BETTER WOMAN'S FOLLY THAN MAN'S WISDOM

THERE lived once in Constantinople an old khowja, a learned man, who had a son. The boy followed in his father’s footsteps, went every day to the mosque Aya Sofia, seated himself in a secluded spot, to the left of the pillar bearing the impress of the Conqueror’s hand, and engaged in the study of the Koran. Daily he might be seen seated, swaying his body to and fro, and reciting to himself the verses of the Holy Book.

The dearest wish of a Mohammedan theological student is to be able to recite the entire Koran by heart. Many years are spent in memorizing the Holy Book, which must be recited with a prescribed cantillation, and in acquiring a rhythmical movement of the body which accompanies the chant.

When Abdul, for that was the young man’s name, had reached his nineteenth year, he had, by the most assiduous study, finally succeeded in mastering three-fourths of the Koran. At this achievement his pride rose, his ambition was fired, and he determined to become a great man.

The day that he reached this decision, he did not go to the Mosque, but stopped at home, in his father’s house, and sat staring at the fire glowing in the brazier. Several times the father asked:

“My son, what do you see in the fire?”

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And each time the son answered:
"Nothing, father."
He was very young; he could not see.
Finally, the young man picked up courage and gave expression to his thoughts.
"Father," he said, "I wish to become a great man."
"That is very easy," said the father.
"And to be a great man," continued the son, "I must first go to Mecca." For no Mohammedan priest or theologian, or even layman, has fulfilled all of the cardinal precepts of his faith unless he has made the pilgrimage to the Holy City.
To his son's last observation the father blandly replied:
"It is very easy to go to Mecca."
"How?—easy?" asked the son. "On the contrary, it is very difficult; for the journey is costly, and I have no money."
"Listen, my son," said the father. "You must become a scribe, the writer of the thoughts of your brethren, and your fortune is made."
"But I have not even the implements necessary for a scribe," said the son.
"All that can be easily arranged," said the father; "your grandfather had an ink-horn; I will give it you; I will buy you some writing-paper, and we will get you a box to sit in. All that you need to do is to sit still, look wise, and your fortune is made."

And indeed the advice was good. For letter-writing is an art which only few possess. The ability to write by no means carries with it the ability to compose. Epistolary genius is rare.

Abdul was much rejoiced at the plan that had been given him, and lost no time in carrying it out. He took his grandfather's ink-horn and the paper his father bought, he got himself a box, and began his career as a scribe.

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Abdul was a child, he knew nothing, but, deeming himself wise, he sought to surpass the counsel of his father.
"To look wise," he said, "is not sufficient; I must have other attraction."

And after much thought he hit upon the following:

Over his box he painted a legend: "The wisdom of a man is greater than the wisdom of woman." People thought it very clever, customers came, the young khoja to many piastres, and he was correspondingly happy.

This sign one day attracted the eyes and mind of a Hanın (Turkish lady). Seeing that Abdul was a manly youth, she went to him and said:
"Khoja, I have a difficult letter to write. I have that thou art very wise, so I have come to thee. To the letter thou wilt need all thy wit. Moreover, the letter is a long one, and I cannot stand here while it is being written. Come to my konak (house) at three this afternoon, and I will write the letter."

The khoja was overcome with admiration for his employer, and surprised at the invitation. He was enchanted, and the heart beat wildly, and so great was his agitation that his acquiescence was scarcely audible.

The invitation had more than the charm of novelty: it made it attractive. Abdul had never talked with a woman outside of his own family circle. To be admitted to a house was in itself an adventure.

Long before the appointed time, the young khoja—impetuous youth!—gathered together his reeds, ink and inkstand, and made his way to the house. Little by little, the window covered and the high wall of the garden, a ponderous gate barred the entrance. Thrice he raised the massive knocker.
"Who is there?" called a voice from within.
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The scribe, was the reply.
It is well," said the porter: the gate was unbarred
the khoja permitted to enter. He was at once ushered into
apartment of his fair client.
The lady welcomed him cordially.
“Ah! Khoja Effendi, I am glad to see you; pray sit down.
The khoja nervously pulled out his writing implements.
“Do not be in such a hurry,” said the lady. “Refute
yourself; take a cup of coffee, smoke a cigarette, and we write the letter afterwards.”

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

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

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

“I have it,” said the lady at last; and, taking Abd
the arm, she said, “you must get into this box,” indicat
large chest in the room. “Quick, quick, if you prize
life utter not a word, and, In-shâ-Allâh! I shall save you.
Abdul saw his folly now that it was too late. It w
want of experience that had misled him; but, driven
sense of danger he entered the chest: the lady locked
took the key.

A moment afterwards the pasha came

“I very tired” he said bring coffee

chibook.

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

Bah!” said the pasha. “I want none of your

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talk; 'the hair of woman is long, and her wits are short,' says the proverb. Bring me my pipe."

"But, Pasha Effendi," said the lady, "I have had an adventure to-day."

"Bah!" said the pasha, "what adventure can a woman have—for got to paint your eyebrows or colour your nails, I suppose."

"No, Pasha Effendi. Be patient, and I will tell you. I went out to-day to write a letter."

"A letter?" said the pasha; "to whom would you write a letter?"

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

"A young man with beautiful eyes," shouted the pasha. "Where is he? I'll kill him!" and he drew his sword.

The khoja in the chest heard every word and trembled with fear.

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

"Here? To this house?" thundered the pasha.

"Yes, Pasha Effendi," said the lady. "So the khoja came here, and I gave him coffee and a cigarette, and we talked, and the minutes seemed like seconds, and the hours were as minutes. All at once came your knock at the gate, and I said to the khoja 'That is the pasha; and if he finds you here, he will kill you.'"

