

CK

ON

93

H



*Yours truly,
John H. Nicholson.*

HALEK.

A ROMANCE

BY

JOHN H. NICHOLSON.

SECOND EDITION.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

BY

A. J. ROSS & CO., 26 QUEEN STREET, BRISBANE.

MCCCXCVL

A H



*Yours truly,
John H. Nicholson.*

HALEK.

A ROMANCE

BY

JOHN H. NICHOLSON.

SECOND EDITION.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR

BY

A. J. ROSS & CO., 26 QUEEN STREET, BRISBANE.

MDCCCXCVI.

1964

CONTENTS.



PUBLIC LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

	PAGE.
CHAPTER I.	
THE LAND OF BENUBEN ...	... 45
CHAPTER II.	
THE BLACK-WHITES ...	... 52
CHAPTER III.	
THE BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN ...	... 62
CHAPTER IV.	
HALEK IS CALLED A " REASONER " ...	... 72
CHAPTER V.	
THE BOOK OF ADARONI ...	... 82
CHAPTER VI.	
THE DIAMOND MERCHANT ...	... 93
CHAPTER VII.	
A STRANGE CONFECTION ...	... 101
CHAPTER VIII.	
THE APPRENTICESHIP ENDS ...	... 106
CHAPTER IX.	
THE ADVENTURES BEGIN ...	... 114
CHAPTER X.	
A STORY OF TWO LOVERS ...	... 127

	CHAPTER XI.	PAGE.
HALEK WRITES A POEM ...	...	138
	CHAPTER XII.	
SOME OF THE SECTS ...	...	147
	CHAPTER XIII.	
THE OLD MUSICIAN ...	...	154
	CHAPTER XIV.	
THE BETROTHAL OF HALEK AND TURONI ...	...	164
	CHAPTER XV.	
THE KASHEPAS ...	...	173
	CHAPTER XVI.	
GRASS MEDICINE ...	...	181
	CHAPTER XVII.	
A DISTURBING INFLUENCE ...	...	190
	CHAPTER XVIII.	
THE OLD POET AND THE YOUNG CRITIC ...	...	202
	CHAPTER XIX.	
ANECDOTES ...	...	212
	CHAPTER XX.	
THE HALL OF THE HARPERS ...	...	220
	CHAPTER XXI.	
A KAROMA'S REVENGE ...	...	229
	CHAPTER XXII.	
ZENAH SINGS TO HALEK ...	...	238
	CHAPTER XXIII.	
A REBUKE ...	...	249

	CHAPTER XXIV.	PAGE.
THE NEW HARP ...	...	262
	CHAPTER XXV.	
THE VISION OF KABRI ...	...	272
	CHAPTER XXVI.	
THE GRIEF SISTER ...	...	285
	CHAPTER XXVII.	
LOVE AND VICTORY ...	...	294
	CHAPTER XXVIII.	
A NEW RESOLUTION ...	...	303
	CHAPTER XXIX.	
THE DIAMOND MOUNTAINS ...	...	318
	CHAPTER XXX.	
THE WANDERER'S RETURN ...	...	328
	CHAPTER XXXI.	
"THOU ART MINE, AND I AM THINE" ...	...	337
	CHAPTER XXXII.	
ONLY A FEW FAINT STARS ...	...	347
	CHAPTER XXXIII.	
A BEGGAR WHO CAN GIVE ...	...	352
	CHAPTER XXXIV.	
THE PEACE THAT PASSES UTTERANCE ...	...	364
	CHAPTER XXXV.	
HALEK THE MESSENGER ...	...	377
THE RIDDLE OF "HALEK" ...	...	391
ERRATA ...	...	392

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF / AGRICULTURE

Go, little book, from this my solitude !
I cast thee on the waters—go thy ways !
And if, as I believe, thy vein be good,
The world will find thee after many days.

SOUTHEY.

WHAT IS HALEK?

By THE REV. G. D. BUCHANAN, B.A.

IF "a good book is the life blood" of a Master Spirit, then we have in HALEK the best of books. Here we have truth sublime, veiled in allegory; here we have the aspiration of the soul, set forth in life-like pictures. The sea has charms of its own, but the islands in the sea make the poet's paradise. In HALEK our little world is "Benuben"; it is in the ocean of immensity, with "Adaroni," the place of the blessed—eastward; and "Kashep," the abode of darkness—westward. In "Benuben" there is no rest for the earnest soul; influences from "Adaroni" on the one hand, and from "Kashep" on the other, are ever operative, even while the soul is bound in "Benuben." Here is the secret of the world's unrest, the cause of all its trials, perplexities and wars. These planes of world life are before us, and the journey from one to the other gives us the "Adventures of HALEK." This is a book every young man should read as he sets out on the journey of life. It will help him to know himself, and to understand life's meaning. It is a book of revelation to the desponding, and a book of encouragement to all. It uncovers the shams of "Benuben" and discovers the way of everlasting life.

It is a Christian book, not in a sectarian sense, but in the higher, fraternal, and spiritual sense, and therefore acceptable to men of all nationalities and religions—a forerunner of "the Christ that is to be"—whose spirit is destined to unite the human race in the unity of diversity.

It proclaims the way by which the seeker after truth can rise from the bondage of the flesh (Pagam), through the enlargement of the intellect (Karom), to the illumination of the Spirit (Sahitam). HALEK, struggling in the first, finds faith; journeying to the second,

he finds hope, and in the third, love. *Faith, Hope, Love, these three, but the greatest of these is Love.*

HALEK is a romance of the highest order, and when all the little books, written for little minds, shall be forgotten, HALEK will stand, as the dream of a seer, whose vision of life came to him in the wilds of the Australian bush.

The style of the book is excellent, and the story carries the reader on from stage to stage until the climax of aspiration is reached.

HALEK will never grow old, as humanity is the same always and everywhere. Multitudes yet unborn will be thankful that John H. Nicholson lived, dreamed and wrote.

G. D. BUCHANAN,

Minister of Wickham Terrace Presbyterian Church.

BRISBANE, MARCH 6TH, 1896.

REVIEW OF HALEK

BY

THEODORE WOOD,

Editor of THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN, Brisbane.

THIS great work is not so much the product of a master mind as the outpouring of an inspired pen. The pilgrimage of Halek from Pagam *viâ* Karom to Sahitam is allegorical of the earth life of one who, strong in his faith, and sure in his hope of future bliss, is yet destined to learn hard lessons, to lie prone under heavy blows, to be thrown into the very depths of despair, to be tried and re-tried, to be tempted and tortured in body and mind times out of number before he has sufficiently purified his nature, and conquered Self to a degree that will enable him only to experience delight in making others happy, and in subordinating all desires of the flesh to the will of God.

The first chapter is explanatory and descriptive, and shows throughout in a marked degree the author's intense earnestness of purpose and keen comprehension of the all pervading love and wisdom of the Creator, and of the justice of His laws. Our world is represented as an island, "Benuben," lying between the unknown shores of "Adaroni" (the abode of the blessed ones) on the Eastern side, from which direction

spring the love and light that illumine the world, and "Kashep," the unknown land of loveless darkness, which lies across a frozen sea to the West, where dwell those who, through their own misdoings, are no longer fitted to mingle with their kind, and who "have no wish to progress" towards the realms of light. Benuben is divided into three countries, Pagam, Karom, and Sahitam, representing the bad, medium, and best phases of human nature.

Halek's father is a wealthy merchant, of the world worldly, and necessarily a Pagama. Halek is apprenticed to a jeweller in a distant city of Pagam, and when the story opens he is entering upon his pilgrimage of life. His father has given Halek what he considered to be a good opening towards future commercial success, and, moreover, has promised to find him a considerable sum of money to enable him to set up in business for himself as a goldsmith when he shall have learned his trade. Halek, however, is a dreamer, and feels he possesses that within him which urges him to adopt a higher profession than that of a tradesman; and therefore he works reluctantly and against the grain. Always aiming for higher things than those amongst which his lot is cast, his life is one long struggle after the ideal shown him by his Soul in his early youth.

To closely follow the work in this review would be impossible in the space which we can allot to it. The whole book is so illumined throughout with fine thoughts, lofty sentiments, divine ethics, and grand passages of pure sonorous English that but meagre justice can be done to it by a reviewer. It is in our opinion an immortal work, and one which will rank high as a standard book long after its gifted author shall have gone to that home of bliss which he pictures so brightly and so admirably in his pages. It was, undoubtedly, written in advance of its time, but now at the close of the present century, when the dawn of a

light new to our thinking world is rapidly spreading its radiance over the darkness of materialism, the new edition of Halek, which is promised shortly, should find thousands of readers to welcome its appearance.

Those who *study* Halek will find it a work invaluable as a companion, soothing in its effects upon irritated nerves, strengthening to the weak, a gentle curb upon the proud, and at all times a noble incentive to the leading of a life which shall reflect credit upon the individual, and assist every one to guide his earthly course upon the great principles of Man's Loving Duty to his Creator and to himself. The author must be held perfectly free from any attempt to coerce anyone's belief in any given direction. Halek is a work that stands alone in our literature. Without bias of any kind, it incites only to the conception of noble thoughts and no less noble actions; nor once, in following the hero's pilgrimage, does the reader come across any passage which would lead him to suppose that the author of such a book was aught but a high-souled being standing upon an independent plane, who lived only for the good of his fellow man. Halek is a beautiful allegory, and must be read "between the lines" throughout.

The 2nd chapter may be tersely summed up as refined sarcasm upon our manners and customs, more especially upon the hollow and Pharisical religious professions of the time. "The men of Siroth are easily known by their dress; for when they are in the deep sadness of mourning, or in the extreme joyfulness of festivity, they must be dressed from head to foot in the blackest cloth that can be procured."

Again, amongst the Pagamas, or spiritually lowest and most worldly class, the principal faith is that of the "Black-Whites," who possess a *black* stone in their temple which the faithful must believe to be *white*, because it is an article of their faith to believe that

the stone is white, although the evidence of their reason and eyesight is directly opposed to the doctrine taught.

The effect of this endeavour to supplant reason by dogma is expressed with great subtlety in the following words: "Their form of worship is extremely simple. The elders stand in a circle round about the stone, and when they have joined hands, they rush thereon head first, and continue this exercise *until they are stunned by the repeated shocks* (the italics are our own). When the elders have performed their duties, it is the turn of the young men; then come the women; and lastly the children walk up to the stone, and touch it with their foreheads, but so as not to hurt themselves." Poor Halek had a hard time with his master Kobesh, because, to use his own words, "as you walk up to the stone, you must repeat the words *White is the stone*; and I could not bring myself to say that it was white before I could see that it was white."

The 3rd chapter runs on very much the same lines as the preceding one, caustic reference being made to our outward observances of the Sabbath, and to Mayoral elections. In regard to the inevitable collection at all places of worship, Halek wonders why so few people subscribe their names to the "petition" to the Great King which is handed round for them to sign, and he adds, "In all these contributions, it is the duty of the Uzza" (chief minister) "to be the first; yet, strange to say, there are Uzzas who are not the first, nor even the last; and who, every tenth day, read aloud a petition for the progress of useful works, towards which they themselves not only refuse to contribute, but which, in a variety of ways, they both discourage and obstruct." And again, "It is to be observed that the Pagamas think there is great merit in going to the Temple, in asking for things they do not want, in singing hymns of thanksgiving for what they have not received, and in hearing

the explanation of laws which they do not intend to keep."

It was at one of the Temple services that Halek first saw his ideal of perfection—her whom he called Turoni. This beautiful being—all love and purity—plays an important part in Halek's life and adventures. At this time she has just reached that stage of spiritual progression which causes her to leave Pagam and take up her residence in Karom, far advanced from that Soul-state which would allow Halek to bear her company. Halek never forgot his ideal, and the very thought of her inspired him with a longing after purity and progress to a higher state, but before he could move onward and set his foot firmly upon the soil of Karom, many a trial was before him, and many a victory over Self had to be grandly won.

With regard to the Mayoral elections, Halek typifies our system by describing the Pagam ceremony of "Choosing the Richest" with dry humour and delightful irony, and tells, in language all his own, how he, who is indeed the richest, who can eat and drink most, throw most money about, and during election times bear meekly the most abuse, is pretty sure to be elected for the current year.

In the 4th chapter Halek is sorely tried, but his faith in a bright Beyond brings him through, and the wondrous feeling of calm that comes over him after a great trial assures him that a constant struggle against evil brings victory over Self. "For some moments my soul was tossed in a tumult of rage when I discovered that Kobesh had slandered me to Rayamin, and now desired me to know it. But after a while the tempest ceased, and there was a wondrous calm, in which I beheld Kobesh from a remote region of thought where his arrows could not reach me."

Modern self-styled scientists are mildly ridiculed under the head of "The sect of the 'Reasoners.'" For

refined satire commend us to the following passage :
 "The Reasoners say that all things are governed by laws, and that the laws themselves are governed by one great law, beyond which is nothing, and which provides that all laws work harmoniously together. This Law of Laws is what the Reasoners worship; and, as a law can have neither form nor parts, and, as they desire to worship something visible, they adore a large painting which represents a point, a line, a triangle, a square, and a circle; for these, they say, are emblems of unchangeable laws."

In the next chapter the great lesson is taught that one victory over Self should not make any person too confident that the struggle is over. Halek had been so long and continuously galled by the petty malice of his master that he grew to hate him. On this subject Halek reflects, "When a young man achieves a victory over some sudden passion, or over a besetting vice, he thinks that he may rest secure, and forever enjoy the fruits of conquest. But as he becomes older, he learns that the lengthened enjoyment of victory prepares the way, not only for another conflict, but for an ignominious defeat." Halek adds to his reflection the following great truth. Speaking of Kobesh, he says: "While I pitied him he could not injure me; but when I hated him, I caused myself a thousandfold more pain than he had ever inflicted upon me. *Of all loads hatred is the heaviest.*" Then came the inevitable re-action to a spirit such as Halek's. He chanced to take up an old copy of the book of Adaroni, which was used as a lamp stand—so neglected is the Bible in Pagam. He read it between the lines, *and he understood it*; and this was the first turning point of his life. What he gathered from reading the book of Adaroni, and what everyone can learn from our Bible, is so admirably expressed that we cannot do better than reproduce Halek's words: "I found that the

Great King speaks of himself, not only as the father and friend of his people collectively, but of each person individually; and I saw that, whereas a man might all his life truly serve his prince, and yet remain unknown and unrecompensed, he who faithfully served the Great King would certainly receive an abundant reward."

"I saw that as a man finally is what he has become through repeated exercise of his free will in choosing between good and evil, he requires some place where this perfect man may be thus built up till he is fit to enter upon his highest duties in Adaroni—even as a ship is built in a dockyard, and not upon the ocean."

"It became clear to me that, if the Great King purposed to make Adaroni the very kingdom of kingdoms, in which each person, from the highest down to the lowest, shall discharge those duties for which he is most fit, and that if his subjects were naturally slothful and vicious, there must be a place set apart, out of Adaroni, where men may be made fit for Adaroni; and I could understand that Benuben was well suited to be such a place." *B. Benuben*

"I could also conceive that if there were persons who had so far destroyed within themselves the love of good, as heartily to believe that evil is good, there should be a place whither such persons might be removed, so that they should not pervert and corrupt others; I could understand that Kashep was well suited to be such a place." *(Kashep)*

These beautiful passages give the keystone of the whole structure of the book, and summarise the author's conception of the perfect justice and love of the Creator as shown in his scheme for regulating the spiritual progress of mankind. One more passage in this chapter we must quote from Halek's reflections:—
 "The law of progress may be thus stated: Learn what is true; desire what is good; though still prone to

evil, do not commit evil ; good deeds will surely follow ; and the good deeds which you at first performed with difficulty, because it was chiefly your judgment which approved of them, will afterwards be performed with full delight when you have learnt to love them."

The 7th chapter is evidently designed to show that a brain clogged by the use of alcohol and drugs cannot appreciate the higher joys pertaining to a really spiritual nature, and that the pure perceptions of the very soul itself are deadened if the senses are dulled by the use of drugs. To exemplify this, Pasakh, an alchemist, is introduced who presents Halek with some confectionery which upsets his brain's equilibrium and forces him to turn every subject, however serious, into unseemly jest. This Pasakh does not appear again in the book till near its close, when he plays a most important part in Halek's life.

In the 8th and 9th chapters the good wrought in Halek's nature by his study of the book of Adaroni is clearly shown by his determination to follow a profession by which he may exalt and do good to the hearts and minds of others, rather than to stick to a mere earthly trade the sole object and aim of which is to amass riches for selfish ends. To fulfil his high purpose Halek leaves Pagam and commences his pilgrimage by starting for Karom.

He has with him 100 gold pieces which his father had sent him, and he feels rich and secure in his possessions ; but many trials await him, and bitter are his last experiences of Pagam. He loses the gold that is so valued in Pagam, but finds instead of it a more than adequate return in the brightness of hope and in the consolation of faith. By the misfortunes that happen to him on his journey, and the adventures that he meets with, and which are graphically described, Halek learns that there must be no lagging on the path from Benuben to Adaroni, so, taking to heart the lessons he

has learnt, he falters not by day or night until he arrives at Karom, and enrolls his name on the list of its inhabitants.

So far, the author has described Halek as one who has been forced by circumstances to live amongst worldlings pure and simple, but who, directly the opportunity offered, seized it, and cast his life amongst a better class, hoping thereby to improve himself, and eventually become fit company for the noblest men and women that the earth possesses and ultimately for the angels.

Halek's life has been divided practically into three parts. We have now done with the first ; and the more we study the hero in the second part, the more we admire the very fine intuition possessed by the author into the various sides of human nature. In Pagam, Halek possessed a higher soul that the majority of those around him. Upon his arrival in Karom he finds himself of a lower order, for he has not yet thrown off the taint of Pagam, nor can he see at first with the eyes of a Karoma, and appreciate their gentleness ; for instance, he cannot understand that reproofs can be given in loving earnest by a Karoma for the good of others and not incited by uncharitable feelings. The kindly nature of the Karomas is also strange to him, and he has gradually to pass through the experiences of a mental *terra incognita*, and to endure many trials before he fits himself to rank on a level with the best Karomas, and to really understand the happiness of a complete effacement of self for the benefit of humanity. As he rises to more lofty heights, so does Halek in the second part of his narrative use still more noble and majestic language than before.

The whole tone of the author's work becomes richer and more expansive as his ideas grow with Halek's advancement, and at times we run across passages than which no finer are to be found in the English language

both for purity of diction and for the music of their expression, but such will be noted at the proper time. At present we proceed with our epitome of the work.

The 10th chapter is mostly taken up with the story of Milroth and Zarma, conveying one of the most beautiful lessons, expressed in the purest language, of the action of faith, and the triumphant reward of sublime courage under adversity and oppression. Milroth, a young lapidary, was enamoured of a poor but beautiful maiden named Zarma, but the girl's father favoured a rich suitor and forbade the match between Milroth and Zarma. In grief Milroth wandered about, and at length he slept. Then a voice seemed to say to him, "Renounce thy Love, and love shall raise thee up."

And with these words a wondrous light shone within him, and he exclaimed: "I yield thee up, O Zarma, to the power that is stronger than I."

Milroth saw his Love once more, and set out for the Diamond Mountains to seek the means of supporting Zarma as her father would wish. Here we have an allegory in an allegory—of thoughtful conception, a veritable *adytum in adyto*. What do the Diamond Mountains signify but that in solitude the intellect may seek, but not necessarily find the jewel of hidden truth, which lies far from the beaten track of the ordinary traveller? Zarma was Milroth's ideal, and he went forth in search of the means of supporting and proving his faith in his ideal; he journeyed in hope and trust; his spirit was cheered by the voice of sympathising nature. "He lived in solitude and silence. More than once his courage failed him, and a fierce hunger for human companionship gnawed at his heart; but he communed with the skies, and the wild flowers whispered to him; he made friends of the birds, and the insects taught him; and he laboured zealously from day to day." The italics are our own.

In the next chapter, the eleventh, we have in the "Vision of Lormuz," one of gems of this noble work. It must be read aloud before the sympathetic harmony of words and ideas can be followed in all their musical richness. This chapter also contains "The Song of Halek," deeply expressive of the pilgrim's soul longing to reach its ideal of purity and love. In the "Vision of Lormuz," the following musical description of sound and colour is not anywhere that we know of, surpassed in English prose:—

"Behold a tree standing alone upon a bare mountain.

The sun rises and the tree is transfigured, while his leaves, waving in the breeze, glitter like jewels.

Sometimes the wind brings him from afar the perfume of trees of his own kind, which he has never seen. Then do his bright leaves quiver and droop."

The depth and pathos of Halek's song may be gathered from a recital of it:—

THE SONG OF HALEK.

I.

I call to the maid whom I named long ago Turoni. She sat in the Temple, her white-haired father beside her. I gazed on her face, and my soul filled with love.

I am singing to thee—Turoni.

II.

Unknown to me was her dwelling; what was her name I knew not; only her beauty I knew, and the gentle grace of her movements. Only one look did she grant me before she departed.

I am seeking for thee—Turoni.

III.

Many around me love and are loved in return; many a song is sung in the light of a beautiful eye. But I sing alone, and the tone dies out in the darkness.

I am waiting for thee—Turoni.

IV.

Only in dreams do I see thee; my love has lived only on hope. Show me a token to tell me I hope not in vain. My heart is weary with looking and longing for thee.

I love thee alone—Turoni.

The 12th chapter deals with Karom, and shows that although there are many religious sects, they are less positive and more trusting than in Pagam. They are, briefly, too refined for Pagam, but not sufficiently pure for Sahitam, the third and final stage of man's spiritual progression.

In the next chapter Halek, determined by the splendid language of Erimoth the harper—"Music is the voice which cries aloud in the wilderness, and murmurs in the perfumed groves of the lovers. Music slides her tremulous tones into the heart of the humble, and thunders forth her call before the fortress of the proud"—resolves to be a musician, and listens to a most instructive lesson on patience, from Erimoth, which concludes with the words, "Ardour without patience and a wise ordering of our steps, is but as the glare of the meteor which rushes earthwards ere we have rightly beheld it. The fiery sun and the grave moon know their seasons." In this chapter the strange woman Zenah, is introduced, representing disorderly affection and discontent. Halek, acting on his good impulse, leaves this woman though she excites his sympathy, to seek his ideal from whom he has received an unexpected summons—the Beautiful Maiden whom he calls Turoni. Having found her spending her life and energies, as might be expected, in the service of others, Halek thinks his bliss is now permanent, but he soon finds out that there is truth in the fable of "The King's Horse," which shows "the difference that may be between what we conceive, and what we produce, the imperceptible degrees by which good becomes turned

into evil, and the ease with which we flatter ourselves and accept the flattery of others."

The fifteenth chapter is an analytic epitome of the various moral states of man, and shows the author's intimate acquaintance with the higher truths of spiritual life as well as with the ordinary weaknesses of humanity. It is a caution for the present, and a guide for the future.

"The Story of Rimnag," which follows, shows how surely a man may conquer himself by faith in God, and a determination to keep His laws; and how, at the end of his trial he may become a valued member of society. Amongst the many beautiful ideas in this story, the Lily holds first place. Rimnag is so engrossed by self, and merely carnal pleasures, that he cannot bear to see a white lily—the emblem of purity; so, when a great physician sends Rimnag on a pilgrimage, he gives him a pot of earth in which is hidden the living bud of a lily, as yet unseen above the surface. Rimnag has to tend this bud until it blossoms with his own moral improvement into a lovely flower which he refuses to part with at any price to those who tempt him to do so, but which he eventually gives to a pure woman whom he finds worthy of the gift. It is a lovely story worthy of the author and his work.

In the 17th chapter Halek yields to insidious temptation while yet he knows it not, and loses his situation with the good man Alsor. He accepts another, however, which he thinks will suit him better. In reality he neglects the stern business of life for indulgence in the romantic side of existence.

In the 20th chapter we meet one of the grandest passages that occurs in the whole work. The scene is laid in the hall of the Harpers, and the author thus describes Halek's thoughts as he listens to the music of Meshran:—"Then did the music rise and fall, and rise again, pulsing in solemn rhythm, till I saw the

island no more, but alone on some serene height, I took into my heart the fierce pangs, the pining sorrows, the loneliness, and the grand endurance of those bright spirits who hope and have not, who toil without sympathy, who fight without victory, but who still strive upwards, urged and sustained by the glorious instinct that at last, somewhere, it shall be well with them."

In the 23rd chapter Halek, in a conversation with Turoni, places love before duty, but is gently and lovingly corrected by her. He is made to see the weaknesses of his nature; but the confirmation of Turoni's words by Erimoth and Zukku reduces him to a state of bitterness and despair.

In the next chapter Halek rejects self-indulgence at the expense of independence, and his conduct begins to receive its own reward.

Halek sounds the keynote to his whole character when he writes to his brother that he "would rather be an unnoticed and struggling aspirant towards some noble end, than the indolent inheritor of untold wealth." The 25th chapter concludes with the dream of Kabri, wherein is given in splendid language an interview between God and Man.

Next, Halek's employer, Kabri, is called to Adaroni, and the "Grief Sisters" are introduced "whose choice work is the art of making others happy."

The 27th is an important chapter. Halek, ever too anxious to succeed quickly, fails again in his musical exhibition—in his dream of art; and, falling under the spell of the temptress Zenah, flings his good influences behind him in despair. The spell of the Evil One continued to enslave him for 70 days till the climax came. Halek awakened and wrote in his Record, "*Whatever else I may aspire to, I resolve first to aspire towards becoming a good man.*"

Halek now makes another attempt to secure an easy life without much effort, and again he fails. Then his final resolve is taken to win the object of his ambition by hard work, and he leaves for the Diamond Mountains to undergo a probation of several years. Previous to starting he makes the almost superhuman sacrifice of Self in offering to the woman he loved with *such* a love her freedom, and liberty to follow the dictates of her own heart in his absence without reference to him. Halek's farewell letter to Turoni contains high resolves and noble sentiments. He describes the principal aids that man requires during his pilgrimage on earth, and adds "But to crown all this he must love, as a part of himself, some woman who can join with him in his aspirations, and share in all his joys and sorrows."

The 29th chapter sees Halek through his six years' probation at the Diamond Mountains. How altered are his motives as he leaves Karom from those which directed him when he left Pagam! He left Pagam to cultivate one of the fine arts in Karom; he leaves Karom for the Mountains with the hearty intention of keeping the laws of Adaroni. In the wild solitudes he keeps them, makes a fortune, and returns thinking to enjoy the rest of his life in ease and comfort with Turoni. But Self has not yet been sufficiently purified. Adaroni is now the home of the loved Turoni; and Halek, yielding to despair, and with his dearest hopes shattered, hardens his heart and rebels against the all-wise laws of the great King. But soon his good angel prevails, and Halek thenceforward commences to live for others, and to study their happiness before his own.

But not yet is the final victory won. Halek, although doing much good work and making the happiness of others round him, still seeks earth's joys and now would wed Shashuna, who had been Turoni's adopted sister. But she and Zakku are lovers. A noble

impulse seizes Halek, he resigns Shashuna to Zakku, and provides for them both. Halek is rewarded by a bright vision of Turoni, who cheers him with the words, "Rejoice, and fear not; thou art mine, and I am thine, and we shall surely meet in sweet love, for love is lord of all, and there is naught stronger than love, and no power of evil can prevail against it. Rejoice, therefore, and fear not."

But the inevitable reaction sets in upon Halek with awful sternness, until in black despair he thus describes his wretched plight:—"I called to the Great King but I received no answer; I wandered throughout the night-watches by the shore of the sea; I called upon the Adaronas to come to me and show themselves that I might be comforted; but I only saw the awful sky, the sullen sea, and the barren rocks. I was conscious of nothing outside of myself, and in myself was no power of helping myself."

The 33rd chapter gives us the meeting of Halek and Pasakh after many years, and the two exchange confidences. This chapter is very powerfully written, and ably expresses the thoughts that have ever tortured or consoled most thinking men and women.

In the 34th chapter Halek undergoes his last and most terrible trial—the trial of his faith in the immortality of his soul. In this chapter are thoroughly analysed the inmost feelings of human nature. In Halek's case the original germ of good has never been lost, hence he can eventually come out of his ordeal purified, and say, "There is the peace which arises from the fulfilment of our desires; there is the peace which arises from our renunciation of them. Each has its proper time and use. But when a man has ceased from thinking of his own immediate happiness as the first thing to be attained at any cost; when he recognises that his first duty is to consider the welfare of others, at any cost; when he has done with

meanness, and coldness, greed of gain, and greed of pleasure that brings pain; when he has lost the lust of power, and the lust of fame; when he utters no more sullen complaints, and bravely holds to his highest hopes, then, whether he has enjoyed all, or surrendered all, he will know that peace, which had hitherto passed his understanding, and which, now that he dwells therein, passes his utterance."

In the last chapter of the book Halek arrives at Sahitam from Karom, and tells how on the journey he was tempted in the wilderness and how he repelled the Evil One. He describes the loving purity of Sahitam life, and eventually resolves to go as a Messenger to Pagam, closing his stated resolution in the following noble words: "I have now found the choice-work for which the whole of my life has been a preparation, and which alone will satisfy the eager desires of my heart."

"And I am an artist still; for the fine arts do but represent what is beautiful; but the art of arts teaches men to make their lives beautiful. I will go to the Pagamas and tell them what I have learnt. I will open to them my hand as well as my heart; for they are as little children, to whom doctrine is nothing, if it be not interpreted by kindly deeds. I will teach them the meaning of renunciation—to which they can never be stirred, save by one who of his love and pity for them daily renounces before their eyes."

Upon Halek's departure the Prince gave him "the Diamond Sandals and the Ruby Signets, which mark a messenger from Sahitam to Pagam. The sandals mean that the wearer takes no step without the light of the law on his path; and the signets, one for each hand, mean that he who wears them does no act which is not animated by the purest love."

In conclusion, we may be allowed to express the earnest hope that before long Mr. Nicholson may see

his way to bring out a second volume continuing Halek's history until his final reception into Adaroni.

Before taking leave of Halek it may be well to inform those who have never heard of the book that it is a purely Australian work, and that it was written in the solitude and silence of the Australian bush.

LETTERS RELATING TO HALEK.

From the Rev. G. A. M. Pringle.

ALL SAINTS RECTORY, BRISBANE,

I have read your book, HALEK, with great interest. It is written upon an unusual topic, but I have yet to learn that the taste for a dignified and sustained allegory has altogether died out—at any rate, I still preserve it; and your book has therefore caused me great pleasure.

The story is interesting in itself; the allegory is just, and worked out with skill, while the great thoughts represented in classical English, with a wealth of poetical imagery, make me desire to keep such a book always by me after it has been read. I wish, therefore, that when you bring out your new edition you would send me a copy.

From the Chief Justice of Queensland, Sir Samuel Griffith, G.C.M.G.

I am very glad to hear that you are going to bring out a new edition of HALEK, and hope it will have a large sale. I enclose an order for four copies.

From the Rev. W. Osborne Lilley, F.R.H.S., author of "The New Theology."

Who would not read HALEK? Its graphic delineations of the soul's struggles, its unveiling of the heart's tragedies, its subtle touches of satire, its proverbial wisdom and quaint parables, its melodies of hope amid the dirges of loss and pain, its revealing of the everlasting foundations underlying the *débris* of time, make it a book for the weary masses, the enjoyment of the cultured, and one that will be more highly appreciated as the world advances into the light of Christ.

From Denis O'Donovan, Esq., C.M.G., Parliamentary Librarian.

Hearing that you are soon to bring out an Australian edition of HALEK, with Introduction, Key, etc., I beg that, as a small tribute to the literary merit of the work, my name may be placed on the list of subscribers for two copies.

From Mr. John Gordon Stewart, Private Tutor, Brisbane.

I am much pleased to learn that you are bringing out a new edition of HALEK—the Pilgrim's Progress of the 19th Century. I have long admired it as a contribution to the solution of the problem of existence, as a book containing a protest against the cold pessimism and the aggressive cynicism of an age of intellectual corruption, and as the vehicle for a pure and elevating philosophy, none the less convincing, that it is conveyed through a charming and artistically-woven story.

You may put me down for three copies.

From Mr. H. L. Davis, Queen-street, Brisbane.

IF HALEK affords the general public half the pleasure it has afforded me, your name will become a household word in Queensland.

Your admirable exposition of the most beautiful and most highly prized Christian ethics is so presented as to win the reader's sympathy. Every page sparkles with a light that should commend your book to those desirous of learning from the Great Master.

Did circumstances permit, I could wish to subscribe for as many copies of HALEK as would enable me to give one to every young man of my acquaintance, but I must content myself with two copies, for which kindly add my name to your list of subscribers.

From Mr. R.H. Roe, M.A., Head Master of the Boys' Grammar School, Brisbane.

I shall be glad to take two copies of the new edition of HALEK. It is in my judgment, as a literary work, a "well of English undefiled," and no one can read it without gaining spiritual elevation from the nobility of its moral tone.

From Mr. Granville G. Miller, a Judge of the District Court.

I am very much delighted to hear you propose to bring out another edition of HALEK. I think that, irrespective of the natural charm of the book, the purity of the English, and the classical beauty of its style make it a very valuable addition to our libraries.

From the Rev. Hugh Jones, M.A., Minister of Wharf Street Congregational Church, Brisbane.

YOUR HALEK is no ordinary book; it could have been written only by a man of spiritual genius and of deep Christian experience. When it is re-published, will you please send me two copies of the book, as I should like to help to lift up on high a torch that lights up the Spiritual Way?

From the Rev. William Whale, Baptist Minister of City Tabernacle, Brisbane.

I find you are about to issue a new edition of HALEK, and am almost offended that you have not informed me earlier of the date of issue, for I am anxious to have a copy for my own use. Please put me down for two copies, and use my name with anybody who cares for such influence as a commendation. You should have a large response, and I hope you will be well repaid for your venture.

N.B.—It may be well to point out that the foregoing letters refer to the London edition of HALEK, and that they were received by me before the publication of this Australian edition.

J.H.N.

THE ADVENTURES

OF

HALEK.

REVISED EDITION.

DEDICATED

TO

SIR SAMUEL WALKER GRIFFITH,

G.C.M.G.,

Chief Justice of Queensland.

My Dear Sir Samuel,

As you would be the last to let your generous sympathy be mistaken for the frigid condescension of a patron, I address you as a fellow-worker, as one who loves his country and is proud to serve it.

Like myself you have passed your youth in Australia, and have grown with the growth of Queensland; but while you have obtained eminence in more than one sphere, I have been content to labour in obscurity, and to know that men like you appreciate my work.

Allow me to express my recognition of the kindly spirit in which you permitted me to dedicate this volume to you.

I am,

My Dear Sir Samuel,

Sincerely yours,

JOHN H. NICHOLSON.

Brisbane,

March, 1896.

PREFACE.



THE first printed copy of HALEK found its way from London to Brisbane in 1882. It had neither preface, comment, nor key. In this, the first Australian edition, I have not only supplied these wants, but given a number of letters from well-known men, in order that the general public, at any rate of Queensland to begin with, may see what is thought of HALEK by some of those whose opinions are worth having.

And now a few words as to the origin and the teaching of my book.

HALEK was begun in the little town of Springsure, about the year 1873. Being at that time almost destitute of books, I tried to appease my hunger by writing a few; and I had no difficulty in determining that I would write a work which would combine the most engaging qualities of Robinson Crusoe with those of The Arabian Nights.

Suddenly, however, while writing away without any definite plan, the allegory, HALEK, shot up like a new volcano, shouldered aside my meaningless trash, and poured itself forth in a tumult of delightful imaginings. But when the hero of my story had crossed the river Bak, and fallen asleep in the land of Karom, not

another thought came to me. The book was not touched for years, and the last chapter was not written until 1880.

Halek is the Hebrew for *pilgrim*, and I meant the book to be a Pilgrim's Progress; but not until long after I had written it, did I discover that my allegory had come to me precisely as *the Pilgrim's Progress* had come to John Bunyan; for I had either forgotten, or not read, his rhyming preface in which he says:—

“When at the first I took my pen in hand
Thus for to write, I did not understand
That I at all should make a little book
In such a mode; nay I had undertook
To make another, which when almost done,
Before I was aware I this begun.”

There is, of course, nothing new in *HALEK*. The book teaches that there is a God, that we, in our very inmost, are one with that God, that we are the immortal heirs of those fine delights which are the fruit of conquering our lower, and cultivating our higher nature.

HALEK teaches that every young person should study one of the ennobling arts. My pilgrim chose music; and it was in song that he sought to utter his love for the beautiful maiden, Turoni. But there is a higher music even than this: only those have “the harps of God” who have “gotten the victory over the beast.” (Rev. xv.).

Something of the teaching of *HALEK* is to be found in one of my leaflets:—

I.

- He finds not gold who will not stoop to seek;
- He is not strong who was not first made weak.
- He is not good who would not better be;
- He never sees who never longs to see.

II.

- He shall have water who is sore athirst;
- He shall have love who loves not self the first;
- He shall have life who would for others live;
- He shall have all who freely all would give.

Something of the teaching of *HALEK* is to be found in my song, “Rouse, Australians!” which, I am glad to say, has been sung pretty well throughout the length and breadth of Queensland.

And now I will beg the indulgent reader to pardon me for closing this preface with some of my own verses on my favourite subject—music.

—OUR SONG AT LAST!—

I.

Music flows from purple hills,
Chimes and rhymes in mountain rills,
Throbs through all the gleaming spheres;
— And the true musician hears,
— Knows from whom the music springs,
— Praises God, and straightway sings.

II.

Eyes are silent; music tells
The deepest thought that in us dwells;
Music utters all our woe,
And the love we cannot show;
Music finds the heart of each—
'Tis the universal speech.

III.

When the work of life is done,
 When the fight is fought and won,
 When the dross is burnt away,
 When we break the mould of clay,
 When the pains of life are past,
 We shall find our song at last.

*Glenn
 Assurance of
 Heavenly Bless*

JOHN H. NICHOLSON,
 SPRING STREET
 BRISBANE

March 26th, 1896.

KEY.

WITH the exception of *akkash* and *Kashep*, the words, whose meaning is given in this Key, are either pure Hebrew, or they have been formed by me from Hebrew roots.

The words *akkash* and *Kashep* have points of resemblance, and are formed in accordance with philological views of mine which may or may not be correct. There are also points of resemblance between the words *Adaroni* and *Turoni*.

The vowels in all the following words should be pronounced as in Italian. The name *Halek*, therefore, should be pronounced *Háh-lek*. The Hebrew termination *oth* should rhyme with the English word *boat*. *Kh* should have the guttural sound of *ch* in German.

Some English people are apt to lose the musical sound of the name *Turoni*: it should be pronounced as an Englishman would pronounce *Too-ró-nee*.

Abdan—Destruction.

Adaróni—Heaven.

Akkash—Some intoxicating liquors and drugs, such as opium, chloral, &c. In the romance "Halek" wine is not classified with *akkash*.

Anek—The self-hood.

Aven—Nothingness, annihilation.

Bak—Compunction, contrition.

Bóded—Loneliness.

Benúben—Between: the probationary state of man on earth, with power to choose between good and evil.

Hálek—Pilgrim.

Károm—The first reforming spiritual stage.

Károma—One who earnestly sets himself to begin to obey God by breaking off evil habits.

Káshep—Hell.

Káshepa—One in whom the love of evil habitually predominates.

Khóshel—Darkness, ignorance, utter blindness to things of the spirit.

Kóbesh—One who tramples under foot, one who rules by compulsion, and merely from the lust of dominion.

Meribóth—From the crowd (*Vide* Hebrew psalter, ps. v. 7).

Náhamah—The name of a woman whose business was to comfort those in affliction.

Pásakh—Lame.

Págam—State of the natural man, the ordinary worlding.

Sáhitam—The state in which celestial love is paramount.

Sháshuna—Lily.

Siróth—England.

Turóni—My darling—literally *my dove*. = *spiritual*

Zénah—Impure affection.

CONTENTS OF CHAPTERS.

THE ADVENTURES OF HALEK.

CHAPTER I.

*The Land of Benuben.

THE Land of Benuben is an island lying between Adaroni on the East, and Kashep on the West.

It is divided into three provinces or principalities, namely, Pagam, Karom, and Sahitam. Of these Pagam is the most northerly, and it extends to the Frozen Sea; travelling southwards from Pagam you come to Karom, and thence to Sahitam.

The Great King of Adaroni is Lord over all the Land of Benuben; and the rebellious inhabitants of Kashep are also under his beneficent rule.

The people of Adaroni excel all others, for the purest love animates and directs their whole conduct. Their wisdom is of the highest; and it is affirmed by some, not only that the arts and sciences known by the Benubenas are derived from the Adaronas, but that there is not one useful plant, or one serviceable

*Those who possess this and the first edition of "Halek" will see that I have made many, but for the most part, unimportant emendations.—J.H.N.

animal in Benuben, which did not first exist in Adaroni; because it is certain that in the most ancient times the whole Land of Benuben was a barren desert.

The Adaronas are of exceeding beauty; their speech has the music of poetry; their manners are royal. Poverty, disease, and unhappiness are unknown in that wondrous kingdom.

Kashep is the very opposite of Adaroni. The Kashepas breathe hatred to each other, have no delight in useful labour, and desire no knowledge except that of hurtful arts. Their faces are horrible; their speech harsh; their manners disgusting. They are all more or less afflicted with disease; all are more or less unhappy; and the misery of their state is only tolerable through the wise government of the Great King.

Kashep may indeed be considered as a house of correction, for it is only inhabited by those Benubenas who wholly give themselves up to evil, so that the happiness of others would be destroyed, were they not separated till they are willing to make an orderly progression in usefulness and wisdom.

And now, before beginning my own history, I must speak of the three nations of Benuben, for their dispositions are widely different. The Pagama serves himself first; the Karoma serves others; the Sahitama serves the Great King before all, and finds that in fulfilling this duty, he fulfils all duties to others, and to himself as well. The Pagama is chiefly stirred by emulation; the Karoma by the love of being useful; the Sahitama by the love he bears to all living things.

The Pagama will do good because it is expedient; the Karoma because it is right; the Sahitama because he loves goodness. The Pagama may be naturally good; the Karoma will force himself to be good; the Sahitama dwells in the liberty and the peace of love. The Pagama excuses his evil, and magnifies his goodness, seeks wealth, and is happy if he obtains it; the Karoma deploras his evil, and speaks not of his goodness, desires to know the truth, and is happy if his conscience is clear. The Sahitama is ever turned from evil, would love and be loved, and is happy when he causes the happiness of others.

Benuben, as already stated, is separated from Adaroni on the one side, and from Kashep on the other side, by a sea. Now some of the Pagamas maintain that Benuben is all the world, and that no land lies on either side of them; but all the Karomas believe in the existence of Adaroni and Kashep; and only when they have been long left without fresh evidence thereof, do they ever doubt that there are such places. The Sahitamas live in the perfect assurance that these wonderful places really exist.

But the intercourse between Benuben and the places beyond the great sea is such that doubts concerning the existence of Adaroni may easily arise in the minds of those naturally hard of belief: mysterious vessels are known to leave the lonely shores of Benuben during the night; in the morning certain persons are missing, and are never again seen. Those who believe in nothing beyond Benuben say that they have been carried out to sea by some unknown power or authority, and that they were drowned; while believers say that

the good have been taken to Adaroni, and the evil to Kashep;—but among those who believe this last, there is a diversity of opinion, some holding that those taken to Kashep are never permitted to come thence; while others believe that the Great King would keep none in prison for ever, merely as a punishment, but that, as they consent to be purified, he permits them to proceed to Adaroni, where suitable work is found for them.

Throughout Pagam there is the same sort of dispute concerning the commerce between Benuben and the lands beyond the sea. Sometimes a Pagama finds in his garden a wonderful fruit-tree, such as none have ever seen; perhaps he says that a visitor from Adaroni planted the seed in the night; or he may say that he himself caused it to form in the earth from some substance which he purposely placed there. Sometimes a bale of some strange drug is discovered on the shore; the learned try to discover its uses, perhaps it may be found that a small quantity abates the violence of a fever, and that a large quantity causes madness. Then some say that a Kashepa left it in order to have the pleasure of hearing that the inhabitants of a whole town had been seized with madness, and destroyed one another; while others say that the drug was a present from the Great King who desires to heal all the diseases of his subjects.

In all ages there have been those who wonder that the intercourse between the Benubenas and the Adaronas should not be as open as that between the Pagamas and the Karomas, but, on the other hand, there are many, chiefly lovers and poets, who declare that they have seen wonderful ships float by night into

the silent bays of Benuben; and some affirm that they have spoken face to face with the beauteous messengers.

The Pagamas are given to studying the sciences, and some of their teachers have taught the purest morality; but with many their learning is extensive rather than deep, and laborious without being elevated. The Pagama glories in disproving; the Karoma in proving; while the Sahitama feels and knows without needing proof.

Although the languages of Pagam are below those of Karom in depth of meaning and in copiousness, the Pagamas have produced poems which are highly esteemed even in Sahitam. In their comedies there is much wit skilfully displayed, together with much grossness which they are at little pains to conceal, except so that there shall be ostentation in the very concealment. Their tragedies are magnificently conceived, and abound in the most noble sentiments; but even the best of them contain many passages which displease the Karomas, and repel the Sahitamas.

I will say nothing of the divers religious sects among the Benubenas, until I speak of my own history; but I may here mention that the Pagamas do not believe that the spirit of religion will purify the affections and ennoble the life. When a Pagama does ill, he blames the laws rather than himself who broke them, and he knows nothing of that fine feeling which the Karomas call *contrition*. The first question of the Pagama is, What money shall I gain by this?—with the Karoma—Shall I become a better man by this? So the Pagama readily yields to temptation, and the more easily becomes worse, because to progress in goodness requires

conscious effort, whereas to lapse into evil only requires indifference.

The Book of Adaroni exists in the Pagamese language, and even the lowest savages have portions thereof; but while the Karomas deem it the first of books, it is the last which a Pagama will read,—the learned saying that it is beneath them, and the unlearned that it is above them.

The laws of Pagam are of ancient origin, and, for the most part, founded on equity; but they are capable of so many contradictory interpretations and glosses, that they often appear to be, and sometimes are, both iniquitous and cruel.

The manners of the civilized Pagama are sufficiently polished, but compared with the habitual graciousness of the Sahitamas, their most refined courtesies are absurd and even barbarous.

Slavery prevails throughout Pagam, yet the Pagamas themselves declare that it only exists among the savages; but the Karomas call a man a slave who loves not his work and his master also. The Pagamas are indignant when told that slavery is common among them; although it is certain that even in the most civilised districts of Pagam, a rich man can buy men, women, and children to be his slaves.

I must now speak of a strange custom which prevails among the Pagamas: When a child is born, a small waxen image is made to represent him. This is called his *anek*. It is begun with wax from the *anek* of his parents; and when the child has completed his fourteenth year, it is given over to him, to shape and adorn as he may choose.

The *anek* is meant to be an image of what a person desires to become, of what he supposes himself to be, or of what he wishes others to think him. In the first case, attending to the *anek*, and beautifying it, may do good; in the second case it may do harm; in the third case, it is acting a most detestable sort of lie. Others again, boldly and defiantly make the *anek* an image of some evil which they love; and not only do they fall down before this hideous idol, but they compel those who are dependent on them to do the same.

CHAPTER II.

The Black-Whites.

MY ancestors for several generations have been wool-merchants in Siroth, a district famous for the great wealth of its noblemen, the bravery of its people, and the singular reverence with which the Tenth Day is regarded.

The men of Siroth are easily known by their dress; for when they are in the deep sadness of mourning, or in the extreme joyfulness of festivity, they must be dressed from head to foot in the blackest cloth that can be procured.

My father had settled in Khoshek, a small town on the coast. He was a merchant of good repute, sufficiently wealthy, and of a generous disposition; but when opposed in his designs, he was both hasty in his anger, and violent in his resentment. Moreover, as is usual with the merchants of Pagam, he was so taken up with the cares and the delights of his business, that he considered all other things of little or no account.

Of my mother I remember nothing; of my step-mother worse than nothing. I have been told that my mother was beautiful and gentle; I know that my stepmother was vain and imperious.

My two brothers had shewn themselves to be good men of business; and my father admitted them as partners. But I, the youngest of the family, appeared neither to know the value of money, nor to feel the excitement of gaining it; so that my father and brothers often made me the object of their raillery, and sometimes of their anger.

The truth is that I was too much of a dreamer; and often, when I should have been casting up accounts, my father would find that I had been essaying to write verses, after the style of certain Karomese poems which had filled me with an interior delight. Indeed, I am persuaded that it was my love for these poems, which first kindled in me the desire to dwell among the people who wrote them.

When I was ten years old I was sent to a school in Khoshek. The system used was then common in Pagam, and was called the "Mill." The benches of one class form a large circle; the pupils sit in one row on the benches, with their backs turned inwards; while the master, with a stout whip in his hand, paces round and round inside the circle. The least sign of idleness brings a sharp blow; but it is almost impossible to be idle, for the pupil's head is tied in a sort of cage which projects far beyond his face, so that he cannot look in his neighbour's face, a gag prevents his speaking, and both hands are required to hold up the heavy wooden books. At the end of an hour the gag is removed, and whilst the master still walks round with his whip, the pupils repeat what they have learnt, each boy saying a word in his turn.

The Karomese tongue is rarely taught in these schools; although it only differs from the Pagamese in the addition of a number of words which the Pagamese do not use, and in giving an inner meaning to some words which are found in both languages. For myself, I can say that I learned it of my own accord by studying certain poems which fell in my way, and which I soon tried to imitate by using such Karomese words as I thought I understood.

It was in vain that my father sought to employ me in matters of business; I appeared to be dull and incapable. When he insisted upon my choosing an employment, I told him I would be a poet or a musician; and at last, after much solicitation, I suffered myself to be apprenticed to a goldsmith and lapidary, solely because I thought that most of my work would be to seek beautiful stones in the mountains, and devise elegant inscriptions for tablets.

I was sent to Unoti, a city lying thirty *halabs* to the east and south of Khoshek, for there chanced to be in that city a certain jeweller named Kobesh, who, being highly esteemed by my father, and by but few others, was easily persuaded to take me as a pupil. I was bound by a sealed compact to remain for the space of four years as a pupil of Kobesh, and then to work for him one year longer at a rate of payment already agreed on.

The manner in which five years of my life were at once disposed of, occasioned me some bitter thoughts at the time; but afterwards I often felt how much I owed to my father, for correcting with his plain sense

my too great ardour in the pursuit of mere emotions, sentiments, and speculations.

Though not zealous in my new employment, I gradually came to take some interest in acquiring that nice dexterity which is necessary in the business I had forced myself to choose. I gave most of my own time after sunset, to the study of alchemy, which filled me with many new and strange thoughts. I also gained some knowledge of other matters which excited my curiosity; but although the great poems of Karom were my daily study, I rarely attempted to compose verses, for I had begun to doubt my powers, as I discovered how little I knew of anything, and how much others knew of many things.

I was only required to work from the second hour of the day until sunset; none but slaves working for others after the sun is set; I had, therefore, much time at my disposal, most of which I employed in my studies.

I soon found a friend in Imyan, the brother of Kobesh; and it was in his company that I usually passed the days of festival. But I was not long in discovering that I need expect no pleasant intercourse with Kobesh himself; for he was naturally stern and unloving, and he belonged, moreover, to that sect whom men commonly term the "Black-whites," though they, of course, like all other sects in Pagam, call themselves "The Only Ones."

There are in Pagam various religious sects, both among the civilized and among the savages; and a traveller who is curious in these matters, will hardly fail to observe not only that the savages ascribe to their

divinities various qualities which the civilized impute to their demons, but that certain sects among the civilized make the same sort of reproach to other sects among the civilized.

In some respects the Black-whites resemble the sect of the Uzzimas—who appear to think that the surest way of attaining future happiness is habitually to reject the happiness which each day might afford them.

The Black-whites are very numerous in Pagam. They have in their temple a massive three-sided stone, three cubits in height, and of a deep black colour. The all-in-all of their faith is to believe that this stone is white; and this faith is the all-in-all of their religion.

Their form of worship is extremely simple. The elders stand in a circle round about the stone, and when they have joined hands, they rush thereon, head first, and continue this exercise until they are stunned by the repeated shocks. When the elders have performed their duties, it is the turn of the young men; then come the women; and lastly, the children walk up to the stone, and touch it with their foreheads, but so as not to hurt themselves.

Kobesh had more than once persuaded me to accompany him to their temple; for he earnestly desired that I too should become a Black-white. He assured me that he knew, on good authority, supported by numerous passages in the Book of Adaroni, that it was impossible for any but the Black-whites even to enter Adaroni, and still less to obtain preferment therein.

On the occasion of my first visit to their temple, Kobesh asked me, when we were come outside, what I

thought of the stone? And, after some hesitation, for I did not choose to offend him, I told him frankly that I thought it was black.

He shook his head at this; and said that the stone had appeared black to me because I was an unbeliever; that it was a mystery; that some persons had been years before they could see that the stone was white; that, although it then appeared black to my sight, I should bow to the sure belief and solemn declaration of the elders, and at least *say* that it was white, until in time I should myself come to see even as they saw.

During the five years that I remained with Kobesh, he compelled me to have many conversations with him touching the mystery of their faith. But, although I thus learned many particulars respecting it, I could not for a long time make up my mind as to how much I might safely believe; for there are some who teach that the stone was once actually and plainly white to all eyes, but that many years ago it was covered with black paint by the officers of the temple.

