

Youths' Department.

THE FAIREST ROSE IN THE WORLD.

A great Queen once reigned, in whose garden bloomed the loveliest flowers from all parts of the world at every season of the year. But above all other flowers she loved roses; and therefore she possessed the greatest variety of these, from the wild hedge-rose, with green, apple-scented leaves, to the most beautiful rose of Provence. They grew on the castle walls, twined round the pillars and over the casements of the corridors and saloons, and the roses varied in scent, form, and colour.

But care and sadness dwelt in that palace; the Queen lay on her sick bed, and the physicians said she must die. "There is, however, a remedy for her," said the wisest among them. "Bring to her the fairest rose in the world,—the one which is the expression of the highest and purest love,—if that comes before her eyes ere they close, she will not die."

And young and old came from all lands, with roses, the loveliest that bloomed in every garden, but none was the right one. The flower must be brought from the garden of love: but what rose could be the expression of the highest, purest love?

And the poet sang of the fairest rose in the world,—each one named his own. And messengers were sent through all the countries round, to every heart that beat with love—to every rank, and every age.

"No one has yet named the flower," said the wise man. "No one has shown the place from whence it springs in its beauty. It is not one of the roses from the bier of Romeo and Juliet, or from Walburg's grave, though these flowers will ever bloom in legends and songs. It is not one of the roses that bloomed forth from Winkelried's blood-stained lance,—from the holy blood which flowed in death from the breast of the hero for the fatherland, though no death is sweeter, no rose is redder, than the blood which then flows. It is, also, not that wonder-flower for the cultivation of which man gives his fresh life away in years and days,—the magic rose of knowledge."

"I know where it blooms!" said a happy mother, who came to the Queen's couch with her tender babe. "I know where the fairest rose in the world is to be found—the rose which is the expression of the highest purest love. It blooms on the blushing cheeks of my sweet child, when it opens its eyes refreshed by slumber, and smiles at me with its whole love."

"Lovely is that rose, but there is yet a fairer one," said the wise man.

"Yes, a much fairer one," said one of the women. "I have seen it,—a holier rose blooms not. But it was pale, like the petals of the tea-rose. I saw it on the cheeks of the Queen; she had laid aside her royal crown, and was nursing her sick child in the long, sad night. She wept and kissed it, and prayed to God for it, as a mother prays in the hour of anguish."

"Holy and wonderful is the white rose of sadness in its power; but it is not the one sought for."

"No, I saw the fairest rose in the world before the altar of the Lord," said the good old Bishop. "I saw it shine as though an angel's face had shown itself.—The young maiden went to the altar of the Lord, having renewed the vow of her baptism, and roses came and went on her fresh cheeks. The young maiden knelt there; she looked up to God, with her whole soul full of purity and love. That was the expression of the purest, highest love."

"Blessed is it," said the wise man: "but no one has yet named the fairest rose in the world."

Then stepped a child into the chamber, the little son of the Queen. Tears stood in his eyes, and on his delicate cheeks. He carried a large closed book, bound in velvet, with large silver clasps. "Mother!" said the little one, "oh, hear what I have read."

And the child seated itself on the bed, and read out of the book, of Him who gave Himself to die on the Cross, in order to save men, and even unborn generations. Greater love is there not!

And a rose blush spread over the Queen's cheeks; her eyes became so bright, for she saw the fairest rose spring forth from the leaves of the book,—the likeness of the one which bloomed from the Blood of Christ on the Cross.

"I see it!" said she. "They never die who look on this rose, the fairest in the world."—From the German of Hans Christian Andersen.

"As it is never too soon to be good, so it is never too late to amend. I will therefore neither neglect the time present nor despise the time past. If I had been sooner good, I might perhaps have been better. If I am longer bad, I shall, I am sure, be worse."

Selections.

EASTERN NOTIONS ABOUT ANGELS, SPIRITS, AND DEMONS.

