enquiry into questions connected with physical science. These men are great travellers. If you cannot bring to meet him a professor who is gifted with a knowledge of science, wherever he goes he will spread it abroad that the learned classes in Anatolia are of no account, and that will injure your good name among the nations."

Thereupon the notables held a consultation, at which after long reflection they came to the conclusion that there really was no such professor in the country; but they said, "This will never do. We must think of something. We must avoid such a calamity!"

They had a long talk and discussed the possibility of bringing a professor from Konia or Kaiserich.

At last one of them remarked, "It will take a long time to get a man from outside the district—let alone one who speaks foreign languages. I am afraid this is going to bring us into disgrace with Tamerlane and make us unpopular."

"Come now," said another, "let us hear the opinion of our learned Khoja on the subject. Maybe we shall manage to confound this clown of a foreigner by some queer trick of his."

Finding this an excellent idea, they sent for the Khoja and explained the matter. He at once said, "You leave it to me. If I can shut him up by an apt reply, it will be fine; but if I cannot, all you have to say is, 'Oh! that fellow! He is cracked—a half-witted Khoja who came to the meeting unbidden. Don't take any notice of him.' Then you will have to find some other educated person to meet him. If I succeed, I shall look for a good present from each of you, and of course I shall get a reward from Tamerlane."

"O Khoja," said they, "God give you whatever you ask so long as you can save our faces in the eyes of this stranger!"

The end of it all was that on an appointed day tents were pitched in the public square and the ceremony was made august and awe-inspiring by the presence of Tamerlane and his Court, all covered with gold and jewels and armed with the full panoply of war. Next came the foreign professor, a mop-headed, queer-looking fellow, who was given a seat near his Majesty.

After the people had settled down into
their places, everyone sat waiting for the arrival of the Khoja. At last he entered, wearing an enormous turban and a gown with open sleeves. He brought with him his pupil Hamad with two other students and he was given a place on the left of his Majesty.

After drinking sherbet and a moment's repose, the professor stepped forward and drew a circle on the ground. He then looked into the Khoja's face for an answer.

The Khoja at once rose and with his stick drew a line right through the centre of the circle, thus dividing it into two parts. He then looked at the professor and, seeing that he approved, proceeded to draw a line across in the opposite direction, thus dividing the circle into four parts. With a wave of the hand he made a gesture as if he would draw three of the parts towards himself, while he pushed the other towards the professor. Then he looked again at the professor, who expressed his approval and congratulations by waving his hand.

After this the professor held his hand in the form of an open tulip. Holding his fingers outstretched he waved them several times in the air (fingers up). The Khoja also made a gesture exactly the reverse so that his fingers pointed to the ground, and the professor made a sign of approval.

Then the professor pointed to himself and with his fingers imitated an animal walking on the ground. Then he pointed to his belly and made a gesture as if he were pulling something out.

The Khoja now took an egg from his pocket and, shaking his arms, imitated the act of flying. The professor approved this also, and, standing up, he made a profound obeisance to the Khoja, kissing his hands. He then told the interpreter to congratulate Tamerlane and the notables on possessing such a treasure as Nasr-ed-din Khoja.

The spectators were delighted. Each one in turn congratulated the Khoja on having saved the honour of the country and showered on his head the presents which they had provided for the occasion.

Tamerlane also enriched the Khoja with generous gifts.

After everyone had left, Tamerlane, attended by his retinue, took the professor on one side and said to him through the inter-

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preacher, "We could not understand anything from your dumb-show. What was it you said? What kind of answer did the Khoja give you which made you retire from the contest?"

The professor explained his object in the following words:

"Greek and Jewish professors are not agreed on the subject of the Creation, and as I did not know the opinion of the learned Doctors of Islam on the subject, I was very anxious to ascertain what it was.

"Consequently I first showed that the world was round. The Khoja not only accepted this fact, but by those lines which he drew he first marked the Equator, dividing the globe into a northern and southern hemisphere. He then drew a line across the centre of the circle at right angles to the first, and by taking three of the divisions to himself and leaving one to me he meant to say that three parts of the globe are water and one part dry land.

"Then, in order to show the different species of animals and probe the secrets of Creation, I waved my fingers up in the air, intimating thereby the production from the earth of vegetables, trees, springs, and minerals. The Khoja replied by pointing his fingers downwards, showing clearly, and in agreement with the most recent investigations, that these things are produced by the rain from Heaven, affected also by the sun's rays and the influence of other celestial bodies.

"Then I pointed to myself and indicated by a gesture that all creatures on the face of the earth are propagated one from another. I had, however, left untouched quite a large proportion of living things.

"The Khoja now took an egg from his pocket, held it out and then made a movement as though he were flying, alluding beyond all doubt to the bird species. He hereby gave a full and comprehensive answer regarding the Creation of the world and the propagation of species.

"From this I saw that your Khoja is a most talented professor who embraces in his personality a knowledge of science both celestial and terrestrial. Therefore the people of Aksehir in particular and his fellow-countrymen in general may well be proud of such a sage."
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

After taking leave of the foreign professor with due respect and honour, they collected round the Khoja and asked him to explain the matter—and this was his answer:

"Pooh! Call him a professor indeed! The fellow was a poor, sick, dog-hungry starveling. You need not have worried about him! When I came he drew a circle as you saw him do. 'Oh!' said he to himself, 'if only it were a tray full of cakes!'