One day I showed Kobesh a beautifully polished bead of the black stone called *yodad*.

“Is not this of a pure deep black?” I exclaimed, holding it before him.

“Yes, by my faith!” he replied. “Such *yodad* is not to be had every day.”

When I found that his eyes could, under ordinary circumstances, perceive black to be black, I concluded that there must really be a wonderful mystery in the Black Stone; and I resolved that for the space of one

month I would try to believe it to be white, observing whether it should appear to me to become whiter.

But this experiment failed to show me any gleam of white about the stone; and I at length conceived a notion that, during the giddiness and partial stupor which follows from the frequent striking of their heads against the stone, it might possibly appear white to them, at least for a time.

But Kobesh could not prevail on me to make this trial in my own person; because, as you walk up to the stone you must repeat the words—"white is the stone;" and I could not bring myself to say that it was white before I could see that it was white.

I remember that one day when Kobesh was full of indignation at my unwillingness to believe what so many learned men had said they believed, he called me some hard names, and at length sought to move me by counting up the virtues of one particularly learned man, who had written a large book on nothing but the whiteness of the Black Stone.

In spite, however, of all his exhortations, in the face of all his reasonings, Kobesh could not bring me further than to the admission that I believed *he believed it*.

So he affected to pity me for my stupidity; whereas he really disliked me for not being so stupid as he would have me.

So different a man was his brother Imyan, that it was scarce credible they had a common father and mother. Kobesh was domineering, but not commanding; his smile was even more forbidding than his frown; even his jests were unkindly. To become rich was the first object of his life; heartily to believe a particular

mystery was his second. He expected to receive some high appointment at the hands of the great King of Adaroni; not, as he himself admitted, because of his peculiar fitness, but because he was of "The Only Ones."

Imyan, who, to my great sorrow, left Unoti before I had been there a year, knew little but his business; he, too, was a jeweller. He looked up to his brother as to a superior being, because this brother had attained to an untroubled faith in the whiteness of the Black Stone, while he himself could only strike his forehead against it, and hope that it would one day appear white to him, even as it did to the more advanced brethren.

And yet Imyan was a good and happy man, zealous in his work, in amusement hearty. To his superiors he was yielding and pleasant; to his equals gentle and kindly; to those below him he was tender-hearted and beneficent. He was so simple as constantly to mistake for the goodness of others what was his own goodness, or the reflection thereof. So far as I observed, his chief blemish was his proneness to flatter, which proceeded from a mistaken notion of politeness; while his only foible was, that he believed he could play on the lute more skilfully than any in all Benuben.

Kobesh had a wife named Zibara, and a daughter named Delsi. As it is certain that Zibara had once been younger, it is also possible that she had once been fairer. But when I first became acquainted with her, she had not the beauty of youth, and appeared unlikely ever to arrive at the beauty of old age. She appeared to have neither pains nor pleasures worthy to be so called; to have no hopes, nor even regrets—which are

perhaps the next best. She tried to conceal the pleasure with which she listened to evil reports concerning her neighbours; but she plainly showed pleasure in hearing them well spoken of. She also, as well as her husband, endeavoured to make me say that the Black Stone might be white, and she once told me that, as I was a youth whom she much esteemed, it grieved her to see me evince so unteachable and perverse a disposition.

I must here mention that my father had promised me one thousand *sababs* to enable me to set up in business as a goldsmith, when my term with Kobesh was expired; and further, that Zibara told me Delsi would marry none but a young goldsmith who would be able to set up in business for himself.

Now, Delsi was at least comely, and might have been pleasing, had she not, even while willing to please, but too plainly shown that she was conscious of being the daughter of my master; so that, after she had many times allowed me to perceive this, I also came to regard her as my master's daughter, and as nothing more.

She was disposed to be mean; but she was not malicious. She would listen behind a curtain; yet she would invent no lies but the more foolish and contemptible ones; and I well remember that, when Kobesh had accused me of stealing a diamond, which he had himself mislaid, Delsi became my eager and indignant champion.

The janitor was the only slave they had in the house, while I lived with them. His office was to remain at the door, except when he had harder work to perform.

He was a dull and silent man of sixty, or thereabouts. He never complained, nor would he permit me to enter into conversation with him. Neither Kobesh nor any of the family would give me any information concerning him; and this, coupled with a word once let slip by Imyan, led me to think that this slave was more closely related to them than they cared to acknowledge.

Of all my work I particularly disliked the uninteresting labour of grinding down to a face, and afterwards polishing, the less beautiful stones, such as chalcedony, marble, or porphyry; but I took pleasure in cutting diamonds, and especially in devising elegant ornaments with inscriptions, which would some day delight the amiable women who wore them, and the courtly men who delighted in the wearers.

When not inclined for my studies I would pass the evening in the hall of the story-tellers; and I fear that, after Imyan had left us, I gave more evenings to this amusement than was altogether wise.

CHAPTER III.

The Beautiful Maiden.

I HAD been two years and a half in Unoti, when the hidden depths of my spirit were stirred by a power which I had hitherto only read of in poems. Imyan had been suddenly called to Adaroni, and I had greatly missed him; for although he was ten years older than I, his simplicity enabled us to associate on equal terms. Moreover, Kobesh was become harsher towards me, since his brother was gone; so that I now always tried to escape from him, and enjoy the solitude of the forests; but Kobesh insisted on my always accompanying him to his Temple on every Tenth Day.

Throughout Pagam there are numerous temples whither people repair every Tenth Day, to petition the Great King that he will grant them money from his immense treasures, for the construction and repairing of roads, the draining of pestilential morasses, the clearing of forests, and for other uses connected with the welfare of the state. But the more enlightened pray that messengers may be sent from Sahitam, to instruct them in the interpretation of the laws, and in the wisdom of leading a good life.

The Uzza, or chief officer of the temple, recites the petitions from an elevated throne, below which is a

smaller seat for the accommodation of an inferior officer.

I can give but little information concerning these officers; but I will confess that I often wondered at the solemn earnestness with which an Uzza could declaim on the importance of keeping those laws which he himself habitually violated.

I also wondered why some of the Uzzas would only read a form of petition which had been drawn up hundreds of years ago; while others would only read petitions which they themselves drew up.

Before the Great King grants money from his treasury, for the carrying out of necessary work, the people must themselves contribute thereto, each according to his means; some giving money, others materials, and others their labour.

In all these contributions, it is the duty of the Uzza to be the first; yet, strange to say, there are Uzzas who are not the first, nor even the last;—and who, every tenth day, read aloud a petition for the progress of useful works, towards which they themselves not only refuse to contribute, but which, in a variety of ways, they both discourage and obstruct.

When a petition has been read, a subordinate officer, whose business it is to procure signatures thereto, passes between the seats, and offers it to each person, together with a pointed stick of *nevo*, or some other soft substance of a red colour.

It might be imagined that for a person to offer something to each one of an assembly in turn must occupy a considerable time; but this is a mere ceremony; for the officer hurries past the petitioners; and it is but

seldom that anyone steps him in order to sign the petition; indeed it is sometimes the case that the Uzza himself does not sign it.

In most of the halls, after the petition—whether signed, or unsigned—has been handed back to the Uzza, the whole assembly bursts forth into loud singing, to express, in some measure, their exceeding joyfulness at the prospect of having those things granted them, which have been mentioned in the petition; and, of a truth, this song of joy is most delightful to hear. But in some of the halls the people sing as though it caused them pain and grief of mind; and their song begets then in the hearers either a great heaviness, or a desire to flee.

It is to be observed that the Pagamas think there is great merit in going to the Temple, in asking for things they do not want, in singing hymns of thanksgiving for what they have not received, and in hearing the explanation of laws which they do not intend to keep.

Now, I was one day in the Temple and the petition had been read aloud, when this thought suddenly presented itself to me:—

How strange it is that now for eighteen months I have heard the Uzza read this same petition every Tenth Day, and that so few people have signed it, when, nevertheless, they are at the trouble of coming hither for this very purpose.

Thus thinking, I turned myself half round that I might observe whether any person behind me signed the petition; for I had never seen anyone in front of me do so, nor had I myself done so.

As I looked round, the officer was in the midst of the people; and I saw that no one appeared to notice him. Some were asleep on pillows which they had brought with them; others, with small tablets in their hands, were intently counting up rows of figures, and several, men as well as women, were absorbed in gazing at their faces in the mirrors which all, in that part of the world, carry attached to the girdle by a cord.

For my own part, although at that time the first signs of a beard were becoming visible on my chin, and I would therefore often contemplate my face in my mirror while the petition was being read, I usually passed the time in thinking over verses, or in reflecting upon some curious process in alchemy.

In all the assembly only two signed the petition; one was an old man whose long and flowing beard was of a pale gold colour; the other was a maiden who sat near him, and appeared to be his daughter.

This maiden was altogether beautiful; but her face was of such exceeding loveliness that the beauty of the rest of her form was received without being observed; while even the beauty of her face was lost in the wondrous light of her eyes.

It is now many years since that memorable day when the inner pulse of the soul began to move within me; but I still have a clear vision of that wondrous face, with the exact expression it wore when I first gazed thereon.

When the people rose to depart, I stood up, that I might look upon her yet once more. She also rose. I saw a queenly form, a noble head, poised with an

unspeakable grace ; for a moment her eyes rested upon me ; she turned ; she passed out of my sight.

And now was my life nourished with a new food. I continually felt the presence of the Beautiful Maiden, and even while I worked, my thoughts flowed into a sort of sweet music. Yet I neither wrote, nor uttered verses, nor did I sing ; and the melodies which I heard were as the remembrance of music, rather than as the sound thereof.

For several days I found abundant delight only in looking backwards ; but after a while I began also to look forwards,—at first with pleasure, but ere long with as much pain as a very young man is capable of feeling.

Many a time, as I sat at my work, I wished that the walls of the house were of crystal, that I might be able to see all who passed in the street ; and more than once did Kobesh look scowlingly upon me, and assure me that I would make but a sorry goldsmith.

At last that day arrived, which alone was a day to me ; all intervening time being taken up with recollections of the last Tenth Day, and anticipations of the one next to come.

The Beautiful Maiden sat in the same seat ; and the same old man sat beside her. I placed myself so that I could always see her without turning my head. I observed and noted that she only once looked at her face in her mirror, and then but for an instant. She never looked at me ; that is to say, I could not discover whether she did so, or not. When the officer passed me with the petition, I touched his arm ; he stopped and

looked surprised ; but he gave me the petition together with the pen, and I signed it.

I had given no heed to the separate requests contained in the petition ; I signed it that I might join in what interested the Beautiful Maiden ; and as I returned the roll, I glanced towards her, and perceived, by the motion of her head, that she had been looking at me.

This discovery filled me with a triumphant delight, such as, methinks, an alchemist would feel, who after years of anxious toil, and unnumbered alternations of hope and despair, at last discovers the secret of transmuting even the basest metals into the purest gold.

As the Beautiful Maiden signed the roll, I shaded my face on one side, with my hand, so that those near me might not read my thoughts ; and in this position I bent an earnest gaze towards the wondrous being whom I seemed to have known and loved long ago in some other life than this.

I do not know what are the limits of the subtle power of love, but I am fully persuaded that the love which then first began to live within me, at once found its way to the heart of the Beautiful Maiden.

It is possible that, with the wiser art of women, she had observed me without permitting me to know it ; and that she had thus perceived with what emotions I looked at her ; but however this be, I am certain that her heart had desired to give a full answer to mine ; for when she had signed the petition (which I had signed), she suddenly raised her head and opened upon me eyes

which, for a moment, shone with a tender and glad some light.

Then came the hymn of thanksgiving; and through all the song I heard the voice of the Beautiful Maiden, sounding soft and clear, with a high tone of joy, and yet with a strain of some sweet sadness.

Many battles, much affliction, and sore trials have not robbed me of the priceless gem which the Beautiful Maiden that day bestowed upon me out of the treasures of her heart.

Four days afterwards was the great festival of "Choosing the Richest," as they call it; and I passed the two days during which it continued in roaming through the streets in the hope of seeing her whom I loved. But my search was in vain; and I was harassed by the thought that perhaps I might never see her again.

In the larger cities of Siroth it is the custom to choose one who, for the space of a year, shall be called The Richest Man. Ten candidates for this high honour are chosen by lot from among those who are at the same time rich, and desirous of being reputed so. These ten candidates are then carried on thrones through ten of the longest streets in the city, to the Hall of Public Ceremonies, where a feast is prepared for them. Each candidate sits at a table by himself; the tables are covered with the richest meats; and the hall is crowded with people, who press round the tables, and compel the candidates to eat and drink till they have one by one cried out they can endure it no longer; he who can hold out the longest, being, so far, the most esteemed.

After this they are conducted to a raised platform at one end of the hall, where they sit on their thrones all night; frequently giving sums of money, and speaking with much pleasantness and cheerfulness to those who are constantly throwing various disgusting and offensive substances at them.

It is considered that he who shelters himself behind his throne, or who, worn out with fatigue, falls asleep, does not sufficiently value the high honour for which he is contending; and he is certain not to be elected thereto.

In the morning, usually about the fourth hour, the candidates are permitted to leave the hall for a short time, that the platform may be swept; and on their return, an officer names each of the ten candidates in order; the people signify their choice by holding up the hand; and the candidate for whom most hands are held up, is formally declared to be The Richest Man, and entitled to all the rights and privileges pertaining to that exalted dignity.

I believe that, as a rule, he is elected, who has dispensed the most money, and borne with the greatest cheerfulness the most unpleasant missiles; but it is said that abuses have crept in, and that the whole business must be differently conducted, so that he who is indeed the richest, may be certain of being declared so.

For two days I attended the shows, and visited the public gardens; but in vain. I never saw the Beautiful Maiden, nor the old man, whom I had seen with her. I became uneasy, and at length melancholy; and I

was not sufficiently master of my countenance, nor yet of my behaviour, to conceal my unhappiness.

Kobesh found me less assiduous in my work. Zibara lamented that I was fallen into evil company. Delsi bent her powers to draw from me the reason that I who had but a short time ago been so studious, was now content to pass two whole days out of their house. For answer she took my unwillingness to answer; and showed herself to be greatly displeased.

But I could not remedy this, and I only longed for the next Tenth Day; for I had resolved that I would wait near the door of the temple, till the Beautiful Maiden should come, that I would follow her, and seat myself near her.

The day came; but not the maiden; and I saw her no more in Pagam. Some said she had been removed to Adaroni; but one told me that she and her father were gone to dwell in Hoshav which is the chief city of Karom.

Six months, or thereabouts, after I had lost her, I was much comforted by a dream. I had often dreamed of her, but with a confused and indistinct vision;—this time, however, I saw her with wonderful clearness, and my inmost being was filled with the sweetness of her presence.


Methought I stood on the sea-beach; the air was strangely clear with an amber-coloured light; purple shadows lay on the hills; no sound was heard; and everything appeared to be hushed in expectation. And now the Beautiful Maiden stood before me; but my soul was held entranced, so that I could not speak to her.

She looked with a solemn tenderness into my eyes, and gave me a white flower of great beauty; but while I looked thereon, as though wondering what it should signify, the golden light faded, the sea and the hills vanished, and I awakened.

It would require many words to show why this dream so greatly comforted me; and it may be thought that the sorrows of a love which had fed on a glance, might easily be solaced by a dream; but from this dream I took the assurance that I should again behold, and have fuller intercourse with the Beautiful Maiden; and that in the meantime I should guard and cherish the purity of that love which she had planted in my breast.

CHAPTER IV.

Halek is called a Reasoner.

Y intercourse with Kobesh was now becoming, in every way, more and more unpleasant. I saw reason to regret that my father had promised me one thousand *sabahs*; for although this prospect had at first given me a certain dignity in the eyes of Kobesh and his household; yet now that I had shown myself indifferent to the capricious, and at no time amiable Delsi, they sought to vilify me; and the less they really despised me, the more pains they took to make me believe they did.

Moreover, in the matter of the whiteness of the Black Stone, I had proved to be utterly intractable; and now, for some time, Kobesh always spoke as though he thought I attended the meetings of the Reasoners, although I assured him that I had not done so.

The Reasoners are the furthest removed from the Black-whites, and regard them with contempt. The Reasoners pretend to believe nothing but what they can demonstrate to be true; the Black-whites maintain that there is no merit in believing what can be demonstrated to be true.

The Reasoners say that all things are governed by laws, and that the laws themselves are

great law, beyond which is nothing, and which provides that all laws work harmoniously together. This Law of Laws is what the Reasoners worship; and as a law can have neither form nor parts, and as they desire to worship something visible, they adore a large painting which represents a point, a line, a triangle, a square, and a circle; for these, they say, are emblems of unchangeable laws.

Some of this sect are exceedingly strict in the observance of their ceremonies: I knew one man who, every morning before repairing to his work, used to trace these five signs on a board which hung in his bedchamber; at noon he would again go through the same solemnity; and after retiring to rest, he would describe his five mystic signs in the air with a wand until sleep overpowered him.

By calling me a Reasoner, Kobesh thought to show me how low an opinion he had of me; for he had always told me that the Reasoners were void of all moral principles.

"A Reasoner," said he, "will lie; a Reasoner will rob; a Reasoner will eat leeks in the month *Bim*, when it is unlawful to eat roots of any kind."

"But," said I, "the Reasoners say that the lower part of the leek is not the root, but the stem; and that the roots are the parts like threads, which are the lowest of all."

"They say so," replied Kobesh, "because they are Reasoners, and because leeks are as savoury in the month *Bim* as in any other month."

Having now had much intercourse both with the Black-whites and with the Reasoners, I am able to

come to this conclusion: Reason is good, and Faith is good; their uses differ. Where each assists the other, it is well; both should be led by the Love of Good.

The Black-whites will not let Reason do anything; the Reasoners will have it do everything. The Reasoners crown Reason king; the Black-whites will not even let it serve.

Much as it troubled me, I was sometimes amused at the obstinacy with which Kobesh called me *Reasoner*,—ay, even many times a day; so that one would think it had been my name.

I had assured him that I had not once attended their hall; and as Kobesh knew me to be a truth-speaker, I imagine that the pleasure he derived from persisting in calling me *Reasoner*, proceeded from his consciousness that he was wronging me.

He had many opportunities of showing his natural austerity, without at the same time acting unjustly; for as I had never been zealous in learning the business of a jeweller, so, as time wore on, I relaxed in the assiduity to which it was my duty to force myself.

For this I largely blame the unvarying harshness of my master; for I was not naturally disinclined to work of any sort; but I could not easily continue a round of, to me, uninteresting duties, without even the least sign of approbation. Not that I required always to be praised when I did well; but Kobesh was quick in cavil and utterly incapable of praising. At times he succeeded in making me think myself the worthless and contemptible creature which he appeared to think me.

To bear the yoke in one's youth is a necessary discipline; but to be long abased by the base is a humiliation which does not always produce humility.

I can now look back, however, and discern that my life consisted of what at the time were hidden processes, some painful, some pleasant, but all necessary in the building up of my manhood.

It is true that I often appeared to be unstable; that I was at one time carried away by one study, and again by another; but my wanderings still tended upwards; and I now believe that no labour is lost, and no ardour fruitless; that the power of a man is nourished by all things; and that for him who, through all disappointments and desertions, has remained faithful to the image of excellence enshrined within his heart, the time will surely come when he shall know that he has worthily finished that best work towards which his blind endeavours had been unceasingly guided.

At the time when, as I have said, my intercourse with Kobesh became daily more unpleasant, I made the acquaintance of an orator named Rayamin. This good man so warmed me towards the study of rhetoric, that I wrote to my father, and besought him to compound with Kobesh, so that I might study rhetoric; but my father replied that I had been learning the goldsmith's art for two years, and that if I now turned aside the two years were lost. He also reminded me that I had not the dignity of form necessary in an orator. So nothing remained for me but to work and wait patiently till the term of my servitude was expired.

Patience was not easily learnt, for I was by nature impatient. Sometimes I tried to comfort myself by

thinking that I should again see the Beautiful Maiden; but my craving for present sympathy was at times too strong to be thus satisfied; yet I sought no consolation from Delsi, nor from any other; for the love of the Beautiful Maiden was in my very heart.

I remember that about this time I became careless of my *anek*, which, according to the custom of Pagam, occupied a niche in my bedchamber; for days together I never looked at it, and for months I made no alteration either in the features or attitude thereof. I forced myself, however, to be more industrious in my work; and I hoped thus to avoid all cause of offence; but this was impossible; for the most horrible contentions would arise in the most unexpected manner. For example—I happened one morning to have no appetite for food; and three times when Delsi pressed me to eat of a fippottage, which chanced to be flavoured with *kinim*, I refused to taste it, and contented myself with a cup of milk.

Upon this the mother darted venomous glances at me; and the face of Kobesh clouded over, till suddenly the lightning of his wrath broke forth.

"Too long," said he, "do I witness in silence your rudeness to the gentle Delsi! You have too long disturbed the peace of our quiet household. I shall write to your father that our compact be made void. You must leave us."

"That may be," I replied, "as you and my father shall agree; but I have never been unmannerly to your daughter; and now I have but declined to eat, because I am not hungry."

"*Rishak!*" cried Kobesh, striking the table with his fist. "You are a boor, and therefore do not know when you are rude."

"Therefore forgive him," said Delsi, smiling at me with her lips, while her eyes glowed with anger.

"He has seen but little of the world, and he means well," said the mother.

"He shall see a little more of the world, and mean better," said the father.

"I am content," said I, somewhat hotly, "to begin seeing more of the world from this day."

"You desire then to go?" asked Kobesh.

"Most heartily," I replied.

"Then it were to be wished," said Kobesh, "that I could dislike you more, or respect your father less."

"I do not understand that," said I.

"It means," replied Kobesh, "that as you yourself desire to leave me, I would gladly permit you to do so, did I not so greatly respect your father, that all your misconduct cannot drive me to send you back to him. Be not discouraged; for though you will know naught of your business, when you leave me, I will yet do my best to instruct you therein."

"By the bye, I received yesterday the order for a rare piece of work which will delight you: Rilpad, the cloth-merchant, has desired me to prepare five tablets of coloured stone, to set in the breast of his *anek*. Rilpad—whom many consider to be of unsound mind—has joined the sect of the Reasoners; and the five tablets I need not further explain to you who are so well acquainted with the subtleties of their faith. But you

will do well to eat of the pottage, for your arms will be tired before noon."

"Tell me, my heart," said Zibara, addressing her husband,— "tell me what these tablets have to do with their faith."

"Halek, who is never unmannerly, will inform you, if you ask him," replied Kobesh.

"I assure you," said I, "that I am ignorant of the nature of their tablets."

"Halek does not like to display his knowledge," said Kobesh; "so I will tell you that the five tablets are to be inscribed with circles and triangles. The Reasoners, my heart, adore lines and points. You will surely be able to grind down the five stones in a day, if you work hard. What say you, Halek?"

"I say that I will work hard," I answered.

"As usual?" asked Kobesh.

"Yes, as usual," I replied gravely, for I had of late worked with great diligence.

"Could you not work harder than usual?"

"I certainly could," said I.

"Then," said Kobesh, "you shall, for the future, always work harder than usual."

As he uttered these words, he rose, and I followed him out of the room; and as I passed through the curtains, I heard Delsi laugh. She had often vexed me by laughing at my discomfiture; but I saw that I must continue to eat the bread of adversity from the hand of Kobesh, and I little heeded the bitter herbs sprinkled thereon by his daughter.

One evening, after a day spent in the dullest work, I went to pay my third visit to Rayamin, the orator, in

whose company I always forgot the hardships of my condition. He lived by himself, in the street of the carpet-weavers; and an aged woman prepared his meals. He had two classes in rhetoric; one consisted of three young men who were his most advanced scholars. Sometimes he gave them subjects on which they prepared written speeches; at other times he would lay a subject before them, without any warning; and they were then required to speak on that subject, after a short time spent in meditation. As Rayamin desired them to cultivate their imagination and inventiveness, as well as their readiness of speech, he would at times narrate to them the first half of some fictitious history; and next day, they would bring to him in writing, the remainder of the story, each pupil making it proceed and terminate as he saw fit. Rayamin then read aloud their stories, and pointed out defects and excellences; but he sometimes required one pupil to criticise, in a kindly spirit, the essay of another.

In the afternoon he was visited by four youths, who were only beginning the study of rhetoric. The exercises of these youths consisted chiefly in learning to use the instruments of oratory; for, as Rayamin once said to me, "He who would become a carpenter, does not begin by building a house; but by learning to handle the tools employed in his craft; and no man thinks he can use the plane, the saw, or the adze, till he has practised."

Rayamin never led me to think that I could become an orator; and he never encouraged me in my wish to study under him; but my own disposition prompted

me to cultivate some art in which the feelings were principally engaged.

It was now about twenty days since I had seen him, and I expected much pleasure from the visit, for he had always received me with the utmost kindness. But on this evening I seemed not to be Halek, or he not to be Rayamin. He saluted me with ceremony, touching his breast and forehead, but his wonted smile did not appear; and though his manner was gentle as usual, it was cold and repellant. To one who is quick to feel, such a reception has in it something horrible. I hoped that I had not disturbed him in some work; he said that he had been idle. I trusted that he was well; he said he was well. I could say no more, and he courteously accompanied me to the outer door, touching again his breast and forehead.

In vain did I search within myself for any offence which I could have given this good man; and because he was good my pain was great.

I went directly home, and would have gone straight to my chamber; but in the entrance hall I encountered Kobesh with a lamp. He appeared to have met me by chance; for he said that he had not expected me home so soon, and asked me if I had enjoyed my sport.

"I have been visiting the orator Rayamin,"

"Your best and firmest friend, is he not?"

"He is so good that none call him enemy."

"But you he particularly esteems?"

"He has never told me so."

"Did you think that your visit gave him great pleasure?"

As Kobesh said this, I started, my eyes sought his, my heart throbbed wildly, and my hands clenched themselves.

Kobesh looked curiously at me and said:—"Nay, take no evil meaning out of my words; for I rejoice to know that a pupil of the contemptible goldsmith is respected by the great orator Rayamin."

For some moments my soul was tossed in a tumult of rage when I discovered that Kobesh had slandered me to Rayamin, and now desired me to know it. But after a while the tempest ceased, and there was a wondrous calm, in which I beheld Kobesh from a remote region of thought, where his arrows could not reach me. My calm gaze then abashed him, and we passed, each to his chamber. This was a sweet triumph for me; and I hoped ever to remain superior to him.

knife, and that I could derive a malicious pleasure from contemplating it thus, although the knife was only an emblem of strong hatred, and did not signify that I intended any act of violence.

Being now robbed of my former consciousness of right, I felt truly desolate, and lapsed into a deep melancholy, which leaned, however, to sullenness rather than to gentleness. I did my work grudgingly, but yet faithfully, to satisfy myself rather than my master. I ceased to take pleasure in poetry; the study of alchemy I threw aside; and I renounced my secret hopes of one day becoming an orator; yet I did not make up my mind to become a goldsmith.

The beginning of all my misery with the house of Kobesh was simply that, being a jeweller of no repute, and therefore of small means, he had eagerly grasped the idea that, if matters were rightly managed, his portionless Delsi might become my wife, which he had not thought of, had not my father informed him that he would give me one thousand *sababs* when I was able to enter upon business for myself. Kobesh and Zibara never forgave me for not loving their daughter; but I think that Delsi herself almost forgave me; for sometimes, during the unhappy months of which I have just spoken, she appeared to pity me, and now began to be sufficiently amiable, when she no longer took pains only to be thought so.

But, though I knew it not, the dawn after this long night was close at hand; for now that I had begun to cherish hatred, it was time that a change should be wrought in me.

CHAPTER V.

The Book of Adaroni.

ALAS! ere ten days were passed, I had learned to hate! It is true that the man whom I hated was not amiable; but to hate even a bad man is so abhorrent to our better nature, and I as yet knew so little of my own worse nature, that the discovery of my hatred towards Kobesh is, even now, regarded by me as one of the most appalling which I ever made.

When a young man achieves a victory over some sudden passion, or over a besetting vice, he thinks that he may rest secure, and forever enjoy the fruits of conquest. But as he becomes older, he learns that the lengthened enjoyment of victory prepares the way, not only for another conflict, but for an ignominious defeat.

I appeared to have set myself far above the malice of Kobesh; I had acted nobly; he basely. But after I had learned to pity him, I fell thence to despise, and at length to hate him. While I pitied him, he could not injure me; but when I hated him, I caused myself a thousandfold more pain than he had ever inflicted upon me. Of all loads hatred is the heaviest.

I shudder even now, after the lapse of so many years, when I remember that, for three months together, the right hand of my *anck* grasped a red

It was in the month *Shub*, and on the third day of the month, so that I had been exactly two years and eight months in Unoti, when, by the merest chance, as it appeared to me, I began to read the Book of Adaroni.

The volume was written in the Pagamese tongue, and belonged to Kobesh, but was never read in his house. Being of a suitable thickness, it was always used as a stand for the lamp in the middle of the table. A few days after my arrival, I noticed this book, and asked what it was. They answered, carelessly, that it was only the Book of Adaroni; so I did not open it, because, from my youth, I had heard portions of this book read in the Hall of Petition; and it had always appeared uninteresting.

Kobesh, Zibara, and Delsi were gone to attend a great festival among the Black-whites, who on the third day of the month *Shub*, remain in their temple till midnight, but in total darkness; and at midnight the Black Stone is said to burst forth with a bright light, which fills the hall; whereupon they rise from their seats, and run hither and thither, full of joy, congratulating each other on their good fortune in witnessing another *Renewal*, as they call it.

Shakar the slave was left to watch the house, and I to watch Shakar; for they said he was fond of prying into the inner rooms.

Behold me, then, alone in a commodiously-furnished and well-lighted apartment. Facing the principal sofa, which extended along the whole of the upper end of the room, hung the memorial tablets of the ancestors of Kobesh, even to eighteen generations. They were of

the best burnished copper, and looked very old; but I doubted their genuineness, for it was a part of the lapidary's business to prepare such tablets; and I fancied that I detected in them traces of the workmanship of Kobesh. They were hung up so as to front the visitor who sits upon the principal sofa; and they were unusually large and imposing, one of them being more than a handbreadth across, while six of them were of *malak*, which is esteemed by the Pagamas as the king of all coloured stones which are not jewels.

At the right side of the room, as you faced the tablets, was a shelf for books, and on the left side a shelf for wonderful things. Chief among the books, that is to say, in the centre, was a great volume called *The Whiteness of the Black Stone*.

I had often examined the books, the wonderful things, and the tablets; and this evening, not knowing what else to do, I removed the lamp, and set myself to read in the Book of Adaroni.

I had often heard of the Great King, and I believed him to be good and wise, for I always heard him spoken of as good and wise. I had often heard of Adaroni as being a country of exceeding beauty, inhabited only by the best and wisest persons. I had heard Kashep spoken of as an unhappy land, where the people were sunk in sloth, subject to horrible diseases, and in every respect utterly wretched.

But Adaroni and Kashep had always seemed to me so far off that I had come to consider them as not having any sensible connection with the Land of Benuben; while the Great King had always appeared

to me so great that each man's prosperity or misfortune could but very little concern him.

When, however, I carefully read in the Book of Adaroni, I found that the Great King speaks of himself, not only as the father and friend of his people collectively, but of each person individually; and I saw that, whereas a man might all his life truly serve his prince, and yet remain unknown and unrecompensed, he who faithfully served the Great King would certainly receive an abundant reward.

I saw that as a man is finally what he has become through repeated exercise of his free will in choosing between good and evil, he requires some place where this perfect man may be thus built up till he is fit to enter upon his highest uses in Adaroni—even as a ship is built in a dockyard and not upon the ocean.

It became clear to me that, if the Great King purposed to make Adaroni the very kingdom of kingdoms, in which each person, from the highest down to the lowest, shall discharge those duties for which he is most fit, and that if his subjects were naturally slothful and vicious, there must be a place set apart, out of Adaroni, where men may be made fit for Adaroni, I could understand that Benuben was well suited to be such a place.

I could also conceive that if there were persons who had so far destroyed within themselves the love of good, as heartily to believe that evil is good, there should be a place whither such persons might be removed, so that they should not utterly pervert and corrupt others; I could understand that Kashep was well suited to be such a place.

Though not expressly stated in the Book of Adaroni, it seems reasonable to suppose that if only those take up their abode in Kashep who will never again feel any hearty and permanent desire for amendment, they will always remain there; but that, if the restraining and constraining discipline of the place should, in the course of time, produce in any of them a hearty desire to amend, however slowly, they will be permitted to leave that dreadful place; for the Great King is too wise and too gracious to permit the labour even of the lowest of his subjects to be lost; neither could it be possible to allow the infliction of any pain which does not tend to the ultimate benefit of the sufferer.

After further studies in that wonderful book, I came to perceive that a man is gradually fitted to become an inhabitant of Adaroni, first, by a knowledge of his unfitness; secondly, by a desire to be fit; and thirdly, by his actual endeavour to become so. He must know; he must desire; he must act.

The discovery of his unfitness will cause him pain; his desire to become fit will produce reformation; and his striving after fitness will result in a gradual regeneration; and these three are continually repeated, but in higher and higher stages, knowledge becoming each time more interior, love more ardent, deeds nobler and purer.

The Book of Adaroni teaches, moreover, that before a man can do good he must cease to do evil; and also that, as he can acquire a good understanding by keeping the laws, he should not wait to understand them before he keeps them.

The law of progress may be thus stated : learn what is true ; desire what is good ; though still prone to evil do not commit evil ; good deeds will surely follow ; and the good deeds which you at first performed with difficulty, because it was chiefly your judgment which approved of them, will afterwards be performed with full delight, when you have learnt to love them.

A man who has ceased the commission of his grosser acts of evil, and then gradually learns to do well, is as one who makes a garden in a wilderness. The giants of the forest are first cut down and burned with fire. Then are the dark places illumined with the sunlight ; the wild beasts are deprived of their lurking places ; and the protecting wall is built round the cleared space. Animals which serve man take the place of those which injure him. The earth is prepared for the seed, for the tree bearing good fruit, for the pleasant plant with flowers. The large trees, the giants of the forest, arise not again ; they were the first great hindrances which met his view ; but alas ! if not continually checked, weeds will spread so as to dwarf and even kill his best plants. Let him, therefore, who has slain the large trees and burned the briars, watch now the small weeds, and destroy them as they arise.

It must not be inferred that the whole of what I have just written concerning the laws of progress was perceived by me on that one evening ; and I will now sum up what I did then perceive.

I saw that the Great King earnestly desired his subjects to keep his laws, and declared them to be righteous laws, having happiness for their object ; then, after a thoughtful review of my own life, I perceived

that I had always been happy in so far as I had kept his laws, and unhappy in so far as I had broken them. Indeed, I could not recall one enjoyment which had not been destroyed as evil had crept in, nor one vexation which had not been either removed or mitigated by the good grace with which I had borne it.

I could see that, whereas I had more than once overcome with good the evil which a person had wished to work me, I had never overcome another's evil by the strength of my evil ; for if a man injure me, and I in turn so injure him that he dare not again injure me, I have but overcome the man, and not his evil.

I concluded hence that the reward of keeping these laws is not given as a favour which is bestowed or withheld by a capricious monarch ; and that the penalty of breaking them is attached to the breach itself, and follows it, even as pain follows a wound.

After these considerations I asked myself whether I desired to be happy, and to progress in happiness. Now, any man, on asking himself this question, will answer, *Yes, I desire to be happy.* If, therefore, he has discovered for himself that the highest, and most perfect, and the only enduring happiness lies in keeping certain laws, he must desire and resolve to keep these laws. This was my desire, and this my resolution.

Be it observed that the people of Pagam do not hold such intercourse with the Adaronas as do the people of Karom ; and that they do not follow after love, or desire the higher gifts of the Great King ; but that those who are not satisfied with their state in Pagam, remove, sooner or later, to Karom. Already, as a boy, I had a dim idea that I should like to be with the people who

wrote the poems I loved ; but I now earnestly desired to leave Pagam, and to dwell in Karom, how humble soever might be my lot in that province.

For at least five months after this memorable evening I had no difficulty in carrying out my resolution of committing no wrong acts, and of omitting no duties. I became much happier than I had ever been before. A new life appeared to have opened up within my old life, transforming it and beautifying it, till even the dullest parts of my work caught a soft grace, even as the rugged side of a mountain becomes transfigured with the golden light of sunrise. I was brought nearer, in my heart, to the Great King, for I had of my own free will become a better subject ; and now, when I went to the temple, I listened attentively to the petitions which were read ; and though at times a false shame would have deterred me, I always signed the roll, and took pleasure in so doing.

But towards the end of five months my first ardour began to cool, and, though reprobating my old vices, I insensibly fell into them again. Studies were again neglected, partly from sloth, partly from melancholy. I even neglected my plain duties towards Kobesh ; and I more than once replied to him with signs of scorn and resentment. For these things I would take myself to task, inwardly bewailing my faults, and resolving to amend. Indeed, I never wholly lost the resolution, even when I acted against it.

I remember that on a certain feast-day, about this time, I was in a public garden which contained three large fountains, and pleasant alleys of sycamore, beech, oak, and plane trees. It was the hour of sunset ; and

while I was sitting in an arbour, I chanced to fix my attention upon a clear space in the western sky, which space was bounded by clouds of various rich and soft colours. My fancy shaped this clear space to me as a sea ; and the clouds on either side appeared as the shore of some strange and beautiful land. Then straightway I thought of the sea which bathes the shore of Adaroni. I pictured to myself the noble and amiable people who inhabit that country, and I imagined what delightful intercourse they must have with each other.

But I was roused from my reverie by the shouts of a multitude of persons who had assembled to witness a man perform a most dangerous feat, which consists in climbing up a pole about a hundred cubits in height, and tapering upwards to the thickness of a finger. The higher the man mounts, the more the people applaud ; and, encouraged by their plaudits, he climbs upwards till he reaches the top, or till the pole breaks ; in which case he is almost certain to be killed by the fall, and many are so killed ; but those who escape are well paid by the spectators.

To me, thus meditating on Adaroni, the shouts of this barbarous multitude were so abhorrent, that I thought I would rather live alone in a wilderness, than always remain among the Pagamas ; and as I hastened homewards, I was filled with a great longing to taste the sweetness of solitude, and to feel the quiet of remote forests. I resolved that when I was free I would make the journey to Karom alone and on foot, staying, as I listed, by pleasant streams, or resting in shady groves. And in Karom, I would prove whether I could not succeed in some vocation demanding higher talents than

are requisite for the devising of ornaments and the polishing of pebbles.

But when I informed my father of my intention, and besought him not to withhold from me the thousand *sabals* which he had promised me, he declared he would not aid me in any visionary schemes; and that the money he had promised me was to enable me to begin business for myself as a goldsmith. This answer filled me with grief, because the tone thereof was reproachful and contemptuous. But it also plunged me into a great perplexity, because I had now to choose whether I would gain a sure living by a business which I liked not, and among people who suited me not, or whether, yielding to the impulses of my heart, I would venture without money, upon an unknown future, among strangers. While this debate was being daily carried on in my mind, I came upon a passage in the Book of Adaroni, from which I concluded that a man should leave his country, and his kindred, and his father's house, when his consciousness of unused faculties, and his yearning after a higher life, urge him forth across deserts, it may be, or over seas, to that land where his wants can be satisfied.

So I resolved that nothing should induce me to give up my intention of leaving Pagam, and of going to Karom; even though I should begin my life there as a poor shepherd; for I trusted that the Great King would surely aid me, when I was so anxious to make that progress towards Adaroni, which he desires to be made by all his subjects throughout the Land of Benuben.

CHAPTER VI.

The Diamond Merchant.



AT last, when there remained but six months of my period of servitude, something began to be built upon the foundation of humility which I had laid.

Kobesh was once compelled to remain in a neighbouring town, for several days. The management of his business fell upon me, and I discovered a new satisfaction in working with increased assiduity during his absence.

Now I was once sitting in the dusk of the evening, piercing garnets for a necklace which I had been desired to complete with all haste. It was past the hour for discontinuing work, but I still worked. After I had placed the stone in the rest and adjusted the instrument, my labour was but mechanical; and my thoughts, as was now often the case, travelled before me into Karom. There remained yet one stone to be bored, when it became too dark for me to see what I was about; so I lit the lamp, and hastened to finish my work, that I might not cause Zibara and Delsi to delay the evening meal on my account.

While I was yet working, Shakar admitted a visitor, and then, according to the custom in that part of Pagam,

took up his stand inside the room at the door, so that he could keep a watch upon all in the room.

I immediately stood up to return the salutation of the stranger, who, seeing that I was a young man, inquired if I were the son of the master of the house. I replied that I was not; that the master would not be home for some days; but that I hoped I might be able to act in his stead.

He seemed taken aback by this, and said that he had expected to see the master jeweller, because, as he passed the door, he had heard the sound of work, and because he knew that free men do not labour after sunset unless they are masters.

"But," said I, "might it not have been a slave working task-work?"

"Nay," replied the stranger; "the wheel was too briskly turned; I recognised the hand of the master."

"Though I am only a pupil," said I, "can you not tell me your business?"

"I can communicate it to none but the master," he replied; "and I shall not fail to visit him upon his return; for he must be a good man who, when absent, can so influence his pupil that he diligently works after others have ceased."

When I replied not to this, the old man said, "But perhaps you work late because you love your work?"

A certain tenderness in his voice encouraged me to reply to these last words, by looking wearily round the room, and sighing.

He understood my sigh, and repeated that proverb of the Karomas—"He who dislikes his work, doubles his work, yet not so as to double the fruit thereof."

"Indeed," said I, "I take great delight in some work; but not in this." And as I said this, I motioned to Shakar to leave us, bidding him tell Zibara and Delsi to excuse my not appearing at supper; for there was that in the manner and voice of the stranger which made me desirous of further conversation.

All this was at once understood by my visitor, who, the instant Shakar was gone, looked earnestly into my face, and said, "What work do you most delight in?"

"I have found my highest delight," I replied, "in the composition of verses in the Karomese tongue; my next in the study of alchemy; and I have often thought that I would like to become an orator."

"In each of these, what is the highest object which you propose to yourself?" he inquired.

I answered:—"I would that the strong voice of my singing should cause a man to unbar the dungeon of his soul, and loose thence the good affections which have long lain bound, and forgotten as though they were not. Now should my song fall like rain upon the parched herb; now flash like lightning through the gathered clouds of midnight. I would teach; I would reprove; I would comfort; I would show the satisfying sweetness of goodness, and the exceeding beauty of wisdom."

While I uttered these words, the eyes of the old man kindled with a strange light, by which I read his deep sympathy; but ere I had ceased speaking, the shadow of a vast regret (as it seemed to me) darkened those portals of the soul, and gradually laid upon all within him the gloom of desolation and of desperate sorrow.

For some moments we stood still, and looked each other in the face. At length he turned suddenly from me, paced several times across the room, and then, returning to me, said :—

“ You must unfold the germs which are within you, or your whole life will be void ; you must hasten to Karom, or you will be tempted to sell your gifts for the gold of Pagam. Strive to work out a poem which shall be worthy of presentation to the Prince of Karom. Keep this purpose before you, and think of nothing below this. Meddle not with alchemy ; seek not to learn rhetoric. I think you may become a poet ; I know you are ambitious and greedy of approbation ; I know not whether you are capable of perseverance.

“ When the fire of your zeal is quenched, and when the light of your life is low, remember that no man rises in the realms of art who thrusts aside the cup of pain, and seizes the cup of pleasure with both hands.”

“ Surely,” I cried, “ you who are so wise, and so full of sympathy, must at the same time be a great poet ! I beseech you to tell me your name !”

Again did his face cloud over with a sudden gloom, and he replied, “ I do but tell you the path as a heap of stones in the wilderness marks out the road to the wayfarer.”

“ I beg you,” said I, “ to tell me your name and place of abode that I may visit you.”

He pointed to some leaves of paper under a stone tablet, and made signs for a pen. When I had given him the materials for writing, he bent over the counter, and after writing for what appeared to be a long time, he gave me the paper and retired a pace or two nearer

to the door. The handwriting was so strange that I could not easily decipher it ; and when I looked up for his help, he had disappeared.

Going back into the room, I set myself to read what I had supposed to be the name and the residence of this wonderful man ; but I found these words instead :— “ Would you excel as an artist ? Ask for great gifts, and for these you must look to the Great King. Fear emulation, despise gold. Think no labour too great for you ; none too small. In the end all good shall triumph over all evil ; for he that ranges himself on the side of the Great King will have servants of the Great King to help him, though he see them not, and observe not their ministrations. Work zealously ; hope steadfastly ; wait patiently.”

Strange to say, I had now for the first time perceived that I had so great a love of approbation and applause, as frequently to lose sight of higher objects, although these higher objects were continually in the interiors of my thoughts. So I determined that I would be watchful, and close my heart to the promptings of an emulative and vainglorious spirit, lest I should lose aught of that pure and fervent love of art, which should be the chief guide and the sweetest reward of the artist.

It had not then, nor has it ever, entered my thoughts to excel as an artist that I might become rich : The love I bore to art was inborn—a part of very self.

Small, methinks, will be the achievements of him who never, in some supreme moment, has had a vision of enterprises far beyond his powers, but which then seem to be of certain and easy accomplishment. All my doubts vanished, and the most lively hopes took

their place. I regretted that I had not more sedulously applied myself to the study of poetry; and I resolved that I would devote my spare time to reading the masterpieces both of Karom and Pagam, so that I might be guided in determining the nature and style of the poem which I would present to the Prince of Karom.

Two days after this strange and memorable visit, Kobesh returned to Unoti, and I informed him that, during his absence, an old man had desired to see him, and had been unwilling to tell me his business. I did not, however, see fit to acquaint Kobesh with the conversation I had held with the visitor; and, for once, my master did not seem inclined to question me.

Each day I expected to see my new friend; and three days after Kobesh had returned, my desire was gratified.

The old man saluted Kobesh with the greatest courtesy, but appeared not to observe me, a circumstance which at first pained me; but I soon reflected that he had thought it advisable not to distinguish me by any attention which might attract the notice of Kobesh. I longed, however, to have further conversation with him; so I determined to visit him, when I could find out his name and place of abode, both of which he had plainly been averse to giving me.

The stranger wanted to sell three diamonds; Kobesh depreciated them. The stranger said not a word in their praise; and at length accepted what I thought a very small sum.

A few days after this the stranger again visited us, and again presented three diamonds which he desired to

sell. Kobesh again depreciated them—as he depreciated everything—and this time also the seller said nothing in praise of his wares, but contented himself with demanding a certain sum. He offered to sell the diamonds at the rate of two *sababs* for each jewel; but he at length parted with them for one *sabah* apiece.

I had the mortification of again seeing him depart without having spoken one word to me, and without my having learnt his name or his place of abode.

On the day after his second visit, I ventured to ask Kobesh how it could be that this man was able to dispose of diamonds at so small a price?

“Beloved Halek,” replied Kobesh, wrinkling his whole face with smiles, “when you are a master-goldsmith, and must buy for a high price, ask as many questions of the seller as you choose; but when you buy for a low price, be silent.”

Not many days after this visit of the diamond-merchant, for so I now regarded him, he again brought diamonds for sale. This time he only brought two; and the transaction was conducted in the same manner as the preceding ones, except that Kobesh now declared the jewels to be of the lowest quality, and would only offer one *sabah* for the two gems.

The diamond-merchant, upon hearing this offer, folded up his diamonds in a roll of soft cloth, bound the roll in his girdle, and went out.

Kobesh, unused to this show of quiet dignity in one who would sell, stood amazed, and looked as though he would fain call him back. Hereupon I offered to hasten after the merchant, and bid him return.

"Good youth," exclaimed Kobesh, "do so; tell him I will certainly take his diamonds; and that I would not offend him for the great *Debel-or!*"

I needed no spur; in an instant I was in the street; and I caught sight of the diamond-merchant before he had gone fifty paces from the door.

"Sir," said I, when I was come up with him, "Kobesh will buy your jewels; he hopes he has not offended you; and he entreats you to return."

"I will return," he answered; "but had you not been sent after me, I had never entered his house again."

"I believe," said I, as we turned to the house, "that my chief reason in offering to go after you, was that I might prevail on you to tell me your name, and place of abode, for I greatly desire to speak with you. Indeed, I must see you before I leave Pagam; and I leave in a few months."

"What is your name?" he asked, slackening his pace.

"*Halek,*" I replied.

He fixed his eyes upon my face with a look of keen penetration, and after a while he whispered,—

"My name is Pasakh; I live in the sixth house on the east side of the street Abdan. Speak of me to none, and should you chance to see me again in the street, turn aside as though you knew me not."

CHAPTER VII.

A Strange Confection.

ON the next Tenth Day I set out to visit Pasakh. The house was large and gloomy, and I at first thought it was not inhabited; but after frequent knockings, the door was opened by a half-dressed savage. He was out of breath, and looked as if he had been standing before a furnace. He eyed me from head to foot, and when I desired to be admitted, he shook his head and half closed the door.

"Tell Pasakh," said I, "that Halek the son of Mazor wishes to speak with him."

But the savage shut his eyes, and motioned me away. Then, thinking he was deaf, I gave him my *moshim*, together with a small tablet of *godad*, whereon I had engraved the motto—work zealously; hope steadfastly; wait patiently.

"Give this to Pasakh," said I.

The man took it, and at once closed the door, leaving me outside, as is the custom in this part of Pagam, where the people are exceedingly suspicious of evil intentions. I did not wait long, however, for the man came back with evident haste, and desired me to enter. I followed him down one passage, and

then down another, which led into a small room opening into a garden, which was enclosed by high walls of brick.

The first thing which I observed was the *anek* of Pasakh. It did not occupy an elevated position, and it stood with the back turned to the light. The eyes were looking down, almost shut; round the forehead was a narrow black band, and on the head a crown of brass or copper; the left hand held a pen; and the right hand was hidden behind the back. This *anek* was full of a mystery which I could not then solve; but which he explained to me long afterwards, when our circumstances were greatly changed.

Suspended from the ceiling by an iron chain, and too high to be reached by the hand, was a small packet, wrapped in what appeared to be the skin of a sheep. There were no ancestral tablets in this room. I observed only two books; one was under a heavy polished cube of porphyry, which I did not venture to remove; the other was a roll of exceedingly smooth paper, and written in the *khut* style; at any rate, I could not read two words consecutively.

The air in this room was laden with a strange odour, altogether unlike the burnt cinnamon and myrrh with which the chambers of the wealthy are purified, and reminding me of the smell of burning fig-leaves.

I suppose I had waited upwards of an hour before Pasakh appeared. His face was red and flushed as though he had been standing before a furnace; and the heat of his hand, when he laid it upon my shoulder, was at once felt through my slender coat and tunic.

On first seeing me, his countenance lighted up with pleasure; but I observed that, after his eye had rested for a few moments on his *anek*, his manner changed, retaining all its kindness, but becoming tinged with melancholy.

"And now, young spirit," he began, after we had exchanged words of greeting, "why are you come?"

"To thank you," I replied; "for you have delivered me from doubts; the way lies clear before me, and I will be a poet. But I wish to know why you advised me not to study oratory?"

"Because you are already an orator," replied Pasakh. "When I asked you what was your highest object in poetry, your words were the best words, and waited not to be chosen; your delivery befitted your theme, and—best proof of all—you pained, with a keen pain, one who had thought to feel deeply no more."

"How did I pain you?" I asked.

"It matters not," replied Pasakh; "such pain is my nearest approach to pleasure. But enough. I have here a rare confection, lately brought into Siroth by a traveller: It draws as it were a thick veil over the remembrance of pain, and enables us to perceive matter for merriment in all things. Life, methinks, were intolerable without it."

As he said this, he rose from his seat, and from a recess in the wall drew forth a small coffer, which he opened with a key.

"Take one," said he, presenting the open coffer, which was half filled with what looked like wafers or lozenges.

I took one, and put it into my mouth, when I at once perceived a pungent sweetness, accompanied with a peculiar savour as of musk. Shortly after I had eaten the cake, an agreeable warmth spread itself through my body, and I thought I would eat another; but when I stretched forth my hand to take one, Pasakh removed the coffer, and put several of the lozenges into his mouth at once, as though they had been so many lentils, or grains of rice.

It is now impossible for me to say why this should have appeared so ludicrous; but I know that when Pasakh placed the coffer on the other side of the table, I laughed heartily; and that when he looked inquiringly at me, I laughed yet more.

Pasakh now rose, and struck two gentle taps upon the *shebet*: this also greatly amused me, and prompted me to utter some foolish conceit which appeared to me, at the moment, to be one of the drollest fancies which had ever entered into the mind of man.

"Compose yourself," said Pasakh: "my sister is coming to see you."

I at once endeavoured to assume a grave and decorous mien; but when the sister of Pasakh entered the room, she appeared to walk with a strut, which so amused me that, even as I rose and bent the head in salutation, my whole body shook with restrained laughter. Some whimsical and jocose meaning seemed to lurk in all that was said to me, and at length I laughed aloud whenever I was spoken to.

"Beloved," said Pasakh, "I have now enabled you to witness, in a young man of good breeding, the working of that new confection. When it is offered

to the sweet youths of Pagam, they will buy it for its weight in gold. Speak now to Halek of the gravest matters, and he will show you that everything may be turned into a jest."

Now, though I heard this speech, and knew that I was under the spell of some potent drug, I could not but jest at everything the sister of Pasakh said to me, until she went out, unwilling to hear more.

