TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

They began to shout, "Where is it? He gave it to you. No, he did not! I will have my rights! Give me my share!"

There was a tussle, and they rolled off the bench one on top of the other.

Then they took to their sticks and had a pitched battle, while the Khoja looked on, roaring with laughter.

The Midnight Patrol

THE Khoja was walking the streets at midnight when the Governor with his patrol came upon him and asked what he was doing there at such an hour.

"My sleep has left me," answered he.

"I am trying to catch it."

The Bellows

THE Khoja lighted a fire, took the bellows to it, then stopped up the nozzle and hung it up again.

When he was asked why he put the stopper in, he answered, "To keep the air in, of course. I don't like waste."

THE HARE AND THE BARLEY-MEASURE

The Loan of a Donkey

ONE day a neighbour asked the Khoja for the loan of his donkey. "It is not here," said he.

Just at that moment the donkey began to bray.

"Hullo!" said the man, "you say it is not here, and there it is braying!"

The Khoja shook his head at him, "You are a strange fellow. You believe my donkey, but don't believe me, in spite of my grey beard!"

The Hare and the Barley-Measure

WHILE cutting wood upon the hills the Khoja came upon a hare. Strange to say, he had never seen one before.

"It must be a rare animal," he said to himself; "I had better show it to a native. One of them is sure to know what it is."

He put it into a bag, tied it securely, and carried it home.

He told his wife about it, and said, "Be careful not to open the bag. Meantime
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

will call in a native and show him the animal."

Of course when you are told not to do a thing you immediately want to do it, and no sooner was the Khoja's wife left alone, than she said to herself, "He is up to some mischief. Let us see what this thing is."

Directly she opened the bag the hare sprang out, made for the chimney, and escaped.

She of course got a terrible fright, and not knowing what to do under the circumstances, caught hold of the first thing she could find (a barley-measure) and put it into the bag. She tied the mouth of the bag securely and sat waiting to see what would happen.

She thought the Khoja might possibly bring in one or two wiseacres to see the animal. Perhaps, however, they would only laugh at him and refuse to come, and if so, the affair would soon blow over.

Alas for her hopes! When the Khoja went out, he met some notables and officials who were returning from a party and happened to be passing the house.

They asked him what he was so excited about and made him tell them the whole story.

"What can it be?" they said. "Let us go in and have a look."

So they all crowded into the Khoja's reception-room and sat down.

The Khoja impressed upon them that they should all hold up their hands and remain perfectly silent while he brought in the bag.

This he now did, holding it with the greatest care, and as he proceeded to untie the string, the visitors looked on in the greatest excitement.

When it was emptied and the barley-measure rolled on the floor, the Khoja was so astonished that he did not know what to say. At last he blurted out the words, "Ah, yes! a barley-measure! Ten of these make one kilo."

The Omnipresent Deity

THEY asked him, "Where is God?"

"What need to ask?" said he. "Is there any place where He is not?"
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

A Summary of Medical Science

ONE day the Khoja said, "The sum of medical science is this: Keep your feet warm, your head cool, be careful what you eat, and do not think too much."

He cannot tell which is his Right Side in the Dark

A MAN came to stop the night with the Khoja.

They went to bed, and at midnight the man said, "There is a candle on your right side, please give it me."

The Khoja answered, "You stupid! How can I tell which is my right side in the dark?"

The Khoja's Abyssinian Pupil Hamed

THE Khoja had a pupil named Hamed—a black from Abyssinia. One day some people asked the Khoja what were those ink-spots on his clothes?

"Yesterday," he answered, "Hamed was late for his lesson. He came running in, all of a sweat, and as he kissed my hands some drops of perspiration fell on me."

The Changeling

THE Khoja's donkey died. His wife said to him, "We cannot do without one, so take these six piastres to the market and buy another."

The Khoja bought one, and was leading him along without giving a glance behind, when two young rascals saw him. They passed the word to one another, and quietly slipped off the halter. One of them took the donkey back to the market and sold it on their joint account, while the other put the halter on his own head and arrived with the Khoja at his front door.

When the Khoja looked back and saw a man standing in the donkey's place he was struck with amazement and said, "Hullo! What on earth are you?"

At this the boy began to snivel, turn up his eyes, and whine. "Ah, sir!" he said, "my own stupidity. I offended my mother..."
and she was furiously angry. In her anger she cried, ‘I wish this son of mine to be changed into a donkey!’ and lo! I at once became a donkey.

“They took me to the market and sold me, and it was you, sir, who bought me. It is by your kind intervention that I have become a man again.”

He went on to say how grateful he was; but the Khoja said, “Be off with you, and don’t play the fool again.”

The next day the Khoja went off again to buy a donkey. When he saw that the same one which he had bought yesterday was being taken round by the broker, he went up, stooped down and said in its ear, “Ah! You silly fool! Of course you would not listen to my advice and have made your mother angry again!”

Riddles in the Pulpit

ONE day at Akshehir the Khoja went up into the pulpit to preach.

“Oh, ye faithful!” he began, “know ye what I am going to say to you?”

