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FOR CONSULTATION ONLY

THE STORIES

OF THE

BÁGH O BAHÁR.

BEING AN ABSTRACT MADE FROM THE
ORIGINAL TEXT.

BY

EDITH F. PARRY



LONDON:

W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE,
AND AT CALCUTTA.

1890.

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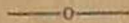
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PREFACE.



THE Bāgh o Bahār, or Stories of the Four Darweshes, is a book much read by students of Hindustani, often when their knowledge of the language is scarcely sufficient to enable them to cope with the difficulties of Oriental idiom and phraseology, and at the same time to realise the main incidents of the stories. To do this, however, is necessary, if the student desire to obtain a thorough grasp of the work; and it is in the Bāgh o Bahār specially difficult, not so much from any peculiar complication of the plots, as from the fact that one story is frequently inserted into another; this, in conjunction with the similarity between them all, is apt to be confusing, and to leave the reader with a somewhat vague impression as to the



relative positions of the chief characters, and the purport and main incidents of the stories.

When I had finished reading the book, it was suggested to me by a friend in whose advice I have great confidence, that I should make an abstract of each story. I did so, simply for my own amusement. But it subsequently occurred to me, and in this view I was encouraged by the friend already referred to, that it might be of some use to those students who do not care to use a translation, but who may be glad of help sufficient to enable them to realise the purport of each story ; while it might also be interesting to English readers, and give them an insight into the general character of Oriental fiction, without obliging them to wade through unnecessary details, and the peculiarities of Eastern expression, often so wearisome and unattractive.

After this short preface had been written, the proof sheets of the book were submitted to Col. Jarrett, B.S.C., Secretary to the Board of Examiners under the Government of India, who



PREFACE.

ix

returned them with the following remarks, which he has kindly allowed me to have printed on my representing to him that they would doubtless carry great weight with both classes of readers whom I hope to interest.

EDITH F. PARRY, B.A.

LONDON, *February* 1890.

NOTE.

—o—

THE tales of the Four Darweshes known as the Bāgh o Bahār have been condensed into the compass of eighty short pages of simple but graphic prose by a lady whose studies have led her into an unusual field.

The difficulties of Urdu are not inconsiderable,



and added to the intricate complications of Oriental story-telling, closely interwoven yet severally distinct, a clear and readable synopsis of these narratives is not an easy task.

In this instance it has been accomplished with skill and patience, and though the touch is light and the hand free, it is evident that a knowledge of the language, as well as of the subject, is the key to its success.

It will, no doubt, answer the expectations of its preface, and, as it deserves, interest not only English readers attracted by the folk-lore and legends of the East, but prove a boon to students, for whom these tales are a text-book, and whose labours will be lightened by an easy survey of their subject.

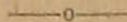
H. S. JARRETT.



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6

CONTENTS.



	PAGE
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE	1
INTRODUCTION	4
STORY OF THE FIRST DARWESH	7
STORY OF THE SECOND DARWESH	16
STORY OF THE SECOND DARWESH'S FRIEND (in- cluded in the Second Darwesh's Story)	23
STORY OF THE KING AZÁD-BAKHT	28
STORY OF THE SAG-PARAST (included in the King's Story)	33
STORY OF HOW THE RUBIES CAME INTO THE SAG-PARAST'S POSSESSION (included in the Sag-parast's Story)	46
STORY OF THE THIRD DARWESH	52



	PAGE
STORY OF NIMÂN SIYÁH (included in the Third Darwesh's Story)	51
STORY OF THE FOURTH DARWESH	62
COMPLETION OF ALL THE STORIES	70
CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK (by the Author)	75
LAST WORDS OF THE TRANSLATOR	75



STORIES
OF THE
BÁGH O BAHÁR.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

AFTER an opening eulogium of God, the all-powerful, the translator explains that the translation of this work from Persian into Hindustani was undertaken at the instigation of Dr. John Gilchrist, a great patron of learning in the time of Wellesley, who, in his desire for the prosperity of India, did all he deemed best for the diffusion of knowledge and cultivation.

The Bágh o Bahár was composed by a Persian, Amír Khusru, for the benefit of his master, Nizám-ud-dín-aulia-zari-zarbakhsh. When selected by



Dr. Gilchrist as translator, Mír Amman, before beginning the work, gives a short account of himself and his family. His ancestors, from the time of Humáyun, were high in the favour of the King, but the family gradually declined in power till the time of Mír Amman, who, dispossessed by Súrajmal Ját and Ahmud Sháh Durráni, left the city of Delhi and took refuge in Calcutta, where, after a time, he was appointed tutor to the younger brother of Nawáb Diláwar Jung, and finally selected as translator of this work by Gilchrist, on whom he invokes all blessings.

Mír Amman then proceeds to give a short history of Delhi and the Urdu or Hindustani language. Delhi was an ancient Hindu city, and pure Hindí was spoken there until the coming of the Mahommedan Emperors. From the mingling of Hindu and Mussalman in camp sprang the Urdu language.

Different rulers held the throne of the northern part of India; under Akbar, Urdu became more diffused, and Delhi went on increasing in splendour under successive sovereigns, Sháh Jahán, Amír Timúr, Muhammad Sháh, &c., until no other city could bear comparison with it either for the polish of its language or the beauty of its buildings. At last the city was invaded by



TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

3

Ahmud Sháh Abdáli from the west, and by Sháh Alam from the east; confusion then prevailed; Mír Amman left it, and, after much travelling, reached Calcutta.



INTRODUCTION.

THERE was once a great king renowned for justice and liberality ; Azád-bakht was his name, and Constantinople the capital of his kingdom. His rule was so perfect that shops could be left unprotected and travellers could carry untold gold with impunity. Thousands of cities were under the rule of this monarch, but there was one bitter drop in the cup of prosperity—he had no son to inherit his name and kingdom.

When alone one day, after earnest prayer to God for an heir, the King observed a white hair in his beard. This led him to reflect on the instability of the things of this world : he must die soon ; he had no heir, and the best thing he could do was to give up everything at once and spend the remainder of his life in holy meditation. Acting on this decision, he retired into an



inner place and spent several days weeping and sighing.

This state of things soon became noised abroad, the King's enemies took advantage of it, and confusion reigned supreme. The nobles in their perplexity went to the Wazír Khiradmand, and asked him to see the King and try and alter his determination. The Wazír consented, and sent in a verbal message to the King. Azád-bakht, in consideration of the devotion and great services of the minister, consented to see him ; he declined, however, to enter into conversation, and told Khiradmand—who was terribly shocked at his emaciated appearance—to leave him in peace, and to see to the carrying on of the government. The Wazír, however, took courage, and represented to Azád-bakht how his kingdom was going to wrack and ruin, but the only answer he received was that the King was weary of the "headache" of acquiring kingdoms, and that he had no son, and meant to spend the rest of his life in solitude. Khiradmand, presuming on his long friendship with the King, administered a severe reproof, and at last succeeded in persuading him again to enter upon his kingly duties. Azád-bakht held a council the next morning, and from that time



6 STORIES OF THE BÁGH O BAHÁR.

forward determined to do so every day, and at the third watch to retire for reading or commune with God.

One day he read that if a man were sorrowful it was good to go into a churchyard and meditate, and, if possible, consult a holy man. Accordingly, he went all alone by night. While communing with himself, he was astonished to see a bright light; he approached and found that it proceeded from a lamp, around which four darweshes were seated. The King was delighted at the sight of these holy men, and wanted at once to reveal himself and form a fifth, but caution prevailed, and he sat down in a corner to listen. One of the darweshes began to speak to the effect that the night was long, and that they would do well to beguile the time by each relating his own history. The others consented, and the first darwesh began as follows.



STORY OF THE FIRST DARWESH.

“My father was a rich merchant in Arabia Felix, and I had a sister who was married to another merchant. I was brought up

Story of the First
Darwesh.

in the greatest luxury, and on my parents' death, when I was fourteen, I came into possession of great wealth; but I fell among bad companions, dissipated everything, and in a few years was reduced to complete beggary. I soon determined to go to my sister, and after enduring many hardships arrived at the city where she lived. She treated me with the greatest kindness and consideration, but at the end of a few months she represented to me that I could not go on living on her generosity; she gave me money to purchase merchandise, and advised me to send it by sea to Damascus. I acted on this advice, and set out myself by land, well provided with means for the journey.



"I arrived at Damascus after night-fall, and, as the guards would not admit me, I was obliged to take up my post outside. In the middle of the night a chest was lowered over the wall, and on opening it I found a lovely woman weltering in blood, who, after a few words of reproach to some unknown tyrant, fainted. When morning came I took the chest into the city, hired a house, and went in search of a surgeon, representing the lady as my wife, who had been wounded by robbers. The surgeon comforted me with the news that she would soon be well, and with careful nursing and much medicine, bought with the produce of the sale of my merchandise, she recovered.

