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*The History of Nourjahad*



SCHEMZEDDIN\* was in his two and twentieth year when he mounted the throne of Persia. His great wisdom and extraordinary endowments rendered him the delight of his people, and filled them with expectations of a glorious and happy reign. Amongst the number of persons who stood candidates for the young sultan's favour, in the new administration, which was now going to take place, none seemed so likely to succeed, as Nourjahad the son of Namarand. This young man was about the age of Schemzeddin, and had been bred up with him from his infancy. To a very engaging person was added a sweetness of temper, a liveliness of fancy, and a certain agreeable manner of address, that engaged every one's affections who approached him. The sultan loved him, and every one looked on Nourjahad as the rising star of the Persian court, whom his master's partial fondness would elevate to the highest pinnacle of honour. Schemzeddin indeed was desirous of promoting his favourite, yet notwithstanding his attachment to him, he was not blind to his faults; but they appeared to him only such as are almost inseparable from youth and inexperience; and he made no doubt but that Nourjahad, when time had a little more subdued his youthful passions, and matured his judgment, would be able to fill the place of his first minister, with abilities equal to any of his predecessors. He would not, however, even in his own private thoughts, resolve on so important a step, without first consulting with some old lords of his court, who had been the constant friends and counsellors of the late sultan his father. Accordingly having called them into his closet one day, he proposed the matter to them, and



desired their opinion. But before they delivered it, he could easily discover by the countenances of these grave and prudent men, that they disapproved his choice. What have you to object to Nourjahad, said the sultan, finding that they all continued silent, looking at each other? His youth, replied the eldest of the counsellors. That objection, answered Schemzeddin, will grow lighter every day. His avarice, cried the second. Thou art not just, said the sultan, in charging him with that; he has no support but from my bounty, nor did he ever yet take advantage of that interest which he knows he has in me, to desire an encrease of it. What I have charged him with, is in his nature notwithstanding, replied the old lord. What hast thou to urge, cried the sultan, to his third adviser? His love of pleasure, answered he. That, cried Schemzeddin, is as groundless an accusation as the other; I have known him from his childhood, and think few men of his years are so temperate. Yet would he indulge to excess, if it were in his power, replied the old man. The sultan now addressed the fourth: What fault hast thou to object to him, cried he? His irreligion, answered the sage. Thou art even more severe, replied the sultan, than the rest of thy brethren, and I believe Nourjahad as good a Mussulman\* as thyself. He dismissed them coldly from his closet; and the four counsellors saw how impolitic a thing it was to oppose the will of their sovereign.

Though Schemzeddin seemed displeased with the remonstrances of the old men, they nevertheless had some weight with him. It is the interest of Nourjahad, said he, to conceal his faults from me; the age and experience of these men doubtless has furnished them with more sagacity than my youth can boast of; and he may be in reality what they have represented him. This thought disquieted the sultan, for he loved Nourjahad as his brother. Yet who knows, cried he, but it may be envy in these old men? they may be provoked at having a youth raised to that honour to which each of

them perhaps in his own heart aspires. We can sometimes form a better judgment of a man's real disposition, from an unguarded sally of his own lips, than from a close observation of years, where the person, conscious of being observed, is watchful and cautious of every look and expression that falls from him. I will sound Nourjahad when he least suspects that I have any such design, and from his own mouth will I judge him.

It was not long before the sultan had an opportunity of executing his purpose. Having past the evening with his favourite at a banquet, where they had both indulged pretty freely, he invited Nourjahad to a walk by moon-light in the gardens of the seraglio.\* Schemzeddin leaned on his shoulder as they rambled from one delicious scene to another; scenes rendered still more enchanting by the silence of the night, the mild lustre of the moon now at full, and the exhalations which arose from a thousand odoriferous shrubs. The spirits of Nourjahad were exhilarated by the mirth and festivity in which he had passed the day. The sultan's favour intoxicated him; his thoughts were dissipated by a variety of agreeable sensations, and his whole soul as it were rapt in a kind of pleasing delirium. Such was the frame of Nourjahad's mind, when the sultan, with an assumed levity, throwing himself down on a bank of violets,\* and familiarly drawing his favourite to sit by him, said, *Tell me, Nourjahad, and tell me truly, what would satisfy thy wishes, if thou wert certain of possessing whatsoever thou shouldst desire?* Nourjahad remaining silent for some time, the sultan, smiling, repeated his question. My wishes, answered the favourite, are so boundless, that it is impossible for me to tell you directly; but in two words, I should desire to be possessed of inexhaustible riches, and to enable me to enjoy them to the utmost, to have my life prolonged to eternity. Wouldst thou then, said Schemzeddin, forego thy hopes of paradise? I would, answered the favourite,



make a paradise of this earthly globe, whilst it lasted, and take my chance for the other afterwards.

The sultan, at hearing these words, started up from his seat, and knitting his brow, Be gone, said he, sternly, thou art no longer worthy of my love or my confidence: I thought to have promoted thee to the highest honours, but such a wretch does not deserve to live. Ambition, though a vice, is yet the vice of great minds; but avarice, and an insatiable thirst for pleasure, degrades a man below the brutes.

Saying this, he turned his back on Nourjahad, and was about to leave him; when the favourite catching him by the robe, and falling on his knees, Let not my lord's indignation, said he, be kindled against his slave, for a few light words, which fell from him only in sport: I swear to thee, my prince, by our holy prophet,\* that what I said is far from being the sentiments of my heart; my desire for wealth extends not farther than to be enabled to procure the sober enjoyments of life; and for length of years, let not mine be prolonged a day, beyond that, in which I can be serviceable to my prince and my country.