“We do not know,” they answered.
The Khoja, who did not like to say before all these people that he had no money in his pocket, turned his head away saying, "Is this the time to ask such a thing when you see that I am engaged?"

The man, however, persisted, for he wanted the change badly, and the Khoja was forced to think of some way of getting out of the difficulty.

"Very well!" said he. "Give me the coin!" He began to turn it over in his hand as if he were testing its weight. At last he said, "I am sorry, my lad, but I cannot change it. It is short of weight."

"Oh, please, Khoja!" said the man. "Change it and charge me what you like for the shortage. I don't mind."

The Khoja began to mutter, "Confounded you. I cannot change it. It is very light indeed!" but the man clasped him by the hand saying, "Give me what you like! Afterwards I will take the coin back to the place where I got it and give you your money in full. You will be doing me a great favour if you will."

The Khoja began to break out into a perspiration and felt very angry. Deter-
mined to get rid of the fellow, after turning and tossing the coin repeatedly, he turned to him and said, “I have made the calculation. You have not only to give me the pound, but must bring me six and a half piastres besides before I can change it.”

The Khoja hides in the Pantry

One day the Khoja’s daughter went into the pantry to fetch something and came upon her father lying upon the ground, hidden behind some oil-jars.

“Whatever are you doing here, father?” she asked.

“It is your mother, my dear. I am hiding from her. Oh! what a time I have had!”

A Plot to Steal the Khoja’s Shoes

One day the boys of the parish arranged to play a trick upon the Khoja.

“Let us make him climb a tree, and while he is up we will steal his shoes,” they said.

Standing at the foot of a tree they began
to discuss the question in great excitement. "No one can climb that tree," they cried.

The Khoja passed by and, hearing what they said, went up to them.

"I will," said he—"I'll climb that tree!"

"You can't," said they. "It looks very easy, but it is not every smart young fellow can do that. So you let it alone."

The Khoja became very angry. "I'll show you," said he, "whether I can do it or not," and tucking up his skirts he proceeded to squeeze his shoes into his pocket.

"Why put your shoes into your pocket?" they asked. "You won't want them up the tree."

"How do you know I shall not?" said he. "Let me keep them handy in case I should fall."

Travellers' Tales

There was a Persian who came to Akshehir, and told travellers' tales about Isphahan. He said that the Shah had any number of palaces there containing from 100 to 150 rooms and each palace so many thousand yards square.

The Khoja retorted, "Oh yes, but at Broussa, which is our capital, we have plenty like them. The length of the new palace is 5,000 yards and ——"

But at that moment another Persian came in, who said that he had just come from Broussa.

The Khoja felt that he could not go on like this, so he said, "The width of the palace was fifty yards."

"That is very odd," said the first Persian; "the length and breadth should always be in proportion."

"Yes," said the Khoja, "I was going to make the width agree with the length, but that Persian gentleman there came in just at the wrong moment and spoilt it all!"

The Khoja and the Students

The Khoja met some students in the street and invited them to go home with him. He brought them up to the street-door and saying, "Wait a moment," went in and told his wife she must manage to get rid of those young fellows who were standing before the door.
His wife, pretending that she knew nothing about them, peeped out and asked what they wanted, saying at the same time, “My husband is out.”

The students answered, “But, dear lady, we came here together just now. He insisted upon our coming.”

The Khoja’s wife repeated that he was not at home, and the students cried out that he was.

As the dispute grew louder the Khoja became impatient and put his head out of the window.

“Gentlemen, what are you quarrelling about?” said he. “Perhaps there are two front doors: he may have gone in by one and come out by the other.”

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The National Dish Helwa

One day he was chatting with some friends, when the conversation turned upon the national dish, helwa.

“Some years ago,” said the Khoja, “I wanted to make some helwa flavoured with almonds, but I could never manage to do it.”

“That is very odd. It is not difficult at all. Why couldn’t you make it?” they asked.

“Well,” said he, “when there was flour in the larder there was no butter, and when there was butter there was no flour.”

“Oh, nonsense, Khoja! Do you mean to say that all that time you could not find both?”

“Ah, yes,” he answered, “it did happen once, but then you see I was not there to make it.”

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The Game of Jereet

One day Tamerlane invited the Khoja to take part in a game of jereet.

The Khoja had a big stout ox in his stable, which he immediately saddled and rode it to the jereet ground.

When the people saw him, they roared with laughter.

Tamerlane sent for the Khoja and said.

* See Appendix.
"You know that for the game of jereet you ought to have a pony—an animal that is clever and can fly like a bird. What made you ride an ox—a heavy log like that?"

"It is quite true, your majesty, that it is from five to ten years since I rode him last, but I know what he was when he was a calf. He ran so fast, no horse could catch him, let alone a bird."

The Khoja and the Shepherd

ONE day the Khoja was walking up the mountain pass when he met a shepherd. The man asked him if he were a philosopher, and the Khoja said he was.

"Look, sir," said he, "at those stupid people down in the valley yonder. I asked them a question, but they could not give me an answer. Come now! Let us agree that if you are able to answer my question I shall put it, but if you cannot answer it, I will not."

