Allah was heavily laid. Everybody suspected that the old ragman had lost his reason, and they were sure of it when one morning he suddenly left his house, saying: "I go! I go! to the land of wealth." After vainly trying to detain him, his wife wrung her hands in despair, while the neighbours tried to comfort her. Poor Ahmet went straight on board a boat which he had been told was bound for Iskender (Alexandria) and assured the captain that he was summoned thither, and that the ship was bound to take him. Half-witted and mad persons being regarded by Mohammedans as holy, the captain offered no objection and Ahmet was conveyed to Iskender.

Arriving at Iskender, Hadji Ahmet roamed far and wide. He proceeded as far as Cairo in search of the luxuries he had enjoyed at Constantinople during his dreams, but which he expected to enjoy in Egypt during his waking hours. Alas for poor Hadji Ahmet! The only bread he had to eat was that which was given him by the charitable. Time sped on; even the most charitable were beginning to grow tired of the old Stamboul ragman; and his crusts of bread were few and far between.

Wearied at last of life and of suffering, Hadji begged Allah to let him die, and, wandering out to the Pyramids, he solicited 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? Has your soul been so strangled that you prefer its being dashed out of your body to its remaining the prescribed time in bondage?"

"Yes, my son," said Hadji Ahmet, "Far away in Stamboul, with the help of God, I managed as a ragman 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 
not 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 other towers that have smaller towers within them. In 
one of these towers, a square one, live an old man and woman, 
and close by this tower is a large tree. 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 Stam-
boul and seek to verify this. Though oft-repeated, it is never-
theless a dream and nothing more. And in your case, father, 
it is the same. See what you have been reduced to by coming 
so far."

"Yes," said Hadji Ahmet, "it is a dream and nothing 
more, but you have interpreted it. Allah be praised, you 
have encouraged me; Allah'-en yardim-la (With God's help) 
I will return to my home."

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

In due course, and much to the astonishment of both wife 
and neighbours, Hadji Ahmet again appeared upon the scene 
not very much changed. In fact, he was the cinder-and-iron 
gatherer whom they had all known of old.

To all questions as to where he had been and what he had
TALES FROM TURKEY

been doing, he would answer: "A dream sent me away, and a dream brought me back. Allaha Teskekkur ederim! (I thank God)."

And the neighbours would say: "Truly he must be blessed."

The first care of Hadji Ahmet was to borrow a spade and a pick from an obliging neighbour. Provided with these tools he went out into his garden one night and began to dig at the base of the great tree that grew therein. He had only been digging a short time when a large case was exposed to view. In this case he found gold, silver, and precious jewels of great value. Hadji Ahmet replaced the case and the earth and returned to bed, much lamenting that it had pleased God to furnish woman, more especially his wife, with a long tongue, long hair, but with very short wits. "Alas," thought he, "if I tell my wife, I may be hanged as a robber, for it is against the laws of nature for a woman to keep a secret."

But becoming more generous after a time, when he thought 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 the general rule. Who knew but she might, after all, keep the secret? To test her, at no risk to himself and the treasure, he conceived a plan.

Crawling from his bed, he sallied forth and bought, found, or stole an egg. This egg, on the following morning he showed 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, my dear wife, if the neighbours hear of this, your husband will be bastinadoed, bowstrung, and burned to death. Ah, truly, my soul is strangled."

And without another word Hadji Ahmet, with a sack on his shoulder, went forth to gather the cast-off shoes of horses, oxen, or asses.

STORY ABOUT HIDDEN TREASURE

In the evening he returned, heavily laden with his finds, mours, sidered within a respectabe man, had done something that was unknown in the history of man, to wit, that he had laid no less than a dozen eggs.

Needless to add that Hadji Ahmet did not tell his wife about the treasure. But he daily went forth as usual with sack to gather rags and bones, iron and cinders, and, cut enough, he always discovered, among the refuse which he picked up, gold pieces and silver pieces, and now and precious stone. It was when he and his wife sat as his scrapiron in the evening that these remarkable finds always made.
THE LANGUAGE OF BIRDS

According to that man of God, the holy Jalálu’ddín, Allah vouchsafed unto the Prophet Mohammed (on whom be peace!) a knowledge of the language of birds. There once lived, however, a simple hodja who also understood the language of birds, but he refused to impart his knowledge. One young man was very persistent in his desire to know the language of those sweet creatures, but the hodja was inflexible.

In despair, the young man went to the woods to listen at least to the pleasant chirping of the birds. By degrees this chirping conveyed to him a meaning, till, finally, he understood the birds 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 affording me an opportunity of selling it and avoiding the loss."

The hodja was silent, and would not give way.

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, and, having sold his house, again went to the hodja and told him all that had happened, adding:

"See, Hodja Effendi, you would not teach me the language
TALES FROM TURKEY

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 to him the doleful tale that on the following day he would die. In tears the young man went to the hodja for advice.

"Oh, Hodja Effendi! Alas! What am I to do? The birds have told me that to-morrow 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 borne the loss of your horse, your house would have been saved, and had your house been burned, your life would have been saved."

THE SWALLOW'S ADVIC

A MAN one day saw a swallow and caught it bird pleaded hard for liberty, saying:

"If thou wilt let me go, thy gain will be of use to thee."

The man listened to the bird and let it go. Fly tree close by, it perched on a branch, and said:

"Hearken and give ear to the three warnings I guide thee. The first is, do not believe things that credible; the second is, do not attempt to stretch of hand to a place thou art unable to reach; and the advice I give thee is, do not pine after a thing that is gone. Take these my counsels and do not forget them."

The bird then tempted the man, saying: "Insid there is a large pearl of great value; it is both ma, and splendid, and as large as the egg of a kite."

Now, hearing this, the man repented at having bird go, the colour of his face went ashen with sadnes at once stretched out his hand to catch the swallow, latter said to the foolish man:

"What! Hast thou already forgotten the advice thee, and the lie which I told thee, hast thou considered I fell into thy hands, yet thou wert unable to retain me, thou art sorrowing for the past for which there is no:

Even such are those that worship idols, and give of Allah to their own handiwork. They have left a Almighty, and have forgotten the Great Bestow good gifts.
HOW AHMET THE COBBLER BECAME THE CHIEF ASTROLOGER

E VERY day; year in and year out, Ahmet the cobbler measured the breadth of his tiny cabin with his arms as he stitched old shoes. To do this was his kismet, his decreed fate, and he was content with it. And why should he not be content? His business brought him quite sufficient to provide the necessaries of life for both himself and his wife. And had it not been for a coincidence that occurred, he would in all probability have continued mending boots and shoes to the end of his days.

One day Ahmet's wife went to the hamam (bath), 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 munajjim bashi, or chief astrologer to the Sultan. Much hurt, she returned home and vented her pique upon her innocent husband.

"Why are you not the chief astrologer to the Sultan?" she said. "I will never call you husband, or think of you as such, until you have been appointed chief astrologer to his Majesty."