Soon after I had taken leave of this wonderful man whom I now regarded as a magician, my spirits sank until I lapsed into a horrible dejection.

A strange sense of guilt, and a fear of some unseen danger, kept me awake for many hours when I should have been resting in sweet sleep. I appeared to be in a pit of blackness, out of which I could never ascend into the wholesome light of day.

I recalled the promises in the Book of Adaroni; but they reached me not, and could yield no solace. I looked forward to the day when I should leave Pagam; I thought of the Beautiful Maiden who had gone before me into Karom; but all beauty and nobleness, all value and meaning, seemed to have been taken away from all things, and blotted out for ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Apprenticeship Ends.

WHEN I awakened, Kobesh was standing over me; and his greeting was not such as one would choose to begin the day with.

"So then, my Halek, to your other excesses, which have caused men like Rayamin to close their doors to you, you now add the drinking of *alkash*, against which I have ever cautioned you, as being the most insidious poison ever brought into Pagam by the Kashepas."

"Never in my life have I put lip to *alkash*," said I, somewhat hotly.

"In that case," said Kobesh, "you are losing your senses, through some other villainous thing from Kashep. What would your estimable father think, did he know that his son was yet sleeping, when it was past the third hour of the day! Arise now, and hasten to work. There is at least one thing which you can do passably well, namely, devise inscriptions: I have an order for six tablets, which are to be presented by a young man to his bride; and he desires something new."

Before proceeding to work, I ate a few morsels of barley-cake, and drank some water, hoping that the food would refresh me, for I felt dull and weary.

THE APPRENTICESHIP ENDS. 107

Delsi greeted me with a reproachful look; Zibara called me a lost youth, saying it was no wonder my noble father and my amiable step-mother had desired to be rid of me. With such encouraging speeches was my morning meal enlivened; and I entered the workshop in a humour not over well suited to the framing of pleasing inscriptions.

I shall never forget that morning. Of all the various works performed by goldsmiths and lapidaries, I particularly liked that to which I was now set. But now I wished that I had been required to grind and polish stones; for I appeared to have no more ideas in my head, than if it were itself a stone.

I sat at a table with writing materials before me. Kobesh was setting a small mirror in a ring for the thumb; and he repeatedly shot angry and contemptuous glances at me, while he puckered his face into a most frightful scowl. At length his rasping voice smote upon my ears with these words:—

"It has come to my ears, friend Halek, that you believe you are able to compose the most excellent poems, and that you design to follow the business of a verse-maker. You have now sat there, for more than an hour, and have not yet written one line; tell me, I pray you, in what time would you, at this rate, earn a hundred gold pieces?"

I replied calmly:—"The head can command the hands to work: but not the hands the head. You cannot compel fine thoughts to come at your bidding."

"I now understand," said Kobesh, "why so many poets are poor. By my faith, it is a fine business! But, dear youth, I pay you, and have now for six months

paid you for your work ; I beg, therefore, that you will at once devise six inscriptions, which shall be sweet, short, and new."

For some reason unknown to me I was insensible to the goad with which Kobesh wounded me ; and I sought to withdraw my thoughts from him, that, if possible, I might come upon some sentiments suitable for the required inscriptions.

I reflected that these tablets were to be presented to a bride, by the man who loved her ; and then, musing on that maiden, whose image I still preserved in my inmost heart, I set myself to consider what I would write on six tablets to be presented to her by me. But I fell into a reverie ; I recalled those deep eyes which shone with a most sweet tenderness ; I remembered those placid lips whose lines appeared to be the record of sorrow, and endurance ; I thought of the vision, which was to me more than a dream :—golden light and purple shadows,—floating locks, white arms, a broad calm brow, and a look of great love,—a wondrous flower committed to my keeping, an assurance given, but not in words, that she was mine forever.

"Beloved Halek !" exclaimed Kobesh, dashing an iron weight upon the table where I sat,—“Beloved Halek, you have now sat there two hours : when will it please you to begin work ?”

I sprang to my feet, and glared at him with a momentary savageness ; but, recollecting myself, I again sat down, and bent over the paper.

"If you do not work, when yet I pay you to work, you are robbing me," said Kobesh. "As you are honest, will you not proceed to work ?"

"I cannot do this work now," I replied,—“no, not for all the goldsmiths in Benuben. You think it is as easy for a man to come at a fine thought, as to take a tablet from a shelf. I am not in the humour for what you demand of me.”

"Will you attempt it after the mid-day meal ?" asked Kobesh.

"I think not," I replied ; “but I will do any other work you set me.”

"Will you attempt it to-morrow ?"

"I may attempt it ; and yet not do it," said I.

"This is indeed strange !" exclaimed Kobesh. "You assure me that you have never tasted *alkash* ; then you must have procured admission into the sect of the Perfumers ! Yes, this explains everything. I now see why you have always manifested such repugnance to the useful and reputable business of a goldsmith. I now see why you have crushed the heart of my dove, my innocent Delsi : you thought that the thousand *sababs*, which your father has promised you, would enable you to hold an honourable rank among the Perfumers. I understand everything."

When he had concluded this speech, he regarded me with a look as of great satisfaction at his skill in reading my inmost motives ; then hurried into the next room, where I heard him tell, with abundant glee, how completely he had discomfited me.

I had reasons for believing that when Kobesh called me a Perfumer he meant what he said ; and I was able to recall speeches of Delsi, which showed that she also thought me desirous of joining the small band of Perfumers in Unoti, which I could easily do by

ceasing to work, and by paying for initiation out of the money I expected from my father.

Something may here be said concerning these Perfumers. They form the most ancient and obstinate sect in Pagam. The chief tenet of their creed is that it is wrong for them to do any manner of work. If one of their society were to be seen using an axe, a spade, or a hammer except for a whim, he would lose what they call *caste*, and be unto them as a malefactor, or a common labourer. It is believed that many of them are utterly opposed to the laws of the Great King, and that they have set up for themselves a mystic chief whom they call The Spotless, to signify that his hand has never been stained by labour.

Every morning, while they still lie on their soft couches, they think of The Spotless, and earnestly hope that they may never work for others, but that others may always need to work for them.

They are called Perfumers because they use a peculiar unguent, said to be prepared from the fat of swine and the gall of peacocks, and as the peacock is a rare bird, this unguent is exceedingly precious; and, moreover, it cannot be prepared by persons not fully admitted into the mysteries of the sect, because the particular substance with which it is perfumed remains a secret among themselves.

When a foolish man who envies these people is permitted to kiss the hand of a Perfumer in the street, he prolongs the greeting that he may in his turn be envied, and then hastens to his friends, while the scent is fresh, that they also may kiss his hand, and envy him.

When it wanted about three months to the end of my apprenticeship, I wrote to my father, and gave him my reasons for not following the business of a goldsmith, for desiring to leave Pagam, and for believing that I was justified in devoting myself to one of the fine arts.

I concluded by reminding him that I could not do much without his assistance, and I begged him to give me at least half of the thousand *sababs* which he had promised to give me when I began business for myself.

After waiting two months in the most irritating suspense,—for my success in Karom seemed, in a great measure, to depend upon my having sufficient money to support me until I should be able to support myself,—my father sent me one hundred gold pieces, and his *khariz*!

In that part of Pagam, when anyone desires to inform another that he renounces all friendship with him, he sends him a paper on which have been written the name of the sender and that of the person to whom it is sent. This paper is then torn asunder, so that one name is on one half of the paper, and the other name on the other half; both these pieces of paper are then enclosed in a reed whose ends are afterwards sealed with wax. This is what is called a *khariz*; and it is considered a great breach of good manners for him who has received the *khariz* ever to address a word, by mouth or by letter, to the sender thereof, until he shall have received express permission to do so. Though I was greatly pained and astounded at receiving a *khariz* from my own father, I at length

comforted myself by thinking that when he should hear of my success in Karom, he would certainly revoke his *khari*, and that we would then rejoice together.

I confess, moreover, I had so greatly feared he would send me no money, that I regarded the hundred *sababs* as an immense treasure; and indeed I reckoned that, without running into extravagance on the one hand, and avoiding a sordid frugality on the other, I had wherewithal to maintain me in Karom for the space of two years.

The term of my bondage was now expired, and I found that the day to which I had looked forward as one of exuberant joy was actually one of much sadness. Delsi was often in tears; Zibara made several kind speeches; and even Kobesh softened on that last day. I truly and heartily forgave him his many unkind and unjust acts towards me—that is to say, I remembered them no more, and felt only pity for an old man whose chief care was to gain money.

I resolved to visit Rayamin, the orator. He received me with marked kindness; said he had heard that I was going to leave Pagam; and wished me success.

I told him that my pride had held me from visiting him in order to inquire why he had suddenly treated me with such a show of coldness; and I assured him that I had never been guilty of any offence which could render me deserving of such treatment from one who had been my friend.

“We have both been wrong,” he replied. “Before rejecting you from my friendship I ought to have given

you my reasons for so doing, that you might have defended yourself. You, on your part, conscious of innocence, should have demanded the cause of my altered behaviour towards you.”

“You have taught me,” I said, after a while, “that virtue is the soul of true oratory. I now desire to know your opinions as to what qualities are requisite in one who would succeed as a poet; for from my boyhood I have wished to dedicate my life to that noble art, and I am at last able to follow my inclination in this matter.”

Rayamin replied: “Keep your heart and life pure, if you would attempt the highest excellence as a poet.”

Part of my last day in Unoti was passed with Pasakh. I showed him the poem I had prepared for the Prince of Karom; and he praised it, assuring me that he could discern no other faults therein, save those which would fall off of themselves, as I became older.

And now came the last night of my life in Unoti, where I thought I had suffered so much; where, in reality, I had suffered so little.

At midnight I arose, and taking my *aneh* away from the house, I burnt it, according to the custom of the country. Then I paced up and down, pondering many things, resolving many things, trustfully believing and hoping many things.

The morning star glowed large and fair, and when I saw the first pale light of dawn, I set out on the Great Pilgrimage.

CHAPTER IX.

The Adventures Begin.

IT was on the eleventh day of the fifth month, I being then in my twenty-fourth year, that I set out on the Great Pilgrimage from Pagam, through Karom, and thence to Sahitam; though, indeed, I then knew nothing of Sahitam, and purposed going no further than Karom.

The town of Unoti is but ninety *halabs* from the river Bak; and I judged that I could easily travel this distance in four days, though on foot; but being minded to keep the time of this journey as a sort of festival, wherein I celebrated the breaking of my chains, and the beginning of a new state of activity, I would not force myself to accomplish any fixed distances; and, moreover, there was no reason why I should hasten, for at every step I gathered up into my heart the materials whereof poems are made.

It was yet only morning as I entered the forest to the south of Unoti. A gentle wind stirred the glittering foliage of the trees; and the whole earth seemed to be sending up a psalm of thanksgiving into which my thoughts flowed, and also became melody.

About the third hour of the day, when I was come to a spring of clear water by the roadside, I sat down to

THE ADVENTURES BEGIN. 115

make my first repast in the woods. Never had food appeared to me so delicious; the dry barley-cakes, but lightly seasoned with salt, had a savour beyond the richest dainties which I had ever tasted; the fruits were sweet as honey; and the water seemed to contain a subtle principle which invigorated me.

My repast was enlivened by watching the gambols of some kids which formed part of a large flock of goats. I knew that I was not far from habitations; for most of the she-goats were tethered so as to prevent their straying too far; and some of them were yoked in couples.

After passing through fields in which were horses with their sprightly foals, and cows with their calves, I found myself towards evening within bowshot of a town called by the pilgrims Boded; and I debated whether I should pass the night in the open air, or hasten forwards, and betake myself to an inn. The nights were not cold; I had a cloak, and abundance of food. I had been meditating during the day on a new poem which was striving to be uttered; and I thought to find much delight in communing with my own heart, during at least a portion of those quiet and solemn hours. But the sky was become overcast; I heard the sound of a distant wind; and when I reflected that, although I was so near to a town, there might chance to be wolves prowling about, I determined to quicken my pace so as to arrive at Boded before nightfall.

By the time I reached the town, it wanted yet half-an-hour to sunset; and the sky was darkening with black clouds moving up from the west. I soon found an inn; and the host welcomed me with a pleasing civility,

which assured me of his kindness; but did not make me feel at ease.

No sooner had I taken my seat in the public room than the host approached me, and asked what I drank before my meals,—“*kivis* or *pon*?” Now I never drank any sort of liquor before my meals, in order to beget a false hunger, but I had often drunk *pon* after my meals; for it is a harmless beverage, made from fermented honey and barley-meal. I had never heard of *kivis*,—that is to say, not by that name,—and my curiosity made me reply that I would drink some *kivis*.

Kivis is distilled from grain, and it is clear as water. It is largely taken by certain people whose territory borders on the Frozen Sea. The word *kivis* belongs to one of the ancient tongues, and signifies *water of life*; but the liquor so entitled were more fitly named *water of death*, for it inflames all the brutal tendencies, and blunts all the finer feelings, until in the end it kills the conscience; and in proportion as a man's conscience is dead, the man himself is spiritually dead.

The host brought me a porcelain cup containing a mouthful or so of *kivis*; and after having courteously waved it round towards the company, he presented it to me with a smile, and I drank it.

The operation of this liquor is not perceived for some time after it has been drunk, except as producing a certain tranquillity of mind; and this is what I felt as I sat in a corner of the room, and attentively regarded all that passed. Presently a man of grave and haughty mien entered the room, and held the following conversation with the host:—

“What do you demand for a horn of ten?”
 “Twenty *keregs*,” replied the host.
 “And for a horn of twenty?”
 “Thirty *keregs*.”

“Sound then immediately ten.”
 Upon this a man with a red and blotched face caught up a ram's horn, and blew thereon ten loud blasts, which together occupied as much time as one would take to count ten with moderate quickness.

Now a *kereg* being a coin which will purchase three hundred ripe figs, in the season, methought that to pay twenty *keregs* in order to hear ten blasts on a horn was a strange waste of money.

While the horn still sounded, several men ran into the room, in the most violent haste, and stood listening to this loud and not particularly pleasing music; but the instant the tenth blast had sounded, the doors were closed, and no more people were admitted.

Then he who had desired this music to be played, drank a cup of liquor, after the host had, with much show of ceremony, waved it towards the company; and when he had drunk it, he passed out through a door at the side of the room. The host then gave to each, in turn, a cup of whatsoever liquor he demanded; and when each had drunk, he also passed out at the door through which the first had gone.

At length I was left alone, for I felt so comfortable as not to wish to move; and, indeed, I had been regarding the whole scene as though I were dreaming.

“What drink do you desire?” asked the host, addressing me. “*Bilbal*, *kivis*, or *pon*,—'tis all one to me.”

"I desire to drink no more," I replied.

"Surely," cried the host, "you would not put such an affront upon one who has paid for a horn of ten! What will you drink?—*pon*, *bilbal*, or old *kivis*?"

"Bring me half a goblet of the old *kivis*," I replied; though, in truth, had he recommended new *kivis*, I had been equally satisfied.

On entering the next room with the others I found the man who had appeared to be so generous. He had before him a table covered with silk caps and girdles, small parcels of scent, *kihoh* for the eyebrows, and an abundance of other wares. He no longer seemed to be proud and haughty, for he was continually bowing and kissing his hand to the people in the room; now pressing a cap upon the head of one; and now thrusting a parcel of scent under the nose of another.

Presently he advanced towards me, and bowed profoundly, chafing his hands together, as though they were cold. I bowed to him in return, and suddenly perceived upon my shoulders a new cloak which, with much suavity, he begged me to accept.

"Take it," said one, "it is an excellent cloak!"

"Right good stuff of the woolly goat of Berom," whispered a second.

Confused and bewildered, I thanked this rich nobleman for his present; but after a while, when I would leave the room, one laid his hand upon me, and demanded two gold pieces for the cloak.

"Nay, friend," said I, "you mistake; I bought it not; and had it not of you, but of yonder nobleman."

"I am his servant," returned the man. And this I found to be true; therefore, as shame would not permit

me now to decline purchasing the cloak, I at once paid two gold-pieces, which I took from the pouch at my waist.

As each district and city in Pagam has its own strange customs, so the town of Boded is behind none of them in this respect. In this town, when a nobleman would display his wealth and his liberality, he pays a stipulated sum for a certain number of blasts on the horn; and all who can contrive to enter the room, while the horn is yet sounding, may drink at his expense.

In the instance which I have just related, it was a travelling merchant who had been so generous. He had the double object of impressing the people with a notion of his liberal disposition, from which they might expect to obtain good bargains; and of disposing them, by the operation of strong liquors, to be incautious in their purchases.

Soon after I had left the room a servant called out, in a loud voice,—"The food is served." On hearing this I suddenly felt an overpowering hunger, and at once hastened to the table, where I seated myself opposite a large dish of kid's flesh, stewed with leeks. This was a most savoury meat, and I ate with much appetite; but towards the close of the repast, I began to perceive the more distressing effects of the *kivis*: my head throbbed with pain, and I thought I should have fainted.

For one so newly arrived in the outer world in which other men live, and oppressed, moreover, with this direful poison, methinks I showed some commendable discretion; for, I rose from the table, and though I

scarcely felt the ground, I contrived to leave the room with a steady step, and to find a servant who would conduct me to my chamber.

I now began to fear that my money would be stolen from me; yet I did not dare to trust it with the host; so I lay down, with the pouch containing my money turned to the side next the wall; and then, with a feeling of impending evil, I lapsed, by degrees, into a state of torpor, which could not be termed sleep.

When I awakened in the morning I felt much distressed both in body and in mind, and my courage sank to the lowest when I discovered that my money had in very deed been stolen.

On telling the landlord of my loss, he flew into a terrible rage, and called me many hard names, declaring that no man had ever lost anything in his house. Then I told him that I would complain to the Judge; whereupon he laughed, and told me that the Judge was his own brother, who would assuredly condemn me to pay a heavy fine for lying and slandering to the injury of an honest man. I then gave up all hope of recovering my money, and set myself to bear my loss with what serenity and patience I might. Moreover, I feared lest worse should befall me, so I said no more, but hastened to depart from among so detestable a people.

About the fourth hour of the day, I was passed by a chariot drawn by two cream-coloured mules, and in this chariot sat a young man and a maiden. Their faces beamed with love of that joyous kind which belongs to the spring-time of life, and I could not avoid thinking how delightful it was to journey towards Karom as they

journeyed, instead of toiling along as I did, on foot, without money, and alone.

I was still continuing these envious thoughts when I came up to an old man also journeying to Karom. He walked with difficulty, being both infirm and lame. His clothes were mere rags, and he wore neither shoe nor sandal. When I came up with him, I stopped and saluted him. He also stopped and bowed, but spoke not. His black eyes gleamed from beneath large eyebrows white as snow. I asked him if he was going to Karom, and he nodded, looking upon me with eyes full of unspeakable sadness. Now did I truly feel the loss of my money, and I verily believe I would have given him the half thereof, so deeply was I touched by the sight of his misery. I could not leave him without giving him something, so I offered him my cakes; but he only broke off one mouthful, with which he touched his breast and his forehead. I then offered to stay with him, and help him along the road. Here he pointed to his crutch, and stick, kissed my hand, and signed that I should myself hasten to Karom. When I kissed his hand, and left him, I was so full of his unhappiness, that I quite forgot my own; and for the rest of the day, I pushed steadily on, not envying those above me, but feeling thankful for my youth, my health, my hopes, and my good conscience.

I passed that night in a cave near a running brook, which murmured in the shady depths of the forest, and here I replenished my little flagon. My food was barley-cakes, and a delicious sort of wild strawberry, which was very plentiful in that place. The night was not cold, and I fell asleep with my mind full of the most peaceful

thoughts. I dreamt I was walking in a garden in Karom, and that I suddenly heard a voice behind me. I turned, and saw the Beautiful Maiden. The sudden joy of this awakened me, and as I lay trying to bring back the beauty of her face and the music of her voice, I came by degrees to a perfect assurance that Turoni (for so I called her) was not gone to dwell in another part of Pagam, as I had sometimes fancied, but that both she and her father had set out on the Great Pilgrimage; and that I should meet her in the happy land of Karom.

As it yet wanted at least two hours to daybreak, I composed myself again to sleep, and fixed my thoughts upon the Beautiful Maiden, hoping again to see her in my dreams; but in sleep we are not masters of our thoughts, and I fell into such hideous imaginations that at length I awakened with horror.

The sunlight streamed into my cave through an opening in the trees, and on looking around me I saw a serpent coiled up close beside me, so that if I had turned in my sleep, or put forth my hand, I must have touched it. But close to the snake was a large loose stone; this I lifted up, and dashed down upon the snake, which contrived to thrust out its head at me, hissing with open jaws; but it could not reach me, nor come from beneath the stone; and there I left it.

In about an hour's time I passed a small house, beside which a family were breakfasting in the shade of an enormous gourd; and when the father saw me smiling to myself at the gambols of his children, who were playing with some young goats, he asked me to

partake of their food. This I did with great pleasure, and so refreshed mind and body at the same time.

About noon I passed a wayside inn, and my curiosity was roused by the sight of a broken chariot, which resembled the one I had seen the day before, with the two happy young people in it. While I stopped and looked earnestly at it, the host came to me, and I asked him concerning the chariot. He told me that in descending a steep hill the horses had run away, and the driver being stupid with too much wine, they could not be guided or stopped, so that at length they rushed off the road into the woods, where the chariot was overturned, and the maiden so much injured that they were obliged to carry her to the inn. The host further told me that she had not yet spoken, and that the young man, her husband, was distracted with grief.

When I heard this, I pitied the young man even more than the old one, whom I had left behind; for the one had only his own pains to bear, and went always forwards; but this other had to bear the pains of her whom he loved better than he loved himself, and for a long time to come they could not continue their journey.

About the eighth hour I turned off the road to rest in the shade; and here it came into my mind that, as I had now each night met with some unpleasant adventure, one when in company, and one when alone, I would try another way of passing the night—namely, travelling; for the moon being now nearly full, I thought it would be much pleasanter to walk by night than during the heat of the day. So I lay down on the soft grass in the shade of a wild citron tree, and soon fell

into a deep sleep, from which I awakened a little after sunset, when I ate the last of my barley-cakes, and began my night journey. All went well till near upon midnight, when the road led through an exceedingly thick part of the forest. Here I heard smothered cries as of one in pain; twice I heard footsteps behind me; twice I heard a hollow voice calling to me to stop; once my cloak was plucked from behind; and once a spear or an arrow whizzed past my head. I knew not what to do but to walk steadily forwards, though, in truth, I was ready to faint.

However, I saw nothing all the night. At length the sun rose, and after a while I saw houses, and heard sweet human voices, but a feeling of strangeness and isolation held me aloof from the people.

I walked all that day without food, and desired none, by reason of the dejection of my spirits. By nightfall I came to the river Bak, which separates Pagam from Karom.

I went at once to the Hall of Passports, and stated that I desired to cross into Karom that same night. An officer advised me to wait till the morning; but I was full of anxious fears, and would not stay another night in Pagam.

The one question was put to me, which is put to all who come from Pagam into Karom:—Do you sincerely purpose to fight against all the evils which you perceive in yourself, and henceforth in heart and life to keep the laws of the Great King?

Having answered that I did so purpose, the officer made a certain mark on my *moshim*, and gave me a large blank volume, in which he had written my name.

This is called the Record; it takes the place of the *anek*, and every day one should make an entry in this book of his progress in goodness, or his lapse into evil.

All people enter Karom on foot, for they have to cross the river Bak by a number of stepping-stones, which stretch completely across the stream.

As it was a bright moonlight night, I felt no fear, and, besides, the officer assured me that no person had ever been carried away by the stream in crossing.

I stepped quietly and steadily from one flat stone to the next, for they were all exactly one pace apart; but when I came to the middle, I observed that a stone was missing. My first thought was to spring across the gap; but I reflected that I might easily slip when I came to the next stone. Then I recalled what I had been told,—that none had ever failed to reach the other side. But the roar of the waters seemed to stupefy me, and I thought to myself that although none had yet perished, I might perish through rashly venturing to cross in the night. Then I looked up at the moon, for the rushing and gleaming of the waters unsteadied me; but at that instant a thick cloud passed over its face. Then a voice behind me said—*Turn back*; and my heart failed me. I looked towards the shore of Karom, but saw no light, and heard no sound.

Turn back, said the voice; and methought one plucked me by the sleeve. "Nay," said I, aloud, "I will never turn back, though I stand here till daylight. I know that I am obeying the laws of the King of Adaroni, and I will not fear."

Then did I seem no longer to hear the roar of the waters, and my thoughts steadied themselves. I remembered that the officer had explained to me that these stepping-stones reached without gap from shore to shore; I reflected that all in Karom must have crossed by them; that little children had crossed by them; that the Beautiful Maiden had stood on the very stone where I now stood. So I reasoned within myself that the stone which I did not see might be only a little way under the water, and that if I stepped quietly and steadily I must find it. I stepped, and found it. After a while I came to another place where I could not see the stone, but it caused me no uneasiness, and at length my foot touched the shore of Karom.

Then did I at length behold that land of many promises lying before me—a vast silent plain; and I straightway turned my steps towards a wide-spreading oak which stood alone. Under this oak was a great stone set up like a pillar of memorial. Here I renewed my vows of faithful obedience to all the laws of the Great King; and then, perceiving beside the stone a bed of dried ferns, I lay me down, and at once fell into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER X.

A Story of Two Lovers.



KAROM! Land of keen pains and bliss unspeakable; land of seeking and of finding, of losing and of longing; land of sore temptations, doubts, and agonies!

I said to myself, "I shall err no more, for my heart is fixed; I shall go from strength to strength; I shall be compassed about with songs of deliverance."

I knew not that he who takes the full cup of joy between his trembling hands is also he who sits alone, who lays his cheek to the dust, and eats his bread with tears. I knew not that the poet is a caged bird whose master can hang the cage in the sunlight or in the shade, and give or withhold food, water, and delicacies. I knew not that if the bird be cared for, it will pour forth sweet songs, but that if left unnoticed it will pine in silence, or only utter notes of sadness.

I shall never forget the day when I entered Hoshav, the chief city of Karom: the streets resounded with music, for, in fine weather, bands of musicians play through all the streets at sunrise, so that even those who live in the farthest alleys shall begin the day with hearing songs of battle and noble endurance, or the sweet harmonies of love and peace.

To me the music whispered of the Beautiful Maiden whose image lived in me. I looked from side to side as I passed one lovely form after another, but none seemed to have the loveliness of her I loved.

I was in the midst of the most agreeable thoughts, when a goldsmith's shop caught my eye. I entered, showed my passport and my *moshim* to the master, and was straightway hired at a good rate. Nor did my good fortune end here, for that same morning one of the young men had left, so I took his place in the family, and his apartment in the house of the workmen.

Also the goldsmith was a man of princely generosity, but so sensitive to even the appearance of indifference on the part of those whom he befriended, that he made a rule of not employing men whose conduct towards him as master did not perfectly satisfy him. This he told me before I agreed to work for him; and I assured him that I would serve him with my whole heart.

Also received my protestation of honest intentions with a searching and kindly look, then gave me a piece of gold, and told me that as the weather was fine, and I but newly come to Karom, I should take three days' rest after my pilgrimage, so that I might at once begin to see the wonders of the province of Karom.

For a young man like myself, desirous of becoming a poet, the time of my entering Karom was most favourable, for the moon was full, and the Karomas then hold what is to me their most delightful festival. If the sky be clear, the moon-feast continues for three

nights; but if the weather be stormy, or unsettled, they hold no festival, for no lamps, or light of any sort, save that of the moon, may be used in the gardens at that time. The moon-feast, as it is called, is held in a large garden, where multitudes assemble to hear the musicians, the poets, and the story-tellers.

When a poet has become celebrated, he hires a large hall for himself, and here he recites his poems on a stage so placed as to be clearly illumined by the moonlight, for none of the halls in these gardens have the roof covered in. People do not pay to enter a hall, and hear the poem, but on going out all leave something in one of the deep urns which stand at the sides of the door. Some give jewels, others money, some a paper with words of praise, advice, or censure; and when the people are gone, the contents of the urns are given to the poet.

I seemed to be entering a new world when I mingled with the happy people who filled the gardens; and though I had desired to hear the court-poet before all others, I insensibly followed those who thronged the broad path leading to the hall occupied by Thuri the celebrated story-teller.

When the hall was filled, Thuri entered from behind a curtain that shone like gold. He saluted the audience, threw his cloak back from his shoulders, and began to tell the story which I will here set down in my own simple fashion; for not only did it greatly interest me at the time, but years afterwards, I reckoned my hearing of this story among the many memorable things in my own life.

THE STORY OF MILROTH AND ZARMA.

Milroth was a young man who earned scanty wages as a lapidary, and who had but little hope of rising by means of his trade. He had for more than two years been deeply in love with Zarma, a beautiful girl, rich in love and womanly graces, but in worldly goods as poor as himself.

Kephri, the father of Zarma, was a very old man, and being by nature greedy of gain, he favoured a rich suitor who often made him valuable presents; and who so allured him by promises of further presents, that Kephri at last forbade his daughter to grant another interview to the youth who loved her so dearly.

Zarma obeyed her father, though her chief happiness lay in her love for the poor lapidary; and Milroth also obeyed, for he hated what was forbidden and concealed. But in a little while he became so unhappy that he went away and hid himself in the forest, where none might intrude upon his grief, or set eyes upon his woebegone visage.

When he had reached a shady thicket far from the village, he lay down with his face to the earth, and remained for several hours as one asleep. When after many hours he arose, and looked around him, it was night, and as he beheld the glory of the heavens, a new life stirred gently within him, his pain ceased, and sweet tears started to his eyes. Then a voice said to him, *Renounce and thou shalt possess.*

Yea,—answered Milroth in his heart—but how shall I understand this?

The voice said—*Renounce thy love, and love shall raise thee up.*

And with these words a wondrous light shone within him, and he exclaimed—*I yield thee up, O Zarma, to the power that is stronger than I.*

And when he had brokenly uttered these words, love raised him up, and he knew that he had never so deeply loved Zarma, as at that moment, and moreover, he felt that, by virtue of some mysterious bond, she was his own more than ever.

Then all tumult ceased, and he was filled with a delightful peace, as far beyond the touch of man as the majesty of the moon and her myriad stars.

The next day he told the father of Zarma that he was going away to a far country, and that he greatly desired to see his daughter for the last time.

His request was granted; and Zarma, noble as herself, renounced the hope that she had cherished, for she well knew, as did Milroth, that love like theirs would perish if not fed by the purest goodness. They also knew that the Great King, by wondrous and secret means, brings right to those who do right; so they separated in perfect trust, he promising to return if he became rich enough to marry her, and she promising to love him alone.

Milroth set out for the Diamond Mountains, where so many before him had found jewels which had made them the wealthiest in the land; and he rightly considered that as he was well acquainted with the appearance of rough gems, he had an advantage over those who knew nothing of the lapidary's business.

According to the custom of the searchers in those lonely mountains, he built himself a hut, and fenced it round, so that he might keep out the monsters which, in those regions, wander about at night, and work mischief to the unwary. His food consisted chiefly of fish, fruits, and honey. His drink was water, his bed was made of leaves. He lived in solitude and silence. More than once his courage failed him, and a fierce hunger for human companionship gnawed at his heart; but he communed with the skies, and the wild flowers whispered to him; he made friends of the birds, and the insects taught him; and he laboured zealously from day to day.

He found many small diamonds, and other precious stones; but at the end of three years he unearthed a ruby so large that he felt assured it must be worth many thousand pieces of gold.

Then he travelled night and day that he might tell his good news to Kephri. But the old man would not believe that the stone was a ruby, and bade Milroth show its value in gold. Zarma, however, believed; and the two young people rejoiced after their years of separation.

It behoved Milroth to be prudent lest some mishap should mar their hopes, so he spoke to no person of his great ruby; but sold his other gems, and bought a small hut outside the village, where he intended to cut and polish his wonderful jewel, which he would then offer for sale to the Prince.

But something of this came to the ears of Ithpakar, the rich suitor, who continued to make presents to the father of Zarma. Now Ithpakar had three villains in

his pay, and when he discovered why Kephri appeared to favour the suit of Milroth, he set these villains to watch for an opportunity of stealing the great ruby. But Milroth was more watchful than they; and when they came to his hut, in various disguises, and under various pretences, they always found him polishing stones of little value.

At length Ithpakar ordered his villains to waylay Milroth while on his way one evening to visit Zarma; for they had already searched the house during his absence, and finding nothing, concluded that he always carried the ruby with him. But when they had made sure that he had not the ruby with him, they agreed that it must be concealed in the house, so they still watched and searched whenever they found an opportunity.

The ruby was indeed hidden in the house, but so cunningly, that the villains could not find it; and in spite of all hindrances the polishing of the magnificent jewel was making excellent progress.

But the continued watchfulness and anxiety began to have a dire effect upon Milroth, and he was beset both night and day by tormenting fancies. Sometimes he would get up in the night, and hide the jewel in a new place; sometimes he dreamed that it had been stolen; once he awakened and found that he was at work cutting the last face of the ruby, and then he resolved that he would keep the great jewel no longer, but dispose of it on the morrow.

In the morning, however, when he went to the place where he remembered hiding it, the ruby was gone, and though he sought in every place where it had at any

time been hidden, he was unable to find it. Then he believed that he had again arisen in his sleep, and hidden it in some new place. But days and nights passed, and no light came in upon this mystery. He thought, and sought, and suffered alone, for he would not trouble the happiness of Zarma, and he hoped that he might yet find his ruby.

In the meantime Ithpakar had become more fixed in his evil designs, and had at length devised a plan by which he thought he must surely obtain the ruby: he ordered his servants to set fire to the house of Milroth at midnight, and to watch carefully around it, for it was certain that he would bring out the ruby with him, when he saw the house in flames. This plan was carried out, but no ruby was found hidden in the garments of Milroth, so Ithpakar had no other satisfaction than the ignoble one of having destroyed all that his rival possessed.

Milroth was now in despair, he seemed to have been lifted up only to be cast down. He was alone; none came to help him; he saw his hut burn away without being able to rescue anything. Then, but with no wondrous voice to encourage him, he once more renounced his hopes of happiness with Zarma, and resolved that he would yet again seek the solitude of the Diamond Mountains.

But it chanced that in the cold hour which precedes the dawn, he raked together a few burning coals that he might warm himself; and by the light of their flame he perceived something glittering in the ashes—it was his ruby, but, alas, its colour was burnt out, and in the eye of the goldsmith it was no longer a ruby.

Milroth bound the pale stone in his girdle, and went to the house of Kephri. "Father," said he, "a poor man, broken in his hopes, craves of you food and a little money; open to me that I may see Zarma, and bid her farewell for ever."

When Milroth had told them all his story, and showed them the colourless gem, his strength failed him, and he fell back on a couch, where he long lay without speaking.

Then Zarma pleaded with her father until she loosed the bands of selfishness which had cramped the free beating of his heart. She spoke of the laws of the Great King of Adaroni; she spoke of love and pity. Her tears, her tones, her soft arms, and her beseeching eyes overcame the hard spirit of her father, and he became filled with compassion.

"Daughter," he said, "I will take Milroth to be my son. Our home shall be his."

When Milroth came to himself, it was evening, and Zarma was alone with him, for the father had contrived to have some business in the village. When he returned, Milroth and Zarma ran to show him that the ruby had received its colour again! This they supposed to be a miracle, for they knew not that the ruby loses its colour by heat, and recovers it when cold.

Three days afterwards Kephri and his children, Milroth and Zarma, set out for Karom, where they lived a happy life together, each helping the other to advance in those virtues which alone render life worth living.

* * * * *

This is the story which I heard on the evening of my first day in Karom. It made a deep impression on me, for in various points it resembled my own case. I myself was a lapidary, and would, I feared, never become rich by my skill in the art; then, again, I also loved a beautiful maiden, who appeared to be beyond my reach; and, moreover, the father of Turoni, an old man, was still alive, and, if not avaricious, he might possess some other quality which would be a bar to my union with his daughter.

But what most interested me was Thuri's account of the lonely life among the Diamond Mountains; and from that hour I conceived the idea that, if all should fail me, I would retire from the cares of this lower life, and enjoy a long period of rest and meditation in the solitude of those far-off mountains.

When I inquired concerning these mountains, and the people who went thither, I learned that many celebrated men had lived there, completely shut out from intercourse with friend or lover; and I was also assured that various wonderful discoveries had been there made and perfected.

Some men, I was informed, had gone thither with a broken heart; some because they were poor and proud; some because they had been told in a dream that they should discover a jewel of enormous value. Some went thither while yet very young, wearied out with the miseries of an unhappy marriage; others had taken up their abode there in old age, when most persons have done with eager hope and toilsome search.

Many who went to the Diamond Mountains were no more heard of; and, worse still, as it seemed to me, many returned with worthless stones, which they had imagined to be jewels of great value.

CHAPTER XI.

Halek Writes a Poem.

THE story of Milroth caused me not only to seek information concerning the Diamond Mountains, but concerning Thuri, the teller of the story. I was informed that he had been brought up as a carpenter, and that, although he now received as a story-teller more than sufficed for his own wants, he still followed the occupation to which he had been brought up.

In Karom every youth, before leaving school, must choose, besides the business by which he intends to live, some study which shall cultivate his finer perceptions, and raise him above the mere brute life. Thus even the court poet Lormuz was by trade a weaver. Indeed, so necessary do the Karomas deem it that a man should love some art which can elevate him into the higher regions of thought, that even the young princes do not leave school till they have chosen, and for a certain time studied, one of the ennobling arts.

On the second night of the moon-feast, as soon as I entered the garden, I asked for the hall of Lormuz, the court poet. I found it already nearly filled, and I remember that, as I crossed the threshold, a strange awe fell upon me, for all were sitting silent, listening

to soft music, while Lormuz, clothed in pure white, stood in the moonlight, and gazed upon the people with deep eyes, that seemed to read the hearts of those before him.

After a while the music ceased, and Lormuz began in a low but clear voice. I cannot give the exact form of the poem which he recited, for it was never written, and I was told long afterwards that it was an improvisation of Lormuz, who was, in truth, a rhapsodist of great power.

THE VISION OF LORMUZ.

Behold a tree standing alone upon a bare mountain. The sun rises, and the tree is transfigured, while his leaves, waving in the breeze, glitter like jewels.

Sometimes the wind brings him from afar the perfume of trees of his own kind, which he has never seen. Then do his bright leaves quiver and droop.

Yet the great tree is not altogether lonely, for a pair of noble eagles have their nest in his branches, many living creatures of great beauty visit him, and some remain with him for days sipping honey out of his flowers.

At the foot of the tree there is a black and silent pool extending far into the caverns of the earth. The pool produces only a few small fish which are blind; she has no beauty of her own; but she mirrors in her dead waters the image of the stars, the clouds, and the great lonely tree that grows near her.

The tree is nourished by the earth with its dark pool, and by the sky with its light and warmth. He knows that he is nourished by the earth, for he rests on it, his roots seek a way to the pool, his branches

bend over it lovingly, and he sees his own grandeur mirrored therein. But he knows not that he is preserved by the subtle influence of the sun, and he comprehends not the healthy ministrations of heat and cold, of calm and storm.

The living tree loves the dead pool, and so contemplates himself therein, that at last he knows not whether it be himself that he loves, or the pool. He bends his lower branches downwards to the water; and in the autumn he lets his crimson leaves fall upon the bosom of the dark water, where they float, and fade and decay.

Moreover, as he ever thinks of the pool whence he imagines he draws his life, he strengthens his roots on that side, and continually sends forth fresh roots in that direction; but on the other side, where the earth is harder, he sends forth but few roots, and they do not seek to obtain firm hold in the clefts of the rock.

It is night. Thunder shakes the mountains, and the great tree bends over the pool, for the blast of the tempest is strong upon him. The pool is strewn with his leaves and branches, but she is silent, and receives all.

It is midnight. The storm is at its height. The last roots of the tree are torn from the rocks, and he falls into the arms of the black pool, carrying with him the faithful mother eagle that would not leave her young, and crushing the beautiful flowers that had already begun to blossom in the soft soil around him.

* * * * *

As soon as the poem was ended, Lormuz retired, and I was entranced by music that sounded like the moaning of a hopeless regret.

Before I left the hall I wrote these words, and deposited the paper in the urn as I passed out:—

“To Lormuz the court-poet: Thou hast awakened the poet’s heart in me. I resolve to labour in the vineyards of Karom, so that I also may some day produce ripe clusters.

Accept the poor thanks of Halek, who can give naught else.”

When I came out from the hall, and walked along the trellised paths, I became suddenly conscious of my loneliness: for the garden was full of youths and maidens walking up and down, and I heard many a soft laugh as I passed them. But longing brings fulfilment; and he whose eyes are blinded with tears, may yet follow the path which he sees not.

It was so with me this evening; for I fell into so melancholy a train of thought, that I wandered away not knowing whither, and yet I had been insensibly drawn towards a circular grove of orange trees, from the midst of which there sounded a clear voice singing to the music of a harp.

Within the grove, to which there was only one narrow entrance, I found many people listening to a young man singing a love-song, each verse of which ended in a woman’s name, now pealed forth like the call of a trumpet, and now murmured to the quivering chords of the harp. The singer was tall and straight; the harper was bent with age, and his snow-white beard reached to his waist.

When the song was finished, the harper remained, but the young man passed through the crowd, and went out of the grove. In a little while another young man took his place near the harper. The second singer was neither young, handsome, nor of noble stature, but his voice moved me to compassion as he sang of sorrow for some wrong whereby he had estranged the love of her whom he yet faithfully loved, and whom he most earnestly desired to see and to reconcile.

Although I chiefly attended to the song, I could not but admire the skill of the harper who produced such sad and solemn strains, well according with the emotions of the singer; and I remember that I then for the first time desired to become a musician as well as a poet; for, after the singing I had heard in Karom, it seemed to me that the highest kind of poet should pour forth his thoughts in a rapture, and be able, at will, and naturally as the bird sings, to give the music which is accordant thereto.

It is good for a young man to desire excellence, and to strive after it; but there is wisdom in this saying of the Karomas: Youth sets the seed, and his mouth waters; manhood prunes and waits; old age tastes of the fruit, and leaves the tree to another.

When the second song was ended, and both singer and harper were gone, I turned hastily away, and a young man who had been standing beside me, turned to go at the same time.

I had several times glanced at his face while I listened to the song, and he had appeared to be so noble and engaging that I would have spoken to him; but as he had not looked towards me, I knew not how to

address him; now, however, as we walked out together, I drew closer to him, saluted him, and after telling him that I was but a novice in Karom, I begged him to inform me why these love-songs had been sung to so many hearers.

He informed me that the singers were chiefly young men who, like myself, were newly come to Karom; that some had left all their friends in Pagam, and now sought to find suitable friends in Karom; that others had been preceded by those they loved, and that they took this way of acquainting them that they also were here, and desirous of continuing the friendship.

My heart beat fast when I heard this, and I straightway imagined that I heard myself pouring forth a song which should reach the ears of Turoni, and bring her to my side. But I forcibly recalled my impetuous fancy, and, assuming a careless manner, I asked if all the young men in Karom sing to announce their arrival.

He smiled at this, and replied that this was the way of the poets and the impatient, but that many are content to attend the moon-feasts, and he assured me that, sooner or later, all who desired it, and were worthy, meet those who are able to return love for love.

I then ventured to ask him if he had been long in Karom; and he told me that he could not remember any other country, and that when a child he had left Pagam with his father and mother. He also gave me to understand that he had many friends in Karom.

But while he was yet speaking to me, I fell to thinking of Turoni, and to determining what should be

the style and form of the song which I would compose.

How long I walked beside him in silence I know not; but after a while he laid his hand on my arm, and said—"You are troubled; tell me; I can help you." Then we stood still, and when I looked in his face, I accepted his friendship.

His manners appeared so gracious and winning to me, who had been so long accustomed to the barbarity of the Pagamas, that I at once opened my heart to him, told him of my love for Turoni, and of my earnest desire to excel as a poet.

He, on his part, responded to my confidence by promising that if I would come on the morrow to a certain part of the garden, he would introduce me to friend of his, a musician, who would set a poem of mine to music, and so skilfully that it would certainly attract the notice of the hearers, and of Turoni, should she be among them. Moreover, before we parted, he told me where he lived, and invited me to come to him when I would.

The next day I set about composing a poem which, if Turoni heard it, would tell her who was singing. For my own part I was confident that I could recognise Turoni the moment I saw her, but I thought she would not so readily recognise me.

After writing and correcting and altering again and again, I was at length satisfied with a short poem which I produced, and which I resolved to sing at the next moon-feast. A young man seldom finds it difficult to be satisfied with his own poems; but this, my first attempt at a love-song, appeared to me so much better than the poems I had written in Pagan,

that I afterwards burnt the piece which I had desired to be my introduction among the poets of Karom.

THE SONG OF HALEK.

I.

I call to the maid whom I named long ago Turoni. She sat in the Temple, her white-haired father beside her. I gazed on her face, and my soul filled with love.
I am singing to thee—Turoni.

II.

Unknown to me was her dwelling; what was her name I knew not; only her beauty I knew, and the gentle grace of her movements. Only one look did she grant me before she departed.
I am seeking for thee—Turoni.

III.

Many around me love and are loved in return; many a song is sung in the light of a beautiful eye. But I sing alone, and the tone dies out in the darkness.
I am waiting for thee—Turoni.

IV.

Only in dreams do I see thee; my love has lived only on hope. Show me a token to tell me I hope not in vain. My heart is weary with looking and longing for thee.
I love thee alone—Turoni.

In the evening my new friend Zakku met me at the appointed place, and with him was an elderly man whom he introduced to me as a musician named Erimoth. I eagerly scanned his face, but I saw nothing to attract me, for he appeared to be surly and discontented.

When Erimoth had perused my song, I asked him if he could set it to music.

"Yes," he replied, "I could do that, though it were ten times better."

"Then you think it might be ten times better?" I asked.

"I only pronounce judgment on music," he replied. "If you will come to my house on the Day of Peace, about this hour, you shall have your song, and if it please you not, I will ask no payment."

"I must ask your pardon," said I, reddening as I spoke. "I forgot till this moment that I have no money; I will wait till I have earned some."

Then Erimoth fixed his eyes upon me, and his voice became softer as he said: "A young man who has no money, and who can forget that he has none, ought to become rich."


"I thank you for this encouragement," said I.

"You shall thank me for something more," said he, "for, if you forget that you have no money, I will forget that I take money for my music. You shall have your song ready for the next moon-feast."

With these words, and so bright a flash of kindness from his eyes that his rugged face was beautified thereby, he left me to meditate on the great and unexpected good fortune which had already welcomed me into the wondrous land of Karom.

CHAPTER XII.

Some of the Sects.

N the next morning I began to work for Alsor, and I was not long in discovering that the goldsmiths of Karom greatly excel those of Pagam; and, indeed, I could not sufficiently admire the beauty of the many finished ornaments which were displayed for sale.

I was at first unable to use some of their instruments; but no one appeared to notice it, and I was much pleased with their forbearance, for some of them were but lads. Even my skill in devising inscriptions, which in Pagam had passed for something commendable, was here shown to be of little value, and I observed that the walls were hung with tablets of jasper marble, malak, silver, and even gold engraved with beautiful sayings, which, both in conception and style, were far beyond my capacity.

For three days our work proceeded right merrily and earnestly, and I enjoyed perfect peace; for my heart was given to making progress as a Karoma, and this gave me so sweet an assurance of success, that my restless thoughts concerning the finding of Turoni entirely passed away.

There are many religious sects in Karom, the chief of which are the Black-whites, the Reasoners, and the Refusers; but in all the land there are no Deniers or Perfumers.

The Black-whites are exceedingly numerous in Karom, and they have thousands of temples containing tens of thousands of inscriptions, among which I have often seen these that follow:—

Persuade, compel, or punish.

He is also wise that lets another be wise for him.

The Reasoners are next in number to the Black-whites, and these are some of their sayings:—

He that knows most knows least.

The fish that doubts may go without food; but the credulous one becomes food for the angler.

The Refusers, who in the olden times were more numerous than at the present day, have the following sayings:

He who threw away the sweet cane which had wounded his lips, killed therewith a fat pigeon. When he had picked up the pigeon, he also picked up the sweet cane.

He that crosses the sea to Adaroni, will so loathe the food of Benuben, that his stomach will reject all before he comes to the other side.

There are many wonderful things to be seen in the temples of Karom. The Black-whites assert that they believe whatsoever the various officers of their temples bid them believe; and each temple contains something by which their faith may be exercised. In one temple there is a little book which none can read, and in the

same temple there is a lamp whose light none can see; and yet, they declare that if this book be held before this lamp, the faithful can read therein anything they choose.

In another temple they have a book upon which the officers put a new cover every year; and this they have done for so many years, that the book has now a thickness of twenty cubits, wherein the book itself is so hidden, that many say it does not, and never did exist; but the faithful believe that it is there, and the learned among them have written many books on what they believe it may contain.

In another temple there is a dark vault said to contain vast treasures left by rich men who had long ago been removed to Adaroni. Every seventh year there is a festival at which the vault is opened, and all who choose may enter, one by one, with their baskets, and take what jewels or money they may desire. I once attended to witness this high festival, and I can testify that I saw many come out from this vault, who appeared to be laden with riches, and who showed the utmost joy in their countenances. I also observed a friend of mine among the faithful; but when I asked him to let me see the wondrous jewels in his basket, he was greatly angered, and thrust the basket somewhat violently into my face, saying—"They are here! We do not show them to prying unbelievers." Outside the temple I observed another friend, walking homewards in much dejection of heart; he confessed that he had seen no treasures, and he humbly bewailed his want of faith.

Again there is a temple possessing a book whose words appear to be placed without visible order and connection, as though written in the *Khut* style. Now it is quite possible that he who first wrote this book, after the manner of other books, did then copy out the words thereof according to some regular procession of numbers, so that he might conceal his wisdom until the secret law of the number should be discovered. Howbeit, each officer of the temple declares that he himself has discovered the key to the intelligible reading of the book; and as officer succeeds to officer, each affirming that he has discovered a new plan of reading after a law of his own invention, the worshippers in this temple must exercise their faith in the difficulty of believing, first, that the book is written according to any certain law, and secondly, that the knowledge of this secret law will reveal to them treasures of wisdom.

I once heard an officer of distinguished piety announce the discovery of his law:—Seven, said he, was a mystical number, and ten a mystical number; whence the division of the circle, and other perfect forms, into seventeen parts. The doctrine of this book was in a perfect form, and seventeen was the number which unlocked its mystery. He then showed that if you began to read the book at the two hundred and eighty-ninth word (for seventeen taken seventeen times will give this number), and then continued taking the seventh or tenth or seventeenth word, according to a law of strange complexity, you arrive at a sequence of words which, with but very little ingenuity, can be shown to be parts of sentences, which then merely

require to be filled out, so as to bring forth the meaning of the writer.

The Reasoners constantly impugn the authority of the Black-whites; but they set up an authority of their own, which declares that it is unlawful to believe anything on the authority of another. Yet, in common with all the other sects in Karom, they acknowledge the sovereignty of the Great King, and the wisdom of the laws contained in the Book of Adaroni; but their watchword is *Perhaps*, and they are so often dazzled by the brilliancy of their reasonings that they are unable to see the most comforting hopes, which are also reasonable.

The Reasoners have their temples even as the other sects in Karom, and the worshippers therein have also various admirable things in which their faith may be exercised. In one of their temples there is a deep well that no line has fathomed. Some affirm that it reaches under the sea, and opens out into Adaroni; while some say it goes through Adaroni, and opens into Aven or Emptiness. Into this well the learned throw many valuable things; for they consider it their duty to add to the treasures which, from the remotest ages, have been cast into it.

Now, in the temple over this deep well the ingenious have constructed a long tube of bronze, and this tube is fitted at various intervals with smooth pieces of crystal (or diamond, for aught I know), in the shape of a lentil seed, but larger; and they affirm that if they steadfastly gaze through this tube down the well, they can see anything they choose, even as the Black-whites can read in their books anything they choose. Some

Reasoners declare that the tube enables them to see clearly into Aven; but others strengthen the hopes of those who are hopeful among all other sects, for they declare that by the aid of their crystals they see the houses and gardens and the happy multitudes of Adaroni; and they also declare that none of the treasure which a good and earnest man casts into that well is lost, but that in Adaroni he receives it again, together with other treasures of an hundredfold value.

There are not many Refusers in Karom, and their number is not increasing. They are gentle and inoffensive to others, but they practise the greatest cruelties upon themselves, holding that the Great King desires men to become fit for high dignities in Adaroni, by rising above the allurements of the flesh; so they habitually deny themselves even the most innocent delights. Some of the Refusers are sorely tainted with hypocrisy; they love their severe asceticism to be known, and they look with the utmost disdain upon all who enjoy themselves, however innocently, or however temperately.

Some of the Refusers live apart in the wilderness, and will worship in no temple, saying that when they are thus solitary they are visited by messengers from Adaroni, and that the delights of this intercourse far exceed all other delights.

It may be true that, as some have reported, the most part of those who are called Refusers are only so in name; but I must here affirm that when I was a young man (in Karom) I became one of the strictest Refusers, and I must also affirm, with many others,

that my life was then a succession of the most entrancing delights.