"I can. What is the question?" asked the Khoja.

The shepherd replied, "You know that the new moon is very small, that it grows larger and larger until it is the size of a cart-wheel, that from the fifteenth day of the month it begins to wane until it becomes a thin crescent and finally disappears. What do they do with that old moon?"

"Do you mean to say you don't know?" said the Khoja. "Why, they cut up the old moon into long strips to make lightning. Don't you notice when there is a storm, how it flashes like a sword?"

The shepherd said, "Bravo, philosopher, you are quite right. That is my idea also."

Buying Flutes for the Village Boys

THE Khoja was going to market, and the boys of the parish asked him to bring a flute when he came back.

To each one he gave his promise, but one of them brought him the money and said, "That is for mine."

They all waited for the Khoja's return that evening, and when he came into the town they came round him, crying, "The flutes, Khoja. Where are the flutes we asked for?"

The Khoja took out one flute and handed
it to the boy who had paid for it, saying, "Only the boy who paid for his flute may play the flute."

The Khoja as a Nightingale

THE Khoja went into a man's garden, climbed up an apricot tree and began to eat the fruit. While he was doing so the owner came and asked what business he had up that tree.

The Khoja replied, "I am a nightingale. I come here to sing!"

"Very good!" said the man, "let me hear you."

When the Khoja began, the man could not help laughing.

"Is that the way a nightingale sings?" he asked.

"Yes," said the Khoja—"a nightingale that is out of practice!"

The Khoja and the Beggar

THE Khoja was sitting at home one day when a man knocked at the street-door. He called out to him, "What do you want?"

"Please come down for a moment," said the man.

The Khoja went down, and when he came to the door found that it was a beggar. He felt very much annoyed, but said to the man quietly, "Come upstairs with me."

When the beggar had climbed up to the top floor where the Khoja had been sitting, the latter turned to him and said, "I have nothing for you, my man."

"Well," said the beggar, "since you meant to send me away without anything, why did you not tell me so downstairs?"

"And you, my good man, why did you not tell me what you wanted instead of making me go all the way downstairs?"

Impertinent Critics

THE Khoja was going to a village with his son. He put the boy on the donkey and walked alongside.

Some people saw them and said, "Look at these young fellows of the present day. Fancy making his old father walk while he rides the donkey in comfort!"
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

The boy heard them and said, "Father, that is not my fault; I did not insist upon it. Now, don't be obstinate, but get up."

The Khoja did so, and they had gone but a short distance when several people passed and called out: "Oh, you hard-hearted brute! Isn't it a shame to make the poor lad run like that and bake in the sun?"

The Khoja immediately pulled up, took the boy and put him up behind.

They had not gone far before a party of roughs met them and said, "What cruelty! Two people riding on one donkey and evidently come from a distance. Just see that fellow. He is a Khoja! How disgraceful!"

At last the Khoja lost his temper, and they both got down and drove the donkey on before them.

Then some others came along, and when they saw them cried, "What stupid people! Fancy letting their donkey go free and easy like that, while they trudge along in all this heat and dust and dirt. What idiots there are in the world!"

When the Khoja heard them he said, 220

THE KHOJA TONGUE-TIED

"Oh, I would give anything to make these people hold their tongues!"

Tamerlane and the Khoja at the Bath

TAMERLANE went to the bath with the Khoja and asked him in the course of conversation, "If I had been a slave, I wonder how much I would be worth?"

"Fifty piastres," answered the Khoja.

"You blockhead," said he angrily, "the cloth round my loins is worth fifty."

"Just so," answered the Khoja coolly. "I estimated your value at the price of that rag."

The Khoja Tongue-tied

ONE day the Khoja went up into the pulpit to preach. The people crowded into the mosque and sat waiting to hear him.

He sat there for a long time, but could think of nothing, and as he saw the eyes of the people fixed upon him he became very nervous, and the more nervous he felt the more tongue-tied he became.

At last when he realized the fact that he 221
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

had nothing at all to say, he turned to the congregation and said: “Good people, you evidently know that I am quite unable to speak to-day. Indeed, I wonder if you think it was right for me to have got into the pulpit at all?”

The Khoja’s son happened to be sitting just under the pulpit, and when he heard his father say this, he got up and said, “Father! if you cannot think of anything to say you might at least have the decency to get out of the pulpit.”

In saying this he not only showed that he was indeed the son of his father, but he saved the poor man from a dilemma.

The Fish that swallowed Jonah

WHILE the fishermen were dragging their nets at the lake the Khoja stood watching them. He was so absorbed that he quite forgot where he was. His foot slipped and he fell into a net. The fishermen cried, “Why, Khoja, what have you done?”

“Oh!” he answered, “I am one of them. I am the fish that swallowed Jonah.”

HONEY FOR THE CADI OF KONIA

Honey for the Cadi of Konia

THERE was a Cadi at Konia who was very fond of taking bribes. The Khoja had to send to Konia to get a decree confirmed by the Court, but he was kept waiting for months, and though he tried every possible means to persuade the Cadi, he could not get him to do it. Finally he was obliged to go to Konia himself.