It is not, replied the sultan, with a mildness chastened with gravity, it is not for mortal eyes to penetrate into the close recesses of the human heart; thou hast attested thy innocence by an oath; it is all that can be required from man to man; but remember thou hast called our great prophet to witness; him thou canst not deceive, though me thou mayest.

Schemzeddin left him without waiting for his reply; and Nourjahad, exceedingly mortified that his unguarded declaration had so much lessened him in his master's esteem, retired to his own house, which immediately joined the sultan's palace.

He passed the rest of the night in traversing his chamber, being unable to take any rest. He dreaded the thoughts of losing the sultan's favour, on which alone he depended for his future advancement; and tormenting himself all night

with apprehensions of his disgrace, he found himself so indisposed in the morning, that he was unable to leave his chamber. He spent the day in gloomy reflections without suffering any one to come near him, or taking any repast: and when night came, wearied with painful thoughts, and want of sleep, he threw himself on his bed. But his slumbers were disturbed by perplexing dreams. What had been the subject of his anxiety when awake, served now to imberter and distract his rest: his fancy represented the sultan to him as he had last seen him in the garden, his looks severe, and his words menacing. 'Go wretch,' he thought he heard him cry, go seek thy bread in a remote country, thou hast nothing to expect from me but contempt.'

Nourjahad awoke in agonies: Oh heaven, cried he aloud, that I could now inherit the secret wish I was fool enough to disclose to thee, how little should I regard thy threats! And thou shalt, Oh Nourjahad, replied a voice, possess the utmost wishes of thy soul! Nourjahad started up in his bed, and rubbed his eyes, doubting whether he was really awake, or whether it was not his troubled imagination which cheated him with this delusive promise; when behold! to his unutterable astonishment, he saw a refulgent light in his chamber, and at his bed's side stood a youth of more than mortal beauty. The lustre of his white robes dazzled his eyes; his long and shining hair was incircled with a wreath of flowers that breathed the odours of paradise.

Nourjahad gazed at him, but had not power to open his mouth. Be not afraid, said the divine youth, with a voice of ineffable sweetness; I am thy guardian genius,\* who have carefully watched over thee from thy infancy, though never till this hour have I been permitted to make myself visible to thee. I was present at thy conversation in the garden with Schemzeddin, I was a witness to thy unguarded declaration, but found thee afterwards awed by his frowns to retract what thou hadst said: I saw too the rigour of the sultan's looks as he departed from thee, and know that they



proceeded from his doubting thy truth. I, though an immortal spirit, am not omniscient; to God only are the secrets of the heart revealed; speak boldly then, thou highly favoured of our prophet, and know that I have power from Mahomet to grant thy request, be it what it will. Wouldst thou be restored to the favour and confidence of thy master, and receive from his friendship and generosity the reward of thy long attachment to him, or dost thou really desire the accomplishment of that extravagant wish, which thou didst in the openness of thy heart avow to him last night?

Nourjahad, a little recovered from his amazement, and encouraged by the condescension of his celestial visitant, bowed his head low in token of adoration.

Disguise to thee, Oh son of paradise, replied he, were vain and fruitless; if I dissembled to Schemzeddin it was in order to reinstate myself in his good opinion, the only means in my power to secure my future prospects: from thee I can have no reason to conceal my thoughts; and since the care of my happiness is consigned to thee my guardian angel; let me possess that wish, extravagant as it may seem, which I first declared.

Rash mortal, replied the shining vision, reflect once more, before you receive the fatal boon; for once granted, you will wish perhaps, and wish in vain, to have it recalled. What have I to fear, answered Nourjahad, possessed of endless riches and of immortality? Your own passions, said the heavenly youth. I will submit to all the evils arising from them, replied Nourjahad, give me but the power of gratifying them in their full extent. Take thy wish then, cried the genius, with a look of discontent. The contents of this viol will confer immortality on thee, and to-morrow's sun shall behold thee richer than all the kings of the East. Nourjahad stretched his hands out eagerly to receive a vessel of gold, enriched with precious stones, which the angel took from under his mantle. Stop, cried the aerial being, and hear the condition, with which thou must accept

the wondrous gift I am now about to bestow. Know then, that your existence here shall equal the date of this sublunary globe; yet to enjoy life all that while, is not in my power to grant. Nourjahad was going to interrupt the celestial, to desire him to explain this, when he prevented him, by proceeding thus: Your life, said he, will be frequently interrupted by the temporary death of sleep. Doubtless, replied Nourjahad, nature would languish without that sovereign balm. Thou misunderstandest me, cried the genius; I do not mean that ordinary repose which nature requires: The sleep thou must be subject to, at certain periods, will last for months, years, nay, for a whole revolution of Saturn at a time, or perhaps for a century. Frightful! cried Nourjahad, with an emotion that made him forget the respect which was due to the presence of his guardian angel. He seemed suspended, while the radiant youth proceeded; It is worth considering, resolve not too hastily. If the frame of man, replied Nourjahad, in the usual course of things, requires for the support of that short span of life which is allotted to him, a constant and regular portion of sleep, which includes at least one third of his existence; my life, perhaps, stretched so much beyond its natural date, may require a still greater proportion of rest, to preserve my body in due health and vigour. If this be the case, I submit to the conditions; for what is thirty or fifty years out of eternity? Thou art mistaken, replied the genius; and though thy reasoning is not unphilosophical, yet is it far from reaching the true cause of these mysterious conditions which are offered thee; know that these are contingencies which depend entirely on thyself. Let me beseech you, said Nourjahad, to explain this. If thou walkest, said the genius, in the paths of virtue, thy days will be crowned with gladness, and the even tenor of thy life undisturbed by any evil; but if, on the contrary, thou pervertest the good which is in thy power, and settest thy heart on iniquity, thou wilt thus be occasionally punished