"And I will kill him," screamed the pasha, "Where is he?"

"Be patient, Pasha Effendi," said the lady, "and I will tell you. When you knocked a second time, I suddenly thought of the chest, and I put the khoja in."
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"Let me at him!" screamed the pasha. "I'll cut off his head!"

"O pasha," she said, "what a hurry you are in to slay this comely youth. He is your prey; he cannot escape you. The youth is not only in the box, but it is locked, and the key is in my pocket. Here it is."

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

As he took it, she said:

"Philopena!"

"Bah!" said the pasha, in disgust. He threw the key on the floor and left the harem, slamming the door behind him.

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

"Go now, khoja, to your box," she said. "Take down your sign and write instead: 'The wit of woman is twofold the wit of man,' for I am a woman, and in one day I have fooled two men."

THE ALBANIAN'S LETTER

One of the most picturesque objects in the larger cities of the Near East—and, for that matter, of the East as well—is the clean and gaily bedecked booth of the scribe. It is generally planted in the quarter of the town, under the thin, towering minaret of the great mosque, and on the shady side of a crowded market-place. The interior of the little wooden booth, somewhat resembles a sentry-box, is artistically arranged: the walls are covered with specimens of calligraphy. In China and in Japan calligraphy is an art as well as an accomplishment, and the temples, tea-houses, and mosques abound in reproductions of famous examples of penmanship (or, rather, of brushmanship—a delicate brush like that used by a painter being employed instead of a pen). These reproductions are hung on the walls like maps, or kakemono, and most of them are attributed to mediæval Buddhist monks or abbots, who lived in the good old days when people had time to write distinctly. Not a few, however, are work of Admiral Togo, the late Prince Ito, the late Count Nogi, and other celebrated men who were just as bushi just as modern as these. In the Near East the same custom prevails. Indeed, the Mohammedan pays more attention perhaps than the Japanese to the artistic side of calligraphy owing to the fact that it is one of the few artistic diversions which his religion permits him to indulge. He is not allowed to have representations of the human form in his house.
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his public buildings, so that when he wishes to decorate either the exterior or the interior of his home he does so by covering the walls with the geometrical devices which are so well known to the student of Oriental architecture. Or, more frequently, he reproduces on the walls some favourite sura, or a text from the Koran, or one of the nine and ninety beautiful names given Allah in the Mohammedan rosary. And just as the Turk, who does not drink wine, learns to perceive in spring water different pleasant tastes and flavours unknown to the Christian, so the Turk who does not take in the illustrated papers learns to appreciate a specimen of handwriting as much as a European connoisseur would appreciate a fine drawing in black and white.

A mosque is the place where Islamic inscriptions can be seen at their best. On the walls are generally large shields, whereon are written the names of Allah, Mohammed, and the first four Khalifs. In the mosque of Santa Sophia those shields also serve to cover up the faces of the mosaic Cherubim which the Greeks had placed below the dome. On every convenient place on the walls pious artists paint not pictures, but calligraphic exercises which generally mean, “There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet,” the verses of Throne (Sura 2, 256), the Fatiha, or some such sentiment as “Allah is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth,” “Allah he who sees and hears.”

Over the mihrab or niche which marks the direction of the Holy City is almost invariably written the strange Koran inscription, “Whenever Zacharias visited her in the mihrab—an inscription which is chosen, not because it has any style in it, for it has none, but because it looks ornamental. In fact, Oriental inscriptions are pointless. The same remark refers to some extent to letter-writing as well. Words are chosen for their appearance on paper, and not so much for their meaning.
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"All Orientals, and particularly Arabs, have an idea that fine writing and fine speaking should not be too intelligible. No Turk is in the least astonished if he does not understand a composition written in Turkish. He merely respects the author as having a command of choice expressions. He hardly regards literature or writing as a normal part of life. He expects to understand a story when it is told him, or a business transaction when it is explained to him verbally, but he regards a book or a letter much as an Englishman regards a technical legal document—as a thing which he could not possibly write himself, and of which he can only be expected to understand the general drift. The Turk looks upon writing as a special art, in which it would be highly indecorous to employ ordinary language. In every town writers may be seen sitting at the street corners, or in their little shops. The man who has decided on the grave step of writing a letter communicates the substance of what he has to say to the writer, and the latter embodies it in suitable language, according to his own powers of composition and the rank of the person addressed, for it would be a want of etiquette to address a high official in a style which everybody can understand. If the recipient of a letter is himself not a literary character, he may require to have the document explained to him. It is said that during the Turco-Greek war many Turkish soldiers wrote to their families in Anatolia, saying that they were wounded, and requesting remittances; but that these requests, when written down by a professional letter-writer and deciphered by the village sage, were thought to be a statement that the sender of the letter was well and saluted his friends."

So says the English diplomat who writes under the pseudonym of "Odysseus." Perhaps matters were even better when the Turks were almost wholly illiterate, and had to communicate largely by symbols. Any of my readers who has
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seen a Turkish coin or postage stamp must have noticed that it bears a curious network of lines like those on the palm of the hand. This decoration is said to have originated with a Sultan who, being unable to sign his name, made his mark at the foot of all official documents by smearing the palm of his right hand with ink, and then applying it to the paper requiring signature. That Sultan should by rights be regarded as the inventor of the thumb-print system. He was certainly in advance of his age if he acted on the conviction that, while his signature could be forged or his seal stolen, the palms of his hand would always remain with him and could never be counterfeited.