Ahmet thought that this was another phase in the eccentricity of woman—a phase which would in all probability disappear before morning, so he took small notice of what his wife
TALES FROM TURKEY

said. But Ahmet was wrong. His wife insisted so much on
his giving up his present means of livelihood and becoming an
astrologer, that finally, for the sake of peace, he complied with
her desire. He sold his tools and his ill-assorted collection of
old boots and shoes, and with the proceeds purchased an ink-
well and reeds. But this, alas! did not make him an astrologer,
and he explained to his wife that her mad idea would assuredly
bring him to an unhappy end. She could not be moved, how-
ever; and she insisted on his going into the highway, there
to practise the art of astrology, with a view to becoming
ultimately the chief astrologer of the Padishah.

In obedience to his wife’s instructions, Ahmet sat down
on the high road, and sought comfort in looking at the heavens
and sighing deeply. While in this condition a hanoum came
in great excitement and asked him if he communicated with
the stars. Poor Ahmet sighed, saying that he was compell(\)ed
to converse with them.

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

With this the hanoum immediately squatted on the
ground, and began to tell Ahmet her story. She had gone to
the bath that morning, and she was positive that she then had
the ring. But every corner of the hamam had been searched,
and the ring was not to be found.

“Oh! astrologer, for the love of Allah, exert your power
to see the unseen, and tell me where my diamond ring is?”

“Hanoum Effendi,” replied Ahmet, the instant her excited
flow of language had ceased, “Hanoum Effendi, permit me to
say that I perceive a rent——” He was referring, as a matter of
fact, to a hole he had noticed in her shalvars or baggy trousers;
but before he could complete the sentence, the hanoum inter-
rupted him by jumping to her feet excitedly, at the same time
exclaiming:

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A thousand thanks! You are right! Now I remember! I put the ring in a crevice 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 the good woman was unmoved in her purpose. Until he became the chief astrologer she would neither call him husband nor think of him as such.

In the meantime, owing to the discovery of the ring, the fame of Ahmet the cobbler spread far and wide. The tongue of the hanoum never ceased to sound his praises.

Now it so happened that about this time the wife of a certain pasha had appropriated a valuable diamond necklace. The pasha, her husband, had consulted all the astrologers, hodjas, and diviners in Stamboul, Galata, Pera and Scutari, but they had one and all failed to discover the whereabouts of the missing article. As a last resort he determined to consult Ahmet the cobbler, whose fame as an astrologer was in every mouth.

The pasha went to Ahmet, and, in fear and trembling, the wife who had appropriated the necklace sent her confidential slave to overhear what the astrologer would say. The pasha told Ahmet all he knew about the necklace, but this gave no clue; and in despair the cobbler finally asked how many diamonds the necklace contained. On being told that there were twenty-four, Ahmet, to put off the evil day of his own exposure, said it would take an hour to discover each diamond. That being the case, would the pasha condescend to come on the morrow at the same hour, when, In-shd-Allah, he might perhaps hear some news of his lost necklace?
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The pasha departed, and no sooner was he out of earshot than the troubled Ahmet exclaimed in a loud voice:

"Oh woman! woman! what evil influence impelled you to choose the wrong path, and to drag others with you! When the twenty-four hours are up, you will perhaps repent! But then, alas! it will be too late. Your husband gone from you forever!—without a hope of being ever again united to you, even 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. Filled with fear, the pasha's wife hastened to plead her cause in person with the astrologer. On approaching Ahmet, the first words she said, in her excitement, were:

"Oh learned hodja, you are a great and a good man! Have compassion on my weakness and do not expose me to the wrath of my husband! I will do any penance and make any reparation you may order, and, moreover, I will pray for you five times daily as long as I live."

"How can I save you?" asked Ahmet. "What is decreed, is decreed!"

As a matter of fact, Ahmet had not the remotest idea of what the good lady was talking about.

"If you won't pity me," continued the hanoun, in despair, "I will go and confess to my pasha, and perhaps he will forgive me."

Upon hearing this appeal Ahmet, still in the dark, said he must ask the stars for their views on the subject. The hanoun 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, Hodja Effendi, I must go now, or the pasha will miss me. Shall I give you the necklace to restore the pasha without explanation, when he comes to-morrow?"

Ahmet now realized what all the trouble was about in consideration of a fee, he promised not to reveal the client's theft on condition that she would at once return and place the necklace between the mattresses of the pasha's bed. This the grateful woman agreed to do, and finally departed invoking blessings on Ahmet, who in return promised to exercise his influence with the stars on her behalf.

When the pasha came to the astrologer at the appointed time, Ahmet explained to him, that if his Excellency took the necklace and the thief, it would take a long time to hurry the stars. But if, on the other hand, he would be content with the necklace alone, the horoscope indicated that the stars would oblige him and get his diamonds again, and Ahmet at once told him to find them. The pasha returned to his home not at all sceptical, and immediately searched for the necklace which Ahmet had told him it was to be found. His astonishment on discovering the long-lost treasure knew no bounds, and the fame of Ahmet the cobbler was the talk of every tongue.

Having received handsome payment from both the pasha and the hanoun, Ahmet earnestly begged of his wife to desist from her purpose and to be content and not to bring sorrow and calamity upon his head. But his prayers were in vain. Satan had closed his wife's ears to the reason. Resigned to his fate, all he could do was to continue..."
TALES FROM TURKEY

his pretence of consulting the stars on behalf of the credulous. After mature thought he would transmit their communications to his client or assert that the stars had, for some reason best known to the applicant, refused to hold any communication with him on the subject of inquiry.

Now it came to pass that forty cases of gold were stolen from the Imperial Treasury, and every astrologer in Stamboul, Pera, Galata and Scutari 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, but most probably it would be 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. The interview took place in the Sublime Porte and, on its conclusion, Ahmet sadly gathered up the implements of his occult art and slowly directed his steps homewards. On the way he went to a shop and asked for forty beans—neither one more nor one less. When he had got home and laid the beans 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. Knowing that it would be useless to explain in any great detail to his wife the extreme seriousness of the affair, he confined himself to taking from his pocket the forty beans and mournfully saying:

"Forty cases of gold, forty days, forty thieves; and here is one of them," handing a bean to his wife. "The rest," he added, "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 he hurried off to tell his companions.

STORY ABOUT AN ASTROLOGER

The thieves were greatly alarmed, but they decided to wait till the next evening and see what would happen. When next evening came, they sent another of their number to listen and to see if the disquieting report of the first listener was not exaggerated. The second listener had not 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 in great alarm he hurried off to tell his accomplices that the astrologer certainly knew all about it, and also that he had been there. The thieves consequently determined to send a delegation to Ahmet, confessing their guilt and offering to return the forty cases of gold intact. Ahmet received them, and heard their confession of guilt. When they offered to return the gold, he boldly told them that he did not require their aid and that it was in his power to possess the forty cases of gold whenever he wished. He was a merciful man, however; he had no desire to have them all executed; and he would not betray them if they would go at once and put the gold in a place he indicated. This was agreed to, and Ahmet continued to give his wife a bean daily—but now with another purpose; he no longer feared the loss of his head, but he discounted by degrees the great reward he hoped to receive. 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 revealed to him at the same time the names of the thieves and the hiding-place of the gold. But whichever one of these secrets his Majesty wished to know would be immediately made clear to him. The Treasury being low, the padishah declared that his sole desire was to get the gold. And so he then conducted the officers of the imperial household to the place where the gold was buried, and, amidst great rejoicing,
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It was taken back to the palace. The Sultan was so pleased with Ahmet, that he appointed him to the office of astrologer, and thus the cobbler's wife attained her desire.