by a total privation of thy faculties. If this be all, cried Nourjahad, then am I sure I shall never incur the penalty; for though I mean to enjoy all the pleasures that life can bestow, yet am I a stranger to my own heart, if it ever lead me to the wilful commission of a crime. The genius sighed. Vouchsafe then, proceeded Nourjahad, vouchsafe, I conjure you, most adorable and benign spirit, to fulfil your promise, and keep me not longer in suspence. Saying this, he again reached forth his hand for the golden vessel, which the genius no longer with-held from him. Hold thy nostrils over that viol, said he, and let the fumes of the liquor which it contains ascend to thy brain. Nourjahad opened the vessel, out of which a vapour issued of a most exquisite fragrance; it formed a thick atmosphere about his head, and sent out such volatile and sharp effluvia, as made his eyes smart exceedingly, and he was obliged to shut them whilst he snuffed up the essence. He remained not long in this situation, for the subtle spirit quickly evaporating, the effects instantly ceased, and he opened his eyes; but the apparition was vanished, and his apartment in total darkness. Had not he still found the viol in his hands, which contained the precious liquor, he would have looked on all this as a dream; but so substantial a proof of the reality of what had happened, leaving no room for doubts, he returned thanks to his guardian genius, whom he concluded, though invisible, to be still within hearing, and putting the golden vessel under his pillow, filled as he was with the most delightful ideas, composed himself to sleep.

The sun was at his meridian height when he awoke next day; and the vision of the preceding night immediately recurring to his memory, he sprung hastily from his bed; but how great was his surprize, how high his transports, at seeing the accomplishment of the genius's promise! His chamber was surrounded with several large urns of polished brass, some of which were filled with gold coin of different

value and impressions; others with ingots of fine gold; and others with precious stones of prodigious size and lustre.

Amazed, enraptured at the sight, he greedily examined his treasures, and looking into each of the urns one after the other, in one of them he found a scroll of paper, with these words written on it.

'I have fulfilled my promise to thee, Oh Nourjahad. Thy days are without number, thy riches inexhaustible, yet cannot I exempt thee from the evils to which all the sons of Adam are subject. I cannot screen thee from the machinations of envy, nor the rapaciousness of power: thy own prudence must henceforth be thy guard. There is a subterraneous cave in thy garden where thou mayst conceal thy treasure: I have marked the place, and thou wilt easily find it. Farewel, my charge is at an end.'

And well hast thou acquitted thyself of this charge, most munificent and benevolent genius, cried Nourjahad; ten thousand thanks to thee for this last friendly warning; I should be a fool indeed if I had not sagacity enough to preserve myself against rapaciousness or envy; I will prevent the effects of the first, by concealing thee, my precious treasure, thou source of all felicity, where no mortal shall discover thee; and for the other, my bounty shall disarm it of its sting. Enjoy thyself, Nourjahad, riot in luxurious delights, and laugh at Schemzeddin's impotent resentment.

He hastened down into his garden, in order to find the cave, of which he was not long in search. In a remote corner, stood the ruins of a small temple, which in former days, before the true religion prevailed in Persia, had been dedicated to the worship of the Gentiles.\* The vestiges of this little building were so curious, that they were suffered to remain, as an ornament, where they stood. It was raised on a mount, and according to the custom of idolaters, surrounded with shady trees. On a branch of one of these, Nourjahad perceived hanging a scarf of fine white taffety,\* to which was suspended a large key of burnished steel.



Nourjahad's eager curiosity, soon rendered his diligence successful, in finding the door, to which this belonged; it was within-side the walls of the temple, and under what formerly seemed to have been the altar. He descended by a few steps into a pretty spacious cavern, and by groping about, for there was scarce any light, he judged it large enough to contain his treasures.

Whether his guardian genius had contrived it purely for his use, or whether it had been originally made for some other purpose, he did not trouble himself to enquire; but glad to have found so safe a place, in which to deposite his wealth, he returned to his house; and having given orders that no visitors should approach him, he shut himself up in his chamber for the rest of the day, in order to contemplate his own happiness, and without interruption, to lay down plans of various pleasures and delights for ages to come.