He took with him a large jar which he gave to the Cadi as a bribe. The latter opened it in his private room, and when he saw that it contained some very fine honey he went into the reception-room where the Khoja was waiting, treated him with the greatest cordiality, and proceeded at once to confirm the decree and hand it over to him. The Khoja put the document into his pocket and with a foxy smile on his face took leave.

A day or two afterwards another man sent a dish of cream as a present and the Cadi thought he would eat some of the honey with it. He dipped the spoon into the jar, when he saw that underneath the honey was a lot of dirt.

He was furious, called the constable, and

223
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

told him to find that rascal Nasr-ed-Din Khoja and try under some pretence to get him to come back to the Court.

The constable came upon the Khoja in the market just as he was making his preparations to return to Akshehir.

He went up and, after respectfully kissing the hem of his garment, said, "Sir, there was an error in the wording of that document. The Cadi sends his kind regards, and I am to tell you that he will correct it and give it back to you."

The Khoja gave the man a sarcastic smile, and said, "There was nothing wrong with that document, for the Clerks of the Court (God bless them) were very careful to see that it was all right; but there was certainly something very wrong with that jar!"

So saying, the Khoja went on with his preparations and then left for home.

A Cure for the Scab

A VILLAGER had a goat which was attacked by the scab. His friends advised him to rub it with tar, but he took it first to the Khoja.

A CURE FOR THE SCAB

"I am told, sir," said he, "that your breath is an excellent cure for the scab. Would you be so kind as to breathe on my goat?"

"All right," said the Khoja, "I will breathe on it if you wish; but if you want it to get well quickly you must mix a little tar with my breath."

The Dirty Melons

ONE day the Khoja went up the mountain to cut wood and took some melons with him.

Becoming thirsty, he cut one, but finding that it had no taste, threw it away. Then he cut another, and so he went on until he had tried them all.

He ate a bit of each and threw the rest on to a muck-heap close by.

Later on he again felt hot and thirsty, and as he could not find any water to drink went back to the pieces of melon which were lying in the dirt.

"H'm! that is not so bad," said he, picking up a bit and eating it; "but that—ah! that is too dirty!"

p 225
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

However, he went on until he had eaten them all.

Instructions to the Donkey

THE Khoja had been cutting wood on the mountain and loaded it on his donkey. He threw the axe and his cloak on top and said, “I am going by the mountain path. You go by the high-road.”

When he arrived he found that the donkey had not turned up, and said to himself, “Just think of it! I have come quicker than the donkey. What a good walker I am!”

But as time passed and no donkey arrived, he said, “I had better go and see what has become of him.”

When he got up to the mountain he found the animal grazing on the very spot where he had left him, but of his cloak and the axe there was nothing to be seen. He at once threw down the wood from the donkey’s back, leaving him with the saddle on.

Then he began to scold him. “Here you are feeding just where I left you. Very good! Now be off and bring back my cloak and the axe and take the saddle with you!”

226

THE BED-QUILT

The Khoja ill-treats his Daughter

THE Khoja handed his daughter a water-jar, and as he did so gave her two smacks in the face, saying, “Mind you don’t break the jar!”

Some people who saw the innocent child beaten in this way turned to the Khoja and said, “Is it not a shame to ill-treat the poor child without a cause?”

“No!” said he, “I must show her the serious consequences of breaking the jar before she breaks it, so as to make her pay attention. It would be no good punishing her after she had broken it.”

The Bed-quilt

THE poor Khoja and his wife had only one bed-quilt between them. In the winter they used to cover themselves with the Khoja’s coat or anything that came to hand.

One night when there was a heavy fall of snow his wife said to him, “Khoja, you are not earning anything. We are very hard up.

227
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

We have not even an extra quilt, and you say the one we have must do. Oh! if we only had two, how comfortable we would be! I hate having to put up with anything we can get. One thing is too long and the other too short; one slips over the edge of the bed, the other gathers into a hard lump in another place. Oh, curses on such poverty! But what can we do? I remember that my father once . . ."

But when she began this the Khoja, who had for years listened to these same stories and indeed knew them now even better than she did herself, broke in, saying, "Stop grumbling, will you? I am tired and want to go to sleep, and you go to sleep too!"

But once her tongue had begun to wag it was quite impossible to stop her, so he said, "Come now. I will get you any amount of cotton and you shall make as many quilts or mattresses as you like."

So saying, he put a sack on his shoulder and went down to the yard, where he began to fill it with snow.

His wife saw him from the window and cried out, "What are you up to? You will make yourself ill playing with the snow in . . ."

THE BED-QUILT

this hard frost, and then I shall have something else to worry about! What are you going to do with that snow?"

"There you are," said he. "Cotton! Any amount of it! Come straight from God!"

"What!" said his wife, "the idea of using snow to keep one warm!"

"Well!" said the Khoja, "if it cannot keep one warm, how is it that our fathers and grandfathers are lying under it so warm and comfortable and sleeping so peacefully?"