While walking one day in his palace grounds, pained by his chief astrologer, the Sultan experienced a desire to test the ex-cobbler's occult powers. With an object in view his Majesty caught a grasshopper, holding out his closed hand to the astrologer, asked what it contained. Ahmet, in a pained and reproachful tone, answered the Sultan by an oft-quoted proverb: "Alas Majesty! the grasshopper never knows where its thing will land it," alluding figuratively to himself, and the danger of guessing what was in the clenched hand of his Majesty. The Sultan was so struck by the reply that he was never again troubled to demonstrate his powers.
THE SAINT WHO RODE ON PEOPLE'S BACKS

SHEIKH ASSIFERI was known to everyone in Latakiah, and, though he died about seventeen years ago, he is still remembered there and still spoken of with reverence by Christian and Mohammedan alike. So original indeed was his character, that it may be worth while to give here an account of his life and his death as it is told to-day by the inhabitants of Latakiah. I need hardly remind the reader that Latakiah is a small town on the Syrian coast. It was celebrated in ancient times, but it does not seem to have grown much since the days of the Crusaders. Were it for its famous tobacco it would now in all probability be known in Europe.

As his title at once tells you, Sheikh Assiferi was a Moslem, but he was known to Christians as well as to Mohammedans. It was regarded by all as a privilege to be of any use to the sheikh. To the Moslem, of course, it was a very real and peculiarly great privilege, because he believed in the sheikh's sanctity. The Christian pretended it was a privilege because he feared to hurt the Moslem's feelings, and consequently to bring upon himself oppression in some of the forms known to all Christians living in Turkish towns where the Mohammedans are in the majority.

Nevertheless, in the eyes of the Christians the good sheikh had one very great failing. He was mad. Now madness is to
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The Mohammedan a form of sanctity inspiring only reverence. Sheikh Assiferi's madness took, however, a form which sometimes led the uncircumcised to blaspheme. The holy man often honoured passers-by in the street by mounting and riding on their backs, should they chance to be going his way. If he happened to mount on the back of a Christian, the latter was obliged to carry him till such time as it pleased the sheikh to descend and patronize somebody else. The Mohammedan, of course, was greatly honoured and flattered. No doubt he realized, as he staggered along under the sanctified weight of the sheikh, that he was doing something pleasing to Allah, and laying up treasure for himself in heaven. The poor Christian had no such consolation; but, though he may have thought a great deal and felt deeply, he never said anything, and always did his best to look pleasant and happy.

The sheikh would distribute his favours to high and low, quite irrespective of their social or financial position. Whether it was a long-haired Greek priest he was riding, or a rich Jew, or a portly pasha, or a thin Arab, or a wild Nusiri hillman was all the same to him. He had no theological prejudices in his choice of a mount, and would honour a Christian or a Jew or a half-pagan mountaineer just as readily as he would honour a Mohammedan. Sometimes, if many pedestrians were on the road, he would mount first one and then another; and he was even known to jump occasionally on a woman's back. On such occasions the woman, whether Christian or Moslem, would generally totter under the sheikh's weight, being unused to carrying such a load. Naturally there could be no invidious distinction on the sheikh's part between Moslem women and Christian women. Besides, the Christian women dress and cover their faces in exactly the same manner as the Mohammedan women, Turkish and Arab.

The sheikh enjoyed many privileges, but perhaps the greatest of them all, when we consider how strict the Mohammedans are about the seclusion of their women, was the lege of entering the harem, or women's quarter, of any which he took a fancy to visit. He used even to enter ladies' haman (public bath). On such occasions the Christian women would rush away like a herd of frightened deer in to hide their nakedness, but the Mohammedan woman struggle with one another as to who should be the first of the holy man's hands, or even touch his body, quite uncon of the fact that they had perhaps nothing, not even a towel, round their bodies. For to touch the holy man's was to bring blessings on themselves and on those they. The women would on their return home tell their hus of the good fortune that had befallen them that day, and would be their joy if the saint had spoken to them. Sometimes he gave a blessing, and this event was never forg by the recipients. One hair from his head or beard would be treasured through life, and worn as an amulet or abrac Afterwards it would be regarded—by Mohammedan course—as a family heirloom second only in sanctity to the beard of the Prophet.

No door was closed to the sheikh. He could visit house he chose and stay there as long as he liked. If it Mohammedan house the owners always felt themselves highly honoured, and greatly were they envied by all neighbours.

What was the secret of the sheikh's power? The first place he had all the traditional characteristics of Eastern saint—he had an extreme devotion to prayer and fasting often, he exhibited on all occasions a genuine con for money. Over and above this, however, he was con with the possession of supernatural powers. During the course of the last Russo-Turkish War, mothers, fathers,
TALES FROM TURKEY

brothers, lovers, and children got all their news of their loved ones from Sheikh Assiferi. When they could bear the strain of anxiety no longer they would go to him and beg him to give them some account of their relatives at the front. This the holy one never refused to do, but willingly offered to go to Kars or to Plevna or wherever they asked him, and to let them know all about the health and the deeds of those in whom they were interested. He knew, personally all the soldiers who had gone from Latakiah to fight against the Tsar, and thrilling are the tales he would sometimes tell of their stubborn bravery in the snow-covered trenches. Had he been alive at the time of the recent Balkan War, some London paper would probably have been anxious to engage him as its "own correspondent;" but, seriously, many of the stories which he brought from the front were afterwards found to be true. Very often, unfortunately, those stories dealt with the mutilation, death, or capture of the beloved one, with the privations which he endured, with the defeats which he witnessed.

Sheikh Assiferi was inexpensive to those who employed him as their war-correspondent. In fact he got nothing at all as salary, and his expense account was nil. His method of procedure was simplicity itself. He had but to go to the water's edge, stepping over the remains of the Phœnician tombs on the sea-shore, to take off his cloak, and to throw it upon the water. He then seemed to fall into a trance, in the course of which his spirit visited the Moslem armies. His body would lie motionless on the beach for many hours, and some of the people told a curious tale—not generally credited, however—of how, during that period of trance, he used to be fed by bees, which adroitly dropped their honey into his open mouth. No one would ever dream of disturbing him; and when his spirit returned he always seemed to wake up refreshed and invigorated. Then he would proceed to tell his tale. He

STORIES ABOUT SAINTS AND SINNERS

had seen Ibrahim, and Abbe Din, and Selim, and when other townsman it was that he had gone in search of, spoken with them. One was bravely carrying the flag of Prophet in the thickest of the fight. Another had been unwell. A third had received a decoration, and so on.

The good news which he sometimes brought back cause great rejoicing to all the people of Latakiah, Sheikh Assiferi was often called upon to undertake these special journeys in order to ease a mother's aching heart, or to obtain the confidence of an Arab maiden in her solicitude. Daily on the beach would he prostrate himself in prayer, an anxious crowd gathered around him at a respectful distance, to watch him get ready for his journey and to pray for his safe return. It is said that the good news of this kind first given to the people of Latakiah by Sheikh Assiferi.

