from the path, and stopped in front of the woman who cried:

B'ath pishpish khātūn, mā ruhtu!

Aūsh-aūshera mā rūhtu

Hadha hōb-hōbera,¹ lāzim ārūh wiyāhu!

'He sent a Miss Pussy, but I wouldn't go!

He sent a Bow-wow, but I wouldn't go!

But now here is Mr. Hump! I must go with *him!*'

So she rose and knocked at the door, and called to her husband:

'You sent Miss Pussy, and I wouldn't come!

And you sent a Bow-wow, and I wouldn't come!

But now you have sent Mr. Hump, I must come!'

Now the man was beginning to feel sorry that he had left the woman out in the cold, and he opened the door, and there was the woman with a camel.

He said, 'Where did you get this camel?'

Answered she, 'You sent it to me!'

So he drove the camel inside into the yard, and said to his wife, 'It is cold, go in and sleep!'

And when she had gone, and he knew that she was asleep, he opened the saddle-bags, and found them full of treasure! He got a spade and made a hole and buried it all, then he killed the camel, and buried it too, only keeping a piece of the meat. This he took and made of it some *kubbeh*² and cooked it, then he went up to sleep.

Now there came some neighbours from a house near by, and they knocked at the door, and cried to the woman, 'We want to go down to the river to get water!'³

He heard the women knocking, and roused his wife and said, 'Go, wife, see who knocks at the door!'

She went, and they took her with them to go down to the river to get water.

¹ *Hōb!* is a cameleer's cry.

² *Rissoles* of meat, within a casing of rice or wheat.

³ Women do not like to go out at night by themselves, or in twos or threes, they prefer a larger number for safety.

While they were gone the man took a dish of the kubbeh on to the roof, and as soon as his wife came back from the river, he threw some of the kubbeh at her; then he went back to bed and pretended to sleep.

Cried the woman, 'Come, neighbours! Come! It is raining kubbeh!'

The women picked up the kubbeh which he had thrown and ate it, and then they went away. Came the woman to her husband and roused him, saying, 'O husband! husband!'

He answered, 'What is it? You won't let me get any sleep!'

Said she, 'Come! It has been raining kubbeh!'

He looked at what she had brought, and said, 'Yes, it is indeed kubbeh! From whence did it come?' and ate of it.

She replied, 'It came from the skies: when we came back from the river, it rained kubbeh upon us!'

Said he, '*Suduq?*' 'Truth?'

Then they both went to sleep.

The next day the cobbler went to his work as usual, and the next day and the next, but on the third day, a crier went through the town, crying, 'Has any one seen a camel bearing the Sultan's saddle-bags on its back?'

The woman heard it, and she called to the crier, saying, 'The camel is in our house, come, come! My husband took it into our yard!'

She led them into the house, but they found nothing. Then they asked her, 'Where is your husband?'

She said, 'In the *sūq*,¹ and sent a boy to show them where her husband sat in the *sūq*, mending old shoes. The police seized him, and bore him off to the serai, saying, 'The Sultan wants you!'

When he got to the serai they brought him before the *mudīr* of the police, and accused him saying, 'You have a camel, with saddle-bags on its back.'

¹ Place of shops. See note, p. xv. The *sūq* is usually a covered-in street with booths on either side. Trades are apt to congregate together, so that there is a *sūq* of the slipper-makers, another of coppersmiths, and so on.

He answered, 'No! By Allah!'

They said, 'Do not prevaricate, your wife has already confessed.'

He said, 'It is a lie, I have no camel. I am a poor cobbler, and every one knows me for an honest man. Where should I put a camel?'

They said, 'Your wife came to the crier and said that you took into your yard a camel with saddle-bags on its back.'

He replied, 'Will you bring my wife here, and examine her before me, and allow me to ask her questions?'

They answered, 'Yes, she may come,' and they sent for her, and said to her, 'Your husband has sent for you: he is in the serai. Come with us.'

She replied, 'Aye, I will come, but he told me to keep guard on the door, and how can I do that if I go to the serai? I had best bring the door with me!' So she took the door off its hinges¹ and put it on her head and went to the serai.

When she arrived, the mudir said, 'What is this? Why is this woman carrying a door on her head?'

She answered, 'O my uncle, my husband told me not to leave the door of the house, so I've brought it with me!'

Said the cobbler, 'Tell the police all that happened the day you say I took the camel with saddle-bags into the house.'

She replied, 'That was the day you asked for the 'aba, and I took you outside the city to see if my cousins the frogs had spun the wool. Then you beat me and pushed me outside our door. And that night you sent Miss Pussy to ask me to return, and I would not, and then you sent Mr. Bow-wow to ask me, and I would not, and then you sent Mr. Hump, and I went with him, and you let us both in.'

Said the man, 'What else happened that night?'