Whilst Nourjahad was rich only in speculation, he really thought that he should be able to keep his word with the genius. That the employing his wealth to noble and generous purposes, would have constituted great part of his happiness; and that without plunging into guilt, he could have gratified the utmost of his wishes. But he soon found that his heart had deceived him, and that there is a wide difference between the fancied and actual possession of wealth. He was immediately absorbed in selfishness, and thought of nothing but the indulgence of his own appetites. My temper, said he, as he lay stretched at length on a sofa, does not much incline me to take any trouble; I shall therefore never aspire at high employments, nor would I be the sultan of Persia, if I might; for what addition would that make to my happiness? None at all; it would only disturb my breast with cares, from which I am now exempt. And which of the real, substantial delights of life, could I then possess, that are not now within my power? I will have a magnificent house in town, and others in the country, with delicious parks and gardens. What does it signify

whether or not they are dignified with the names of palaces? or whether I am attended by princes or slaves? The latter will do my business as well, and be more subservient to my will. There are three particulars indeed, in which I will exceed my master. In the beauties of my seraglio; the delicacies of my table; and the excellence of my musicians. In the former of these especially, King Solomon himself shall be outdone.\* All parts of the earth shall be explored for women of the most exquisite beauty; art and nature shall combine their utmost efforts, to furnish the boundless variety and elegance of my repasts; the sultan's frigid temperance shall not be a pattern to me. Then no fear of surfeits; I may riot to excess, and bid defiance to death. Here he started, on recollection that he had not requested the genius to secure him against the attacks of pain or sickness. I shall not however be impaired by age, said he, and this too perhaps is included in his gift. But no matter; since I cannot die, a little temporary pain will make me the more relish my returning health. Then, added he, I will enjoy the charms of music in its utmost perfection. I will have the universe searched for performers of both sexes, whose exquisite skill both in instrumental and vocal harmony, shall ravish all hearts. I shall see the line of my posterity past numeration, and all the while enjoy a constant succession of new delights. What more is there wanting to consummate happiness, and who would ever wish to change such an existence, for one of which we are entirely ignorant? Here he paused. But are there not, he proceeded, some things called intellectual pleasures? Such as Schemzeddin used to talk of to me, and for which, when I was poor, I fancied I had a sort of relish. They may have their charms, and we will not leave them quite out of our plan. I will certainly do abundance of good; besides, I will retain in my family half a score of wise and learned men, to entertain my leisure hours with their discourse. Then when I am weary of living in this country, I will set out with some chosen



companions to make a tour through the whole earth. There shall not be a spot of the habitable world, which contains any thing worthy of my curiosity, that I will not visit; residing longest in those places which I like best: and by this means I may pass through two or three centuries, even before I have exhausted the variety of my prospects: after that I must content myself with such local enjoyments, as may fall in my way.

With such thoughts as these he entertained himself, waiting for the hour when his slaves should be retired to rest, as he had resolved to take that opportunity of burying his treasure.

He had tried the weight of the urns one by one; those which contained the gold he found so extremely heavy that it was impossible for him to lift them. Those which held the jewels, he could easily carry. Accordingly, when every one in his house was asleep, he loaded himself with his pleasing burdens; and having from each of the repositories which held the gold, filled several large purses for his immediate expences, he conveyed the rest by many journeys to and from the cave, all safe to his subterranean treasury; where having locked them up securely, he retired to his apartment, and went to bed.

For the three succeeding days his thoughts were so perplexed and divided, that he knew not which of his favourite schemes he should first enter upon. Satisfied with having the means in his power, he neglected those ends for which he was so desirous of them. Shall I, said he, purchase or set about building for myself a magnificent palace? Shall I dispatch emissaries in search of the most beautiful virgins that can be obtained? and others, at the same time, to procure for me the rarest musicians? My household, meanwhile, may be established, and put on a footing suitable to the grandeur in which I purpose to live. I will directly hire a number of domestics, amongst which shall be a dozen of the best cooks in Persia, that my table at least may be

immediately better supplied than that of the sultan. I am bewildered with such a multiplicity of business, and must find out some person, who, without giving me any trouble, will undertake to regulate the œconomy of all my domestic concerns.

In these thoughts he was so immersed, that he entirely forgot to pay his court to Schemzeddin; and without any other enjoyment of his riches, than the pleasure of thinking of them, he sat for whole days alone, alternately improving on, or rejecting, such systems of happiness as arose in his mind.

The sultan, mean time, offended at his absenting himself, without offering any excuse for it, especially as their last parting had been a cold one; was so disgusted at his behaviour, that he sent one of his officers to forbid him his presence, and charge him never more to appear at court. Tell him, however, said he, that I have not so far forgot my former friendship for him, as to see him want a decent support; that house, therefore, in which he now lives, I freely bestow on him; and shall moreover allow him a pension of a thousand crowns yearly.\* Bid him remember that this is sufficient to supply him with all the sober enjoyments of life. These being his favourite's own words, the sultan thought proper to remind him of them.

Nourjahad received this message with the utmost indifference; but without daring to shew any mark of disrespect. Tell my lord the sultan, said he, that I would not have been thus long without prostrating myself at his feet, but that I was hastily sent for to visit a kinsman, whose dwelling was some leagues from Ormuz;\* and who in his last hours was desirous of seeing me. He died very rich, and has made me his heir. The thousand crowns a year therefore, my royal master may please to bestow on some one who wants them more, and is more deserving of his bounty, than I; wretch that I am, to have forfeited my prince's favour! The house that his goodness bestows on me, with all gratitude I



her, she told them they were henceforth to obey me, as they had done her. Tell my lord, said she to me, that I forgive him the death which his cruelty inflicted on a woman who loved him to the latest minute of her life. In pronouncing these words, she expired.

I knew not till then, pursued Cozro, that thou hadst been the murderer of my sister; but she was no sooner dead, than the slaves informed me of the manner of her death. My resentment against thee was proportioned to the horror of thy guilt; and had I thrown myself at the feet of Schemzeddin, and implored justice on thy crimes, neither thy riches nor thy immortality would have availed thee, but thou wouldst have been condemned by a perpetual decree, to have languished out thy wretched existence in a vile dungeon.