The doctrine of angels, spirits and demons belongs almost exclusively to the East. By Occidentals the doctrine is held in a crude and indefinite form, and is often treated with levity; while no Orientals, especially the followers of the Prophet, approach it with the utmost reverence. That there are angels, demons, spirits, and genies, is the belief of every true Mussulman. On this subject we have been perusing a paper by the late M. Alexandre Timoni, a Greek of Constantinople, in the *Journal Asiatique*, from which we take a few particulars. Before doing so, we may state, for the use of those who take an interest in the matter, that ample details respecting the demonology of the Moslems will be found in a memoir by the Baron Von Hammer, in the transactions of the Academy of Vienna, entitled, *Geistesleben der Moslimen*.

The Mussulmans say that God created the angels before Adam; that they eat nothing, and have no need of water; that they are not of any sex; that there are among them some who approach the throne of the Eternal, and are employed as messengers. The angels, according to their doctrine, have particular duties; some of them are of great stature, and have immense strength. Such is Gabriel, whom it takes only an hour to descend from Heaven to earth, and who, with one of his wings, could cast down a mountain. Israel receives every soul as soon as it has quitted the body which it inhabited. Israfil will sound the trumpet at the day of judgment; he will emit a blast so terrible that the mountains will tremble, the earth will shrink, and the sea will be tinged red as blood. In the Koran there is a chapter entitled "The Angels." At the beginning of this *soura*, it is written that they are the messengers of God, and that he has furnished them with two, three, or four wings. At chap. xi. we read that God sent angels to the patriarch Abraham, and that these same angels were charged to order Lot out of Sodom. At the beginning of chap. xvi. Mohammed pretends that, at the voice of the Eternal, the angels will descend upon earth at the last day, accompanied by the Spirit (Gabriel). In the same *souira* he affirms that the spirit of sanctity (Gabriel) will carry the Koran to heaven. He says elsewhere: "On the day of resurrection, when the angel shall descend, it is to those who shall have given proof of mercy that shall belong the empire." And, speaking of those who deny the day of judgment, that the Angel of Death shall cut off the thread of their days. He introduces angels surrounding, with naked feet, the throne of the Eternal, and praising the Lord; and when the Eternal shall have judged mankind, they will shout aloud: "Praise to God, sovereign of the world!" He speaks of two angels who take their places, one on the right, the other on the left, of a person who is laid in his tomb. They have to interrogate the deceased respecting his God, his prophet, his religion, and his *kiblé*. If the dead man replies: "Our god is God, our prophet Mohammed, our religion Islam, our *kiblé* the Kaaba," they give him to taste of different pleasures; and if on the contrary, they inflict upon him different kinds of evils. The same chapter mentions an angel who shall say to the sinner on the day of judgement: "Behold what I have prepared for him!" In chap. lxxix. mention is made of the angels who carry off souls of men with violence, of those who carry them away gently, of those that traverse the skies with rapid speed, of those that precede the just, and of those that preside over the destinies of mankind (the universe). We have mentioned that the true Mussulman holds that the angels are of no sex. There are some who affirmed that the angels are females, and Mohammed quietly asked them whether they were present at their creation. An anonymous Arab, who composed a catechism for Mohammedans, says, that it is necessary to believe in the existence of angels, even though we may be ignorant of their names and of their different classes; and he declares those to be infidel who assign them sex, and who, confessing that they exist, but not assigning to them sex, yet do not care for them and love them. In a Persian Mohammedan Catechism, entitled *Rahet ul Couloub* (The repose of hearts), by Abd Allah el-Djizdy, mention is made of four angels, viz: Dejebrail (Gabriel), Micail (Michael), Israfil and Israfil, who are retained near the throne of the Most High. Abd al-Aziz advances, that it is not permitted to give sex to angels; that their nourishment is prayer, and their drink purity and holiness; that God has given them power to borrow a form like to that of a man. It was thus that the angel Gabriel,

