

to smite him upon the mouth, he cried unto them, saying, "Ye cowardly men, ye come with your thousands against me as against an army. Let me go, I pray you, for I will not submit myself unto you." And, moreover, he spake words not to be uttered by man. But the men who had dwelt long in the land harkened not unto these words, but in all haste dragged they him unto their dungeon. And when they had come unto the place, some made about to bind him fast, but others spoke unto him, saying, "O, apothecary, wilt thou yet hold out against us? But rather yield unto our customs, and thou shalt not be bound." And he, fearing to be bound, yielded unto them, and they suffered him to go through the ceremony free. But when the men who had dwelt long in the land had done unto the apothecary as unto all others, he spake unto them with a wrathful soul, saying: "Ye cowards, ye fools, I hate your custom, for it is the custom of men who are mad. But I say unto you, let him who is accounted greatest in battle among you come unto me and I will smite him until he dies; or let each among you come against me in turn and I will give his dead body unto the fowls of the air." And, moreover, he spake words not to be uttered by man. But they, seeing that he knew not what manner of words he spoke, reasoned with him, saying, "Oh, apothecary, speak not thus rashly, for the men whom thou seest are warriors, mighty men in battle, and in their sight you are as a grasshopper. And, moreover, you must needs be persuaded and yield unto us; neither let the sun go down upon thy

wrath, for we do unto all strangers in our midst as we have done unto thee." And they let him go, and straightaway he hastened unto one in authority in the land, and cried unto him, saying, "Verily, oh, master, I have come unto thee at a late season, but the men who have dwelt long in this land fell upon me by the wayside and dealt roughly with me. But I say unto you, verily, they are fools and mad men, and, as years are added unto them, they become as children." And, moreover, he spake words not to be uttered by man. And his wrath was very great. But he in authority answered him not a word, for he was wise and the custom of the land seemed good unto him. Forthwith the apothecary went before the king of that land, and, falling upon his face, cried: "Oh, king, live forever. I know that thou art a just king and wilt avenge the wrongs of thy servant, for verily thou art a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well. Behold, O king, the men who have dwelt long in the land fell upon me by the wayside and submitted me to their evil custom, and behold they dealt roughly with me and have rent my garments. Avenge my wrongs, O king, for these are cowardly men and folly is their portion." And he spake words which no man could utter. And lo, the king was angered and spoke unto his people, saying: "Let no man lay violent hands upon his brother, lest I cast him forth from the land. Give heed now, for I, the king, have spoken it." But the men who had dwelt long in the land heeded not the words of the great king, and the custom remaineth even unto this day.