"I first divided the circle into two parts, meaning that I would share the cakes with him. But I saw that he did not understand, so I divided it into four parts, taking three for myself and giving him one.

"The poor fellow was satisfied and waved his hand as if he would say, 'Oh! we would be all right if a pot of pilaff* were boiled and put on the tray!' and I made a gesture as if to say, 'Yes, and we would flavour it with pepper and salt, pistachios and raisins.'

"Then he pointed to his stomach, by which he meant to say, 'Ah! if you only knew what a long distance I have come and how long I have wished for a good meal!'

* Pilaff. A dish of boiled rice (or crushed wheat) flavoured with chicken broth or meat gravy.

A DISSERTATION ON PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

"I, in dumb-show, answered, 'But I am more hungry than you. I am so light on an empty stomach that I could fly like a bird. I got up this morning and my wife gave me only one egg for breakfast. You sent for me and I had not even time to eat it. I put it into my pocket as a stop-gap.' There you have the whole story."

Setting a Light to the Furze on the Donkey's Back

He put a load of furze on his donkey's back, and then said to himself, "I wonder whether furze, when it is damp, can be made to blaze and burn just the same as when it is dry." So saying, he set light to it on one side, and as there was a pretty stiff wind blowing at the time, it caught at once on all sides.

It made a terrible crackling noise and a great shaft of flame shot up into the sky.

Of course the poor beast went wild with fright and bolted along the road, braying and kicking up its heels.

When the Khoja saw that he could never catch it up, or even get near it, he shouted out at the top of his voice, "To the lake,
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

you fool! If you have any sense in your head, run to the lake!"

Climbing a Moonbeam

ONE night while in bed, the Khoja heard a thief walking on the roof. He said to his wife, "Last night I came home and knocked at the door, but I couldn't make you hear, so I said this prayer... and catching hold of a moonbeam I got into the house."

The burglar, who was listening to the conversation through the chimney, repeated the prayer to himself, then caught hold of a moonbeam with both hands and let himself go. He had hoped to get down quietly, but he fell from the roof with a crash and broke his bones.

The Khoja ran at once and collared the burglar, calling out to his wife:

"Quick! Quick! Bring a candle, I have caught him."

The burglar, being unable to move, said quietly, "Please don't be in such a hurry! What with your prayer and my own stupidity here I lie unable to escape."

AN ASS'S COLT BORN WITHOUT A TAIL

The Khoja as a Letter-writer

A MAN came to the Khoja and said, "Do me a favour. I want you to write a letter for me to a friend at Bagdad."

"Oh! don't bother me," said he. "I have no time now to go to Bagdad."

He was walking off when the man ran after and stopped him. He was curious to know what he meant.

"My dear Khoja," said he, "why should your writing this letter for me make it necessary for you to go to Bagdad?"

The Khoja answered, "There is nothing strange about it. My handwriting is very bad. I am the only person who can read it, so that if I write a letter for you I must be there to read and explain it!"

An Ass's Colt born without a Tail

A S the Khoja was leaving home he said to his wife, "My dear! Cook a nice pilaff of bulghur* for supper and we will have a jolly evening together.

* Bulghur. See footnote on page 29.
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

He came home tired, threw off his cloak, and feeling very hungry rushed to the table, where he noticed that his wife had laid out a dish of youghourt* and spring onions in addition to the pilaff.

"Bravo! little wife!" he cried, and sitting down began to eat with great appetite and good-humour.

They were full of laughter and merriment when the child of the people next door came running in, looking very unhappy.

"Oh, please come, sir," he said, "mother wants you. We are in great trouble and there is no one can help us but you!"

The Khoja, who had a tender heart, at once jumped up and ran next door.

Half an hour afterwards he came back looking very much annoyed, and when his wife asked what it was he said, "Just think of it! You and I were enjoying a pilaff such as I have not seen these forty years, and am called away because the ass next door has given birth to a colt without a tail!"

*Youghourt. Milk coagulated, but not curdled rather acid but very wholesome and refreshing. The best "youghourt" is made from sheep or buffalo's milk.
and after all is treated with such discourtesy, he curses him and will have nothing more to do with him."

A Strange Way of Riding a Donkey

ONE day, as the Khoja was riding to the Mosque to give a lesson he sat on his donkey with his face to the tail, his pupils walking behind.

They asked him why he made himself so uncomfortable, riding in that fashion.

"You see," said he, "that if I rode with my face looking straight ahead, you would be behind me. If, on the other hand, you were to walk in front you would turn your backs upon me. I think, therefore, it is better to ride this way. It is more polite!"

Tamerlane in Hell

A GROUP of people sat talking, and their conversation turned upon the next world and the terrors of the Judgment-day.

While they sat there brooding over the matter, Tamerlane, who was sitting next to the Khoja, heaved a deep sigh and said to him, "O Khoja, what will become of me on the Judgment-day? Shall I have a seat in Heaven or Hell?"

"Really, your Majesty, I am sorry to see you vex your Royal heart with such matters. In my humble opinion, you should not worry nor have the slightest doubt on the subject.