he adds, appeared to Mary. M. Timoni gives the following passage:—

"In a Persian treatise on the principal points of the Mohammedan religion, by Abou Naser Ibn Mohammed el-Ghazavey, in reply to certain interrogators, Mohammed is made to say, that in the first heaven which God created there are certain angels whose occupation it is to adore the Eternal: their chief is called Ismail. There is besides in this heaven another angel named Raad—"thunder"; he is set to guard the clouds and the rains; it is he who gives voice to the thunders. The angels of the second heaven are all prostrated (before the Supreme); their prayers consist in these words: *Soubhan zi el izzeti wel djebrouti* (Praise to the possessor of greatness and all power!) Their prince is Djolb; he is composed of equal parts of snow and fire. The angels of the third heaven stand erect; their prayer is conceived in these terms: 'Glory to God, living, immortal!' Their chief is called Ferkiak Yek. Those of the fourth heaven have only to praise God in these terms: 'Praise to the King of holiness, to the Lord of angels and spirits!' Their chief is angel named Moumai Yek. Those of the fifth heaven are occupied in rising (after adoration) and their form of prayer is: 'Praise to the Master of Light, praise and adoration to Him!' At their head they have an angel called Istapha Yek. Those of the sixth heaven are continually at prayer, and here is their prayer: 'Praise God, may He be propitious to His people!' Their chief is called Redyai Yek. Those of the seventh heaven are so numerous that they cannot be counted. They have each a different form, and no two resemble each other. They have never contention among them, this silence arises from the terror with which Divinity inspires them. From the moment they were created by the Eternal out of nothing they have not ceased to weep. If their sighs were but to reach the ears of mortals, they would become suddenly inanimate. It is known, says this theologian, that, when Mohammed was ascending to heaven, he heard their sighs seven times; and the angel Gabriel explained to him that it was the sins of men that drew forth these bursts of grief."

We read in these oriental books of angels furnished with a hundred thousand wings; of being provided with hands and feet, who eat and drink and wear garments, and who are neither angels nor men; of a sea which the Almighty created so deep that it would require five hundred years for a stone to sink from its surface to its bottom, and that in this sea there is an angel of the same stature as its depth. We read further, that Gabriel is at the head of all the angels, and is precious in the sight of the Most High; he has six hundred wings of all sorts of precious stones. Michael was created five hundred years after Gabriel; after the same number of years, God gave being to the angel Ismail, who inhabited the first heaven. His face is turned towards the bench where judgement is pronounced; he bears in his left hand the souls of Mussulmans, and in his right those of infidels; the first he sends to heaven, the latter to hell. So far of angels. A word or two of demons.

The first *djin* (spirit) which God created of the fire of hell was a male; he was called Maridj. Then he created a woman, called Maridje; they had a son, to whom they gave the name of Djinn. It is from him have descended all the djins, and from the latter descended Iblis. Iblis had a wife named Lebya, and issue of the race of djans. Commentators on the Koran are divided with regard to Iblis; some make of him an angel, others believe that he was derived from the djins. The Mussulmans, at all events, admit of demons, at the head of whom is Iblis. In chapter xxviii. of the Koran, God asked him why he did not adore the first man. Iblis replied that Adam was formed of the dust of the ground and he of fire, and consequently his nature was more noble than that of Adam's; he swore by the power of the most high that he would seduce mankind, and spare only the faithful servants of the Divinity. According to the Mussulmans the demons remain forever in hell. To one of them they give the name of Ifrit; it was he, according to Mohammed, who was charged with bearing the throne of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. The Prophet affirms that the devil is the patron of infidels and unbelievers, and that he draws them from the light to plunge them into darkness. As to genies, the Mussulmans think that they hold an intermediate place between angels and men; that among them are good and bad; that there are some who convert, and some who pervert; that they were created of fire. According to Salab-eddin, the genies eat, drink, and propagate their species; they are, besides, liable to death. Mohammed blames the ignorant idolatrous Arabs