When some days later the Government confirmed this news, the people prostrated themselves in the most reverent manner, showed their gratitude to Allah by having sent to their town so holy a man as Sheikh Assiferi. Can anyone wonder that, after this "scoop"—as a journalist would call it—the good man's every utterance was regarded as being, verily, the voice of Allah Himself?

Every good Mohammedan must try to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, once in his life, and kiss the Kabba stone, and return purified. Before the construction of the Hedjaz railway, the journey was as long and dangerous as a mediæval pilgrimage to Jerusalem or St. James of Compostello. A very small percentage of the pilgrims ever made the trip and while they were on the road there was no one to receive news from them. Of those who could not, only the vaguest and most unreliable rumours ever came.

The people of Latakiah were in an exceptional case, however, for every day Sheikh Assiferi would bring the
TALES FROM TURKEY

of their loved ones, and tell each family what he had said to the pilgrims, and if they were well provided for. When they started on their return journey he would likewise narrate to their friends the incidents of each day's march. Unfortunately he had often to tell of disease, of robbers attacking the caravans, of deaths, and of other kinds of misfortunes; but the people of Latakiah preferred to know the worst at once rather than be kept in painful suspense.

Often would he go to the governor, tell him that such and such a caravan was in difficulties, and insist on help being sent to it without delay. Inquiries were frequently made as to the accuracy of his inspirations, and the people say that the sheikh was always right. The Government sometimes contradicted him, issued reassuring statements (as governments would do), procrastinated—and was always wrong. As a rule, however, the local governor did his best to meet the sheikh's wishes. It may very often have been difficult for him to do so, but the holy man's popularity was such that promises of at least a satisfying kind had to be made or there would have been trouble. If the sheikh were seen to depart from the Government house dissatisfied there was no telling what the fanatical population might do. The officials realized this, and, as a rule, they skillfully avoided disputes with the Man of God.

That the Turks could tolerate the sheikh may seem to an Englishman almost inconceivable, but Asia Minor is not England, and the Turks are not as we are. They are profoundly convinced that a human interpreter of Allah's will is not as other men are, and the holier he is, the less is his intelligence to be gauged by that of his fellow creatures. Even the victim of catalepsy, when he falls down, is thought to be communicating with the Giver of Life, and no assistance of any kind is given to him. Where he falls, there he lies, and

STORIES ABOUT SAINTS AND E.

do nothing there is a gate

we course, so often, n. Many Araf, the with one dan creed raised his and being his limbs, e colour of calamity, ects to the no. It did scribes an on men's styly commit his dan male ny case a he bier of man, the bearing rave, and the work ce reason women, in keepers, a speedy rally along

the passers-by bend their heads in reverence—but more. Should anyone look on with too inquisitive he will probably be requested to move on.

Sheikh Assiferi, however, was mortal, and, in the hour came for his spirit, which had roamed to depart from its earthly tabernacle never to return visitors he had daily, but among them one day was Angel of Death. Gathering up all his strength final effort, he repeated a few times the Mohamm (La Ilaha illallah, Mohammed Rasul Allah), c hands on his chest, the index finger of the right pointed as a sign of belief in Islam, stretched out and passed away. And, verily, he passed away in the sanctity. He died, and Latakiah was stricken as by:

The entire population came to pay their respects to the body of the sheikh as it lay in a common deal coffin not in state long, for the Moslem religion provided for the early funeral, and soon it was borne to the cemetery shoulders—shoulders of Mohammedans who earned peted for the honour of carrying such a very holy n last resting-place. All classes of the Mohammedan population assisted in this pious task; but in a singular spirit of democracy always prevails around a dead Moslem. The hamal (porter), the rich beggar and the high dignitary all take their turn; the coffin at least a step or two on its way to the there is always some one anxious to do his share of and acquire merit for himself thereby. But, for so or other, a Moslem funeral is seldom attended by. The only women present are those who, like the Iri are hired to lament the dead.

The Mohammedan religion not only prescribes burial after death; it also directs that the funeral hu
with what we would consider to be indecent haste, instead of
going slowly as with us. This is owing to the Islamic
doctrine that the body is sentient after death and suffers
torment till committed to the repose of the tomb. Thus in
death as in life Turkish habits are the opposite of European
habits. The Western European “hustles” and “scorches”
all his life; but, after death, he goes with extreme deliberation
to the graveyard. The Turk is phlegmatic while alive; but,
as soon as the breath has left his body, he rushes to the
cemetery at a pace that would win the respectful approbation
of a joy-ride motorist.

When Americans wish to indicate that a man is slow they
say that he would be overtaken and run down by a funeral, but
that witticism does not hold good in Mohammedan countries.
It is dangerous at times to get in the way of a Turkish funeral.

Its bearers constantly changing, the body is thus carried
along until the open grave is reached. Sometimes blind men
lead the way. The dead, so far as we know, are blind—so the
Turks reason—and why should not their funerals be headed
by living men who are sightless?

But the dead Sheikh Assifeli was not blind. The corpse
saw where it was going, and for some unknown reason it
refused to go any farther when it reached the governor’s
house, which is on the road to the cemetery. Here, after
the most desperate efforts to advance, the perspiring and
thoroughly frightened bearers at last stood still. But even
when fresh, willing hands came forward to assist, the bier
remained as firm as a rock.

Great consternation naturally prevailed among the numerous
mourners, and it increased with the failure of each fresh effort
to carry the sheikh’s body on to the grave. Latakiah was
Thunderstruck and very much alarmed, for it did not know
what sort of calamity this extraordinary stoppage portended.
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The most stalwart youths in the town came forward at length with strong ropes, and these being made fast to the coffin, dozens of men hung on to each rope as if they were holding down a Zeppelin balloon. And, indeed, their object was nothing less than to keep the body from soaring upwards, for a rumour had got abroad that it was about to ascend into heaven. The town was unanimously of opinion, however, that this crowning calamity should not be allowed to happen, and that the holy man’s corpse should be retained—by force if necessary—in his native Latakiah. Prayers were offered up to Allah, but still no progress was made, and both the coffin and the host of mourners remained standing opposite the Government House, strangely expectant, as if waiting for some great event. Finally another sheikh approached, and, after many prayers, listened at the head of the coffin to learn if perchance there was aught that the dead sheikh wanted done. And the corpse communicated with him. It bade him let the governor know that the dead body would never pass that door of injustice, false promises, corruption and tyranny until he promised to rule justly. On his knees and with blanched face the governor promised, whereupon the coffin lurched forward so suddenly that its bearers nearly lost their feet, while a great sigh of relief went up from the host of mourners and all the people looked as if an intolerable burden had been taken from them. And now the funeral wound its way through the solitude of the great cypress forest which lies like a vast pall thrown over the departed who sleep in the ancient graveyard of Latakiah. For it is a beautiful custom of the Turks to plant in their “Cities of the Dead,” as they call their cemeteries, great numbers of funereal cypresses. This Oriental race is fond of symbolism—their “flower language” is quite as elaborate as that of the Japanese—and in this stately evergreen they seem to find the emblem of strength.
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and immortality. A better emblem they could hardly choose, for in Turkey the cypress attains its greatest magnificence and beauty. Its trunk is often of immense circumference and its lofty summit points, like a minaret, to heaven. The cypress is, moreover, the family bible, reminding them of such a birth, such a marriage, and such a death; for they note down all these domestic events by the planting of a cypress tree. The result of this laudable practice is that the area of the magnificent cypress groves is constantly extending.

