

MORAL TALES,

AFTER THE

EASTERN MANNER;

BY

Mr. ^l S E A L L Y. ^R

V O L. I.

LOVELY ARE THE TALES OF FORMER TIMES.

L O N D O N :

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HARAZAN AND SELIMA.

DOST thou ask a torch
 to discover the bright-
 ness of the morning?—
 Dost thou appeal to ar-
 gument for proofs of *Divine Perfection*?
 Look down to the earth on which thou
 standest, and lift up thine eyes to the
 worlds that roll above thee:—Thou
 beholdest splendour, abundance, and
 beauty. Is not HE who produced them,
mighty?—Is not HE who formed thy
 understanding, *wise*?—Is not HE who
 gratifies

gratifies thy senses, *good*?—Can ought have limited His bounty, but His wisdom?—or can defects in His sagacity be discovered by thine?—To Hamet Hassen the teacher of humility and resignation, let thine ear be attentive, even thou, whose heart has rebelled in secret, and whose wish has silently accused the *Attributes* of HIM, who touches the mountains and they smoke, *The Almighty* and *The Most Merciful*, be everlasting honour!

I awoke early in the morning—refresh'd by rest—animated with hope—incited by desire,—I bent my course over the vallies—and saw the hills rising in view. My ears were delighted with the melody of birds—I contemplated the towering oak—and caught the gentle fragrance

of the eldest daughter of the spring. Thus I went on till the sun approached in his meridian, and the increasing heat preyed upon my strength. I quickly espied a grove that seemed to wave its shades as a sign of invitation.—I enter'd it—and found the coolness and verdure irresistibly pleasing. In this charming recess, I amused myself with the flowers that covered the banks on either side—and plucked the fruits that hung pendant upon their branches. The green path at last began to decline from its first tendency, and wind among hills and thickets, cooled with fountains, and murmuring with water-falls. I listen'd to every echo—mounted every hill for a new prospect—turned aside to every cascade—and pleas'd with tracing the course of a gentle river, that rolled
among

among trees, watering a large region with innumerable circumvolutions. To my inexpressible joy, I discovered the retreat of Muza the hermit, who investigates the secrets of Nature, and ascribes Glory to his *Creator*. " I . . .

The hope of improving my meditation by his wisdom and sanctity of life, gave me new vigour.—I soon reached his humble dwelling: I enter'd—but Mirza was absent. I presently discovered him through the trees at some distance, advancing towards me with a person whose appearance was, if possible, yet more venerable, and whom before I had never seen.

Mirza saluted me by name, and presented me to his companion, before whom

I bowed myself to the earth Having
 looked stedfastly in my countenance, he
 laid his hand upon my head and blessed
 me.

“ Hamet-Hassen, said the hoary sage,
 “ those who desire knowledge, that
 “ they may teach virtue, shall not be
 “ disappointed: — I will relate events
 “ which yet thou knowest but in part,
 “ and disclose such secrets of Provi-
 “ dence from which thou mayest de-
 “ rive instruction.”—We listened, as
 to the counsel of an angel, or the mu-
 sic of Paradise.

Selima, the daughter of a poor shep-
 herd, was drawing water at the wells
 of Asor, when a caravan arrived, and
 the driver of the camels alighted to
 give

give them drink:—Those which came first to the wells, belonged to Harazan the merchant. Selima, when the caravan drew near, had covered herself with her veil, which the slave of Harazan, to gratify his curiosity, attempted to withdraw. Harazan seeing the violence offered to Selima, called out for him to forbear, and himself hastened to the well.—The veil of Selima had fallen off in the struggle, and Harazan was captivated with her beauty. The lovely confusion of offended modesty—the disdain that swelled in her bosom—and the resentment that sparkled in her eyes, expressed a consciousness of her sex, which warmed and animated her beauty. They were graces which he had never seen—and caused a tumult in his breast he had never before felt:—For Hara-

zan, though he had large possessions, was yet a youth, and a stranger to woman. The merchandize which he was transporting had been purchased by his father, whom the angel of Death had intercepted in the journey—and the sudden occasion of independency and wealth did not dispose him to restrain the impetuosity of Love

Harazan demanded the beautiful Selma of her parents—his message was received with gratitude and joy—and Harazan, after a short stay, carried her back to Egypt, having first punished his slave for his audacity.

Harazan delayed the solemnities of marriage, till the time of mourning should expire—he anticipated the happiness

piners which he believed to be secured, and supposed that it would increase by expectation, like a treasure by usury, of which more is still possessed, as possession is the longer delayed.

In this interval, Selima, recovered from the tumultuous joy of sudden elevation—her ambition was satiated—and her soul, became susceptible of Love. Harazan, regretted the obscurity of her birth only, because it had precluded the cultivation of her mind. However, he laboured attentively to supply the defect as much as possible. His instructions were received not only with gratitude, but with delight. While he spoke, Selima gazed upon him with esteem and love, and had no wish but to return

return the happiness which he was so impatient to bestow.