"We lived for a long time very happily, she enjoining me to ask no questions, and I only too glad to obey her behests. However, my resources came at last to an end, and I was in the utmost perplexity. The lady perceiving this, gave me a note to take to a certain house; I delivered it, and forthwith eleven slaves were sent back with me, bearing each a tray of brocade and áshrafis.* Though I was consumed with curiosity, I dared

* An áshrafi is a gold coin. Worth in Calcutta about £1 11s. 6d.



ask no questions. Shortly afterwards, she again gave me money and sent me to a certain shop in the market-place to buy brocade and jewels. There was seated a very handsome young man, who would not let me go until I had promised to return and feast with him at his house. Urged by the lady, I went back and accompanied my new friend to a very beautiful garden, where we partook of a splendid banquet, followed by dancing and singing ; but in the midst of all this the youth burst into tears and asked my leave to send for his beloved. Of course I granted it, and, to my intense astonishment, a hideous black woman came and sat down with us. The merriment and feasting lasted three days and nights ; but on the morning of the fourth day I at last obtained leave to depart.

“I went home in fear and trembling, for I had never left the lady so long before ; but she was not angry, and told me I must return my friend’s hospitality. Accordingly, I again went to the market-place and persuaded the youth to return home with me. On entering my house, I found preparations for a banquet going on in a right regal style—splendid carpets, gold and silver ornaments, minstrels and dancers, &c. &c. The lady was nowhere to be seen ; but when I at last



10 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHÁR.

found her in the kitchen superintending the cooking, she sent me back to my guest, and I entertained him to the best of my ability, sending in the midst of the festivity for his beloved one, who was so hideous that all the guests thought the youth must be bewitched. The carouse continued for three days and nights, and on the fourth night the youth began to take leave; but the cup went round once more, and with such effect that all of us were soon intoxicated.

“When I opened my eyes the next morning all traces of festivity had disappeared, and in a corner under a blanket I discovered the youth and the black woman lying murdered. I swooned at the sight, and on recovering my senses saw a eunuch, whom I questioned concerning the meaning of all this. He would not enlighten me; but directed me to the house, where the lady was. I remained outside it all night, and the next day sat in a mosque with my eyes fixed on her door. In the evening the eunuch appeared and took me into a garden, where I waited until the lady came to me. She, however, dismissed me, and in spite of my tears and entreaties remained obdurate.

“For forty days I wandered about the city,



STORY OF THE FIRST DARWESH. 11

until I was reduced almost to a skeleton. In that state I was discovered by the eunuch, who had compassion on me and carried me into the presence of the lady. She for a long time remained hard-hearted; but at last, touched by my complete despair, she sent for the royal physicians, who pronounced that I was in love and that the kindness of my beloved alone could cure me. Then the lady relented, ordered me to be sumptuously clothed, and invited me to open my heart to her. I did so. She consented to marry me, and the ceremony was performed at once; but my mind was so perplexed concerning all the previous events that I could not enjoy my happiness to the full. The lady, observing this, questioned me as to the cause. I explained matters, and begged her to tell me her story; but she would only consent to do so after much persuasion, and on my promising to keep the strictest secrecy.

“The lady was the only child of the Sultan of Damascus, was brought up in the utmost splendour and comfort, and knew not the meaning of the word unhappiness. Yet in spite of all this she became terribly dejected, and nothing could rouse her from her apathy, until the eunuch whom I had seen, gave her a certain beverage,



12 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHĀR.

which had a wonderful effect. She took a goblet of this every day, and it was always brought to her by a boy, who was so handsome and made himself so agreeable that she speedily fell in love with him. The Princess noticed, however, that though she gave him many gifts, he always appeared miserably clad, and, on inquiry, she found that his master took everything away from him. She then gave him into the charge of the eunuch, and ordered him to be brought up as her page.

“When he became a man, his coming to the palace was put a stop to; the Princess was in despair, but to console herself established him in a splendid shop in the market-place. She found, however, that she could not exist without him, and the eunuch was made to construct a subterranean passage, through which the youth came to her every night. This state of affairs continued for some time, until one evening he had to be sent for twice, and when he appeared looked so dejected that the Princess was alarmed. When she found that he was eager to possess a garden and a slave that were for sale together, she of course bought them for him, and he was again happy and contented.

“One day, however, it occurred to the Princess



STORY OF THE FIRST DARWESH. 13

to visit the garden, and taking a nurse with her she set out. She wandered about in it all day, and towards evening met the youth, who took her into the garden-house. There, while she was enjoying herself to the utmost, a hideous black woman appeared and filled her with terror and disgust; yet such was her love for the youth that she did not even remonstrate with him. The woman had brought in very strong wine, and she and the youth soon became quite intoxicated and behaved in the most unseemly way; but the youth, when he regained his senses, and remembered in whose presence he was, terrified at what he had done, wounded the Princess, and, thinking her dead, packed her into a chest and lowered her over the city wall. There I found her, and, as you know, tended and took care of her.

“The man to whom she sent me with a note was her treasurer, and the youth in the market-place was her would-be murderer. The Princess wanted to get him and the black woman into her power, but when she had made me invite him to the house, she was at a loss how to entertain him suitably. She went to her mother, made a full confession, and asked for the means of giving a splendid banquet that she might be avenged on



14 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHĀR.

her enemies. Everything turned out as she wished, and when we were all intoxicated she had the guilty pair put to death.

X “When the Princess had thus ended her story, she besought me to take her out of the city. This I was only too glad to do, and we set out on horseback, and travelled together for many days, the lady disguised as a man. At last we came to a broad river, or lake, in the midst of a deserted plain; there seemed to be no means of getting farther, and I left the lady under a tree while I tried to find a boat. I could not, however, discover any means of transit or any traces of man, and returned in despair to the tree. To my intense horror the lady had disappeared! I sought her frantically but unsuccessfully. Thinking that she might have been pursued by some of her own people, I returned to her home; but though I made every possible inquiry, and did everything in my power, not a trace of her whereabouts could I discover.

“At last, weary of life, I was about to cast myself down from a high mountain, when I was stopped by a horseman ~~in green—Martaza Āli*~~ who told me that in Turkey I should meet three other men in difficulty like myself and the King

* Martaza Ali—a Mahommedan saint.



STORY OF THE FIRST DARWESH. 15

of the country, Azád-bakht, who was also in trouble, and that we should all five have our several wishes fulfilled. Accordingly I journeyed here, and this evening met you; but we have yet to find Azád-bakht."

The King ⁴¹¹ remained in his place of concealment, and listened to the story of the second darwesh, who began as follows.



STORY OF THE SECOND DARWESH.

“ I am a prince of the kingdom of Persia, and was brought up most carefully and trained in every way as a king's son should be. One day, when one of my teachers was instilling into me some excellent principles, I asked him to tell me of some men who had acted on such principles, that I might follow their example. Thereupon, he told the following story.

Story of the
Second Darwesh.

“ A certain Arabian King, Naufal by name, intended to go to war against the renowned Hátim;* but the latter was unwilling to cause the death of his subjects, and hid himself in a cave. Naufal, when he found that the chieftain had fled, looted his palace and proclaimed a reward of five hundred áshrafis for his head. An old man

* Hátim was an Arab chief famed for his liberality.



and woman were gathering sticks in the cave, quite close to Hátim, and he overheard the old woman express a wish that they could find him and gain the reward, and the old man rebuke her. Then Hátim revealed himself and told the man to take him to Naufal and claim the reward. For a long time he refused; but while he and Hátim were disputing, a crowd collected and carried the latter off by force. When they arrived at the palace, each man boasted that he had been the captor, while the old man stood apart and wept. Hátim, however, interfered, and explained how the matter stood; and Naufal was so touched by the generosity of the chieftain and the loyalty of the old man, that he gave the latter five hundred áshrafis, restored to Hátim all his possessions, and set him again at the head of his tribe. The boasters were rewarded with five hundred blows with a slipper.

“When I had heard this story, I reflected that Hátim was liberal only on a very limited scale, and that there is no such thing as true liberality or justice in the world, because if a man does not reap his reward here, he obtains it after death.