Answered she, 'Why, yes, husband! That was surely the night when it rained kubbeh!'

¹ An 'Iraqi door is often made on the ancient Sumerian pattern and hooks into its hinges. Hence it can easily be removed if it is not closed.

The Crazy Woman

The mudīr cried, 'What is this rubbish!'

Said she, 'But it is truth, O mudīr, I was coming back from the river, and it rained kubbeh from heaven and I ate some!'

Said they, 'The woman is crazy!' and then they said to him, 'Go! There is no accusation against you!'

And the man went home, and he divorced his wife, and after that he dug up the bags one night, and travelled away to another city, where he lived like a rich man on the Sultan's treasure.

II

THE GOAT AND THE OLD WOMAN

THERE was once upon a time an old woman who had a goat, and they lived in a little mud hut, and in the yard there was a well.

One day it began to rain, and it rained so hard that the roof leaked, and the old woman said to the goat, 'My goat, we can't keep dry here, let us get into the well.'

The goat replied, 'I won't go down.'

Said the old woman, 'You won't go down?'

Said the goat, 'No.'

Said the old woman, 'Shall I call the butcher to kill you?'

Said the goat, 'Go away!'

So the old woman went to the butcher and said,

<i>Imshi idhbah 'anūzi</i>	'Go and kill my goat
<i>Anūzi mā yirdha yinzal</i>	My goat won't go down
<i>bil bīr!</i>	the well!

The butcher said, 'I won't come out in this rain, go away, go away!'

Said she, 'Shall I bring the smith to make your knives blunt?'

Said he, 'Go away!'

Then she went to the smith, and said, 'Smith, go and make the butcher's knives blunt! the butcher won't kill my goat, and my goat won't go down the well!'

The smith said, 'Go away, go away! I won't go out in this rain!'

She said, 'Shall I bring the river to quench your fire?'

He said, 'Away!'

So she went to the river and said,

'River, river, quench the smith's fire.

The smith won't blunt the butcher's knives,

And the butcher won't kill my goat,

And my goat won't go down the well.'

The river said, 'Away, away!'

She said, 'Shall I go and call the camel to drink you?'

The river said, 'Go away!'

Then she went to the camel and said,

'Camel, camel, drink the river,
The river won't quench the smith's fire,
And the smith won't blunt the butcher's knives,
And the butcher won't kill my goat,
And my goat won't go down the well!'

The camel said, 'Go away, I won't come in this rain!'

She said, 'Shall I bring rope to strangle you with?'

He said, 'Go away!'

Then she went to the rope, and said,

'Rope, rope, strangle the camel
The camel won't drink the river,
The river won't quench the smith's fire,
The smith won't blunt the butcher's knives,
The butcher won't kill my goat,
And my goat won't go down the well!'

The rope said, 'Go away, go away! I won't come in such rain!'

Said she, 'Shall I call the rat to come and nibble you?'

He said, 'Go away!'

So she went to the rat and said,

'Rat, rat, nibble the rope,
The rope won't strangle the camel,
The camel won't drink the river,
The river won't quench the smith's fire,
The smith won't blunt the butcher's knives,
The butcher won't kill my goat,
And my goat won't go down the well!'

The rat said, 'Go away, go away! I won't go out in this rain!'

Said she, 'And if I bring the cat to come and eat you?'

He said 'Away!'

Then she went to the cat and said,

'Cat, cat! eat the rat,
The rat won't nibble the rope,
The rope won't strangle the camel,
The camel won't drink the river,
The river won't quench the smith's fire,
The smith won't blunt the butcher's knives,
The butcher won't kill my goat,
And my goat won't go down the well!'

Said the cat, 'Where is the rat? Lead me to it!'

The cat was about to spring, when the rat said, 'No, no! I am going to nibble the rope!'

The rope said, 'No, no! I am going to strangle the camel!'

The camel said, 'No, no! I am going to drink the river!'

The river said, 'No, no! I am going to quench the smith's fire!'

The smith said, 'No, no! I am going to blunt the butcher's knives!'

The butcher said, 'No, no! I am going to kill the goat!'

And the goat said, 'No, no! no!' and it went down the well, and the old woman after it.

III

THREE LITTLE MICE

Kān mā kān

'Ala Allah wat Tuklān

Kul men 'aleyhu dhanb yaqūl Istaghfar Allah!

'Was it, was it not,
Upon Allah, the Worthy of Reliance,
All who have sinned must say, "I ask pardon of Allah!"'

THERE were once three little mice, who were sisters. The eldest was called Hanni, the middle sister was Manni, and the youngest was called Tariaqsanni.

Hanni lived in a baker's shop and sat in it.

Manni lived in a butcher's shop and sat in it.

Tariaqsanni lived in a greengrocer's shop and sat in it.