And what hindered thee, cried Nourjahad, from pursuing thy revenge, seeing I was not in a condition to resist thee? My reverence for the oath I had taken, answered Cozro, and fear of offending the Almighty!

Nourjahad, at this reply, was struck with a secret awe which he could not repel; he remained silent whilst Cozro proceeded.

I obtained permission of the master whom I served, to leave him, and entered immediately on my new employment; but I found I had undertaken a difficult task. Thou hadst rendered thyself so odious to thy women, that not one of them retained the smallest degree of love or fidelity towards thee. In spite of my vigilance they made thy hated seraglio the scene of their unlawful pleasures; and at length having bribed the eunuchs who guarded them, they all in one night fled from thy detested walls, taking with them the slaves who had assisted them in their purpose. Pernicious spirit, exclaimed Nourjahad, are these the fruits I am to reap from thy fatal indulgence! The rest of your servants, pursued Cozro, I endeavoured to keep within the bounds of their duty. And how didst thou succeed, cried Nourja-

had? But ill, replied Cozro; they all declared that nothing could have induced them to stay so long with a master of so capricious and tyrannical a humour, but the luxury and idleness in which thou permittedst them to live; and finding I managed your affairs with economy, they one after the other left your house; neither promises nor threats having power to prevent those who stayed longest in thy service, from following the example of the first who deserted thee; so that I alone of all thy numerous household have remained faithful to thee: I, who of all others, had the most reason to abhor thee! But I have now acquitted myself of the trust which was reposed in me, and I leave thee as one condemned to wander in an unknown land, where he is to seek out for new associates, and to endeavour by the power of gold, to bribe that regard from men, which his own worth cannot procure for him.

Unfortunate wretch that I am, cried Nourjahad, pierced to the quick with what he had just been told, what benefit have I hitherto received from my long life, but that of feeling by miserable experience, the ingratitude and frailty of man's nature. How transitory have been all my pleasures! the recollection of them dies on my memory, like the departing colours of the rainbow, which fades under the eye of the beholder, and leaves not a trace behind. Whilst on the other hand, every affliction with which I have been visited, has imprinted a deep and lasting wound on my heart, which not even the hand of time itself has been able to heal.

What have thy misfortunes been, said Cozro, that are not common to all the race of man? Oh, I have had innumerable griefs, said Nourjahad. After a short enjoyment (during my fatal slumbers) the grave robbed me of Mandana, whilst she was yet in the bloom of youth and beauty. I lamented her death, tears and heaviness of heart were my portion for many days. Yet remembering that sorrow would not recall the dead, I suffered myself to be comforted, and sought for



consolation in the society of my other women, and the fond and innocent caresses of an infant son, whom Mandana left me. Joy and tranquillity revisited my dwelling, and new pleasures courted my acceptance; but they again eluded my grasp, and in one night (for so it appeared to me) my son like an unnatural viper, forgetting all my tenderness, plundered and deserted me. The two faithful friends in whom I most confided, had closed their eyes for ever; and the beauties of my seraglio, whom I had last beheld fresh and charming as the lillies of the field, I now saw deformed with wrinkles and bending under the infirmities of age.

Yet these afflictions I surmounted; and resolved once more to be happy. And wert thou so, interrupted Cozro? No, replied Nourjahad, the treacherous joys deceived me; yet I still looked forward with hope, but now awake to fresh disappointment. I find myself abandoned by those whose false professions of love had lulled me into security, and I rouse myself like a savage beast in the desert, whose paths are shunned by all the children of men.

Nourjahad could not conclude this speech without a groan, that seemed to rend his heart.

As thou art, said Cozro, exempt from punishment hereafter, dost thou think also to escape the miseries of this life? Mistaken man, know, that the righteous Being, whose ordinances thou defiest, will even here take vengeance on thy crimes. And if thou wilt look back on thy past life, thou wilt find (for I have heard thy story) that every one of those several ills of which thou complainest, were sent as scourges to remind thee of thy duty, and inflicted immediately after the commission of some notorious breach of it.

The death of Mandana was preceded by a brutal fit of drunkenness, by which, contrary to the laws of our prophet, thou sufferedst thyself to be overtaken. Then it was thy good genius, to punish thee, plunged thee into that temporary death, from which thou didst awake to grief and disappointment: But thou madest no use of the admonition,

but didst permit thyself to be again swallowed up by intemperance; and not content to tread the ordinary paths of vice, thou turnedst out of the road, to the commission of a crime, to which thou couldst have no temptation, but the pride and licentiousness of thy heart. Thy profanation of our holy religion, in presuming to personate our great prophet, and make thy concubines represent the virgins of paradise, was immediately chastised as it deserved, by a second time depriving thee of those faculties, which thou didst prostitute to such vile purposes.

The ills with which thou foundest thyself surrounded on awaking from thy trance, served to no other purpose than to stir up thy resentment against the power who governed thy life. And instead of reforming thy wickedness, thou soughtest out new ways of rendering thyself still more obnoxious to the wrath of Heaven. In the wantonness of thy cruelty, thou stainedst thy hand in blood; and that same night, were thy eyelids sealed up by the avenging hand of thy watchful genius, and thy depraved senses consigned for twenty years to oblivion! See then, continued Cozro, if a life which is to be a continued round of crimes and punishments in alternate succession, is a gift worthy to be desired by a wise man? for assure thyself, Oh Nourjahad, that by the immutable laws of heaven one is to be a constant concomitant of the other, and that either in this world or the next, vice will meet its just reward.