When Jenghiz Khan and Hulagu died, it is quite clear that they must have gone straight to Hell. Oh, yes! your Majesty may be quite sure that you will have a seat of honour there along with Nimroud, Pharaoh, Alexander, and Jenghiz Khan."

The Khoja cannot read Persian script.

A PERSIAN from Azerbaijan received a letter in Persian, and happening to meet the Khoja asked him to read and explain it.

The Khoja took it in his hand and when he saw that it was in Persian and written in broken script (Shikasté), said, "You must get someone else to read it," and handed it back.

As the man persisted, the Khoja said, "I am not very familiar with Persian, and even
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

if this were written in Turkish, I could never make it out."

The Persian waxed indignant and said, "You are a pretty fellow! You don't know Persian and you don't even know how to read! What right then have you to call yourself a Khoja and go swaggering about with a turban on your head like a mill-stone?"

At this the Khoja lost his temper, tore his turban from his head and his cloak from his back and threw them to the Persian, saying, "There you are. Put them on. If that is all that is necessary in order to read the letter, let me see you read a line or two yourself."

The Khoja and the Jew

At one time while saying his morning prayers the Khoja would call out:

"Lord! Lord! Give me a thousand pounds; but if it turns out to be one pound short, I won't take it."

His next-door neighbour was a Jew. This man constantly heard the Khoja saying this, and it made him very curious, so he put 999 pounds into a bag and threw it down the chimney while the Khoja was repeating his prayer. He then began to listen, saying, "I wonder what he will do?"

The Khoja first returned thanks to God that his prayer had been heard, then took the bag with the greatest reverence, counted the money, and found that there were only 999 pounds. He calmly put the bag into his pocket, saying, "God, who has given me the 999 pounds, will certainly make up the difference."

When the Jew saw this unexpected turn of events, he got into a terrible state of mind and ran to the Khoja's house as soon as it was daylight, saying to him, "Enough of your joking, Khoja. Give me back that money of mine."

The Khoja answered quite seriously, "Money? What money, Jew? Have I ever asked you for money? Did you ever put money into my hand?"

"But it was I," cried the Jew, "who threw that money down the chimney! Every morning I heard you repeat the same prayer, and I said to myself, 'Let me see whether the Khoja will keep his word.'"

The Khoja laughed sardonically and said:
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

"A fine cock-and-bull story! Do you believe it yourself—that a Jew would, for an experiment, throw such a large sum of money down my chimney? No!" said he calmly, "God has given it to me in answer to my prayers."

The Jew, seeing that the matter would never be settled between them, said, "Very well, let us go to the Court."

"I have no objection at all," said the Khoja, "but I cannot go on foot."

So the Jew brought him a fine mule.

"Then," said the Khoja, "I have appearances to keep up. How can I appear before the Judge in this old cloak?"

So to avoid delay the Jew brought a valuable fur pelisse and put it on the Khoja. Then he mounted him on the mule and so they went to the Court-house.

When the Cadi asked what they wanted, the Jew said, "Your Honour, this man owes me 999 pounds and refuses to pay."

The Cadi turned to the Khoja.

"And you, what have you to say?"

The Khoja said, "Ask him, please, if he has ever given me a piastre."

The Jew then told his story, at which the Khoja laughed, saying, "Your Honour, this man is my neighbour. He probably heard me counting my money. The Lord has indeed given me much, and He is able to give me a thousand times more. As for this Jew, he would rather die than give a piastre to a Mohammedan. He wants to swindle me out of my money. I should not be at all surprised that if you were to ask him he would say that the mule I was riding outside belongs to him."

The Jew, in a fright lest he should lose his mule also, at once called out, "Of course it is mine! It was because you would not come to the Court on foot that I got it for you."

The Cadi began to feel doubtful. The Khoja, noticing this, said, "Why! he will tell you next that he owns the fur coat which I am wearing on my back."

At this the Jew lost all control over himself and shouted, "Yes! I do! The coat is mine also!"

At last the Cadi became indignant, and said, "You rascal of a Jew! You not only try to rob the property of a man so universally respected, but dare to treat our Court
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

with contempt! Enough! Out you go!" They turned the Jew out of the Court.

The Khoja went home in state, riding the mule and wearing the pelisse. When he arrived, he sent for the Jew next door, who sat there brooding in despair. He gave him back all his property, and having made him happy, proceeded to give him advice never again to meddle with a compact made between a man and his God, nor to treat His servants with disrespect.

The Jew, after receiving so severe a lesson for having tried to make a fool of the Khoja, was quite overcome and swore he would never again play tricks with a Moslem.

Singing in the Turkish Bath

ONE day the Khoja went to the Turkish bath and finding that he was quite alone began to sing a song called, "Kaya bashi" (Up on the rocks).

He began to think that he had rather a fine voice and said to himself, "If I can sing so nicely I ought to let my people hear me."

SINGING IN THE TURKISH BATH

When he had finished his bath he went straight up to the minaret, and as it was midday began to recite the call to prayer, "Allah-u-Akbar." As he did so a man called out from the street, "Shut up, you clown. What do you mean by shouting the call to prayer in that ugly voice?"