The symbolical system was once employed with great effect by the Grand Vizier of Suleiman the Magnificent when he went to besiege Vienna. Before doing so he thought it would be only polite to drop a hint of his intentions to the Austrian Ambassador in Vienna, so he sent that diplomatist a large melon. His idea was to intimate in a friendly way that the cannon-balls which he would throw into Vienna would be as large as that melon. It seems almost miraculous that the Austrians should have discovered this meaning, but they did so; and moreover, they sent a bigger melon back to the Vizier in order to imply that their artillery was still stronger than that of the Turks. And it turned out that they were right.

Flowers are still used as largely in a symbolical sense by the illiterate Turks as they are used by the very literate Japanese. They are principally employed as a means of communication between lovers, the rose being in special request as an emblem of beauty and joy. The orange-flower means hope, the marigold despair, the amaranth constancy. The tulip is a reproach for infidelity. Among illiterate lovers bouquets of flowers called selams supply the place of letters, and very good substitutes they must make considering, as I

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have already pointed out, that most of the written letters are unintelligible to the receiver. By means of flowers, especially if he be a gardener, sometimes holds tender with his mistress even in the presence of that mistress' husband.

But the scribe is also employed largely by love. Stamboul these scribes sit near the Custom-house—formerly the habit of the scribes in Naples—also bazaars and at the corners of the streets. They are guished by a ca-domboy or bright brass inkstand and stuck into the girdle. If a Turk is going to law he scribe to write an azuhal or statement of his case. Fears the evil eye, the scribe transcribes a certain part the Koran and adds thereunto certain mysterious looking like a doctor's prescription (and probably as eff as most doctors' prescriptions). This document he the patient (or client, or whatever you like to call his sure and certain protection against (1) disease, (2) (3) the Evil Eye, (4) the malice of enemies, (5) the of robbers. It is said to be quite as good for most cot as the most widely advertised English or American medicines (i.e. no good at all), and it costs almost nothing.

In the illustration we see an anxious mother such a protection for her child; and it will be noticed that, in accordance with the rules of Moslem po the scribe does not look the lady in the face. A fraumulet in such cases is the "Kef Marjam" (hand of which is either represented on blue glass or inscription paper and hung on the head or breast of the little on Virgin Mary referred to is, of course, the Mother of Mohammed writes most reverentially about her in the even declaring his belief in the dogma of the Im Conception, and he declares in one place (Sura 4, 1
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the Jews are accursed "because they spoke against Mary a gross calumny." He commits rather a "howler," however, by saying that she was the sister of Aaron.

The scribe is as a rule a bearded man with a turban, and a loose, flowing robe which reaches to his heels. The illustration represents an old-fashioned scribe seated outside his booth in summer-time. Inside there is just room for himself and for his client, who sits opposite him. Between the two is a tiny table holding a tray with ink-horn, pens and sand—the latter used, of course, as blotting-paper. In the booths of well-known scribes the client's stool is seldom or never unoccupied during the busy part of the day. Very often, in addition to the client inside, one may see three or four ladies each waiting her turn to consult the man of letters. One is faintly reminded of the queue at a London theatre.

The walls of the scribe's cabin are of glass with dainty curtains so arranged that all the passers-by can see both the letter-writer and his visitor. This open-air way of transacting business is probably due to the Mahomedan's aversion from having his wife, sister, or daughter left alone with any man in a place where they cannot both be seen. But of course the clients are very often of the male sex.

One day, when business in the letter-writing line was somewhat slack, a young Albanian approached the booth of a scribe on the south side of the Valideh Mosque, near the Stamboul end of the outer bridge in Constantinople, and gazed at it in astonishment. He was slim, handsome, and admirably proportioned, as very many of the Albanian youths are; and though the tight-fitting national costume which he wore was so patched and mended that it would have been difficult to tell which was the original dress and which were the patches, nevertheless it set off his figure to the greatest advantage. Indeed, it would have pleased the impartial eye more than the best creased trousers and most irreplaceable coat that ever came out of Bond Street.

Judging by the way he stared, this Arnaout shep fresh from the hills. He had evidently been told for time in his life that there was such a thing as an alph an art of writing. The news had no doubt astonished there is about the Albanian something of the wild stoicism, and, when finally he mustered up sufficient courage to enter the letter-writer's booth, it was in silence and face which was a mask of impenetrable reserve. A Albanians wear voluminous cinctures wound about them in many folds, and in these cinctures they carry a variety of those small belongings which a Westerner carries in his pockets. From his cincture our hero drew a cigarette case and, having slowly lighted one, he smoked and meditated without saying a word. The being an Oriental himself, offered no objection to these proceedings. Besides, he was busy inditing a pettic Ministry of Marine for a fisherman who had already him the drift of what he wanted to say. Finally the broke silence with a pious invocation to Allah after a asked the letter-writer—whom he addressed as "O One!"—if it was true that people at a distance could send the signs he made on paper. Laying down his raising his head to look at his visitor for the first grey-bearded savant assured him that anything that he to say could be said on paper. On hearing this, he was greatly relieved, but he sighed deeply as he sloved his lute from his shoulder, and began tuning it.

The Albanian lute is a long-handed, three-stringed, and is played with a quill. The sweetest strain produced is a monotonous wail in the minor key. shepherd earnestly asked the learned man to put
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black and white the sad Albanian air he was playing. The scribe patiently waited, however, holding his pen ready to take down faithfully the Albanian's words, whenever he was ready to begin speaking. Being a wise man he knew that music could not be written down, but he refrained from explaining this to his client.

The Albanian, poor man, had innocently imagined that the tune would be at once committed to writing. After a while, however, he accompanied his instrumental music with a pathetic chant which was meant for his loved ones at home; and this chant the learned clerk endeavoured to take down as well as he could. It ran somewhat as follows:

"To my father and mother, my betrothed, my brothers and my sisters and every member of my clan. Greetings! A greeting for every day of the long years I have been away! I kiss your hands, father and mother, and ask ye to forgive this my long silence of five years! But I knew not that paper could speak and play the tune I am playing"—and here the musician turned a flushed face to the scribe and earnestly besought him to take it all down and not to miss one note of the tune.