Alas, replied Nourjahad, thou hast awakened in me a remorse of which I was never sensible before; I look back with shame on the detested use I have made of those extraordinary gifts vouchsafed me by my guardian spirit.

What shall I do, Oh Cozro, to expiate the offences I have committed? For though I have no dread of punishment hereafter, yet does that ætherial spark within, inspire me with such horror for my former crimes, that all the vain delights which this world can afford me, will not restore



my mind to peace, till by a series of good actions I have atoned for my past offences.

If thou art sincere in thy resolutions, replied Cozro, the means, thou knowest, are amply in thy power. Thy riches will enable thee to diffuse blessings amongst mankind, and thou wilt find more true luxury in that, than in all the gratifications wherewith thou hast indulged thy appetites.

It shall be so, replied Nourjahad; my treasures shall be open to thee, thou venerable old man, and do thou make it thy business to find out proper objects, whereon charity and benevolence may exert their utmost powers.

Enquire out every family in Ormuz whom calamity hath overtaken, and provided they did not bring on their distresses by their own wilful misconduct, restore them to prosperity. Seek out the helpless and the innocent; and by a timely supply of their wants, secure them against the attacks of poverty, or temptations of vice. Search for such as you think have talents which will render them useful to society; but who, for want of the goods of fortune, are condemned to obscurity; relieve their necessities, and enable them to answer the purposes for which nature designed them. Find out merit wherever it lies concealed, whether withheld from the light by diffidence, chained down and clogged by adversity, obscured by malice, or overborn by power; lift it up from the dust, and let it shine conspicuous to the world.

Glorious talk! cried Cozro; happy am I in being the chosen instrument of Nourjahad's bounty, and still more happy shall he be in seeing the accomplishment of his good designs.

We must not stop here, said Nourjahad; I will have hospitals built for the reception of the aged and the sick; and my tables shall be spread for the refreshment of the weary traveller. No virtuous action shall pass by me unrewarded, and no breach of the laws of temperance, justice, or mercy, shall escape unreprieved. My own example, so far

as it can influence, shall henceforth countenance the one, and discourage the other.

Blessed be the purpose of thy heart, said Cozro, and prosperous be the days of thy life!

Nourjahad now found the anxiety under which he had but a little before laboured, exceedingly relieved. My mind, said he, is much more at ease than it was; let us not delay to put our design in execution. I will lead you to the place where my treasure is concealed, which I never yet discovered to any one. Saying this, he took Cozro by the hand, and conducted him to the cave.

Thou seest here, said he, riches which can never be exhausted; thou mayest perceive that I have not yet sunk a third part of one of these urns which contain my wealth; yet have I with monstrous profusion lavished away immense sums. Five more such urns as these are yet untouched. Those six which thou seest on the right hand, contain wedges of the finest gold, which must be equal in value to the others. These six, which are ranged on the left, are filled with precious stones, whose worth must be inestimable: The wealth of Ormuz would not purchase a single handful. Judge then, my friend, if I need be sparing in my liberality.

Cozro expressed his astonishment at the sight of these wonders. If thou wouldst be advised by me, said he, thou wouldst secretly remove from Ormuz, and carry thy treasures with thee. Thou mayest deposit part of them in each of the different countries through which thou passest in thy progress all over the earth. By this means thou mayest have it in thy power to distribute with more ease thy bounty wherever thou goest; and be always provided with riches in what part soever of the world thou shalt chuse for a time to take up thy residence. Thy long abode in this city will draw observations on thee sooner or later; and thy person's not having undergone any change from length of time, will



bring on thee the suspicion of magic; for tradition will not fail to inform posterity of thy strange history.

You counsel well, replied Nourjahad; as I am now at liberty, I will retire from Ormuz. You, my dear Cozro, shall accompany me; your prudent counsel shall be my guide; and when I shall be deprived of you by death, I will still endeavour to follow your wise precepts.

Come, continued he, I am in haste to enter on my new course of life, let us both go into the city and try to find out proper objects on which to exert our charity. I shall pass without observation, and unknown, as few of my contemporaries can now be living, and I will not leave the country which gave me birth, without first making it feel the effects of that beneficence which thou hast awakened in my heart.

Deserving of praise as thou art, said Cozro, thou for the present must suppress thy ardor to do good; for though by the death of Schemzeddin thou art no longer a prisoner, thou art not nevertheless yet at liberty to leave thy house. Why not? answered Nourjahad, who is there now to prevent me?

The young sultan, replied Cozro, deeply afflicted for the death of his father, and out of a pious regard to his memory, has given strict commandment, that all his subjects should observe a solemn mourning for him, during the space of twenty days;\* in which time all the shops, and places of public resort (except the mosques) are to be shut up, and no business of any kind transacted; nor are any persons to be seen in the streets, excepting those who visit the sick, and the slaves who must necessarily be employed to carry provisions, on pain of the sultan's heavy displeasure.

This edict was published yesterday, and the people of Ormuz all love the memory of Schemzeddin, and the person of their present sultan too well, not to pay an exact obedience to it.

