

party was playing a strange-shaped one-stringed viol, which he held between his knees, he being also in a squatting position. Another came forward and removed the wicker cover from the basket, and took out what appeared to be some pieces of dirty blanket. The old dervish began whistling some weird sequences of notes, alternated by clucking noises with his tongue. The viol ceased to emit sounds, and the other three men, all squatted on their heels, closely watched him with an air of mystery. After a few minutes the head of a horned viper slowly rose from the basket, from which it gradually crept, its scaly brownish skin—more or less tinged with yellow, ornamented with six longitudinal rows of quadrangular markings—glistening in the sun.

Slowly the viper wriggled towards the old man, who had evidently fascinated it. Then it crawled on to his outstretched hand and slowly coiled itself around his