Now one day, Tariaqsanni fell sick. A man came riding into the town to buy bread, meat, and vegetables, and the first shop he went to was the greengrocer's to buy some dates. When he entered the shop, he heard a tiny voice speaking to him:

Ya rāḳib al faras

Ya muchanchin bi jaras,

Qūl, li ūkhi, li Hanni, li Manni

Tariaqsanni qa [i. e. qad] tamūt!

'O rider on the mare
With jingling bells,
Tell my sisters Hanni and Manni
That Tariaqsanni is like to die.'

The man on horseback (*abul faras*) then rode on to the baker (*abul khabz*), and as he bought bread from him, he said, 'When I was in the greengrocer's shop just now, I heard a little voice coming from the shop which said,

"O rider on the mare with jingling bells,
Tell my sisters Hanni and Manni
That Tariaqsanni is like to die.'"

Now Hanni heard his words, and no sooner had they left his mouth than she went running to her sister Manni and told her, 'A man came to my shop, and he told me that our sister Tariaqsanni is like to die!'

Then Hanni and Manni went together, running, running, running, to the greengrocer's shop to see their sick sister. They comforted her, saying, 'Please Allah, you will get well and we will all go out into the *chöl*¹ for a little change of air.'

And in time, Tariaqsanni got well. Then each mouse made provision for the journey. Hanni took some bread with her: Manni took some meat with her, and Tariaqsanni took some dates.

Then they set forth and journeyed into the *chöl*,¹ each carrying her food in her mouth. Presently they met a dog, who barked at them and pursued them. They ran away from him affrighted, and took refuge in a hole at the mouth of a well.

Then the dog came and barked over the well, saying thrice

*Ümm al bîr, ümm al bîr*²
Tisqa fî rāsech al kabîr!

'Well-mother, Well-mother,

Thou who givest to drink from thy wide mouth!'

Then crying, 'If you had had sense or forethought, you would not have come to the Mother of the Well!' he jumped in and ate Hanni, Manni, and Tariaqsanni—*all up!*

¹ *Chöl* (Turkish). This word, which occurs often throughout these tales, may be translated as 'desert', 'prairie', 'the wide world', 'the country', or 'the outskirts of a town'. In short, 'chöl' (pronounced to rhyme with bowl) is the townsman's word for whatever lies outside the wall of the city, and is always used in this sense in Baghdad. Just without the city wall, or just outside the door of house or tent—all is 'chöl'. To a townsman the *chöl* is a place of danger and fear, to a tribesman it is his natural surrounding.

² *Ümm al bîr*. The dog is addressing the spirit of the well. A female spirit is supposed to haunt every well. See p. 120.

IV

THE SPARROW AND HIS WIFE

THERE was once a sparrow who was happily married and lived in a tree. One day he went out and bought seven grains of corn, for he wished to give a party. He brought the grains back to his wife, and then flew off to ask other sparrows to come to the feast. But he lingered on his errand, and when she had waited a long time for her husband to return, she was so hungry that she ate up all the seven grains, one after the other.

Just as she had finished, her husband flew back and his guests with him, and said to her, 'Bring the seven grains, for we are hungry!'

She answered him, 'Pardon! O my husband, you were so long away that I became weary and faint with hunger, and I ate the seven grains!'

He was very angry, and then and there before his guests he divorced her, saying three times, 'Woman, I divorce you!'¹

Then she flew off to her people and the guests flew away to their houses, and the sparrow remained alone to repent his hastiness to his wife, for he loved her.

So after a little, he flew to the tree where she lived with her family and perched on a bough.

The wife-sparrow called out, 'Who has alighted on my father's tree?'

The sparrow answered, 'It is I, it is I! Little witch, little pecker! Little feathered and billed wife, I want you back! I want you home!'

Ana! ana!

Bint as sâhira

Bint an nâqira

Bint âbul rîsh wal manqara

ÿnâ nsâlah marrîna

Ta'tûna illa naradd lil wara!

¹ To say thrice before witnesses 'I divorce you' is a legal divorce. The story is a playful indictment of hasty divorce.

But she answered him, 'Go away! return whence you came!'

The next day he flew to her father's tree again, and she asked, 'Who has alighted on my father's tree?'

He answered as before: 'It is I, it is I! Little witch, little pecker, little feathered and billed wife! I came because I want you back, I want you home!'

But she answered, 'Go away! return whence you came!'
So it was each day.

But one morning, the sparrow went to the sewing-woman, and said, 'I want a green thread, a yellow thread, a blue thread, a red thread, and a lilac thread!'

And the sewing-woman gave him all five threads in five colours.

Then he took them in his bill and flew to the tree of his wife's father.

Cried she, 'Who is it that has alighted on my father's tree?'