The humble and primitive instrument wailed and tinkled in harmony with its master's feelings, and finally tears came into the youth's eyes.

"For five years," he sang, "for five years have I been a shepherd, and every evening I have played to ye, my father and mother, in my solitude; but truly I did not know that paper could carry the tune. I often thought of ye as I watched my flocks on the hills. I did not go home because I was saving up money to bring to ye, I was waiting till I should be rich enough to claim the hand of my betrothed, and to ask for your blessing on us both.

"Greetings to ye all! Greetings for each month of this five long years which have passed! Lo! One Turkish pound or about seventeen shillings and sixpence, [fourpence] a day is all and we never spend; and the rest I will bring with me and shall be happy together and shall partake of pride's favourite dish of the Albanians. Its principal ingredient is leeks.

Flushed by the thought of a speedy return home, the youth played faster and faster, stopping, however, from time to time in order to impress on the now weary scribe the necessity of not missing a note but of taking it all down as he sang it.

"And do you think they will recognize my voice, the man of letters?" asked during one of these parentheticals; but the aged scribe made no reply, having, as a matter of fact, returned the composition of the petition to the Ministry of Magistrates.

Finally he paid his fee and added a piastres for postage, the letter-writer suggested that an address was also necessary. The address was of the vaguest possible description. It was to Mahomet, living "near the ford," five miles from a hamlet with an unpronounceable name on the Montenegrin border.

And, being a wise and far-seeing man, the scribe put within himself when the youth went light-heartedly away, if Allah, as this e Tanin, left not?"

Bridge, in its STORIES ABOUT Scribes.

the Old Golden Horn, which hides so many mysteries
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bosom. And, by Allah, it was no great loss, being written in a style so learned and obscure that, if it ever did reach Halim's parents, they would have had to engage a letter-writer to read it and he would probably have deduced from it the conclusion that the lad was married to a beautiful princess and had just been appointed Grand Vizier. But Halim Albanian returned, joyous, to Anatolia and sang songs as he touched his lute and watched his flocks on the mountain.
THE EFFECTS OF RÀKI

BEKRI MUSTAFÉ, who lived during the reign of Sultan Selim, was a celebrated toper, and perhaps at that time the only Moslem drunkard in Turkey.

Consequently, he was often the subject of conversation in circles both high and low. He was denounced from the pulpits of mosques; and mothers pointed him out to their young sons as a dreadful warning and example. It happened that the Sultan had occasion to speak to Bekri one day at the Sublime Porte, and his Majesty asked him in the course of the conversation what pleasure he found in drinking so much ràki, and why he disobeyed the laws of the Prophet.

"O Lord of the Faithful," Bekri replied, "Knowest thou not that ràki is a boon unto man; that it makes the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the poor rich? And knowest thou not, furthermore, O Sun of Grace and Father of all Goodness, that I, Bekri, when drunk, can hear, see, and walk like two Bekris?"

The Sultan, to verify the truth of this statement, sent his servants into the highways to bring four men, one blind, another deaf, the third lame, and the fourth poor. Directly these were brought, his Majesty ordered ràki to be served to them in company with Bekri. They had not been drinking long when, to the glory of Bekri, the deaf man said: "I hear the sound of great rumblings."

And the blind man replied: Sahih! (True!) Ishtë Baq, Aman! Aman! (Look! Look Good Gracious me!) "I
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can see him, O Successor of the Prophet, the Elect of Heaven! It is an enemy who seeks our destruction."

The lame man asked where he was, saying, "Show me, by Allah! and I will quickly dispatch him."

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

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

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

"I simply asked him O Khalifatu-'r-rasuli-'llah,"* replied Bekri, "whither he was going and what disease he had of, and he replied he was going to Paradise, and that he had died from drinking raki without a mézé."

Whereupon the Sultan, understanding what the old man wanted, ordered that the mézé should be immediately served.

* Khalif of the Apostle of God. The transcription of this phrase is correct, as having been made by a competent scholar. I make this remark lest the reader, might be inclined to suspect, from the bizarre form of the utterance, that rakı was beginning to have its effects on Bekri's powers of speech.
THE DEVIL AND THE DISCONTENTED AGRICULTURIST

The Place of a Thousand Tombs is naturally a favourite resort of jinns, demons, and fallen angels, who frequently show themselves to men. A peasant who lived near this dreadful cemetery was once ploughing his field, panting with fatigue, when the devil appeared before him and said:

"Oh, poor man! you complain of your lot, and with justice, for your labour is not that of a man: it is that of a beast of burden. Now I have made a wager that I shall find a contented man; so give me the handle of your plough and the goad of your oxen that I may do the work for you."

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

"Is it well done?" asked the devil.

"Evet! [yes]," replied the man, "Guzzêl ëldu, üsstâ [it is well done, master], but seed is very dear this year."

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

"I hope," said the devil, "that I have gained my wager."

"Pêk tî, pêk tî [very good, very good]," answered the peasant, in a non-committal tone, however, and without enthusiasm; "but, after all, what's the good of that? These seeds might be lost. You do not take into consideration frost,
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blighting winds, drought, damp, storms, diseases of plants, and other things. How can I judge as yet?"

"Ha, Bâq! [Behold, there]," said the devil, "in this box are both sun and rain; take the box and use it as you please."

