

and court, and entertain them in princely style. But alas! titles and royal guests were not for him, and all the castle he was ever to lay claim to was such one "in the air," as any one of us may build. He was taken prisoner by the Turks, robbed of his ship, sold as a slave, fettered and set at work in the palace gardens of Mahmoud, a terrible, fierce-eyed, black-bearded, big-turbaned Saracen chief.

It was a very hard fortune, that of poor Gilbert. He was obliged to toil from morning till night, digging or spading, planting and weeding, and all the while with the disadvantage of not knowing much about the gardening business, and of having a heavy chain dragging and clinking at his ancles. You may depend that he felt that if he could get safe back to England he would never more aspire to castles and titles, nor trouble himself if the king and court never should eat a good dinner or shake their heels at a ball again.

But often out of our greatest misfortune comes our best good and happiness—and hope and joy often follow times of fear and sorrow, as beautiful rainbows are made out of storms that have just darkened the sky and beaten down the flowers. One evening, just as the muezzin was calling all pious Musselmen to prayers, Gilbert a Becket stood leaning against a palm tree, resting a little from his daily toil and thinking longing of his country and home. Just then, a young Saracen lady of marvelous beauty, called Zarina, chanced that way on her evening walk, and was very much struck by the appearance of the stranger. In truth, as Gilbert stood there leaning so gracefully against the palm, with his pale face cast down, and his soft auburn hair half veiling his sad eyes—to say nothing of his

long golden eye-lashes, and his curling, silken mustache, he was a very handsome and interesting young man, and in spite of that gardener's dress and that slavish chain, looked as proud and noble as a prince.

Zarina thought so, and though very modest and timid, drew near to speak a few kind words to him. He looked up at the sound of her light step, and, for the first time in many months, he smiled, gladdened by the sight of her beautiful innocent face.

The ballad does not tell just how these two became acquainted, but it is certain that they soon grew to be excellent friends, and managed to meet often, and have long walks and talks in the shaded bowers of Mahmoud's gardens. They first talked of the birds and flowers, then of the stars and the moonlight, then of love, then of God. Gilbert told Zarina of the Christian's blessed faith, and related all the beautiful and marvellous stories of our Lord Jesus, and Zarina wondered and wept and believed.

Gilbert had learned the Saracean language and spoke it very well, but Zarina did not understand the English at all. The first word of that she ever spoke was "yes," which Gilbert taught her to say when he asked her to be his wife, whenever he could gain his freedom.—But month after month, a whole year went by, and Gilbert was still a captive.

One day, when Zarina met her lover in a shady garden walk, she said in a low, gentle voice, and with her tender eyes cast down, "I am a Christian now, dear Gilbert; I pray to God morning and night. Thou knowest I am an orphan. I love no one in the world but thee; then why should I stay here? why shouldst thou linger in bondage? Let us fly to England?"