“As a result of these deliberations, I ordered a large building with forty doors to be constructed outside the city; there I spent the whole day



18 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHĀR.

giving alms to the poor. One day a fakír* came to the first door and asked for an áshrafi, which I gave him; he then appeared at the second door and asked for two áshrafis, and so on, up to the fortieth door, where he demanded forty áshrafis; and then began again at the first door. Thereupon, much astonished, I reproached him with avarice, and asked how he, a fakír, could behave in such a way. He became very angry, threw all the money down on the ground, told me I had no conception of what liberality meant, and that he had only seen one person who was really generous, and that was the Princess of Bassora. My curiosity was roused; I apologised, and asked him to tell me more about the Princess; but he refused, and went away in a rage.

“Soon after this episode my father died, and I reigned in his stead. I was so possessed with the wish to go to Bassora that I called my nobles together and told them my intention; and though some were against my plan, I appointed a minister a vicegerent, put on fakír's clothes, and set out.

“As soon as I reached the boundary of the Princess's dominion, I found servants in attendance who provided everything for me. I travelled

* Fakír and darwesh are synonyms.



in this luxurious fashion for many months, until I came to the city of Bassora, where I was met by a youth who told me he was appointed to look after travellers. I went with him to a beautiful house, where, after having been regaled with a sumptuous repast, I spent the night. I stayed on as a guest for three days, and then on pressing for permission to depart, was told that all in the room belonged to me, and was made to stay on for three more days in another and more sumptuous house. At last, becoming impatient to see this most generous of princesses, I wrote a note explaining who I was and asking for an interview. I was summoned to the palace, and was presented to a lady, who told me that the Princess was willing to marry me, but that I must comply with a certain condition, which should be revealed to me the next day. Accordingly, on the-morrow, I was entertained by the nobles of the state at a great banquet, and afterwards an official was summoned, who told me the following story.

“Once when he was travelling for the sake of commerce, he arrived at the city of Nimroz,* and found all the inhabitants in a state of great grief:

* Apparently it is not known where Nimroz was situated, and whether it was a country or a city.



no one would tell him the reason, but one morning all the people turned out, and were drawn up in array outside the city. In the distance a youth appeared riding on a yellow ox. When he got near the people, he dismounted and gave his slave something, which he showed to each person; the sight of which, whatever it was, had the effect of making everyone weep. When the slave returned to his master and gave him back the mysterious object, his head was immediately cut off, the youth mounted and rode away, and the people returned to the city. The official who told the story was unable to ascertain the meaning of this proceeding, and the Princess imposed on the aspirant for her hand the discovery of the mystery as a necessary condition.

“I accepted the condition, but begged for an interview with the Princess before I set out; my request was granted. I found her surrounded with the utmost splendour; and after paying my respects, asked her whence she had obtained all her wealth, which must be truly enormous, if all travellers were treated as I had been. She commanded me to return in the evening, and promised to tell me all about it. When I kept my appointment, after sunset, I was led into the private audience chamber, the walls of which



STORY OF THE SECOND DARWESH. 21

were of looking-glass, and the furniture a blaze of precious stones. There the Nurse told me the following story, the Princess, though present, remaining behind the curtain :—

“The Sultan of the country had seven daughters. One day he summoned them to his presence and propounded to them the doctrine that he was the author of all their prosperity and comfort. To this the six elder ones agreed, but the youngest, the present Princess, kept a rigid silence, and, when asked her reasons for so doing, stated her opinion that they owed everything to God, and that destiny was unalterable by man. The Sultan flew into a great rage, and ordered her to be carried to a desert place far from the haunts of man, where she would have plenty of time to meditate on the sternness of destiny !

“The order was of course executed, and the Princess remained for three days and nights without touching food—consoling herself with the proverb, ‘While there is life there is hope.’ However, on the fourth morning a darwesh appeared on the scene, gave the starving woman food and water, and consoled her to the best of his ability. He went every morning to the city to beg, and returned in the evening. This state of things lasted for some time, until one day,



when the Princess was combing her hair, a pearl fell out. This the fakír sold, and, with the proceeds, began to build a house. He asked the Princess to help him by digging the foundations; and while she was doing so, she came upon an inexhaustible store of jewels and áshrafis buried under ground. Then they set to work to build a city, which grew so speedily, and was so magnificent, that rumours of its splendour reached the ears of the Sultan, the Princess's father, and he sent a message to the effect that he intended to pay a visit to this unknown millionaire. He arrived the next day in magnificent state, and great was his astonishment to find, in this wealthy and renowned queen, his own repudiated daughter!

“When the Nurse had finished her story, she preached me a little homily on uprightness, and enjoined me to depart at once, if I meant to go.

“I set out immediately, and after travelling for one year, arrived at the city of Nimroz. There, on the first day of the month, everything happened as the official had described it. I fainted with astonishment the first time; the second time I attempted to follow the youth, but was brought back by the men of the city; the



third time I hid myself in a jungle, through which he was bound to go, and succeeded in following him, in spite of his efforts to kill me, until he reached an enclosure, through the door of which he disappeared. I was in despair, but, to my delight, a slave soon appeared and summoned me to the presence of his master, whom I found employed in working at a vase of emerald, surrounded by many slaves. After a time, these all disappeared, and, when we were left alone, the youth asked what had induced me to court certain death. I told him the facts of the case, and, from the sympathy he evinced, I surmised that he, too, was a disconsolate lover. This proved to be the case, and he proceeded to tell me his story.

“ ‘ I was a prince of Nimroz, and, at my birth, my father had consulted the astrologers concerning my destiny. They re-

Story of the
Second Darwesh's
Friend.

ported that I should be a great and good king, but that some

danger* threatened me from the influence of the sun and the moon, up to the age of fourteen; and they advised that, till that age, I should be kept away from the open air. In accordance

* The danger was that he would become insane, and leave the habitations of man to dwell with beasts in the jungle.



24 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHĀR.

with this advice the king walled in a garden and roofed it with cloth. All kinds of teachers and companions were provided for me, and I passed the first ten years of my life in complete seclusion. One day, however, a beautiful flower appeared at one of the holes in the cloth made for admitting light. I stretched out my hand for it, but it disappeared, and I heard a sound of laughter. I still continued to look up, and saw, to my intense wonder, a beautiful face looking down upon me, the owner of which gradually descended, and proved to be a most beautiful woman. She was seated on a jewelled throne, and invited me to sit down by her side. I accepted her invitation, and was fairly overcome with the emotions of love, when four fairies appeared and whispered something into the lady's ear. Her countenance changed, and she explained to me that she was summoned away, told me that she was the daughter of the King of the Jins, who dwelt in the mountain of Káf, and held out no hopes of another interview within the next hundred years. I was overwhelmed with grief, and fainted as her throne disappeared.

“On being told of my distraction, my father came to see me. The physicians considered me to be insane and prescribed accordingly; but



their medicines effected nothing, and I remained in a state of melancholy for three years.

“At last a merchant came to the city and told my father of a hermit in Hindustan who could cure all kinds of sickness, and offered to take me to him. My father consented, and after a journey of a few months we arrived at the abode of the hermit, who dwelt on the bank of a river. When the holy man had prescribed for all the sick who were waiting for him, he took me away with him and kept me in his house for a year. During this time I learned much and improved greatly in health, though nothing could completely efface the memory of the fairy from my mind. At the end of the year the hermit hanged himself, for some inexplicable reason connected with a beautiful youth and a centipede on the brain. I took his keys, and with them opened two small rooms which were filled with jewels and áshrafis, and in one of which I found a book of magic. I immediately summoned the merchant, who had been waiting for me, commanded him to freight the vessels with these precious things, and to return with me to my father's kingdom.

“The King was delighted to see me; but his pleasure was a little damped when he found I



persisted in having the walls of the old garden built up again and in living there. I studied my book of magic, fasted for forty days with the object of raising a demon, and at length was rewarded by the appearance of the King of the Jins, who came down, borne on the wings of the wind, in the midst of a terrific storm. When he asked my reasons for causing such a disturbance of the elements, I demanded his daughter in marriage. After demurring for some time, he at length consented, imposing only one condition, which I swore to keep. The fairy appeared, and I was intensely happy ; but one day I forgot all about the condition. The fairy instantly disappeared, my book of magic was snatched away, and all my efforts to recover it were in vain. Since that time I have dwelt in this garden. Every year I fashion a vase of emerald, ride out with it to the city, and go through the ceremony you have already seen, in order to instil sorrow into the hearts of the people and to induce them to pray for me.'

"When I heard this sad story I was filled with such compassion for the youth that I gave up the idea of returning to my Princess, and determined to do all I could to help him. I wandered about fruitlessly for five years, and at the end of that



STORY OF THE SECOND DARWESH. 27

time I was on the point of putting an end to my life by casting myself down from a mountain, when a horseman stopped me and promised that at some future time my wishes should be fulfilled."