Answered he, 'It is I, it is I! Little witch, little pecker, little billed and feathered wife! I came because I want you back, I want you home!'

She made reply, 'Go away! return whence you came!'

But he said, 'A red, and a green, a yellow, a blue, and a lilac (thread) I have brought. Will you give her to me, or shall I return without her?'

Bil āhmari, bil ākhdhari
Bil āsfari bil māwi bil lilāqi
Ta'tūna illa naradd lil wara?

Then she uttered joy-cries and flew down to him, and took the threads in her beak, and flew back with him to their nest. She wove the threads into it:¹ then they bought some more corn and gave a party to all their friends.

¹ Threads of different colours interwoven are a charm against the evil eye. Cf. R. Campbell-Thompson, *Semitic Magic*, p. 164.

DUNGARA KHSHEYBĀN

THERE was once a man who had two daughters, and both grew up and married. The elder daughter married a wealthy man, but the younger chose a poor man.

One day, at a time when the younger was pregnant and near her delivery, she felt a longing to eat some lentil soup. She went to her elder sister, and said, 'Can you give me some lentils, for I have a longing for lentil soup.'

The elder said, 'I will cook you some lentil soup.'

So the younger sister sat, and the elder sister cooked soup, and while she was cooking it, she heated red-hot in the fire a skewer. When she brought the soup, and the younger sister sat to eat it, she ran the skewer into the other's thigh, and the younger sister fled away, hungry, leaving her soup uneaten.

She returned to her husband, and asked him to go and find some lentils for her, and he went off to try to get some.

While she sat in the house, waiting for him, her pains came upon her, and she was afraid, for there was no one there to help her. But, just as her need was greatest, the wall of the room parted, and out of it stepped five maidens, daughters of the jānn,¹ who came to her and helped her. When she had brought a daughter into the world, they washed it, and clothed it, and gave it back to the mother.

Said the first jinniya, 'If God wills, a golden head-dress² shall crown her brow.'

Said the second, 'When she walks, myrtle and jessamine will spring from her footprints.'

The third said, 'When she speaks, a jewel will fall from her lips.'

The fourth said, 'When she weeps, the rain will fall, and when she smiles, the sun will come out.'

¹ The fairy folk, *jinni* and *jinnīya* are the singular forms, masculine and feminine. The plural forms are *jinn*, *jānn*, masculine or collective, and *jinniyāt*, feminine.

² *tās*.

The fifth said, 'Each time she bathes, the water she has bathed in will turn to an ingot of silver and an ingot of gold.'

Then the wall reopened again, they stepped into it and disappeared.

The woman washed her baby that evening, and, just as the jinniyāt had said, the water in which she had bathed the babe turned into an ingot of gold and an ingot of silver. She bought food, and clothes, and hired servants, and a fine house, and had as much money as she could desire, for every day there was gold and to spare.

But all this while her husband had not returned, for he had gone everywhere in search of lentils and had been able to find none. So when she had moved into her fine house, the woman sent a slave in search of her husband, and ordered the man to take him, when he had found him, to the bath, and to clothe him in good new clothes.

The slave searched for him in the sūq, and there he found him.

Said the slave, 'Your wife has sent me to find you, and she wants to know why you have not returned to the house.'

Answered the man, 'I have looked everywhere for the lentils for which my wife was craving, and have found none. How then could I return to the house?'

Said the slave, 'Your wife has brought a daughter into the world, and wishes to see you, but first you must go to the bath.'

So the man went to the bath, and afterwards he put on the new clothes, and returned with the slave to the house. His wife was waiting for him near the door, and when he approached, she went to him, and told him all that had happened.

He was delighted, and from that day he and she lived in great comfort and wealth, and wanted for nothing.

Their daughter grew, and in course of time she reached the age of thirteen, and was of such rare beauty that every one who saw her was amazed.

One day, she went on to the roof to take the air. As she

walked there, the Sultan's son passed, and gazed upon her. He was bereft of his senses as he looked upon her, and as soon as he had reached the palace, he went to his father and said, 'I have seen the maiden that I wish to marry. I will take none other as wife.'

The Sultan asked, 'Who is this maiden, my son?'

Answered the youth, 'I saw her to-day on the roof of such and such a house.'

Said the Sultan, 'That cannot be, for we do not know the girl or her people.'

But the youth besought his father, and at last the Sultan gave in to his importunity, and sent women of his household to the household of the girl. They saw that the family was wealthy, and the Sultan's wife said to the mother of the girl, 'I have come to ask for your daughter. My son wishes to marry her.'

So the marriage was arranged, the marriage contract drawn up by the mulla, and the day appointed for the bride to go to her bridegroom.

Her mother's sister said that she would accompany her, and on the evening of the bride's departure, she and the bride went in a carriage to ride to the Sultan's palace. On the way her aunt persuaded her to stop the carriage and rest a little, and when they had left the road the aunt said to the girl, 'I wish to try on your bridal clothes, will you change with me?'