In Pagam, any young man, whatsoever his defects, may become an officer in the temple. But in Karom no man is admitted to the priesthood until he has dwelt some years in Sahitam, as a servant, in the palace of the Prince, who, if he have worthily gone through this probation, invests him with the Diamond Sandals and the Ruby Signets. The wearer of these jewels then returns to Karom as a priest; and whether he had favoured the doctrines of the Black-whites or those of the Reasoners, he now teaches nothing but the beauty and the blessedness of leading a good life. Every priest in Karom is a man of exalted piety, unwearied patience, and quick sympathy. His hand is open as his heart; he encourages and admonishes; his praise is precious; his rebuke terrible.

Some of these priests from Sahitam devote their lives, and all that they have, to enlightening the Pagamas, and leading them from the love of themselves to the love of others. Such priests are called *messengers*. Their manner of life yields them many noble delights; but it sometimes happens that they are cruelly maltreated by those whom they seek to instruct and comfort; for evil hates good, and lusts after its destruction.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Old Musician.

ALSOR belonged to the sect of the Refusers, and as I had not yet joined any sect in Karom, and was desirous of knowing something of all sects, I accompanied him to his temple.

I paid but little heed to the wonders displayed therein; but the words of the priest stirred me to the depths, and made me resolve to keep a strict watch over my thoughts, lest I should be ensnared into evil deeds, whereof even the remembrance is poison.

It wanted yet about an hour to sunset when I repaired to the house of Erimoth. He received me with much courtesy and kindness, and his face had wholly lost its look of sullen discontent. He invited me to sit on the cushions in the portico, which opened upon the garden at the back of the house; then he set fruit before me, and while we enjoyed it together, he entertained me with much lively discourse.

While we were thus engaged several wild birds fluttered down from a large cedar tree which stood outside the garden, and perching within arm's length of us, demanded a share of our repast. Erimoth gave them grapes, which they took from his hand and bore away with chirpings of content; but to one of these birds

Erimoth, for my amusement, would give nothing; whereupon he darted at a grape which Erimoth was on the point of eating, seized it, and carried it off with ludicrous haste, uttering the while loud cries of triumph.

"How different," said I, when this little play was concluded, "how different is this from the barbarous cruelties of Pagam, where some make a business of ensnaring these bright spirits of the woods, that they may confine them in narrow cages."

"Selfishness," said Erimoth, "is the life of the Pagama. It is well for the birds that their eyes would not retain their lustre after being plucked out, or the forests would resound with the cries of blind birds, that the beauties of Pagam might load themselves with new ornaments."

As we became more familiar with each other, Erimoth asked me what was my business, and what my choice-work. I told him that I had followed the business of a lapidary, but that I had not yet determined on my choice-work, adding that I had at one time been attracted by the mysteries of alchemy, at another by the sublime powers of oratory, and lastly by the entrancing delights of poetry; but that I was now beginning to think that I should devote some of my spare time to the study of music.

"What," inquired Erimoth, "would influence your choice?"

"I desire," said I, "to choose that art by which I shall the most fully express my emotions."

"Music alone," said Erimoth, "can utter all the keenest pangs and the highest joys of the sensitive

heart, its despair and exultation, its aspirations, its grand endurance, its weariness, its brilliant hopes, its moods of serene meditation, and its black storms of wrath. Music is the voice which cries aloud in the wilderness, and murmurs in the perfumed groves of the lovers. Music slides her tremulous tones into the heart of the humble, and thunders forth her call before the fortress of the proud."

"I will be a musician!" I exclaimed, seizing his hand. "I will be your pupil. What shall I do first?"

He answered in one word—"Wait."

"But that is merely doing nothing," said I.

"What shall I begin to do?"

He answered in one word—"Listen"; and I made a gesture of impatience.

"My son," said Erimoth, "I do not mean that you should listen in order to imitate, or in order not to imitate. All who have made others listen have themselves listened. I speak of the musician, the poet, and the orator. When the perturbations of the lower depths have ceased, there is a great calm, and the voices of the upper spheres sound sweet and clear to us. We do but repeat what we have thus heard; to do so worthily we must love virtue and practise it."

"This," said I, "was also the teaching of Rayamin the orator. I knew him well, and I loved him."

"Yet not as I loved him," said Erimoth, "for he is my very brother in the spirit; but nobler and stronger than I. We shall soon see him; after years of content in Pagam, he has wearied of it."

At length Erimoth said that he would sing my song to me; and when he had brought his harp, he stood in

front of me, struck a few grand chords by way of prelude, and then gave me the new delight of hearing one of my own poems made to breathe and quiver by its union with impassioned music.

"Master," I exclaimed, "you have done well!"

"You brought a beautiful cup," said Erimoth; "I poured good wine into it; both of us drank."

"My poem," I continued, "was a closed flower drooping in the darkness; your music was the sunlight. You have made me love music with my whole heart."

"In that case," said Erimoth, "I counsel you henceforth to leave poems to the poets."

"But," said I, "you have also made me think more highly of my own power as a poet."

"I return, then," said Erimoth, "to my first word—*Wait!* Many seeds slumber in the earth, they do not all become plants; many plants perish before they bloom; and all blossoms do not yield fruit. You are young; you can be patient."

"Methinks," said I, "it is the old who can be patient, for they see their fruit ripening. Alas! I do not know that I shall ever produce that which shall crown the long years of patience. I was patient when my wings were clipped in Pagam; I was patient in the cage of Kobesh. The cage is broken, I feel my wings, and I am in Karom. I can be patient no longer!"

"The clipped wing and the strong cage," replied Erimoth, "compel endurance, they do not teach patience: It is here in Karom that you will need patience; it is here you must learn it. Patience, my impatient pupil, is the very ground whereon we build. Ardour without patience and a wise ordering of our

steps, is but as the glare of the meteor which rushes earthwards ere we have rightly beheld it. The fiery sun and the grave moon know their seasons."

When I left the house of Erimoth I felt saddened, I knew not why, and I longed to do I knew not what. Before I went to sleep I wrote much in my Record,—all I remembered of the conversation of Erimoth, and my own resolve that I would some day write beautiful poems which I myself would set to beautiful music. I also set down in my Record that I would be patient. Many years afterwards I wrote—*I am beginning to be patient.*

I will pass over the wearisome days of waiting for the next moon-feast. Alsor had not failed to note my feverish restlessness; once he looked grave, and once he rallied me; but I appeared to possess no power over myself, and I at length became firmly persuaded that Turoni had never noticed me; that the look of love I had seen had been for another; that if it had been for me, she had now forgotten me; that she was married; that she was gone to Adaroni; that I could not write a poem worthy of the name; that I possessed no power to compose music; that I was an utter fool; and that everybody in Hoshav would know me to be one if I ventured to sing in public. I fancied I found my voice failing, the very words of the song escaping my memory; I thought I saw the amusement of my hearers, and heard their laughter; I saw my master, Erimoth, take up his harp, and leave me with a scowl of indignation. In a word, I tortured myself to frenzy; and yet, so soothing and assuring is the sympathy of a

friend, that Erimoth could always comfort me, and send me away full of hope after singing my song to his music.

When at length the first night of the moon-feast came, I found myself, to my amazement, as tranquil as the night itself, and my timidity vanished as soon as I confronted my audience.

The first to mount the platform in the lovers' grove was a young man with a scarred face, who limped, and supported himself on a staff. What love song, thought I to myself, can he sing? My question was afterwards answered.

It was my turn. Erimoth smiled at me as I approached; and after I had for a little while listened to the mighty music of his harp, my spirit seemed to pulse therewith; so that without anxiety for the issue, I launched my voice upon the calm air. While singing the third strophe, I perceived a murmur of applause; and in more than one face I read a kindly appreciation.

When my song was finished, I hastened through the crowd, and walked up and down the avenue which led to the grove, thinking that I should either meet with Turoni, or receive some token from her. But I was disappointed; and it seemed that I was not to be as fortunate as others; for as I was leaving the garden I met the lame man leaning on the arm of a tall and beautiful woman, who from time to time regarded him with looks of the most tender solicitude, mingled with joy, and a sort of humble pride, as it were, that this man would deign to receive the riches of her love.

The next evening, as I was singing, I saw Zakku within the grove, and was somewhat cheered by his

presence; but I caught no glimpse of Turoni. When my song was finished, I walked, much dispirited, down the avenue, and so out of the garden into the road, where was a bench set for the use of those who waited outside. Here I tried to steady my thoughts, but felt only discontented and disheartened. Presently a woman approached me, and asked me if I had seen her mother—an old woman who walked with a staff. I told her I had observed nobody. At this she drew a deep breath, and sat down suddenly beside me, covering her face with her hands.

"Be not distressed," said I, "it was easy to lose sight of your mother in so great a crowd. She will pass this way, and you can then rejoin her."

The poor creature tried to speak, but she only stammered forth words I did not catch. She appeared to be about twenty years of age, and I thought she was very beautiful.

"How came you to lose your mother?" I asked.

She replied, "I heard so sweet a song as we walked outside the walls that I hastened to come near to the singer. Moreover, I heard my own name; for the singer called *Turoni—Turoni!* So I ran from my mother, and when the song was finished I could not see her."

"It is indeed strange," said I, "that your name is Turoni, and that you hastened towards me when I called that name in my song."

"Was it then your voice that made me lose sight of my mother?" she asked.

"I sang the song of which you speak," I replied.

Then she looked earnestly on my face, and laid one of her hands on mine; whereupon a strange giddiness

seized me; my thoughts stopped, and I heard, as it were, a confused murmur of waves.

While I was thus spellbound, Zakku came and saluted me. I did not recognise him; and as I bent forward the better to scan his features, the woman started up, and glided away from me like a shadow. Zakku accompanied me to the house of Alsor, and sought to cheer me with his conversation, but I cared not to talk with him.

My sleep that night was troubled with dreams, in one of which I appeared to be imprisoned in a cave beneath the sea, where I was held by a woman whose hand was grown into mine, so that when I was at length maddened with horror, and struggled to burst away from her, it was with the pain of tearing my flesh.

On the third evening of the moon-feast, I gave my song with all the sadness of a last and hopeless appeal. No one appeared to care for me or for my song; and in a sullen despair, I resolved that I would sing it no more. As I hurried from the platform, Erimoth slipped a sealed paper into my hand. I knew not what it might be; and I was then so dejected that I cared not; but moved away through the crowd, holding it carelessly in my hand.

No friendly eye met mine. I walked as one in a dream, and appeared to have left the garden without being willing to do so. The young woman to whom I had spoken the night before, rose from the bench near the gate, and came towards me. I saluted her with grave courtesy; but she appeared to be distraught, and sitting down again upon the bench, she looked away from me, and sighed.

"What is your sorrow?" I asked.

"Desolation, and poverty, and a gnawing envy," she replied. "While I listened to your sweet song, my pain was soothed awhile; but afterwards I was envious of those who are always happy because they are always loved."

These words touched me to the quick, and threw me into so great a tumult of thoughts, that I could not speak; but looked down, and pulled the paper which I still held in my hand; when the superscription suddenly caught my eyes:—*To Halek, from Amutai, whom he calls Turoni.*

On sudden joy came swift shame. "I must go," I said, "for I hold here a summons which is as the mandate of the Great King."

The woman made a gesture as though she would detain me; but I stepped back.

"I came to your voice when you sang," she pleaded; "and will you not stay for mine? You cannot leave me without comfort; you will at least promise to see me once more."

"Yes," I replied, "I will promise this; but how can I comfort you?"

"Your face tells me that you are generous," she replied; "you will never turn from the needy. My mother is infirm and poor; we earn a wretched living by embroidering robes for the wealthy; while we ourselves are barely clad, and are many a time pinched with hunger."

The appeal of this poor woman was at once answered: I gave her all the money I had with me; told her where I lived, and promised that if she and her

mother should hereafter need a friend, they could always find one in me.

Hereupon she was overpowered by so lively a sense of gratitude, that ere I could withdraw my hand from her sudden clasp, she had pressed it to her lips; but perceiving this to be unseemly, I snatched my hand away, turned on my heel, and hastened homewards, for I burned to break the seal of my precious letter.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Betrothal of Halek and Turoni.

THE LETTER OF TURONI.

“**M**AY peace and joyful progress be your portion in Karom; and may those who love you work for your good, even as Zakku, who has for three years been my brother and counsellor, and who has now told me of you and of your song.

“My life has been so filled with duties, that I have had but little time for dreams; but I have not forgotten the name of Halek, who in the Hall of Petition had eyes for me alone.

“When Zakku told me that our friend Erimoth was the harper who attended you in the grove, I gave him this letter; and he promised to deliver it to you on receiving a sign from me. So I come to the grove this evening; and if my eyes assure me that you are Halek, the son of Mazor, this letter shall assure you that I am indeed Amutai, whom you call Turoni.

“Zakku will direct you to my house, and I shall look for you to-morrow at moon-rise.”

And now I will copy from my record passages written there on the night that still shines in my memory as one of unclouded faith and perfect bliss.

“No more of sorrow and sighing! The years glow before me with a thousand hopes. Turoni loves me, and is mine for ever. I am conscious of powers within me, as musician and poet; I shall acquire fame and wealth. Turoni and I will go to the sweet isles of Sahitam, and we will petition the Great King to let us leave Benuben together, and then live together in Adaroni.”

“I have youth, health, work, and friends. The forest is removed; the wild beasts are fled; the ground is green with pleasant plants, and nurses in her bosom myriads of good seeds. A high wall is built round about the garden, and the laws of the Great King are graven on its portals.”

Thus ran my record when I was a young man. I knew not that my sorrows were only beginning, and that if the future were never bright, the present were but rarely endurable.

The brighter the hope, the blacker the despair; the sweeter the love, the more terrible the loss. Beyond the cruel wilderness of Pagam, beyond the lonely mountains of Karom, is the glorious kingdom of Sahitam; and beyond Benuben there is the age-long bliss of Adaroni, where what was here unsearchable is read in letters of light; where our common speech is poetry, where only to listen is to hear music; and where we, toiling and tearful beings, whose lives are entwined with all the joys and pains of the universe, shall for ever advance in love, in knowledge, and in noble works.

I will here relate a fable which I heard about this time in the hall of the story-tellers, for it well shows the difference that may be between what we conceive,

and what we produce, the imperceptible degrees by which good becomes turned into evil, and the ease with which we flatter ourselves and accept the flattery of others.

THE KING'S HORSE.

There was once a king who esteemed himself so fine a judge of horses, that he undertook to paint what should be universally accepted as the very pattern and perfection of horses.

So he caused a smooth wall to be prepared in the palace whereon he would portray this image of a faultless horse; and so zealous was he in this great design, that for the first two days and nights he shut himself up in a tower, where his profound meditations might not be disturbed.

At length, when he had so vividly conceived the perfect image, that now nothing remained but to portray it, he descended from the tower, and commanded a great feast to be prepared for his courtiers, who were loud in their praises of the king for having succeeded in imagining a horse of such noble proportions, that it would become the pattern for the whole world.

There was, indeed, much rejoicing at the court for many days; the wonderful genius of the king was talked of throughout the whole land; and men were strictly ordered that for the space of three years they should not bring their sorry jades nearer to the palace than a league, lest it should happen that the king's eye falling thereon should bring some flaw to the masterpiece which His Majesty had so gloriously conceived.

Each morning those who would flatter the king inquired if it was well with the masterpiece, and this before a stroke or a dot thereof had been marked on the prepared wall.

"Matters of this sort," the king would say, "cannot be hurried. Even to produce a miserable and shapeless foal nature requires many months, and then several years to fashion that foal into a horse, which after all may be only fit to be the slave of a peasant; think you, then, that I should produce the peerless flower of horses in less time?"

The courtiers, abashed at this answer, forbore to injure the projected masterpiece by any remarks which might betray their impatience; and for many months they contented themselves with praising the smoothness and whiteness of the wall.

But it chanced that a certain merry ambassador came to the court; and when the king exhibited the wall to him, pointing out that the head of the horse would be in this place, and the tail in that place, he did not appear to be as highly delighted as the king would have him; so the king asked him bluntly if he did not think the projected work to be most excellent.

"Yes," replied the ambassador; "for as those works may still be esteemed the best which are yet but roughly sketched out, so Your Majesty's work may be considered to excel even these, for it is not yet begun; and I protest that Your Majesty has, with a twirl of the hand, struck more fire into the head of this nobly imagined horse, than a plodding painter without genius

could have accomplished with all the appliances of his art."

His answer delighted the king for many days, and he often repeated it to his courtiers; but at last, long after the ambassador was gone, he began to feel that there was a subtle poison therein; and then, observing that even his greatest flatterers found it somewhat irksome to maintain their show of anxiety as to the progress of the masterpiece, the king concluded that it was high time to show something. So he immediately sketched a magnificent tail.

This was so much admired by the courtiers that, after a while, the king attempted other portions of his great work; but whenever he tried to represent the beautiful creature of his fancy, he discovered that he could not produce anything like it; so he gradually gave up his idea of a perfect horse, and told his courtiers that he would invent and portray a new sort of horse, which should differ from and excel the horses men had hitherto used.

Years went by; the king still desired to be thought an artist; the courtiers still pretended they thought he was one; but he had mistaken love of self for love of art, and was incapable of producing any noble work. Moreover, he gradually gave himself up to vicious pleasures, and his drawing altered with himself. It is true that some of the original lines still remained, but what the king had designed as a horse finally became more like a pig; and if he had been an ordinary man, he would have suffered much pain and humiliation; but as he was a king, his courtiers always professed to

admire his work, and never forgot to call it the King's Horse.

* * * * *

I had conceived a noble life for myself; my hopes and my instincts told me that it would be noble. I had designed my horse; ignorance and vanity praised it; but as yet there was scarcely more than a dot, or a wavering line, to show what I might eventually perform.

As soon as possible after the day's work I hastened to the house of Zakku, showed my precious letter, and begged him to tell me where Turoni lived.

Like a true Karoma he at once took part in my abundant joy, saying that Turoni was indeed the very queen and flower of women, and I the most fortunate of men.

The house of Turoni was in the outskirts of Hoshav, and near a small river. At that time of the year it was hidden from view by a double row of grape-vines which were trained so as to form a shady walk. When I had passed through these vines I was met by a girl about five years of age, who after looking earnestly in my face, bounded towards me, and cried, "Here is Halek!"

Then Turoni came out of the house, holding her hands open to me. I clasped them, and we gazed at each other without speaking. At last I said, "Are you my Turoni?" She answered simply and softly—"Yes." This was our betrothal.

"Now come and see my father," she said. Then we went into the house, and I, being filled with the sweetness of Turoni's love, at once received

into my heart such of her cares and sorrows as she revealed to me. Her father was palsied, and his mind was as that of a little child. When Turoni brought me into the room, he smiled at me, and said *Halek*; but as he could not walk without support, he sat still, and contented himself with nodding his head at me whenever I looked towards him.

"This is Batul," said Turoni, "our patient father; and this little maid is Shashuna, our sweet lily-bud." Shashuna was holding my hand; and Turoni's eyes glistened with pleasure when she saw this.

While she was yet speaking a servant entered the room. She was a black woman from one of the savage tribes of Pagam. She was about fifty years old, strong and rugged; and she served, with childlike faith, her helpless master, her gentle mistress, and the bright Shashuna.

Turoni was an expert maker of baskets; and the whole household depended upon her fine taste and unwearied industry. Basket-making had been the business of her father; she had learnt the art from him; and her baskets were now so well known for their beauty, that she could always find purchasers. It was not enough, however, to be industrious; Turoni was also obliged to be careful and frugal.

The child Shashuna was a wonder, a delight, and a mystery. One night Turoni dreamed she heard soft music as of clarions played with such inexpressible sweetness and sadness, that she could not help going towards the place. The moon appeared to be just rising, and by its faint light she saw that this music proceeded from a large covered boat which was draped

in black. A woman stood on the shore close to the boat, and seemed to be bidding farewell to one in the boat. Presently two snow-white arms appeared from amid the black curtains, and with a lingering clasp, laid a sleeping child in the bosom of the woman.

Then the music sank to a murmur; the boat moved slowly from the shore; and the woman turned away with the child. When she turned, Turoni saw her face, and behold, it was her own. Yet did this not seem strange to her; but when she would speak, the dream-Turoni vanished. When she awakened, her face was wet with tears; and she thought she still heard the music.

Turoni's house was near a beautiful brook, whence she procured the various delicate reeds and grasses required in her work; and it seemed to her that the music came from this brook. She then rose, and looking out at the door, she perceived that the moon was just rising, as in her dream. She even yet thought she heard music, and hastening down to the brook, she found an infant sleeping in a bed of lilies close to the water.

The mystery of this was never explained; but the child was at once adopted into the family of Batul, and Turoni became a mother to her. As the child was only about three years old when she was found, she soon forgot her mother; and by the time she was able to talk, she could tell nothing which gave a clue to her parentage. Batul at once called her Shashuna, for *shashun* means a lily; and, moreover, the clarion, like that heard by Turoni in her dream, is also called *shashun*, because the wide opening thereof spreads out like the flower of a lily.

So Turoni had three that depended upon her,—the palsied Batul, the faithful Orka, and the spring-blossom Sbashuna; but in sweetness, innocence, and benignity Turoni was woman and child in one. No man could think evil in her presence, for no man could look on her face, or hear her voice, without loving her.

CHAPTER XV.

The Kashepas.

BEFORE proceeding with the history of my adventures, it will be necessary to mention various particulars concerning the people of Karom, else much that I shall relate may be passed over as unintelligible, or rejected as incredible.

The Great King of Adaroni, desiring the happiness of all his subjects, has made known to them those wise laws by the observance of which the highest and the only enduring happiness can effectually be secured.

These laws, however, are differently received, according to the genius of the people. The Pagama obeys the laws if they agree with his disposition; the Karoma will cultivate his disposition till it agrees with the laws. If the Pagama has health and riches, he can imagine himself happy, though immersed in the most direful lusts; the Karoma can enjoy neither health nor riches, unless he knows that he is advancing in the love of good. The Pagama loves evil, and is being continually educated to love good; the Karoma loves good, and is being continually led to practise it. With the Pagama the first question is: Will this minister to my pleasure? The Karoma first asks: Is this my duty?

There are perfect and imperfect Karomas: the former being those who are honest and steadfast in their avoidance of evil, and who thus resemble the Sahitamas; the latter being those who had first rushed horror-stricken from their grosser vices, but in a little while, half ignorantly and half presumptuously, went back to them when temptation was dallied with, and opportunity welcomed.

It is only by frequent and terrible sufferings that such as these are finally brought to give their whole heart and strength to the one grand desire of leading a good life. Indeed, there are thousands of Karomas who have once fed on the sweet fruit of love, and who afterwards content themselves with the husks. It is sufficient for these to have been once good, to have once known truths. Blind, unclean, disfigured, they esteem themselves eminently wise, sufficiently pure and altogether comely. But the Great King, merciful and loving, leads them by paths which they see not, chastening them with wonderful chastenings, till, broken in spirit, they return to their allegiance, and once more begin to keep all the laws of Adaroni.

Those whom I have just mentioned are the lowest of the Karomas; but those also are imperfect Karomas who display a furious hatred against all evils except the one to which they themselves are most inclined.

Those also may be considered imperfect Karomas who do not know that they refrain from evil acts chiefly because they have not a sufficient temptation, or a fitting opportunity. The state of such is like that of a man whose secret enemies have resolved upon his ruin, and who in various disguises, now appearing as

his own wife, now as his own children, or his dearest friends, pass and repass him daily in his own house, laughing within themselves, while they night and day carry on the undermining of the whole building, until, when the day of wrath and reckoning is come, the unsuspecting victim, with all that he holds dear, is precipitated into a gulf of irremediable disaster.

Then there are those Karomas who have so often yielded to the seductive wiles of the Kashepas, that they have at last become slaves. They are usually known by their varying moods of elation and depression; for when the tyrant has left them for a season they forget their servitude, or believe that it is past; but when he again extorts their obedience, they feel as though they should never again be delivered.

The state of these is most grievous, for they bitterly deplore their evils, and are deeply sensible of their degradation. But at last, when the tortured slave asserts his inalienable right of freedom, and defies the power of the fiend, then comes that grand combat in which the Karoma is ever victorious.

The best Karomas are those that excel in watchfulness; and as not to be watchful is, with most men, the consequence of indolence, dulness, and indifference, this one homely virtue of watchfulness over the small acts of our daily life, will do more to advance our happiness than many another virtue with a finer name and a more exalted reputation.

The one anxious care of the perfect Karoma can be uttered in these words from the Book of Adaroni:—
Let no iniquity have dominion over me!

I now come to speak of the Adaronas. These do not openly dwell among the Karomas, and indeed the manner of their coming and going is not easily understood, for they only appear as in visions. Their influence is wonderful, and their presence is able to calm the most violent passions. They are rarely visible except to those called seers; but their ministrations are easily perceived by those who look for them, and who set themselves to purify their bodies as well as their minds. Many Karomas who have not actually seen the Adaronas, deny that others have seen them; but this I will vouch for, that if the most unhappy and hopeless being in Karom will, for so short a time as six months, maintain himself in the earnest intention of keeping the laws of Adaroni, he will rise into a state of such beatitude, that he will feel as though the most delightful men and women were guests in his house; and that he need not always be in the same room with them in order to be assured of their existence and their warm sympathy.

The Kashepas are known by various names, such as Tempters, Tyrants, and Accusers. Like the Adaronas, they do not live openly in Karom, but they are able to assume various disguises, and to appear in those forms which are best suited to assist them in gaining the confidence of those whom they are desirous of misleading. The Karomas are certain, from their own experience, that the Kashepas have no real power over a man when he is asleep, because it is especially during these defenceless hours that a man is guarded by the Adaronas. It is also certain that no Kashepa can enter the house of one who is not willing to receive him: the

voice of the weakest child saying *No* to a Kashepa who would enter a house, will as effectually keep him out as the refusal of the most resolute man. But when a Kashepa has once contrived to obtain a footing within the house, it is no easy matter to expel him.

It is generally believed by the Karomas that the assaults of the Kashepas are necessary to the progress of all the dwellers in Benuben; for they say that a man's inherent evils cannot be removed unless they are called forth by temptation, and rejected by the exercise of his power of choosing. They also assert that he alone comes into the sure possession of any virtue, who has striven against, and finally overcome its opposite vice.

But, however these things be, it is certain that the people of Karom have but few intervals of rest from temptation, and that of all the inhabitants of Benuben, the Sahitamas alone are in the enjoyment of perfect peace; for it is they alone who understand the wisdom of not even entering into temptation.

A Kashepa will sometimes take the form of a beautiful woman; and though the man at first intended to love in her only that which was virtuous, she can by degrees alter and withdraw the semblance of virtue, until at last the horrified Karoma discovers that he has been enslaved by a demon, who in the day of wrath and reckoning reveals herself to him as an Accuser, holds up before him an image of what he himself truly is, and leaves him shuddering at the spectacle of his fearful deformity.

The Kashepas always attack a man whose power of choosing and refusing has been weakened by the

immoderate use of *akkash*. This marvellous drug, under a variety of names, and prepared in many different ways, has the effect of so enfeebling the will, that even the best men, when under its influence, can be led to commit the most horrible crimes. If now the excessive use of *akkash* has this effect on the brightest minds, the strongest wills, and the best dispositions, what must be its effect on those who are by nature slow to perceive, weak to resolve, and utterly selfish? Temporary loss of reason is among the smaller evils attendant on the abuse of this drug; for the reason may readily be restored, but the will, once palsied, rarely recovers its strength, and only after years of watchful protection. That this is the case may be seen from the great number of those who have passed through incredible sufferings from the immoderate use of *akkash*, and who nevertheless, when they are again tempted in the same way, are immediately compelled to yield, and to do that which their reason strongly condemns. These men are slaves; Kashepas are their masters; *akkash* is the accursed chain.

I have spoken of the temporary loss of reason, because it often happens that the use of his reason does not return to a man until he be removed from the jarring shocks and the whirling unrest of Benuben, to the serene calm of Adaroni.

That long night of storm relieved but by intervals of sullen torpor, that awful darkness in which the mind loses all sense of place and direction, that terrible tearing asunder of all ties, that total disregard of duty which men call *madness*, proceeds from the enfeebling

of the will; and *akkash*, once allowed to be master, can destroy even the strongest will.

It is true that by far the greater part of those who lose their reason are men of small brain; but the love of evil, is a sort of madness, and the gradual weakening of the will can lead to complete madness even in men of the largest brain. It is a great comfort to know there is not a sane man in Karom who cannot preserve his sanity if he will habitually resist his inclination to do what he knows to be wrong.

There are men who dislike *akkash* in any form, and whose lives are, in general, so pure that it is a difficult matter for the most watchful Kashepa to come into intercourse with them; but these are frequently ensnared by the anxieties of their business, until the nobler faculties become palsied through disuse. Some are ensnared by their foolish vanity; some by their monstrous pride; some by their lust of ruling over others. But it is unnecessary to mention the various ways in which a Karoma may become enslaved; for any vice whatsoever, if persevered in, will bring a man into the hands of the Kashepas.

I now come to speak of the wonderful Physicians of Karom. They are all in the pay of the Great King, accept no fees from those who consult them, and are ready to assist all men at all times. Their orders are always such as can be obeyed by those who are curable; but it is to be remarked that there are many unfortunate persons who have contracted diseases which can only be healed in the salutary air of Adaroni.

Some of the orders of these Physicians may appear to be whimsical; but a wise Karoma is careful to obey them, for it may often happen that the obedience is itself the medicine required.

CHAPTER XVI.

Grass Medicine.

I COULD relate many extraordinary things of these Physicians; but for the present it may suffice to give the following example of the manner in which they treat their patients.

THE MAN WITH THE MARK ON HIS ARM.

There was once a man whose weak point was his admiration of himself. He held in the highest estimation all he had done, all he might have done, and all he could do, together with a great many things which he could not do. Everything he possessed was of singular excellence, from his noble intellect down to a little red mark which he had on his arm, and which, according to his fixed belief, signified that he should some day become a Prince.

But with all his fine qualities he did not give himself out as perfect; he admitted that there was one strange flaw in his constitution, and this was that the sight of a lily always put him into a furious passion, which he was quite unable to master till the flower was removed.

But even this peculiarity ministered to his conceit; for he used to say that you might search Benuben through and not find another person so strangely affected by a lily.

From long and frequent contemplation of his own merits, it came about in the course of time that Rinnag, for that was the name of this excellent man, became utterly unable to appreciate the merits of others. But to become a Prince in Karom it is not sufficient that a man fancies himself worthy of that distinction; for rich and poor, high and low, men, women, and children, must unite in pronouncing him worthy; and as it is not easy, even for the most generous, to praise the worth of one who holds them worthless, it is not surprising that Rinnag soon found himself surrounded by those who were as fiercely opposed to him as the kindly disposition of the Karomas permits them to be.

It is true that Rinnag possessed many estimable qualities; but his vanity disfigured them all, gradually alienated the regard of his best friends, and finally turned away the love of his very betrothed.

Then at last he sickened of himself, till, what with the fresh follies to which his infatuation still prompted him, and the cruel rebuffs which they constantly brought upon him, his life became altogether unendurable.

He then considered it high time to consult a Physician; and when he had detailed all the symptoms of his malady, and explained that the most horrible melancholy had come over him on finding that his hopes of becoming a Prince could not be realized for many years

to come, the Physician told him his first medicine must be a little grass.

This order greatly astonished Rinnag; but the Physician being of an exceedingly grave and venerable aspect, he merely bowed and remained silent.

"It must be wet with the morning dew," continued the Physician; "and it must be gathered by yourself, from the top of the mountain."

Rinnag again bowed, and was about to leave the room when the old man added, "You must eat nothing else until noon. Do this for three days; then come again to me."

The truth was that, among other things which had contributed to Rinnag's disorder, the Physician had readily discovered that, being both rich and indolent, he did not take sufficient exercise, and that as he ate and drank more than was good for him, the sensibilities of the inner man were deadened by the grossness of the outer.

On the third day Rinnag again appeared before the Physician; and on being asked how the remedy had affected him, he replied that he certainly felt somewhat easier; but that as he had not found much appetite for the grass, he had not been able to satisfy his hunger.

"That was certainly an inconvenience," said the Physician; "but if you begin to feel easier, you will not hesitate to persevere until your cure be complete. You must go on with the grass as before for other three days; but at noon you must seek for wild honey in the clefts of the rock. As you eat but little grass, you will eat the honey with a wonderful relish—if you find any."

When Rimnag next appeared before the Physician, he felt so much better that he even attempted to be merry: he said that the wild honey was doubtless wonderfully delicious; but that he himself had only succeeded in tasting the bees.

The Physician looked grave as before, and paid no heed to Rimnag's face, which indeed was much swollen from the stings of the wild bees; and having ascertained that his patient felt better than he had done for many years, he proceeded to give further directions.

"You must now for three days," said he, "take the grass in the early morning as before; and at noon, should you chance to feel hungry, you may again seek the wild honey. About midnight I will come to you, and bring you food. Remember, also, that you must be alone as heretofore."

"It will be very dull for me," said Rimnag, "but I am in your hands, and I am already nearly cured."

The Physician did not notice the latter part of Rimnag's speech, but he said, "Nay, it will not be dull; you will perhaps see something to contemplate and to meditate on: on the mountain top there are no palaces to hide the moon and the stars."

Rimnag was much dejected on hearing this last order; but just as he was leaving the room he bethought him that there was nothing to prevent his taking a supply of food up the mountain with him; and he had almost resolved to do this, when the wise old man, who had all the while watched the countenance of his patient, called him back, and thus addressed him: "I will be frank with you: yours is indeed a bad case; and you are by no means nearly cured, as you imagine.

You must in no way seek to evade my orders. I knew that my words left you a loophole; but you understand the spirit of my instructions, and it is desirable that you, of your own free will, should work with me."

Upon hearing this, Rimnag protested that he would in thought and act obey not only all the orders he had already received, but all which he might receive at the hands of one who so well understood his malady, and who had done so much to relieve it.

So Rimnag, for the first time in his life, fasted throughout a whole day; for he could eat but little even of the tenderest grass, and he found that the honey of the wild bees was beyond his reach. But towards midnight, after he had for some hours contemplated the starry heavens, the Physician appeared, bringing with him a supply of food. The next night he did the same, and on the third night the Physician thus addressed him:—

"Your case is a strange one, and has greatly perplexed me, but I am now able to give you directions which, if exactly obeyed, will result in your certain cure. You have been mistaken as to the red mark upon your arm; for, instead of betokening that you will become a Prince; it signifies that you will become a porter."

"But," exclaimed Rimnag, "how can I, who am so well known in Hoshav, submit to the indignity of labouring as a porter?"

"By leaving Hoshav," replied the old man, "and going to a city where you are not known."

"But how," inquired Rimnag, "can I leave my land and my house? And even if I were to do this, how

can I cease to be conspicuous for all those talents, virtues, and graces by which men rise above their fellow?"

"You must cease to be Rimnag," answered the Physician; "and I see that, after days of fasting and nights of solitary contemplation, you are Rimnag still. I had hoped that when you had been for so long a time alone on the mountain top, you would have estimated the talents, the virtues, and the graces of Rimnag at their true value. I repeat that you must cease to be Rimnag. Place all your possessions under the charge of one who will duly superintend them. Take ten pieces of gold for the journey; put on the dress of a porter; remove those dangling curls and those heavy rings; be called by another name; and set out for a city where you are not known. Remain there, labouring as a porter, for the space of three years; and you will be cured. Say nothing of this, or you will lose much good. Moreover you must not give any person to understand that you are better than you seem. In a word, you must cease to be Rimnag."

They then descended the mountain together in a grave and solemn silence; but when they were come within about a furlong of the city, and would have parted, Rimnag perceived that the Physician had been weeping.

"My son," said the old man, laying his hand tenderly upon his shoulder, "my heart has long bled for you, I know your sufferings, and the doubts that assail you, I know the struggle that is going on within you; but I also know that you will come forth purified, the possessor of true happiness, and true nobility—a

Prince indeed. For the present, farewell. When you are ready for the journey, come to me, and I will give you something which you must take with you."

Rimnag obeyed all the orders of the Physician; and when he was ready for the journey, he presented himself before him, clad in the garments of a porter.

The wise old man forbore to commend his obedience; but at once gave him a small vessel about a span in height, and, as it seemed, full only of earth.

"Take this," said the Physician, "and cherish it,—it is the last thing necessary to complete your cure."

"I will keep it," replied Rimnag, "for I trust in your wisdom; and it is meet that my difficult cure, which began with a little grass, should end with a little earth."

"My son," observed the Physician, "this is not the jest of a porter. You must unlearn that easy elegance of speech which Rimnag cultivated, and you must be chiefly studious how *not* to be remarkable for anything save the industry, the honesty, and the simplicity of a labouring man. But lest you should be careless of what I have given you, I will inform you of its nature—*it contains the living bud of a lily.*"

At these words Rimnag became horribly pale, his whole body trembled, and he had nearly let the lily fall to the ground; but the Physician supported him till he was again tranquil, and then spoke to him as follows:—

"The most difficult things can be accomplished by degrees. There is now nothing of the lily to be seen; in a week or two, you will see a small point, and each

day a little more. Watch it and water it. This lily has a rare beauty, and a wondrous fragrance. It is the pure white lily from the Gardens of Adaroni."

So Rinnag departed from the great city of Hoshav, where he had so many possessions, and set out on foot for a remote city, where he was not known, and where his only possession was a tender plant in a little vessel of earth.

He bore his trials with fortitude, laboured honestly, and learned to be humble. He was astonished at finding that all the smallest duties of life were capable of affording pleasure to those whose tastes were not vitiated; and that Karom contained thousands of poor people who cultivated both their talents and their virtues.

At last his lily bloomed; and the city flocked to see it; for it was indeed of rare beauty, and breathed forth a wonderful odour. All desired to have a bud from it, that they might grow it for themselves. But Rinnag refused to give any of it away, because every day a beautiful woman used to pass before the window of his cottage, and stand there for a few moments that she might see this wonderful flower.

Then Rinnag began to love the white lily, which he had before detested; and the longer he lived, the more he became convinced of the wisdom of the Physician who had shown him that even the most difficult things can be accomplished by degrees.

In the course of time Rinnag discovered that he also loved the beautiful woman who so often stopped to admire his lily; and one day this beautiful woman ventured to ask him for a bud from his lily, adding

that she scarcely hoped he would favour her, for she had heard that he had already refused large sums of money for even the smallest piece.

Then the porter answered, "I possess nothing in this wealthy city but this my lily; it has been my only companion for two years; and I had resolved to keep it until one appeared to whom I might give it all as the free-will offering from my heart: It is yours." Then the eyes of the beautiful woman showed many deep thoughts, and her voice was sweet and soft; but she would not take the lily, for she said she had not thought how dear it was to him. "I beseech you to take it," urged Rinnag; "for it will be dearer to me than before." So she consented to take the lily, saying, that indeed she knew not how to refuse a gift so earnestly offered; but she left in its stead a bud of hope in the heart of the generous giver; for she had begun to love him even as he loved her. When Rinnag became assured of her love, he was happier than he had ever been before; and when the period of his probation was over, during which he had restrained his impatience, and kept silence, he had at last the full joy of telling the story of his sufferings to the beautiful woman who had loved him, while she thought him only a poor porter. When the wise old Physician, and all his former friends, welcomed him back to Hoshav, they declared that he had not wasted those three years in which he had found such a noble and beautiful woman for a wife; and after a while they discovered something more—that he had become worthy of such a woman.

CHAPTER XVII.

A Disturbing Influence.

DURING the first four months of my life in Karom I was perfectly happy. I was conscious of keeping the laws of the Great King; and I clearly perceived that they were founded on that inmost wisdom which ordains that he who would be perfectly happy, must have his aspirations, his powers and his actions in harmony with each other, while he himself is in harmony with that which is outside himself; for a powerful but unseen current flows ceaselessly in one direction and all nature moves with this current. To strive against it brings all things into opposition; to move with it produces a feeling of repose and confidence. During these four months I learned to know Turoni; and I discovered that she who was a fount of poetry and music to me, found the chief delights of her life in a round of labours for the support of her helpless father, and her adopted daughter. I passed nearly every evening at her house; and I was soon able to assist her in making her beautiful baskets, while we chatted together in short speeches, as two children might have done. But in this childlike intercourse I learned manhood's finest lesson—how sweet and ennobling a thing it is to be loved by a good woman.

A DISTURBING INFLUENCE.

191

During these months I made swift progress in all that pertains to the business of the goldsmith and the lapidary; and more than once I had the pleasure of receiving the hearty commendation of Alsor.

But Zakku and Erimoth knew of my love for Turoni; and they both knew Turoni; so it was but natural that I should sometimes speak of her, and praise her noble qualities. Zakku was always as zealous in her praise as I myself was; but Erimoth usually listened in silence.

He had two distinct and opposite moods: at one time he would be as bright as a child, and as gentle as a woman, everflowing with kindness, mirth and music; at another time he would be dark as a thunder-cloud, sullen, sarcastic, and irritable. When I observed that he showed his dark side, I took pains to show him my brightest; and sometimes I was so successful as to bring him out of the unhappy mood.

One evening, after he had given me my lesson in music, for which I now regularly paid him, we sat and conversed according to our wont. There appeared to be some cloud over him; but I thought it would pass away with a little lively conversation.

At last, as was often the case, I spoke of Turoni—her charming simplicity, her childlike innocence, her unswerving devotion. Erimoth said several things about women which appeared to be witty, and which may have contained a spice of wisdom; but I liked them not then, and will not record them now; suffice it to say that I pulled Turoni's letter from my girdle, begged him to read it, and tell me what he saw therein.

He read it, and returning it to me with an expression of face which I could not clearly understand, he said that he certainly could see in that letter nothing but *Zaku, Zaku, Zaku*.

Now, *Zaku* is a poetical term among the Karomas, and signifies innocence; but Erimoth said it so that I thought he said *Zakku*; and as the name of our friend was actually to be found three times in the letter of Turoni, I was the more perplexed as to what Erimoth had meant. We looked at each other for a moment; he said nothing more, and I asked no questions; but I carried away with me a small seed, which thenceforth lived and grew in my very heart.

In a month's time the plant became visible. Turoni was showing me her treasures, which she kept in an ivory box; and she showed me, among other things, a poem beautifully written out, and enclosed in a wrapper of scarlet silk. When I had read it, she asked me what I thought of it. I told her that it was pretty enough, but that I did not think I should greatly care for the man that wrote it.

"There you are indeed mistaken," exclaimed Turoni, "for it was written by *Zakku*."

"I did not know that he could compose verses," said I.

"He has done so for several years," replied Turoni, "and he is eager in the cultivation of his powers."

"Is it not strange," said I, "that although I have told him so much about myself, and my great love of poetry, he never said a word to me about this?"

"He is timid and cautious," said Turoni; "he would gladly succeed, but he would shrink from

letting people know of his failure; so he employs the young orator whom you met at his house to recite his poems on the moon-feasts."

"He has a zealous advocate in you," I remarked.

"That he will ever have," said Turoni, "for I once found a zealous advocate in him. Before my baskets had the sale which they now have, we fell into debt; *Zakku* appeared for me in the Hall of Justice, pleaded our cause, and saved us our little garden, without which we must have been beggars."

"Then," said I, "he is not altogether without courage."

"No," said Turoni, "where the good of his friends is concerned he is brave as a lion."

"And how would he be where the good of his enemies is concerned?"

"Equally faithful," replied Turoni.

"You are doubtless right," said I; "but answer me this: If he does not wish people to know of his labours as a poet, why did he tell you?"

"He told me," replied Turoni, "because he knew that I would not only rejoice in his triumph, but feel for him under defeat;—and you know that young men require sympathy."

"They do," said I; "but when he found me so communicative to him, why did he not seek from me the sympathy which he knew I could most heartily have given him?"

"He has not known you long," replied Turoni.

"Long enough to know all the story of my life," said I.

"But your natures are different," said Turoni; "you trust all men at once; he is somewhat diffident. Perhaps, also, he fears your criticism, for he knows you have some skill in poetry."

"Our natures are widely different," said I, "and he has deeply wounded me by his want of trust in me, who trusted him with all. Moreover, though he did not at once respond to my brotherly advances, when he as yet knew me not, methinks he might afterwards have done so, when he knew me as the friend of Turoni."

There could be no mistaking this plant which had sprung up within me; but I crushed it as it appeared; and was at least secret in this, for I spoke not a word of it to any one. Turoni made me promise I would let no one know that Zakku caused his poems to be recited at the Gardens; and I, on my part, bade her say nothing to Zakku about my knowing what I knew.

I had been fully six months with Alsor before the smallest unpleasantness arose between me and any of my fellow-workmen. We were in all five men and two boys; three of my companions liked music; of these, one did not like the harp, but was willing to endure it for one evening in each week; the fourth, when he was within doors, which was nearly every evening, was always studying geometry and the occult properties of numbers. It became clear to me, therefore, that I could seldom pursue my musical studies without disturbing somebody; so I often took my harp out into the woods behind the city.

I had not thought of doing this, had it not been for a circumstance which I will at once relate. Erimoth had frequently spoken to me of the inmost calm at the

heart of nature, and he used to say that all the poetry and music of Benuben proceeded from that calm. He used to tell me to listen. I listened, and heard nothing; but one evening, a little after the hour of sunset, when I lay in the shade of a grove of pine trees, the sky appeared to darken, and the stars to shine forth; I did not seem to know that I existed; all was hushed in the stillness of expectation. Suddenly I heard music, soft and low like the trembling of a harp. I neither stirred nor looked, but I remember thinking it was moonlight. After a while I heard the clear voice of a woman singing in an unknown tongue; then the harp stirred to the windings of the song, and sent forth deep throbs which seemed to answer the cry of the woman from the height of some vast purpose. The music did not appear to cease; but I lost the power of hearing it. I looked around me, and saw the clouds still red with the glow of sunset.

As I never understood the nature of this music I called it a sort of dream. When I afterwards thought upon it, it seemed as though the music had been in myself; but Erimoth always affirms that this wonderful music exists in nature. However it may be, I concluded that this is the highest music, that it is thus heard by ardent lovers of music, and that if they can but succeed in recalling and fixing what they have heard, they become great musicians. In the meantime I could not give Erimoth any idea of what I had heard; but I thought that if I had been a master of the art, I could have produced some grand music which I might have called mine, because I first heard it.

This memorable evening made me resolve that I would bring my harp out into the woods, and when tired of playing, follow the advice of Erimoth, and listen. I did this for several evenings, and heartily enjoyed myself; but before I was again in the mood to hear the dream-song, I was disturbed in a manner altogether unexpected:—I was visited by the woman who had spoken to me outside the gardens, when I had begun to despair of meeting Turoni.

The first time she came to me it was nearly dark, and before I saw who it was, I rose to go away; but she hastened to me and besought me to remain, saying that the sound of my delicious music had brought her to me. I remained and listened to her praises, while she listened to my music. From praising my music she came to praising my generosity; whereupon I gave her reason to praise it yet more; for I never could hear a tale of distress unmoved, and she told me that she and her mother were almost perishing with hunger and cold.

The heart of man holds in its hidden depths so much good which looks like evil, and so much evil which looks like good, together with so much both of good and evil the very existence of which is not suspected by the man himself, until some great struggle arouses them, that it were vain to speculate on the merit or demerit of my conduct to this woman; suffice it to say that for many months I was only conscious of being animated by the purest generosity, and that I often gave her money which I could ill spare.

For two months did I continue to bring my harp into the woods, before I began to perceive that Zenah

(which was her true name) had become a disturbing influence: when she did not come, I expected her: when she came, I played only what she liked. I now also knew that her presence was pleasing to me; and I gradually invited her sympathy in my aspirations towards excellence as a musician; for I persuaded myself that the approval or disapproval of one whose ear was so finely tuned for the reception of sweet sounds, would greatly assist me in finding out the value of my talents, and the rate of my progress. But, alas, she only praised me.

At length, my peace of mind became seriously disturbed. I began to mistrust her constant flattery, and to fear her glittering eyes. I received warnings: mutterings as of thunder shook the hot air; and the spring of music dried up within me. One evening when she had told me that her mother's happiness now depended only on my kindness, I told her that as I also was poor, I must henceforth be content to leave her to the kindness of others; then I gave her a piece of gold, and, in spite of her tears, turned from her, and looked not back. But I felt that I was right, that there are reasonable limits even to generosity, and that I had surely done my share as a perfect Karoma.

My mind was now firmly fixed in the resolution that I would no more bring my harp into the woods; and as it was almost impossible for me to follow my studies in our common room, in the house of Alsor, nothing remained for me but to do what I had already contemplated, namely, find a small house where I could live by myself. The prospect of this independent and solitary life gave me much pleasure; but it seemed advisable to take counsel with Turoni before I gave up

my residence with Alsor. So I went that same evening to Turoni, while my intention was fresh, and told her the whole history of the unhappy Zenah. I spoke of her poverty, her love of music, and her isolation from all the innocent enjoyments of youth. I did not speak of her beauty; but I said that her presence disturbed my studies. When Turoni had attentively listened to the whole of my story, she said that she agreed with me in all I had done, and in all I intended doing; so it was now decided that I should find a house outside the city, and there pursue my studies, unknown and undisturbed.

The next morning I laid the whole matter before Alsor. "Friend," said he "you have been nine months with me; during the first four you were faultless; during the next three you still worked well, though your thoughts were too often elsewhere; during the last two months you have several times been remiss in your duty; but for yesterday's work you deserve my sharpest reprimand. Look at this tablet and compare it with this writing."

I did as Alsor desired, and perceived that I had left out a letter, which spoiled the whole of my labour; for the writing was a puzzle in which each letter occupied a certain square, and it was written in the *Khut* style, that is to say, it could only be understood by following a certain sequence of numbers.

"Your work," said Alsor, "was merely to copy."

"That is true," said I, "and if it were possible to find an excuse, it must be that as the whole of it was meaningless to me, the work was mere hand-labour, and my understanding not being engaged therein, I the more easily made a slip."

"If this excuse," returned Alsor, "can really hold good with you, it gives me one reason more for ceasing to employ you: I cannot undertake to keep you constantly at work which shall be sufficiently interesting to engage your gigantic intellect. Many a time could I have reproved you; but I refrained, for I admire your disposition, and I esteem you much—so much that it would greatly pain me to be greatly angered with you. I foresee that if you remain you will often give me cause for anger, for you dream when you should work."

"It is true," said I, "and I once dreamed that I had a master who would be as faithful to me as I had resolved to be to him."

"Halek," said he, in a softened voice, "I am faithful to you; I do not care for your music, nor for any man's music; my choice-work is gardening, and no man has such fruit as I have. Your fellow-worker, Atur, is also a gardener; Kilri seeks for wonderful things in numbers; Yithrob has four children; and Garrash is content to do nothing. All these I can understand, even to Garrash, the Father of Butter, as you call him."

"I cannot change my choice-work," said I, "for he who would excel, must follow that which he loves best."

"I do not ask you to change your choice-work," said Alsor; "I ask you to change your master; and I know a goldsmith who would be delighted to have you. I do not know much of him, but I know that his house is small, that he only employs two workmen, and that he is called Kabri the Poet. If when you are with him, you cannot force yourself to copy a few

unmeaning characters, he will beg your pardon for having expected so menial a service from you. If you remain here I shall certainly say some hard things to you; but you will learn a good business. Kabri may awaken you at sunrise to hear him recite a poem on a lame locust; and in return he will permit you to awaken him next morning to hear the music you have made thereto;—but you will not excel as a goldsmith."

"To be candid with you," said I, "I never hoped to excel as a goldsmith."

"Then by all means go to Kabri," said Alsor.

"There are things," said I, "which I esteem beyond money."

"Then," replied Alsor, "Kabri will exactly suit you."

"And moreover," I continued, "though I am careless at times, I think I already know enough of the business to consider myself a fair workman."

"In that case," said Alsor, smiling, "I will at once give you a letter to Kabri saying that Halek, the son of Mazor, an honest young man, formerly a poet, and now a musician, desires employment in his workshop. I will add that Alsor considers he may become a fair workman. Does this please you?"

"If you will," said I, "you may say that I am a young poet; for I still compose verses when I feel inclined; but say nothing about my being a musician."

"It is true," said Alsor, "that you are not bound to tell him either about your poetry or your music; but if you tell him anything, be sure you tell him what is only the truth."

"That is always my desire and intention," said I; "therefore, lest my wish to appear well before Kabri should make me speak too favourably of myself, say of me what you will."

"In that case," said Alsor, "I will only tell him that you are a goldsmith; and when you see him you may tell him whatsoever you will."

Alsor then wrote two lines on a slip of paper, and handed it to me, without looking at me; but before I took it I drew back, and asked him if, during the nine months I had been with him, he had known me say anything which was not, in my belief, the exact truth.

"No," said he, "I must admit that you are a truth-lover, and would ever correct the word which you spoke in haste, if you found it not true. Take this tablet, and keep it in memory of me; and when I can serve you, come to me. Farewell."

While he thus spoke he gave me the money for the work of the month which was not quite finished, together with a tablet of silver—the most costly present which had ever been given to me.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Old Poet and the Young Critic.

IT seemed strange to me at first sight that one of so kindly, and even noble a disposition as Alsor, could so easily turn me away for my first fault; but the pleasure which I felt at the prospect of working for a goldsmith who was also a poet, led me to perceive that I had for some time wearied of my life here, without having been aware of it; and when I reflected that Alsor possessed a quick and unerring insight into the minds of his workmen, I concluded that he had noted the beginnings of my discontent, and that he had therefore acted most kindly in sending me to Kabri, where he believed I should meet with something like fellowship and sympathy.