STORY OF THE KING, AZĀD-BAKHT.

The day was now dawning, and the King returned to his palace. After his morning devotions, he took his seat in the hall of audience and sent for the four darweshes. On their arrival he commanded them to relate their adventures; and when they hesitated, he smiled, and told them he had already heard the stories of two of them and wished to hear those of the other two. However, they were so manifestly alarmed that, to reassure them, he consented to tell his own story first, and began thus:—

“ When my father died, I reigned in his stead, and was king over the whole of Turkey. One day a very wealthy merchant
Story of the King,
Azād-bakht. came to Constantinople. I sent for him, and after much pleasant conversation, he made me many presents, among which was a magnificent ruby weighing five



STORY OF THE KING, AZÁD-BAKHT. 29

miskals.* I was so delighted with this that I used to send for it every day, just for the sake of looking at it. One day, during a durbár, I sent for the ruby as usual, and handed it round to the ambassadors—that of Christendom among others—for inspection. Everyone praised it and complimented me on possessing such a jewel, except the Wazír, who told me that it was beneath the dignity of a king to worship a stone, and, by way of pointing a moral, said he had seen a merchant in Naishapúr† who had adorned his dog's collar with twelve rubies, each weighing seven miskals. I was very angry at this, as I considered, untruth, and ordered the Wazír to be beheaded immediately. However, the ambassador of Christendom interfered, and persuaded me to cancel the sentence of death, as the lie was not proved. I relented so far as to commute the punishment to imprisonment for a year; if at the end of that time the Wazír's statement were proved true, he should be released; if false, he should be put to death.

“When the news of this imprisonment reached the Wazír's house there was great grief and lamentation; and when his daughter, a most

* 1 miskal = 63 grains troy.

† Naishapúr is in Persia; once a most populous city, now a heap of ruins.



beautiful and accomplished girl, was told of the calamity, she determined to do what a son would have done, *i.e.* to go to Naishapúr and verify her father's statement. Accordingly she persuaded her grandfather to help her, and slipped away one night, when everything was ready, disguised as a young merchant. Nothing happened on the journey, and as soon as the Wazír's daughter reached Naishapúr, after bathing, she went into the market-place. There, amidst others, she saw one merchant most sumptuously arrayed, whom she guessed to be her father's friend. While looking round for a pretext to approach him, she saw in a shop two cages in each of which was a man of most evil aspect. Near them in another shop was a dog, seated on a velvet cushion placed on an ivory chair, on whom two slaves were waiting; round his neck was a collar in which were set twelve rubies!

"Meanwhile, everyone was charmed with the beauty of the girl, especially the merchant, who sent a slave to ask her to come and speak to him. She went, and stated that she was a young merchant, travelling instead of her father, who had become infirm. She had wished intensely to see the people of Persia, because they were so famed for their beauty and courtesy;



and now, having fulfilled her desire, she intended to depart. The unfortunate merchant had fallen completely in love with the *soi-disant* young merchant, and could by no means be persuaded to let her go, but sent for all her things and installed her in his own house. That evening, before the host or his guest touched food, the dog was regaled with the choicest dainties, and water was presented to him in a golden basin. When he had finished, the two prisoners were brought out of their iron cage, beaten with clubs, and then made to eat the dog's leavings. This proceeding so disgusted the girl that she would not begin to eat until the merchant—called in the city Sag-parast, the dog-worshipper—had satisfied her that he was a devout Mahommedan* ; but in spite of her entreaties he would not explain why he paid such honour to a dog, alleging that to do so would cause them both great grief.

“The Wazír's daughter remained with the Sag-parast for two months, creeping ever closer into his affections, but never betraying the fact that she was a woman. When she broke to him that she must return to her own country, the poor man was heart-broken, and offered to send for her father and mother, and to make her his heir

* The Mahommedans consider the dog to be impure.



if she would only stay. Such a proceeding, however, did not suit her plans, and she reiterated her desire to go home. Then the Sag-parast, seeing he could not prevail on her to remain, determined to go with her himself, and made preparations accordingly. These preparations were on a gigantic scale, and so many merchants accompanied him that the cavalcade was like a small army. It is scarcely necessary to say that the dog and the iron cage went with their owner.

“After a very pleasant journey they arrived at the gates of Constantinople, and the girl, leaving the merchants outside, went in, as she said, to find her father and mother. At first the mother reproached her bitterly for her desertion; but when she heard that she had brought the proofs of her father’s integrity, her tone changed entirely. The girl then returned to the merchant, whom she met on the way, for he had become alarmed at her prolonged absence, and led him to a beautiful garden on the edge of a stream, just outside the city, where the whole cavalcade encamped. They were soon espied by my* head game-keeper, who naturally wished to find out who they were. A slave invited him in, and he

* Azād-bakht is telling the story.



was regaled with coffee and the hookar. He, of course, saw the dignity of the dog and the degradation of the two men, and was so much impressed that he told me about it in a durbar held the next morning. I was most indignant, and ordered the merchant's head to be cut off immediately. However, the ambassador of Christendom interfered again, reminded me of the Wazír's story, and begged me to seek an explanation from the Sag-parast, before proceeding to such extreme measures. I acted on his advice, and my messenger soon returned, bringing with him the merchant, and, as we supposed, his son. I at once asked him to what sect of infidels he belonged; but he assured me that he was a true Mahommedan, that he did everything required by the faith, and that he gave one-third of his possessions to the poor. This declaration did not satisfy me, and I threatened to put him to death immediately, if he did not tell me his story, and explain satisfactorily his heathenish practices. This he at last consented to do, after many excuses; and at his request I sent for the two men in the cage that I might question them whenever I doubted his veracity. This was his story :—

“ O King ! These two men on my right and

left are respectively my elder and my second brother. Our father was a

Story of the
Sag-parast.

merchant of Persia, in very well-to-do circumstances. He died,

however, when I was fourteen, and, as soon as the time of mourning was passed, my brothers commanded me to take my share of his possessions. This I declined to do, urging that I was only a child, and would like to continue living with them, and to finish my education. They became very angry, and the next day summoned me before a magistrate, and then, because I repeated to him all I had said to them the night before, they made me sign away all right to my share of my father's possessions. I soon found that they did not mean me to live with them; so I sold the various presents which my father had from time to time brought me from distant countries, and set up a haberdashery shop. I succeeded very well, and at the end of three years my shop had gained such a reputation that it was resorted to by everyone who wished to buy anything especially good.

“One day, when I was seated in my shop, a slave came rushing in and told me that in the market-place a Jew was beating my brothers, and threatening that he would kill them if they



did not repay his money. Thereupon I ran out, barefooted as I was, paid the debt, and rescued my brothers from the infuriated Jew. I took them back to my own house, and, after keeping them for some time, provided them with money and merchandise, and sent them with a caravan to Bokhara, because I found their credit in the city had quite gone.

“After a year the caravan returned, but for some time I could get no news of my brothers. At last someone told me that they had both become completely degraded; one was scullion in a gaming-house, the other an inferior servant at an inn. Terribly distressed at this account, I at once set out for Bokhara, and fetched back the two delinquents, but left them outside the city, so that no one should suspect that they had not returned of their own accord. After two days, I was preparing to go and meet them ceremoniously, when a man came to me, complaining that they had robbed and plundered his house during the night, and told me they were now sitting naked and miserable outside the city gates. Again I took them to my house, and there they remained, not daring to go out, because people looked upon them with contempt.

“When three months had elapsed I thought



36 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHĀR.

it would do them good to travel again, but this time I determined to accompany them and, if possible, keep them out of mischief; my dog also went with us. A month passed without any accident. One day, however, when I was asleep in my cabin one of my brothers rushed in and called me up on deck: there I saw the other brother looking most eagerly over the side of the boat. He declared he saw a merman with pearls and coral in his hand, and while I was stooping over the side, trying to catch sight of him, the other brother pushed me over. This was a plan, preconcerted by the two, that they might gain possession of my wealth. After struggling for some time in the water, I was becoming thoroughly exhausted when, putting my hand out, I felt something moving, and found it was the dog who had jumped overboard when he saw me fall. I caught hold of his tail, and for seven days and nights we were tossed about by the waves. When at last we reached land, I was so exhausted that I lay senseless for a day and a night, and when I did find strength to drag myself to the nearest town, I was nearly starving. I had no money with me, and was almost at my wits' end, when, to my joy, I saw two youths in Persian attire, to whom I determined to apply for



help. These turned out to be my reprobate brothers, and no sooner did they see me than they spurned me from them, raised a tremendous outcry, and accused me of having thrown my master—that is myself—into the river. I was taken before a magistrate, but they bribed him, and I, being quite unable to defend myself because of my exhausted condition, was condemned to be impaled. I appeal to you, O King. Was this a fit return to make me for all my kindness?