Answered the girl, 'Aye!' and she took off her clothes, and put on her aunt's. As soon as they had changed, the aunt seized her and tore out her two eyes, and left her there by the road. Then she got back into the carriage and rode to the Sultan's palace as the bride. None of the Sultan's household suspected that she was not the bride, but the bridegroom, when he saw her face, came out of the bridal chamber, and said to his mother, 'This is not the girl I saw.'

She replied, 'This is the girl you have married, my son,' and he was forced to accept her as his bride.

As for the real bride, she walked with blinded eyes into the desert, pricked by the thorns and stumbling over

stones, and her dress was torn, and her feet were bleeding. When she had gone thus for some way, she met a poor thorn-seller, who was amazed by her beauty, and cried, 'Are you fairy or human?' *Ins ū jins?*

She answered, 'I am human.'

Then he pitied her plight, and took her home with him, and said to his four daughters, 'Here is a poor girl whom I met in the desert; give her food and tend her.'

The eldest daughter said, 'My father, we are hungry, and have not enough bread for ourselves! You must turn this stranger away; she will eat our bread and we shall have none!'

Said the thorn-seller, 'How can I turn her away? It would be a sin!' and his youngest daughter said, 'My father, she shall stay, and I will give her half my portion every day,' for as soon as she saw the girl she loved her.

So the bride stayed with them and shared the bread of the youngest daughter. When it was night, she said, 'Fetch me water, I want to bathe,' and a pearl fell from her lips when she spoke.

The youngest went to get her water, and the bride bathed, and when she left the water, in its place was an ingot of silver and an ingot of gold. These she gave to the thorn-seller, and told him that he should have the same every day, as well as the jewels which fell from her lips. So the thorn-seller became a rich man.

One day the bride said to the thorn-seller's daughter, 'Take some of this myrtle and jessamine that have grown from the ground upon which I have trodden, and go to the Sultan's palace. When you have come beneath the windows of the prince's bride, cry:

Yās ū yāsmīn

Bi 'ain al yamīn

"Myrtle and jessamine

For the right eye!"

until she looks out from the window.'

The daughters of the thorn-seller did as she had asked, and went below the window of the false bride, and cried:

'Myrtle and jessamine

For the right eye!'

The false bride looked out of the window, and said, 'What do you want?' They said, 'Here is myrtle and jessamine for the right eye!'

She was frightened, and threw the right eye out of the window to them. They returned, and the bride put the right eye in its socket, and it grew again, and she could see with her right eye.

Next she took a pearl which had fallen from her mouth when she spoke, and gave it to them, saying, 'Go as before to the window of the prince's bride, and cry:

Lūlū sār

Bī 'ain al yisār!

"A pearl.

For the left eye!"'

They went as before, and the false bride came to the window and said, 'What do you want?'

They answered, 'A pearl for the left eye!'

Then she threw them the left eye, and they returned with it to the real bride, and she put that into its place, and she could see perfectly with both eyes as before.

One day the girl asked the thorn-seller to bring some wood, and to carve her a dress from it, and to make her as well a wooden staff.

He did so, and made her a dress of wood which covered her completely from head to foot, leaving only holes for her eyes, and holes for her arms. Then she took the staff in her hand, and bade him and his daughters farewell. They begged her to stay with them, but she refused, saying, 'You are rich now, and I must go.' She gave them her blessing, and set out, and walked until she came to her husband's palace, where she seated herself by the door.

The servants noticed her, and came to the Sultan's son, saying, 'There is a man dressed all in wood sitting by the Palace gate!' Said he, 'Go and ask what he wants.'

They went to her, and said, 'What do you want?'

She answered, 'I want to become a servant in the prince's house.'

They answered, 'Come in, you shall help in the house.'

She entered, and so well did she do her work, that every one was amazed. At night she took off her wooden

dress, but by day she always wore it, and they gave her the nick-name of 'Dungara Khsheybān'.

One day the prince gave a feast to his friends, and he said to the master of the household, 'This evening no one shall wait on us at table but Dungara Khsheybān.'

So when the guests came, Dungara Khsheybān brought the dishes to the table, and her movements in the wooden dress were so clumsy that she let the dishes fall, and they were broken.

He was very angry, and cried, 'Dungara Khsheybān! Take off that wooden dress of yours, or I will stab you with my dagger!'

At that, she lifted the wooden dress, and came out of it, and there she stood, beautiful as the moon from behind the clouds. He knew her at once for his own true bride, and bade her tell him everything.

She told him all that had happened to her, from the beginning to the end, and he embraced her, and took her for his wife, and as for the aunt, he ordered her to be burnt alive!