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

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

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

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

While he was speaking the devil had taken an ear of corn from the ground and was crushing it in his hand. As soon as he blew on the grains they all turned into pure gold. The peasant took up one and examined it attentively on all sides, and then in a despairing tone he cried out "Aman! Aman! [O dear! O dear!] I must now go and spend no end of money in order to melt down all these ingots and send them to the mint."

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

There once lived in Stamboul a man and wife who were so well mated that, though they had been married for quite a number of years, their life was nevertheless one of ideal harmony. This troubled the shëytân (devil) very much. He had destroyed the peace of home after home; he had successfully created enmity between husband and wife, hatred between father and son, and aversion between brother and sister. In the midst of families once harmonious he had made chasms of uncharitableness so deep and wide that nothing save the mercy of Allah could span the gap. In this one little home alone did he fail, in spite of his greatest endeavours. One day the devil was talking to an old woman when the man who had thus far baffled him passed by. The devil groaned at the thought of his repeated failures. Turning to the old woman he said:

"I will give you as a reward a pair of yellow slippers if you make that man quarrel with his wife."

The old woman was delighted, and at once began to scheme and work for the coveted slippers. At an hour when she was sure to find the lady alone she went and solicited alms, weeping and bemoaning her sad fate at being a lonely old woman, whose husband was long since dead. The hanoum (lady) took pity on the old woman and was very generous to her. Each day the hanoum gave the old woman something; in fact, she gave her so much that the thought that her good husband might think her extravagant often caused her some uneasiness.
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One day the old woman looked into the shop of her benefactress's husband, and planted the first evil seed by calling out:

"Ah! if men only knew where the money they work for from morning to night goes, or knew what their wives do when they are away, some homes would not be so happy."

The evil woman then went her way, and the good shopman wondered why she had said those words to him. A passing thought suggested that it was strange that of late his wife had asked him several times for a few extra piastres. The next day the old woman as usual solicited alms of her victim. In the fulness of her hypocrisy she embraced the young lady before departing, taking care to leave the imprint of her blackened hand on her dupe's back. The old woman then again went to the shop, looked at her victim's husband, and said:

"Oh, how blind men are! They only look in a woman's face for truth and loyalty; they forget to look at the back where the stamp of the lover's hand is to be seen."

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

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

It is obligatory on all Moslems to praise Allah five times a day. In Psamatia, an ancient Armenian village situated near the Seven Towers, there once lived, however, a certain Mohammedan smith, whose custom it was to curse the shéytán (devil) and his works regularly five times a day instead of praying to God. He argued that it is the devil’s fault that man has need to pray at all. The devil was angered at being thus persistently cursed, and decided to punish the smith, or at least prevent his continuing any longer his unusual and disagreeable practice.

Taking the form of a young man he went to the smith and engaged himself as an apprentice. After a time the devil told the smith that hammering on hot iron was a very poor and mean way of earning a living; but that he, the apprentice, would show his master how money was to be made. The smith asked what he, a young beginner, could do. Thereupon the devil told him that he was endowed with a great gift, the power to make old men young again. Though incredulous, the smith finally allowed himself to be persuaded by his smooth-tongued apprentice to let a sign be put above his door, stating that aged people could here be restored to youth. This extraordinary sign attracted a great many people, but the devil asked such high prices that most of them went away again, preferring old age, with all its miseries, to the loss of so much money.

At last one old man agreed to pay the sum demanded by
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the devil, whereupon he was promptly cast into the furnace, the master-smith blowing the bellows for a small remuneration. After a good deal of vigorous blazing on the part of the furnace and blowing on the part of the smith, the devil raked out a young man. As a result of this successful operation, the fame of the smith extended far and wide, and many were the aged that made a pilgrimage to his smithy in order to regain their youth. This lucrative business went on for some time, becoming more and more lucrative every day; and at last the smith, thinking to himself that it was no very difficult thing to throw an old man into the furnace and rake him out of the ashes again, rejuvenated and handsome, decided to dispense with his apprentice's services. But of course he kept the sign above the door, nay, he even had it embellished and repainted by a cunning Greek artist.

Now, it so happened that a captain of the janissaries, who was a very aged man, came to him, and, after bargaining for a much more modest sum than his apprentice would have asked, the smith thrust him into the furnace as the devil, his apprentice, had been accustomed to do. He then seized the bellows and worked at them till the perspiration streamed down his face. He afterwards raked in the ashes for the young man, but he only raked out cinders and bones. Great was his consternation, but what could he do?

The devil in the meantime had gone to the head of the janissaries, and had informed him of what had taken place. The poor smith was arrested, tried, and condemned to be bowstrung, as it was proved that the missing janissary was last seen to enter his shop.

Just as the smith was about to be executed, the devil again appeared before him in the form of the discharged apprentice, and asked him if he wished his life to be saved. The answer to that question was—as The Hon. Mr. H. H. Asquith would say
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—“in the affirmative”; but, raising his hand to demand silence (for the smith was making a dreadful uproar), the devil continued his interrupted sentence. “If so,” quoth he, “then I can save you, but I shall only consent to do so on one condition—that you cease cursing the devil five times a day and pray henceforth as other Mussulmans pray.” To this the smith vociferously agreed. Thereupon the apprentice called in a loud voice to those who were about to execute his master: “What will you of this man? He has not killed the janissary. The janissary is not dead, for I have just seen him entering his home.”

This was found to be true, and the smith was liberated, after having thus learned by bitter experience the truth of the ancient Turkish proverb, “Curse not even the devil.”
ALI ON EARTHQUAKES

WHEN living in Constantinople I had a boatman named Ali who used to row me across the Golden Horn every morning and evening. Beyond the silent salutation with his hand which he always gave me, standing erect, both at meeting and at parting, Ali never ventured as a rule to intrude upon my thoughts or to break the silence. He was my boatman for fully ten years, and only twice during the whole of that period did he ask me a question or utter more than a few words.