“I had given myself up for lost, when a man rushed in and loosed my bonds. The King was suffering from a disease for which many remedies had been tried without result, and the physicians, in desperation, recommended him to release all prisoners. But my brothers determined that I should not be let off, and in the night, with the help of the magistrate, they carried me away to a dark cavern in a mountain about one kós* from the city, which was called Sulimán's prison.† The dog went with me and lay on the bank at the top. When I recovered my senses and heard the sound of voices, I thought I must be in the tomb, and that the

* One kós = two miles.

† Suliman = King Solomon.



voices must proceed from Nákir and Munkir.* However, I was soon undeceived; two living men were in the cave, and they explained to me where I was; but though I could hear them eating they would not give me a scrap. Food and water were lowered to them every day by means of a rope, and my dog observed this proceeding and thought he would do what he could for his master. He trotted off to the town, snatched a loaf from a baker's shop, and ran off with it, fighting with the town dogs all the way to the cavern. When he had dropped it down he went off again in search of water; this was not so easy to procure, but he succeeded in persuading an old woman to follow him with a water-pot and to lower it to me. For six months food and water reached me in that way, but by the end of that time I was nothing but skin and bones, and longed for death to end my sufferings.

“ ‘ One night, when the other two captives were asleep, a rope was let down, and a voice told me to catch hold of it and be hoisted up. At the top of the cavern was a young man waiting with two horses; he told me to mount, and we rode hard

* Nákir and Munkir are the two angels who wait for the soul after death.



STORY OF THE KING, AZÁD-BAKHT. 39

till dawn. I then saw that my companion was a heavily-armed warrior; he gazed at me with a furious expression, and made a lunge with his sword, but I avoided it, and when we came to explain matters, it turned out that I was not the man he wanted. When it was mid-day we halted, and the youth told me his story. Briefly, it was this. The youth was a maiden, daughter of the Maharája of Burmah; she had fallen in love with a man and had had him smuggled into her apartments; he was discovered, and, with his brother, condemned to confinement in Sulimán's prison. The girl's conscience was uneasy, as no one knew that the fault rested with her, and she kept the two supplied with food and water till the previous night, when in a vision she was told to disguise herself and go to their rescue. This she did, with what result you know.

“After this little story was ended we had some food, and I began to instruct the girl—at her own request—in the principles of Mahommedanism. We travelled on together, and at the end of two months came to a large city between Burmah and Ceylon (?).* Here we settled down,

* Sarandip.



and I married the girl and lived happily with her for three years.

“ ‘ At the end of that time my brothers turned up again ; I found them on the point of being put to death, but I interfered, and by dint of bribing the judge and paying their prosecutor 5,000 rupees, I procured their release and took them home to my house.

“ ‘ They behaved properly for three years, but once, when I was away, the second one saw my wife, fell in love with her, and the two determined to get me out of the way. This was the plan they adopted. They pretended to be longing to return to the land of their birth—Persia—and their laments so touched my heart that I determined to go and to take them with me. My wife warned me to be on the alert, and I acted on her advice so well that for a long time they found no opportunity of harming me. One day, however, my brothers induced me to go with them, accompanied only by two horses and two slaves, to a place where they said there was a profusion of the most beautiful flowers. They sent away both the slaves on different pretexts, and when we were quite alone they fell upon me with their swords, wounded me grievously, tried to kill the dog who set upon them furiously, and



then, having daubed themselves all over with blood, rushed back to the camp and said that robbers had attacked us and killed me. The caravan moved off in terror, and went home. My wife, never dreaming of treachery, believed these liars, and in despair put an end to her life.

“O darweshes! When the merchant had got so far in his story, I could no longer restrain my tears; he showed us his wounds, and they were so terrible that we could not bear to look upon them. After this little diversion he again proceeded with his story.

““My brothers had left me for dead, and indeed very little life remained in me. Near the place where I had fallen, there was a large city which contained an enormous idol-temple. The King of this city had a very beautiful daughter, who spent her life, for the most part, in the pursuit of pleasure. By chance, on the very day on which all this occurred, the Princess came to the place where I and the dog were lying, and seeing our pitiable condition took us to the palace and sent for a physician.

““She was most kind, tending me day and night, so that through her unremitting care I recovered very quickly, and in twenty days was well enough to tell her my history. The perfidy



42 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHĀR.

of my brothers roused her indignation, and she promised always to protect me. I generally managed to perform my devotions while the Princess was absent, but one day she unfortunately returned when I was in the midst of them. At first she did not know what I was doing, but when she discovered that I was a Mussalman, her anger was unbounded. She left me in suspense for three days, but on the evening of the third day returned, flushed with wine and carrying a bow and arrow. I thought my last hour had come, but the Princess could not find it in her heart to kill me, and I took advantage of her softened mood to convert her to Mahommedanism. She was engaged to be married to her cousin, who, of course, was a heathen, and to avoid him she proposed to leave the city with me.

“ ‘ Acting under the Princess’s orders I went to the caravansary,* and remained there until I found a body of Turkish and Persian merchants who were returning home. I took passage on a vessel, met the Princess disguised as a slave-girl in the evening, and disembarked the next morning. Just as we were starting, a gun was fired, the boat was stopped, and the ruler of the port

* Caravansary = a house for travellers.



STORY OF THE KING, AZAD-BAKHT. 43

came on board with orders to search the vessel for the Princess, whose absence had been discovered. All the merchants hid their most beautiful slave-girls in chests. I followed their example, and my Princess would never have been discovered if some idiot had not revealed the trick; she was carried off with the rest, but when they were sent back the next morning she was not with them. Then in despair I returned to the city and sought for her high and low; at the end of a month of unavailing search it occurred to me that she might be with the governor of the port, and I turned my attention in that direction. I got into the mahal* through a drain-pipe, and there found my Princess weeping and wailing; she was overjoyed to see me, and was, as before, ready with a stratagem by which to procure her escape.

“ ‘ I was to take up my position in the idol’s temple, under a piece of black canvas where suppliants were wont to sit. When I had been there three days the Brahmin priests would come to me and offer me clothes and money, under the impression that my object was to go on a pilgrimage. I, however, was to refuse to stir until the mother of the Brahmins should sum-

* Mahal = women’s apartments.



44 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHÁR.

mon me to hear my grievance. To this old lady, aged two hundred and forty years, who was endowed with the highest authority, I was to tell the following story :—I had come to this city on a pilgrimage to the idol, and had brought my wife with me ; she was very beautiful, and the governor of the port, attracted by her good looks, had carried her off to his house ; what I wanted was the means to regain my wife and to kill her kidnapper.

“ I followed out these instructions to the letter, and everything turned out as the Princess wished. The old lady believed my story, and sent me with her two pages to the King, with a message to the effect that the governor of the port was to be put to death, and all his possessions given up to me. The King wished to summon the delinquent and my so-called wife into his presence. That did not suit my views ; but the two pages, seeing that I was troubled, threatened the King with condign punishment if he did not do the idol's bidding at once. Thereupon he sent me back to the temple with a note investing the mother of the Brahmins with full power over the life and property of the governor. I went off immediately to his palace, killed him with my own hands, found my Princess, and gave



everyone presents all round, from the property which had now fallen into my hands.

“‘ I made myself very popular with the courtiers and the King, and acquired fresh honours almost every day, until at last the King could do nothing without my advice. I married my Princess and lived happily with her for two years, though occasionally troubled with unpleasant thoughts concerning my two brothers.

“‘ It was the custom for all merchants who came to this port to pay me a tax of one-tenth of their goods. One day a caravan of merchants on their way to Persia stopped here; they came as usual to pay me the accustomed tax, and when I returned their visit the next day the first thing I saw was my two brothers acting as servants. Again I took them home and clothed them, and again they attempted to murder me; but the dog, who was under my bed, gave the alarm, and they were seized just in time. This last attempt was too much even for my patience, and I determined to prevent their working any more wickedness; but lest they should suffer hunger and cruelty in an ordinary prison, I had this cage made for them in which I carry them about wherever I go. For the dog, I think no honour can be too great.



46 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHÁR.

“‘This is my story, O King. Now decide whether I am worthy of death or not.’

