

So he thought he would of a surety fling far away his tackle, discard barbercraft, and be as other men, a mortal, forgotten with his generation. And he cried aloud, "O thou old woman! thou deceiver! what hast thou obtained for me by thy deceits? and why put I faith in thee to the purchase of a thwacking? Woe's me! I would thou hadst been but a dream, thou crone! thou guileful pareel of belabouring bones!"

Now, while he lounged and strolled, and was abusing the old woman, he looked before him, and lo, one lolling in his shop-front, and people standing outside the shop, marking him with admiration and reverence, and pointing him out to each other with approving gestures. He who lolled there was indeed a miracle of hairiness, black with hair as he had been muzzled with it, and his head as it were a berry in a bush by reason of it. Then thought Shibli Bagarag, "'Tis Shagpat! If the mole could swear to him, surely can I." So he regarded the clothier, and there was naught seen on earth like the gravity of Shagpat as he lolled before those people, that failed not to assemble in groups and gaze at him. He was as a sleepy lion cased in his mane; as an owl drowsy in the daylight. Now would he close an eye, or move two fingers, but of other motion made he none, yet the people gazed at him with eagerness. Shibli Bagarag was astonished at them, thinking, "Hair! hair! There is might in hair; but there is greater might in the barber! Nevertheless here the barber is scorned, the grower of crops held in amazing reverence." Then thought he, "'Tis truly wondrous the crop he groweth; not even King Shamshureen, after a thousand years, sported such mighty profusion! Him I sheared: it was a high task! — why not this Shagpat?"

Now, long gazing on Shagpat awoke in Shibli Bagarag fierce desire to shear him, and it was scarce in his power to restrain himself from flying at the clothier, he saying, "What obstacle now? what protecteth him? Nay, why not trust to the old woman? Said she not I should first essay on Shagpat? and 'twas my folly in appealing to the King that brought on me that thwacking. 'Tis well! I'll trust to her words. Wullahy! will it not lead me to great things?"

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