The Khoja's Skill with the Bow

IN the spring when the time came for the troops to go out for archery practice, Tamerlane took the Khoja with him, and in the course of conversation the Khoja happened to mention that he had at one time gone in for archery. "If so," said Tamerlane, "you must have a shot now."

The Khoja begged to be excused, but as Tamerlane insisted, he strung a bow and aimed at the target. He missed, but without a moment's hesitation said, "That was to show you how the Chief Huntsman shoots."
They then gave him another arrow and he took aim. This also went wide of the mark. "That," said he, "is the way our Governor shoots."

By a fluke the third arrow made a bull’s-eye, whereupon the Khoja turned round and said with great pride, "And now you see how Nasr-ed-Din Khoja shoots!"

Payment for Attendance at the Turkish Bath

ONE day the Khoja went to the Turkish bath, but the attendants treated him with scant respect, giving him a rag for a loincloth and an old towel.

He made no remark, and when he went out left ten piastres on the hand-mirror. The attendants were very much surprised and of course delighted.

A week later he again went to the bath, when the attendants paid him the greatest attention, giving him embroidered towels and a cloth of silk.

Again he made no remark, but when he went out left only one piastre on the mirror.

The attendants were amazed and very

indignant at receiving so little, and said to him: "Khoja, is this a nice way to treat us?"

The Khoja replied, "There is really nothing extraordinary about it. The one piastre which I have given you to-day is to pay for last week's bath, and what I paid you then is for my bath to-day."

God's Guest

THERE was a big hulking loafer, a fellow without the slightest particle of shame or decency, who never went into a house without stealing something. From some houses he took clothes, from others food, and although they might beat and drive him away it had no effect, for it would not be long before he came back again.

He had constantly annoyed the Khoja in this way.

One day he was at home and the man came just when he was busy and knocked at the door.

The Khoja's wife went down and asked who was there, and he answered, "I want to see the master of the house."
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

The Khoja then went down and, recognising the man’s voice, stood behind the door to listen. He heard the man ask his wife for food and her indignant refusal, then he himself went up to the impudent rascal and said, “What are you doing here? What do you want?”

“I am God’s guest,” said he.

“Ah!” said the Khoja at once. “If so, come along with me,” and he took him straight to the door of the big Mosque. “You came to the wrong house, my man, if you are God’s guest, for this is God’s House.”

Hare Soup

ONE day a villager brought a hare to the Khoja as a present, and the Khoja treated him so well that he turned up again a week later. The Khoja did not recognise him, so the man said, “I am the villager who brought you that hare last week.”

The Khoja made him welcome and gave him some soup, saying, “It is soup made from the gravy of the hare. Please help yourself.”

HARE SOUP

A few days later three or four villagers turned up in the hope of being entertained. He asked who they were, and they answered, “We are the neighbours of the villager who brought you that hare.”

The Khoja gave them some sweets and made them welcome.

A week later a few more people came and the Khoja asked who they were. They answered, “We are the neighbours of the neighbours of that villager who brought you that hare.”

“Welcome!” said he, and put a bowl of water before them.

The villagers stared at it and said, “What is it, Khoja?”

“It is,” answered he, “the water of the juice of the gravy of the hare!”

The Khoja and the Trooper

THE Khoja was returning from a long journey tired, and he said to himself, “O Lord, if only I had my donkey here! At least he would lift my feet from the ground!”

As he said this, a trooper came galloping
along the road and, pointing to a young foal behind him, said to the Khoja, “Heh, gaffer! No skulking in the shade of the trees. You must work. Look you. That foal of mine is tired. Put it on your back and carry it as far as the village yonder.”

The Khoja cried, “Mercy on me! It is just because I am so tired that I cannot stir.”

But before he could get the words out of his mouth, the man’s whip came down on his shoulders like a flash of lightning.

“Up, you rascal!” cried he. “We cannot let you people take your ease like this out in the country nor choose to say where you shall stop or when you shall move on. One says, ‘What a nice place! I will sleep by the fountain and you shall lie under the pine tree,’ and when you do move on like a snail you take a week to do one day’s journey!”

There was no help for it! The Khoja hoisted the foal on to his back and began to run before the trooper, who every now and then made him skip as he touched him up with the whip. It took him ten minutes to reach the village, where he collapsed, falling prostrate with the foal on top of him.

The hard-hearted brute pressed him no further, but after a little more abuse left him and went on his way.

For half an hour the wretched Khoja lay there all over blood and sweat and quite unconscious. At last he began to revive and managed to drag himself to the foot of a tree.

Then he looked up to Heaven and said, “O Lord! Evidently I was unable to explain myself properly because I had lost my teeth. What I asked for was a donkey to ride, but Thou didst send me something to ride me!”

_The Khoja and the Vineyard_

_A VINEYARD_ at Aksehir was for sale and going very cheap. Four or five people were after it.

One of them came to the Khoja and begged him to try to get it for him, and, if possible, at a lower figure.