“Of course I could attach no blame to the merchant; but before I let him go I asked him to tell me how the rubies on the dog’s collar had come into his possession. He did so in the following words :—

“‘One day when I was in the balcony of my palace, whence I had an extensive view, I saw coming towards the port two people, who on nearer approach turned out to be a man and a

Story of the
Rubies.

woman. I sent the woman to the mahal, and summoned the man to appear before me; he had a little boy on his back, and seemed almost dying with hunger. Meanwhile the eunuch had come in from the mahal with some bags taken from the woman, filled with jewels, any one of which was worth the revenue of a sultan. When the youth had finished eating he told me his story.

“‘In his childhood he had endured many hardships and been often at the point of death. His father was a merchant of Azurbáiján,* and when he was ten or twelve years old, the father announced his intention of taking his son with him

* Azurbáiján is a province of Persia to the west of the Caspian Sea.



on a journey. Their destination was Burmah, and having got there in safety and accomplished their business satisfactorily, they returned by sea. After travelling for a month a tremendous storm arose; the ship was tossed about by wind and waves for eleven days, and on the twelfth day she struck a rock and went down. The boy found himself on a plank, and was buffeted about for four days. At length he was cast on shore. There he found many men who were quite black, and whose speech was unintelligible to him. After resting there the night he went on, and, passing on the road a fort of tremendous strength which appeared uninhabited, he arrived at a fine city, situated on a river. Just inside the gates he saw a man clothed in European dress, seated on a throne, who entertained him hospitably, but frightened him by asking him if he were mad, that he came to such a city as this.

“The next day this man gave the youth a spade, a sieve, and a bag, and told him to go to a mountain close by, to dig a hole one gaz* deep, to sift the earth thrown out, and to take back to him in the bag all that would not pass through the sieve. The youth did all this. His new friend gave him all the jewels, and in addition

* 1 gaz = 30 to 33 inches.



48 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHÁR.

his signet ring, which he was to give to his brother, who would be found sitting in the market-place. The brother took the youth home, entertained him, and then explained to him what danger he was incurring. The people of the city were heathens, and they cast every traveller who came to their city into the river, unless he conformed to their faith, or unless the idol gave out that he was to be well treated. To avoid this, the old man hit on the daring plan of marrying the youth to the Wazír's daughter. There was a special meeting of priests, courtiers, &c., the next day, and he then proposed to the assembled company his plan, which fortunately met with the approbation of the idol, and therefore of everyone else.

“The youth was married immediately to the Wazír's daughter, who was very beautiful, and with whom he lived happily for two years, gaining the King's confidence more and more until at last he was admitted among his companions.* At the end of that time, however, the lady died in child-birth. The unfortunate husband was taken off to the idol's temple; all his possessions were heaped together in the

* To be admitted among the King's companions is a proof of the highest confidence.



centre of it, and anyone could buy what he liked and pay what he liked for it. When everything was sold, jewels were bought with the proceeds of the sale, and placed in a small chest; food for forty days was placed in a second chest, and the lady's body in a third chest. The two latter were placed on a camel which the youth was made to mount, and the chest with jewels was put into his hands. He was then made to ride to the fort which he had passed on his way to the city, a procession of priests in front of him and a concourse of people behind. When they reached the fort, a priest delivered an exhortation on the certainty of death, and then all went away and left him alone.

“ At first the youth gave vent to his feelings by maltreating the corpse of his wife, but as that would not keep him alive he turned his attention to something more profitable. He soon found a cascade of water, and made a little house for himself out of the chests of jewels which were scattered all over the place. When his catables were just finished an old man was brought into the fort, provided with food as he had been, and the youth immediately murdered him and took his food; he did the same to everyone who came into the fort, until one day the



new-comer happened to be a very beautiful damsel. He could not find it in his heart to kill her, but instead, converted her to Mahomedanism and married her. A son was born, and the three went on living as the youth had done before, when he was alone. At the end of three years, a man appeared to the youth in a vision, and told him he could get out by way of the drain. He did so, taking his wife and child with him; and they had been wandering about for more than a month when I saw them from the balcony.'

“ ‘This is the story the youth told me.

“ ‘Many children were born to me, but they all died in childhood, and my wife died too, heart-broken at the loss of our youngest child. Then I was overwhelmed with grief, and I determined to depart for Naishapūr, entrusting the government of the port to the youth, and, taking with me my dog, my brothers, and all my property, I set out.

“ ‘There I dwelt contented with my lot, though paying double tax because of my bad repute as a dog-worshipper, until this young merchant arrived. To please him, I came here.’

“ ‘When I heard that the young merchant was not the Sag-parast’s son, I commanded him to tell



51

STORY OF THE KING, AZÁD-BÁ

his story, which you already know. The unfortunate merchant fainted on hearing that his beloved was a woman, and made such piteous lament because he had no heir, that I beckoned him to me and promised that he should marry the Wazír's daughter. I summoned her and her father into my presence, restored the latter to his office and to greater favour than before, and betrothed the former to the Sag-parast. In the course of time two sons and a daughter were born to them, of whom the eldest holds a position of great confidence in the court.

"Now, O fakírs, I have told you my story, and I beg that you will stay with me for a month, and that the two who have not already related their adventures will do so to please me."

The fakírs were very much delighted at the king's invitation, and the third began his history at once.



STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHÁR.

52

STORY OF THE THIRD DARWESH.

“Listen, O fakírs, to my adventures, and hear how Love has treated me. I was the only child of the King of Persia, and was brought up in every comfort and surrounded with charming companions. One day we went into the plains on horseback, with our falcons. It was a beautiful spring day, and the bright-coloured flowers were so enchanting that we dismounted and walked about among them. Suddenly I saw a black deer, wonderfully caparisoned, which raised its head at our approach, and slowly went away. I immediately conceived a strong desire to take this beautiful animal alive, and forbidding my companions to follow, I set off after it on horseback. But though I kept it in sight, I could not overtake it, and evening found me with my desire still unaccomplished, far from home and



thoroughly tired out. Rather than lose the deer altogether I determined to shoot it, and, fixing an arrow in my bow, wounded it in the leg. It limped towards a mountain and began to mount, I following on foot. After ascending for some distance, I saw a dome, and soon afterwards a garden and a fountain: the stag disappeared, and I began to wash my hands and feet in the water.

“Suddenly a sound of lamentation and weeping struck my ears, and bitter reproach against the man who had wounded the stag. I went in the direction whence the voice came, and found a white-bearded old gentleman, seated on a cushion and occupied in extracting the arrow from the stag's thigh. I explained that I was the delinquent, and expressed sorrow for having unintentionally caused him so much grief; thereupon he pardoned me, gave me something to eat, and made me lie down and rest.

“I went to sleep immediately, but was soon awakened by a sound of lamentation. I rubbed my eyes, looked round, and was rather frightened to find the room apparently empty. In one corner, however, was a curtain, and behind it I perceived a woman of enchanting beauty, dressed in European fashion; and lying



54 STORIES OF THE BÁGH O BAHÁR.

with his head on her feet, was the old man, weeping bitterly. At this strange sight I fainted, and on recovering my senses went up to the lady and saluted her. She took no notice, and though I conjured her by all that is sacred to speak, she still replied not. At last I touched her, and found she was only an idol; but the harm was done, and I was deeply in love. The old man was very loth to give me an explanation, but I insisted, and he told me the following story:—

“My name is Nimán Siyáh, and I was a merchant, and had travelled to all parts of the world except Christendom. I was, however, most anxious to go there, and, by the advice of my friends, set out with a caravan of merchants and many curiosities and presents. After a few months we reached our destination, and took up our quarters in a city such as I had never seen before; the roads were kept very clean, it was beautifully lighted at night, and round it were magnificent gardens. The day after we got there an official appeared, informed me that the Princess had heard of our arrival, and desired me to present myself as soon as possible, and take with me any merchandise I had fit for a

Story of Nimán
Siyáh.



king's palace. The next day, accordingly, I went to the palace, taking with me all that was the best in my caravan. Everything there was as beautiful as fairyland, and the Princess herself was so charming that I speedily fell in love with her. She took some of my goods, and when I returned next day for payment, made herself very agreeable, and asked me to undertake a commission for her. She wrote a letter, which she placed, with some pearls, in a small bag, and giving me her signet ring, told me to go to the garden Dilkhush, give the ring to the superintendent, named Kai-Khusrú, and ask for an answer to the letter. On reaching the garden I saw, sitting in great state, a youth with a tiger-like face, who directed me to give the letter to a young man imprisoned in a cage fastened to the boughs of a cypress tree. On receiving the note, the prisoner began to ask eagerly after the Princess, but, before I could reply, I was suddenly surrounded by negroes and cut down in a moment.