Bozaldab, the Caliph, was then upon the throne of Egypt. The passions of Bozaldab were impetuous as the torrents of Redala—and fatal as the whirlwind of the desert. To excite and gratify—still unsatisfied—and his life was wretched. The seraglio was filled with beauty—yet he was outrageous to revive desire by new objects, which he demanded of Hufsan the eunuch. Hufsan, therefore, caused a proclamation to be made, that whoever should produce the most beautiful virgin within two days, should stand in the presence of the great Caliph, and be deemed the third in his kingdom.

Dalca;

Dalca, the slave of Harazan, from the fullen ferocity of his temper, and prompted by revenge, when he heard the proclamation, a joy kindled in his aspect, like lightning in the darkness of a storm.

He knew that Selima was still a virgin, and that her marriage was very near. Dalca, the slave, hasted to the palace, and demanded to be brought before Hufsan the eunuch, who in the midst of magnificence and servility,—the flattery of dependant ambition—and the zeal of unlimited obedience, was sitting pale and silent—his brow contracted with anxiety—and his breast throbbing with apprehension.

When

When Dalca was brought into his presence, he fell prostrate before him.—

“ By the smile of my lord, let another
 “ be distinguished from the slaves who
 “ mingle in obscurity, and let his fa-
 “ your elevate another from the dust:
 “ But let my service be accepted, and
 “ let the desire of the mighty Caliph
 “ be satisfied with beauty. Selima
 “ will shortly be espoused by Harazan,
 “ —but of Selima, the sovereign of
 “ Egypt only is worthy Haste, my
 “ Lord, to demand her—she is now
 “ with him in the house, to which I
 “ will conduct the messenger of thy
 “ will.”

Hassan, the eunuch, heard Dalca with transports of joy.—a mandate was instantly written to Harazan.—it was sealed

sealed with the royal signet, and delivered to Dalca, who returned with a guard sufficient to compel obedience.

The mourning of Harazan expired that very day—he had changed his apparel, and perfumed his person—his features were brightened with love and rapture:—he invited his friends to the festival of his marriage—and the evening was devoted to the accomplishment of his wishes. The coming day was also expected by Selima with a joy she laboured not to suppress—and she was hiding her blushes in the bosom of Harazan, when Dalca arrived with the mandate and guard.

The domestics were alarmed and terrified—and Harazan, being instantly
in-

informed of the event, rushed out of the apartment of Selima with disorder and a distracted countenance. When he saw Dalca, his slave, he boiled with anger and disdain, but was intimidated by the appearance of the guards. Dalca, with looks of insolence and triumph, presented the mandate: Harazan seeing the royal signet, kneeled to receive it; and having gazed a moment on the superscription, pressed it upon his forehead in an agony of suspense and terror.—

The wretch Dalca, who had betray'd him, enjoyed the anguish which he suffered, and perceiving that he was fainting, and had not the fortitude to read it, informed him of the contents. At the name of Selima he started, as if
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he had felt the sting of a scorpion, and immediately he fell lifeless to the ground.

Dalca, the slave, proceeded to execute the commission without remorse,—he was not to be moved by the almost expiring Harazan—nor by expostulation, entreaty, or tears. He conducted Selima to the seraglio, and presented her to Hassan with exultation and hope.

Hassan, whose wish was flattered by her stature and her shape, lifted up the veil with impatience, timidity, and solicitude—but the moment he beheld her face, his doubts instantly vanished. Hassan fell prostrate at her feet, as a person on whose pleasures his life would from that moment depend. Selima was conducted

conducted to the apartments of the women—and Dalca was the same hour invested with his new dignity. Apartments were assigned him in the palace, and he was made captain of the guard that kept the gates of the seraglio.

Harazan, when he had recovered his great sensibility, and found that Selima had been conducted to the seraglio, was seized by turns with distraction and stupidity. He passed the night in dreadful agitations, by which the powers of nature were exhausted. In the morning he locked himself into the apartment of his beloved Selima, and threw himself on a sofa, determining to admit no comforter—nor to receive any sustenance whatever.

While

While Harazan was abandoned to despair, Haffan's description of Selima had roused the Caliph from his apathy. He commanded that Selima should be prepared to receive him, — and soon after went alone into her apartment. Familiar as Bozaldab was with beauty, he could not behold Selima without emotion. He perceived her in tears — and that his presence covered her with confusion — yet he believed that her terrors would vanish — and that by kindness she might be soothed to familiarity and pleasure.

The moment he approached her, she threw herself at his feet, and intreated to be heard, with an importunity which he chose rather to indulge than resist, —
he

he raised her from the ground, and encouraged her to proceed.

