



THE ARABIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENTS.

THE ONE THOUSAND AND SECOND NIGHT.
(Dedicated to the Mayor and Council.)



HAVE already related to you the adventures of Sindbad the Sailor," said Scheherazade, placing her cold feet against the small of the Caliph's back, and nudging him in the ribs to prevent him falling asleep, "and I now propose to give you an account of the still more extraordinary things seen by Plumduff, the Bargee, in his wanderings about the world."

"Very good," said the Caliph, "and if Plumduff be but as truthful as Sindbad, I shall be much entertained. Proceed."

Scheherazade then, munching a handful of dates, proceeded as follows:

"When I came to my senses after being cast ashore on the banks of the Can Awl, in which my barge had sunk—so Plumduff's narrative runs—I found myself lying on the green sward of some strange country, the like of which I had never seen in any of my previous voyages. At a distance of some four hundred feet was a vast palace which was entered at either end through several tall and gateless arches into each of which ran two lines of some hard and shining metal which I took to be silver, and which ran parallel with one another through the palace and extended many miles beyond it at either end: how far I could not say, for I was unable to perceive where they came to an end. Many creatures resembling human beings crowded about the palace wherein was much uproar and confusion, and whence issued the clanging of a gong and the voice of some creature crying out, as nearly as I could make out, 'Al aboard goineeste,' and at this moment I thought I should have died with terror at what I saw.

"Advancing along the lines of metal came a huge monster, the snorting and groaning of which were fearful to hear. In its forehead was set one eye of a brilliancy like unto that of the sun, and from its single nostril, which was set upon the top of its head, issued a volume of breath of a pitchy blackness. This terrible monster crawled along with incredible swiftness, dragging its whole length, which was many hundred fathoms, directly above the metallic lines, and, dashing into the palace, uttered a yell so awful in sound that I can liken it to nothing else but the shrieks of a thousand imprisoned genii.

"Though well nigh overpowered with fear and horror, I allowed my curiosity to master me, and rising, I tottered towards the palace, where I beheld a multitude of people, for such they were, ascending into the very body of the fearful monster I have described, and whom I followed though half-dead with fright.

"No sooner had I entered the body of the monster than a gong sounded, and the creature, uttering two piercing shrieks, darted off with the speed of an arrow across the land which, from the inconceivable velocity of the monster's flight, appeared to be whirling round and round, trees, water, earth and clouds all being mingled in our undistinguishable mass of confusion. I feel certain that the rate of speed at which the monster flew could not be less than three score of miles in an hour."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Caliph, "what are you giving us? Tell that to the marines."

"I fainted with terror," went on Scheherazade, regardless of the king's interruption, "and when I once more regained consciousness, I found that the monster had ceased its flight and was standing motionless. The people were now descending from the creature's body into a palace similar to that which I had seen when first cast ashore, and I arose and got me

THE GOOD WORK GOES BRAVELY ON!