Beneath the trees the headstones cluster thickly. Very often they are of marble, owing to the cheap and inexhaustible supply of this valuable material which is to be had in most parts of Turkey. These headstones are shaped into rude representations of the human form, surmounted by a head covered by a turban. On the bust of the pillar is an Arabic inscription containing the name of the deceased without any enumeration of his virtues. The stones which mark the graves of women are adorned with a carving meant to represent a lotus leaf, and surmounted by a knob like a nail. In Turkey, as elsewhere, women spend much time in praying at the tombs of the departed, for whose repose they appeal to Allah, and from whom they solicit favours. In the accompanying illustration there is represented a woman, enveloped in her yashmak and feridge, performing this pious duty. On the grave—if it is flat—there is usually a trough or cavity for the reception of plants or flowers—offerings of pious affection to the dead. Sometimes lattices of gilt wire form aviaries over the grave of the beloved one. The Turks take peculiar delight in flowers and birds, and the amiable superstition of the survivor hopes to gratify her departed friend, even in the grave, by the odour of the one and the song of the other.

When they reached the grave the stalwart youths held the ropes still more firmly, for they feared that the sheikh's

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body might even yet play some prank on them away to some other part of the earth or suddenly heavenwards. And they were not going to take any risks of losing holy relics which would deprive Latakia second only in spiritual and temporal advantages to the Prophet himself at Mecca. The whole of that hill held on tightly to the ropes while masons dug for a turbeh or tomb, and ere the sun had risen it was to rise be to Allah! Sheikh Assiferi's body was for Latakiah alone!

The turbeh was built, and to-day when the sun sets you will see the cloaked Moslem women entering another. Each of them has a piece of bread, a jug of water, and a small square of carpet whereon to kneel while she prays him her intervention to Allah and communes with the dead sheikh, tells him her wants and her hopes, and begging for his powerful with the Merciful, the Compassionate. They kneel the right nor to the left. Each has her mission, to believe the stories that are told of miracles which some of these women possess the faith that moves mountains. In proof of all the wonders I have narrated, latakia stands to-day in Latakia. What proof can the reader want? He will also see, in Latakia, that the tomb is overhung with rags of grateful devotees whose petitions have been granted.

The old mad sheikh brought consolation to the people while he lived (although he did sometimes annoy them), and consolation and hope he brings in death. In truth Sheikh Assiferi is never empty night or day, and stricken never leave it without feeling that thei has been somewhat lightened, or that (what come}


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thing) strength to bear it has been vouchsafed to them by Allah the Merciful, the Compassionate.

The authors of this book freely admit that this Sheikh Assiferi story is not one that you could tell with a serious face in your club. It might create unfavourable comment on the subject of the narrator's veracity or sanity, to say the least of it. And yet the witnesses to the old sheikh's miracles are so numerous and so well entitled to belief, that we know Britishers who do not believe in the miracles of Christ to believe most implicitly in those of "the saint who rode on peoples' backs." And we must say that we ourselves are convinced that, when full allowance has been made for exaggeration and inaccuracy, Sheikh Assiferi did possess various mysterious powers, which three centuries ago would have led to their possessor being burned alive as a necromancer, but which are now given scientific names, such as telepathy, levitation, &c.

HADJI OSMAN OF BOKHAR

HADJI OSMAN was on the return from that is, the pilgrimage to Mecca which good Mohammedan makes at least once in his lifetime. Should he make the journey more than once, and kiss the Kabba (Holy Stone) which the Gabriel placed there, near to the last resting-place of the Prophet, then he becomes beloved of God and dear to that Prophet of God.

While resting in the pilgrims' house or tekkiyek of Selim at Damascus, Hadji Osman frequently went to the bath-house to ease his aching limbs and to cleanse his body, making himself white as his soul was. On the occasion of one visit he permitted himself for an instant to doubt the truth of the pious saying of "All creatures made by Allah are of use to man!" To this impious questioning of the ways of the Most High, Hadji Osman was led by a contemplation of the immensity of the universe, the numberless stars, dark red, and brown cockroaches which swarmed in the bath-house. "Of what use to man," asked the hadji, "can these cockroaches be?" He was sorry, a moment afterwards, that he had questioned the utility of the cockroach, for but man is weak, and he had done it.

His punishment followed swiftly, for, while pre-occupied with this deep theological question, it chanced that he upon one of the creatures in question with his naked foot, slipped on the highly polished, wet, marble floor, and, fæ, seriously bruised his left knee-cap. The pain was great
the attendant was resourceful: he immediately laid the hadji on his back, and, having caught about a dozen of the fleet cockroaches, he made them into a paste, and applied the paste, still hot, to the hadji's knee. The pain was alleviated almost miraculously, and the hadji's gratitude was boundless.

Mingled with self-reproach for having dared to question the utility of any creature made by the All-Wise, his remorse grew as the days passed, and he pondered on some penance that might please his Creator and teach himself man's utter insignificance.

Shortly after this painful adventure, and as soon as he could walk, he left Damascus for Beirut, and took steamer for Batoum.

In the Black Sea a dreadful storm was raging, and even the seamen despaired of ever reaching a port. In every part of the vessel, nay, even on the captain's bridge, there was weeping and wailing, but the hadji took no note of this uproar or of the tempest which caused it; he calmly smoked and contemplated the wondrous works of the Almighty. His calmness finally irritated his fellow-passengers and the seamen to such an extent that they said to him: "O hadji! you have been lately at the tomb of the Prophet. Do you think it meet, then, that you should be now sitting smoking, indifferent to our common danger, instead of joining with us in asking for mercy?"

"Friends," said the hadji in reply, "who has caused this storm? Is it not Allah? Take warning, therefore, from me, and don't criticize the work of Allah! I once did so, O brethren, and I still limp from the pain of the chastisement which He inflicted on me. With His help I shall never again question the Supreme Wisdom, and, my friends, if you take my advice, you will follow my example and be resigned, as I am, to His holy will."
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Then he continued to smoke and to contemplate, while the storm raged. And he thought of the ten signs which shall precede the Last Day, that is to say, the smoke, the beast of the earth, an eclipse in the east, another in the west, and a third in the peninsula of Arabia, the appearance of Antichrist, the sun's rising in the west, the eruption of Gog and Magog, the descent of Jesus on earth, and fire which shall break forth from Aden. And he considered within himself how on that day the beasts of the field shall also rise from the dead, and how the unhorned beasts shall take revenge on the horned. And he marvelled exceedingly.
THE FORTY WISE MEN

On a day amongst the many days when the Turk was more earnest than now, before the Europeans came and gave new ideas to our children, there lived and laboured for the welfare of the people an organized body of men. At whose suggestion this society was formed I know not. All that we know of them to-day, through our fathers, is that their forefathers chose from among them the most wise, sincere, and experienced forty brethren. These forty were named the Forty Wise Men. When one of the forty was called away from his labours here, perhaps to continue them in higher spheres or to receive his reward—who knows?—the remaining thirty-nine consulted, and chose from the community him whom they thought most capable and worthy of guiding and of being guided, to add to their number. They lived and held their meetings in a mosque of which little remains now, the destructive hand of time having left but a battered dome and three cheerless walls pierced by great square holes where there once were iron bars and stained glass. As a place of worship the mosque is no more—as the forty wise men are no more. But its foundations are solid, and they may in time come to support an edifice dedicated to noble work, and, In-shâ-Allah! the seed of the Forty Wise Men may also bear fruit in the days that are not yet.