If so, said Nourjahad, I will not by my example encourage others to infringe their duty; yet as the relieving of the

poor is in itself meritorious, I would not wish to be withheld from doing it so long as twenty days; How many virtuous people may be during that time pining for want! more especially as this prohibition must cut off all intercourse between man and man, and deprive many poor wretches of the charitable succour they might otherwise receive. I think therefore that thou, Cozro, in thy slave's habit,\* mayst go forth unsuspected; and by privately seeking out, and alleviating the miseries of our fellow citizens, do an act of more real benefit, than can result from the strictest conformity to this pageant of sorrow, which many in their hearts I am sure must condemn.

Cozro approving of these sentiments, readily agreed to the expedient, and taking a large purse of gold with him to distribute as occasion might serve, immediately set out in order to execute his lord's commands.

Nourjahad now entered on a total reformation in his way of living. He rose at day break, and spent the morning in study or meditation. Luxury and intemperance were banished from his board; his table was spread with the plainest dishes, and he wholly abstained from excess in wine. His slumbers were sweet, and he found his health more vigorous.

I will no more, said he, enslave myself to the power of beauty. I have lived to see the decay of a whole seraglio of the fairest faces in Persia, and have sighed for the ingratitude of the next generation that succeeded them. I will not then seek out for those destroyers of my quiet, for whose death or infidelity I must for ever complain. Mandana was the only woman who ever really deserved my love; could I recal her from the grave, and endue her with the same privilege of which I am myself possessed, I would confine myself to her arms alone; but since that is impossible, I will devote myself to the charms of virtue, which of all things she most resembled.

Whilst Nourjahad was thus resolving to correct the errors



of his past life, his virtue was not merely in speculation. He never laid him down to rest, without the satisfaction of having made some one the better for him. Cozro, who constantly spent the day in enquiring out and relieving the distressed, failed not to return every night to give an account of his charitable mission, and to infuse into his master's bosom, the (till now unfelt) joy which springs from righteous deeds.

The heart of Nourjahad was expanded, and glowed with compassion for those sufferings which Cozro feelingly described as the lot of so many of his fellow creatures. As charity and benevolence rose in his breast, he found his pride subside. He was conscious of his own unworthiness. He kneeled, he prayed, he humbled himself before the Almighty, and returned thanks to God for enabling him to succour the unfortunate.

In this happy frame of mind he continued for eighteen days; there wanted but two more to the expiration of the mourning for the sultan, when Nourjahad was to be at full liberty to pursue in his own person the dictates of his reformed, and now truly generous and benevolent heart.

He was sitting alone in his apartment, waiting the arrival of Cozro, in the pleasing expectation of receiving some fresh opportunity of doing good. The hour of his usual return was already past, and Nourjahad began to fear some accident had happened to him; but he little knew that a black cloud hung over him, which was ready to pour down all its malignity on his own head.

As he mused on what might be the occasion of Cozro's long stay, he heard a loud knocking at his door. It was immediately opened by one of his slaves, and a man, who by his habit he knew to be one of the cady's officers,\* rudely entered his chamber.

How comes it, said the stranger, that thou hast had the temerity, in contempt of our sovereign lord's commands, to employ thy emissary about the city at a time when thou

knowest that so strict an injunction has been laid on all people to keep within their houses, none being permitted to stir abroad but for the absolute necessities of life, or in cases of imminent danger?

Far be it from me, replied Nourjahad, to disobey our mighty sultan's orders; but I understood that slaves had permission to go unquestioned on their master's business. And what business, answered the man, can thy slave have from morning to night in so many different quarters of the city?

Nourjahad, who did not care to be himself the trumpeter of his own good deeds, hesitated to give an answer.

Ha, ha, cried the stranger, I see plainly there is something dangerous in thy mystery, and that the money which thy slave has been distributing amongst such a variety of people, is for a purpose very different from that which he pretends. A likely matter it is indeed that a private man should bestow in charity such sums as Cozro acknowledges he has within these few days distributed!

Yet nothing is more certain, replied Nourjahad, than that Cozro has spoke the truth. We shall see that, replied the officer, in a tone of insolence; Cozro is already in prison, and my orders are to conduct thee to him.

Nourjahad, exceedingly troubled at hearing this, replied, He was ready to go with him; and the officer led him out of his house.

It was now late at night; they passed along the streets without meeting any one, and soon reached the place wherein Cozro was confined. It was the prison where such persons were shut up as were accused of treason against the state.

Here he found the unfortunate Cozro in a dungeon. Alas, cried he, as soon as his master entered, why do I see thee here? Say rather, my dear Cozro, replied Nourjahad, what strange fatality has brought *thee* to this dismal place?

I can give no other account, answered Cozro, but that in



returning home this night, I was seized on in the street by some of those soldiers who were employed to patrol about the city, to see that the sultan's orders were punctually observed; and being questioned concerning my business, I told them that I had been relieving the wants of indigent people, and saving even from perishing, some poor wretches who had not wherewithal to buy food.

That is an idle errand, replied one of them, and might have been deferred till the term of mourning was expired; however, if you will give me a piece of gold, I will let you pass for this time, otherwise both you and your employer may happen to repent of having transgressed the sultan's commands. I made no scruple, pursued Cozro, to take out my purse, in which there were ten sequins\* left. I gave one of them to the soldier, but the rapacious wretches seeing I had more money, were not content with this, but insisted on my giving the whole amongst them. I refused; some angry words ensued; one of the miscreants struck me, and I returned the blow. Enraged at this, they hurried me before the cady, to whom they accused me of having disobeyed the edict, and assaulted the sultan's officers in the discharge of their duty. I was not heard in my defence, having four witnesses against me, but was immediately dragged to this horrid prison; and the sultan himself, they say, is to take cognizance of my offence.