The Khoja leaned over the parapet and said to him, "Ah, if some charitable person would only build a Turkish bath up here, you would soon see what a pretty voice I have."

The Sleepless, Hungry Khoja

THE Khoja had been invited out to dinner. He arrived rather late, when dinner was over, and his hosts were under the impression that he had already dined.

Sherbet was brought in, and after a short conversation they wished him good-night and retired.

The servant then came in, and having made up a luxurious bed for him, left the room.

When he was alone the Khoja began to feel desperately hungry. He tried to forget it
and go to sleep. Quite impossible! At last he got into such a nervous state that he began to pace up and down the room. He saw that this could not go on long or he would go mad. So he stepped out of the room and rapped at the vestibule door. Immediately his host ran out in great excitement, crying, “What is it? What is the matter?”

“Sir,” said the Khoja, “you have given yourself much trouble on my account. That is a most luxurious bed you have given me, but we are simple folk, inured to poverty, and cannot get to sleep on such sumptuous couches. I would be better pleased if you would give me just one griddle-cake. I would put part of it under my head to serve as a pillow and the rest on top of me to serve as a quilt. Then I shall sleep as sound as a top.”

**Damages for the Loss of a Cow**

*WHEN* the Khoja was Cadi at Akshehir a man came into Court and said, “Your Honour, while the cattle were out-grazing a red cow—I rather fancy it belongs to you—*120*

**DAMAGES FOR THE LOSS OF A COW**

attacked mine, ripped up its belly and killed it. What is to be done about it?”

The Khoja answered, “The owner is not responsible and you cannot sue the cow for blood-money.”

“Oh! I made a mistake,” said the man. “I should have said that it was my cow which had killed yours.”

“Hah!” said the Khoja, “in that case the matter becomes more complicated. Just hand me down from the shelf that book with the black binding. Let us see how the law stands.”

**The Khoja’s Nightcap**

*THE* Khoja stopped the night with a friend and the servants put on his bed an enormous cotton turban instead of a nightcap.

He untied the sash and fastened it tightly round the middle, saying to himself, “I will undo it in the morning and put it back as it was before.” So saying, he lay down to sleep.

He was still in bed when his friend the host came into the room and said jokingly,
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

“Bless the man! How fond of sleep you are! One would say that you had joined the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.”

Then he caught sight of this strange-looking object on the Khoja’s head and it was some time before he could make out what it was.

“Why, Khoja!” said he, “you have strangled your turban!”

“What else could I do?” said he. “If I had not strangled it, it would have strangled me.”

Weeping at the Bedside of his Sick Wife

The Khoja’s wife fell ill, and every day when he returned from his work he would sit by her bedside and weep.

A lady who lived close by came in to enquire after her and said to him, “Do not fret so. There is no reason to be alarmed. Please God, she will soon recover.”

“My dear lady,” answered he, “I am a busy man. To-morrow I may be off to the village or have something else to do. I

* See Appendix.

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have nothing on just now, so I am having a good cry. What else can I do? I may not have a chance later on, and you know the poor thing has no one else but me to cry for her.”

Garlic and Honey

A GOVERNOR came to Aksehir who was rather eccentric.

“If anyone knows a good dish,” said he, “I wish he would write out the recipe and we will make a Cookery Book.”

He made the suggestion to one of the principal men of the town, who passed it on to the Khoja.

Next day the Khoja met this man and said, “Do you know I was thinking all night about what you told me. I have invented a rare dish—one that no one has ever heard of—quite delicious!”

When the man asked what it was, he said, “You must make a batter of garlic and honey.”

The man, who was a bit of a fool, went off at once, and happening to meet the Gover-
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

nor, said to him, "We have a Khoja in the town, a man of much experience and quite an original character." He then proceeded to give him the Khoja's recipe.

Now, the Governor was by no means as intelligent as he was supposed to be. He answered, "How extraordinary! You don't say so!" and at once hurried home and gave orders to the cook that he was to try it for supper.

* Of course it was disgusting.

The Governor was very angry and told the man who had mentioned the Khoja to him, to bring him to Government House.

"So you are the man who invented a dish of garlic and honey?" he asked.

"Your very humble servant," replied the Khoja, "unworthy though I be to have done such a thing."

"Very well," said the Governor, and gave orders that he should be made to eat some on an empty stomach next morning.

As he turned it over in his mouth he made horrible grimaces at the nasty taste, and the Governor said, "What are you making those faces for? Enjoy yourself. Take your fill

GARLIC AND HONEY

of this dish you invented. Perhaps it tastes differently to the man who made it."

"Your Excellency!" said the Khoja, "this invention of mine was only a theory. I had never tasted the thing before. Now I have, and I see that theory and practice are quite different things. I don't like it, either."

* The Cat and the Meat

ONE morning the Khoja bought three oves of meat and left it at the house while he went back to his work.

His wife at once called her friends in and gave them a good dinner with it.

In the evening the Khoja came back to supper and his wife gave him nothing but plain boiled pilaff of bulghul. He turned to her and said, "Even if you had no time to make me something with the meat, you might at least have put a few pieces of the fat in this pilaff."

"Indeed," she answered, "I was just going to do it when I was prevented. Your favourite tom-cat came and ate it all up. I just came in time to see him do it."