“ When I recovered consciousness I was being carried along on a stretcher by two bearers who were debating whether they should put an end to me at once. I interrupted their interesting conversation by begging for mercy and demanding



an explanation of all I had suffered. These men told me that the youth in the cage was the nephew of the present King, who had succeeded his brother. By the will of the latter, his brother was to be regent till his son reached years of discretion, when he was to marry his cousin, the present King's daughter, and the two were to reign together. This will was not carried out by the wicked brother, who kept his nephew imprisoned, and went on reigning himself. The Princess, however, was sincerely attached to her cousin, and attempted to communicate with him in the way just explained; but the King found out her intention and managed to baulk it. By the advice of his Wazír, he decided that the Princess should herself kill her cousin. This execution was about to take place, and I persuaded the two men to place me in a dark corner whence I could witness it. The youth was taken out of the cage and made to stand in front of the Princess; but instead of killing him she cast away the sword, threw her arms round his neck, and declared that this execution was merely a pretext to see him again. The King flew into a great rage with the Wazír, who had given him such bad advice; the Princess was hurried away, and the youth taken back to his garden, after the Wazír



had in vain tried to kill him and had lost his own life, in some mysterious way.

“ ‘The Princess sent for me and gave me in charge to her surgeons with strict injunctions to cure me as soon as possible. In forty days I was quite well, and was dismissed with all honour. I set off with a large retinue ; but when I reached this place, I had this building erected, sent away my servants, and have since spent my whole time in the worship of this idol, and shall continue to do so for the remainder of my life.’

“ When I heard this story, O fakírs, I put on fakír's garments, set out for Christendom, and travelled in a state of desperate love, till I reached the city where the Princess dwelt. I wandered round and round her palace, but could find no means of access. One day when I was standing in the bazaar, everyone began to close their shops and to flee ; and, looking round for the cause of this commotion, I saw a young man with a face like a tiger, heavily armed and followed by two slaves bearing a coffin covered with a velvet pall. I followed this youth, though everyone tried to prevent me, and when he attempted to kill me, I begged him to do so, and assured him I longed for death. This speech softened his heart, and he asked me to tell him



why I was so disgusted with life. I hid nothing from him, and great was my delight to find that he held out hopes of being able to bring about the fulfilment of my desires.

“When I had fed and rested a little, my new friend told me that in the coffin he took about was the body of the imprisoned Prince. He had been killed by one of the Wazírs, but his death had been speedily avenged by the tiger-like youth, who had since made it his business to carry the coffin into the city every new moon.

“In the evening I was made to take the place of one of the slaves as bearer of the coffin, and in that capacity accompanied my new friend to the palace of the Princess. The coffin was placed on a couch plated with gold, standing under an awning of silver thread fringed with pearl brocade. In a few moments the Princess appeared, her face showing traces of deep sorrow; and, after a few preliminaries, the youth told my story, and, with the Princess's consent, called me up and presented me. We then returned home, and my friend told me that the Princess had consented to receive me the next evening. I waited with impatience till it was time for me to keep my appointment, and set out for the palace as soon as it was dark. The Princess came to me in



the garden at the end of an hour, and volunteered to go away with me to my own kingdom. So great, however, were my wonder and delight that I completely lost my way, and the Princess became very weary and rather angry. I had just reassured her, when we most opportunely came in sight of a house. I broke open the door, and after we had partaken of the meal which was standing ready, we settled ourselves comfortably for the night.

“In the morning the Princess’s absence was discovered; a search was instituted, and a reward of one thousand áshrafis offered for her. By chance a horrible old hag entered the house, and, recognising the Queen, invented a pitiful story, whereby she obtained her ring as alms, and made off, intending to deliver it up to the authorities and claim the reward. Just as she was going away, the owner of the house, a young soldier, returned, and seeing the open doors, concluded that the old woman was the culprit, and hanged her immediately. I began to tremble, but he welcomed us most kindly, said all that he had was ours, and promised to respect our secret. This youth, whose name was Bihzád Khán, entertained us regally for six months. At the end of this time I began to long to see my parents, and Bihzád



Khán, seeing me thoughtful and melancholy, found out what ailed me, and proposed to accompany me home. I consented joyfully, and we set out, all three on horseback.

“When we reached the walls of the city the youth proclaimed to the guards who we were and dared them to get back their Princess. The King sent two armies against us; but Bihzád Khán defeated them one after the other, single handed, and we proceeded peacefully on our way. When we reached the boundary of my kingdom, I sent word of my arrival to the King, my father, and he came out to welcome me in great state. We were separated only by a river, and, in my eagerness to embrace my father, I urged my horse into the water. The Princess’s horse at once followed; but she, confused and frightened, lost her presence of mind, tugged at the animal’s mouth, and they both disappeared under the waves. Bihzád Khán rushed to the rescue, but his horse could not withstand the force of the stream, and he, too, was engulfed.

“Such an effect had this sudden calamity on me, O fakírs, that I became insane, and after some time conceived the idea of drowning myself in the same river, in the hope of thus finding my beloved. I was on the point of carrying out my



intention when that veiled rider who brought you glad tidings appeared to me. He reproached me with wishing to take my own life, told me that both the Princess and Bihzád Khán were alive, and assured me that my wishes would be fulfilled when I met you in Turkey.

“This is my story, O fakírs.”

STORY OF THE FOURTH DARWESH.

“I, O fakírs, am the son of the King of China. On his death-bed my father sent for his brother and committed the kingdom to his care until I should have reached years of discretion, when I was to reign and to marry his daughter.

Story of the
Fourth Darwesh.

“I was brought up among the ladies of the harem until I was fourteen, spending much of my time in the company of Mubárák, a black slave held in much esteem by my father, and who was very kind to me. One day one of the maids in the mahal boxed my ears, and when I ran complaining to my friend Mubárák he took me straight to my uncle and asked him to marry me to his daughter and to give me my kingdom. The astrologers, however, declared that that year was not auspicious, and I was sent back to the mahal. When I next went to my friend



Mubárák, he was in tears, and, on my asking the reason, he told me that a day or two before, the King had sent for him and told him to put me to death. Of course, I was terribly frightened, and begged him to save my life; but he reassured me and told me he had hit on a plan to regain my kingdom. We went together to the palace of my father, and Mubárák having displaced the throne, began to dig underneath it. Soon a trap-door appeared, and further digging revealed a kind of room divided into four compartments. There were ten jars in each compartment, filled with áshrafis and jewels, with a monkey of emerald on all but the fortieth.

“When I demanded an explanation of this, Mubárák told me that my father was a friend of Malik-i-Sádik, the King of the Jins, that he spent one month out of each year in the King's service, and that in return he received these emerald monkeys, each of which had power over a thousand demons, but that this power could not be exercised until they reached the number of forty. Unfortunately my father died before the requisite number was completed, and Mubárák's plan was to go to Malik-i-Sádik, and to ask him to give me the fortieth monkey. I was only too glad to get out of my uncle's way.



64 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHÁR.

“We set out as soon as possible for the abode of the fairy king, Mubárak having first deceived my uncle with the story that he meant to take me into the wilderness and kill me secretly. After a month’s continuous travelling we reached our destination; but I could see nothing until my eyes had been washed with collyrium. Then, however, I perceived an army of fairies, who led us into the presence of the King, who, with his courtiers, all very sumptuously dressed, entertained us most hospitably. After dinner Malik-i-Sádik inquired what I wanted, and when Mubárak explained to him how matters stood he expressed himself most anxious to help the son of his old friend, but demanded a service from me before he took any steps towards reinstating me in my kingdom, and explained to me what this service was. He produced the portrait of a very beautiful girl, directed me to find the original, to express to her his great love for her, and to bring her as quickly as possible to him.

“I set out immediately with Mubárak, and after wandering about through country, village and town for seven years without accomplishing my purpose, I came at last to a large and populous city, whose people seemed to be of a religious turn of mind. There I saw an old blind fakír



begging ; but no one paid any attention to him. He was so excessively grateful when I gave him a coin, that I was rather astonished and followed him out of the city to the ruins of a splendid palace, where he apparently lived. On entering, the fakír was greeted by a woman's voice expressing wonder at his early return, whereupon he explained that a strange youth had given him a mohur, and expressed such joy at the prospect of food that I resolved to give him twenty more. When, however, I followed the sound of the voices, I beheld the original of Malik-i-Sádik's picture ! I was so overcome with emotion that I fainted, and when I recovered consciousness, thanks to Mubárák's ministrations, I asked the fakír to give me shelter, having first drawn on myself the lady's displeasure because I stared too much at her. I told the old man my story, leaving out Malik-i-Sádik's name altogether, pretending that I had bought the picture and was searching for the original on my own account. In return I heard the fakír's story.

