

to the ears of the sovereign of Bagdad, who expressed a desire to see him. Ali therefore repaired to the palace, taking with him four large scarlet trays full of the most valuable jewels. The king received him with great condescension, and, when he saw the present, he was filled with wonder, for its value far exceeded that of the royal treasury. He called his ministers and principal men to look at the trays, and asked them what they thought of the merit of a man who had made so magnificent an offering. "He is a man of the highest worth, no doubt" replied the vizir.—"So I think," said the king, "and I will make him my son-in-law, that is, if my consort and the princess, my daughter, have the same opinion of him that you have, who are a true mine of sagacity." Upon this he ordered the trays to be conveyed into the inner chambers. "Whence came these splendid gems?" inquired the queen. "From Khajeh Ali the jeweller," replied the king; "one of the most opulent merchants in Bagdad, or in the world. We cannot," continued he, "accept these without some return, and what return can we make? The only equivalent would be the pearl our daughter; what say you? Our vizir has declared him to be a man of the highest merit; and, as he is young and handsome, the princess will probably be of the same opinion."

On the same day the king called a general council, to which the principal merchants were invited, that they might express their acknowledgments for the honour to be conferred on their fraternity. The chief cadi was also summoned, and commanded to prepare the contract of marriage between the princess and Khajeh Ali, of Cairo. "Your pardon," cried Ali, "how can a merchant become the son-in-law of a prince?"—"You are no more a merchant," replied the king; "I make

you of equal rank with my vizir, and a privy counsellor." "Sire, yet one word."—"Speak out without fear." "I have," said Ali, "been married these fifteen years, and have a son fourteen years old; now if your majesty would transfer to the son the grace you design for the father."—"Not a bad idea," said the king; "let us see your son; what is his name?"—"Hassan," replied Ali.—"Hassan!" a very good name for the son-in-law of a king; let him be called."—Ali immediately went for his son, whose graceful person and gentle manners won all hearts the moment he appeared. The queen and the princess gladly assented to the exchange, and the marriage was celebrated with festivities that lasted a whole month. The king had two palaces erected contiguous to his own; one for the young couple, and the other for his new vizir.

So passed many years in the enjoyment of all the pleasures of life. The king became dangerously ill, and, having no son of his own, thought it necessary to provide for the succession; a council was therefore assembled, and the members, who knew his wishes, unanimously declared for Hassan, who was accordingly installed. Three days afterwards the king died, and was buried with the usual solemnities, and a mourning for forty days was observed at court.

Hassan filled the throne with so much propriety, that it might be said he had been called to it from his birth; he was beloved by his people, and reigned in peace and prosperity. His father was vizir, and Hassan had three children, who in the course of time succeeded to the kingdom.

Praised be the power of God, who disposes of kingdoms and thrones at his will, and distinguishes by his favour those who do good to others.

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