I remember both of the occasions on which he spoke to me, and I think it may be of some interest to put on record what Ali then said. I might first mention, however, that like all Mahomedans and all Russian peasants, Ali adored his God with a fervour and a publicity or, as the theologians would call it, a want of human respect, which would be considered positively indecent in the West. In other words, he was neither ashamed nor afraid of praying in public. Very often indeed, during the years he was with me, did I come to the water’s edge only to find Ali praying or about to pray. Whether he saw me or not, it is for him to say; but he never took any notice of me or offered to cease praying. It mattered not whether his thumbs were yet in his ears, or whether he was about to make the final prostration, or whether he was only about to begin his ablutions. The great fact remained that Ali was communing with Allah, and, so far as he was concerned, I could either walk, take another

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boat, or, in a word, do as I chose, for Ali knew me not. It was immaterial to him what I might do. Evidently he did not care whether I was in a hurry or not. The hour had been called for him to pray and the All-Perceiving knew this. That was enough.

The first time Ali spoke to me on any subject outside of his orders for the day was when he asked me if England was an island. I told him it was, but I added that it was larger than Prinkipo. This is the largest of the Princes' Islands in the Marmora, but though not nearly as large as Hayling Island, it was the largest island whereof Ali had any experience. My boatman pondered for a moment, but I interrupted his reverie by saying, "Why do you ask me that question, Ali?"

"Chelebi," he replied, "I have been a boatman for forty years on the Golden Horn; and every week five, ten, sometimes more, vessels laden with English coal come and discharge here. I have been wondering in what condition the interior of that island is, and if the crust is not in a dangerously weak state as the result of so much coal having been removed from the interior."

I assured him that I could not say if there was enough safety either above ground or below ground as the result of so much coal being taken out, but I added that the mines were not all over the country, and that the Island of England was very large.

Ali nodded his head, but he was not quite satisfied, though my answer ended the conversation. The second time on which Ali spoke to me was on the afternoon of July 10, 1894, the day of the great earthquake, when, at 12.25 P.M. (not many people who experienced that earthquake can forget it), the waters of the Golden Horn boiled, advanced, receded and returned. I entered the boat which was waiting for me

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notwithstanding the earthquake, the severity of which was great.

Ali was silent as usual and, when half-way across the Horn, he said to me, "Chelebi" (Sir), "there is one sura of the Koran which I never understood until to-day. The Book writes that if Allah wishes, He can destroy the world. I never before understood the meaning of that verse. Now I understand it: Allah gives intelligence at the hour at which it pleaseth Him."

I made no comment, but I asked Ali if he had been frightened. To this he gravely replied: "Chelebi, I was sitting down and something told me to get up, and I got up."

The remainder of the journey was completed in silence, but I thought a good deal, and wondered if perhaps in his profound belief in Allah, Ali saw any farther than I saw.
ABOU-NOUAS

It is thanks to Abou-Nouas that the name of Haroun-ul-Raschid, the great Sultán of Bagdad, still lives among the Christian and Mohammedan Arabs. The couplets of Abou-Nouas are numerous and they cause merriment whenever the Arabian Nights tales are told. Many anecdotes are also related about the same poet. The following anecdote I have never seen in print, but I have often heard it in the mouths of Arabs.

The Sultan, who patronized the Court poet and philosopher, asked him one day if he could make an excuse that would in itself be a greater insult than the insult for which forgiveness was asked.

Abou-Nouas considered long but bided his time, not forgetting the command of his Majesty. For a desire expressed by Haroun-ul-Raschid was a command that not even the Arabian Poet Laureate dared ignore. Finally, at one of Haroun-ul-Raschid’s ceremonious receptions, Abou-Nouas approached the monarch at a serious moment, a moment when the attention of the Sultan was most engaged, and familiarly slapped his Majesty on the back. The astonishment and anger of Haroun-ul-Raschid were beyond words, and many of the courtiers were quite ready to dispatch Abou-Nouas without further ceremony had but Haroun-ul-Raschid given the assenting look.

As soon as he caught the eye of his Majesty, however, Abou-Nouas apologetically remarked: “I crave your Majesty’s forgiveness, but I thought it was her Majesty whom I had caressed and not yourself, and this I say in obedience to your Majesty’s own august commands.”

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MAN'S SPAN OF LIFE

It is said that before the birth of Death the Creator asked all of the creatures he had created how long they wanted to live. Youth, strength and vigour reigned amongst all, and man, having been created nearest to the image of Allah Himself, was called first and asked how long he wished to live. Man was then buoyant and careless and strong. He knew not what it meant to be asked how long he wished to live, for Death had not as yet been born. So he answered, unthinkingly: "Thirty years, O Allah!" Perhaps a vague memory had remained with him of summers he had already lived. They had been pleasant summers; and what better could he wish for his children than for two score and ten such happy years? Indeed, he was thinking only of his posterity, not of himself, and was surprised when the Creator suddenly said, "As you have willed, so be it! Let, then, your limit of life be thirty years."

In turn were the other creatures of the Creation asked how long they wished to live. Many imitated Man and asked for thirty years. Others, however, asked for more, and they got as much as they asked for. The donkey asked for more and got it; the monkey followed suit; and then the remaining creatures of the Creation asked almost at random and they got whatever they asked for. But our tale does not deal with them all, only with the parrot and the tortoise who were more extravagant than most of the others in their desire for length of days.