Alsor had introduced me to Kabri as a goldsmith who desired employment; I made myself further known to him as one who had cultivated poetry, and who now gave all his leisure time to music. Kabri readily engaged me at a fair rate, and offered me a small room in his house; but this I declined, for I knew that I could not exercise myself on the harp for two hours a day without disturbing the other inmates of the house. So I arranged to take my meals with Kabri, and to sleep in my own house.

I had no difficulty in finding a small but comfortable cottage, which I could have at a rate within my means. My house was just outside the city, and contained three chambers commodiously furnished. In the summer time it was completely hidden in a grove of almond trees, and in the garden was a beautiful arbour covered with flowering plants.

I will now briefly relate something of the history of Kabri; for I soon found myself occupying a strange position in his household.

When Kabri was a youth, he had been filled, even as I had been, with the love of poetry; and, like myself, he had come to Karom while in his early manhood. He was a good workman, and in a year or two he married, and set up in business for himself.

When I first made his acquaintance he was fallen into the most disastrous habit of taking large quantities of *alkash* every two or three months. One of these fits of unrestrained excess would continue for a week, and sometimes longer, during which time his wife looked after his business to the best of her ability.

But it was necessary that Kabri should deceive his workmen as to the cause of his absenting himself at various times; and being that sort of honest man who first deceives himself, he persuaded himself that his old love of poetry was again budding forth, that he deeply regretted having neglected it since his marriage, and that it was his duty once more to follow those fine aspirations which, if they do nothing more, elevate the mind of him who cherishes them. I do not mean, however, that Kabri merely used poetry as a cloak for his excesses, but that when he found himself always

descending into lower pits of unhappiness, and recalled the innocent delights which poetry had once afforded him, he fondly hoped it could yet satisfy that importunate instinct which will not rest until the burden of woe, or the message of joy, has been fully delivered. In the meantime, whenever Kabri felt that the longing for *akkash* was beginning to master him, he would announce to his family and workmen that he was meditating a new poem; and the next day, or the day after, he would shut himself up in a certain room, and begin writing verses. It is true that for a day or two he wrote verses, but the *akkash* with which he sought to spur his faculties, soon robbed him of the power of guiding his pen. When the fit was passed, he would quietly appear again among his workmen, and some evening read to them and to his family the poem which he had composed during a part of his absence.

Kabri, his wife Esbah, the children, and the workmen had for three years united in praising the poems of Kabri; but long before the close of this period the praise had lost its savour, and Kabri the desire of producing fresh poems. Then he contented himself with writing his old poems once more, making a few alterations here and there. When the poems thus critically revised and artistically polished had been once more read aloud, and once more praised, he gave out that he would begin a large poem which should be a masterpiece, and which none might see till it was finished. His faithful workmen applauded his resolution, and Kabri immediately retired for two weeks that he might meditate on the projected poem. I will not presume to decide whether the workmen were deceived, or

whether they honestly accepted Kabri's account of his vast labour; for Karomas can be as cunning as Pagamas, who reckon this one of their chief virtues.

Esbah, watchful and clear-sighted, had never been deceived; but she was silent, because, knowing her husband's weakness, and his pride, she feared that to expose his self-deception, and to tell him she knew he was in the terrible bondage of *akkash*, would plunge him into such an agony of shame and remorse, that he would be tempted to do as many another had done in his despair,—leave Karom by night, and trust himself to the waters of the Great Sea which lies between the troublous Land of Benuben, and the restful Kingdom of Adaroni.

In the meantime, while Kabri was outwardly cheerful, he was in reality so unhappy that each day's labour was almost insupportable; and this was his state when I came to him.

I had been six days in the employment of Kabri, and, to my surprise, he had not once spoken of poetry. I observed that he spoke but little on any subject; and I concluded that he was naturally reserved and unsociable. One evening, however, Esbah invited me to stay with them for an hour or two; and as I saw she had a particular reason for thus asking me, I at once consented, although I longed for the company of my harp and the solitude of my garden.

Kabri appeared not to notice my presence; and I afterwards knew that for the last few days he had been unusually dejected. After a while Esbah told him to take me into his room and show me his poems. He

answered that I cared not for poetry, and that he himself did not care to show his verses.

"I shall esteem myself honoured," said I, "if you will permit me to see your poems."

Kabri then led the way to an inner room, and brought out a bundle of papers, from which he selected one; and when he had laid it before me with an air of listless indifference, he desired me to read it, and to give him my opinion.

Now I must observe that I not only knew little about poetry, but that I did not know how little I knew. From my earliest boyhood I had enjoyed certain poems, even as a man enjoys being in good health, without reckoning the many and various circumstances which go to produce that delightful state; and I had also disliked certain poems without exactly knowing wherefore. When I myself had composed verses, it was as the bird sings. I regarded verse-writing as the spontaneous outpouring of exalted emotion. I knew little of the art, possessed no judgment, and was wholly unaware that the common sense which directs the ordinary affairs of life must also guide us in our decision as to the merits of a poem.

I may also say that, strange as it may seem, until Kabri asked my opinion of his poem, I had never exercised my judgment, or even my common sense, in the study of poetry. But to proceed with my history.

I was still a very young man, and in ideas a mere lad; Kabri was fifty, or thereabouts; his beard was grey, and his face marked with many sorrows. But I accepted the office of critic, and gave him my opinion with the utmost readiness.

"This is indeed a beautiful poem," said I; "it is full of strange thoughts and sweet music."

Kabri heeded not my speech, and gave me another poem, which I also declared to be extremely beautiful; whereupon he began to place the poems in order, as though he would put them away. I felt ill at ease, and scarcely knew wherefore, unless it was because he had not thought my opinion of his poems worth listening to. I wished that I could have found some fault; but I had admired the poems, and had fully expressed my admiration.

"Are all the other poems as fine as these two?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied; "and I may say, without the least vanity, that they are as perfect as they can be made, for they have been corrected and polished till nothing remains to be improved."

"I would gladly see one more," said I. So he handed me a poem of about forty lines, which I read with great attention. It did not please me, and I returned it to him without speaking. Kabri put the papers together in their order, saying as he did so, "All good things go by threes."

"The proverb may be right," said I; but it does not follow that all things which go by threes are good."

"You wish to say that the third poem was not good," remarked Kabri.

"It did not please me as the other two," said I.

"You are no judge of poems," said Kabri.

"That may be true," said I, "but it is certain that every man is the best judge as to whether a thing pleases him or not."

"You are right," said Kabri; "and one condemns what another praises."

"Nevertheless," said I, "there are first principles of truth, virtue, and beauty, which are not merely matters of taste: thus the floating clouds and the changing hues of sunrise are beautiful in themselves, though there should be a whole nation whom the spectacle fills with horror."

"You throw beyond the mark," returned Kabri; "but supposing such a nation to exist, have they not as much right to call it hideous as we have to call it beautiful?"

"Nay," said I, "the sunrise is grandly beautiful, because a life of progress is grandly beautiful; and when we rise refreshed by sleep, the beginning of each day's progress, with its labours and its joys, its hopes and fears and secret sorrows, may well be ushered in with a pageantry of stately shapes, hues of scarlet, gold and purple, the unfolding of flowers, and the sweet song of birds."

"You speak from sound sense," said Kabri; "and for similar reasons this poem of mine is good whether it please you or not."

"Pardon me," said I, "but methinks it pleases you whether it be good or not."

"I can always pardon a young man who thinks he knows," replied Kabri; "pardon me if I now test your knowledge: read the poem again, and instead of

saying it pleases you not, point to a part, and say it should not be thus, but thus: then tell me why."

This challenge roused me to the utmost, and quickened all my faculties. I perceived many blemishes in the poem, but knew not which one I should point out to him. Kabri did not understand my hesitation, and exclaimed—"Young man! it is not strange that you should perceive no faults, for I have transcribed that poem at least ten times, and have each time made at least ten emendations."

"But," said I, "that only shows how many faults it had, not how many it may still have."

"Show me one," said Kabri; "it is easy to hint that it has many."

"It is a fault," said I, "to compare a woman's eyes to jewels set in white marble."

"Now show me why this is a fault," he demanded; and he heard me patiently while I gave my reasons, which I did at some length, it is true, but step by step, from foundations to which he assented.

"But now that you have proved this to be a mistake," said he, "only see how I have followed the idea throughout the poem, and what a variety of ingenious turns I have given to it; that surely proves the fancy to be worth something."

"Nay," said I, "it rather proves the whole poem to be worth nothing."

"Halek," said he, laying his hand upon my arm and looking wistfully into my face, "had I known one like you twenty years ago, I had not been as I am now. They say that if a man is a poet he will continue to write poems though all who read them despise and

ridicule them: it may be so; but I can only live and work with the direct and ready sympathy of my fellows. Twenty years ago I sought such sympathy in the Gardens of Karom; others found it, but I did not; so I gave up the quest."

"Did no poet," I inquired, "ever recognise the merit of any of your poems?"

"Yes," replied Kabri, "there was one who said that the people would not hear my poems, because they were new and strange. This comforted me for a while, till I wearied of writing for my own pleasure things which were so new and strange that they seemed likely ever to remain so. And yet this was my highest instinct; and losing that, I became what I am. But enough of this. I had long since wearied of the praises of the ignorant; and when I so readily took you into my employment, it was because something in your voice and look drew me towards you; but though you told me you had cultivated poetry, I had no intention of showing you my works; for you could not admire them more than my other workmen did, and I did not wish you to admire them less. You showed me the value of your praise by proving to me the justness of your censure."

This interview was the beginning of a friendship which had important results both for Kabri and for myself. My sympathy roused him from a hopeless lethargy, and made him conscious that he possessed peculiar powers which were worth sedulous cultivation. His greatest faults as a writer were owing to the luxuriance of his imagination, and to his want of that decisive judgment which would have cut away

three-fourths of all he wrote. He had been unfortunate in submitting his earliest efforts to an audience easily repelled by the extravagance of his fancies, but not so easily charmed by the subtlety of his thoughts, and the pensive delicacy of his humour. The poems of Kabri were, for the most part, parables taken from natural objects, and interpreted by one who comprehended their wondrous beauty, their hidden life, their silent purposes, and their mysterious relationship with man. His verse was always melodious; but the words were often badly chosen, partly owing to a defect in his early education, and partly because he had not carefully studied the best poems of Pagam or of Karom. When he found one to cheer him, he worked; when his higher instincts were fully satisfied, he began to restrain the lower; and when he at last came to labour carefully and connectedly at his masterpiece, he found himself living in an ideal world, from which, however, his own evil passions could drive him out as with fiery swords. I went through all the poems Kabri had written, and I was then permitted to take my part in the gradual unfolding of the one great poem by which his name will live: my part was to examine and to point out faults; and he rarely refused to cut away what I objected to as extravagant, superfluous, or incongruous.

CHAPTER XIX.

Anecdotes.

I HAD been about a month in the employment of Kabri, when one evening, to my great joy, I met Rayamin at the house of his brother Erimoth. Having often wondered why so excellent a man as Rayamin, could remain so long in Pagam, I ventured to question him on this point.

"Pardon me," said I, "if I venture to say that it has appeared strange to me, that one so good and learned as yourself, never spoke to me of the Great Pilgrimage."

"Golden fetters," replied Rayamin, "impeded my progress: I made large sums of money by pleading in the Halls of Justice, and many a time did my tongue defend what my heart condemned; I forced myself to be as earnest in the defence of wrong, as in the maintenance of right. In a word,—I who declaimed on the beauty and majesty of virtue, was myself dishonest, and the protector of any villain who would pay me."

"But surely," said I, "the merits of a case cannot be known unless both the arguments for and against it have been carefully brought forward."

"That is true," replied Rayamin; "nevertheless, if I know that a man has committed a certain crime, and

if I endeavour to persuade others that he has not committed it, I may be called a noble orator, but my heart assures me I am not a noble man. When I at length became perfectly pure in my intentions, the life of Pagam began to be unendurable to me; its hideous selfishness, its complacent barbarity, and its sordid littleness all combined to urge me thence as from a pit of pestilence. Here I have renewed my youth, and the commonest things present themselves to me with fresh charms. I am still an orator, but not a hireling; for before I seek to persuade others that a cause is just, I will myself be assured of its justice."

Even in Pagam I had always revered Rayamin; in Karom I revered him yet more. He proved to be a firm friend; and the time came when the consciousness of his sympathy was most precious to me.

His observations on the life of the Pagamas were perfectly just; and the more I saw of the noble Karomas, the better was I able to estimate the despicable meanness, and the habitual falseness of the ordinary Pagamas. As the sea-shore is strewn with pebbles of various colours, shapes, and sizes, so the daily life of the Pagama is strewn with lies. There are the small smooth lies which their polite ones consider ornamental; there are the countless lies which are trodden upon at every step, and noticed by nobody; there are the sharp lies which are cast in the face of an enemy; and the cruel lies which cowards hurl in the dark.

I am able to give two stories, one of Alsor the Karoma, the other of Kobesh the Pagama, which will clearly exemplify what I have just stated.

A young man once bought a diamond ring of Alsor; and in two days he came again, saying that he had sudden and urgent need of money, and that he would esteem it a kindness if Alsor would take back the ring, and return his money.

Alsor examined the ring and informed the young man that it had not received the smallest injury, and that it was as valuable as when he had bought it.

"Then you do not intend to keep back something for the two days during which I had it?" inquired the young man.

"I will do that," replied Alsor, "because I might have sold the ring during that time; and you yourself may consider that you have paid so much for the pleasure of wearing the ring for two days. Perhaps you may wish to buy it again: young men are changeable."

"In this matter," said the youth, "I am not changeable, for I have long desired to possess such a jewel; but this morning a demand was made upon me which no man may resist."

Alsor fixed a searching look upon the face of the youth, and after awhile he suddenly exclaimed, "I understand you, friend; and I rejoice that you spoke:—you would relieve one who is in want;—am I right?"

"You are," said the youth; "but I did wrong to speak of it."

"Nay," said Alsor, "for I have not given anything to the poor for many months, and I will take upon myself to relieve this poor person."

"That does me a wrong," said the youth, smiling,

"for it was I who found him: first you cause me to lose the secret satisfaction I enjoyed, then you take from me the pleasure of relieving him."

"You shall give it to him yourself," said Alsor.

"But I shall tell him you sent it," said the youth.

"It is still from you," added Alsor; "for if you had not intended relieving him, I could not have done so. How much did you wish to give him?"

"I could not possibly give less than a gold-piece," replied the youth.

"And to do this," said Alsor, "you need not sell your diamond: give him this gold-piece from me; and when he wants another, come to me again. Friend, I am obliged to you for this: I had been ailing these months back, and knew not wherefore; but I now see that it was because I had not done an act of this sort for so long, that I seemed to have forgotten how many poor people need our help."

The story which I can relate of Kobesh is as follows: A young man bought a ring, concerning which Kobesh had invented various lies. In a few days the young man came back, and as nearly as I can give it, this conversation took place:—

"I gave you thirty *sabahs* for this ring a week ago; and I wish to sell it to you again. What will you give me?"

"Two *sabahs*," replied Kobesh; "the stone is not a diamond; there is but little gold in the metal; and the workmanship is wretched."

"Seven days ago," returned the youth, "you told me that the stone was of extreme rarity, that the gold was pure, and the workmanship exquisite."

"Worthy sir," replied Kobesh, "you were then willing to give thirty *sababs* for the ring, and my commendation thereof did not seem extravagant to you."

"Go you now and find another young man who will give you thirty *sababs* for the ring, and then you may commend it as I did."

"But I understand nothing of the goldsmith's business," objected the youth.

"You have at least made a beginning," said Kobesh, with a smile.

"That is true," remarked the young man, as he left the shop, "for I have learned that half of your business is to make bad rings, and the other half to call them good ones."

While speaking of the Pagamas, and the shameless lying which is so common among them, I am reminded of an amusing knave whom I once met in Unoti.

I had been sent to the shop of a silk-merchant, and perceiving a grave-looking man doing nothing, I went towards him, and asked him if he was the master.

He answered me with much readiness, "Nay, my lord, I am only one of his liars."

"If that be true," said I, "you are rather one of his honest men."

"Then do not say *one of them*," he returned, "but *the one*, for he could not afford to keep more than one."

"In that case," said I, "you should be in Karom."

"Can a silk-mercer exist in Karom?" he asked jestingly.

"Yea," said I, "an honest man can exist anywhere."

"Well, then," said he, "I will remain where I am."

It is not surprising that the men of Pagam should have their finest qualities tainted by the most unfeeling and the most unblushing selfishness, because it is cultivated in them from their earliest infancy, and in their boyhood nothing is more conspicuous.

Shophar, the son of Hegri, who for six years together enjoyed the honour of being chosen Richest Man in Khoshek, was a school-fellow of mine.

We all looked up to Shophar with admiration and envy, on account of the impudent tricks he would play upon the master, and the ingenious lies by which he always managed to escape detection. Each day brought some new trick, played either upon the master or upon his school-fellows; and we all tried to gain his approval, and to be admitted into his friendship by attempting tricks as mischievous as his own. Now it chanced that there was a certain quiet youth among us named Hamu. It was not in his nature to find pleasure in the distress of others; but we so persistently derided him for his gentleness, that he at last resolved to show us that he also could do something mischievous. But not being able to devise any trick worthy of the name, he went privately to Shophar, and the following conversation ensued:—

"Sweet Shophar," said Hamu, "we all love you."

"Certainly you do," answered Shophar, "because if you did not, I would soon make you."

"You would," said Hamu, "for you can do anything. Now listen to me: I am weary of being laughed at by all of you because I cannot play any amusing tricks; and you who know so many can easily tell me one, a new one, which you have never played

before; and if you will do this I will give you ten *heregs*."

"I suppose," said Shophar, "you would like a trick in which the person upon whom it is played is cheated in the most barefaced manner."

"Yes," said Hamu, "that is the sort of trick I wish to learn."

"And you would wish it to be a trick in which your friend shall know that it was you who cheated him, and shall yet be unable to blame you, or accuse you?"

"Yes," said Hamu, rubbing his hands in great glee, "that is exactly what I want."

"And it must be a perfectly new trick," continued Shophar. Then after some little meditation he said, "Put the money into my hand, and I will at once show you such a trick as I have described."

Hamu did as he was told, and while Shophar took the money with one hand, he struck him with the other on the cheek, saying, "That is a perfectly new trick, and just such a trick as you wanted me to show you." But Hamu had not bargained for his silence, and when Shophar related the story to us, the simple-minded Hamu was laughed at more than ever.

Yet one other story may be here recorded, for it shows to what a degree the unfeeling selfishness of even little children may be carried. Shophar was a youth of sixteen or thereabouts, but this story is of a child of six:—

One evening I observed a little boy sitting by the wayside, and weeping as though his heart would break.

"Dear child," said I, sitting down beside him and drawing him towards me, "tell me what ails you?"

"My father beats me," he answered.

"He beats you to correct your faults," said I; "do not cry any longer, but resolve to be good."

"It is when I am good that my father beats me," said the child.

"That is better than being beaten for behaving badly; so be comforted."

After a while the boy told me further: "I was not crying for being beaten," said he, "but because my father is at home again. He spends his money in *akkash*, and when it makes him mad, he beats us. This evening he was sick, and he told us all that he would not stay in Benuben; but that he would go away and throw himself down the rocks into the Great Sea; and he said we should never set eyes on him again. Then he kissed us all, and went away to throw himself down the rocks into the sea; but he never did it; he came back again, and he is at home now."

As the boy uttered these words he was unable to master his grief, and again broke forth into weeping.

CHAPTER XX.

The Hall of the Harpers.

THE solitary manner of my life soon became so delightful to me, that I began to think of preparing and eating my meals in my own house. Several considerations disposed me to this. In the first place, Kabri often kept me for two hours after we had supped, that we might discuss the merits of his last poem; and even on holidays I could not have the whole day to myself. I did not like to eat with my fellow-workmen, because there seemed to be some ill-will between us. Whether the fault lay with me or with them or with us both, I will not take upon myself to decide. The hidden dissatisfaction between us did not appear to have any effect upon them; but me it made so ill at ease as frequently to take from me all desire for food. I had already observed myself to be thus affected by the harshness of Kobesh; and in time I grew so sensitive to unkindness, however concealed, that I could neither eat nor drink, save alone, or with friends.

Kabri had two workmen besides myself: Ebul was an old man, chiefly remarkable for his power of not replying; Shomez was a youth, whose chief gift was the power of smiling without reason. Neither of these men had any choice work, and evidently thought they

had done enough towards cultivating their tastes, if, when Kabri recited a poem to them, Ebul kept his brow knit as with deep thought, and Shomez preserved a patient smile.

Ebul plodded through his round of labour as an ox on the threshing-floor; and he maintained an ox-like silence. The speech of Shomez was to me little better than silence, for he rarely opened his lips but to say that he agreed with me, or to state what one could not possibly contradict, as that to-day being the last of the month, to-morrow would be the first of the next month.

When I discovered that the simple speeches of Shomez proceeded from emptiness and serene content, I gave no heed to them; but when I saw that the silence of Ebul came of knowledge and interior peace, I sought to make him speak.

"Ebul," said I, after I had for some time been debating a difficult question with him (which I had only contrived to do by imagining that he had made such and such objections), "why will you not speak for yourself?"

"Because," he replied, "I agreed with you from the first."

Not long afterwards, when we were working side by side, he grinding a block of *malak*, and I turning the wheel for him, I began another harangue on some point of wisdom; and at the end of an hour or so, when I had warmed into a rapturous eloquence, I suddenly stopped the wheel, and clapping him on the shoulder, told him how delightful it was when

the ardent glow of youth perceived the silent approbation of the old and sedate.

"Halek," said he, "I was silent because I did not agree with you, and because I detest argument. Please turn the wheel again; and if you wish to air your rhetoric, you can still proceed with your discourse."

Ebul was married, and only took the mid-day meal with us. Shomez was like a son to Kabri, and not having any choice work, and not caring about companions of his own age, he was always at home; and as he willingly assisted both Kabri and Esbah in anything they asked of him, he was a great favourite with them. Ebul was as much liked as Shomez, for he was a good workman of approved integrity, and he had served Kabri for several years. But when I appeared among them, Kabri showed that he esteemed me for my knowledge of poetry more than he esteemed them for their long and faithful services; and it was but natural that this preference of his should cause them some feeling as of being slighted.

I resolved that, sooner or later, I would live altogether by myself; but, contrary to my usual impulsiveness, I did not at once make the change: I pondered the hint of Rayamin,—It is easy to resign what it is hard to regain.

I have now to record the first of a chain of events which, one hanging to the other, each bringing a larger one after it, at last made my life such as I could never have imagined it.

During all the years Turoni had been in Karom, she had never been to the Gardens except on that one evening when she went to see me. She was fond of

music, but needed not to go in quest of it; because, as she worked, her thoughts uttered themselves in melodious murmurings; she liked a beautiful poem, but required not to hear any, for her daily life was poetry; she could yield herself to the delights of a story, but the story of her own life was higher than their best; she loved pleasant company, but those who loved her did not fail to visit her; and she never wearied of the silent Batul, the prattling Shashuna, and the careful Orka.

I had often begged Turoni to go with me to the Gardens, but neither on the moon-feast nor at any other time could I prevail on her to leave her house. This constant refusal of hers caused me at length to perceive in myself a certain quality of mind which, of all others, I had not thought myself possessed of—pertinacious obstinacy. As a boy I had never wilfully thwarted the desires of my father; as a young man I had bent before the cruelty of Kobesh; but now the sweetest and gentlest creature that existed was able to harden me into an inflexible stubbornness. Not only did I not understand the secret springs of this, but I did not even suspect that I was obstinate, for it often happens that he who has long been distinguished by one particular virtue may, for an equally long time, practise the opposite vice, without being aware that he has even begun to descend towards it.

I could see that Turoni would enjoy herself at the Gardens; I could see that her health required such recreation; I could see that I myself would enjoy everything tenfold if she were with me; I could see that it was her duty to go, if only to please me; in short I could see fifty reasons why I wished her to go

with me to the Gardens; but I did not see that I was unable to rest, until she had submitted her will to mine; and it is probable that even if I had been conscious of this, I had then persuaded myself that my desire for mastery was not grounded in the love of ruling for its own sake, but that it proceeded from the natural wish that Turoni should, at some time or other, acknowledge the rights of my position, and the prerogatives of my manhood.

It has ever appeared to me that much of the wisdom of women lies beyond the searchings of men: Turoni seemed only conscious of my love for her, and all that she did seemed to spring from her love to me; but I am now sure that she knew all my strength and all my weakness; and that within her faithful love to me was a sanctuary for her inviolable love of duty,—her first duties being, in her estimation, towards her household.

When she at length deemed it advisable to withdraw her opposition to my wishes in the matter of going to the Gardens, I was enchanted with her complaisance, for she seemed by this act to become more truly mine.

As it was arranged that I should sup with her, and then take her to the Gardens, I hastened to her house as soon as I had finished my day's work with Kabri. Beautiful, beautiful Turoni! I behold again your sweet, grave eyes, your smile, and the generous gesture of your arms, as you welcomed me on that evening so long ago that it seems to be the remembrance of a dream.

No sooner were we come to the Gardens than Turoni asked me to take her to the hall where the

young poets recited their verses, for she said that a poem by Zakku would that evening be submitted to the public.

"What is the name of the poem?" I asked.

"Sleeping Flowers," replied Turoni.

"Does he recite it himself?" I asked.

"No," replied Turoni; "but he says that if this poem meets with marked approbation, he will openly enter the lists as a poet."

"I would," said I, "that he had thought me also worthy of his confidence."

"He fancies his poems unworthy of being confided to you," answered Turoni; "for the other day when I drew the conversation to this, he said he thought you had a piercing wit."

"He *thought* I had? he shall be *assured* that I have."

"You are unkind."

"Was Turoni unkind when she cut the tender branches of the vines until they bled?"

"I did it that they might bear the more fruit."

"So will Zakku, when the critic cuts away the long leafy shoots that encumber him."

"Do you then find fault with Zakku's verses in order that he may improve?"

"That is not my only reason."

"It ought to be."

"I also improve myself."

"In kindness? or in criticism?"

"Thus to defend myself will certainly not improve my kindness, and may lead me into a criticism which were better left alone. Suffice it for me to assure you

that I admire the man Zakku, while I despise the poet of that name, as I despise every man who strives to succeed only by imitating the successful."

"But, friend, consider whether this imitation of those who have succeeded may not be a necessary stage in the progress of one who would himself become worthy of imitation."

"To a certain degree we are all imitators. I myself cannot avoid some imitation of the music of Erimoth, but I deliberately set myself to produce effects which Erimoth never heard. Sometimes I expand and improve what was at first an accident, till it becomes a novel beauty; sometimes I wilfully break the oldest rules; sometimes I refuse to follow the newest. I am Erimoth when I must; I am Halek when I can. Zakku, on the other hand, would always be Lormüz; and in this he may be right, for, of a truth, to be Zakku is to be nothing."

"Do you not consider Zakku a poet?"

"Zakku, the imitator, is somewhat of a poet, because Lormuz is a poet, but Zakku himself is of the school of Gam, the son of Ziphri."

"Who was he?"

"One who might have become a poet could he ever have made it convenient to compose verses; but he was contented to write *poet* after his name, and he was delighted when those who did not know him did the same."

"Why did he not write poems?"

"He used to explain it thus: sometimes his spirits were too high, sometimes too low; when rightly trimmed he thought it best to look after his business."

By this time we were come to the Hall of the Novices, as it is called, and being acquainted with the door-keeper, I inquired of him when a poem called *Sleeping Flowers* would be recited. On being told that it was the eighth on the list, I proposed that we should hear some music; for though I was only a novice, I was already so discriminating that I could only be charmed by the finished elegance of a master.

When we arrived at the Hall of the Harpers, we found an immense multitude of people sitting in silent expectation. On the platform, beside a magnificent harp, stood a young man who looked upwards with large calm eyes. The president of the hall was on the point of introducing him. His name was Meshran, and he was by trade a potter. He was newly come from a small village of Pagam, where he had endured the greatest privations that he might devote himself to the study of music; and he had finally abandoned everything but his harp, in order that he might pursue his studies under the protection and favour of the Karomas.

The president retired, and Meshran, with scarcely any perceptible movement, for his fingers had rested in the position of one about to play, touched his harp to such sweet sighing and trembling, that I straightway lost all knowledge of where I was, and imagined myself in some far off isle of Sahitam, where the sea was murmuring at early dawn.

Then did the music rise and fall, and rise again, pulsing in solemn rhythm, till I saw the island no more, but alone on some serene height, I took into my heart the fierce pangs, the pining sorrows, the loneliness, and the grand endurance of those bright spirits who hope

and have not, who toil without sympathy, who fight without victory, but who still strive upwards, urged and sustained by the glorious instinct that at last, somewhere, it shall be well with them.

Then after a while the music changed; and such comfort was poured forth with such tender suavity, that my eyes filled with tears; and I whispered to myself—*Courage, brave heart! thou shalt suffer many things, but at last the glad music of thy triumph shall ring forth like this!*

When Meshran ceased playing, the hall resounded with applause; and as the multitude passed out, warm with emotion, I both saw and heard a rain of money fall into the urns.

It was some time before I could speak; but at length I pressed the hand of Turoni, and whispered, "Some day it will be my turn; only believe in me."

She answered, "I believe in you, for I love you;" and these few words, softly and simply uttered, I hid in my heart together with my strengthened resolves.

We then walked together in silence, not caring whither we went; the moon-lit groves were thronged with happy people; sweet voices and laughter and music were heard on every side; and I remembered that when I paced those perfumed paths alone, before I had obtained the love of Turoni, all had been to me but as darkness and desolation. When I told Turoni this, she assured me that her own life had been ennobled and gladdened since she had received my love; and this speech of hers brought many more from me. On that fair night the wine of life ran ruby red, and sparkled in a crystal cup. O, beautiful Turoni! Was ever love so pure and sweet as ours? Turoni—Turoni!

CHAPTER XXI.

A Karoma's Revenge.

SLEEPING Flowers! A poem given for the first time by a young poet!

These words were called out by the door-keeper, as I was passing the hall with Turoni by my side. Turoni stopped, and said something about Zakku. I started as one awakened from a dream, then suddenly remembering what Turoni had wished, I turned towards the hall.

The poem of Zakku was, in every way, a little one; but it was received with much applause, in which I could not join. I thought that the great skill of the orator had lent it a beauty not its own; and I plainly perceived that it was full of petty tricks of style borrowed from the poems of Lormuz. Turoni joined in the applause, and was proud of her friend's success. I sat silent, and only refrained from criticizing.

The restraint thus put upon myself gave me, I must acknowledge, a higher satisfaction than I had derived from my former criticism; for, though I was but exercising a right possessed by every man in Karom, I could not avoid feeling ill at ease, because I had not had the honesty to sign the papers which I put into the urn. Nay, though I was not without various plausible reasons why I should be secret in this matter, I was

heartily ashamed of myself. Be it noted that I always persuaded myself that it was some good end I aimed at. The sheep-like multitude, said I, press after him who leads them along the wide path where they have been led before; they are not easily drawn into the wilderness by the voice of a stranger, although he would lead them to sweet pasturage and running brooks. Zakku was daily advancing in favour; Kabri, twenty times repulsed, had ceased to sing, had wandered away, well-nigh broken-hearted, and was at last come under the most cruel enthrallment. I resolved to raise my voice against the sapless imitators, and to do all in my power to bring Kabri forth into the light.

That I acted secretly I attempted to justify by more than one consideration: in the first place, I argued that as Zakku had not told me he wrote verses, I was not bound to tell him I criticized them; and again, as he had not deemed me worthy of his confidence, he might not think my criticism worthy of his attention; further, I repeatedly said to myself that if he would only begin to treat me with the same confidence with which he had encouraged me to treat him, I would remain altogether silent, or openly discuss poetry with him as I did with Kabri. But that we should ever be on these terms with each other I greatly doubted; for although Zakku was a perfect Karoma, and a man of irreproachable life, I suspected that he too highly valued his position as the only son of a wealthy merchant, who had always allowed him to follow his own inclinations.

While Turoni and I were considering whether we should remain to hear another poem, or go to the hall of the story-tellers, Zakku, radiant with satisfaction,

made his way towards us, and forthwith demanded our congratulations. "Halek," said he, "I have long wished you to know that I myself aspired to some small fame as a poet; but being always diffident until I can ascertain the extent of my powers, I have been silent until this night."

"Your poem was beautiful," said Turoni.

"You had chosen a fine subject," said I, but "—

"Proceed," said Zakku; "I am curious to hear your opinion."

"Nay," said I, "it was a jest—a fanciful conceit that fitted through my mind."

"Let it also flit through mine," said Zakku.

"Well, then," said I, "your language, as was but suitable, was richly florid; but methought that your flowers of speech were asleep, like the flowers in your poem."

Both Zakku and Turoni smiled so pleasantly at my jest that I thought they had not perceived the spice of jealousy lurking therein.

"Now let us go," said Turoni.

"Stay a little longer," said Zakku.

"We wish to hear a wonderful story," said I, "which will be told by Thuri; he told it on the last moon-feast, and it was much thought of; but I did not hear it."

"Nor I," said Zakku; "and if you will stay till the urn-keeper gives me my papers, I will go with you to hear this story of which you speak."

After we had waited a considerable time, Zakku came back to us more delighted than before. "This," said he, "exceeds my utmost hopes: at last I have won

the approbation of all my hearers! Each poem of mine has hitherto met with severe criticism from at least one person; to-night there was not the smallest scrap of paper in the urn containing anything but praise! Read these."

I was glad when Turoni motioned me to go, for I felt ill at ease; but the vanity of Zakku was so apparent, and, in my estimation at least, so ill-founded, that I determined to continue my secret but salutary criticism.

The janitor whispered to us as we entered that the name of the story was *Karpar and Beromith: or, A Karoma's Revenge*.

I chafed somewhat that I had lost half of this story through staying to read the praises of Zakku, and to have what I had fain dispensed with,—the company of Zakku; but I suppressed all signs of annoyance, and whispered jestingly to him, as he took his seat beside me, "What revenge shall I take on you for making me lose this story that I might read all the flattering things said of you to-night?"

To this he replied, with an earnest look into my eyes, "whatever my offences, remember that we are Karomas; and let your revenge be that of a Karoma."

"Yes," said I; "but if you make many more speeches like that, and if I listen to them, I shall not be able to hear what is a Karoma's Revenge."

After this exchange of harmless thrusts we set ourselves, as well as we were able, to understand the story, which we should have ill succeeded in doing, had not Thuri, with that exquisite kindness which distinguishes the Karomas, introduced a sentence or two,

unnecessary to those who had heard the beginning, but greatly required by us, whose late arrival he had evidently noticed.

Karpar and Beromith were noblemen living in a city of Karom. While mere lads they had become embittered against each other,—Karpar believing that Beromith had done him a grievous wrong, and Beromith being unable to clear himself except by revealing what he was in duty bound to conceal, and what would have injured Karpar far more than his resentment of an imaginary wrong.

It is a law of Karom that when two cannot overcome their mutual dislike, but when, on the contrary, it grows into hatred on one side or on both, they shall no longer live in the same house, nor in the same city, nor even in the same district. But it is rarely necessary to carry out the provisions of this law; for among so wise and kindly a people as the Karomas, it is seldom that a feud becomes inveterate.

Karpar and Beromith at length brought their case before the judges. Karpar accused Beromith of a grave offence. Beromith asserted his innocence, and stated that he could not exculpate himself except by causing much unhappiness, and doing serious injury to other persons, of whom he would only name Karpar himself.

Many years had elapsed since the commission of the offence with which Beromith was charged; and Karpar, though unable to bring direct proof that Beromith was the offender, could still make it appear highly probable that he was; and as Beromith persisted in his refusal to clear himself at the expense of others, the judges decided that it was he who should leave the district,

adding that as this quarrel had continued for so many years, that hundreds of people were become warm partizans on one side or the other, it was absolutely necessary that the enmity should be made to cease, or that one of them should go away.

Beromith prepared to go, and the whole city was moved against Karpar, for Beromith had been universally esteemed. But Karpar took his stand on the law, and was deaf to the entreaties of his best friends, who urged him to a generous reconciliation: nothing short of the exile of Beromith could satisfy him.

It was not long, however, before Karpar wished that he himself had gone away instead of Beromith; for he began to feel, when too late, that although the law of Karom had made Beromith go, the love of a Karoma should have permitted him to remain; for Beromith was much older than Karpar, had a wife and a daughter, and, owing to the nature of his property, suffered ten-fold more loss than Karpar would have done had he chosen to remove. But Karpar was proud and unyielding, while Beromith was merciful and gentle.

After years of exile, Beromith was smitten of a disease which reduced him to the helplessness of a babe. But in due time a message was brought him from Adaroni, bidding him be of good cheer, and giving a secret pledge that if he did not recover within a certain time, he should be removed thence to Adaroni, where health and happiness return to all.

Finding his malady increase, and being now past hope of mending, he bade his daughter come to his bedside and attend to his last commands. "Daughter,"

said he, "I bequeath to you the care of my enemy, Karpar. His sister, to whom I made a promise of silence, has been removed to Adaroni, and I myself have been told that I shall soon follow her. I am now free to speak; and this packet contains the whole history of those things which made him my enemy in reality, because I was his enemy in appearance. Give this to him with your own hands. I have for many years fulfilled my duty to one who has been removed from Benuben, and I must now regard my duty to myself, to my family, and to the many who love me. I will not leave behind me one man who believes I am a villain, and who can make others believe the same."

"When I depart for Adaroni, my possessions here will be sold, for your mother desires to return to her own people. I have kept myself well informed of the doings of Karpar, and I am aware that he is broken in spirit, and visited with sore afflictions;—I charge you to make him feel that I forgive him who would not forgive me, and who never wavered in his purpose of compassing my ruin."

Karpar was at this time about forty years old, but still unmarried. The unrelenting cruelty with which he had pursued Beromith, even to exile, cost him the love of his oldest friends; his habitual coldness prevented him from making new ones. Rejected by those who had once honoured him, he took refuge in the absorbing delights of alchemy; for he thought forgetfulness was better than contrition. Alchemy gave him forgetfulness, but robbed him of his wealth; and when the daughter of Beromith found him, he was a melancholy recluse,

with an unhappy life behind him, and a still more unhappy one before him.

The clear truth which the story of Beromith revealed to him maddened him with remorse, and plunged him into hopeless melancholy—he had rewarded his best friend with mistrust, hatred, and banishment. But the poignant anguish which this revelation brought with it was in time assuaged by the tender pity and the generous love of the daughter of the man he had hated. Thus ended the long feud which had gradually embroiled so many people; and as it had formerly been a matter of public controversy, the marriage of Karpar with the daughter of Beromith was the occasion of a public rejoicing.

That this story may the more clearly show the difference between the Pagamas and the Karomas, I will here record that when I was in Pagam I used to visit the hall of a celebrated story-teller, and that I remember his hearers being greatly delighted with the story of a man who, on the eve of his departure from Benuben, charged his daughter to dedicate all her powers to accomplish the ruin of his enemy; nay, he even expected her to sacrifice love itself, for he commanded her to accept as her husband any man whom she found most able to assist her in obtaining a complete revenge. But this was not the only story-teller of Pagam who received thousands of gold pieces for inventing the most ghastly horrors, or for debauching his readers by pandering to their lusts.

Indeed, the Pagama cares little how he injures others if he be rewarded with money or with fame; whereas the Karoma, even in his amusements, regards

the happiness of others; and knowing that the actual life of many persons is full of abominable things, he will the more see to it that the life which he imagines for them shall be full of noble things.

During the recital of the story of Karpar and Beromith, I became conscious of a strange dislike to Zakku; and at last it suddenly entered into my mind that he himself, before I had come to Karom, had learned to love Turoni as tenderly and as truly as I had done. If this be the case, thought I, it explains his manifest reluctance to grant me anything of his confidence; it explains also his being so highly esteemed and so zealously defended by Turoni. But the current of these thoughts was instantly stayed by Turoni herself, for, as if conscious of my distress, her hand sought mine from the folds of her cloak, our eyes met, and she gave me the assurance of her perfect love. Now, thought I, even if it be that Zakku loved her, I have not wherewith to be comforted, for since her own love is wholly given to me, he can only love her as a good man may love and rejoice in a thousand other beautiful things which do not belong to him. I reflected also that even if he had most tenderly loved her, he, as a perfect Karoma, could renounce his dearest hopes at the clear call of duty.

CHAPTER XXII.

Zenah Sings to Halek.

WHEN I parted from Turoni at the door of her own house, all the delights of that fair night rushed together upon my mind. Surely she also was filled with love as I was; for she was silent as I was. I uttered her name, and gathered therein all the emotions of that marvellous passion which binds the very life of a man to the very life of a woman. But when she had closed the door, and I turned away from the house, I seemed to awaken from a dream. I stood still; then I turned again towards the house; then I walked swiftly back, entered the garden, and sat down on a bench, striving to think and to quiet myself.

The springs of life are laid in mystery. I was as a tree torn by the tempest; and I knew no more than a tree what storm was tearing me. Had I been at first secretly moved by a foreboding of loss?

I need not record the many troublous thoughts which swept through my mind, nor could I do so. I sought in the depths, I searched in the heights, I looked into the nature and aim of our life in Benuben; I regarded the wise laws of Adaroni; but turn where I would, everything, except my love for Turoni, appeared to be far off, confused, and uncertain. Then I

abandoned myself to the recollection of the delights which her presence afforded me, until I was so penetrated therewith that I felt as if I could not possibly continue my life without her. I had hitherto schooled myself to wait, patiently and hopefully, until my circumstances would permit me to make Turoni my wife; but now I thought not of patience, and would see no difficulties; I said to myself that love would yield to love, and that possession would bring peace.

How long I sat meditating in the garden of Turoni I know not, but suddenly I caught a glimpse of a project, the carrying out of which would raise me above all disquietude, while its successful issue would place me in the possession of wealth, fame, and the hand of Turoni.

My first quick impulse was to call aloud to Turoni, that I might straightway impart to her the news of my splendid enterprise; but I overcame this headlong eagerness, and walked swiftly homewards, solacing myself with many imaginings, and often saying to myself—*Love will surely yield to love.*

That night I slept at the most four hours, but I awakened with a delightful sense of rest, strength, and confidence. It seemed as though I had received instruction during the night, or that my mind had, without my knowledge, prepared my plans, and shewn me how to execute them. There was now no presentiment of evil, no suggestion of loss, no malice towards Zakku, no storm, no tumult; nothing was dark, doubtful, or difficult. I listened to the joyous carol of the birds, and the soft light of sunrise illumined my

room, while I yet lay on my couch, and regarded the tranquil and orderly progression of my thoughts.

Happiness, said I to myself, is the aim of all our endeavours. Renunciation is but laying down a lower for a higher happiness; despair itself is the foundation of a sublimer hope.

I have borne the yoke in patience; I have suffered in silence; I may now eat the ripe fruits of my labour, and drink the sweet wine of my perfected probation.

The life of Turoni must henceforth be one with mine. I can no longer live without her; for the blossoming purposes of my life will droop if they be not tended by her love.

My earnings as a goldsmith will not suffice to maintain Turoni and her family. I must procure money by other means; and Meshran has shown me how to do so.

Meshran strove, studied, and suffered; though young, his reward is great. What he has done I will do; for I also feel the mighty inbreathing of the music which lies in the heart of nature, seeking to be received by the heart of man, that it may be moulded into a form, and be brought forth a glorious creation, fraught with the joys, the sorrows, and the yearnings of humanity.

But in order to compose a work like that of Meshran, I must make for myself something like the leisure of Meshran. I will propose to Kabri that he pay me by the day; and I will engage to work for him five days out of ten. He will agree to this, and I shall then begin to live here entirely by myself, working when I choose, resting when I choose. Three months

of this life should enable me to arrange and perfect the musical ideas which are already in my mind. During this time I shall continue to receive the help of Erimoth, for I shall continue to pay him for his lessons; and being still his pupil, I can submit my work to him as it proceeds, and benefit by his criticism. When I can do no more, and when he can advise no more, I will produce my perfect work at the Hall, and reap the rich reward of my labours,

If my work prove successful (and I shall take care that it is successful), I shall at once receive a great sum of money; this will enable me to take a house large enough for myself and Turoni, for her father, for Shashuna, and for Orka.

Having made this beginning, and my fame as a musician being established, I may cease to work as a goldsmith; and my time being then wholly given to music, I shall be able to produce a new piece at each moon-feast, and if I am then as well paid as Erimoth, I shall easily maintain myself and my household by the exercise of my beloved art.

Such was the course of my meditations; and no misgivings disturbed my happiness. To a young man nothing seems more certain than success; to an old one nothing is more doubtful; and it is well that it should be thus; for if a young man perceived all the obstacles in his path, he might be deterred from venturing, and failures are for him a necessary discipline; but when an old man sees difficulties, he sets his judgment and his patience to overcome them; and for him failures are fruitless.

Hope on, strive on, warm heart of youth ; and though you find not your perfect song ; though the issue of your finest purposes be only shame and pain ; yea, though you be as a bird trailed with dimmed eye and broken wing through the dust of the highway, you must still hold fast the sweet instincts of your nature, you must be bravely silent, and you must wait, for in the end no force of evil shall prevail against the bright brain, the kind heart, and the noble intention.

Kabri at once acceded to my proposal of working for him five days out of ten, and he even commended me for sacrificing immediate gains to secure greater ones ; but he demanded of me, in return, that I should give him one evening in every ten, for the purpose of examining portions of his great poem, in the composition of which he was just then so absorbed, that he had little thought for anything else.

This request of his I readily granted ; and when I told him that he set too high a value on my services as a critic, he assured me that no one could be better fitted to perform this task for him, because I was precisely the sort of person for whom he wrote.

“ I do not write,” said he, “ for the besotted or the illiterate. What pleases you will please thousands who are like you ; and where your cultivated sense is jarred, there must be something essentially wrong.”

I still believe that Kabri over-estimated my judgment in this matter ; but at the same time I will admit that I could detect faults in his verses where he could see none, and that by dint of arguing with him I gradually acquired a knowledge of those principles upon which all the finer arts of life are founded. I also

unconsciously formed the conclusion that the reason why men who can write well can also write badly is that their vanity blinds them to their defects, and easily persuades them that their productions are full of beauties which are only invisible to the ignorant, the besotted, or the envious.

The moment the day's work was over I hastened out of the shop, for I was determined to speak to Turoni that very night. On my way home I bought some fruit, fresh and dried, two loaves of wheaten bread, and various small things necessary in a house, because I would now begin this living by myself which had so long enticed me.

On arriving at my house I closed the door, and hastening to my harp, I fell into so enchanting a dream of music and singing, that I took no heed of the time. My harp was an old one which had been lent me by Erimoth ; its range was small ; and two of the deeper strings were missing ; but I brought out such music as I never afterwards brought out from that harp, or from any other.

Methinks I had played for an hour, or thereabouts, when a loud knocking at the door broke the course of my music. Who this might be I could not conjecture, but when I said *Come in*, the door opened, and I saw, to my great astonishment, that it was Zenah.

She closed the door after her, and looked around for a little while ; then she said, “ Play on—play on ! your music brought me to your door. I lost you, but my heart whispered that I should find you again. I have been unhappy since I last saw you, but now I am

glad. Sing more of that sweet song of triumph, for I too will sing it."

"Did you know then," said I, "that it was a song of triumph?"

"Yes, for I understand the subtle speech of music," she replied; "and I know by your music that you will love me."

"Who and of what nature are you?" I exclaimed.

"If you love me," she replied, "it matters not who I am."

"Nay," said I; "but if I love you it matters greatly who you are."

"Sing," said she; "sing and play the harp, and I will sing with you, and tell you who I am, and what is my nature."

"The spirit of music is fled," said I.

"Then listen to me," said Zenah; "and I will sing to you; and do you, when you catch the song, strike upon your harp to my singing."

So Zenah began in low and solemn tone to chant a song such as I had never before heard or imagined. The words were in an unknown tongue, which appeared to me harsh, and at times terrific. Being now twilight, and nearly dark within the house, for the moon was not yet risen, I could not tell the expression of her face, but I saw that she often rolled her eyes about, and that she continually waved her white arms to her singing. Suddenly she uttered a hoarse and horrible cry, whether of rage or of some other madness I knew not; but it was part of her song, for after a while she again cried out as before. She now became more vehement, brandishing her arms instead of waving them; and at

length it chanced that, as I stepped back from my harp, she advanced a pace, and, making a violent gesture with her arms, struck the harp as though she had not seen it; and as I was not holding it, it fell over to the floor with a jarring clangour.

When I took it up, I perceived that two of the best strings were broken, and others loosened; for the harp had been dashed against a stool. Had I believed in omens, I might have been taken aback by this mishap; but I gave it no further thought. When Zenah saw what she had done, she ceased singing, and stood still and straight, her breath coming and going in deep gasps.

"What strange barbaric chanting was this?" said I, half jestingly.

She tossed her long hair back, and laughed, saying, "Ha! that was a song of our caves by the sultry shore of the sea, where the lions crouch and roar in the moonlight."

"It was not as the songs of Karom," said I; "and in truth it made me shudder; but it began with music which was marvellously sweet; I will remember it, and introduce it into the great piece of music which I intend giving at the Hall."

The fact was that I had, several months before, determined upon composing a piece of music to be called *Evening and Morning*, and the half-savage song of Zenah showed me how the music could be made to give an idea of the terrific strength of lions, together with their gentle and graceful movements, their sudden bounds, and their awful cries. Then, after a passage which should gradually bring all things into rest, I would as

gradually bring in the solemn dawn, the glorious sunrise, and the glad awakening of the birds and flowers.

Zenah said she was delighted to know that her song could be of use to me; then she asked me for money; whereupon I told her I could give her nothing, but that if my piece of music was successful at the Hall, I would make her a large present.

Zenah assured me that such music as mine would be successful beyond my highest hopes; and she extolled both my talents, and my generosity in such warm language, that I heartily despised myself for taking pleasure in listening to her; but I thought it could do no great harm to let her relieve her mind by thanking and praising me.

And now I began to ask myself how I might be rid of this wonderful woman; so I asked her where she lived, adding that, now the moon was risen, she could easily see the way home. To this she replied that her mother had removed to a cottage not far from mine, and that she was in no haste to leave me.

"That may well be," said I; "but I must hasten to see some person before it be late; for I have important business on hand, and I have not yet supped."

"Nor have I," said Zenah; "and I am voraciously hungry."

Then I gave her several dried figs, a quantity of almonds in the shell, and one of my loaves of bread, thinking she would go; but she immediately sat down, and began to eat the figs.

Hereupon I knit my brows, and as I did so, Zenah looked up at me.

"A sumptuous repast by my faith," said she, "for one who is starving! It were but a meagre collation for a slave, or a dessert for one has eaten his fill. I want meat—roasted or broiled."

"I eat no meat," said I.

"Then I must have eggs," said Zenah, pouting, "and some rich cheese, and the red spice that is as fire, and then I want wine—I hate water!"

"Red spice and wine," said I, "you will never find in my cottage. I have here one egg, but it is raw, and I must away speedily; I shall have no cheese till to-morrow."

When she had heard my speech to the end, she tore the crust off the bread, and began to cram it into her mouth.

Boiling with indignation, I darted into my inner room and began to prepare myself for my visit to Turoni. When I was ready to set out, I found Zenah still eating, leisurely cracking the almonds between her white teeth, and strewing the shells about the room. I shewed no signs of impatience, but stood near the door, and waited.

"Why do you not eat with me," she said at last.

"Because I am not hungry," said I.

"But," rejoined Zenah, "you said you had not supped."

"Yes," said I, "but I did not tell you that I was hungry."

"But you are hungry," said she. Take this morsel of bread from my hand, or this fig, or only this almond."

"One cannot always eat when one is bidden to do so," said I.

Then Zenah stood up, opened wide her fiery eyes, glared at me in speechless rage, lifted above her head the loaf which lay before her, dashed it down to the floor, and swept out of the house.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A Rebuke.

I FOUND Turoni still at work finishing a fruit-basket of exquisite design, and divided into several parts for different fruits. Shashuna lay asleep on the floor; Batul sat and smiled from his cushions.

I sat down near Turoni, and gave her the coloured reeds as she required them; then, after a while, I approached the subject of which I was full.

"Is the remembrance of last night sweet and joyous?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, "it is indeed both sweet and joyous."

"Then you will make holiday on the next moon-feast, and go again with me to those happy gardens."

"Not so soon again," said she; "my hours are precious, and I am never willingly away from my father; he grieves and cries if he cannot see me; moreover, Shashuna needs my constant care, for strange thoughts and fancies are continually springing up within her."

"Methinks," said I, "that for one night in the month Batul might safely be tended by Orka, and we can take Shashuna with us."

"I will not again leave my father even for one night in the month. Orka says that last night, when I remained so long away, he made most bitter lamentation, and cried out *Adaroni! Adaroni!* meaning that I was taken thither. Of Shashuna you know nothing; she is quick, sensitive, eager, and full of strange fancies, as I mentioned to you. I will not take her to the Gardens.

"Turoni," said I, "the nature of woman is unknown to me; I feel that it is good, but I cannot comprehend its equable calm: you are able to put aside, as with a careless waving of the hand, delights which have so inly penetrated my spirit, that I demand not only their occasional renewal at a moon-feast, but that they become mine, quickly, constantly, and for ever. I cannot live without you."

Then did Turoni regard me with a look of such gentleness; that I was ashamed of my vehemence; then looking towards her father, who appeared to be asleep, she said, "Dearest, you know that I love you."