Kunna 'adkum wa jīnā
Wa lo baitikum qarīb
Kunt ajīb likum hafna¹ zabīb.

'We've been to you and come back
And were your house near
I should have brought you a handful of raisins.'

¹ In Baghdad they give a *tubeg* (trayful), in Mosul, only a handful. Mosul people bear the reputation of being close-fisted.

VI

THE CRYSTAL SHIP

Kān u ma kān
'Ala Allāh at Tuklān.

It was and was not!
(Our)reliance is upon God.

THERE was once a merchant who had three daughters. One day he was obliged to travel to a far country in search of merchandise, and he said to his eldest daughter, 'When I return, what shall I bring you, my daughter?'

She said, '*Arīd lī bedli hilwi!* I want a pretty new dress!'

Then he asked the same of his second daughter, and she answered, 'I want a pretty new dress, too.'

Then he asked the youngest, who was but a child, and she went to her mother and said to her, 'O my mother, what shall I ask my father to bring me back when he returns?'

The mother said, 'Ask for clusters-of-pearl.'¹

So she went to her father and said, 'I want clusters-of-pearl.'

He promised his daughters to bring them back what they had asked, and then he set forth, and travelled by ship to the distant country. When his business there was transacted, he went to the *sūq*, and he bought two lengths of silk for his two eldest daughters, but the youngest he forgot. Then he went to the harbour, and embarked on the ship. The captain came to him and said, 'Is all your business transacted, and is nothing left undone? For my ship will not sail if there is one on board who has left something undone.'

The merchant exclaimed, 'I have forgotten my promise to my youngest daughter that I would bring her a present!'

Said the captain, 'Then return to the shore and get it, else my ship will not move from the harbour.'

The merchant went ashore again, and went to the *sūq* of the jewellers, and said, 'I wish to buy clusters-of-pearl.'

¹ *Lulu 'anāqīdu.*

They answered him, 'Clusters-of-pearl is the name of a person: it is the name of the son of the Sultan of the Jānn.'

He asked them, 'Where is he to be found, this Clusters-of-Pearl?'

They told him, 'His father's palace is in such and such a place.'

The merchant went to the place they indicated, and he found the door of the palace and knocked at it.

A voice inside the door said, 'Who is it?'

He answered, 'I!'

Said the voice, 'What do you want?'

He said, 'I seek Clusters-of-Pearl.'

The door was opened, and there stood before him a beautiful boy, who said to him, 'My name is Clusters-of-Pearl. What do you want of me?'

The merchant answered, 'I have three daughters, and when I left my country to come here, I promised them each a present. To the two eldest, I promised new dresses, and to the youngest, I promised Clusters-of-Pearl.'

Said the boy, 'Take this small box. In it are three hairs. Give them to your daughter and tell her to sit in an empty room, near a bare threshold in a place apart, all by herself. This room you must build for her. When she is alone, let her rub the three hairs together. Whatever appears to her, she must not utter a word or cry aloud for fear, but must say "*Māshāllah!*"¹ thrice.'

The merchant took the small box, and said farewell to the boy, and then went back to the ship. It sailed with him and in time he reached his own country.

When he returned to his house, his daughters greeted him, and embraced him, and the eldest said, 'Where is my new gown?' He opened his box, and gave it to her, all brodered and sewn and ready to wear. The middle sister said, 'Where is my new gown?' and he gave it to her, all sewn and brodered and ready to wear. Then the youngest said, 'Where are my clusters-of-pearl?' And he

¹ *Mā sha' Allah* (literally, 'What God willed') is an exclamation which averts the evil eye and envy, and should be used every time one looks at anything beautiful or splendid.

replied, 'O my daughter, I forgot what you asked, so I have brought you nothing.'

But that night as he lay abed, he said to his wife, 'Wife, I do not know what to do and you must give me your counsel. Clusters-of-Pearl is the name of the son of the Sultan of the Jānn,' and he told her all that had happened, saying when he had done, 'What say you, wife? Shall we build a room and leave the girl alone in it, as the son of the Sultan of the Jānn said, or shall we not?'

His wife answered him, 'Build it, and you will see that good fortune will come of it.'

So the next day the merchant called builders, and built a new room, and put nothing into it: the threshold he left bare as Clusters-of-Pearl had ordered and, when it was finished, the little sister went to the bath, and they dressed her, and adorned her, and then her father and mother led her to the room and bade her wait there, giving her the box containing the three hairs. Her father bade her strike them together, and to forbear exclaiming at what she might see, only saying, '*Māshāllah!*' three times.

Then they locked the door, and left the girl alone. She struck the three hairs together as they had said, and as she waited there she looked at the threshold, and saw that it had become a lake, and upon the lake swam a ship of crystal. The ship approached her, and in it was a boy,

<i>Subhān Allah al khalaquh</i>	Praise to God who created
<i>Wal khāliq ahsan!</i>	him, and the Creator is
	better than his creation.

and this boy was of the most perfect beauty.