When youthful Man noticed this great diversity amongst his creatures, he returned to the Creator and pointed out that,
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seeing he was the first to be asked, it was hardly meet that he should also be one of the first to die. Allah told him that what he had asked had been given unto him, and that if he had any wish to change he must negotiate with the others. Man did now wish for more years, and he thereupon looked about him to see who would be likely to give him of their superfluous summers. The first creature he met was the donkey, who seemed to set no great score by the number of years he had to live, and who willingly gave Man no less than twenty years off his own span of life.

Man had now got fifty years, but even this did not seem an adequate number for Allah’s leading creature, and Man looked around him again in search of somebody else with a few summers to spare. He next met the monkey who, after much negotiation, gave the superior animal ten years. The parrot pityingly threw in another ten, while the tortoise, who had himself asked for much, was slow in coming to a decision—and indeed he has not quite made up his mind about it yet. Occasionally he lets a man (or more frequently a woman) have some of his many years, but he has not yet come to a definite decision as to the exact number he can spare, and it is unlikely that he will ever come to a decision. Man’s age was thus brought up to about seventy by the final help of the monkey and the parrot.

Properly speaking, Man’s life, therefore, is but the one score summers, and ten given him by the Creator. He negotiated, as we have seen, for the balance, and brought the whole total up to three score and ten. But everything above thirty is borrowed capital, and not very good capital at that. Up to one score and ten Man leads the life of a man; he is buoyant, confident, and strong. Then, if he lives, he draws on the borrowed years—the years he got by way of alms from the inferior animals.

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The saddest and the hardest years of these borrowers are the years which the donkey gave him—the years from fifty. Labour and toil and trouble are his share the these twenty years; and the donkey is even grateful to-day for having shortened a little his own monotonous life. The donkey gave the years, but only give a donkey’s years—years of monotony and work.

The majority of people to-day would gladly return donkey the years which it gave. The twenty years Man persuaded the monkey and the parrot to part with also be returned without any great loss to the hum- munity. Both the monkey and the parrot could o what they have, consequently a man is a monkey fit to sixty and a parrot from sixty to seventy. Those last years are more kindly, however, than the preceding and entail little suffering. Consequently they are of by those labouring through the years given by the If a man lives beyond seventy it is the tortoise to who indebted for this prolongation of his life, and he cannot plain if these last sad years smack of the slowness caution of that deliberate and shell-bound amphibian.
WE KNOW NOT WHAT THE DAWN MAY BRING FORTH

In the age of the janissaries the Sèr-àssker Pàsha, or Minister of War, summoned in all haste to his presence the chief farrier of the army, and ordered him to make immediately two hundred thousand horseshoes. The farrier was aghast, and explained that to make such a quantity of horseshoes, both time and smiths would be required. The Sèr-àssker Pàsha replied:

"It is the order of his Majesty that these two hundred thousand horseshoes be ready by to-morrow; if not, your head will pay the penalty."

The poor farrier replied that, knowing now that he was doomed, he would be unable, through nervousness, to make even a fifth of the number. The Sèr-àssker Pàsha would not listen to reason, and left in anger, reiterating the order of the Padishah.

The farrier retired to his rooms deeply dejected. His wife, woman-like, endeavoured to encourage and comfort him, saying:

"Cheer up, husband, drink your râki, eat your mézé, and be cheerful, for we know not what the dawn may bring forth."

"Eywâh!" (alas!), said the farrier, "the dawn will not bring forth two hundred thousand horseshoes, and my head will pay the penalty."

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Late that night there was a tremendous knocking at his door. The poor farrier thought that it was an inquiry as to how many horseshoes were already made, and, trembling with fear, he went and opened the door. Sure enough, it was a messenger from the Seraskierat (Ministry of War). The farrier was unable to utter a word, but even if he had desired to do so, the soldier would not have given him time to speak, for he immediately shouted:

"Make haste, farrier, make haste and let us have sixteen nails at once, for the Sèr-Assker Pasha has been suddenly removed to Paradise by the hand of Allah." . . .

The farrier collected, not sixteen but forty nails of the best he had; and, handing them to the messenger, said:

"Nail him down tightly, securely, and well, O friend! Nail him so that he will not get up again, for had not this happened, these nails would have been required to keep me in my coffin."
KING KARA-KUSH OF BITHYNIA

A KING of Bithynia, named Kara-kush, who was blind of an eye, was considered in his day to be a reasonable, just and feeling man. He administered justice upon the basis of the law, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," and enlarged or modified it as circumstances demanded.

Now it so happened that a weaver put out a man’s eye by accident. He was brought before the king or kadi—for in those days the kings acted as kadis—who promptly condemned him, in accordance with the law, to the loss of an eye. The weaver pleaded touchingly, saying:

"Oh, kadi! I have a wife and a large family, and I support them by throwing the shuttle from the right to the left, and again from the left to the right; first using the one eye and then the other. If you remove one of my eyes, I shall not be able to weave, and my wife and children will suffer the pangs of hunger. Why not, in the place of my eye, remove that of the hunter who uses but one eye in exercising his profession, and to whom two eyes are superfluous?"

The kadi was impressed, acknowledged the justice of the weaver’s remarks, and immediately sent for the hunter. The hunter being brought, the kadi was greatly rejoiced to notice that the hunter’s eyes were exactly the same colour as his own. He asked the hunter how he earned his living, and receiving the answer that he was a hunter, the kadi asked him how he shot his arrows. By way of reply the hunter raised his arms,
put his head on one side, and closed one of his eyes. The kadi said the weaver was right, and immediately sent for the surgeon to have the eye removed. Furthermore, the kadi bethought him that he might profit by this occasion and have the hunter’s eye placed in his own empty socket. The surgeon set to work and prepared the cavity to receive the hunter’s eye. This done he removed the hunter’s eye with a practised hand and was about to place it in the prepared socket when it accidentally slipped from his fingers to the ground, and was snatched up by the cat. The surgeon was terrified and madly ran after the cat; but alas! the cat had eaten up the eye. What was he to do? On the inspiration of the moment he snatched out the eye of the cat, and placing it in the kadi’s head, bound it up.