"This I know," said I, "but I know not how much."

"It is not yet possible for you to know it," said Turoni.

"That may be," said I, "but I know that your love does not yet answer mine; and yet every living creature has its mate to return love for love. Turoni, Turoni, if you do not love me so that you will do all things for my sake, then is your love not kin to mine."

"The stronger your love," said Turoni, "the more patiently can you wait until I can show you how true mine is."

"That," said I, "is as though you said that the more one thirsts the longer one can wait for water."

"True love," replied Turoni, "has many perpetual delights within itself, undimmed faith and patient hope being amongst them; but it is false love which would break the green bough for a blossom, and so destroy the promise of fruit."

"I have yet to learn," I rejoined, "that this wondrous human love, with all its delicious transports, proceeds by such imperceptible degrees as the unfolding of a flower; but if it be so, then am I as a full-blown tree bearing a thousand blossoms, while you stand beside me leafless and lifeless."

Turoni still plied her swift fingers; I thought she was unmoved; but after a while I perceived that her eyes were filled with tears, and I was on the point of springing towards her, when I felt a soft arm encircle my neck; for our conversation had awakened Shashuna, who with her bare feet had come lightly behind me. Turoni had not seemed to observe this; and before I myself well knew what it was, Shashuna laid her face against mine and murmured, "Good Halek, I will always love you."

In an instant I thought of the dream which I have already recorded, and which I had related to Turoni: I mean that beautiful dream wherein Turoni had given me a white lily. Then I remembered that the name *Shashna* signifies *lily*: so I turned to the child, and putting an arm round her, said, "Yes, my Lily, and I will always love you; for when Turoni becomes my wife, she will give you to me for a daughter."

Upon this the child gazed in my face, kissed me, and said, "But I love you now, because you are good; and I will not wait until I am your daughter."

"You will not need to wait long," said I.

"Tell me how long," said Shashuna.

"That I cannot do," said I; but if your sweet mother will put away her work, and sit a little while with me in the moonlight I shall be able to tell you when we return."

Shashuna clapped her hands at this, and made many other pretty gestures of glee, saying to Turoni, "Go, sit in the moonlight with Halek: I want him to be my father, and live here, where I can always see him."

Then Turoni put away her work, and went into the garden. This was what I wished, for I had as yet said nothing of my plans, and while Shashuna could overhear us, I could not speak as I desired.

Turoni heard me with the closest attention, and, to my exceeding joy, promised that she would become my wife, if I could successfully carry out my plans, so that we could build a larger house, and if I could then earn so much money that she might give up basket-making.

These two requirements of Turoni were in all respects reasonable. She was then living on a small piece of ground purchased with the money which Batul had brought from Pagam. On this ground Batul had built a house consisting of three rooms, which was amply sufficient for a family of two. Then afterwards, when he became palsied, and they found it necessary to keep a servant for the housework, so that

Turoni could give her time to basket-making, they had caused a small room to be added at the back of their house, and in this room Orka prepared the meals, and performed other household labours.

I suggested that Turoni should sell their ground, and out of the money so obtained pay the rent of a larger house; but she soon convinced me that this would be throwing away what little property they were possessed of; and, moreover, she was certain that the change would be most hurtful to her father, who would understand nothing but that he was not where he wanted to be.

As to the other matter—namely, that Turoni should give up basket-making, I acknowledged that when she became my wife, she would have many new duties to perform, and that unless I could release her from the unremitting toil to which she had now for some years been bound, I was altogether undeserving of so sweet and noble a woman.

Having at length obtained this precious promise, I declared that in three months' time I would claim the fulfilment thereof; but after awhile, when my overjoy was somewhat abated, I observed that Turoni took little part therein, and that she appeared to be in a deep reverie.

"Turoni!" I exclaimed, "tell your thoughts, that I may know why your joy is not as mine. Speak, I beseech you; fear naught but silence."

At last she spoke. I will not attempt to record her words, her varying gestures, or the awful beauty of her eyes: they are graven on my heart. She said she was sad because if my hopes of marrying her were based on

my success as a musician, they would come to nothing. She showed me that my nature was impetuous, enthusiastic, unstable, uncalculating. She reminded me that my father had offered to set me up in business, and that I had frustrated his hopes in order to follow the visions of my boyhood by becoming a poet. She pointed out to me how easily I had turned from this to become a musician; and she compared my conduct to that of a man who plants fig-trees, cuts them down after a year that he may grow pomegranates, which he also cuts down before they bear, that he may plant olive-trees, whose tardy fruit he is not permitted to enjoy.

To this I made answer that the creative instincts of my youth had been strong but vague, constantly urging me to produce some noble work, but of what nature I knew not; that after hearing the master-music of Karom, and obtaining some insight into its marvellous powers, I immediately recognized music as the art to which I would gladly devote my energies. "Any man," said I, "may think that he can measure the capacities of any other man; but each knows for himself what alone satisfies his most ardent longings."

Turoni then asked me on what grounds I believed myself able to become a great musician. Upon this I waxed eloquent, and spoke of the many emotions which stir the heart of the sensitive man. I spoke of his sombre melancholy, his terrible despair, his sense of sweet solace, his passionate yearnings, his magnificent hopes, his vision of the sure progression of the universe, and the fulfilment of his own inalienable part therein. I showed Turoni that these were great realities, and

that the hearts of musicians and poets were full of them. "With these things," said I, "my heart is filled; and as I long to utter them so as to link myself in sympathy with all my fellows, striving to the heights of those above me, and reaching the hand to those below me, it follows that I must be a poet, or a musician, or both: I will be a musician."

Here Turoni explained that she was sure I possessed talents, but that I had mistaken their bent, and that I should have pursued the path of poetry. Upon this I demanded of her who could best judge whether I were more likely to succeed as a poet or as a musician; and Turoni replied that the best judge would be one who was himself a master of the art which I had chosen, I considered this answer for a little while, and after some further questioning I learnt that Erimoth had told his bosom-friend Zakku, and that Zakku had confided to Turoni, that I could not hope to attain anything like distinction as a musician, because I had not begun either to practice or to study music until I was twenty-five years of age; thus losing, according to Erimoth, those twenty years which are more valuable to a musician than to any other. Turoni also mentioned that, in Erimoth's opinion, if I possessed anything like genius for music, I had surely found it out before attaining the age of twenty-five.

This I explained by showing that during my boyhood I had heard no good music, and little music of any kind. I also told Turoni that from my earliest years I had abstained from learning to play musical instruments of any kind, because my father liked neither mirth nor music; and that I had therefore betaken

myself to the quiet amusement of reading and composing verses, which disturbed nobody, and attracted the observation of nobody.

"Erimoth," I continued, "is right as to the immense value of the years I have lost; he did well to speak of it to Zakku; Zakku did well to speak of it to you; and you did well to speak of it to me, for we are all friends together. But from the midst of their advice and their forebodings, from the mire of their doubts and whisperings, I will arise to shew them how I dare trust my own instincts, and how, by redoubled exertions, I will yet prove my claim to be admitted among the great musicians of Karom. And for you, Turoni, I grieve, because, if you have no faith in me before I succeed, you will have but little joy in my success.

As I walked homewards after this memorable interview (and I did not leave Turoni until she had assured me of her perfect sympathy) my spirits rose to the most indomitable resolution; and I concluded that the mistrust of Erimoth and Zakku was for my ultimate good, because it would incite me to my best endeavours; whereas, had they always praised my parts, and spoken of an easy success, I had doubtless failed by reason of the over-assurance which their praise would have wrought in me.

But now came a question which led me into a maze of thoughts: Were Zakku and Erimoth honest in their intentions towards me? Did the one seek to lower me in the estimation of Turoni? Was the other moved by a secret jealousy of my budding powers as a musician? After much debating in my mind, and being unable to

determine how these things might be, I resolved to go straight to the fountain-head of these troubled waters, namely to Erimoth himself.

I at once turned towards the Gardens, intending to find Erimoth, and walk home with him; but he was nowhere to be found; and the door-keeper of the hall where he used to play, said that some mischance must have befallen him, because he was that night to give a grand piece of music, and he had not yet appeared.

I then with all speed went to the house of Erimoth, and finding it closed and dark, I listened at the door, and presently heard a sound of lamentation, as of one in pain. I at once called aloud—"Erimoth, what ails you?" No answer followed; but in a little while the door was opened, and Erimoth came out to me.

"I visit you at this late hour," said I, "because I feared some mishap had hindered you from playing to-night in the Gardens."

"I did not play to-night," said Erimoth, "because I did not wish to hear any music, and least of all my own."

"There you differ from me," said I, "for whether I be sad or merry, my harp is a welcome companion."

"That may well be," returned Erimoth, "for a young man's griefs and joys can find easy utterance in a young man's music."

"Methinks you speak in bitterness," said I.

"Yes," said Erimoth; "and it is well for young men that old men are sometimes in a mood which allows them to be bitter and beneficent withal."

"Your mood," said I, "accords well with mine, for I greatly desire your opinion as to a certain project

of mine; I intend henceforth to devote five days out of every ten to the composition of some great musical work, of which I have not yet a clear conception; do you think I may reasonably hope to succeed?"

"It promises well," replied Erimoth, "for all our greatest musicians have begun by not having a clear conception of that which they intended. Have you any musical ideas, any melodies of your own, which you wish to introduce into the work?"

"Yes," said I, "several; and they haunt me day and night."

"That must be very unpleasant," remarked Erimoth.

"But do you think that you are able to produce these melodies with their proper alternations of harmony?"

"I have no doubt on this head," I replied.

"Good! you must then see to it that these various melodies be judiciously placed, one setting off the beauties of another."

"I have not been unmindful of this," said I; "for I know its great importance."

"You must then regard natural progression and the artistic unity of the work, so that you shall finally elaborate what you feel to be a masterpiece, beautiful in all its parts, and magnificent as a whole."

"I will not rest until I am satisfied with it," said I; "and I will direct all my powers to the production of a perfect work."

"That is well," said Erimoth; "for when you feel that you have produced a perfect work, all you have then to do is to make others agree with you."

"And do you think," I asked, "that I shall succeed in making others agree with me?"

"No," said he, "that is precisely where you will fail. In years you are but young; in music you are a mere novice; and as I am your preceptor in the art, I may speak to you thus. Think not that I speak hastily; I have long marked your eager ambition, your boundless confidence in your own abilities, your presumptuous criticism of works which you could not understand; and your irrepressible glorification of your own works, which are not worth understanding. I speak bitter truth to you, but it is a salutary medicine."

"I thank you for the medicine," said I; "and I shall take good care that I have no more of it. I will now leave you that your great skill may find out a salutary medicine for yourself."

And so we parted with but scant courtesy on either side.

I had scarcely taken fifty paces when I met Zakku, also coming to find out what had detained Erimoth when so many were expecting him. I informed Zakku that his friend was in one of his gloomy fits, and would not thank anybody for visiting him.

"Methinks," said Zakku, smiling, and laying his hand upon my shoulder, "Halek did not receive thanks; he also looks gloomy."

"If I look gloomy," said I, "it is because I have just lost a friend; I have visited Erimoth for the last time."

"Have you fallen out with him?" inquired Zakku.

"Even so," I replied, "as I shall fall out with all who presume to measure my powers, mark out my path, and speak slightly of me to those I love. He believes me to be a conceited enthusiast, and he may be right;

he went so far as to tell me so, and even there he may have been right; but he did it with the cruel sarcasm and the unrestrained rudeness of a Pagama; there he was wrong. I shall never again enter his house."

"And there you are wrong," said Zakku; "for I can assure you that Erimoth dearly loves you; but the truth is, as you have doubtless already discovered for yourself, that he sometimes falls so far into the power of some Kashepa, as to become indifferent to everything,—his finest music, his dearest friends, his prospects in Adaroni; and in this state it is not Erimoth who speaks."

"I have not yet discovered," said I, "that Erimoth is at times ruled by a Kashepa."

"But it is so," said Zakku, "he is sometimes a mere slave."

"You appear," said I, "to be well acquainted with your friend's secrets."

"Yes," replied Zakku, "I am always interested in what concerns my friends, and, as you are one, let me, who know the ways of Karom better than you, caution you in one point: there are Kashepas here who wind so subtly into our affections that, when we have at last discovered their nature, we find it a difficult matter to eject them."

"I thank you for your warning," said I; "but I know not why you consider it necessary."

"Because I found you conversing with a Kashepa outside the Gardens one night after you had sung your song to Turoni; but I considered that the encounter was a chance one, and that your love for Turoni had

raised you to a region where the spells of the Kashepas avail nothing; so I was silent."

"Why do you not continue to be silent?" I asked.

"Because I was told that you had taken your harp into the woods, and that when there you were not alone."

"Then why have you been silent so long?" I asked.

"Because I have hitherto had little opportunity of speaking."

"Then rest assured," said I, "that for the future you shall have less; for there can be but little friendship between a rich man who can afford to keep spies, and a poor man who can barely keep himself."

CHAPTER XXIV.

The New Harp.

BY the time I regained my hut, whence I had set out so light-hearted, my spirits were sunk to the lowest; but, persuading myself that I had acted rightly, with due dignity, and from a justifiable resentment, I gave up nothing of my resolutions, and lost nothing of my courage. Erimoth and Zakku, said I to myself, may mean well; but as the scornful moods of the one, and the prying nature of the other are alike distasteful to me, I shall henceforth not seek their company; and my triumph, when it comes, will be the sweeter in that I have owed nothing of it to the help of friends who doubted my ability, and disparaged me in the eyes of my betrothed.

Early next morning I repaired the harp of Erimoth, and sent it to him by a porter, together with a letter thanking him for his kindness in lending me the harp, and telling him that I purposed buying a new one, which would be better suited to my present wants.

Before I had determined upon sending back the harp of Erimoth, I had been so provident as to form a plan for obtaining another, and it was this:—My father, in spite of his severity towards those who persisted in running counter to his wishes, was generous to the last

degree towards those who bent to his will, and Karvad, my elder brother, inherited my father's benevolent disposition, without having, as far as I was concerned, any reason for not following it.

So I wrote a long letter to my brother, telling him the story of my love, my aspirations, and my necessities, and begging him to send me twenty *sabahs* that I might procure a good harp, without which I could not prosecute my great design.

Three days after I had returned the harp to Erimoth, a porter brought me thirty pieces of gold, and the following letter:—

“Salutations and kind wishes to Halek, the son of Mazor, from Erimoth. I have wronged you, and I ask pardon. I have talked the matter over with Rayamin, and he also is fully persuaded that you cannot surmount the difficulties which block the path of him who at the age of twenty-five begins a great art. But he says, and I agree with him, that your fervent spirit will forth in one direction or another, and that if you will persist in the direction of music, you will not rest until you end in a splendid triumph, or an utter failure. Whether you succeed or fail, you will not have wasted your time: you will be the nearer to knowing the true bent of your genius, and the stronger to follow it. You were right in saying that you must have a good harp; therefore have we, Rayamin and myself, sent you thirty pieces of gold in order that you may at once purchase the best harp in Karom, if you be so minded.”

This letter filled me with the liveliest gratitude, mingled with delight, that such a man existed, and shame that I had so misjudged him; but I followed my

first impulse, and returned the money by the same porter, together with the letter which follows:—

“Greeting, with assurance of warm love and gratitude, from Halek to Erimoth.”

“Noble master!—who can draw sweet music from the hearts of men, as well as from the cords of the harp—if I may still call you master, and if I would produce music worthy of a pupil of yours, I must first endeavour to act nobly, as you do; therefore do I refuse the money which you send me. I were altogether wrong in spirit could I accept gold to carry out a project wherein he who gives believes I shall fail. Nay, Erimoth, I will not thus obtain a harp: I have written to my eldest brother for money, and he will surely send it; but if not, I can save money from my earnings. I shall shortly visit both Rayamin and yourself, that I may more fully express my great thankfulness.”

Forty days passed before I received an answer from my brother. He began by assuring me of his warm sympathy, and ended by telling me that he could send me no money, because my father had threatened him with severe penalties if he did so.

My brother's letter showed me, what I had not known, that those who are under the *khariiz* may still send unpleasant messages to each other; for a passage in my brother's letter ran thus:—“My father says that each calling has its own reward, and that he who has no calling has the reward of being able to think himself anything he chuses. He says that you are able to fancy yourself a poet or a musician, and that none can rob you of these delightful fancies. He says that you may conceive and cherish as many more of such fancies as

you will—and that you can do all this *without the aid of money*. He also says that you will be far happier without the money you demand, because when you possess a harp, you will lose the fancy that you can play upon it.”

These were cruel wounds, and I felt them keenly; but there was one part of the letter which put me into a great quandary, and it was this:—“Our father is a man of his word, and he bids me tell you that if you will promise to give up all your unreasonable fancies, and all your unprofitable labours in music and poetry, he will even yet send you, as he promised, one thousand *sababs* to set you up in business as a goldsmith.”

What was I to do? Here was my father, on the one hand, offering to set me up in a trade for which I had no inclination; but if I closed with his offer, I could at once make Turoni my wife. A deep instinct, on the other hand, urged me to the perfecting of my finest faculties, and to the production of some work by which my generous ambition might be satisfied. I asked myself whether I could be completely happy in the full possession of Turoni's love, in the management of my business, and in the common pleasures of living, if I must for ever turn a deaf ear to the importunate clamouring of that spirit within me which, like a caged bird, struck madly against the bars, and would not be comforted while in durance. The question was not whether I should cease to enjoy the beautiful creations of others, but whether I should give up all hopes of creating for myself. I decided that the love of Turoni might compensate me for the loss of my satisfaction and my hopes as an artist; and that even if it did not

do so, it was my duty to relinquish them for the love of Turoni. Then came the question—Can I not have both? I decided that I could; I resolved that I would. The far-seeing Turoni agreed with me.

I shewed Kabri the letter which contained my father's offer, and told him why I had not accepted it, for I had a secret hope that he would insist upon advancing me the twenty *sababs* I wanted; but I soon learnt that he required all his income to pay his workmen, to purchase materials, and to maintain his household.

I was then tempted to tell Erimoth of my strait, but having once refused his assistance, I was now unwilling to ask it. Turoni pressed me to accept ten *sababs* from her little store; but this I could not do; so it seemed that I must wait until I could save twenty *sababs* out of my earnings, which, if I only worked five days out of ten, I could not do in less than eight months. But I consoled myself with the reflection that my work would be the better, and my final success the surer, if I would wisely use that delay which did not spring from any fault or negligence of mine; and so, all disquieting speculations being dismissed, I came at last into that calm region whence all the delights of the artist are derived. I had no harp, and could not always be certain that I could produce the music which I composed, but I wrote it out with the greatest care, after I had so often gone over it in my mind, that I knew every note thereof.

It was a happy, fruitful time; and my confidence gathered strength as I proceeded. Before three months were over, I had composed many songs, for the best

of which I found a place in my great work—*Evening and Morning*:—I had a song of restful thoughts and sweet meditations to be sung in the twilight, and filled with quaint, sweet harmonies; there was a song in which tears fell fast, regretful tears for long-lost love that may perchance be found no more; a song for the midnight, sounding like the voice of one who from an inner dungeon would send forth some bitter cry to stir the pity of the outer world; a song of dawn for him who has felt the fine joys of renunciation, learned the sublime secret of patience, and known the sweet solace that attends upon lowliness of heart.

During this busy time I only once visited Erimoth; and he overwhelmed me with explanations which I did not require. He told me that when he appeared to despise others, it was himself he despised; that when he wounded others, it was himself he wounded; and that he was at times like a harp, whose strings were all untuned, so that the most skilful hand could only bring forth discordant sounds.

Zakku I once met by chance as I was going to my work. I instantly perceived that Turoni had spoken to him of my affairs, and that I stood higher in his estimation; but I hastened by him, vexed with myself because I could not answer the smile with which he greeted me.

After I had lived some four months by myself, I was surprised to find how greatly Kabri had been cheered and sustained by my presence. The sorrowful eyes of his wife warned me that all was not well; and she several times bade me visit him in the little room whither he now so often retired. But when I sought

admission, I always found the door fastened. One day he yielded to my importunity, and permitted me to enter. The air was laden with the fumes of *akkash*. Kabri held a pen in his hand, but it was encrusted with dried ink. I gazed at him unable to speak.

"Halek," said he, "I stand on the threshold of a grand poem; but I may not pass the portals, and enter in, and call it mine. I behold it in my dreams, and I awaken with the brightness of its beauty: I grasp the pen—the glory vanishes. Who can heal this palsy of the mind? Alas no physician in Karom! My spirit is broken, and I would lie long days and nights in some silent shade of Adaroni where the racking tortures of my life will forever cease. I am weary of Benuben; I yearn to leave all but this grand poem, which I shall never work out, until I am among the gentle Adaronas."

I reminded Kabri that he had a wife and little children to whom he was bound by solemn obligations; and I also hinted to him that if he believed he would be able to perfect his poem in Adaroni, he should the more patiently apply himself to the duties of his life in Benuben; but to this he replied that he desired to finish his poem in Benuben, because when he went to Adaroni, the Great King might have other work for him.

Hitherto I had spoken gently to Kabri, being filled with a tender pity; but I was suddenly moved to cry out "Kabri! Kabri! it matters little what work the Great King gives you either here or in Adaroni, if you are bent upon destroying all your faculties with *akkash*. That palsy of the mind comes of *akkash*."

No sweet, no bright, no lofty thought ever sprang from the foul fumes of *akkash*; it closes the eye to the beauty of the flowers; it closes the ear to the song of the birds; it hardens the heart to the touch of love. *Akkash* is the enemy of art; its children are Dulness, Confusion, and Madness."

"Leave me," moaned Kabri, leaning forwards, and burying his face in his hands. I laid my hand upon his head, stooped, and whispered. He was weeping, and could not answer me. Then I left him, and told all to Esbah, who straightway went to him, and comforted him.

In an hour's time Kabri came silently into the workshop, and set himself to clean all the jewellery which was exposed for sale. Once or twice he heaved a deep sigh, but he never lifted his eyes from his work.

In the evening, when I saluted him before leaving, he slipped three gold pieces into my hand, saying, "That is poor payment for a grand rebuke, but it will speed the purchase of your harp." At first I refused this present; but he pressed it upon me with such kindness and dignity, that I could not avoid accepting it.

Some twenty days after this I was sitting in my arbour among the almond trees, writing down some music, when I suddenly saw Alsor approaching me. I hastened to meet him, too surprised and pleased to reflect that he was treating me with scant courtesy in not sending me the *malkath*—that letter which he who for the first time visits another, sends three days beforehand, to give information of the day and the hour of the intended visit.

When Alsor was seated in my arbour, I set before him bread and almonds, with wine and water. He appeared to relish my simple fare, and comported himself with such child-like simplicity and good nature, that my slight embarrassment soon passed away. Then he unfolded his business.

"Yesterday," said Alsor, "I was visited by Kabri. He told me a secret, and asked me a favor, namely, that when he ceased to employ you, I would again take you into my service. He says that I greatly wronged you when I sent you from me; my wife says the same; I agree with them. You may be neither a good goldsmith, nor a fine poet, nor a great musician, but you are a faithful and a fearless man, which is far better. I do but repeat the words of Kabri, and he has shown me that his estimate of your qualities is a just one. When he no longer requires your services, come to me; I will pay you liberally for your five days' labour out of ten; and I will assist you in your projects as a musician, even as Kabri would do, did not the state of his affairs prevent it. As an earnest of my wishes and intentions towards you, accept these few pieces of gold to aid you in the purchase of the harp which you so much desire."

"Alsor," said I, deeply moved, "what have I done that you should be thus munificent?"

"You have only done your duty," replied Alsor, "and I have done no more than mine. To be generous is man's first duty; he who is generous will find it an easy matter to be merely just."

"Behold a man and a master!" thought I to myself. "What would I not do to serve him!" Then aloud:

"When Kabri will no longer employ me, I am yours; but I pray you to tell me what mysteries lie herein?"

"Hereafter I will explain all; for the present I will only say that I am making earnest preparations for pursuing the Great Pilgrimage. The word Sahitam is graven on my heart—perfect love, perfect peace. Even I, with my choleric temper, am gradually coming towards it; and my sweet wife has long been waiting for me to leave this troublous land of Karom, and to set out for the happy isles of Sahitam."

"Take me with you," said I.

He gazed earnestly into my eyes and said, "Faithful—fearless; you will have many troubles; when you have fought through them, you will come to Sahitam. Farewell."

I should certainly be sorry for it by the time I was forty.

I purchased a harp which cost me twenty-four *sababs*; and when I at last saw it safe in my own house, I was the happiest man in Karom. After many days of absorbing delights, my musical work was ready for the public; and I lost no time in taking it to Immo, who presided over the Hall of the Harpers.

These presidents who are set over the various halls in the Gardens, receive large sums of money from the State, in order that they may be above taking bribes from those who aspire to fame. They are supposed to be capable of forming a just estimate of whatsoever works are presented to them; they have the power of rejecting and of accepting; and in exercising this power they must be uninfluenced by their own love or their own dislike of the artist. When a president persistently refuses to admit the productions of an artist, and the artist thinks he has been unjustly treated, he may hire a hall for himself, and there deliver his music or his poem. This costs much money; but if the voice of the people then declares in his favour, he may bring the matter before the judges, who, if he makes out his case, condemn the unjust president to pay over to the artist whatsoever sum he paid for the hiring of the hall.

If a president has more than once been arraigned before the judges on a charge of having, for unworthy considerations of his own, not connected with the merit of the artist's work, or with the taste of the public, kept back what he should have encouraged, and admitted what he should have rejected, he is deprived of his

CHAPTER XXV.

The Vision of Kabri.

IN four months I had saved nine *sababs*; Kabri had given me three; Alsor five; and when I told Turoni of my unexpected good fortune, she insisted on giving me three *sababs*, that my sum might be complete, and that she might have a share in completing it.

Had I at any time wavered in my resolution of not forsaking my love of art in order to enjoy the companionship of Turoni, I had been strengthened by the advice and sympathy of Rayamin; and Turoni herself joined with me in refusing to enjoy the perfect pleasures of love, if I might not at the same time enjoy the ennobling delights of cultivating a grand art.

So I was able to answer my brother's letter with confidence and calmness; to tell him that more delights lay hidden within the renunciations of a Karoma, than in all the sordid satisfactions of a Pagama; and that I would rather be an unnoticed and struggling aspirant towards some noble end, than the indolent inheritor of untold wealth. I thanked my father for his munificent offer, and I declined it, saying that although I might be tempted to accept it while but twenty-five years of age,

office; and it has even happened that an unjust president has himself been obliged to suffer the just rejection of his own works, by one whom he had treated with careless disdain and careful disfavour. It is seldom, however, that such presidents are to be found; for the perfect Karomas have not only a genuine love of art, but a generous love of their fellow-men.

There are people, kindly enough perhaps, who are at once chilled into opposition by the too great zeal of those who have the misfortune to solicit their kindness. Immo appeared to be one of these. He smiled, and smiled again; was grieved that he must disappoint me; but my music was not good enough for his hall.

There are people who hate nothing so much in others as the vice or foible which distinguishes themselves. Immo appeared to be one of these. As a young man, I was vain of my abilities; Immo much older than I, was vainer than I; but he had the prudence to conceal it.

Whether I be right or wrong in my conjectures as to the secret spring which moved Immo, the result of my visit was, as I have mentioned, that he pronounced my music not good enough for his hall. He glanced over the score, and pointed out a fault; smiled encouragingly, and pointed out another. I begged him to let me play a few of the best passages; he consented.

"How do you like them?" I asked.

"I like them well," he replied; they remind me of my happy thoughtless boyhood, when I used to compose just such passages."

I left the hall utterly confounded, not knowing what to do; but I said nothing to Turoni of the ignominious

rejection of my great work. Suddenly I bethought me of Meshran; he was a musician, and a young man; I had been attracted by his boyish geniality; and I was certain he was of a kindly disposition. To my great delight I found that he was the son of a potter who had formerly lived in Khoshek, and with whom I had been acquainted. He looked at my music, and pronounced it to be good; adding that if it were properly played, and given out to be the music of a celebrated musician, it would meet with a triumphant success; but that as it was the first work of Nobody, it would attract no attention.

"If Immo knew this," said I, "it was his duty to admit me among the harpers, that I might at least have a trial."

"But," replied Meshran, "that is precisely what Immo did not know. I have been assured that he himself never yet composed a piece of music worthy of a second hearing; that he is only a good judge of what he himself likes, and a poor judge of what he ought to like. He would not dare, on his own unaided judgment, to admit anything into his hall which shows the smallest signs of originality."

"Then," said I, "You shall aid his judgment: give me in a letter the opinion which you have just expressed concerning the merits of my music; and we shall then see if he will reject it."

To be brief: Immo at once accepted my piece when he found that Meshran thought highly of it. Then I believed Immo to be a bad judge, and an unkind man into the bargain; but the ultimate fate of my music showed that he was only an unkind man, and that it

was the extreme generosity of Meshran which had moved him to praise my work more highly than it deserved. Immo had called it bad because it was not better; Meshran had called it good because it was not worse; the one spoke only of its blemishes, the other only of its beauties.

Still to be brief: My piece of music was a failure: many left the hall while I was playing; I lost heart, became confused, omitted many parts upon which I had once relied for applause, and was by turn scornful, careless, and furious. My discomfiture was witnessed by Kabri, by Erimoth, by Meshran, and by Zakku. I had besought Turoni to cheer me with her presence; I was thankful that she had stayed away.

When all was over, and I had suffered, as I thought, the full measure of my defeat, I seized my harp, and would have hastened out at the back of the hall, when I was addressed by Immo: "Whither so fast?" said he. "Do not go till the urns are emptied."

"I thank you," said I; "but I am utterly indifferent to the criticisms of such an audience."

"That is but fair," said he, "for they were utterly indifferent to your music."

"Meshran appreciates it," I returned.

"Then for the future," retorted Immo, "you should only play for Meshran."

I was so overwhelmed by the suddenness of the blow which had prostrated my hopes, that for several hours after I had been soothed by the solitude of my own garden, I thought of nothing but immediate flight to the Diamond Mountains. "Immo was right," said I to myself, "and I am nothing but a vain pretender.

There is no pretence in the Diamond Mountains, no headlong enthusiasm, no sweet illusion, nothing but lonely and laborious search. If I find a valuable gem, I shall be able to show it beyond dispute or cavil; if I find nothing, there will be nobody to witness my disappointment. When I set out for the Diamond Mountains, none dare say that I shall not return laden with diamonds and rubies. I might easily become rich in one year, if I were to find only one large diamond, as others have done before me; and then my painful exile would be rewarded by a joyful return. I could then marry Turoni, and devote the rest of my life to perfecting myself in music, or in poetry, or in both.

In the morning I was calmer, but a dull pain weighed me down; I would not go to work that day, and I passed the time in pacing up and down a little avenue formed by my almond trees.

After a while a messenger brought me a packet from Immo. I opened it with eager curiosity, not being able to imagine what it might be; but when I saw three gold pieces and ten pieces of silver, together with a few slips of paper, I knew that I had before me the contents of the urns. None of the critical remarks were flattering; one was encouraging; all seemed to be presumptuous. I had by no means played my best, and even if I had, a few months' practice would have greatly improved my style; I had omitted several of my most original passages, because I had not courage to attempt them when I found my efforts so coldly received; the symmetry of the whole piece had thus been so marred, that even skilful judges would have found it a difficult matter to decide on its merits.

The three gold pieces gave me more pain than pleasure, for I did not regard them as tokens of admiration, but as the offerings of friendship: they had evidently been given by three out of these four—Erimoth, Kabri, Meshran, and Zakku. But by which three? I should never be able to ascertain this, for it is an inviolable custom in Karom that those who deposit gifts in the urns say nothing of it even to their dearest friends.

I read the criticisms again and again. What, after all, did they amount to? Nothing: they merely found fault with a performance which I myself acknowledged to be a failure; and I knew that even the very next night I could have acquitted myself far better. Against these criticisms, however, I had the opinion of a genius like Meshran; and this reflection aroused me from my despondency. "Come," said I to myself, "If one Meshran tells me that I may hope to become a good musician, I will still persevere though a hundred Immos declare that I cannot!"

So I took courage, banished the Diamond Mountains from my thoughts, and was heartily ashamed of myself that one reverse had so dismayed me that I was ready to give up all, and fly like a coward.

This time I said nothing of my intentions and my renewed hopes except to Turoni; for she fully understood the causes of my ignominious failure; and in this matter, as in all others, she ranged herself on my side.

I had still such faith in my own powers, and in the soundness of Meshran's opinion, that instead of composing a new work, I bent all my energies to revising the old one—*Evening and Morning*. Much of

my first enthusiasm was gone; but I worked strenuously and calmly, with greater judgment than before, and with the same unwavering hopes of success.

I had been working on in this way for a month or more, when I received an unexpected shock. I have already mentioned that Alsor had given me a vague hint as to some important change likely soon to take place in the household or the business of Kabri.

I could not conceive what this change might be, but I saw plainly that whatever it was, Kabri had endeavoured to provide for my welfare by securing me a good master in the person of Alsor.

It is true that I had not been without misgivings as to the state of Kabri, for although he was now extremely regular in attending to the duties of his business, he moved about like one dreaming of things far away, ate but little, slept little, and gave no heed to the pretty sports of his children.

One day, about the fifth hour, when I was wrapped up in my studies of music, a lad brought me a sealed letter from Kabri. I dismissed the lad that I might be alone, for I at once perceived that this was no ordinary letter. It ran word for word as follows:—

"The last gift of Kabri to Halek the son of Mazor. You have not yet found your best work; many sorrows lie before you; and if you come into that woful despair wherein I have long dwelt, you may find solace in this record of a dream which solaced me.

"My enemies had been too mighty, and too many for me; they had compassed me about on every side; they had broken down all my strong walls, and taken my tower of refuge.

"I saw in a vision the throne of the Great King, and I besought him to tell me whether, when a man is removed from Benuben, he continue to live in Adaroni, or whether he be dispersed as a vapour, and lost in the silent darkness of Aven.

"I received for answer: Behold this thy garden; search it thoroughly, and tell me if thou find there aught worthy of a life continued in Adaroni.

"Then did I behold in my garden many goodly plants choked by foul weeds; but in the midst of the garden I saw one fair stem, whose head was lifted above them.

"When I for a while attentively regarded this noble plant, my spirit was deeply grieved, and I cried out: O King! that fair and delicate stem is of a plant which belongs to the gardens of Adaroni, and the briars of Benuben will destroy it.

"Then said the Great King: Root out those briars and brambles, and whatsoever hurtful weed is in thy garden.

"I hastened to obey his command; and at first it seemed that the garden would soon be set in order; but after I had toiled through a wearisome space of time, by day and by night, in heat and in cold, I perceived that as I tore up the briars and the poisonous plants in front of me, they sprang up lustily behind me, so that I appeared to have made but little progress.

"Then did I cast myself upon the ground, spent and worn, and torn of the plants that cling and tear, and leave festering sores where they have pierced the flesh.

"While I thus lay despairing, and encompassed by creeping weeds, a voice said: Arise, get thee from this wilderness which thou callest a garden, eat, drink, and disport thyself at thy pleasure. I did but frighten thee: it was I who clothed myself in bright garments, and set myself upon a throne which I had made for myself; it was I, a man even as thyself, who took unto myself the name and the authority of the Great King.

"Then I turned and beheld one with an evil face, a cold eye, and a mocking smile. Thou callest this a wilderness, said I; but seest thou not herein a fair stem from Adaroni, striving to put forth its branches amid the briars of Benuben?

"Nay, said he; I only see briars and thorns, and all manner of noxious weeds. Arise, leave it for ever, and come with me.

"Then answered I: Canst thou help me to arise? And he said, I cannot help thee; for I see no path in this horrid maze whereby I may come to thee; but if thou canst struggle forth, we will then drink wine, and make merry together.

"I have a plant here, said I, whose purple buds I have watched and tended: It is still somewhere in this my garden; and though I have long neglected it, forgotten it, yea, trodden it under foot, I will never leave it till I have gathered strength, torn out these vile weeds, and made my garden fit for the perfect growth of that marvellous tree whose fruit is the sweet food of the Adaronas.

"Then as I steadfastly looked upon him that had told me to arise and make merry with him, his face

became more and more brutish, with a restless fiery glancing of the eye. Whereupon I strove to rise from the ground, that I might flee from that most woful sight—the wondrous face of a man become dull and brutish. But I tore my garments and my flesh, and could not arise, being spent with hunger, thirst, and weariness.

“Then methought I uttered a great cry: O King! King of Adaroni! who hast ordained just laws for the guidance and the comfort of thy people,—release me, I pray thee, from this misery; and if there be in Adaroni a place for us when we are removed from Benuben, send quickly and take me hence; for the light is turned into darkness, and affliction has broken my spirit; and even if, when we are taken from Benuben, we be dispersed as a vapour and lost in the silence of Aven, send quickly and take me hence, that I may at last be released from the cruel pains of a hopeless life.

“But, if I must yet remain in Benuben, teach me to cease from this vain striving after perfect goodness, and this vain searching after sure truth; deliver me from all tearful travail without gain, from the vague yearning that brings pain, and from the short love that leaves us to a long sorrow. And if it be that after the tormenting pains of Benuben, we come not into the restful joys of Adaroni, then do thou, Great King, teach me to forget this undying instinct of deathlessness, and to make brutish my heart, that being delivered from the perplexity of hopes and fears, I may live my short life in the dull contentedness which is enjoyed by the horse and the ox.

“Then I lay still, and awaited an answer from the Great King, for I seemed to know that my bitter cry had reached him, and grieved him. And after a time I heard a grave and gracious voice which sounded like soft music, or like the murmur of a mother who smiles on the babe at her bosom.

“Listen, and be still, said the voice. Whence are these miseries whereat thou makest this doleful moan? They are from thy forsaking of hope, from thy despairing of love, and from thy neglect of labour; and it is thy long and wilful disobedience to the laws of Adaroni, which has led thee to abandon thy brightest hopes, thy purest love, and thy most wholesome labour; until thou art now come into such straits, that thou deemest thy case to be hopeless. But no man is in a hopeless case, who of his own free will performs the smallest duty with the desire that he may do his best. Moreover, though it be so dark that he may not run, it is never so dark that he cannot step slowly forwards whither his honest intention leads him.

“The voice ceased; and I straightway fell into a meditation on my past life, and I was in a little while so smitten with shame and grief for all my wilful wanderings out of light into darkness, that I suddenly cried aloud: O Great King! I will arise with heart of hope, and I will labour, with a thankful spirit, to the end, whether it be the enduring joys of Adaroni, or the silent darkness of Aven, for no power of evil can wholly quench the bright light of thy law which lights up for me the small space of my daily work.

“As I uttered these words, a weight was lifted from my heart, and tears sprang to my eyes. Then

did one stoop, and raise me in his gentle arms; and methought I was a little child, for he said: Child, come with me. So I went with him by a path which I had not perceived; and when we were come to the middle of the garden, I saw again the beautiful stem of the plant of Adaroni; and he who had brought me thither drew it forth by the roots, and carried it out of the garden; I walking at his side.

"Whither dost thou lead me? I asked. And he made answer: I lead thee to Adaroni. Thy garden was destroyed by weeds, for thou hadst been guilty of long negligence; it was beyond thy cleansing, and was become the hold of unclean beasts. But thou didst aforesaid duly tend and cherish this tree of Adaroni; and when thou hadst discovered its forlorn condition, thou didst earnestly strive to uproot the weeds, and to save the tree that it might live; therefore will I again plant it for thee in the garden of Adaroni, where thou mayest tend it, and watch its marvellous unfoldings, and at last eat of its delicious fruit, and rest thee in the shade of its branches.

"Then I awakened, filled with the solace of my dream, for I perceived it to signify that I should in a little while be removed to Adaroni."

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Grief Sister.

AS soon as I had perused this wonderful letter, I hastened to the house of Kabri, feeling assured that he had been taken to Adaroni, during the night.

The door was opened for me by a young woman whom I had never before seen; and she at once ushered me into the inner chamber in which Kabri had of late passed so much of his time. Esbah sat there alone, and wept silently, but on seeing me, her grief broke out into loud lamentations, for she knew that he had loved me, and that I had faithfully served him.

"Halek," said she, "if you had not left him, he had not left me. He said that you had ceased to care for him, because all your thoughts were given to your music; and that you were the only man in Karom who saw the inner meaning of his poems."

There was much truth in what Esbah said, for since I had begun to live by myself, and give five days out of ten to my music, I had not been as warmly interested in Kabri's poems, as I was at first; but I had not imagined that he had so highly valued my sympathy.

When I informed Esbah that Kabri had made kind provision for me by securing employment for me in the service of Alsor, she expressed much surprise, and assured me that she had not received from Kabri any intimation that he expected soon to be called to Adaroni. "He spoke not to you concerning this," said I, "because he would not cause you any unhappiness which he could so easily spare you by merely being silent."

Esbah could tell me little concerning the manner of her husband's sudden departure. Towards midnight she had heard three loud knocks at the outer door; she called to Kabri, who was not yet gone to his chamber; but she received no answer. Beyond this she knew nothing except that, being but half awake, she soon fell asleep again, and that she heard the most delightful music, as in a dream. She also told me that the letter which she had sent me, had been written and sealed more than sixty days before, and that she, knowing nothing of its purport, had been entrusted therewith, and charged to have it conveyed to me, whenever Kabri should be compelled to set out on a long journey. He had in like manner given a letter to Esbah for herself; but she would show it to no one.

Kabri had taken nothing with him save the outline of his Great Poem—all his smaller poems, even those which he had formerly appeared to value, being torn to shreds and scattered about the floor of the room.

When I entered the workshop I found Ebul placidly adjusting the parts of an earring, and when he had saluted me, he looked reproachfully at me, shook his head, and remarked — "Alas! that Kabri the poet

could not go to Adaroni without taking with him Kabri the goldsmith."

"Judge not hastily," said I; "Kabri was bowed down by sorrows of which you know nothing; and the Great King permitted his departure."

"He was a generous master, and a just man," said Ebul; "and I rejoice, for his sake, that he has been permitted to go to Adaroni; but what will he do there? All work had become irksome to him."

"He took with him," said I, "the outlines of a grand poem."

"And left behind him three little children," said Ebul.

"Yes," said I, "but he also left behind him a good business, which, under your careful management, will soon become still better."

During this conversation Shomez bent over his work-bench, speechless, hiding his face in his hands. I went towards him that I might comfort him, and as I did so, Ebul left the room. The grief of Shomez, however, proved to be beyond the reach of my comfort. He was a shy and simple-minded young man, who had few friends, and who had lost the one friend who had been to him as a father.

Finding it impossible to say anything to which Shomez would reply, I at last turned from him, and examined a carcanet of pearls and rubies at which I had been working, and which I would finish before I transferred my service from Kabri to Alsor. While thus engaged, the young woman who had admitted me into the house entered the workshop and walked softly towards Shomez, who, when she had murmured

a soothing word in his ear, raised his tearful face all transfigured with the radiance of adoration.

"Nahamah," said he, "gentle grief-sister, you have indeed chosen the part for which you are fitted."

These words seemed to explain the relation between this timid youth and this young woman; but if I had further considered it, I might have known that they had met before.

The occupation of grief-sister is unknown out of Karom, the Pagamas being too selfish to think of it, and the Sahitamas too wise to need it. It is a common thing in Karom that when a father who must support a large family on a slender income perceives that one of his daughters possesses great prudence, discrimination, and firmness, together with sensitiveness, gentleness, and sweetness, he allows her to go out as a grief-sister.

Nahamah was the first grief-sister I had known. I had not thought her beautiful when I saw her face as she opened the door for me; but that may have been because I was too greatly troubled to observe her; but when I caught a glimpse of the transfigured face of Shomez, I thought to myself that the face of Nahamah must also show something worthy of admiration. So I held myself in readiness to meet her eyes when she turned round from Shomez; but she had veiled them with her long eyelashes, and without even a glance towards me, she passed out of the room as softly as she had entered it.

Presently Shomez followed her; but turning back when he came to the doorway, he said, "Nahamah has persuaded me to eat; she has set out something

delicious; perhaps you will eat with us, if you do not intend to go home as usual."

I was doubtful: in the first place, I felt certain that Shomez did not desire my company; and, in the second place, I knew that I did not desire his, for both himself and Ebul had plainly something against me; but I reflected that if I refused to eat with them in this time of our common grief, I should be guilty of something very much like the rudeness of a Pagama.

At this instant, while Shomez held the door open, I caught sight of Ebul seated at the table and eating away with an air of imperturbable stolidity.

"I thank you for thinking of me," said I to Shomez; "but I am in no humour for eating."

"Nor was I," said Shomez, "until I was persuaded to it."

"Nor shall I be," said I, "until I also am persuaded to eat."

Shomez looked puzzled, and then left me. I pretended to be admiring the beauty of the carcanet at which I had been working, while in reality I was busy reproaching the whimsical perversity of my disposition.

Deep in self-reproach for this and other growing faults, I looked up with a sudden start when the door opened, and Nahamah entered. The sight of her face was like the revelation of a new art; it was so bright and joyous, so honest and open, so winsome and womanly, so confiding and childlike, and altogether so wonderfully sweet, that I thought I had never seen so beautiful a woman; and yet she could hide all this

beauty at will, and appear to be dull and uninteresting, as I had at first thought her.

Instantly, when my eyes met hers, all unpleasantness vanished as though it had never been. She had not time to speak to me, and I did not speak to her; but I hastened to meet her, and then accompanied her out of the room.

I could now see that Ebul had not intentionally begun the meal without me, and also that it was not indifference which had made him forget me: he was evidently absorbed in thought, as was but natural, seeing that the management of a business now devolved upon him.

"Friend," said Ebul, "do you understand accounts?"

"Yes," said I; "for three years I kept the accounts for Kobesh, in the town of Unoti."

"In Pagam, if I mistake not," said Ebul; "but that matters not; two and two make four in Pagam as well as in Karom."

"Not always," said I; "I have known two and two make five in Pagam."

I felt just in the vein for a few lively thrusts of this sort; but Ebul walked gravely out of the room to confer with Esbah."

The issue of their consultation was that I was desired, before I finally left them, to go through all the accounts connected with the business of Kabri. I had no great liking for this sort of work; but Esbah herself pressed me to undertake it, and gave me her reasons for choosing me. I saw but little of Nahamah during the twenty days that I was busied with the

somewhat confused accounts of Kabri; and before I was finished, I ascertained that both Ebul and Shomez connected me with the last long fit of melancholy from which Kabri had never risen. It seems that he had dropped hints to them of a grand poem which he had only begun since my sympathy had stirred him to action; and they knew that he and I used to be closeted together for hours; but they appeared to have no suspicion that he was become a slave to *akkash*; and they knew nothing of the secret sorrows which fretted and corroded his inmost heart. It was certain that the Great King of Adaroni had caused him to be removed because he was no longer able to perform the duties of his life in Benuben; but they blamed Kabri himself for becoming thus disabled, and me as the thoughtless enthusiast who had encouraged him.

As my work proceeded, my intercourse with Ebul and Shomez became more and more unpleasant. I was as yet but a mere bungler in the reading of character. I thought Ebul to be morose when he was only taciturn, and sullen when he was only grave. Shomez I thought to be silly when he was only shy, and stupid when he was only ignorant. Both were simple-minded, without guile, or the smallest thought of malice; both were zealous in their business; but the one was too old and too cold for me; the other was too young, and too empty; neither had a choice-work.

On the last day, when the accounts were fully made out and set in order, I felt that I should like once for all to speak up for Kabri and myself.

"I have often heard you," said I, looking first at Ebul and then at Shomez, "I have often heard you

regret that Kabri had not minded his business instead of his choice-work; but I wish you to see, before I go, that a man may duly mind both, and that a man must have a choice-work if he would cultivate those finer faculties by virtue of which he is exalted above the —”

Shomez smiled, and Ebul fixed a stony gaze upon me. I was going to say “*by which he is exalted above the brutes and the savages* ;” but I thought it advisable to go back a little, and to end my speech thus — “*by which he is exalted.*”

Shomez smiled again; and the eye of Ebul twinkled.

“Halek,” said he, “do you, wrapt up as you are in your music, happen to have noticed in this house a young woman named Nahama?”

“I have not only noticed her, but I have greatly admired her,” said I, boldly.

“Good,” said Ebul. “Now, do you think she is exalted above the—that is to say,—exalted?”

“Yes,” said I, “she seems to be exalted above all creatures except the Adaronas; she is an amiable woman, of the most perfect culture, the kindest heart, and the most charming manners; she is a very fountain of sweetness and happiness; and I will maintain this, though I know not how you may afterwards seek to entangle me.”

“Do you think that Nahamah has a choice-work?” asked Ebul.

“She requires none,” said I, “or you may say that her choice-work is the fine art of making others happy.”

“Good,” said Ebul, “and now do you not think that the father, who from her earliest childhood

cultivated in Nahamah these admirable qualities, may himself be somewhat exalted, and yet have no choice-work?”

“I admit,” said I, “that the patient perfecting of a woman like Nahamah is as noble a work as the production of a grand poem.”

“Well then,” said Ebul, “I am the father of Nahamah, and of two others equally amiable.”

“Ebul,” said I, “you have conquered, and taught me a lesson that I shall never forget. Pardon me that I ignorantly and presumptuously addressed myself to you; and let me now speak to Shomez.”

“I will be silent,” said Ebul, “as I always am; but you reminded me that this was your last day here, and I thought I would like to speak out before you leave us.”

“I am glad that you spoke,” said I; “and now, Shomez, I have yielded to Ebul, and you shall yield to me: you are a young man, you have no choice-work, and you are not the father of Nahamah.”

“No,” said Shomez, “but I love her!” I looked at him: he was flushed and eager; his eyes were full of tears, and his old smile was fraught with a new meaning.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Love and Victory.

I MUST now record my second failure as a musician; and I will do it briefly. For many months did I labour, patiently and carefully; but others could not perceive in my music the meanings which I did. Years have passed since the profound humiliation of my second failure; and now I myself cannot perceive in that music the sweet and solemn meanings which I fancied I had uttered therein.

This terrible and unexpected failure had larger issues than the mere discovery that I could not hope to become a great musician: in my despair I thought I could never produce noble work of any kind; yet I never lost the secret instinct that I could not be completely happy until I had satisfied my aspirations as a lover of art. I might not drink the generous wine of an artist's triumph; and I refused the wholesome bread of lowly and unambitious labour. I forgot the fine lesson of Nahamah; I forgot that I was loved by Turoni; I forgot that he who through all failure, humiliation, despair, and weakness, still cleaves in childlike trust to the imperishable laws of Adaroni will at last enter into its unfading joys, and learn the

inmost secret of his own inalienable part in the age-long progression of the Universe.

When a young man who would become an artist accepts comfort from a woman like Zenah, he is a traitor to his finer instincts, and the wilful destroyer of his highest hopes. Zenah, like that fearful bird which scents disaster and helplessness, again hovered round me while I lay alone in my despair. She praised my music, which the Karomas had despised, and she derided the music towards which I had aspired; but she attended to all my wants, and I was too miserable to care what she thought or said.

She did not now seem to be poor, for she brought me wine, and fruit, and flowers. She also beguiled me into a wretched sort of forgetfulness by telling me wonderful stories of savages and Kashepas, and by singing me strange songs of her own sultry clime.

For the space of seventy days I went not beyond the walls of my garden, and indeed I rarely came out of my house. The sunlight pained me; the sweet flowers of my garden pained me; the clear piping of the birds in the early dawn smote upon my heart with keen strokes of pain. I thought that lover and friend held aloof from me in my sore sickness; I knew not that the lies and artifices of Zenah had always turned them from my gate, and kept me from knowing that any human being cared for me.

Zenah told me, among other lies, that Zakku and Turoni were now man and wife; but enough: the lies of Zenah tortured me, maddened me, and at last stupefied me, until I knew not lies from truth, and cared little for either.

But through all my madness and my stupor I clearly perceived that Zenah was a Kashepa, and that, according to the warning of Zakku, she had now so wounded herself about me that I had but slender hope of escape.

One night I dreamed that I lay on the couch in my inner room, and as I was actually there, my dream was the more horrible, because I was fully persuaded that I was awake, and not dreaming. By and by I thought I was unable to move; then I strove to cry out for help, but no sound came from my lips. Something unknown and terrible was about to happen to me, and for a space of time that appeared to be of immeasurable duration, I lay in helpless expectation of this that should befall me.

Almost within arm's length of my couch was a vase of flowers which had that evening been brought to me by Zenah. In this vase I perceived the bud of some strange flower; and while I gazed thereon, it began to open, and to fill the air with a loathsome and poisonous odour which would have choked me. I strove to break from my invisible bonds, that I might cast this detestable flower out of the house; but in vain; I was powerless.

At length, in a fit of convulsive frenzy, I rushed from my couch, snatched the flowers from the vase, and tore them to pieces; but while I did so, the strange flower shot forth long burning cords which clung around my body, and caused me such intolerable pain that I awakened. Then I saw that all this had been a dream; for though I had actually taken the flowers from the vase, and torn them in my sleep, I perceived nothing of the horrible stench which had seemed to fill

the room; nor did I feel the pain of burning which had tortured me in my sleep.