The little sister was amazed, but she said no words but '*Māshāllah!*' thrice-uttered, as her father had bidden. The boy approached her and kissed her and she loved him and he her, and they stayed together in happiness and contentment until the morning. Then he said to her, 'If anything should happen to part us, and I am unable to come here, go and seek for me: but you must put on shoes of iron,¹ and carry an iron staff in your hand.' Then he bade her

¹ *Iron* is a protection against evil spirits. See the note on this story, pp. 293-4.

say nothing of what had happened that night to any one, and he took his departure, sailing away in the crystal ship. Then the threshold became as it was.

In the morning her two parents came, and she told them that she was happy and blessed, but more than that she did not say.

At night she returned to the room, unlocked it, and did as she had done the former night, and spent the time in happiness and contentment with Clusters-of-Pearl till the dawn. And so it was for many nights.

Now the eldest sister guessed what was happening, and was jealous of the little sister's happiness. One day, when all the sisters went to the bath with their mother, the eldest refused to take off her clothes.

They said to her, 'Come and bathe with us!' but she would not, saying, 'I do not wish to bathe to-day, I will wait for you.'

As soon as the others were bathing, she went to her sister's clothes, and stole the key of the room from her pocket. Then she returned quickly to the house, went to the room and unlocked it, and seated herself in her sister's place. There she saw the box, and when she had opened it, she found three hairs. These she took out and rubbed them together, and after she had done so, the threshold became a lake, and in the midst of it a ship of crystal, in which was the son of the Jänn. The girl was so astonished that she cried aloud, and at that, the ship flew into splinters and entered the body of the boy. Then he and the lake disappeared, and all was as it had been before.

She was frightened, and went out and locked the door, and when the rest had returned from the bath, she went secretly and put the key back in her sister's pocket, but said no word of what had happened.

That evening, the little sister went again to her room, and rubbed the three hairs together, but nothing happened, and though she waited all the night, nothing appeared, and the room was dark and empty.

The little sister wept and cried, 'Woe, woe! This is my sister's work!' and the next morning she went to her

father, and told him that he must make her a pair of iron shoes, and an iron staff to carry in her hand.

She travelled, and travelled, walking over deserts and valleys, and after many days she came to a town. Upon the outskirts of the town there was a tree. She was foot-sore and tired from her journey, *khañya*!¹ so she sat beneath it to rest, and closed her eyes.

Now on the boughs of this tree there were two doves, (*cucūkhtaiin*). Presently one began to coo to the other, and the little sister heard these words:

<i>Cucūkhtii! eyn ūkhtii?</i>	‘Coo-coo, sister doo, where
<i>Idha hadhal bint kānat</i>	are you-u-u! ²
<i>nāimi</i>	If this maiden be sleeping
<i>Hadha nasībha</i>	Her fate is sealed.
<i>Idha kānat qa’adi, min</i>	If watch she is keeping,
<i>nasībha!</i>	Her fate is healed.’

When she heard this, the little sister kept her eyes closed, but she listened with all her ears.

The other dove replied:

<i>Cucūkhtii, eyn ūkhtii!</i>	‘Coo-coo, sister doo, where
	are you-u-u!’

‘This maiden was visited by the son of the Sultan of the Jānn, but one day when she was at the bath, her sister stole her key and rubbed the three hairs together, and when the boy appeared she cried out, and the ship flew into splinters and entered the body of the boy; and when this child came in her turn to rub the hairs, no one came to her, and she remained there sitting and weeping, and now she has come to seek him!’

Then the other dove took up the tale and said,

‘And now that boy is sick unto death, and his father seeks everywhere for a medicine to cure him. Now, if that maiden were listening, she would seize us both, and kill us and take our blood and feathers and some of the leaves of this tree. With these she must go to the house

¹ An exclamation of pity ‘What a sin!’ ‘What a shame!’

² A quotation from a popular rhyme imitating the cooing of doves. The rhyme is given in full in the note to this story, pp. 293-4.

of the Sultan of the Jānn. There she must cry, "A healer! A physician!" until they invite her within. As soon as she has entered, she must take the sick boy to the bath, and smear his body all over with our blood and feathers,¹ and all the crystal splinters will fall out of his body. After that she must wipe his body with the leaves of this tree, and the boy will be cured.'

As soon as the doves had ceased their talking, the girl rose quickly, seized them, and wrung their necks, and then she poured blood from their bodies into a cup, and their feathers she placed in a kerchief. Then she plucked leaves from the tree, and she went into the town, crying, 'A healer! A physician!' until she came to the door of the castle in which the Sultan of the Jānn lived. When the Sultan of the Jānn heard her voice without, he sent and had her brought in before him.