“ He was a nobleman of the highest birth, and had a daughter of surpassing beauty. The King's son fell so deeply in love with her that his father was obliged to consent to their marriage,



66 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHÁR.

and preparations of the most magnificent kind were set on foot. On the day of the marriage, when the Prince and his wife were together, the guards heard a fearful cry in their room, and on breaking open the door, found the bridegroom dead and the bride insensible and foaming at the mouth. This caused a tremendous *émeute*, and the King in his anger commanded that the girl should be put to death. This order, however, was so unpopular that he was afraid to carry it out, and contented himself with sending her home.

“After the period of mourning was completed, the King assembled his nobles, and asked their advice. They counselled him to put the nobleman and his daughter to death, and an officer with his suite was sent to carry out the order. When they demanded admittance, such a heavy shower of stones fell upon them that they fled in all directions, and at the same time a voice was heard by the King, warning him not to interfere with the lady. After that they were left to themselves, and had remained in the condition in which I found them ever since.

“The old man asked his daughter what she had seen, and she told him that when she was with her husband a handsome youth appeared, seated



on a throne and accompanied by a number of people with the heads of men and the feet of goats. He wanted her to flee with him, but she fainted from fear, and saw and heard nothing more.

“No one would help them because the girl had been the cause of the Prince's death, and they were miserably poor. The father was so grateful for my assistance that he said he would give me his daughter, were it not that he feared the fairy king would injure me; but under the circumstances he begged me to go away and not think anything more of her. I could not give her up, however, though I was much troubled as to what my fate would be if I should succeed in overcoming her father's scruples.

“This state of things continued for about a month, I continually begging, the father continually refusing, until he fell ill. I was most assiduous in my attendance on him, and at last he said I might marry his daughter when he died, making it a condition that I should remain with him till then.

“I naturally complied with this request, and in due course of time he died. Much to my disgust Mubárah insisted on taking possession of the girl for Malik-i-Sádik, and when I objected



68 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHÁR.

very strongly he represented so forcibly the advisability of keeping the fairy king as a friend, hinting at the same time that he might be induced to give up the lady to me, that I was obliged to yield, and we set out. We soon met the fairy army, and, accompanied by them, continued our journey to the King's palace. Finding Mubárák asleep one day when we had nearly reached our destination, I told the lady how much I loved her, and she having revealed to me that she reciprocated my affection, we were both weeping at our hard fate when Mubárák awoke, and seeing us in such distress hit upon a plan to make the lady unpleasant to the king by anointing her with a peculiar kind of oil, in the hope that she would then be handed over to me.

“On our arrival the King received us with the utmost honour, and gave us the greatest praise for our success; but when he went to the lady and found her so repulsive, his tone changed, and he sent for us and demanded an explanation. He taxed Mubárák first, but, on his most emphatically denying any share in the matter, he turned to me and was so fiercely angry that, fearing for my life, I snatched the sword from Mubárák's belt and plunged it into the King's body. He fell at once, and I thought he was dead, but



suddenly rising and doubling himself up into a ball he flew up into the air, and rushed backwards and forwards in a state of the greatest excitement. All at once he swooped down and gave me such a tremendous kick that I was hurled through the air for miles, and fell to earth in the midst of the densest and wildest jungle. I wandered about disconsolately, asking everyone about Malik-i-Sádik, and getting no satisfactory answer, until, wearied out, I was about to put an end to my life, when I was stopped by a veiled rider, and told to go to Turkey, where I should find three other darweshes in the same plight as myself, as well as the King of the country, and where all our troubles would be set right.

"This is my story, O King. Now all that remains is the fulfilment of our desires."



70 STORIES OF THE BAGH OF BAHÁR.

COMPLETION OF ALL THE STORIES.

This story was no sooner finished than a messenger came rushing from the mahal, with the glad tidings that the King had a little son, and thus his great ambition was fulfilled. Azád-bakht attributed his good fortune to the four fakírs, and all five went to look at the little Prince, whom they found to be an exceedingly beautiful child. The whole city was in a state of rejoicing, and extraordinary favours were granted to all the King's subjects, rich and poor, civil and military, when suddenly the mirth was turned to lamentation by the news that the little Prince had been spirited away in a cloud.

The whole country was in a state of consternation and sorrow, when on the third day a cloud was again seen hovering over the mahal, and



from it fell a richly jewelled cradle, in which lay the baby sucking his thumb.

The King built a palace for the darweshes, and would go and talk with them whenever the affairs of State allowed him to do so. But every month the little Prince was carried away in a cloud, and returned on the third day, bringing with him rich and costly gifts.

When this state of things had continued for seven years, the King consulted the fakirs as to how he should discover where his son went. They hit on the plan of putting into the child's clothes a letter expressing friendliness towards the unknown abstractor, which succeeded beyond their hopes, for on the evening of the next day that the little Prince went away, a reply fell near the King as he was sitting with the darweshes. It was an invitation for him to go, on a throne that was sent down for him, to a banquet given by the individual who carried off the child every month. The King, of course, went, taking with him the four darweshes, and after their eyes had been washed with collyrium they saw a magnificent throne of emeralds, on which was seated the King Malik-i-Shahbál, while near him was his daughter playing with the little prince. The two kings passed the day in feasting and pleasant con-



72 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHĀR.

versation, but when they met again on the second day, Malik-i-Shahbál asked his friend why he had brought the four darweshes with him. Azád-bakht explained matters, and on asking the powerful fairy king to do what he could towards fulfilling their desires, he immediately sent a deputation of Jins, commanding them to bring the tributary fairy kings and chiefs, and any human beings they might have in their possession, and threatening with the direst punishment those who refused to come.

While the messengers were absent, Malik-i-Shahbál explained why he carried off the little Prince every month. He had been most eager to have children, and registered a vow that if one were born to him it should be married to a human king's child, born at the same time. In course of time he had a daughter, and immediately sent his emissaries all over the world to find a little Prince who could be her husband. They returned with Azád-bakht's son, and since then he had been sent for every month, and would have been kept altogether but for the King's sympathy with his parents.

In the course of a few days the fairy kings and chiefs arrived, and the first to be questioned was Malik-i-Sádik, who very unwillingly gave up the



old Persian's daughter* and the fairy princess for whose sake the Prince of Nimroz† had become insane. Everyone denied any knowledge of Bihzád Khán and the European princess, until at last the King of the Seas confessed that he had been present (of course invisible) at the time of the accident, and had ‡ carried them both off, rather than let them be drowned.

No news could be heard of the Princess of Damascus,§ but by questioning his captains, Malik-i-Shahbál found that a great magician named Masalsal who lived in the mountain of Káf refused to come or to give up anyone. Thereupon a great army was sent to fetch him, and on his refusing to speak, he was put to death, his fortress destroyed, and the Princess produced. Everyone was most delighted at this happy ending, and the city was decorated in honour of it.

When a favourable opportunity occurred, the marriage of Azád-bakht's son and Malik-i-Shahbál's daughter was celebrated, and all the heroes and heroines of the darweshes' stories were made happy: the young merchant of Arabia Felix with the

* Story of the fourth darwesh.

† Story of the second darwesh.

‡ Story of the third darwesh.

§ Story of the first darwesh.



74 STORIES OF THE BĀGH O BAHĀR.

Princess of Damascus;* the Prince of Persia with the Princess of Bassora;† the other Prince of Persia with the Princess of Christendom;‡ Bihzād Khán with the Princess of Nimroz; the Prince of Nimroz with the fairy princess;§ the Prince of China with the old Persian's daughter.|| After this a feast of forty days was celebrated, and at the end of that time beautiful presents were bestowed on the heroes and heroines, and all returned to their native lands except Bihzād Khan and the merchant of Arabia Felix, who remained with Azád-bakht, and held high office in his kingdom.

May every disappointed man be made happy as these darweshes were!

* First darwesh's story.

† Second darwesh's story.

‡ Third darwesh's story.

§ Second darwesh's story.

|| Fourth darwesh's story.



CONCLUSION OF THE BOOK.

The author states that he began this book at the end of the year 1215 of the Hijri, and finished it at the beginning of the year 1217. He gave it the name *Bágh o Bahár*,* because the letters of those words represent the date, and also because reading it is like walking in a pleasant garden, which, unlike a real garden, has not the drawback of autumn, but is in a state of perpetual spring. Here follows a short poem in which the author begs for the reader's leniency, and invokes for him blessings in this life, and happiness in the life to come.

The work concludes with a short notice from the translator, Mir Amman, of Delhi, who states that he had translated it into the Urdu language with much difficulty, and ends with a short quotation from the Persian poem *Sháh Náma*, and a few words from himself in praise of his own translation.

* The Garden and Spring.



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