“ Let the great and mighty Caliph
 “ of Egypt dismiss a wretch who is
 “ not worthy of his presence — and
 “ compassionate the distress which is
 “ not susceptible of delight. I am the
 “ daughter of a poor shepherd, betrothed
 “ to the Merchant Harazan — from whom
 “ I have been forced by the perfidy of a
 “ slave, — and to whom my soul is united
 “ by bonds indissoluble. O ! let not
 “ the terror of thy frown be upon me ! —
 “ Shall the sovereign of Egypt stoop to
 “ a reptile of the dust ? Shall the
 “ judge of nations retain the worthless
 “ theft of treachery and revenge ? Or
 “ shall he, for whom ten thousands
 “ languish

“ languish with’ desire, rejoice in the
“ sufferance of one alienated mind ?”

The Caliph, whose breast had by turns been inflamed with desire and indignation, while he gazed upon the beauties of Selima — listened to her voice — but with a frown of terror he left the apartment without reply.

The Caliph for some moments after remained in suspense, — but the passions which eloquence had repressed, soon became predominant, — and he commanded Selima to be told, that if within three hours she did not prepare to gratify his wishes, he would cast the head of her beloved Harazan at her feet.

Hassana

Haffan by whom the message was delivered, and her female attendants, were touched with pity at her distress, and trembled at her eminent danger. The evils which they could not scarce hope to prevent, they were solicitous to delay—and therefore, advised her, to request three days of preparation, that she might recover the tranquility of her mind, to make a just estimate of her own happiness. They requested her to send, as a pledge of her obedience, a bowl of sherbet, in which a pearl had been dissolved, and of which she had first drank herself.

To this advice, after some throws of desperation, she at length consented, and prepared to put it into execution.

The

The same moment of time, Harazan suddenly started from a restless slumber—he was again stung with an instantaneous reflection upon his own misery—and indulged the discontent of his mind in this exclamation :

“ If wisdom and goodness do indeed
 “ preside over the works of *Omnipo-*
 “ *tence*, where is oppression, injustice,
 “ and cruelty ? As Harazan alone
 “ has a right to Selima, Why is Selima
 “ in the power of the tyrant ? O ! that
 “ now the justice of heaven would ap-
 “ pear in my behalf ! O ! that from
 “ this hour I was the Caliph of Egypt !
 “ —and he Harazan !”

The instant the wish was pronounced,
 his chamber was darkened as with a
 thick

thick cloud, which at length dissipated by a burst of thunder,—and a being, whose appearance was more than human, stood before him.

“ Harazan,” said the aerial visitant,
 “ I am one of the region above thee—
 “ but my business is with the children
 “ of the earth. Thou hast wished to
 “ be the Caliph of Egypt, and as far as
 “ this wish is possible, it shall be ac-
 “ complished :—Thou shalt assume his
 “ appearance, and exercise his power.
 “ I know not yet whether I am per-
 “ mitted to conceal thy sovereign under
 “ the appearance of Harazan,— but
 “ ’till to-morrow he shall not interrupt
 “ thee.”

Harazan;

Harazan, who remained motionless with astonishment and terror, now recovered his fortitude as in the presence of a friend—and was about to express his gratitude and joy, when the genius bound a talisman on his left arm, and acquainted him with its power.

“As often as this bracelet shall be applied to the region of thy heart,— thou shalt be alternately changed in appearance from Harazan to the Caliph—and from the Caliph to Harazan.”

The genius then disappeared, — and Harazan, impatient to recover the possession of Selima, instantly applied the stud of the bracelet to his breast, and

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that

that moment found himself alone in the apartment of the seraglio.

In the interval, the Caliph, who was expecting the issue of his message to Selima, became restless and impatient,—he quitted his apartment, and went into the gardens.—frowning and pensive he fixed his eyes on the clear surface of a fountain in the middle of the walk. The agitation of his mind continued—and at length broke out into this soliloquy:

“ What is my felicity ? And what
“ is my power ? I am wretched by
“ the want of that which the caprice of
“ a woman has bestowed on my slave.
“ I can withhold felicity from him—
“ but I cannot procure it myself.
“ Why

“ Why have I not power to assume the
 “ form in which I might enjoy my
 “ wishes?—I will at least enjoy them
 “ in thought. If I was Harazan, I
 “ should be clasped with transport to
 “ the bosom of Selima.”