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The Khoja at once ran to fetch the scales, brought out the cat which was under the charcoal brazier, and weighed it. It came to exactly three okes!

He turned to his wife and said, "You wretch! If what I have just weighed is the meat, then where is the cat? But if it is the cat, where is the meat?"

The Unpaid Grocer's Bill

THE Khoja owed fifty-three piastres to his grocer and for a long time had paid nothing on account.

One day he sat talking with friends in the market when the grocer passed by and made a sign with his hand that if he did not pay the money he would show him up to his friends.

The Khoja understood what he meant and turned his head away. The man passed again and made the same gesture. The exasperated Khoja shook his head once or twice, muttering "God save me from the rascal!" but the grocer, who was one of those devils who are not to be driven away

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by prayers, persisted all the more. The Khoja was still muttering, "God help me!" when his friends noticed what was going on. Then, seeing that the man would not go away, the Khoja lost his temper and called to him, "Come now, how much do I owe? Fifty-three piastres? Very good, come tomorrow and I will give you twenty-eight. Come the next day and take twenty more. How much does that make?"

"Forty-eight."

"How much remains?"

"Five."

"You bare-faced rascal! Are you not ashamed to insult me before my friends for only five piastres? Begone!"

Bread and Salt

THE Khoja went to a town and one of the inhabitants said to him, "I have taken quite a fancy to you. Please come and take bread and salt with me and let us have a pleasant chat together."

The Khoja accepted the invitation with pleasure.

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TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

After a while bread and salt were put on the table, but nothing else, and the Khoja, being very hungry, had to eat it. Just then a beggar came to the door and begged for something to eat. The owner of the house, who was evidently a terrible miser, put his head out of the window and shouted to the man to go away, adding, “If I have to come to you, I will give you a good thrashing.”

When the Khoja saw that the beggar kept on crying out, he, too, put out his head and said to him, “My good fellow, don’t you imagine that he is like other people. You cannot humbug him. He is a man of his word!”

Three Thousand Piastres for a Pair of Tongs

ONE day the Khoja was strolling through the market when he saw a broker offering a sword for sale at three thousand piastres. He examined it, but could find nothing remarkable about it, so he turned to some people who were sitting there and asked them why it was so expensive. “Because,” said they, “when used against the foe, it becomes five yards long.”

Next day the Khoja took the tongs from the fireplace and went with them to the market.

“Tongs! Tongs! Who’ll buy?” he cried. “Going for three thousand piastres!”

Some people heard him and were curious to see what it was. They took up the thing and examined it and saw that it was a common pair of fire-tongs worth about two piastres.

“What on earth is there in this, Khoja, that you should ask three thousand piastres for it?”

He turned to the dealers and said, “Only yesterday you were hawking a sword about the market for three thousand piastres, because, forsooth, it became five yards long when used against the foe. Let me tell you that if my wife were to get angry and hurl these tongs at me, they would become ten yards long, and perhaps more.”

A PAIR OF TONGS

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Chewing Mastic Gum

THE Khoja had been invited out, and sat with the guests chatting and chewing mastic gum, when a servant came in to say that dinner was ready.

As the guests rose to go into the dining-room the Khoja took the mastic out of his mouth and stuck it on the tip of his nose.

When they asked him why he did it, he answered, “Poor people should always keep an eye on their property.”

The Khoja and Muleteers in the Cemetery

ONE day while the Khoja was walking close to the cemetery his foot slipped and he fell into an old grave. He pulled off his clothes, which were covered with dust, and began to clean himself.

Suddenly an idea came into his head. “Let me put myself in the dead man's place and see whether the angels Munkar and Nakir* will come to me.”

* Munkar and Nakir. Two angels who are said by Mohammed to visit the dead in their graves and examine them as to their belief in Islam. They are described as black angels with blue eyes.
KHOJA AND MULETEERS IN THE CEMETERY

While he was thinking it over some muleteers drove their animals at a gallop up to the cemetery. The Khoja, who could not make out what it meant—this noise of bells, rushing of animals, and cries of muleteers—said to himself, "What an unfortunate time for me to have come here! It must be the end of the world!"

In his agitation he knew not what to do, but at last managed to scramble to the top of the grave and was on the point of running away when the mules came round the corner and caught sight of him as he sprang out of the grave—a most extraordinary-looking object. They shied and there was a regular mix-up, one falling on top of the other. Their loads—pots, glasses, cups, and plates—were all smashed to atoms.

The muleteers in a towering passion attacked the Khoja with their sticks.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" said they.

"I?" he stammered—"I am from the other world. I had just come out to see how things were going on."
The Khoja kicked Downstairs

ONE day the Khoja was coming out of doors when his next-door neighbour met him and said, "Oh, Khoja, I have been so uneasy! This morning I heard some excited voices talking and whispering in your house, and then a loud bang. What was it?"

The Khoja showed that he was annoyed, and answered, "I had a little tiff with my wife. She became very angry, gave my coat a kick and it rolled downstairs. That was all."

"But," said his neighbour, "could a coat make all that noise?"

When he repeated the question the Khoja said, "That's enough! Why are you bothering me like this? As a matter of fact, I was inside the coat!"