The Khoja at once went off to the owner and managed the business. When his client heard that it was all right, he came to him to hear what he had done.

“Oh! I managed it all right,” said he,
“but I had a hard job. I laughed in the fellow’s beard and had to think of all possible ways of persuading him. Then, remembering what you said to me, I tried to get it at a lower price. All this I did for your sake, and I hope you are well pleased.”

The man assured him of his gratitude and began to dance for joy.

“But,” continued the Khoja, “what do you say to my having done a little business on my own account?”

“What do you mean?” answered the man, “of course you will get your commission. No one can say anything against that.

“Well,” said the Khoja, “after using every effort to get it cheaper as you wished me to do, I put in a word or two for myself, as I felt I had a right to be rewarded for my trouble, and so—I bought the vineyard for myself!”

The Khoja and the Sieve

THE Khoja was looking for something in the pantry when a sieve full of onions fell on his head. He got a nasty crack and for the moment was quite dazed.

The Donkey’s Barley Ration

ONCE knew a gentleman who was fond of spinning a good yarn and heard him tell this one about the Khoja.

One winter he was very hard up and said to himself “How would it do if I were to cut down the donkey’s barley ?”

So every time he filled the measure, he put in a little less, but the donkey remained as lively as ever; and later on, when he had reduced it by one handful, the donkey did not seem to mind.

The Khoja went on in this way until he had reduced the ration by one-half. Then
It is true that the donkey became very quiet, but he looked quite fit.

Two months passed and he had reduced it to less than half. Now the poor brute was not only quiet but looked miserable. He came to that state when he could scarcely stand and rarely touched his straw. His ration of barley was just a handful.

One morning the Khoja entered the stable and found him dead.

"Ah!" said he, "just when we were getting him accustomed to it! 'Tis the will of Providence!"

The Khoja buys a Sporting Dog for the Governor

A very miserly Governor of Akshehir once called the Khoja and said, "I hear that you are very fond of hunting and know a lot of sportsmen. I wish you would get me a greyhound. I want one with the ears of a hare, the legs of a deer, and the girth of an ant."

Shortly afterwards the Khoja came back leading by a rope a sheep-dog as big as a donkey.

Khoja buys Sporting Dog for Governor

"What is this?" asked the Governor.

"The dog. Didn't you ask me to get you a dog?"

"Did I not tell you I wanted a greyhound, as thin and swift as a mountain goat?"

"Oh, don't be uneasy," said the Khoja.

"In your house it will not be long before it is as thin as you please."

The Donkey and the Frogs

While coming home from a distant village the donkey became very thirsty, and directly it caught sight of the lake it broke away and rushed for the water. This happened at a spot where there was a sharp, precipitous descent. The poor brute was on the point of falling over when some frogs began to croak, which made him shy and jump aside. The Khoja was so delighted that as he caught hold of the donkey, he took a handful of coins out of his pocket and scattered them over the lake, crying, "Bravo, ye lake birds! Take this and buy yourselves some sweets!"
Loan of his Donkey

ONE day a neighbour asked him to let him have his donkey.

He answered, "I must go and ask him. If he is willing, I will let you have him."

After a while he came back. "I am sorry," he answered, "but the donkey is not willing. He said to me, 'If you give me to strangers, they will hit me on the ears, I shall bite them, and they will curse you!'"

Laying Eggs at the Turkish Bath

ONE day the boys of Akshehir took the Khoja to the Turkish bath, and each one took an egg with him without letting the Khoja know.

They all undressed, went in and sat down on the shampooing bench. Then they began to call to one another, "I say! let us lay eggs! Whoever cannot lay an egg must pay for the bath."

Then they squeezed themselves up like hens, crying, "Ghaid! Ghaid! Ghaidak!" and each one proceeded quietly to lay on the marble slab the egg which he had brought with him.

The Khoja, seeing them do this, immediately began to wave his arms and cry, "Cock-a-doodle-do!"

The boys called out, "What are you doing, Khoja?" and he said, "Why, where there are so many hens, surely one cock is necessary! Cock-a-doodle-do!"

"Gloomy Fatima"

ONE evening the Khoja returned home tired and out of sorts and longing for something to cheer him up, when he saw that his wife wore the usual scowl on her face.

"Hullo! Gloomy Fatima!" he cried, "what is wrong now? Is this my reward for toiling from morn till eve for your sake that you meet me with a face like that?"

"Ah!" said she, "and with very good reason too! A greyhound belonging to a friend of mine attacked a child and killed it. I went to see it and have just come back."

"Liar!" said the Khoja. "I happen to know that you have just come back from a wedding."
through the pit of the stomach! Think what would have become of me if I had been inside!” He kept one hand on the pit of his stomach, while from his mouth he poured forth praise and thanksgiving.

The Pleasure Party

In the spring the Khoja went with his relations to a neighbouring village where there was plenty of running water and gardens full of fruit and vegetables of every description. It was a veritable paradise. The grass was studded with flowers in full bloom, the trees pink and white with blossom, and they enjoyed it all immensely. They beguiled the passing hour with laughter and song and did justice to the good food which they had brought with them.