After this dream I did not wish to sleep again, so I went out into my garden. There I saw the solemn dawn, and the morning star, and afar off in the forest I heard the soft sighing of the trees, which sounded to me then like the murmur of the sea; and straightway I thought of that beautiful dream which I had dreamed long ago in Pagam. I seemed once more to behold the silver sea, the amber-coloured light, and the purple shadows on the hills. I recalled the wondrous vision of Turoni, and the delicate perfume of the white flower which she entrusted to my care.

Presently my thoughts moved to the dream of Kabri, wherein he too had seen a fair plant which had been brought from the gardens of Adaroni, and entrusted to his care; and while I mused thereon, the opening words of his letter came to my recollection with such force that I seemed to hear the voice of Kabri repeating them:—*You have not yet found your best work; many sorrows lie before you: and if you come into that woful despair wherein I have long dwelt, you may find solace in this record of a dream which solaced me.*

Then did I hasten to my house, and draw forth from a box, with a secret fastening, which none but myself could undo, that last gift of my unhappy master. I read the letter slowly from beginning to end that I might discover its inner meaning. Light came to me as I read these last words:—*But thou didst aforesaid duly tend and cherish this tree of Adaroni; and when thou hadst discovered its forlorn condition, thou didst earnestly strive to uproot the weeds, and to save the tree that it might*

live ; therefore will I again plant it for thee in the garden of Adaroni, where thou mayest tend it, and watch its marvellous unfoldings, and at last eat of its delicious fruit, and rest thee in the shade of its branches.

I perceived that this white flower of Turoni and this fair plant of Adaroni, both signified *the Love of good*, which will perish if not constantly tended, and which can with difficulty be preserved amid the evils that unceasingly assail it. But the poisonous flower of Zenah appeared to signify *the Love of evil*, which, if not constantly repressed, and finally uprooted and rejected, will madden, stupefy, and destroy him who falls into its power.

It was now broad daylight ; and now once again, after seventy days, the song of the birds filled me with delight. I felt that the fair plant of Adaroni was not yet lost amidst the weeds ; and it chanced that as I replaced Kabri's letter in my coffer, my eyes fell upon my Record, in which I had not written one line for the last five months. I was deeply grieved when I thought on this, and I at once resolved to set my accounts in order, as honestly, if possible, as I had those of Kabri.

The entries were short, but highly significant :—
Months of vanity, presumption and pride. Months of childish impatience and blind zeal. Months of despicable weakness, wilful madness, piteous misery. Months of unmanliness and hypocrisy. No sign of progress but this— that I am at last convinced I cannot become a great musician ; and that, whatever else I may hereafter aspire to, I resolve first to aspire towards becoming a good man.

About the fourth hour of the day Zenah entered my hut, bringing a small gourd containing wine. I had

not yet eaten or drunk ; indeed I was weak with fasting, for food had long since lost its savour, and yet I was determined that I would not again taste of this aromatic wine which she used to bring me. She saluted me, but I answered not, and made as though I was tuning my harp ; while she on her part affected not to observe my discourtesy.

Then I began to strike a few random chords, while Zenah paced restlessly up and down the room. At last she turned suddenly on me, and said, “ What mean these doleful notes ? Play the sweet music that I love.”

“ That which pleases you,” said I, “ the Karomas do not call music ; they will not listen to it.”

“ And yet,” said she, “ you found a place for it in that great musical work of yours to which five hundred Karomas listened.”

“ It is true,” said I, “ that I had some of your barbarous chants therein, and they destroyed the whole. The sweet music of the Karoma may be either joyous, or sad, or grand ; but it can only come from a pure heart.”

“ But you are not a Karoma,” said Zenah, “ and you need not desire to play their music. Let me hear that song which I taught you about the wild lions crouching and leaping in the moonlight.”

“ Nevermore,” said I, “ shall this harp of mine, the fruit of my patient labour and the generosity of my truest friends, nevermore shall this harp sound aught that can delight a Kashepa.”

Then a baleful light glowed in her glittering eyes, showing that some sinister intention was forming in her breast ; but after she had looked on me for a short

time, she turned away and again paced the room. Then suddenly she turned upon me with a spring, as before, but I still struck random chords, and guarded myself from betraying uneasiness.

"Halek is not himself this morning," said Zenah. "He needs a glass of this wine which I have brought him."

"Halek," I returned, "is truly himself this morning, and therefore will not taste the wine you have brought him."

"Yes," said she, stepping towards the gourd, "You are the good Halek you always were; but you have been sick, and are now peevish; one draught of my wine will cheer you, and banish your moodiness."

"If I have been sick," said I, "your detestable wine made me worse; that is not the wholesome wine of Karom; it fires my blood and maddens me; you have put poison into your wine."

"Nay," said Zenah, coming towards me with the gourd in one hand and a cup in the other; "nay, I put no poison into it, and you are mad without it; drink some, it will restore your senses."

At these words some sort of madness did indeed possess me; I started to my feet, snatched gourd and cup out of her hands, and then dashed them down with furious violence. We now stood facing each other, I heaving with suppressed passion, she livid with suppressed hatred. After an awful pause, during which our eyes maintained the combat, her lips, as she turned from me, writhed into a hideous grimace: she meant it for a smile. I had yet to learn what fell purpose might lurk in the smile of a Kashepa.

Still smiling she walked quietly out of the house, without a word; and I saw her no more. But about midnight, when I was in deep sleep, I was awakened by something falling on my bed:—it was part of the roof; my house was wrapt in flames. I started up, seized my clothes with one hand, and with the other I grasped the handle of the little coffer which contained my Record, my *moshim*, the letter from Kabri, and a few other things which I valued. I had barely time to save so much; for when I had rushed through the flames, I perceived that fuel had been piled all round the house, and that it must have been set burning in several places at once. The house was of wood, easily set alight, and soon consumed. In less than an hour it was nothing but a heap of ashes; and my harp was destroyed with it,—my harp which had given me so much pleasure, and which had finally caused me such bitter pains. I began my renewed life next day with nothing but one change of garments and a few papers. But I had brought out of the fire a pure heart which, like the ruby of Milroth, had lost its first colour, but which was able to regain it when it had cooled to its natural condition.

When day dawned, I discovered that my beautiful arbour had been pulled down for fuel, that even my almond trees had been stripped of their branches for the same purpose, and that every flower in my little garden had been torn up by the roots, and also laid upon the fuel which had been piled against the walls of my house to ensure its swift destruction. It is deeds like these which lie hidden in the smile of a Kashepa; and in the

sinister scowl of Zenah, could I but have interpreted it, lay the destruction of my harp.

But I was victorious! and as the sun rose that morning, my heart filled with hymns of triumph and thanksgiving. And now did I for the first time begin to know how richly I had been rewarded for the ready sympathy which I had always shown to Kabri: that last letter of his, sounding with the sobs of a breaking heart, and breathing the sweet promise of peace to him who will be content with the light which illumines the small space of his daily work, this woful and wondrous letter had indeed given me the solace which he knew I should some day so greatly need; and, moreover, he had provided me with another master as kind as himself—the noble and generous Alsor.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A New Resolution.

THOUGH I had still been minded to pursue my study of music, the loss of my harp, which I could not easily replace, would have been both a hindrance and a discouragement: but being now fully persuaded that excellence in this noble art was all but unattainable by me, I endeavoured to bear my loss with serenity. My ardent enthusiasm was gone; my hopes were utterly destroyed; and, compared with these, my harp was of little consequence.

But I had suffered another loss: when I visited Gareb, the owner of the house in which I had been living, and of which nothing now remained save the hearthstone and the cistern, I found that he reckoned the value of the house and its furniture at three hundred *sabahs*, and that as the rent which he received from this house formed nearly all his income, he was suddenly reduced to poverty. He said he had inherited the land from his father, and that he had built the house with the hoarded savings of several years. He further informed me that his wife and six children depended upon him for support.

When he had made me fully acquainted with his circumstances, he inquired whether the house had

been burnt through my negligence ; and I told him that no want of care on my part had in any way caused the disaster. Then he pressed me to tell him whether I had been in any way to blame in the matter ; whereupon after a little reflection, I told him frankly that I had been to blame, because the house had been burnt by a Kashepa whom I had admitted, and afterwards offended.

“Had he not warned you by threats ?” inquired Gareb.

“I received no warning by threats,” I answered ; “and revenge being so strange to my experience, I failed to read the threats conveyed by sinister glances.”

Gareb then told me that he was willing to take off fifty *sababs* from the full value of his house, if I would immediately pay him two hundred and fifty.

I told Gareb that this was impossible ; that I myself had lost all I had ; and that I had no means of procuring him even a hundred *sababs*.

“I thought,” said he, “that all you great musicians, like Meshran, for instance, gained immense sums of money ; and I was informed that this same Meshran received more than two hundred *sababs* in one night.”

“You may be right,” said I, “but I am not a great musician like Meshran.”

“I thought you were,” said Gareb, “because I heard your piece at the Hall of the Harpers, and I protest that I liked it even better than the music of Meshran.”

“Honest friend,” said I, sadly and bitterly, “had the others been of your opinion, you had not asked me in vain for your three hundred *sababs* ; and now I

shall no longer seek wealth as a musician ; for I would rather starve while trying to please good judges than gain a princely income by pleasing bad ones.”

Our final arrangement of this business was that I should pay him, if possible, twenty *sababs* on the morrow, and afterwards at the rate of five *sababs* a month, until the whole debt of two hundred and fifty *sababs* was paid off ; for, when I had exactly informed him of my own circumstances, he consented to remit the fifty *sababs*.

I went straight from this interview to Alsor. He was rejoiced to see me ; said he hoped I was recovered from my long sickness ; and endeavoured to cheer me by assuring me that a young man who never fails will never succeed, and by hinting that if I only persevered as I had hitherto done, I would surely win, in due time, one of the grand prizes which Alazoar, the Prince, had offered for excellence in music.

I longed to ask Alsor how he knew I had been sick, why he had not visited me during my sickness, and supposing him to have visited me, how it was that he had been turned from the gate without my seeing him ; but I reflected that these questions and answers might lead to unpleasantness, so I refrained, and was afterwards pleased that I had done so, for I found that all my friends treated me alike, it being a rule with the Karomas not to speak to a person of his fault except to warn or to admonish, or in some other way to influence for good.

When I informed Alsor of the loss which had befallen me, and showed him my urgent need of twenty *sababs*, he at once gave me the money, and promised to pay me

at the rate of ninety *sababs* a-year. He had formerly paid me at the rate of eighty, and as I did not think my services were become more valuable, I could not avoid attributing this increase of payment to the tender sympathy and the noble generosity of Alsor.

I again took possession of the same little room which I had formerly occupied in the house of the workmen; but I felt deeply humiliated when I contrasted my present position with the proud and independent one to which I had aspired. And Turoni? When should I be able to marry her, and maintain a household of my own? Was I worthy of her? I had not visited her since that awful night of my second failure. Well do I know that she would have comforted me in my distress; but my vanity and my pride had been so desperately wounded, that I could bear no more, and I shut myself up from Turoni, as well as from Erimoth, Alsor, Rayamin, and Zakku.

I now indeed appeared to have lost everything—the hope of soon marrying Turoni, and the hope of excelling as an artist, the respect of my friends, and much of my respect for myself. I was extremely unhappy; and I knew no comfort but that which I derived from an honest intention to do what was right, and from a secret feeling that, some day or other, I should succeed in some noble work of which I then had no idea, and of whose very nature I was utterly ignorant.

My fellow-workmen, Kilri, Atur, Yithrob, and Garrash, were still in the service of Alsor; and as they had always treated me with kindness, so now they welcomed me back with pleasant courtesy, and many

friendly speeches. None referred to my failure as a musician; none asked me why I had come back among them

But all their kindness only served to cover my angry wound, not to assuage the pain thereof, nor to heal it. I soon retired to my room, closed the door, and lay on my bed, pondering many things, but not able to sleep. Suddenly a light shone through my darkness: I had now given up music and poetry, for ever. I would tell all to my brother Karvad, and beg him to shew the letter to my father, who would then surely deliver me from my sore misery, by sending me the thousand *sababs* which he had promised me if I would give up the fine arts, and follow the business of a goldsmith.

I knew that my father would rejoice to hear I had relinquished the vain pursuit of what he considered to be mere vanities; and I was certain he would send me the money.

I was now unable to sleep by reason of the tumult of happy thoughts and anticipations which thronged my mind. I had not seen Turoni for seventy days. I had intended visiting her on the morrow; but I now resolved that I would postpone my visit until I could be the bearer of the glorious news that my father had sent me one thousand *sababs*, that I was at once going to begin business for myself, and that in ten days I hoped to take her to me for ever as my wife.

This is my father's answer to my request:—

“I send you herewith, my beloved and noble-minded Halek, the revocation of my Khariz, for I have been silent long enough, and I have something to tell you, namely, that I will not send you the thousand sababs,

because you will then cease to be noble-minded, and will sink into a mere tradesman like myself, and your wealthy, but contemptible brother Karvad. This refusal of mine will give you the most exalted delight. You told your brother that more delights lie hidden within the renunciations of a Karoma, than in all the sordid satisfactions of a Pagama: These delights you can always enjoy; they cost nothing, and depend upon nothing, except having nothing. I will not deprive you of them. The only reflection which may perhaps mar your otherwise perfect joy, is that you could not condescend to become a goldsmith, until you had discovered that you could not become a musician. Be of good cheer, and make of this disappointment, one more of those noble renunciations which are so delightful to the Karomas, but which, to be candid with you, utterly baffle the comprehension of the Pagamas."

I had now no glorious news to tell Turoni, nor, indeed, any news; for her altered manner at once showed me that she knew the worst that had befallen me. It is true that her gentleness was balm to my sore wounds; but the sad graveness of her look filled me with unutterable reproaches; while an undefinable something chilled me, and held me from her. I feared to ask any questions. I told her that my desperate failure had caused me to fall sick, and that this was the reason why I had not visited her for so long a time. Turoni heard this in silence, asked nothing, and explained nothing; and to this day I do not know why she had not insisted upon seeing me when she knew I lay sick.

I could not avoid suspecting that Zakku, to whom I had, rightly or wrongly, attributed a meddling, as

well as a prying disposition, had discovered something, or imagined that he had discovered something against my character, and that he had repeated it to Turoni in order to warn her against me. But Turoni was manifestly disinclined to enter upon the subject; and I would not condescend to inquire of Zakku.

As I walked homewards after that visit, I tried to ascertain by what particular acts, words, or looks, Turoni had made me perceive that she was changed towards me; but I could fix upon nothing; and yet I had certainly felt that subtle coldness which a woman can never wholly conceal; for of all difficult things, the most difficult is to simulate, or to dissimulate in love. Could it be that even Turoni had been turned from me by my arrogant vanity, and my public disgrace? My failure must have had something to do with the alteration of her feelings towards me, because, after meanness and coldness in the man she loves, the hardest thing for a woman to forgive is failure.

Again, might it not be that my poverty, which appeared likely to condemn us to years of separation before we could become man and wife, had caused her to turn her thoughts towards some other who loved her, and who was at the same time able to maintain her as his wife? Was Zakku that man? Could it be Erimoth? Might it be some person of whom I knew nothing, and who had been as suddenly and as strongly attracted towards her as I had been when I first saw her?

Distracted by jealousy, consumed by vain desires, fretted by cares, filled with bitter envy, unavailing regret, self-reproach, and secret sorrows, my life would have been altogether unendurable had I not worked for

Also with indefatigable zeal; for this honest labour not only occupied my time so that I could not brood over my own troubles, but it gave me the wholesome assurance that as I was keeping the laws of the Great King, all things would, in the end, work together for my welfare and ultimate happiness.

But I soon found that my mind required some exercise beyond that of my daily labour, and I knew not what choice-work to follow. The sublime heights of music appeared to be unattainable, so did the lofty aims of poetry. I took no pleasure in society, and avoided the Gardens, for the light-hearted merriment, or the tranquil delights of the lovers who thronged its perfumed avenues, only made me the more sensible of my own misery; so that when the moon-feasts came round, I used to set out in the evening, so as to arrive at the sea-side about midnight. Here I would lie down, listen to the melancholy murmur of the waves, and lose myself in tracts of thought. I often expected to see or hear something of the beautiful Adaronas whom others said they had met on these lonely shores which overlook the Great Sea between Benuben and Adaroni; but I only fell into strange reveries, in which I seemed to hear voices, and see glimpses of beautiful faces; and I verily believe that had it not been for my friend Kilri, some evil would have come to me through this dreaming and watching.

When I was fresh from Pagam I was full of prejudices, as are the most part of the Pagamas; I disliked certain of the religious sects, the people of certain districts; took prejudices against people who had repulsive faces or rude manners; but the heart of

the true Karoma grows continually, until it finds room for all except those who are deliberately and persistently set to do evil; and for these the enlarged and tremulously sensitive heart feels a painful pity.

I had never liked Kilri, and I had despised his choice-work; but now when he found me sunk in unhappiness, broken in hope and spirit, he daily drew nearer to me, testifying his brotherly sympathy in so many ways, and with such gentleness and delicacy, that he at last won me to take a lively interest in his studies,—geometry and the occult significance of numbers. Geometry was altogether new to me, and I soon found inexpressible delight therein; for although it deals chiefly with points, lines, and spaces, yet its small beginnings and its subtle advances lead to such brilliant demonstrations, and open so vast a prospect of further demonstrations and still more wonderful discoveries, that one who is at all inclined to be enthusiastic may well be excused for being so in this grand study.

Yet I soon wearied of geometry, and the hidden properties of numbers soon ceased to interest me, because I became more and more oppressed with the feeling that I was gradually losing the love of Turoni, without which all the other joys of Benuben were as nothing. I could not long endure this pining misery; and at length I resolved to make one effort to regain my place in her favour; for I was indeed heart-broken, and must either enjoy more of her love, or for ever surrender even the hope thereof.

As I approached the house in the twilight I heard music: Erimoth was there with his harp; for as Turoni

would never go to the Gardens, and was yet fond of good music, Erimoth would sometimes take his harp to her house, and play there throughout the evening, with Turoni, Shashuna, Batul, and Orka for an audience. This music jarred me somewhat, to begin with ; and as I looked between the vines, I beheld Zakku within the house, his face radiant with satisfaction. I moved further from the house that I might calm myself before entering ; but their happy voices and their merriment only increased the tumult of my envious and angry thoughts.

Presently Shashuna came into the garden, and her quick eye soon caught sight of me. Putting her arms about me, she tried to soothe me with many a sweet speech ; but I could not answer her, for I was choked with sobbing, and a sort of desperate fury seemed struggling to overmaster me. At length Shashuna took fright, and running swiftly towards the house, called out "Mother, here is Halek outside, weeping !" Then I hastily left the garden, before they had seen me, and straightway, as though it were a flash of lightning, this thought rushed upon me, and lighted up my darkness—*Have all, or end all ! Prepare for the Diamond Mountains !*

Next day I went at once to Alsor, told him all from the beginning to the end, and concluded by informing him that there was now nothing for me but to pass a few years in the Diamond Mountains, where I might chance to become wealthy, as others had become before me ; and where I should certainly be soothed back to health by the sweet influences of nature.

Alsor listened to me with the utmost attention, and then pronounced his opinion that, my affairs being as they were, I should do well to absent myself for a year or two from the feverish hopes and the fretting sorrows of my present state.

When he had delivered this opinion, I reminded him of my debt to Gareb, and asked him if he would, at his convenience, pay this debt for me, upon my promising to repay him out of the jewels which I should bring back from the Diamond Mountains.

To this request, which nothing but my knowledge of Alsor's boundless generosity could have permitted me to make, he replied that he would certainly take my debt upon himself ; but that he would not allow me to promise repayment, because he knew that I would repay him if I could, and because such a promise would be a heavy clog upon my happiness. He further reminded me that he was already a wealthy man ; and that the debt of a few score of *sababs*, which would be a great encumbrance to me, was a mere trifle to him.

Early the next morning I went to seek further information from Sebul, a jeweller who had passed a year in the Diamond Mountains, and who had found many valuable gems, but who had soon become weary of the solitude, and affrighted by the strange terrors which there assailed him. From him I learned what was absolutely necessary to be taken with me ; for as I must carry my own baggage, I would not load myself with what was superfluous. Alsor, too, though he knew but little of the Diamond Mountains, gave me advice which I followed, and for which I was afterwards exceedingly grateful : he bade me go to a certain herbalist

and purchase a few of his most valuable seeds; for he said I would not only find my plants to be interesting companions, but helpful ones; and he assured me that he himself had found gardening to be medicine both for the body and the spirit.

In the evening, when I had made all my preparations, I addressed myself to the sorrowful task of saying farewell to Amutai, whom I had called Turoni, but who seemed about to be no longer Turoni.

But when I thought on the many things I had to say, and on the pain of saying them, I bethought me that I would put them in a letter which she could keep, and afterwards peruse and thoroughly understand. I would then deliver this letter, and thus shorten the pangs of parting by merely bidding her farewell.

The dreaded hour arrived at last. I was not prepared to receive such tokens of love and tenderness as she then gave me; and my resolution wavered when she solemnly assured me that she loved me above all other men. But when she further assured me that she had never loved me as deeply as at that moment, when I had shown myself capable of forming a high resolve, and making a painful sacrifice, I became filled with strength and comfort. Such a parting as that between Turoni and myself can only be suffered once in the experience of one man. I tore myself away, and left her weeping bitterly: this was my last remembrance of Turoni; and many a time in the night, as I lay awake in my solitary hut amidst the Diamond Mountains, I seemed to hear the heart-rending sound of her sobbing.

This is the letter which I gave her at the last moment: a letter calmly and carefully written for her calm and careful consideration:—

“From Halek, the son of Mazor, to Amutai, whom he would still call Turoni:—It is not hidden from you, beloved and most sweet maiden, that my way of life has parted from yours, and this through my poverty and my unworthiness. I have resolved to set out for the Diamond Mountains, where I may become wealthy in a short time, and where I shall certainly become a worthier man than I now am, or than I am likely to become, if I remain longer in the city. I have been led to this resolution not by my poverty, nor by my unworthiness, but by my unhappiness. Such a Karoma as I would become must first of all learn the laws of the Great King, and walk by their light; for then will he also love his daily labour; he must have some choice-work, some study which shall exercise his higher faculties, and cultivate his gentler emotions; for any noble art, lovingly and wisely followed, tends to make a man one in his heart with the Great King, with his fellow-men, and with the wonderful life of nature. But to crown all this, he must love, as part of himself, some woman who can join with him in his aspirations, and share in all his joys and sorrows.

“I have sought to perfect my life in these loves, and while I progressed therein, I enjoyed undisturbed happiness. But although I have still kept the desire to obey, however imperfectly, those simple laws which all perceive to be good, my heart will not be still, sore temptations arise, and I find that I am one of those who must either enjoy all or renounce all. For the present,

then, I renounce, that I may afterwards enjoy, and be worthy to enjoy. I do not hold you to any promises you have made. If you love me above all, you will wait for me till I return from the Diamond Mountains; but if, when I am gone, you love another, and would become his wife, I desire, most sweet and noble maiden, that you may come into the possession of those purejoys and fine delights of companionship which I have hitherto only imagined.

“Since I have resolved upon this renunciation, I have clearly felt that there is in the heart of man an inner region of calm which none can disturb, and which is one with the enduring calm that subsists in the secret heart of nature. I also know that he alone who has had this region of calm opened up within himself can enter into that wondrous communion with nature, wherein all things speak to him, soothe him, strengthen him, and nourish those high resolves, and those unutterable aspirations, which alone make manhood noble and living sweet.

“And yet in this solitary life to which I so hopefully look forward, I do not purpose to shut myself out from my fellow-men; nay, I purpose the better to serve them, for only by first raising myself shall I become able to raise others; and I feel certain that the kindly nurture of solitude will raise me out of the low estate into which I am fallen, and make me at last not unworthy of your perfect love.

“And now, when I am come to the last word of this letter, which shall speak of me when I am absent, my

heart tells me that you cannot forget how we have loved, that you will never again find such love as I gave, and that you will seek none other.”

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Diamond Mountains.

WHEN I had made my encampment for the first night of my long and arduous journey towards the Mountains, I could not avoid recalling my joyful journey from Pagam to Karom. Much of my engrossing melancholy was already dissipated, and a certain lightsome serenity had taken its place. During the day I had looked little around me, but strode steadily forwards, thinking little, and feeling little; now, however, when my first day's journey was completed, my heart opened to receive the benign influences of nature. The recollection of my blind eagerness, my traversed aims, and my calamitous failures, troubled me no more; my native hopefulness shut out all gloomy retrospect, and cast a steadfast radiance upon the future; while my happiness was elevated by the clear consciousness that, in what fortune soever my adventurous journey might finally issue, I had a noble purpose before me, and a hearty intention of keeping the laws of Adaroni.

I had long yearned for the gentle ministrations of nature, with her grand silence, and her multitudinous murmurs, with her skyey pageantry of wondrous forms and glorious hues, with her steadfast stars, her

dawnings and her darkenings, her myriad mysteries, her abundant peace, her sweet and awful solitude. For these things had I yearned as an exile yearns for his home; and now was I assured that this mighty yearning had its cause in a real want, and not in a sick fancy; for I was now happy, and happiness flowed in upon me from every side, everything contributing thereto, from the vast spectacle of a whole sky flaming with sunset glories, down to the strange odour of the smoke which arose from my camp-fire. How it could have been possible I know not, but the memory of my sorrows faded away; body and spirit were alike lulled into perfect rest, and I may truly say that I felt like a little child.

After ten days I arrived at Meriboth, a secluded village inhabited by simple-minded peasants. They appeared to seek no happiness, and to lack none. They knew nothing of the noble arts; their days were passed in the lowly labours and the tranquil pleasures which abundantly satisfy those who are simple-minded and unlettered. I remained for several days among them, to recruit my strength; and after two days more of toilsome travel, not without dangers, I arrived at the Diamond Mountains.

At last I came to a small valley between two high mountains. Through this valley flowed a rivulet of clear water, shaded by the most beautiful trees and shrubs. No habitation was to be seen; and I could not discover signs that any gem-seeker had been here before me. Here I resolved to remain, and setting heartily to work, I soon formed an enclosure in which I made me a small hut, and set the seeds which I had

procured from the herbalist. Food was abundant: the pools were alive with small, delicately-flavoured fish; I had a constant supply of a root which, when baked in the hot ashes, is as pleasant to the taste as fresh wheaten cakes. I had, moreover, a succession of nuts, berries, and apples, which were all new to me, but which had been fully described to me by Sebul.

Not only in the summer, but in the winter seasons, when the herbage was crisp with hoar-frost, I used to leave my sequestered camp in the vale, and clamber to the top of the mountain, whence I usually had the delight of contemplating the glories of the sunrise. Then would I implore the secret guidance, protection, and teaching of the Great King, vowing humbly in my heart that I would at all times endeavour to keep his laws. Then would I plunge into a small ice-cold lake, and after swimming a few strokes, I would return, dress quickly, and run at full speed back to my hut. Then came the task of making the fire from the carefully protected coals of yesterday's fire; then to breakfast, which always seemed to me a princely banquet, and thus with a lightsome spirit, and all my senses on the alert, I would address myself to the various labours of the day.

One reflection which I made at this time, and set down in my Record, was concerning the wonderful relation and adaptation of all the parts of a man's life: when I began to discover valuable diamonds and other gems, I felt certain of an ultimate success which would abundantly recompense me for the sorrows of my past, and the privations of my present life; and it was plain to me that this success depended upon my former

grievous failures, and upon my natural love of freedom and solitude; but that my hopes of acquiring wealth would still have been frustrated, had I not possessed a strong body, a resolute will, a daring spirit, and, above all, an intimate knowledge as a lapidary of the many various forms of rough gems. I remembered that Milroth had been represented as a lapidary, and that Sebul, who in a few months had obtained several valuable gems, was also of that business to which I had so unwillingly bound myself.

Before I had been a year in this wilderness, I discovered that my inmost heart still held the germ of a forgotten plant, which now in the undisturbed calm of my life, again put forth leaves and flowers: my thoughts were often occupied with Turoni, recalling the delights I had already enjoyed, anticipating those to come; thoughts broke forth into words; the words were musical as the thoughts were sweet; I was once more a poet. And here again did I perceive the same wonderful adaptation of part to part in the life of him who does not confound all arrangement by persistently seeking the lower instead of the higher pleasures. It is true that from my earliest years I had been imbued with the love of poetry; but this love was almost wholly without taste or discrimination, and the diligence with which I had examined the poems of Kabri, and those of Zakku, was what had enabled me to arrive at a knowledge of the true principles of poetry.

The immediate cause which, after so long a silence, once more led me to verse-making, was the finding of two large diamonds in one day. For months I had not found a gem of any sort; then it rained for another

month, during which I remained at home, restless but inactive. My spirit sank, and I became desperately miserable. As soon as I could venture forth, I undertook an expedition to a gloomy ravine in the side of a distant mountain where I had not yet been; but while climbing a small hill a few hundred paces from my hut, I observed a large diamond which had been washed out of its bed by the heavy rains; and further on I found another of the same size. When my first transport of joy was abated, I thought of a lover weeping in the solitude of the Diamond Mountains; and I fancied his tears changed into diamonds, which he afterwards finds, and presents to the beloved for whom he had wept. So successful was I in the versification of this conceit, that all the delightful ardour of my boyhood broke forth again, and scarcely a day passed in which I did not compose or write something.

When once I had begun to write, the solitude, the silence, and the perfect liberty of my life, became so delightful to me, that I never went to Meriboth, save that I might purchase things with which I could not dispense.

The tempest which confined me indoors was now as welcome to me as the serene sunshine which invited me to go abroad; and I soon found myself absorbed in a poem which I called "*The Wanderer*;" and while working at this poem I discovered how greatly I had been benefited by my studies of music; for I was become so sensitive to melody and rhythm, that I was able to write as I had never before written; and I often fancied that I produced certain pleasing effects which were as new to others as to myself.

When this poem was finished, and carefully written out in my Record, I chanced one day to fall into meditations on that life in Adaroni which is alone able to satisfy all the wants of man. I knew that it must be a life of continual progress wherein all the faculties are harmoniously cultivated. I saw that a man instinctively looks upward to one wise ruler whom he would love and serve; that he desires to love one noble woman; that he sympathises with, and requires the sympathy of his fellow-men. I also perceived that he instinctively desires to perform some work which accords with the love he bears to this wise ruler, this noble woman, and his fellowmen: I saw that he alone who zealously and successfully labours in such work, is truly and completely happy.

These large corner-stones I brought from the quarry of human experience, and upon them I reared a poem which I called "Adaroni." I designed it to be a great poem, and I solemnly dedicated all my powers to the construction thereof. I lived in Adaroni while I wrote concerning it. I believed that in writing this poem, I was performing a work which accorded with the love I bore to the Great King, the love I bore to Turoni, and the love I bore to my fellow-men: I was completely happy. It is true that I had many dark days wherein I could see nothing, and add nothing to my poem, days wherein what I had already written appeared to be utterly worthless, days in which I felt as though all I might hereafter produce would also be worthless; but I often comforted myself by reflecting that though I should never complete this poem, and though no person should derive pleasure through my labour, I had

certainly ennobled myself by labouring among noble thoughts, and strengthened my powers by trying to express them.

At last, when I was entering on the third* year of my exile, the writing of my poem came to a sudden stop. I had designed the poem to consist of two parts, the first showing how all the life of Benuben, to the smallest particulars, was but a collecting of materials for the building up of the perfect man in the life of Adaroni. I used the following parable.—A youth who is alone on a wide plain, perceives workmen bringing stores of wood, stone, and iron. He sees that a great building is intended; but he is continually perplexed by the strange shape of the things there collected; and he vainly conjectures their use in the building that is to be. Many things are also brought in the night, and he knows nothing of their existence. At length, however, when all the materials are brought together, and finally prepared for their proper places, the youth has the delight of beholding a magnificent palace arise from those many pieces of wood, stone, and iron; and he then sees that those things which he had thought useless, were as necessary to the completion of the work, as those whose use he had plainly perceived: I showed that this belonged to the life of Adaroni.

I had materials for the second part of this poem; I had a connected history whereby I might exemplify the wonderful relation between the life of Benuben and

In the London edition the period of Halek's exile was stated to be six years, as given in the Review. (See page 21.)
—J.H.N.

that of Adaroni; I was full of zeal for the work; but there are in man secret springs which are beyond his control; I was unable to work, and unable to conjecture the cause of my idleness.

The work of collecting jewels went on apace, and I had a goodly treasure of diamonds, rubies, and opals; but being extremely desirous of completing my great poem before I left the Mountains, I still lingered, though, as regards my poem, without success. It may be that my mental powers were becoming sluggish through the want of converse with my kind, for I rarely had an opportunity of exchanging thoughts with other gem-seekers. But I desired not their company, for our chance encounters always made me think poorly of my visitors and of myself. They would continually vaunt the extraordinary value of their own treasures, and hint that they had found something vastly more precious than anything I had found, or was likely to find. Then, after they had left me I had always to confess to myself that my vain-glory was as insufferable as theirs. But I sometimes eased my compunction by thinking that it was only their ostentatious vanity which had provoked a display of mine. It never occurred to me that they had perhaps saved their own consciences in a like manner.

I had now for a long time been living in a delightful dream in which I looked forward to a triumphant return to Hoshav, bearing with me valuable gems, and two poems worthy of being received among the Karomas. Many a time did I imagine myself telling Turoni of my great good fortune, and thus gloriously crowning our years of separation. I had several times, during

the last few months of my third year of exile, thought of setting out for Hoshav; but at length my departure was hastened by a dream:—

Methought I was returned to Hoshav, and was unable to find the house of Turoni, or to meet any one who knew her. I appeared to be wandering through interminable streets, vainly looking for and inquiring after Turoni. Then I began to give away my diamonds one by one to those who said they could tell me where Turoni was to be found. When I had thus parted with all my jewels, and still had no information of Turoni, I offered my poem, "Adaroni," the last thing which remained of my possessions, to one who affirmed that he knew where Turoni lived. I was on the point of giving this poem away, when suddenly Kabri appeared, and said, "Keep your poem, and follow me: I will bring you to Turoni." Then he brought me to the sea-side; and after a while I saw Turoni standing before me, her arms held out to me, and her face bright with love. When we had embraced, I gave her the volume of my poems; she opened it, and behold, it was finished!

At first this dream filled me with many sweet thoughts, for it gave me a strong perception of my coming joys; but in a little while I thought of Kabri, his unfinished poem, and whither he was gone to finish it. Then was I suddenly stricken with terror, for although this was but a dream, it made me consider in how wretched a condition I should be, if I returned to Hoshav, and found Turoni no longer there. I now upbraided myself that I had not sooner left the

Diamond Mountains, seeing that I had gems worth many thousand *sababs*.

For three days did I wrestle with the terrors of my own thoughts, chiding myself for being so greatly disturbed by a dream; but I was altogether unable to quiet myself until I turned my face towards Hoshav. On the road I fell sick of a violent fever, and for six days I lay in the house of a peasant, and knew not night from day. When I arrived in Hoshav, I was so worn with fatigue, sickness, and anxiety, that I verily believe I could not have continued the journey for one day longer.

CHAPTER XXX.

The Wanderer's Return.

AT last I saw once more the well-known house of Turoni. Shashuna stood at the door, pale and speechless. I hastened past her, entered the room, and looked about me. Batul dozed in his chair. Then the room darkened; I called aloud, *Turoni! Turoni!* and Batul, stirring in his chair, gazed at me, and answered *Adaroni!* Shashuna was now clinging to me, and weeping bitterly. Turoni, whom I had so deeply loved, from whom I had been so long and so cruelly separated, to whom I could now give wealth, honour, and a love worthy of her own, she, the noblest and gentlest of women, had been summoned from Benuben, leaving me alone in my sorrow. For many days and nights I appeared to be in a dull dream, wherein I only uttered this cry—*Great King, take me to Turoni, that I may tell her of my love.* After this came days and nights of which I remember nothing. I was often visited by Zakku, and I was not forgotten by other friends. Shashuna and Orka watched over me without ceasing.

My work was not accomplished; my cry for release was not answered; I awoke from a long darkness, gathered strength, and was slowly nursed into resignation

by the tender caresses and the sweet speeches of Shashuna. But my peace of mind was repeatedly invaded by a rush of rebellious thoughts; and I often asked this question—Why is Turoni taken away, while Batul is allowed to remain?

One night I arose from my bed in the chamber of Turoni, and opened the window that I might look upon the tranquil heavens and the steadfast stars, for I was unhappy, and could not rest. Then I thought of the lonely years I had lived in the Diamond Mountains; I remembered how often I had fought against despair, and combated the nameless terrors of my solitary life, reasoning with myself in order that I might abide in hope and patience until my travail should be accomplished. These trials were past, and now, when I was rich in treasures of jewels, rich in poems worthy of Karom, rich in love worthy of Turoni, when I was fully able to enjoy the love she had so long kept for me, nothing remained for me but to sit alone and mourn amid the ruins of my life.

Then I asked myself—Is this all? Is it according to the wise and imperishable laws of Adaroni that a man shall for years continue to grow into the full power of loving, only to discover that he may not love? Is it according to reasonable laws that a man shall sell all he has in order to build a magnificent palace which shall never be inhabited, but which, as soon as it is completed within and without, shall be pulled down and left in ruins by the same workmen who built it? Shall a man make renunciation after renunciation only that he may be able to make a last and most awful renunciation which leaves nothing, gives nothing,

promises nothing? No answer came, and I hardened my heart.

Turoni had left Benuben three months before my return to Hoshav; so that if my stay in the Mountains had been shortened but by a few months, I had been able to see her, and to revive her drooping spirits. She was fallen into a profound melancholy; she continued to work with her usual diligence; but not with her usual vigour. If she had received any forewarning of her departure, she said nothing of it to any one.

As soon as I was sufficiently recovered to receive visitors, I had a long and painful interview with Zakku. He convinced me that, from first to last, Turoni had no thought of other love than mine.

Zakku had not prospered during my absence. His father had been reduced to poverty; he himself had not advanced towards an enduring fame as a poet, and had now for two years been obliged to maintain himself by keeping the accounts of a merchant.

Alsor was gone to Sahitam. In a letter, which he had left for me, was the following passage:—

“A Karoma who has more than enough can desire no more; his superfluity belongs to those who have too little. You owe me money which I do not need; give it to the poor; and if you desire to come to Sahitam, add to this money for the poor all the money which you yourself do not need. He who gives shall be made rich; and he who loves shall find love.”

Erimoth did not come to see me. Zakku told me a long story of his piteous condition; and advised me not to visit him until I heard further.

Shomez and Nahamah were man and wife, and they came to see me, bringing with them the most beautiful child I had ever seen—a boy so lovely that I could only remain silent and express my thoughts by a diamond, which I charged the father to set in a golden ring, and present to his boy, when he was old enough to value it.

The business of Kabri, that is to say, of Esbah, his widow, had greatly increased during the last two years, and Ebul had now a share therein.

I had lived for nearly three months in the house with Batul, Shashuna, and Orka, before I began to think of bestirring myself, and in some way using my great wealth; for though I cared nothing for myself, I was not so brutish that I could not receive happiness from the happiness of others.

I had a large sum of money with me, and a still larger sum in the iron coffer whereof Ebul alone kept the key. Ebul was my factor and man of business; he had not only undertaken the sale of some of my jewels, but had taken charge of the proceeds. I may here mention, that for one piece of star-opal about the bigness of a pigeon's egg, he had obtained the sum of two thousand five hundred and forty *sabahs*, and that for one of my rose-coloured diamonds he had received a thousand *sabahs*. Half of these sums he put out at usury, the other half he kept by him for my immediate wants.

So, as I have already mentioned, I thought it time that I should begin to do something with my money; and the first thing I did was to purchase a beautiful house on a hill which commanded a view of the whole

city. The house contained twenty rooms, and in each room was a marble cistern supplied by the rain which fell on the roof of the house. The garden was stocked with fruit-trees in full bearing, and there failed nothing of all that is necessary in the house and grounds of a rich man.

Hither I at once removed Batul, Shashuna, and Orka. The old man had a suite of three rooms for his own use; Shashuna had three; and I had three rooms for myself, into one of which I permitted nobody to enter. I had still several empty rooms at my disposal, and indeed the house was too large for my requirements; but I chose it for its position and its princely garden. One day, however, it occurred to me that as one of the uses of wealth is to make our friends happy, and as, in spite of my inextinguishable love of solitude, I dearly loved the society of my friends, I could not do better than fit up three of my best rooms for Lormuz, who was still the court poet, and to whom I had been introduced by my staunch friend, Rayamin, the Orator. Lormuz accepted my invitation for three months, and we had much agreeable intercourse.

I had forgotten to mention that I had engaged the services of a grief-sister, Labinah, the youngest daughter of Ebul; for much as I enjoyed the company of my sweet Shashuna, I could not always be with her, and she greatly needed the wise comfort of a woman.

I was once talking to Shashuna and Labinah about our empty rooms, and I had expressed my wish to have them occupied for at least a part of the year by some of

my dearest friends. Then Labinah looked down, and was silent for a long while, as one moved by many deep thoughts. Later in the evening she took me aside, and reminded me that Zakku, an old friend of mine, an old friend of Shashuna, and a friend of her own, was now a poor man whose poetic aspirations had come to nothing, and to whom a three days' residence at my house during the moon-feasts, when everybody makes holiday, would be a delight beyond aught else. I thought I read a sweet secret in the trembling earnestness of her voice, and in the modest lustre of her eyes. "Labinah," said I, "had I been born and nurtured in Karom, as you, I had not needed one to point out a generous deed towards a man who is now poor, and whom I trebly wronged when he was rich. I will do more for him than you have asked."

In truth, I had been deeply touched by the behaviour of Zakku: In the first place, he had always been faithful to me, even when I had vilified his motives and misjudged his character. When in the full tide of success as poet, or rather, while he imagined himself to be achieving fame, he was both unduly elated and unwisely demonstrative; but I had never heard him extol his own performances, or disparage those of others; I had heard many a kind word from him, but never an unkind one; and I firmly believe that when he at any time spoke of the faults of others, it was with a single view to some good end. I had persistently misunderstood Zakku, persistently ridiculed his poems, persistently suspected and despised him. He had been a friend to Turoni when she had no others; it was he who had comforted Shashuna through her first grief;

and he was the first of my friends who had come to welcome me back to Hoshav.

Yet this man I had forgotten, and Lormuz I had remembered. I could be generous to a great poet who lacked neither wealth nor friends, but not to Zakku, broken in fortune, and oppressed by the drudgery of an uncongenial employment! A voice whispered,—*You have not forgotten your old ill-will.*

I had always been quick to perceive, quick to feel, impetuous in action. I noted the rich glow that dyed the cheeks of Labinah, I noted her look of thankfulness, when I accepted her counsel.

Next day to Zakku: "Friend," said I, "I am come to beg your assistance. You know that I have brought great wealth from the Diamond Mountains; but you do not know that I have also brought back with me two poems, a completed one called "The Wanderer," and a great poem not yet completed called "Adaroni." I require some friend on whose fidelity I can rely, and who, at the same time, understands something of business, to take charge of my jewels and my money. Ebul has hitherto attended to my business, but he is only a jeweller, and I wish him for the future only to superintend the cutting of my jewels. Will you undertake the rest?"

He joyfully accepted my offer, and I then explained to him that one of my numerous reasons for making this change in the disposition of my affairs, was that I wished to keep all my jewels and my money in my own house, instead of in the house of Eshah and in the keeping of Ebul; and that I would therefore require him to live with me, where he would have two

rooms for his own use, abundance of spare time for composing verses, should he again be inclined thereto, and the delightful companionship of Shashuna and Labinah.

As I uttered this last name I attentively regarded him, and I noticed a sudden gasp, as it were, of delight which he tried to conceal. Then I felt sure that by bringing Zakku to live with me, I was not only doing what would be of great advantage to myself, but what would be a complete restoration of life and hope to the faithful but unfortunate Zakku. He had not long been with me before I was able to perceive the true nobility of his disposition, for there is a noble manner of receiving, as well as of conferring a favour. I took care, however, to let him know that it was at first owing to Labinah that I had thought of making him one of our household.

I had now no cares about the making, the saving, or the expending of money; I could give as many presents as I chose, and I had a happy household. Even the torpid Batul shared in our happiness, though he only appeared to notice that he received better food. And yet perhaps I wrong him, for he certainly enjoyed the company of Shashuna, and he may have had many tranquil delights whereof he could make no outward sign. He did not wish to leave Benuben, and, strange to say, he always shook his head when I asked him if he ever desired to go to Adaroni, where, as I reminded him, he would surely regain his lost strength. So I concluded that as there are wondrous and inscrutable mysteries connected with the life of the smallest creature, so there must be many more, and greater

mysteries connected with so wondrous a being as man. I could not understand why an old man like Batul, beyond uses, pleasures, and pains, should for so long a time be permitted to linger in Benuben; but I now believe that every man performs uses whereof he knows nothing.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“Thou art Mine, and I am Thine.”

I WAS now becoming conscious of a swiftly growing affection for Shashuna; but I always strove to persuade myself that it was not the affection of a lover; and I often reminded my friends that Shashuna was my daughter by right of heritage from Turoni, that she was all I cared for in Benuben, and that my first duty was to do all I could to make her happy. That Shashuna was all I cared for in Benuben was perfectly true; my wealth had lost its highest value to me because Turoni could not share it; and even my poems had ceased to interest me.

As this indifference to the duties and pleasures of life seemed to proceed from grief alone, I soon concluded that I ought to banish this grief, by endeavouring to forget my great loss; and as nothing seemed more likely to dispel my melancholy than the monthly festivals in the Gardens, I began to attend them with Shashuna for my companion, while Zakku went with us taking Labinah for a companion.

One evening when I was filled with delight through witnessing the delight of Shashuna, whom the music and the poems had moved to the most exalted rapture, I told her, that, if I chose, I also could gain the applause

of large audiences, and that I had brought a good poem with me from the Diamond Mountains, but that I did not care to join in the noble emulation of the artists, because I had no one to rejoice in my victory.

Upon this her eyes flashed reproach, and she was long silent; but after a while she said—"You think I do not love you, or you would not speak thus." I tried to put a better interpretation on my speech; but Shashuna was plainly saddened; and did not recover her gaiety, until I told her that if it would give her pleasure, I would seek honourable distinction as a poet.

I have already mentioned that I had one completed poem, "The Wanderer." This poem I revised and re-wrote with great care. Rayamin gave me advice as to the delivery; Lormuz prepared the way for its reception; its success was immediate, undeniable, perfect: I tasted the glorious delights of success after the bitterness of repeated failure.

I will confess that these delights overpowered me, raised me into a lofty region whence I thought I could discern still greater triumphs to come; for I had always been an enthusiast, and the rushing tide of success carried me away whither it would. Lormuz declared that my poem was good; Zakku that it was faultless; Shashuna that it was peerless; but nobody conceived a higher opinion of my powers than I myself did; and I accepted all praise with the tranquil satisfaction of one who is fully conscious of deserving it. It is true that I recalled the prophetic warning of Pasakh, who charged me to beware of ambition and the love of pre-eminence; but it is difficult to know when the delight which properly belongs to success

grows to that giddy intoxication which effectually bars all further success.

Yet was I not wholly self-deceived, nor altogether happy. In my inmost heart there was still one quiet chamber, which neither the loud voice of applause nor the subtle whisper of self-praise could enter; and here I treasured up my fidelity to the Great King, my love for Turoni, and my instinct of immortality. But this inviolable chamber was closed; even in the silent watches of the night I but rarely opened it.

Two months after the brilliant success of "The Wanderer," I again appeared in the Hall of the Poets; and this time I would deliver my masterpiece—"Adaroni." As the second part of the poem was not given, much of the first part would appear to be meaningless and trivial; but I knew that it contained many passages whose beauty would be apparent without a knowledge of their connection with the whole design; and I considered that as the Karomas had been delighted with my first poem, they would give me credit for having a lofty aim, even when they could not perceive it; and that when they heard the first book of "Adaroni," they would grant me their approval and confidence until I would show them the harmonious development of the completed work.

I might at least have taken the advice of Rayamin, and copied the poem from my Record; but I was so confident of its merits, and, perhaps, so indisposed to merely manual labour, that I declared myself willing to risk all upon the reputation which I had already achieved.

The reading of the first book should have occupied six nights. The first reading closed with clamorous

applause, and the best critics commended the majestic beauty of the portal to my poem. The second reading was applauded as the first, and my success appeared to be certain. The third portion consisted of digressions, and the disappointment of my audience was shown by a gloomy silence. The critics said that the digressions, though beautiful in themselves, were quite out of place. I replied to the critics, and the critics replied by silence. The fourth reading justified the censure of the critics: the interest of my hearers had been weakened; the Hall was not half filled. The fifth reading consisted of philosophical reflections, which the critics declared to be so obvious from what had preceded them, that although they were given in the most elegant language, only the dullest of the Pagamas would find it necessary to read them. To this I replied by a contemptuous letter which was affixed to the door of the Hall, and which I presented to the public instead of my sixth reading.

In one of the urns I found a paper containing the following:—

You mark certain persons in your poem with the name of Prince or Noble, even as a gardener who sows the seed of a rare plant, and marks the place with its name. But if the germ dies, and the rare plant comes not forth, the gardener does not call his friends to admire the place where he intended it to flourish.

This keen and masterly thrust gave an additional pang to my disappointment; but what pained me beyond all was the discovery that he whose sharp censure had so humiliated me was none other than Lormuz, whose former praise had so elated me. His

censure may have been just, and his motive may have been good, but I could not forgive him until I had passed through many other sore trials.

In all these troubles Shashuna gave me continual comfort; and I began to think that she was by nature more sympathetic than Turoni. I did not care to reflect that Shashuna was only a wild, bright, sensitive creature, flashing forth changing beauties, full of restless eagerness and unreasoning impulses, which nothing but the watchful care of Turoni had moderated and restrained. I reflected little; I felt much; and delivered myself over to the fascination of her ever-varying moods, until I felt the presence of a hope so delightful that at times I almost forgot the pain of my last calamitous and ignominious failure.

One evening I resolved to breathe this hope to Shashuna; for she seemed ready to hear it. I drew her away from Labinah; and talked a long while to her alone; but I quickly perceived that she was in trouble, and that I could not engage her attention. Her face was pale, and even the glowing light of her eyes had faded away. Sometimes she did not know what I was saying. Unable to divine the cause of her unhappiness, I conducted her to Labinah, who whispered a few words to her, but was also unable to comfort her. Later in the evening I found Shashuna pacing up and down the garden like one distracted. I insisted upon an explanation; but she would tell me nothing. I then desired her to return to her rooms; and when she had obeyed me, I demanded an explanation from Labinah. Her story was as follows:—

Zakku had known Shashuna from her childhood; had always loved her; and during the three months which followed the departure of Turoni, he had been her sole comforter. Labinah believed that but for the sudden failure of his father's fortune, Zakku would have married Shashuna; for she herself had certainly centred all her love in him. Labinah could not tell me how far Zakku had been aware of Shashuna's love for him; but she knew that he had not yet spoken of love to her.

After I had purchased my house, and begun to live as a wealthy nobleman, Zakku had compelled himself to forego the pleasure of frequently seeing Shashuna; and this honourable withdrawal of his, had had so disastrous an effect on Shashuna, not yet recovered from the loss of Turoni, that Labinah had yielded to the entreaties of Shashuna, and reminded me that I had as yet shown no kindness to Zakku, whose long friendship, noble qualities, and unaccustomed poverty entitled him to some share in my good fortune. Labinah had proposed a three days' visit every month; I at once gave him a permanent place in my household.

Zakku did not come home that night. Shashuna kept her room; and I requested Labinah to keep strict watch over her; but to say nothing of our conversation. I knew that Zakku would return to us, for I was certain that he would not set out for the Diamond Mountains without first rendering an account of his stewardship.

Supper had just been served, and I was sitting, alone, unable to eat, but carefully maintaining an appearance of calmness. Presently the arrival of

Zakku was announced; and after a while he entered the room, greeted me with his customary pleasantness, and proceeded, unasked, to tell me what had caused his absence.

He had been visiting Erimoth whose frequent fits of savage bitterness had now estranged nearly all his friends; the fire of his creative genius was utterly burnt out; a Kashepa had held him for years in a most cruel bondage; yet had he bravely endured the miseries of his condition, still hoping, still striving, still sorrowing; until—last and most serious calamity which can befall a Karoma—he had lost the power of feeling pleasure when he did a good act, and of feeling pain when he committed a bad one. The discovery of this plunged him into a rayless pit of despair.

Zakku had found Erimoth lying on his face in a darkened room; a weeping servant told him that his master had not tasted food for three days. Erimoth sat up when he heard the voice of Zakku, and told him that a messenger was coming for him, to take him he knew not whither, for there was no place for him among the perverse rebels of Kashep, and he was powerless to feel the fine joys of Adaroni.

Zakku could not leave Erimoth in his despair, so he opened the window, and sat near him, talking to him with so much sweetness and gentleness, that he at length prevailed on him to sit up and eat. But about an hour after dark Erimoth became restless, and said that if the messenger delayed his coming, he would go to meet him. Then Erimoth set out for the sea-shore, Zakku walking by his side. Towards midnight they arrived at the Great Sea whose fathomless waters flow between

Benuben and Adaroni. Sometimes Erimoth thought he saw the sails of a boat; sometimes he said he heard the noise of oars. After a while he lay down on the slope of a high rock which overlooked the sea; and there he said he would lie till a messenger came for him.

When he had lain here for an hour, he bade Zakku leave him, saying there was no help for a Karoma who can commit evil without feeling contrition.