The Caliph then resigned himself to the power of imagination—and remained silent. But the moment his wish was uttered, he became subject to the genius, who had just transported Harazan to his palace. This wish was instantly fulfilled,—and his eyes being still fixed upon the water, he perceived with sudden wonder and delight, that his figure had been changed in an instant,—and that the mirror reflected another image. The Caliph hastened to the palace, without reflecting that as

he would not be known, he would be refused admittance. At the door to which he advanced with eagerness and precipitation, he was stopped by a party of the guard that was commanded by Dalca :—A tumult ensued—and Dalca being hastily called, believed that Harazan, in the phrenzy of desparation, had scaled the walls of the garden to recover his Selima,—and rejoicing in an opportunity of revenge that exceeded his fondest hope, instantly stabbed him with a poignard,—but at the same time received that of the Caliph in his heart.

Thus fell at once the tyrant and the traitor. The tyrant by the hand which had been armed to support him in oppression—and the the traitor by the
 fury

fury of the appetite which his perfidy had excited.

In the mean time, the man, who was believed to be slain, reposed in security upon a sofa,—and Selima, by the direction of her women, had prepared the message and the bowl. They were now dispatched to the Caliph, and received by Harazan. He understood by the message that his Selima was yet inviolate.—In the joy of his heart he took the bowl—which having emptied, he commanded that Selima should be conducted to his presence.

Selima was conducted, but entered alone pale and trembling—and though

her lips were forced into a smile, the characters of grief, dread, and aversion, were strongly impressed in her countenance. Harazan, who beheld her disorder, exulted in the fidelity of her love—and springing forward, threw his arms about her in an extasy of tenderness and joy—which was still heightened when he perceived, that in the character of his sovereign, those embraces were suffered with reluctance, which in his own were returned with ardour. Harazan, retiring a few paces, applied the talisman again to his breast—and having recovered his own form, would have rushed into her arms—but she started from him in confusion and terror. Harazan smiled at the effect of the prodigy—and sustaining her to his bosom, repeated some tender

der

der incidents which were known to no other—told her by what means he had intercepted the message—and urged her immediately to escape, that they might be happy—and leave the incumbrance of loyalty to the wretch whose likeness he had been enabled to assume. Selima gazed at him with a fixed attention, till her doubts and suspicion were removed——then suddenly turned from him—tore her garment—and looking up to heaven, imprecated curses upon her head, till her voice faltered, and she burst into a flood of tears.

The agony of Selima, Harazan beheld with unutterable distress:—and in broken exclamations she informed him of the cause.

“ In the bowl, which thou hast
“ intercepted, there was death. I
“ wished when I took it from my lips,
“ that the draught which remained
“ might be poison—a powder was
“ immediately shaken into it by an in-
“ visible hand, and a voice whispered
“ me, that he who drank the potion it
“ would inevitably destroy.”

Harazan, to whose heart the fatal malignity had now spread, perceived that his dissolution would be sudden;—his legs already trembled—his eyes became dim—he stretched out his arms towards his beloved—his countenance was distorted—impenetrable darkness came upon him—he groaned and fell to the earth. In his fall the talisman again smote his breast—his form was
again

again changed — and the honors of death were impressed upon the features of the Caliph.

Selima ran to support her expiring Lord—but when she perceived the last transformation, she rushed out of the apartment with the wild impetuosity of distraction, and despair. The 'seraglio was alarmed in a moment,—the body which was mistaken for that of the Caliph, was examined by the Physicians—the effects of poison were evident.—Selima was immediately suspected—and by the command of Omardon, who succeeded his father, Selima was put instantly to death.

Thus was the end of Harazan and Selima—the Caliph and Dalca—from whose

whose destiny I have withdrawn the veil. Let man consider it and be wise, —be thou the messenger of instruction —and let increase of knowledge cloath thee with humility.

While mine eyes were fastened on the hoary fage, who had thus vouchsafed me counsel and knowledge, his countenance became bright as the morning, and his robe fleecy like a cloud—he rose like a vapour from the earth, and the next moment I saw him no more.

I then turned to the hermit Mirza, chilled with reverence, and dumb with astonishment :—but in the countenance of Mirza was the calm cheerfulness of superior virtue—and I perceived that
the

the sanctity of his life had familiarized him to divine intelligence.

“ *Hamet Hassan, the voice which*
 “ *thou hast heard, is the voice of Zamir*
 “ *the genius—by whose power the won-*
 “ *ders which he has related were*
 “ *produced. 'TIS HIS PROVINCE TO*
 “ *PUNISH IMPATIENCE AND PRESUMP-*
 “ *TION, by FULFILLING THE DECREES*
 “ *OF THOSE who WISH to interrupt the*
 “ *order of nature, and presume to direct*
 “ *the HAND of ETERNAL PROVI-*
 “ *DENCE. Relate what thou hast*
 “ *heard, to preserve others from his*
 “ *power.”*

Let virtue suffer with patience—and
vice dread to incur the misery she would
inflict :

inflict:—For by him who murmurs at the will of heaven, his own portion of good is diminished,—and he who presumptuously assumes the sword, will turn the point upon his own bosom.

END of the First Volume.