The Khoja scandalizes the Wedding Party

THE Khoja came home at midday to perform his ablutions before going to the Mosque. He tried to get away in time for prayers, but his wife kept him so busy and he made himself so dirty that she told him he had better go off to the bath for a wash.

KHOJA SCANDALIZES THE WEDDING PARTY

As he left the house she called after him, "Mind you are not late. Remember it is my sister's wedding-day and you have to give her away. If you are not there, you will keep everybody waiting and the guests will be very much offended."

The Khoja found it very tiresome having to take a bath at such a time and made short work of it, but just as he was getting ready to dress and to run back home, they told him that it was raining heavily outside. He looked out and saw that the sky was overcast and that it was not likely that the rain would leave off in a hurry.

So he made a bundle of his clothes, tucked them under his arm, and started off home as naked as a savage; and of course he was drenched.

The wedding guests were all standing before the front door waiting for him, but when they saw him arrive in this state, they exclaimed, "Khoja! whatever do you mean by this?"

He answered, "The man who has to humour his wife by taking a bath at this time of day, gets both a hot bath and a cold one at the same time."
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

A Dish of Youghourt for Two

The Khoja and a friend of his bought some youghourt to be eaten “share and share alike.”

They were just beginning to eat it when his friend made a mark across the middle, saying, “I am going to put sugar and salt on my half.”

“But this is liquid,” cried the Khoja, “and part of it is sure to come over to my side. It won’t be nice. If you do put it on, sprinkle it all over, and we shall know what we are eating.”

“I have very little sugar,” said the other, “and I am not obliged to give you any.”

The Khoja got angry and, reaching out his hand to his knapsack, took out a bottle of salad oil and at once began to pour it on.

“What!” said the man. “Salad oil! Who ever heard of putting salad oil into youghourt!”

“What is it to do with you? I am going to pour it on my own half. I shall do as I please, and as for you, look after your own part.”

“But,” said the man, “is it possible to put anything into a liquid which will not go from one side to the other?”

“Don’t play the fool then!” said the Khoja. “Put the sugar in the middle!”

The Khoja is caught stealing in a Garden

One day the Khoja went into a garden and took all the melons, carrots, and turnips he could lay his hands on. He was busy filling his bag with them when the gardener suddenly appeared.

The Khoja was very frightened, and when the gardener asked what he wanted there, he answered in his confusion, “That fearful storm we had last evening caught me and threw me in here.”

“Indeed!” said the gardener; “and who picked these things?”

“Well, you see,” said the Khoja, “as the wind threw me this way and that, everything that I caught hold of stuck to my hands.”

“A very pretty story indeed,” said the gardener again; “but who has been filling the bag?”

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"H'm!" said the Khoja, "that is just what I was wondering!"

He pulls the Moon out of the Well

ONE moonlight night the Khoja went to draw water from the well and saw that the moon was inside. He at once fastened a hook on to the rope to pull it out. As the rope dangled, the hook caught on to a stone. The Khoja began pulling with all his might, but as the hook got clear he fell on his back.

Then he saw the moon was up in the sky.

"Ah! thank God!" said he. "I had a tough job to do it, but the moon is back in its place."

The Quails

THE Khoja shot a large number of quails, which he dressed and put on to stew. He clapped the lid on the saucepan and went out to invite his friends to dinner, wishing

THE QUAILS

to give some of them who were always questioning his skill an agreeable proof of it.

While he was out, another man came and carried off the cooked quails, putting live quails in their place.

The Khoja's friends arrived, the saucepan was brought out, and the Khoja proudly took the cover off; the quails flew out with a flutter and disappeared. The Khoja stared in amazement, and then ejaculated:

"Oh Lord! granted that Thou hast restored the quails to life and made the dear little creatures happy again, how about my butter, salt, pepper, herbs, cooking expenses, and all my hard work? Who is going to pay for them?"

The Importunate Creditor

WHILE looking out of the window the Khoja saw a man crossing the street to whom he owed some money—a debt of very long standing.

"My love!" said he to his wife, "run downstairs and when he comes, stand in the doorway and tell him what I told you to say
the other day, and I hope he won't come and bother me again for a long time."

His wife went down, but he felt curious and followed her to the door to hear the conversation.

The man knocked, and the Khoja's wife, peeping through the doorway, asked what he wanted.

"Madam, by this time you must know by my voice who I am. I have called a hundred times about this money which the Khoja owes me. It is scandalous. Tell him to come here and I will give him a piece of my mind," said he angrily.

The Khoja's wife answered gently, "My husband is not at home, but you can give me any message for him you wish. You are quite right, sir, to complain; but we are so sorry that we have not been able to get the money yet. However, little by little, we shall try to scrape it together. My husband intends to plant a hedge in front, and as the sheep from the village are always passing our door they will rub themselves up against the hedge and so we shall get a lot of wool. We will clean it, card it, spin it into yarn, and then sell it to pay your money.

We are not the sort of people to do others out of their money. Oh dear, no!"

The man saw very plainly that he would never get his money back, but was so tickled at this odd way of making it that he burst out laughing.

Tamerlane and the Accounts

TAMERLANE, having ascertained that the Governor of Akshehir was very rich, determined to confiscate his property on the pretence that he had defrauded the public revenue, and summoned him to appear before him.