At last it was time to go, but no one wished to leave the lovely spot and they decided to remain a few days. Each one promised to contribute something towards the general entertainment. One said he would bring baklava, another stuffed lamb, another mince meat cooked in vine leaves, while others would bring cheese and fruit.

242

243
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

Then they looked at the Khoja wondering what he would bring.
“Oh!” said he, “let the feast go on for three months I will not stay away. May the curses of God, His Prophet, and all the angels light upon me if I do!”

The Khoja’s Wife provokes a Scandal

Every night the Khoja’s wife left him in charge of the house while she went off to gossip with the neighbours.
Some of them warned him that she was associating with disreputable women.
One night she went off after making all sorts of excuses and came back late. She knocked, but the Khoja was angry and refused to open the door, in spite of her entreaties.
“Very well!” she cried, “then I’ll throw myself down the well and have done with you, once for all.”
She ran off and threw a big stone down the well, while she hid herself in the shadow of the wall.
Stricken with grief, the Khoja cried, “She is mad. I must go and save her!”

THE KHOJA’S WIFE PROVOKES A SCANDAL

Now, no sooner had he opened the door and stepped outside than his wife ran in and fastened the door behind her. Then she ran upstairs and began to look out of the window where the Khoja had been sitting. He called to her to open the door, but, as she took not the slightest notice, he was obliged to eat humble pie and beg her to do so. She, however, began to shout at the top of her voice, “I have had quite enough of this! Going off every night pretending that you go to see the neighbours. A pretty story indeed! Who knows what bad women you go to see. You will break your poor wife’s heart. Shame on your grey beard. You are a perfect scandal. I’ll let everybody know about you. I’ll teach you to go off and leave me every night like this.”

Amazed at her cunning in imputing to others the very indiscretions which she herself committed, and annoyed at the curiosity of the neighbours, all the poor man could say was, “Ah! I only hope that those who know the truth will publish it abroad.”

245
Carrying Fowls to Sivri-hissar

ONE day the Khoja packed his fowls into a cage and was taking them along the road from Aksehir to Sivri-hissar.

"Ah! the poor things! They will be stifled in this heat," said he, "I must let them out for a run."

When he did so they began to go off in every direction, so he took a stick and, putting the cock in front, began to drive them along.

"You stupid bird!" said he to the cock.

"How is it that at midnight you know the approach of dawn and yet you cannot tell the road from Aksehir to Sivri-hissar!"

Ruse to obtain an Invitation to a Wedding

THE Khoja heard that a wedding was going on at a certain house. When he thought that the guests would be just sitting down to breakfast, he took a sheet of paper, folded and put it into an envelope. He then knocked at the door, and when the servant asked him what he wanted, said, "A letter for the master of the house. Urgent."

RUSE TO OBTAIN AN INVITATION

The servant let him in and, handing the letter to the gentleman, he sat down to table and began to eat.

"There is no address on the envelope," said the host.

"Oh, never mind that," said the Khoja.

"The man was in such a hurry that he hadn't even time to write anything inside."

Villagers complain of the Khoja to the Cadi

THE people of the Khoja's village made a complaint against him to the Cadi about something or other, and the Cadi sent for him.

"The villagers don't want you," said he; "you must go and shift for yourself."

"Indeed!" said the Khoja. "It is I who do not want the villagers. Let them go to Hell for all I care. They are so many that wherever they go they can make a village, but how am I at my time of life to move my things without a moment's notice? Where is the mountain-top on which I can make myself a home?"
Youn Gnasr-ed-Din steals the Miser's Goose

WHEN the Khoja was a boy he was always up to mischief. One day as he was going along the road he noticed in the shadow of the wall a lot of geese belonging to a neighbour who was the biggest miser and surliest brute in the parish.

Seeing that they were all asleep, he thought it a good opportunity to make the old man furious and draw a crowd about him, so he quietly caught hold of the biggest gander, slipped it under his coat and walked off with it.

He had gone some distance and was surprised to see that it remained perfectly quiet, so when he came to a street where there was nobody passing, he gently opened his coat and took a peep.

The goose at once lifted his head and hissed out "hush!"

"Bravo, goose!" cried the Khoja—"that is just what I was going to tell you to do. What fools people are to call you a goose! You have far more sense than your master."

The Khoja arrested for Carrying Arms

WHEN the Khoja was a student it was strictly prohibited to carry arms of any kind.

One day he was seen walking to school
with a big yataghan stuck in his belt. He was arrested and brought before the Governor, who demanded angrily if he had not seen the notice prohibiting the carrying of arms. "What do you mean, then, by carrying about that knife in broad daylight?"

"I use it at school," he answered, "to scratch out the errors in my lesson-book."

"Ridiculous!" said the Governor. "What! use a big thing like that for such a purpose!"

"Well," said he, "sometimes the errors are so great that this is really not big enough."

**The Roast Chicken**

THE Khoja sat under a tree eating some roast chicken.

A man came up to him and said, "How nice! I should like some of that. Please give me a bit."