Some time after, the surgeon asked the kadi how he saw.

“Oh,” replied the kadi, “with my old eye I see as usual, but, strange to say, the new eye you placed in my head is continually searching and watching for rat-holes.”
THE WISE SON OF ALI PASHA

HASSAN was a servant of his Majesty Sultan Ahmet. Having been employed for twenty-five years in the palace, and being now on the threshold of old age, he begged permission of the Sultan to retire to his native village, and at the same time solicited a pension to enable him to live. The Sultan asked him if he had not saved any money. The man replied that, owing to his having had to support a large family, he had been unable to do so. The Sultan was very angry that any of his servants, and especially one in the immediate employ of his household, should, after so many years' service, say that he was penniless. Disbelieving the statement of the menial, and being determined to make an example of him, the Sultan gave orders that Hassan should quit the palace in the identical state in which he had entered it twenty-five years before. Hassan was accordingly disrobed of all his splendour; and his various effects, the accumulation of a quarter of a century, were confiscated, and distributed amongst the legion of palace servants. Thus, without a piastre in his pocket, and dressed in the rude costume of his native province, poor Hassan began his weary journey homeward, on foot.

In time he reached the suburbs of a town in Asia Minor, and, seeing some boys at play, he approached them, sat on the ground, and watched them as they amused themselves. The boys were playing at State affairs: one was a Sultan, another

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his vizier, who had his Cabinet of Ministers, while close were a number of boys, bound hand and foot, representing political and other prisoners, awaiting judgment for imaginary misdeeds. The mock Sultan, who was sitting with him on a throne made of branches and stones, decorated with many-coloured centre-pieces, beckoned Hassan to draw near and asked him where he had come from. Hassan replied, he had come from Stamboul, from the palace of the Sultan.

"That's a lie!" said the boy-Sultan. "No one ever from Stamboul dressed in that fashion, much less from palace. You are from the far interior, and if you do confess that what I say is true you will be tried by the ministers, and punished accordingly."

Hassan, partly to participate in their boyish amusement, and partly to unburden his aching heart, related his sad story to his youthful audience. When he had finished, the boy-Sultan Ali by name, asked him if he had received his twenty years back again. Hassan, not fully grasping what the boy said, replied:

"I received nothing! nothing!"

"That's unjust," continued Ali, "and you shall go to the Sultan and ask that your twenty-five years be returned to you so that you may plough and till your ground, and make provision for old age, the period of want."

Struck by this sound advice, Hassan thanked the boy and said he would follow his advice to the letter. In thought he mirth the boys then separated, to return to their homes; he was dreaming that in the case of one among them the seeds of destiny had been sown in that half-hour's play. He retracing his steps, reappeared in time at the gates of palace and begged admittance, on the plea that he had gotten to communicate something of importance to Majesty. His request being granted, he humbly soli
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that, as his Majesty had been dissatisfied with his twenty-five years of service, those twenty-five years should be returned to him in order that he might labour and put by something for the day when he could no longer work. The Sultan answered:

“That is well said and just. As it is not in my power to give you the twenty-five years, the best equivalent I can grant you is the means of sustenance for a period of that duration, should you live so long. But, tell me, who advised you to make this request?“

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

He had one son who was known as Doctor Ali Pasha’s son. This son studied calligraphy, and became so proficient in this art, now almost lost, that his imitations of the Imperial iradés (decrees) were perfect facsimiles of the originals. One day he took it into his head to write an iradé appointing himself Grand Vizier, in place of the reigning one, a protégé of the Imperial Palace. This iradé he took to the Sublime Porte and there and then installed himself in office. But as chance would have it, the Sultan happened to drive through Stamboul that day, in disguise, and noticing considerable excitement and cries of “Padishahim chok yasha!” (long live my Sultan) amongst the people, he made inquiries as to the cause of this unusual commotion. His Majesty’s informers thereupon told him that the people rejoiced in the fall of the old Grand Vizier, and the appointment of the new one, Doctor Ali Pasha’s son. On hearing this amazing intelligence, the Sultan returned to the palace and immediately

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sent one of his eunuchs to the Sublime Porte to see the Grand Vizier and find out the meaning of these strange proceedings.

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

Then turning to the numerous attendants who were about him, he said: “Take this nigger to the slave market, and see what price he will bring.”

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

The eunuch, who was very glad to get off, communicated to his Majesty the story of his strange treatment. The Sultan then ordered his chief eunuch, a not unimportant personage in the Ottoman Empire, to call on the Grand Vizier for an explanation. At the Sublime Porte, however no respect was paid to this high dignitary. Ali Pas received him in precisely the same manner as he had received his subordinate. The chief was taken to the slave market and the highest sum bid for him was five hundred piastres. The self-appointed Grand Vizier ordered him to go and his master the amount some foolish people were willing to pay for him.

When the Sultan heard of these strange proceedings, he sent an autograph letter to Ali Pasha, command him to come to the palace. The Grand Vizier immediately set out for the palace and, being received in audience, he explained to his Majesty that the affairs of the State could not be managed by men not worth more ti
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from fifty to five hundred piastres in open market; and that if radical changes were not made, certain ruin would be the outcome. The Sultan appreciated this earnest communication, and ratified the appointment, as Grand Vizier, of Ali Pasha, the son of the boy who had played at State affairs in a village of Asia Minor.