When he presented his accounts, which were written on cardboard, Tamerlane tore them up and made him swallow them. He sequestered his property and stripped him of everything, to the very last farthing. Then he sent for the Khoja and issued an order appointing him Controller of Inland Revenue on account of his reputation for strict integrity.

The Khoja pretended that he was not very well, but Tamerlane wouldn't listen to any excuse.
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

At the beginning of the month he called upon him for a statement of his accounts; but when he saw that the Khoja had written them out on a griddle-cake he began to laugh, and said, "Why, Khoja, what is this?"

"Oh!" answered he, "wouldn't you make me swallow them sooner or later, as you did the other fellow? I have not got such a fine appetite as he had. I am an old man and can only digest this. No cardboard for me!"

The Nobleman and the Khoja's Wife

ONE day the Khoja's wife and some other women went to the shore of the lake to do some washing. It chanced that the lord of the district attended by his servants was walking in the same direction. He began to stare at the women, seeing that they were unveiled and lightly clad, when the Khoja's wife called out, "You impudent fellow! What are you staring at?"

At this the nobleman turned to his servants and asked whose wife she was, and they told him.

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THE NOBLEMAN AND THE KHOJA'S WIFE

Next day he sent for the Khoja.

"Is that your wife," he asked—"the woman dressed in blue, tall and ruddy?"

"Yes," said the Khoja.

"Then send her to me," said the nobleman.

When the Khoja asked him what he wanted her for, he answered, "I want to ask her something."

"Well, ask me," said the Khoja, "and I will go and ask her!"

The Ordeal

TAMERLANE was in search of an Ottoman Turk of approved courage to fill high office at Court. One might of course find a brave man, but it needed special courage to serve on his staff. It would be at the risk of one's life and no one ventured to apply for the post. And yet it was quite impossible to tell Tamerlane that there was nobody, so they applied to the poor Khoja, who was always ready to make himself a scape-goat.

"Oh! please, Khoja," they said. "You
are the only man in the town he cares for. You know how to get round him. You know his little ways. If only for a short time, do please accept, and later on we will see what is to be done."

After every possible argument they at last persuaded the soft-hearted but patriotic Khoja. He gave them his promise, and they informed Tamerlane. The latter knew right well that the Khoja had plenty of courage, but as he required the services of a man who had also physical strength he gave his consent provided that the Khoja should first undergo a certain ordeal. He gave orders accordingly, and they made the Khoja stand erect in an open space in the presence of Tamerlane, who directed one of his archers to fire an arrow so as to pass between the Khoja’s legs. Though very much frightened, the Khoja did not utter a sound, but began to mutter all the prayers for the dying he could think of.

Tamerlane then told the Khoja, who wore a cloak with wide sleeves, to stretch out his arms at full length and ordered another archer to shoot an arrow so as to pierce the cloak under the left arm. The poor Khoja

was in an agony of fear; and by the time Tamerlane ordered a third archer to shoot an arrow through the knot which fastened his turban, he felt quite faint and dazed. However, thanks to the wonderful skill of the archer, he came off unscathed.

Then they congratulated him on having passed his examination, and he revived. He would not let them see how tired he was, and even began to smile.

Tamerlane was loud in his approval of the Khoja’s courage and endurance, and not only showed his appreciation by the presents which he gave him, but having been informed that there were holes in his cloak and turban, gave orders for him to be supplied with new ones.

The Khoja expressed his thanks for this favour and then said, “May it also please your Majesty to give orders that I may have a fresh supply of underlinen, so that I may have a complete new outfit.”

“But, Khoja,” replied Tamerlane, “I am informed that no damage was done by my men to your underclothing. They examined it and did not notice anything.”

“Your Majesty is quite right,” said the
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

Khoja; "but although there are no outward signs, I greatly fear that they have been damaged inside."

Selling his Turban at Auction

ONE morning the Khoja was trying to fasten his turban, but could not get the end to fall behind as it should.

He undid it and tried again, but it was no use. At last he lost patience and sent it to be sold by auction.

One unhappy wretch made a bid for it.

The Khoja went up to him and whispered, "Mind what you are about. Don't bid too high, or it will be knocked down to you. It is quite impossible to get the end to fall behind!"

Gives Thanks for the Loss of His Donkey

THE donkey was lost. The Khoja ran about trying to find it and at the same time giving thanks in a loud voice.

He was asked why he gave thanks, and he answered, "Because I am not riding it. Of course, if I were, I would be lost too."

COUNTING THE DAYS OF RAMAZAN

Counting the Days of Ramazan

WHEN the fast of Ramazan began, the Khoja said to himself, "Why should I keep my fast the same as others do? I will get a big jar, and each day I will put one stone into it. When there are thirty stones in it I will keep the feast of Bairam."*

He found a jar and started to throw one stone in every day. His little daughter saw him do this and she threw in a handful.

One day some people said to him, "Khoja, what is the day of the month?"

"Wait a bit! I will go and see and let you know," said he.