Then Zakku told him that his despair had blinded him; and that the pain which a man feels because he does not feel more pain, is itself contrition; and that no man is beyond amendment who can distinguish right from wrong.

By this time the sun was risen; earth, sea, and sky were unfolding a thousand unutterable beauties. The heart of Erimoth melted within him, for he had received the wise comfort of Zakku. But being too weak to go home, he went to a peasant's hut, took food, and rested for some hours, after which Zakku walked home with him.

This was the mournful story which Zakku told me; and when he had ended, I said, "You have done a good work; for a faithful Karoma will never leave another in the agony of those pains which only a Karoma has to suffer." Then I bade him eat and drink after his fatigue, and desired him to come to me in an hour's time.

When he entered my inner room I at once perceived a great change in his face. He would have spoken, but I silenced him with a firm voice, and an uplifted hand. I then addressed him as follows:—

The three years which I passed in the Diamond Mountains not only enabled me to procure great treasures, but to write great poems. Now, however, my body and mind have become diseased in this city; my body through indolence and sumptuous repasts, my mind through vain-glory, selfishness, and forgetfulness. I have ceased to labour as a poet; I have forgotten Turoni; I am unhappy. But I am now come to myself, and being raised above want, I purpose retiring to the deserted house of Turoni; where I will with my own hands cultivate the little garden which she loved, and devote my life to the worthy completion of my great poem. But I desire one, upon whom I can rely, to live in this house of mine, and take care of my daughter, for whose happiness it is my duty to provide. I have been told that you love Shashuna; I know that she loves you. I wish you to marry her when you will; and I make over to her as her patrimony, this house and garden; I will also make her a suitable allowance of money, which, together with the income you derive from your management of my affairs, will enable you to maintain your household.

Zakku tried to speak, but burst into tears. "I know all, and have nothing to forgive," said I. "Go and tell this to Shashuna, who needs comfort. And now leave me alone for a while."

When he had left me, I was immediately filled with such joys as I had never before felt, and which I am not able to express in words. I was as it were lifted out of myself, and carried into the presence of Turoni. I beheld her transfigured face, and heard her utter these words—"Rejoice, and fear not. Thou art mine, and

I am thine, and we shall surely meet in sweet love, for love is lord of all, and there is naught stronger than love, and no power of evil can prevail against it. Rejoice, therefore, and fear not."

So I was abundantly comforted, and I thought that the disputing philosophers of Karom could no more trouble my peace ; for the strong love which I then felt appeared to be such that no temptation could assail it, no argument weaken it, no doubts darken it. But man still moves from faith to doubt, from joy to grief, and again to surer faith and sweeter joys ; and this also is according to the wise and imperishable laws of Adaroni.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Only a Few Faint Stars.

I HAD been sorely wanting in that even gentleness of disposition which cannot be surprised into rudeness, unkindness, foolishness, or weakness ; but my last renunciation had so advanced me that I was able to regard my changed self as another man whose acquaintance I rejoiced to make.

In the now desolate house of Turoni I set myself to rebuild my poem, to remove blemishes, and to complete it. Months glided away unperceived ; and except that I sometimes envied the happiness of those who were cheered by the love of wife and child, I was perfectly happy ; for apart from my delightful labour as a poet, I looked forward to meeting Turoni, and to enjoying with her an infinite progress in all that makes life worth living.

A happy man conscious of his immortality is like one eating fruits within a walled garden ; the mere reasoner is like one who will not enter by the door, who cannot climb the wall, and who stops the passers-by to tell them that he who speaks of the delicious fruits on the other side of the wall is an enthusiast, a dreamer, and a self-deceiver.

Without the consciousness of such an immortality, I could not have endured the privations of my lot, for nothing else can reconcile the tearful toilers of Benuben to the many bitter pains which are most keenly felt by those who have most cultivated their capacity for pleasures.

For the space of a year and a half I continued advancing in happiness; but I then began somewhat to decline; for it is in the nature of the Karomas to weary of directing their sight upwards; and it is only the Sahitamas who remain steadfast under all trials, however long continued.

A man has many instincts: There are the instincts of looking upwards to one wise ruler, of looking forwards to an endless progress in some higher state, of loving one worthy woman, of loving children, of loving his fellow-men, of becoming better, of searching into the causes and the final purposes of things, and lastly, the instinct of working, without which, it seems to me, all other instincts are useless. In proportion as any one of these instincts is not developed, the man is incomplete; and in proportion as he is incomplete, he is unhappy.

I had begun to notice that the progress of my poem, the cultivation of my garden, and the society of my friends did not give me the pleasure which I had been accustomed to find therein; but about this time I began to love Almor and Elsay, the children of Shomez and Nahamah. I found that the sight of their lovely faces would instantly dispel my gloom:—in their clear eyes, sweet lips, and noble brows I read the grand destinies of man; for it was impossible that such

glorious creatures as these could be finally destroyed by their own evil, or by the evil of others. When I gazed on this bright boy and this lovely girl I felt in my heart of hearts, beyond all the arguments of the Reasoners of Pagam, that there could be such beings as the Adaronas, and that there must be such a place as Adaroni.

When Shomez perceived how I loved these children, he asked me if I would become their teacher, and I gladly consented. A servant conducted them to me every day, and led them home again after we had passed three hours in the most delightful studies. I soon learned the main principles on which teaching depends, namely, mutual love between teacher and pupils, and with both a love of work. This may be sufficiently obvious to a Sahitama, but a Karoma seeks first to instruct, and a Pagama cares not whether he be loved or not. I also discovered that he whose pupils do not love both their work and their teacher, must be either a bad man or a very ignorant one; because the first and strongest instinct of healthy children is to learn, and to reverence him who teaches them.

The company of these children, and the visible success of my work with them, did much to delay that awful sense of gloom and desolation which was fast overtaking me. I was always happy while I was teaching; and I often thought I felt a tender love towards them as though they had been my own; but when they went away, I always relapsed into listlessness, weariness, and bitterness. I still tried to be patient however; read much in the Book of Adaroni; strove to advance in the perfect keeping of the laws

contained therein; looked forward to seeing Turoni, and held fast to my precious hope of immortality.

When this hope began to leave me I know not; but querulous discontent opened a door for doubt; my confidence had been secretly undermined by the disputing philosophers who reject all that they cannot prove, and, moreover, some subtle influence from Kashep had poisoned my mind. At last I suddenly found myself face to face with that final and most terrible renunciation which takes from a man the fruits of all former renunciations, and leaves him nothing further to renounce. This final agony of the Karoma is when he begins to lose his belief that he is immortal, and destined to enter into the enduring delights of Adaroni. It was as though the earth had fallen from beneath me, leaving me suspended alone in a dark void, utterly severed from the help of my fellows, yea, utterly forsaken and forgotten by that Great King in whom I had always trusted.

I called to the Great King, but I received no answer; I wandered throughout the night-watches by the shore of the sea; I called upon the Adaronas to come to me and show themselves that I might be comforted; but I only saw the awful sky, the sullen sea, and the barren rocks. I was conscious of nothing outside of myself, and in myself was no power of helping myself. In the midst of this misery I still tried to do my work; but the sweet trustfulness of the children pierced my heart with pain; they trusted me, who knew not whom to trust; they were made happy by me, who felt only unhappiness.


I now began to think of setting out for Sahitam, where all dwell in the peace of love, but I was unfit for the companionship of the Sahitamas; I had no love in me; I knew no peace; I felt only bitterness and unrest.

I once sought comfort by comparing my condition with that of Erimoth, for I considered that he had perhaps passed through a sorer trial than mine. He had not given up his hope of Adaroni, although he seemed to doubt his ability to enjoy the fine delights thereof. I, on the other hand, had never lost my love for my fellow-men; and I was still able to feel the pure and exalted pleasure of doing a generous action.

Erimoth used to lash himself into a state of savage anger wherein he not only lost the power of doing a kindness, but of receiving one. He had refused the sympathy of all who would have befriended him; and his repeated fits of barbarous coldness had gradually chilled the love of all but the noble Zakku; whom he often treated with the most contemptuous and repellent acerbity, even while living in his house and enjoying his bounty. I at least was patient, and willing to be comforted. Erimoth had never loved children; I could always be cheered by their pretty ways, softened by their smiles, moved by their little sorrows. In my gloomiest hours I could forget myself, when with them; and I could always take a lively interest in teaching them what otherwise had no interest for me. But in spite of these consolations I thought no unhappiness could be greater than that which I endured in this horrible state. It was not yet midnight however; and I still saw a few faint stars.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A Beggar Who Can Give.

NE day as I was pacing up and down the neglected garden wherein Turoni had laboured so long and so lovingly, I perceived an aged man approaching the gate. He was miserably clad, his face was worn with pains, and he carried the wooden bowl of a beggar. Before he could open the gate, I leaned over, dropped a gold-piece into his bowl, and, without speaking, turned away to continue my walk. When I again turned, I saw that he still stood at the gate.

"What would you now?" I demanded, with some asperity.

"To return you this gold-piece," replied the old man. "He alone gives who gives graciously."

"That is true," said I; "but I cannot think graciously, nor speak graciously, I have naught but bare gold and jewels."

"In that case," said the beggar, "it may be that I can give something graciously to you; let me come in, and rest in the shade of these palm trees."

So he came in; and we sat on the grass beneath the trees. I felt inclined to listen to this man, for his gentleness and dignity had strongly drawn me towards him; moreover he was extremely old, and his manner

was fatherly. When he had spoken of giving graciously to me, I had quite failed to conjecture his meaning.

"I pray you to tell me the cause of your grief," said he; "and I will see if I cannot find balm for it."

"You can have no balm for my wounds," said I.

"Try me," he urged; "for I am somewhat of a physician."

"Find balm for this," said I: "I loved a beautiful woman who has been removed from me, and I have mourned continually."

"And I," said he, "when I was young, thought I loved a beautiful woman, and we were compelled to live in hatred for forty years; because in that barbarous Pagam, whence I am but newly come, the Black-whites have a large black stone in their temples, and when a man and a woman have together laid their hands upon this black stone, and said they will be man and wife, they must always live together, though they enjoy nothing of the delights of such companionship; though each should be utterly unable to live in peace with the other; though each should have conceived a warm attachment for another; though they should be childless. Which, think you, is the greater evil, no marriage, or an unhappy one."

"In this matter," I answered, "you have suffered more than I; for you made another unhappy besides yourself. But perhaps, to mitigate the unhappiness of those forty years, you had children in whom you could take delight; I have had neither wife nor children, and I have felt a great longing for both."

"I had two children," said he, "a son and a daughter; both have given me much unhappiness. I

was an ignorant and a neglectful father ; my wife was an ignorant and a foolish mother ; we brought up our children in a den of strife, hatred, and revenge. I allowed my son to join me in drinking *alkash*. He was always prone to horrible deeds ; I did not teach him to love good ones. For the last ten years he has been imprisoned among other mad people ; and latterly I have not visited him, for he has ceased to know me, and the sight of him fills me with unutterable and unavailing anguish."

"And your daughter?" I asked.

"My daughter!" exclaimed the old man, in a broken voice ; "my daughter! of her I dare not even think! I did not teach her to love what is good; and she easily learnt to love what is bad. Fallen! Fallen! If you have not contributed to the ruin of one of your fellow-creatures, rejoice and be glad; and if you have striven to raise any up, that they may love to walk in the higher paths which lead to peace, then let none rob you of your joy, for you have worked in the vineyard of the Great King, and shall drink of his wine."

"You have had great sorrows," said I; "but I have not yet told you all mine: it is true that I have done some good work, but now I can work no longer, and I am weary with doing nothing, although it appears that all I can do leads only to nothing."

"Again, rejoice," said the old man, "for if you did good work while you were able, you may rest in peace when you cannot work."

"It is easy to say *rejoice*, but hard to show how to do it," said I; "for I am at my wit's end, distracted with

a whirl of doubts and fears, and I am altogether beyond comfort."

"You are not yet mad," said the old man, "so you are yet far from the comfortless misery wherein my son now passes his loathsome life. There are yet many degrees of misery between your state and his."

"I have not yet told you all," said I; "your son feels perchance less of horror and anguish than I who am in my senses: I am distracted with doubts as to whether, when a man leaves this land of toil, he shall be lost for ever in the silent darkness of nothingness, or whether he shall be built up and perfected in some glorious state which men call Adaroni. I cannot renounce this hope which enables me joyfully to bear all the pains of my probation; I cannot prove that I am immortal; I dare not disbelieve it; but, alas, I am only conscious of a silent darkness behind me and before me."

"Friend," said the old man, "you may now herein perceive the folly, ignorance, and weakness of those who insist upon being as unhappy as they can, because they cannot be as happy as they would; if, when I was your age, and wrestling with my dark spectre, one had made me believe that after a few years I should cease to be, I had embraced him with gratitude; for the Uzza of our temple had succeeded in persuading me that when I was summoned from Benuben, which might be at any moment, I should be confined in a dungeon of unending torture and just punishment at the hands of the Great King."

"I will tell you my story," continued the old man. "I was once as innocent and as ardent as yourself,

and, like yourself, wholly given to poetry. Like yourself I had been bound to an occupation which did not suit my tastes; like yourself I became early disgusted with the barbarities of Pagam, and desirous of setting out on the Great Pilgrimage."

"You appear to be well acquainted with my history," said I, attentively regarding him.

"Yes," he replied, "and I was once well acquainted with you; but while your years of adventure have blotted me from your memory, my years of tribulation have so changed me that you do not recognise me. It was I who first counselled you not to sell your poems for the gold of Pagam, but to set out for Karom, and there learn the sublime art of poetry."

The old man was Pasakh. I was instantly overwhelmed with delight. I felt as if I had found a father. We were both deeply moved with the sudden consciousness of what we had suffered since we had parted, and with the sudden joy of renewed friendship. I made him now actually return the gold piece I had so churlishly given, saying—"I will show you that he gives a hundredfold who gives graciously; henceforth you are my brother, this house is your home, and all I have is yours."

"Friend," said he, "I told you once that I should not care to see you when you were twenty years older; but I see you still possess the generous enthusiasm of your early youth."

"But I have lost my hopes," said I; "for a voice says that what you call my generous enthusiasm shall be for ever quenched in the fathomless waters of the Great Sea, beyond which is nothing but the eternal silence

of Aven. It is this thought which makes me the most miserable of men."

"Hear my story," said Pasakh. "When I was eighteen years of age, my father, who was already gone to Karom, leaving me bound to a wealthy tradesman, suddenly sent me a sum of money to defray my expenses to Karom. I was delighted to begin the Great Pilgrimage; and I set out with the fullest intention of leading a changed life. But I put up at an inn a day's journey from the river Bak; and being able to sing and amuse people, I was permitted to remain at the inn, and make it my home. I was not unwilling to do this, for I was become deeply enamoured of the daughter of the landlord; and when he would not consent to our marriage, I stole from him a large sum of money, and fled with his daughter by night.

"After many unhappy wanderings I came to Unoti. Here I gained a precarious livelihood by composing love-songs, and being versatile as well as unscrupulous, I set myself to write vile books for the vile. These books I filled with all the crimes of the Kashepas, and I descended to all the sordid realities of their life. This do I now lament with an unavailing anguish; for though I now repent, and strive after purity, the budding youths and maidens of Pagam are still being polluted by my writings, which now, alas! are beyond my recall.

"I learnt much from the unrelieved misery and the degrading coarseness of my own life; and I gradually lost my belief in all goodness, as I discovered that all the charms which I had perceived in my wife had been illusions, formed round her out of my own too lively imagination and my poetic susceptibility.

"But I will hasten to what concerns you. You perceive that my life was not happy, and that I felt it the more, because I had once been filled, like yourself, with the purest love of goodness, and the most hearty intention of forsaking everything which I knew to be evil. You will now partly comprehend the reason of the mingled happiness and unhappiness which your presence used to cause me: I saw in you the image of what I once had been; I could still, when touched by the fire of your trustful enthusiasm, open my heart to share your delight at setting forward on the Great Pilgrimage; though I myself thought I must for ever remain in Pagam. You would have said that my cup of wretchedness was full; but I believe that bad as I was, hardened as I was, I could have borne all the consequences of my selfishness, vanity, and negligence, could I but have felt assured that all would be ended when I was called from Benuben.

"But alas! the Uzzas of the Black-whites laid hold on me. They had always hated me, as they hate and vilify all who will not say that their great Black Stone is of dazzling whiteness; and now that I had actually set out for Karom, and returned to live once more among them, they declared that I had committed the unpardonable sin, one which the Great King could not possibly forgive, because he was just, and must visit with everlasting punishment all who begin willingly to serve him, and then turn back to their old life in Pagam—as if he who once begins to try and amend is not immeasurably nobler than he who has never tried at all! But so it was. The Uzzas declared that he who turns back and thus doubly rebels can

never be pardoned; and that, whether or no, I could not hope to enter into the enduring joys of Adaroni, until I could force myself to believe in, and to extol the whiteness of their Black Stone. Alas! I believed in something equally absurd—the truth of those who had not charity.

"I went forth from their presence embittered, hardened, and hopeless, for they had shown me that, as the Great King was a just ruler, he could not reward the unfaithful with the faithful: I was of the unfaithful, and eternal exclusion from Adaroni was my righteous doom. So many learned Uzzas told me the same thing, and so many showed me that, however I read the ancient documents, that is to say, by whatsoever hidden system of numbers I chose to read them, this doom always came out—that he who does not believe what the Uzzas tell him will, sooner or later, enter into the interminable torments of Kashep. I believed them; and at last I tried to think that there was no Great King, no place called Adaroni, no place called Kashep, and no immortality for the miserable men of Benuben. The condemning Uzzas drove me to unbelief; for these very Uzzas who did the most vehemently denounce my apostasy, were guilty of the grossest immorality, fattening and smirking in the assurance that they would be saved simply because they believed they were.

"At last, after many times resolving to fly from Pagam, my wealth, my fame, and my secret vices which I could not practise in Karom, I settled down to dull indifference and blank forgetfulness, which I partly

maintained by *akkash* and partly by drugs, some for causing dulness, some for exciting laughter.

"I discovered a new delight in alchemy, but even this I perverted to obtain money for unlawful pleasures. I discovered how to make false diamonds. These I used to sell secretly in the twilight, when they could not be readily examined. I always pretended an urgent need of money; and among others I successfully defrauded your old master, Kobesh. I told you my name was *Pasakh*, which in the ancient tongue means *lame*, for I was as one lamed in the beginning of a race; and I could proceed no further on the Great Pilgrimage. I still call myself *Pasakh*, for I still go but slowly.

"At last I was discovered; my goods were confiscated, and I was cast into prison. Here I languished in a solitary dungeon for the space of three years. I had now ample time to meditate on my past life, and I resolved that, as soon as I was liberated, I would once more set out for Karom. The Uzzas had persuaded me that none were allowed to cross the river which flows between Pagam and Karom, if it were known that they had once begun the Pilgrimage and turned back; but at the ford I frankly told the officers that I was a renegade, and they said they rejoiced all the more to see that after a full trial of the life in Pagam I had still turned from it to seek the higher life of Karom.

"I have told you my woful story to show you that this renunciation of a belief in our immortality, which so oppresses you, would have been to me a source of consolation."

"That may be," said I, "because you looked forward to everlasting misery, I to everlasting happiness. Could you now easily surrender your hopes?"

"My joy at being delivered from the haunting spectre of eternal misery is so great," said Pasakh, "that I could now be content, though I knew the end to be the darkness of Aven."

"Then you are unable to help me in my sore distress," said I, "and I know not how I can longer support it; I am as one cast into prison, for a period of many years, and bidden to take comfort because he was not always in prison, or because another man in the same prison, not only bravely endures his imprisonment, but murmurs not at the stripes which are inflicted upon him, and from which I am exempt. The fortitude of another may shame my weakness; but it cannot reconcile me to my wretched condition."

"You are in the best years of your life," urged Pasakh. "You are strong in mind and body, you have not the ruin of a single fellow-creature lying at your door, you have been a father to the poor (for I have heard the history of your life in Hoshav), you have done good work as a poet, you can do still better, you have many who love you, you are bringing up in the ways of Karom two noble children whom you love as your own; and you live at peace in your house; but you insist upon being miserable to-day, because you do not know that you will be happy to-morrow: while I, laden with many sins, old and infirm, poor and friendless, with no good works to look back upon, and not yet knowing what good acts I may be able to perform, beyond the daily rejection of evil thoughts,

do still struggle haltingly forwards, cheered with the humble hope that somehow, in the fulness of time, when all outcasts are gathered in, myself, my wife, and my poor children may be among those who through sins and sorrows, through fears and tears, and thronging pains, have at last been led to that horror-stricken and remorseful rejection of evil which must always precede the final reception of good."

"Nobly thought," said I; "but whereto serve this rejection of evil, and reception of good, if any day may bring annihilation?"

"I am not yet come to those deep and troublous thoughts," replied Pasakh. "I feel that it is so glorious a thing to love what is good, and so grievous and shameful a thing to love what is vile, that now I am as a man newly set free after a long and rigorous captivity, who surely for the first few days of his freedom, will not cry out for honour and grandeur, for costly attire and sumptuous feasts; but who will be content to walk alone in sweet peace, by some shaded stream in the forest, where he may once more feel that he is free, where he may once more commune with the high heavens and the beautiful earth.

"Such am I; escaped from the horror of a perpetual doom; risen from the filthy and lying life of Pagam; and I find perfect peace in the consciousness of an honest intention to do my best, neither fearing everlasting misery, nor clamouring for everlasting delight. I am content simply to live my life day by day, and to find my daily happiness in keeping those laws which are immortal, whether I be so or not."

"This would also content an ox," said I.

"Then learn of the ox," replied Pasakh.

"I will rather learn of noble men, gracious women, and little children," said I.

"A wise man," said Pasakh, "learns of everything."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Peace that Passes Utterance.

PASAKH took up his abode with me, watching over me as a father, and giving me, though I knew it not at the time, much wise comfort, whereby I was strengthened to endure the miseries of my low estate.

It is said that sometimes the current of the upper waters moves in one direction, while the lower depths are moving in the opposite direction. It was thus with me: I saw the upper stream drifting me into obdurate despair and mad revolt; but I knew little of the secret operations of the mind.

I revolted, hardened my heart, and refused to serve the Great King. I said that I who had once hoped everything, had also renounced everything, and was now unable to do anything but await the end; if possible, with dignity; if not, with indifference.

I was now more wretched than when I had passed my days in supplication and lamentation; for I then still held fast to my daily work; but now I knew that I was not doing my best; and the inner voice constantly whispered—*Whatsoever be true, or false, whatsoever be right, or wrong, or doubtful, it is wrong to forsake your daily labour, or to neglect even the smallest duties of life.*

But I revolted. In a sullen fit I shut myself out from the healing ministrations of my dear children. I said I could not teach them to be happy, and I knew that all other teaching must be based upon this. I felt that I was grievously wronging both myself and them by ceasing to teach them; but I stubbornly went on to despair, and wilfully entered the mire of unhappy thoughts, where there was no standing, and where the floods flowed over me.

I desired Pasakh to tell all my friends that I would not be disturbed by visits; and from this barbarous behaviour I seemed to derive a sort of gloomy satisfaction: I called it heroism, and thought how high a position I took among the citizens of Hoshav: I had wealth, and others enjoyed it; talents, and others took the prizes: I needed not any consolation of man, woman, or child: I stood alone in unapproachable pride, fearing nothing, hoping nothing, doing nothing.

But while I refused all smaller consolations, I was aware of a deep and subtle instinct that, in some way unknown to me, I should at last receive that wonderful and perfect consolation which alone could enable me to take up once more, gladly and hopefully, the great burden of life which I had laid down sullenly and despairingly.

At last, when Pasakh perceived that he could not stir me to hopefulness, but that I became more stubborn in my rebelliousness, he earnestly besought me to consult one of the wise physicians of Karom.

I replied that I had deserved good and not ill at the hands of the Great King; that if he, by his teachings in the Book of Adaroni, and by his encouragement of

my imperishable instincts, had not led me to look for an eternal progression in love, wisdom, and work, I had not been thus wretched, because I might then have been as the sordid savage who, being dull both in thought and feeling, easily satisfies his wants, and as easily endures his pains.

I said I had done all that man can do, not for the sake of the rewards of Adaroni, but because the performance of duty, which had a thousand daily delights in itself, had a thousandfold more when I believed that what gave me the greatest happiness here would also give me the greatest happiness hereafter. But now I had been lifted up to be cast down; I had not cast myself down, and I could not raise myself up. I said I would now await the end, and seek no physician.

Pasakh replied not to this, but went out and brought Lomai, a wise physician of whom I had often heard. His gentleness was such that before I was aware of his purpose he had drawn from me the story of my life, and the recital of my sorrows; then, after he had conversed a little while longer with me, he bade me farewell, smiled pleasantly on me, and said that in a day or two he would send me a letter of instructions. This was his letter:—

A letter of admonition and instruction from Lomai, a physician of Hoshav, to Halek, the son of Mazor:

Your story is a mournful one, but your case is neither hopeless nor uncommon. I will first address you as a pilgrim:

The sufferings of your life in Pagam drove you thence to Karom; the trials of Karom will lead you

forth into Sahitam; the states of gloom, doubt, and despair become more terrible, as you become better fitted to enjoy the happy life and the serene peace of Adaroni.

Karom is higher than Pagam; Sahitam is higher than Karom; and it is the orderly using of the experience gained in these three provinces which prepares the wayworn pilgrim for the glorious labours and the exalted delights of Adaroni.

It is true that the pilgrim sometimes mistakes the path, and that he sometimes wilfully strays from it, delaying in thorny thickets and unclean caves; but he cannot altogether lose his instinct of progress, and his sense of duty to one higher than himself; for many fierce pains and nameless terrors will affright him thence, till he again seek the path from the lower to the higher.

I will now consider you as a poet. It does not follow that you are able to produce a noble and a perfect work, because you believe yourself able; but rest assured that, if you never believe yourself able, no such noble and perfect work will ever be produced by you.

You have begun what you desire to be a great poem: it may not be completed as you desire; but you may not leave it till you have done all you can towards its worthy completion. Moreover, the exercise of writing an imperfect work will strengthen you, so that you may hereafter be able to write a perfect one.

You say that you despair of finishing your poem concerning Adaroni; and you also say that your sufferings are insupportable: I may point out to you that, as what you have already suffered has enabled you

to begin a poem which will assuage the sufferings of others, so, what you now suffer may enable you to finish it.

I now address you as a subject of the Great King ; I will not praise you for the good you have done ; I will not blame you for the evil ; I will only speak of what you are now doing. I declare you to be unthankful, unbelieving, and rebellious ; unthankful in that you forget what you have already received, unbelieving in that you renounce what you may reasonably hope to receive, rebellious in that you turn from what you may now receive.

You have broken the first great law of Adaroni—*Work honestly, patiently, cheerfully.* You broke this law when you turned from your daily labour, and said you would do no more.

Of the other laws which you broke when you broke this I need say nothing, for you are aware that he who refuses to work for the good of others, immediately and effectually shuts himself out from the noble family of workers, the first of whom is the Great King himself.

It is true that you are wealthy, and do not require to labour in order that you may live ; but even the wealthy must labour in some way, and you chose that surest, sweetest, highest of works—such teaching of little children as will enable them also to become hearty and happy workers.

But you turned from this work in which, as you yourself tell me, you found a delight which was as it were the daily bread for your hungering heart, and which you loved as you love no other. Thus did you break the first great law of Adaroni, in the keeping of

which, sure peace and tranquil joys are to be found, when all else is dark, doubtful, and dangerous. You were already unhappy ; you resolved to be more so.

You have also broken the second great law of Adaroni. It has been abundantly declared to the subjects of the Great King that he who would enter Adaroni must become as a little child : the child trusts those who are wiser and higher than himself ; you flung away your trust ; you doubted him who had led you by his laws from Pagam into Karom ; who had strengthened you that you might be able to renounce ; who, after each renunciation, had filled your ennobled spirit with purer joys, and who had ever pointed to still greater joys to come. You flung away your trust in the Great King when you became a traitor to your own instincts ; your last act of mistrust was to surrender, at the clamour of the disputers, or at the whisper of the seducers, that undying instinct of deathlessness which alone can reconcile man to the pains and the travails, the hungerings and the disappointments of the probationary and incomplete life of Benuben.

Moreover, you not only weakly yielded up this your first, your last, and most reasonable hope ; but you murmured and muttered and sought to take this hope away from others. In this you broke another of the great and beneficent laws of Adaroni ; for this hope of immortality, even though it were fallacious and unreasonable, does not tend to deprave those who cherish it ; but it is, on the contrary, so ennobling, and productive of so much active good, that it is infinitely more precious than any other hope which can plainly be proved not to be fallacious. He, therefore, who has

wilfully cast aside his own hope of immortality, and seeks to make others do the same, is guilty of an inhumanity which admits of no defence, and which is capable of no palliation.

I will now give you a few plain and simple truths, on which I advise you occasionally to meditate :—

All in Karom who wish to be cured can be cured.

No man's case is hopeless so long as he fears lest it be so.

Indifference nullifies the best medicine.

He who knows right from wrong is capable of progress, even to the noblest deeds; for eternity is a long time, and much can be accomplished therein, even by the slowest.

He who is still able to show a gracious gleam in his eye, or to sound the faintest tremor of kindness in his voice, may not think he is become so impotent of good works that his life is insignificant and useless.

Nay, though a man be unable to perform even trivial acts for the good of others, if he be only able silently in his heart to forgive the unkind acts of others, he is one in spirit with the Great King who mercifully forgives all the trespasses of his suffering subjects, and earnestly desires their perfect happiness.

Lastly: When a man with the most bitter sense of pain, exclaims, *Great King, why hast thou forsaken me?* he does, by that cry, so lay hold on the tender love of this Great King that straightway his inmost heart is opened to receive the sublime consolation of knowing that neither height nor depth can separate a faithful subject from a faithful sovereign.

I will now give you my instructions. You have lived long enough in Karom, and you must prepare to set out for Sahitam. This is the order of your preparation :—

Take back the little children whom you turned away; continue to teach them wisely and patiently: while so doing you will learn many things of them.

Go abroad as before, and give graciously to those who are in want.

Seek out all whom you have at any time offended, or who have offended you; pardon and be pardoned, making perfect reconciliation.

Instantly reject all thoughts concerning your immortality: If you feel sure of entering into the endless delights of Adaroni, you will patiently endure the short troubles of Benuben; and if you are sure that all your pains will cease in the silent darkness of Aven, that should not prevent your enjoying to the full all the pleasures which spring from the faithful doing of your duty.

Lastly, until your own peace of mind be completely restored, speak not of these things to anyone; but be still, and wait for the light which comes to those who do right.

* * * * *

I at once obeyed the instructions of Lomai, brought back my dear children, visited the poor, and resolutely rejected all thoughts concerning immortality.

I must admit that I began to feel easier from the moment when, by acknowledging the justice of these reproofs, and the wisdom of this advice, I ceased to occupy the position of a rebel. As I held fast to my

work alone, I recovered my usual cheerfulness; and as I made myself listen to the sorrows of others, I completely forgot my own.

I visited, or wrote to, all whom I had offended, and to all who had offended me. First I visited Shashuna and Zakku, together with Erimoth, who now lived with them. Our conversation was most pleasant, and I almost persuaded Erimoth to break all ties and accompany me to Sahitam. I appointed Zakku to the entire management of my affairs, instructed him as to what sums of money should be yearly given to the poor, and arranged with him that Pasakh should always occupy the deserted house of Turoni, and be in all respects carefully attended to.

I also visited Rayamin, the Orator, now somewhat feeble, but still earnest and cheerful. I left presents with Esbah, Ebul, Shomez, and Nahamah.

I visited Immo, the president of the Hall of the Harpers, who had so unkindly received my first attempts at musical composition. When I had thanked him for his discouragement of my early efforts after artistic work, he assured me that he had only intended to do his duty. Our conversation was in every way friendly and honest: he admitted that he had been severe; I acknowledged that I had been conceited.

When I visited Lormuz I spoke not of the past; but told him that I had cast out all envious and rancorous thoughts, and that I desired to begin a new stage in my life. He showed his noble nature by making a perfect answer to my desire, and by not speaking of the past. The tide of returning love swept our little anger out of sight.

I wrote a long letter to my father; thanked him for having insisted on my becoming a lapidary; and sent him one of my most valuable star-opals. My father made me a most gracious and tender answer. He informed me that my brother Karvad had nearly broken his heart by his undutiful conduct; and that having also been sorely afflicted in other ways, he was fully determined to sell all, and set out for Karom.

I also wrote a long letter to Kobesh, and sent him one of my rose-coloured diamonds, a jewel of extreme rarity, and beautifully cut. I also thanked him for having taught me the business of a lapidary.

Kobesh in return thanked me for my little present, saying he accepted it as a slight acknowledgment of the great trouble he had taken with one who had always been unwilling to learn a reputable business, and who had persisted in fancying he could become a poet. He said he was much pleased to know that I had at last discovered the true value of knowing a trade, although it had been of no use to me, and although I was reduced to teaching two little children in a little house. But he congratulated me on being able to enjoy the constant companionship of Pasakh, who, now that he once more carried on his old trade of making counterfeit diamonds, would see that I never wanted for anything. He desired me to compliment Pasakh on having discovered the art of making his diamonds of a fine rose-colour. Kobesh concluded by asking why I had made him this present, accompanied with so many kindly words, hinting that I was now weary of Karom, and desirous of returning to Pagam, in order to manage his business for him; but that I

might not leave Karom on a fruitless errand, he would inform me he now made it a rule to employ no workmen who did not believe in the Whiteness of the Black Stone.

With childlike obedience came childlike happiness; and my undying instinct of immortality again came forth like the bud of a buried plant, which could not be seen till the gardener had removed the weeds which overlaid it. This also is according to the imperishable laws of Adaroni; for the idea of deathlessness being inseparably connected with progress in good works, it follows that when a man trustfully and lovingly applies himself to his work, and closes his mind to evil thoughts, his inalienable sense of deathlessness, however long forgotten or denied, will in due time become manifest.

The following entry in my Record was made within forty days after the visit of Lomai:—There is the peace which arises from the fulfilment of our desires; there is the peace which arises from our renunciation of them: Each has its proper time and use. But when a man has ceased from thinking of his own immediate happiness as the first thing to be attained, at any cost; when he recognises that his first duty is to consider the welfare of others, at any cost; when he has done with meanness, and coldness, greed of gain, and greed of pleasure that brings pain; when he has lost the lust of power, and the lust of fame; when he utters no more sullen complaints, and bravely holds to his highest hopes, then, whether he has enjoyed all, or surrendered all, he will know that peace, which had hitherto passed his understanding, and which, now that he dwells therein, passes his utterance.

I was now delighted with the clear perception that a man's truest guides are those lofty instincts which young and old, good and bad, learned and unlearned, more or less share with him.

One evening, being thus at peace with myself, and feeling in delightful unison with all things, I went into one of the halls, where the music was led by Meshran. I heard a chorus of sweet voices of men and women blended with the solemn pulsing of many harps. I listened and wept. This marvellous music raised me out of my lower self-hood, so that I appeared to stand forth as a glorified creature,—a man who had indeed formerly sinned and suffered, but who was also an Adarona, of pure heart, capable of noble emotions and grand labours. Such music could only come from the immortals; and it made me feel that I also was immortal. And with all this was no sense of wonder or surprise, but only the natural delight of one who feels as if he were in his own land, among his own kindred. For man is a noble being who demands eternity for his habitation, and who feels himself unjustly and cruelly exiled from his heritage, if, after enjoying the glories of a noble life, he can be persuaded that it must end in nothing.

Then I, who had wilfully made myself an outcast from the bountiful loving-kindness of the Great King, was once more brought within the fold; my wounds were bound up; my tears were wiped away. My desire of truth, my love of good, my trust in the Great King, my patient waiting for Turoni, my consciousness of ability to perform noble work, and, lastly, my belief in the immortality of man, were now strengthened, purified,

and beautified by the fire of trial through which they had passed.


I clearly saw that for him who abides in the honest intention of finding and following the right path, all blind wanderings shall be so wonderfully directed that at last he shall find it, though the finding thereof be delayed till he fall into despair.

I also saw that the highest happiness of which incomplete man is capable, and which none can take from him, is that which depends upon the faithful doing of his daily work, he cultivating the while his highest instincts, and, like a little child, leaving the future in the hands of one who is wiser and higher than himself.

So, clearly seeing all these things, which I had often before seen darkly, and being filled with sweet peace and a joyous thankfulness, I set out for Sahitam, that I might worthily finish the Great Pilgrimage, before I should be called from Benuben to enter upon the enduring delights of Adaroni.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Halek the Messenger.

F the journey to Sahitam I will record nothing save a dream, which so terrified me that, for a little while, I was almost persuaded to turn back.

Between Karom and Sahitam are high mountains where no man dwells, and I was sleeping in the shelter of an overhanging rock, when I was disturbed by this dream.

Methought I was feeling my way through a dark and narrow passage in the wall of a tower. From the central chamber of this tower came a sound of music and a chorus of many voices, which I could only hear faintly and brokenly by reason of the roaring of a windy tempest, with thunder and the rushing of rain; but I knew that the music was part of a ceremony which closely concerned me for evil, and that some irremediable calamity would follow, if I did not enter the hall before it was ended. I ran continually in dark passages which seemed to encircle the tower. I ran and fell many a time. I ran and called, and beat against the wall; but I saw no light and found no door.

Presently there arose above the chorus a clear sweet voice: I knew it was the voice of Turoni, and that

the solemn ceremony had separated her from me, and given her to another.

I seemed then to know that I had from the first been unworthy of her, that I had dealt deceitfully with her, that I might have espoused her and held her for ever, but that I had left her for searchings after riches, and for vain visions of triumph. And now was her heart healed of its love for me—weak, unstable, unworthy. The winter of her waiting was at an end, the spring-time of her love was come, and I was cast out.

The music rose and fell, circling to the heights and descending to the depths; while clear through the chorus of voices, the roaring of the thunder, and the rushing of the rain, pealed the clear voice of her who was to me the very image of goodness, the one sweet and fair and noble being who had given her love to me, and waited for me till her spirit failed and faded, and the Great King took her hence to be healed in the gardens of Adaroni.

When I awakened from this dream the mountains were sounding with a terrible tempest, and my spirit was overwhelmed with the horror of a great darkness within and without.

After a while I heard a muttering voice behind me: "Turoni is taken from thee, and thou hast lost her love for ever."

To this I made answer: "I have not lost the love of the Great King; and I shall receive at his hand all things necessary for my happiness; for I keep his laws."

The voice said: "Thou art beside thyself with love of thyself. Thou deceivest thyself, and wilt obtain derision and shame."

I said: "I shall obtain a pure heart and a restful spirit in Sahitam."

"Thou mayest return and find rest in Karom," said the voice.

I replied: "He is not good who seeks not to be better."

"Thou canst not be a poet or a musician in Sahitam," said the voice.

I replied: "I can be as a little child."

"Thou canst not even come to Sahitam," said the voice.

To this I answered: "I can at least endeavour to go thither, according to the will of the Great King, who hath set in me a hunger and a hope."

Hereupon I felt my heart to be so fixed that nought could move me; and I was straightway comforted by a multitude of sweet and joyous thoughts, in which the pain of my dream passed away as though it had not been.

I was no sooner come into the fruitful valley of Sahitam than I began to observe the noble and beautiful faces of young and old, which were the more noticeable, because in Karom the streets are thronged with men and women whose faces are at best unmeaning; while in Pagam I had seen men and women whose faces were hideous with evil passions, and whose whole persons appeared to reek with the filth of debauchery.

I was not long in discovering that much of the beauty of the Sahitamas proceeded from their habitual

purity and their child-like cheerfulness, both of which they watchfully preserve and cherish, lest they be contaminated by a passing thought. Even in Karom, however, I had often seen faces showing so much discontent and pain, that I have many times a day been filled with sadness and wonder.

This cheerfulness of the Sahitama springs from the unwavering honesty of his intention, which is to do good and not evil all the days of his life. This glorious intention is the "White Stone" of the Sahitama. When this honest intention is imperilled through bodily infirmity, the lustre of his face fades out, he passes through a state of sore trial, shuts himself up in his chamber, or betakes himself to one of the lonely isles; but he will not allow his face to be seen in the streets until he has regained his cheerfulness.

I saw nothing in Sahitam of that obtrusive vain-glory which is so common in Pagam, and not unknown in Karom:—When a Sahitama speaks concerning himself, you perceive nothing but a modest confidence, which is as far from an unreasonable presumption on the one side, as from a weak diffidence on the other.

The Sahitama is also distinguished by steadfastness. He dwells in a settled calm which totally differs in kind from the slothful content of the Pagama. His good qualities yield their finest fruits, and are never broken down to the ground by the terrible storms which darken and devastate the life of the Karoma. Bereavement, injustice, sickness, poverty, yea, all the ills of life together, can be patiently and cheerfully endured by the Sahitama, so long as he knows that he steadfastly aims above all things at rightness.

It is true that the Sahitama sometimes suddenly falls into evil; but not deeply; and his repentance swiftly follows: he will never contrive evil like the Karoma, nor glory in it like the Pagama.

The Sahitama seeks not to know the faults of another, and unless evil motives are plainly to be seen, he always imputes good ones; but the Karoma is much given to reproving his brother, and is ever willing to accept the zeal with which he exhorts another, in the place of that zeal with which he should exhort himself.

There are Kashepas in Sahitam, even as in Karom; but the Sahitamas have so often been through the seven rounds, have so often been chastened, purified, delivered, strengthened, guided, protected, and taught, that they are ever watchful, and on their guard, lest, under some fair disguise, the spirits of pestilence insinuate themselves into the citadel of their souls.

The following is a summary of the teaching of the Sahitamas, as given throughout the Book of Adaroni, and finally exemplified in the perfect life of the Great Messenger:—

A man must be perfect, able to abstain from all evil thoughts and all evil deeds because he abhors them. Perfect obedience takes the Kingdom by force, and is the most excellent way.

First comes the True Fast, which means an enforced abstinence from all evil—even from those delectations of the flesh which appear to be pure merely because they are sanctioned by the laws of the Pagamas. The food must be neither rich nor excessive; all forms of *akkash* must be avoided. Ill temper must be controlled; all anxious care must be cast aside.

You must ascertain the will of the Great King, and conform your will thereto. Six weeks of unswerving obedience may suffice to bring you into a state in which the Adaronas can draw near, and minister to you, for like is ever drawn to like. Your seventh week will then be one of blissful rest.

When the disciple has been through the True Fast, and so far prepared himself to live the Perfect Life, he may look for and confidently expect the True Teaching. To obtain this he will for a while give up all books that only deal with sciences, and all books that only amuse the Pagamas and keep them from thinking. He who would obtain must abstain.

With solitude, silence, self-examination, meditation, and prayer, there will be opened up in the disciple an inner region of the soul—the secret place of the Most High—a place of whose existence he had hitherto had no knowledge. He can now daily receive the sweet teaching, and the wise counsel of the Adaronas; he will now dwell in that Perfect Peace which is as meaningless to the Pagama as a discourse on colour to one who has never seen and which is not attained by those Karomas who unduly exalt the importance of persons, places, times, words and ceremonies, while they complacently sow to the flesh by justifying and indulging their favourite lusts. These Karomas will give up some evil but not all evil. They grasp not the full import of the great commandment—

Thou shalt love the Great King with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Instead of having this commandment in the heart, they are content to write it on parchment, hide it in a

case, and bind it on the hand, or as a frontlet between the eyes. They are content to regard the letter, while they disregard the spirit, even after the manner of the Black-whites who rule the churches of Pagam.

Before proceeding with my history I would mention these further particulars: Children born in Sahitam pass through stages of growth which answer to the stages of the pilgrimage from Pagam to Sahitam. When their earliest innocence is outgrown, they resemble the Pagamas, and are ruled only by the love of self; but when they imbibe truths, and seek to live up to them, their state answers to that of the Karomas.

There is no winter in Sahitam; and throughout the year the children are fed on a variety of wholesome and savoury fruits; while the air is always so mild that there is no time of day or night when they may not disport themselves in the gardens and groves.

The pilgrim who sojourns in Sahitam will notice that the country excels all others in the matter of gardens and groves. In the gardens of Sahitam the chief flowers are the red rose, the white lily, and the dark-purple sweet-scented violet. The groves are chiefly of lofty and skilfully pruned olive trees; but laurel and cypress are also used in the making of groves.

Were you to search Benuben through, you would find no tree whose uses are so many and so diverse as the olive tree. Indeed, the name Sahitam signifies *land of the olive*, even as *Pagam* signifies *land of figs*, and *Karom* signifies *land of grapes*. The oil of the olive is much prized by the Sahitamas. It is used in cooking, and the cakes of the lentils of Mizrim are always fried in olive oil. The Sahitamas like to dip

their dry wheaten cakes in a sauce of oil, vinegar, and honey. It may be noted also that the oil of the olive has many other uses: It is the only oil burned in the lamps of the Sahitamas; it has the power of instantly killing noxious insects; it is used in polishing wood, it stops the harsh jarring and creaking of chariot wheels; and as a loving word will calm those who are unwillingly roused to an acrimonious contention, so this wondrous oil can still the waves of a troubled sea.

I may here mention that the Sahitamas will not allow dogs, cats, or swine to enter their cities; but that they keep many sorts of dove and pigeon, not in cages, but tame in their gardens, together with nightingales, swans, peacocks, and many other birds.

The wise men of Sahitam mistrust the drugs of the apothecary, holding that a pure mind and a pure body act mutually towards maintaining perfect health.

When I arrived at the chief city of Sahitam, I took up my abode in the house of a poor widow who had many children. The services which I was here able to render, made me acquainted with other poor people, and not only yielded me many perfect delights; but much valuable instruction. In time, however, I desired to enter a higher circle, and associate with men from whom I could learn still more. I knew not how to do so, save by entering the service of Alphariz the Prince, for I ventured to hope that unused capabilities might perhaps be discovered in me, and that, after years of good service, I also might rank among the nobles of Sahitam, in which case, the wealth which I possessed would regain something of its lost value.

After several months of waiting and wondering a light shone in the distance: The Prince was inquiring for a master to teach his four sons. Three, besides myself, sought this office; and each of us in turn, after we had been closely questioned by the Prince, taught the boys for three days; for it is the custom in Sahitam that the pupils shall choose their master, while the father exercises his judgment in confirming, or setting aside, their choice. This custom is observed, because the first thing that a Sahitama requires of a master, is that he shall be loved and honoured by his pupils; they being quick to discover whom they can love, and the father quickly discovering whom they can honour.

I became the teacher of the sons of Alphariz the Prince, and after I had shown my fitness for that office, I began to look forward to the time when the young princes would need a more learned teacher, and when I might reasonably expect to be entrusted with some higher office.

Happy in my work of instructing two noble and amiable youths, happy in a flawless friendship with Hethron, the court-poet, honoured by the Prince, methought I was now beyond the reach of affliction; and in this delightful state I continued for more than three years. But little by little my cheerfulness left me: until the simple joys of life lost their savour, and I was weighed down by an abiding sadness. Nothing, from within or without, seemed able to reach me so as perceptibly to comfort me; step by step there crept upon me a discontent which I could neither express nor comprehend.

I lost nothing of my conscious intention of good ; and I lived in the present, neither paining myself with thoughts of what might have been, nor harassing myself with speculations as to what might be.

The poetry and the music of the Sahitamas fed me with noble emotions, and their unattainable excellence cured me of ambition. I was so much honoured by the Prince, and I met with such brotherly kindness from the nobles, that I could have gained nothing by rising to a more exalted position.

I was often soothed by sweet memories of Turoni ; and I had a firm assurance of meeting her in Adaroni ; for I felt that my life was incomplete without the companionship of such a woman ; and I had seen none to whom I could give such love as I still cherished for Turoni ; but I seemed to be wearied out as one who has long journeyed alone through a wilderness. It was midnight, and I could see no star, I was in prison, and knew not how I should be delivered.

Although I had been through the True Fast, enjoyed the True Teaching, and exulted in the Blissful Rest, I was permitted to lose all consciousness thereof, so that my faith might be tested, strengthened, and finally established like an impregnable fortress upon a rock.

One evening when I had forced myself, at the request of Hethron, to be present at a great festival in the palace, some deep chords, long silent within me, answered to the gentle pulsings of a harp, and the wonderful windings of one clear voice that pealed forth from the hymn of praise as though it would pierce its way to the very stars. Then straightway my bonds were loosed, and I went up into a high mountain, where

the jarring and unintelligible discords of life were lost in the awful silence and the trembling music of Adaroni.

Then a voice said :—" Thou who hast come into the gardens of bliss, canst measure the misery of those who wander far away in the wilderness. Go forth, and bring them back from the wilderness, and teach them, that they no more call darkness light, and bitter sweet."

I replied : " I will sell all that I have, and give to these poor, labouring among them, that I may bring some with me out of the great wilderness."

I could not sleep until I had unfolded these things to Hethron, and when he had heard me to the end, he said :—

" Is not this a sudden and unreasoning enthusiasm ?"

" Nay," said I, " for my thoughts have often tended thither ; and this is the enthusiasm which explains all other enthusiasm which from time to time has filled me : I have ever desired to do some great work for the good of others ; and I have ever felt a deep grief for the miserable condition of those Pagamas who seem to know nothing of the glorious heritage to which they are entitled. I have now found the choice-work for which the whole of my life has been a preparation, and which alone will satisfy the eager desires of my heart.

" And I am an artist still ; for the fine arts do but represent what is beautiful ; but the art of arts teaches men to make their lives beautiful. I will go to the Pagamas, and tell them what I have learnt. I will open to them my hand as well as my heart ; for they are as little children, to whom doctrine is nothing, if it be not interpreted by kindly deeds. I will teach them the meaning of renunciation—to which they can never

be stirred, save by one who of his love and pity for them daily renounces before their eyes."

When Alphariz, the Prince, was informed of my intentions, he made me many generous speeches, and showed me honour beyond my deserts.

"You have been ambitious of excellence as a poet," said the Prince; "and Hethron assures me that you will excel as an orator. There was a time in your life when you would have given up everything that you might become a musician; I now learn, however, that you wish to become a messenger. This is the highest office among all who dedicate themselves to the service of the Great King, but in order that you may thoroughly prove the steadfastness of your resolution; and that you may write for us the history of your pilgrimage from Pagam to Sahitam, I desire you to abide with us yet one year."

I ventured to hint that there was nothing remarkable in my pilgrimage, and that my life hitherto had been little more than a preparation for living.

It would ill become me to repeat the arguments by which I was finally persuaded to attempt the history of my life; but I may mention that, from what the Prince had been told by Hethron, and from what he had observed of my modes of instruction, he concluded that such a history as I could write would yield both profit and pleasure to the young princes; for they knew but little concerning the Pagamas and the Karomas, and the nature of the Great Pilgrimage. I was also assured that these two noble youths of Sahitam would not be the only readers of my history, for the Prince promised

me that he would cause it to be carefully copied, and preserved in his library.

One day when I was near the completion of my history, the Prince sent for me, and, in the presence of many noblemen, gave me the Diamond Sandals and the Ruby Signets, which mark a messenger from Sahitam to Pagam. The sandals mean that the wearer takes no step without the light of the law on his path; and the signets, one for each hand, mean that he who wears them does no act which is not animated by the purest love.

Then did Alphariz, the Prince, endue me with the white mantle of dedication; and one of his beautiful daughters fastened it with the blue ribands. After this a white-haired priest advanced to me with an air of gracious majesty, and after anointing my head and my beard with the attar of roses, he laid his hands upon me, and blessed me in the name of the Great King.

When these solemn rites were completed, and when all were seated in silence, strains of the sweetest music thrilled our inmost, and raised us into the entrancing delights of Adaroni.

When I would leave the palace, the Prince took me aside, and gave me a purse, heavy with gold. His last words to me were these:—

"This will supply your wants while you are engaged on the book I have desired you to write. After your labours in Pagam you will come to us again, and prepare another book for our library. Farewell.

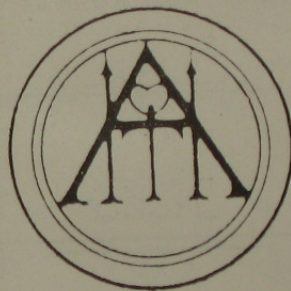
* * * * *

This then is the book which I wrote at the command of Alphariz the Prince of Sahitam ; and I pray him that reads it to believe that I have always endeavoured to write honestly and truly concerning such things as I have thought worthy to be related.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF ALEXANDRIA

THE END.

THE RIDDLE OF "HALEK."



*Guard well the Germ Divine that breathes in thee :
Ah ! bring not Love to cruel Calvary.
Conquer the Beast ; Work, Watch, and Pray ;—
So shalt thou be ennobled day by day.*

J.H.N.

Errata.



On page 97, line 27, read.....a part of *my* very self.
" " 247, " 3, "one *who* has eaten.
" " 264, " 29, "anything he *chooses*.

*The portrait block of Mr. Nicholson which appears as a frontis
piece to " Halek " is from a photo. by Wiley and Co., Brisbane.*



※ ※ ※ Notice. ※ ※ ※



"HALEK"

may be ordered through any Bookseller, or
obtained from

Messrs. A. J. ROSS and CO.,
PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS,

26 QUEEN STREET,

BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND,

WHO ARE

SOLE AGENTS.

Posted to any address within the Australian
Colonies for 8s., and to any other part of the
r 8s. 6d.