Oh, Heaven, cried Nourjahad, to what mischiefs does not the love of gold expose us! See, my friend, into what misfortunes thou art plunged by the sordid avarice of those vile soldiers. But why, why didst thou hesitate to give up that paltry sum which thou hadst in thy purse, to obtain thy liberty? I do not repent what I have done, answered Cozro, and shall contentedly suffer the penalty I have incurred, since it was in so good a cause.

If the sultan is just, replied Nourjahad, the punishment ought only to fall on me, who alone am guilty, since what thou didst was by my command.

Here the officer who had conducted Nourjahad to prison, and who was present at this discourse, interposed, and addressing himself to Nourjahad, Thou hast not as yet been accused to the sultan, said he, and it is not too late to extricate even thy slave from this troublesome affair; it is but making a handsome present to the cady, and I will undertake this matter will go no farther. I am willing to do so, replied Nourjahad, eagerly; name your demand, and you shall have it. Provided I am allowed to go home to my own house, I will fetch the money; and if you are afraid of my escaping, you yourself may bear me company.

I will not consent to it, replied Cozro; neither liberty nor life are worth purchasing on base conditions. I will submit my cause to Schemerzad's justice; the cause of uprightness and truth; my own innocence shall be my support, and I will dare the worst that fraud and malice can suggest against me.

In vain did Nourjahad urge him to accept the profered terms; he remained inflexible to all the arguments he could use to persuade him; wherefore, finding him determined, he was obliged to desist; and Cozro, after passing the remainder of the night in quiet and profound sleep, though without any other bed than the bare earth, was at dawn of day called forth to appear before the sultan.

The reflections Nourjahad made on the resolute behaviour of Cozro, served not a little to fortify his mind. How noble must this man's soul be, said he, which sets him thus above the reach of adversity? and with what contempt he looks down on the glorious prospects he has before him, when put in the balance with his integrity. Surely it is not in this life he places his happiness, since he is so ready to forego the pleasures he might enjoy with me, in that participation of wealth and liberty which I have promised him. How superior is my servant to me, who but for his example, should now sink under my fears; but he has resources which I have not. Alas, why did I barter my



hopes of paradise for the vain, the transitory, the fallacious joys which this vile world bestows! Already I have tried them; what do they inspire but satiety and disgust. I never experienced true contentment, but during the time, short as it is, since I abjured those follies in which I once delighted: And I am now persuaded, that after having past a few, a very few years more in the enjoyment of such gratifications as I have not yet had an opportunity of tasting, that I shall grow even weary of the light, and wish to be dismissed to that place, where we are told no sorrows can approach.

Nourjahad was buried in these reflections, when he was roused by the return of Cozro. The glimmering light which a lamp afforded, struck full on the face of his friend (for he no longer considered him as a servant) and he rejoiced to see Cozro's chearful countenance, by which he judged that he had nothing to fear.

I am come, said Cozro, approaching Nourjahad, and kissing his hand, to bid thee adieu, for from this day, we are to be for ever divided! It is that thought only which makes our separation grievous: Had I hopes of ever beholding thy face in the mansions of light, I should go to death with the same alacrity with which I close my eyes in slumber.

Good Heaven, cried Nourjahad, doest thou talk of death? Can it be, is it possible that thy life is in danger?

What is the life, about which thou art anxious? replied Cozro; our being here is but a shadow; that only is real existence which the blessed enjoy after their short travel here. And know, Oh Nourjahad, I would not yield up my expectations of the humblest place in paradise for the sovereign rule of the whole earth, though my days were to be extended to the date of thy life, and every wish of my soul gratified to the utmost. Think then, with how little reluctance I shall leave a world, wherein I am sure of meeting nothing but oppression, treachery, and disappoint-

ment, where mercy is construed into treason, and charity is called sedition!

And art thou then doomed to die? said Nourjahad, pale and trembling at the thought, though convinced it was a predicament in which he could never stand.

I am, answered Cozro, my offence was found capital. Disobedience to the sultan's edict alone, incurred a heavy punishment; but my crime was, by the malice of my accusers, so highly aggravated, that the penalty became death. They charged me with having distributed money for evil purposes, amongst persons disaffected to the state, and with having beat and abused those officers who first detected me. In vain did I offer all the pleas that truth could suggest; my enemies, exasperated at losing the sum which they hoped to have extorted from you, swore to the facts of which I was accused, and the rigid sultan condemned me to death. What thy fate is to be, I know not; but since it is thy misfortune to be doomed to perpetual life, better purchase thy freedom on any terms, than be condemned to languish for years in a prison, for such probably will be thy lot.

Oh that I could die with thee! said Nourjahad, miserable that I am, thus to be deprived of thy counsel and friendship, at a time when I so much stood in need of them; but wherefore, my friend, why should we submit to the tyranny of the sultan? though thou art condemned, there may yet be found means to deliver thee. The keeper of the prison will gladly set a price on thy liberty; a hundred thousand pieces of gold shall be thy ransom; and I shall think myself rich by the purchase! And what is to become of thee, replied Cozro? I will buy my own freedom at the same rate, answered Nourjahad, and we will both fly from Ormuz together. And leave your treasures behind you, cried Cozro, for it will be impossible to convey from hence such a vast mass of riches without discovery.

I value them no longer, said Nourjahad; they can never