What good, you will ask, did these forty wise men do? Much good, very much good, my friends. Not only did they administer justice to the oppressed, and give to the needy
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substantial aid; but their very existence had the most beneficial effect on the community. Why, you ask. Because each vied with the other to be worthy of nomination for the vacancy when it occurred. No profession was excluded. No station in life was too low for admittance, no station in life was so high that one of the Faithful who occupied it might not also become one of the "Forty." And, among the forty, all were equal. With their years, their wisdom grew; and they were blessed by Allah.

In the town of Scutari, on the other side of the Bosphorus, there lived and laboured a Dervish. He was a just man, charitable to the poor, merciful and compassionate. Apparently his sole object 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, the Dervish patiently laboured. No doubt he contented himself with the hope that the merit of his prayers, his good works, and his life would one day be recognized here below by Allah. If he did solace himself, my friends, he made a mistake; for true faith expecteth nothing, and perfect love desireth no reward. The day did come, however, and the Dervish's great life-long 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 consulted as to whom they should call in to aid them in their work. More than one of them proposed the election of the Dervish. They pointed out how he had laboured among the people in Scutari, ever ready to help the needy, ever willing to advise the rash, always quick to comfort and encourage the despairing. It was unanimously decided that he should be nominated. A deputation consisting of three, two to listen, one to speak, was at once named; and, with the blessing of their brethren for
success, they entered a caique and were rowed over to Scutari. Arriving at the Dervish’s gate, the spokesman said, “Selâmın aleikum! ” (“Peace be on you!”) and when the other responded, “Ve aleikum selâm!” (“And on you be peace!”) the visitor thus addressed the Dervish:

“Brother in the spirit, thy actions have been noted, and we come to make to thee a proposal which, after consideration, thou wilt either accept or reject as thou thinkest best. We would ask thee to become one of us. We are sent hither by 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, endeavour to fulfil their duty. And it is the desire of these one hundred and thirty-eight souls to add to us thyself, in order to complete our number of labourers in the flesh. Brother, thy duties, which will be everlasting, thou wilt learn when with us. Do thou consider, and we shall return at the setting of the sun on the third day in order to receive thy answer.”

So saying, they prepared 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 and my sole object in life for thirty years has been to become one of you. In spirit I have long been your brother. To become your brother in the flesh will therefore be easy for me.”

Then answered the spokesman: “Brother, thou hast spoken well. Allah! thou art with us in our choice; we praise thee. Brother, one word! Our ways are different from the ways of all other men. Thou hast but to have faith, and all will be well.”

“Brethren, faith! I have always had faith; my faith is now even strengthened. I do your bidding.”

“Brother, first of all thy worldly goods must be disposed of and turned into gold. Every earthly possession must be represented by a piece of gold. Therefore let this be done. As for us, we have other duties but will return ere the sun sets in the west.”

The Dervish set about selling all his goods; at lengthened shadows and the deep colouring of the west harbingered the closing of the day, he had everything, and stood waiting with naught but a silk caique was in waiting, and the four entered the caique glided over the smooth surface of the water silently and the occupants sat. When beyond the Tower, the spokesman, turning to the Dervish, said: “Brother, thou hast done well; we will here give me that sack, representing everything thou dost own.”

The Dervish handed the sack as he was bid, and the wise man solemnly rose, and, holding it on high, “the blessing of our brother Mustapha.” Thence dropped it into a part of the stream where the current is soft, as if soothing over the narrow water. When close to the narrow stream four men hasted their way up the steep hill; and to the east the sun was wrapped in the mantle of night, hid them from man’s sight. A few minutes’ walk brought the mosque of the Forty Wise Men; and, on reaching...
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way, the spokesman turned to the Dervish and said: "Brother, follow faithfully," passing immediately afterwards through the doorway. They entered a large, vaulted chamber, the ceiling of which was artistically inlaid with mosaics, and the floor covered with tiles whose brilliant colours spoke of the lost ceramic art of bygone ages. From the centre of the ceiling hung a large chandelier holding a number of little oil cups, each adding its tiny light to the general fund as if to show that union is strength. Round this chandelier were seven brass filigreed, hemispherical lanterns, each holding several oil-burners. These many burners produced a soothing but not a powerful illumination, and this "dim religious light" combined with the silence to add greatly to the impressiveness of the sacred place. Round the hall were forty boxes, all the same shape and size.

The neophyte stood in the centre of the hall and, under the influence of the strange scene, he was almost afraid to breathe. He did not quite know whether to be happy or afraid at having come so far.

As he stood thus, immersed in thought, one of the many curtains which were hung around the walls was slowly raised, and there came forth from behind it a very old man, his venerable white beard all but touching his girdle.

Slowly and solemnly he walked over to the opposite side of the mosque, and in his train came thirty-eight other aged men, the last being apparently the youngest.

The newcomer watched these aged and mysterious men moving about in the unbroken silence, opening their lips as if talking to invisible beings; now embracing unseen forms, now clasping invisible hands, now bidding farewell to beings which the visitor could not see.

The Dervish closed his eyes and opened them again. Was he dreaming? No, it was no dream, no hallucination.

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A sense of horror and of awe invaded his whole being. Perspiration poured down his face.

Each of the brethren now took his place beside his forty boxes. There was only one vacancy, no one at the side of the box to the left of the youngest. Making a profound salaam, 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 time the Dervish watched one after another disappear. Then he raised the curtain, but before vanishing, he turned (a spokesman who had come over to Scutari) and whispered three words: "Brother! . . . Faith! . . . Follow also." These words acted upon the Dervish like a spell, and he followed also.

Up, up the winding stairway of a minaret that as last they reached the dizzy stone platform near the top, a fresh, salt wind from the Black Sea blew refreshing upon the visitor's fevered brow. Then horror seized on the soul, for what did he see? He saw one, two, three of the Dervish men disappear over the parapet. Finally came the turn, and the friend the spokesman. With the words, "Brother! . . . Faith! Follow!" he also vanished into the inky darkness.

Again, at the eleventh hour did the cheering voices of the Dervish brother spokesmen act upon the Dervish like magic, raising his foot to the parapet, and jumped up on it two or three times. But man's angel guardian does not carry him over rugged paths of life. The guardian only gives the impulse; it is for the man himself to act. So it was in the case of the Dervish. He jumped once, twice, thrice, but each time backwards instead of forwards. Then he hesitated a moment, looked down with horror at the sheer wall of the minaret, at the city lights twinkling at an incredible distance.
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him. Sweat burst out all over his body. A cold chill ran down his spine. His head drooped. He got off the parapet. He was not equal to the test. With a great weight on his heart, he slowly descended the winding stairs of the minaret. He had reached his zenith only in desire, and was now on his decline.