He asked her, 'Who are you?' and she answered, 'I am a healer, and if you will bring your son to the hammām,² and leave him there with me, I will cure him completely.'

The Sultan of the Jānn said, 'It shall be done,' and they took her to the hammām, and brought to her the boy, who lay there as if dead. She ordered them to leave her alone with him, and they left them alone in the bath. Then she took off his clothes, and dipped the feathers in the blood and smeared it all over his body. As soon as she had done that, the crystal fell out of the boy's body. Then she wiped his skin with the leaves of the tree, and the wounds closed and his flesh was healed, and he opened his eyes, and was completely cured.

Now when he gazed upon her, he did not know her in her man's dress, but he begged her, saying, 'Come, take off your clothes, and we will bathe together.'

She refused, saying, 'No, I will not bathe.'

Then the boy was angry, and said, 'I will not leave this bath until you have bathed with me!'

Then the little sister confessed, saying, 'I am she to

¹ Clearly a *fedu* or ransom charm. See p. 271.

² Hot bath. Hammāms are supposed to be especially inhabited by spirits.

whom you came in your boat of crystal: and when you came no more, I came to seek for you!

Then the boy embraced her tenderly and took her to his father, the Sultan of the Jānn, who said to her, when he had heard all:

‘Daughter of man! Had you not cured him, your life should have been forfeit, but as you have saved his life you shall marry him and dwell with us in the country of the Jānn.’

Then he made a wedding for three days and three nights, and the boy and girl were married, and they lived always in the country of the Jānn.

Kunna 'adkum wa jīnā!

VII

THE OLD COUPLE AND THEIR GOAT

ONCE upon a time there was an old couple, and they kept a goat, of which they were very fond. Their house was of clay and their door of reeds, and they two and the goat lived there together.

One day a *dāmi*¹ who lived in the desert near by became hungry for human blood, and she said to herself, 'I will eat either that old man or that old woman!' So she went to the house and knocked at the reed door and said:

<i>Yā bāb al qasab,</i>	'O reed door!
<i>Ākassar 'anak</i>	I will break you down!
<i>Lo ujāiz lo shwāyib bi</i>	I will eat up your little old
<i>ākul 'anak!</i>	woman or your little old
	man!

Now the old woman was alone in the house, and when she heard this she was very afraid, but the goat was listening and she answered, 'With my horns I will butt you and with my teeth I will bite you!'

When the *dāmi* heard this, she was frightened of the goat and ran away back into the desert.

But she was still very hungry, so the next day she came again and knocked at the gate. The old woman who was alone said, '*Minu?* Who is it?' and the *dāmi* said,

'O reed door!
I will break you down!
I will eat up your little old woman and your little old man!'

And the goat answered, 'With my horns I will butt you and with my teeth I will bite you!' and the *dāmi* was frightened and ran away.

Now as the *dāmi* was going along the road, whom should she meet but the old man? She said to him, 'Every day I come to your house to give you some food from the Sultan's house, but your goat will not let me in!'

¹ See Preface, p. xii, and note, p. 295.

The Old Couple and their Goat

The old man went back and said to the old woman, 'What is this? The *dāmi* brings us food every day from the Sultan's house and our goat will not let her in! I shall kill the goat!'

Answered the old woman, 'O husband, is your understanding wanting? The goat stands before the door because the *dāmi* wants to eat us! Don't kill the goat!'

The next day it was the same, the *dāmi* came and the goat would not let her in, and the *dāmi* complained to the old man.¹ But after the *dāmi* had complained for the third time, the old man took his knife and prepared to kill the goat. The old woman cried:

'O husband, do not believe the *dāmi*! She wants to eat us! She is hungry for our blood! Do not kill our goat!'

But the old man went to the goat and cut her throat.

The old woman wept and cried, '*Shlōn sowweyt!* What have you done!'

But as the goat was dead, she roasted some of the meat, and made *pācha*² of the head and oddments, and the rest she put in a pot of brine.

The next day the *dāmi* came and cried:

'O reed door!

I will break you down!

I will eat up your little old woman and your little old man!'

And from the pot of brine a voice came from the meat,

'With my horns I will butt you and with my teeth
I will bite you!'

And the *dāmi* was frightened and ran away.

That night the old man ate up the meat that was left. The next day the *dāmi* came before he had gone out, and she cried to the door,

'O reed door!

I will break you down!

I will eat up your little old woman and your little old man!'

¹ Repetition, which I do not give in full.

² *Pācha*. Stew of sheep's offal and head and feet. A favourite dish in Baghdad, and the trade of *pāchachi*, or *pācha*-seller, is a remunerative profession in the poor quarters of the city. It is not, however, a dish that is set before a guest.