"I am very sorry, brother," answered the Khoja. "It isn't mine. It is my wife's chicken."

"But you are eating it," said the man.

"Of course," said the Khoja. "What else can I do? When she gave it to me she said, 'Eat it.'"

**Where to stand when carrying the Coffin**

THEY asked the Khoja which was the best place to take when helping to carry a dead man to the cemetery.*

"Would it be better in front of the coffin, or behind?"

"So long as you are not inside yourself, it doesn't matter which," said he.

*Carrying the coffin. Four from among the near relatives carry the bier upon their shoulders, being every now and then relieved by others. One bier is used for all and is kept at the Mosque. The dead are buried without a coffin.
possible. I would not do it for the world. And why is it necessary? Can you think me so heartless, so ungrateful?

"No, little wife," said he. "These are things you cannot understand. I was thinking of something very different. I see that my end is at hand. Azraíl,* the Angel of Death, is hovering near. I thought that perhaps if he saw you in these fine clothes looking like an angel or a peacock, he might take you and leave me. That is what I wanted. Now do you understand the meaning of it?"

The poor woman stared at him aghast not knowing what to say or what to do. Then one of the old women who were in the room said, "God forgive you, Khoja, but you cannot stop joking even at the point of death."

The Apparition

ONE Friday morning long after the Khoja's death a crowd of people had assembled for midday service at the old Mosque in Alshehir, when suddenly a figure

* Azraíl. The Angel of Death.

appeared at the main entrance looking exactly like him with the same smiling face and familiar, quaint costume.

"Good people," he cried, "I have such a strange thing to tell you. I had just performed my ablutions and was going to lock the door of my grave when whom do you think I saw? Nasr-ed-Din Khoja!! There he was as large as life. It was his face with the same comical expression and he was wearing those funny clothes of his. He was sitting astride on his coffin, looking about him, and he said to me, 'Go and tell the people at the big Mosque to come and see me. If anyone fails to come, it will be at his peril.'"

The people, who had implicit faith in the Khoja and were also favourably impressed by his messenger, rushed to the grave, but of course they saw no Khoja there.

So they came away laughing as they remembered how often they had heard their fathers and grandfathers tell them of similar tricks they had seen him play.

"You naughty Khoja," they cried, "you cannot resist the temptation to come out every now and then and have a game. It is
TALES OF NASR-ED-DIN KHOJA

your little way of letting us know that you are always with us.”

They then all joined in repeating the “Fatihat” * and returned to the Mosque, but when they arrived they found that, while they were away, the dome had disappeared.

* The opening sentences of the Koran. It is as sacred an utterance to a Mohammedan as the Lord’s Prayer is to a Christian.

APPENDIX

Tamerlane the Mongol. Proclaimed Khan of Samarcand A.D. 1371 at the age of thirty-five. He devastated the world from the Great Wall of China to the centre of Russia and from the Ganges to the Mediterranean and Nile. He was not only a great soldier, but remarkable as a law-giver and politician. His name is derived from two words, timour (iron) and leng (lame). The one describes his terrible personality, the other his physical infirmity.

Imam. The leader of prayers in a mosque. It is not a priestly office, as the Imam is not ordained for the purpose. He may, however, be appointed by the community and receive the revenues of the mosque. When only three persons are present, one of them must stand in front and act as Imam while the others follow him. It should be the one who knows the Koran best. Nasr-ed-Din Khoja combined the duties of schoolmaster and prayer leader.

Fast of Ramazan. This is to be observed throughout the Ramazan or ninth month of the Mohammedan year (a movable fast). It does not commence until some Moslem is able to state that he has seen the new moon. If the moon is invisible, the fast begins upon the completion of thirty days from the beginning of the previous month. The sick and infirm, women pregnant or nursing
APPENDIX

children, and travellers on a journey of more than three
days are exempt. It requires total abstinence from food
or drink from sunrise to sunset. It is naturally very
exhausting when the fast falls in the heat of summer.

“Seven sleepers of Ephesus.” A legend told by Gibbon
among others (Rise and Fall, chap. xxxi). It is said
that when the Emperor Decius persecuted the Christians,
seven noble youths of Ephesus hid themselves in a cave
in the side of a hill, where they were doomed to perish by
the tyrant who caused the entrance to the cave to be
walled in. They fell into a sleep which lasted 187 years,
and awoke with all their physical powers unimpaired.
Mohammed introduced the story into the Koran as a
divine revelation. (The Companions of the Cave.)

Namaz. Liturgical or common prayer to be ob-
ser...d five times a day: (i) between dawn and sunrise;
(ii) at midday; (iii) in the middle of the afternoon; (iv)
just after sunset; (v) when night has closed in. It may
be said either privately or in company or in a mosque,
but must be preceded by “Abdesst” (i.e. the washing of
face, hands, and feet).

Jereed. A game played on horseback. Two teams
face each other at opposite ends of the field. Each rider
is armed with a short stick, and the game is one of
individual challenge and chase and the attempt to hit
one another with the stick, which is thrown while in full
career.