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

But the charm of the place was on him again, and, as he stood in the centre of that sacred and mysterious building, a curtain moved, and the eldest of the old men advanced. As before, the silence was unbroken. Again did each take his place beside a box, again did the old man salaam, again did all the others respond simultaneously. Again did they move their lips and their arms as if talking to invisible beings. But now they seemed to be talking of some calamity which had befallen them and which they all regretted.

The old man went and opened the box that stood alone. From this he took, what? the identical bag of gold that had been dropped into the Bosphorus some hours before! The spokesman then came forward and took the bag from the hands of the old man. The brain of the unfortunate Dervish was now in a whirl. A multitude of unseen présences seemed to be reproaching him with fingers which had no substance, with voices which had no sound.

Mournfully, the spokesman thus addressed the spell-bound Dervish, his voice producing a strange echo in the vaulted mosque, as if his words were being repeated and emphasized by a hundred invisible mouths:

"Friend and brother in the spirit, but weak in the flesh, thou hast proved thyself unworthy, alas! to impart that which thou hast not thyself—Faith! Thine actions hitherto exceedingly meritorious, have not been intended solely for the approbation of the Almighty, the All-seeing, the All-powerful. They have been partly, alas! for the approbation of mankind. This approbation thou hast soared out of thine element, the atmosphere is too rarefied; thou canst not live in it. Thou must, therefore, alas, return!

"Get thee back into the world, back to thy fellows, thou canst not be one of us. One hundred and thirty-nine in faith, in partment, man can in secret let none tumble exposed nine all!

"Allaha Esmarladeg! Farewell!"

And with this the Dervish was led out into the street, a lone and defeated man. And in his hand he had his bag of gold.
HOW THE KHOJA SAVED ALLAH

NOT far from the famous fountain and street and tombs in Eyoub an old khoja kept a school, and very skilfully he taught the rising generation the everlasting lesson from the Book of Books. Such knowledge had he of human nature that by a glance at his pupil he could at once tell how long it would take him to learn a chapter, a quarter, the half or the whole of the Koran. His ear was so trained that it mattered not what chapter the boys were reciting, and whether or not each group of three or four boys was reciting a different part, he could detect at once a misplaced accent and correct it while the other boys continued to recite their lessons. He was known over the whole empire as the best reciter and most accurate imitator of the sacred writings of the Prophet. For many years this khoja, famed far and wide as “the khoja of khojas,” had taught in this little school. The number of times he had recited the Book with his pupils is beyond counting; and should we attempt to consider how often he must have corrected them for some misplaced word our beards would grow grey in the endeavour.

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, Bakara, divine inspiration opened his inward eye and led him to pause 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

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a hundred grains; and Allah giveth twofold unto whom pleaseth.” As his pupils, one after the other, recited verse to him, he wondered why he had overlooked it for so many years. Fully convinced that anything given to Allah, or in the way that He proposes, was an act that brought a percentage undreamed of in commerce, he dismissed his pupils, and putting his har his bosom drew forth from the many folds of his dress and proceeded to count his worldly possessions.

Carefully and attentively he counted and then recourecou mony, and found that if invested in the ways of A would bring a return of no less than one thousand piastres! One thousand piastres! Mâsha’Allâh! a fortun.

So, having dismissed his school, he sallied forth, his money in his hand, and began distributing its content to needy that he met in the highways. Ere many hours passed the whole of his savings was gone. The khoja was very happy; for now he was the creditor in Allah’s book.

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

The next day came. The thousand piastres had arrived. He ate his bread, he imagined he had olives, and was content.

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

There, where no one could hear him, he lamented his fate and the great calamity that had befallen him old age.
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What sin had he committed? What great wrong had his ancestors done that the wrath of the Almighty had thus fallen on him when his earthly course was well-nigh run.

"Ya! Allah! Allah!" he cried, and beat his breast.

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, life often paid the penalty.

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

"Allah! Allah! Allah! Guide me now. Protect one of your faithful followers," cried the frightened khoja, and he looked around to see if there was anyone to rescue him from his perilous position. But not a soul was to be seen, and the walls of the city were five miles distant. Just then the howl of the Dervish again reached his ear, and in terror he flew he knew not whither. As luck would have it he came upon a tree, up which, although stiff from age and weak from want, the khoja 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, as with rapid strides he preceded the wind upon his endless journey.

On and on he came, his wild yell sending the blood from very fear out of the poor khoja's face, and leaving it as yellow as a melon.

To his utter dismay the khoja 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
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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. Bringing forth 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 counsel 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 fellow men 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 brought forth an image which he addressed as follows:
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"You, Solomon, are reputed to have been the wisest man that ever lived. You had command over the host of 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 known only to you. You understood every living thing. The speech of the beasts 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 vouchsafed unto you, you committed many wrongs and did many foolish things, which in the end brought misery into the world and destruction unto 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 brought forth from the bag another figure, which he addressed thus:

"Jesus, Jesus, prophet of God, you came into this world to atone, by 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 sets fathers against their children and brethren 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's head.

With a sorrowful face the Dervish bent forward and brought forth 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 unto 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 against brother; hatred was sown between your followers, the followers of Jesus, and again the rivers ran red with blood unto the seas; and you have not been punished. I will punish you. Wallahi! By the beard of my forefather whose blood was made to flow in your cause, you will die," and with a blow the head of Mohammed fell ground.

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

"Oh, Allah! The Allah of Allahs. There is Allah, and thou art He. I have slain Job, David, Solomon, Jesus, and Mohammed for the folly that they have made into the world. Thou, God, art all-powerful. All thy children, thou createst them and bringest them into the world. The thoughts that they think are thy thoughts: all these men have brought all this evil into the world, and I, as the Dervish, am the agent of God. Shall I punish them, and allow thee to go unhurt? I must punish thee also;" and he raised his sword to strike the image of the Dervish, but the sword became a branch of the tree, and the Dervish was prostrated to the ground, and fell senseless to the ground. The khowa was that he spoke and trembled with fear, convinced that the hour had arrived. The Dervish lay stretched upon the grass like one dead. At last the khowa took courage, and seeing the Dervish's face, but the monk made no sign. The
becoming still more courageous, removed one of his heavy outer shoes and threw it on the outstretched figure of the Dervish, but still the latter lay motionless. Then the khoja carefully climbed down the tree, gave the body of the Dervish a kick, and climbed up again, but still the Dervish did not stir. At length the khoja 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 khoja, "at least I shall not starve. I will take his garments and sell them and buy me some bread."

The khoja 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 piastres.