He went home, emptied the jar, began to count, and saw that there were exactly one hundred and twenty stones. He said to himself, "If I go and tell them exactly what these stones tell me, they will think I

* Feast of Bairam. The feast which follows the fast of Ramazan. The people put on gay apparel, visit, embrace and kiss each other, exchange presents, feast and keep holiday for three days.
am a fool!” So he made up his mind, went back to them and said, “It is exactly the forty-fifth day of the month”; but they answered, “Why, Khoja, a month can only have thirty days!”

“Well,” said the Khoja, “I was very moderate in what I said to you. If you were to see the account which I keep in that jar, you would find that to-day is the one hundred and twentieth day of the month.

The Loan of a Cauldron

One day the Khoja asked a neighbour for the loan of a cauldron. After he had done with it, he put a small saucepan inside and took it back to the owner. When the man saw the small saucepan, he said, “What is this?” and the Khoja answered, “Your cauldron has had a baby.”

“That’s good news!” said the man, and accepted it with pleasure.

One day the Khoja wanted to borrow the cauldron again and took it home with him. The owner waited a long time, but he noticed that the cauldron did not come back.

The Loan of a Cauldron

Then he went round to the Khoja and knocked at his door. When the Khoja came and asked him what he wanted, he answered, “I want that cauldron.”

“Accept my sincere condolences,” said the Khoja, “the cauldron is dead!”

“What!” said his neighbour in the greatest amazement—“dead? Whoever heard of a cauldron dying?”

“Strange!—strange!” replied the Khoja. “You could believe that the cauldron had a baby, and yet you do not believe that it could die!”

Tamerlane disguised as a Dervish

At the time of the conquest of Anatolia by Tamerlane the Mongols occupied the district of Akshehir, and as a result of their brutal tyranny the towns were empty and the villages and open country thronged with panic-stricken women and children. The Khoja too mounted his wife on the donkey and, taking his boy along with him, went to a secluded village in the hills.

One day five or ten refugees and people
from the village were gathered together near the fountain holding an excited discussion about the tyranny of the Mongols and their brutal character. The Khoja joined in and began to detail the awful torments which these tyrants would have to suffer in Hell from the wrath of God, when a Dervish who had been quietly looking on burst out suddenly with a voice of thunder, “No, Khoja! You may know everything about the Koran and Sacred Traditions, but not about those who are the Sword of Divine Vengeance and patterns of Divine Justice! God loves not such people as you in whom the strain of patriotism has become corrupt—poor-blooded folk, listless, lazy, disunited, woman-hearted!”

This Dervish was a man of forbidding aspect, tall, dark-complexioned, hook-nosed, with a long face and scanty beard and black eyes with a keen, searching glance. He wore a high black cap with a long tassel which covered his eyebrows, and a cloak, while in his hand he carried a beggar’s wallet. The people, startled by his terrible voice, were seized with panic. Some of them threw themselves to the ground, while others remained staring, aghast at the motionless figure of the Dervish.

The Khoja gave him one searching look from head to foot and began to feel quite faint. “I wonder,” said he to himself, “can it possibly be he?”

Then with a courage born of despair he asked, “From what country are you? Would you kindly tell me your honoured name?”

In the same terrible voice the Dervish replied, “I am a pilgrim from Tartary. My name is Timour.”

When he said that the Khoja quite lost his head. “And do you put the word Khan after your name?”

As the terrible being answered, “I do!” the Khoja turned to the people and cried, “Away! ye people of Mohammed. Begone to your prayers—the prayers for the dead!”

Geese at Akshebir have only One Leg

ONE day the Khoja cooked a goose and took it as a present to Tamerlane. On the road he could not restrain his appetite
and ate one of the legs. On arrival at the palace he presented his offering in due form, but Tamerlane noticed that there was one leg short and asked him where it was. The Khoja replied, as cool as a cucumber, that all the geese at Aksehir had only one leg. “If you don’t believe me, look at those geese standing over there by the fountain!”

It was quite true. The geese were all standing on one leg, sound asleep in the sunshine, the other leg tucked up and their heads sunk in their breasts.

Tamerlane looked out of the window and saw that they really had only one leg.

Now, it chanced to be the moment for changing the palace guard. The band struck up. The roll of the big drum and skirl of pipes made the welkin ring. The geese soon found their second legs and ran off helter-skelter, trying to escape. Tamerlane saw them and at once called the Khoja to the window saying, “You are a liar. You see they all have two feet.”

“Yes,” replied the Khoja, “and if you had the noise of those drum-sticks ringing in your ears you would grow four legs.”

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**A WAGER: THE KHOJA’S VIGIL**

*ONE* night in mid-winter when there was a very hard frost the Khoja’s neighbours made up their minds that, by hook or by crook, they would make him give them a dinner.

“Come now, Khoja,” they said, “we want to have a bet with you. If you win, we will stand you a first-rate dinner; but if you lose, you are to give us a pilaff, helwa* and anything else you like.”

“What is it?” asked the Khoja. “Is it anything I can really do?”

“No! Of course not!” said one of them. “What would be the use of having a bet if you could?”

The Khoja began to feel nettled and said, “Come now, what is this wonderful thing which I cannot do?”

The man said, “You have to stand up all night in the public square, and in the morning we will all meet at the big Mosque. If you can do it, the dinner is yours. But remember! you will have to stand upright in the open air in a frost which is sharp

*Helwa.* A light paste of flour, butter, and sugar.