The khoja turned his face toward Mecca and, raising his eyes to heaven, said: "Oh, Allah, you have kept your promise, but," he added, with just a slight touch of patronage in his tone, "not before I had saved your life."
HOW CHAPKIN HALID BECAME CHIEF DETECTIVE*

IN Balata there lived, some years ago, two scapegraces called Chapkin Halid and Pitch Osman. Those two young rascals lived by their wits and at the expense of their neighbours. But they often had to lament the ever-increasing difficulties they encountered in procuring the few piastres they needed daily for bread and the coffee-house. They had tried several schemes in their own neighbourhood, with exceptionally poor results, and were almost disheartened when Chapkin Halid conceived an idea that seemed to offer them every chance of success. He explained to his friend 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 feign death in the principal street, while Osman was to collect the funeral expenses from the shocked and sympathetic onlookers.

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 Turkish title of this tale is, "Chapkin Halid and Pitch Osman," which means "Scamp Halid and Bastard Osman."
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the burial of the stranger. Osman had collected about thirty piastres, and Halid was seriously thinking of a resurrection, when the approach of a procession made it necessary for him to remain dead for some time longer. The procession was the suite of the Grand Vizier, who, catching sight of Halid, inquired why the man lay on the ground in that fashion. Being told that the body was that of a stranger who had died in the street, the Grand Vizier gave instructions to an imam, who happened to be at hand, to bury the unknown and to come afterwards for the funeral expenses to the Sublime Porte.

Halid was reverently 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 interment. 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 purchase some. No sooner had the imam disappeared than Halid jumped up, and, donning the imam's turban and long cloak, repaired to the Sublime Porte. Here he asked for admittance to the presence of the Grand Vizier, but he was told that this request could not be granted until he had told the nature of his business. Halid said he was the imam who, in compliance with the verbal instructions received from his Highness, had buried a stranger, and that he had now come for the payment which had been promised to him. The Grand Vizier sent five gold-pieces (one hundred piastres) to the supposed imam, and Halid made off as fast as possible.

No sooner had Halid departed than the imam arrived without his cloak and in breathless haste. He 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 own cloak and turban. Witnesses having proved this man to be undoubtedly the
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imam of the quarter, the Grand Vizier gave orders to his chief detective to capture, within three days, on pain of death, and bring to the Sublime Porte, this fearless evil-doer.

The chief detective was soon on the track of Halid; but the latter was on the look-out. With the aid of the money he had received from the Grand Vizier to defray his burial expenses, he successfully evaded the clutches of the chief detective, who was very angry at being thus frustrated. On the second day the detective again got on the scent of Halid, and determined to follow him till an opportunity offered for his capture. Halid knew that he was being followed, and, of course, he divined the intentions of his pursuer. As he was passing a pharmacy he noticed there several young men, so he entered and spoke to the Hebrew druggist in Indo-Spanish, a language with which he was perfectly conversant. Handing the druggist one of the gold pieces he had received from the Grand Vizier, he said that his uncle, who would come in presently, was not right, alas! in his mind, but that, if the druggist could manage to douche his head and back with cold water, he would regain his health for a week or two. No sooner did the chief detective enter the shop than, at a word from the apothecary, the young men seized him, and, by means of a large squirt, did their utmost to give him the salutary and cooling douche which his affectionate nephew had recommended. The more the detective protested, the more soothingly explained that the douche would soon be over, and that he, the uncle, would feel much better after it. The shopkeeper also told of numerous similar cases which he had cured in a like manner. The detective saw that it was useless to struggle, so he abandoned himself to the treatment; and in the meantime Halid made off. The chief detective was so disheartened by this experience that he went to the Grand Vizier and begged for instant decapitation,
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as death (said he) 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 should be placed at the twenty-four gates of the city, and that Halid should be seized at the first opportunity. A reward was further promised to the person who would bring him to the Sublime Porte. Meanwhile, however, Halid lived quietly in the old Tower of Galata.

Halid was finally caught one night as he was going out of the Top-Kapou (Cannon Gate). He had gone into the great subterranean palace of Yere-Batun-Seraif and traversed a secret passage which would bring him, he thought, outside the walls of the city. But it brought him into a pile of ruins close by a guardhouse, the soldiers of which took him at first for a devil. But having recognized him, after a while, they rejoiced in their capture, and also in the prospect of now getting a little rest after their vigilant watch. As a result of considerable discussion, they decided to bind their prisoner to a large tree close to the guard-house. By doing so they would avoid the loss of sleep and the anxiety incident to watching over so desperate a character. They carried their scheme into execution, and Halid now thought that his case was indeed hopeless. Towards dawn, however, he perceived a man with a lantern walking toward the Armenian church, and rightly concluded that it was the beadle going to make ready for the early morning service. So he called out in a loud voice: 

"Beadle! Brother! Beadle! Brother! come here quickly!"

Now it happened that the beadle was a poor hunchback, and no sooner did Halid perceive this than he said:

"Quick, quick, beadle! look at my back and see if it has gone!"

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"See if what has gone?" asked the beadle, looking behind the tree.

"Why, my hump, of course," answered Halid.

The beadle made a close inspection, and declared he could see no hump.

"A thousand thanks!" fervently exclaimed Halid. "Please undo the rope."

The beadle set about the work of liberating Halid, begging him at the same time to tell how he had his hump, so that he, the beadle, might also be free of his deformity. Halid agreed to tell his rescuer the story that he had not yet broken his fast, and promised that he was prepared to pay a certain small sum of money for the secret. The beadle satisfied Halid on both the points, and, immediately proceeded to bind the hunch-sixty-one to the tree, telling him meanwhile to repeat nine times the words: "Esserti! Pesserti! Serpeti!" after this, the hump would of a certainty disappear. Halid, the poor beadle, earnestly and religiously repeating those nine words.

The guards were very much surprised when tied to the tree, not Halid, but a stranger, who took them in and continued to repeat very rapidly words which they could not understand.

"Who is this hunchback and what is he saying?" asked a soldier. "He is mad. He is talking nonsense."

"Therefore it is," quoth the bimbash (major), "very holy man, having been on the hajj, therefor he may be a prophet. Is it not the same in the Koran? the sura 'Al Araf' begin with four letters whose meaning alone?"

And, but soon the Armenian priest came on the scene.

* That is, "On the Pilgrimage to Mecca."
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recognizing the beadle, begged the soldiers to liberate him. The soldiers were furious as they began to unbind the captive, and what made them the more furious was the fact that the only answer they could get to their host of questions was “Eserti, Pesserti, Sersepeti!” As the knots were loosened the despairing voice of the beadle rose louder and louder as he called out the charmed words in the hope of arresting the undoing of his bonds. No sooner was the beadle freed than he asked Allah to bring down calamity on the destroyers of the charm that was to remove his hump. On hearing the beadle’s tale, the guards understood how their prisoner had secured his liberty, and sent word to the chief detective. This gentleman then repaired once more to the Grand Vizier and, having prostrated himself at the feet of that dignitary, told this latest instance of the notorious Chapkin's cunning. The Grand Vizier was amused and also very anxious to see this Chapkin Halid, so he set criers all over the city, announcing the grant of a full pardon to Halid on condition that he would come to the Sublime Porte and confess in person to the Grand Vizier. Halid obeyed the summons, and came to kiss the hem of the Grand Vizier's garment, and his Excellency was so favourably impressed by him that he there and then appointed him to be his chief detective.