

and then bowing low, he retired. Mahmoud's eyes rested on splendid hangings, laden with the richest brocades, and furniture crusted with gold and sparkling ornaments. After reclining for a few moments to gather his scattered thoughts, he signified that he desired a bath. The slaves whom he found nudes, speedily prepared in a marble reservoir, a delicious bath, redolent with aromatic herbs and perfumes. When he prepared to dress, they placed before him robes of the richest materials, blazing with jewels. Arrayed in this he stood before a lofty mirror and saw himself reflected graceful, engaging and magnificent. He had hardly ceased to admire his own attractions, when a slave entered, and bowing low said, "Honourable son of a Sheikh!" my noble master waits his evening meal, in the hope of being honoured with your presence." Mahmoud instantly followed him to a lofty room, still more magnificent than any he had seen, where the Sheikh awaited him at a table spread with every luxury.

The Sheikh welcomed him with great cordiality, and pressed upon him the most delicate viands. Mahmoud ate with the relish of youth and hunger, replying respectfully to the remarks of his generous host. At last, his appetite being fully satisfied, and pipes and coffee being placed before them, the attendants withdrew. They sat sometime in silence, when the Sheikh began, "Think me not prompted by a vain and ignoble curiosity, my young friend, if I ask thee to tell me the story of thy life, for I am convinced that behind the curtain of a plain exterior, something remarkable lingers."

"Honourable father, thou sayest truly," replied Mahmoud. "Thy wisdom and experience have discerned what is happily not apparent to all; but my story, though short, so far transcends all probability, that were I to tell thee the whole truth, thou wouldst not believe it, but wouldst distrust me as a liar, so that I should lose thy esteem."

"Fear not, my son," responded the Sheikh. "I have on my finger a mysterious talisman, a ring, the jewel of which sparkles with a playful light when the truth is told, but when a lie is spoken lowers into a dull and sullen red. Speak on therefore, confident that while you tell only that which has happened, my affection and esteem will increase for you."

"With such a guarantee I will speak," answered Mahmoud, and he told the Sheikh his whole story, as we have narrated it. When he had concluded, the Sheikh embraced him. "My son," cried he, "while you have spoken, behold my talisman has blazed with an unwonted lustre. Every word of your mouth has been true. Allah has sent you to me. You have told me your whole story, and merit a like confidence on my part, if I do not tire you."

"Generous and wise Sheikh!" answered Mahmoud, "I burn to hear the story of one so experienced and noble!—Only discretion and respect hindered me from requesting it. I pray you to begin."

SELIM'S STORY.

Know then, begun the Sheikh, that I am Selim, the son of Hussein. I was born in this house, when my father, a wealthy merchant, lived in great splendour. He determined to bring me up to his own pursuits, and employed masters, who taught me all the polite literature and religious knowledge thought proper for one of the first rank. When I had just attained my twentieth year, an incident occurred that moulded my whole future life. One night as I reposed by the fountain in my garden I heard from out the plash of its falling waters, issuing a melody, far off but of exquisite beauty, and through it ran the words, "Come to me, come to me," with an energy and tenderness that thrilled my heart. After this, I knew no rest, until finally at my request, my father gave me a stock of goods and a purse of gold and bade me travel to acquire knowledge and wealth. By a long journey, I reached Aleppo, and thence coming to the sea, embarked for Spain. Arrived at Malaga, I sold my cargo, for good profit, and went to Granada, the luxurious seat of the Western Caliphate. I reached the suburbs of Granada on a summer evening, just as the moon rose above the orange groves. As

I rode along, breathing the sweet fragrance of jasmine, and a thousand other delicious flowers, I heard within the garden-walls that I was passing, the skilful touch of a musician, accompanied by a voice, which poured forth such floods of melody as Paris might envy. I drew up my steed, and paused to listen. It was the song I had heard by the fountain,—the melody—the voice. I know not how long I stopped, bewildered, enchanted. Some impulse, impossible to resist, seemed to seize me, and, dismounting, I looked for some part of the wall that I could scale. Finding none such, I led my horse close to the wall, and placing my foot on the high pommel of the saddle, gave a great spring which enabled me to grasp the parapet, and clamber up astride of the wall, where, availing myself of the pendulous branches of a hanging tree, I lightly swung to the ground. Standing in the shade of the tree, I looked eagerly about and discovered that I stood in a garden full of all rare delights. But these little occupied my soul at that moment. Hither and thither I turned my eyes to find whence came the ravishing music which had so entranced me. At last I discerned a noble fountain, and at its side a beautiful summer house of the rarest workmanship, in which sat an old man, clad in the costume of a Jew of the highest class. At his feet, reclined the singer, whose voice had lured me thither. I would have repented the rashness of my intrusion, but for the vision of beauty, which burst upon my sight. I beheld a face, whose perfect loveliness at once informed my soul, that it was the song and the music set to the human form. Volumes of soul-melody poured over its perfect features, and thought traversed it with a rhythm, which caused me exclaim to my own heart: "This is not a woman. This is music made human." I drew near under the shadow of the trees, until I could almost have touched them, but so cautious were my movements, so dense the shrubbery that my approach was not noticed. At last the song ceased, and the old Jew drew a deep sigh. "My beloved daughter!" he began, "last and only relic of my lost Leah! Some mighty danger hangs over our house. In the stars, I read its steady advance and near crisis, but how or whence I cannot tell. To-night, at the culmination of Venus, I will realize, apprehend and endeavour to avert it. To this end, I must leave you, to seek in my tower to unfold this mystery of the stars. Seems it not strange that this refuge, which seemed secure, after our flight from Cordova, should prove treacherous also. Good-night, my dearest Hannah. Tempt not the night dew to late." So saying, he rose, and untwining his daughter's arm from his neck which now enclosed it, he kissed her and retired. Again the lady took up her guitar and breathed a murmurous and melancholy love song. My heart stood still, and when she ceased, I was kneeling before her, with downcast eyes. She gave a little scream, which she checked before it was uttered. At this, I lifted my eyes, and said in confusion, "Fear not, lady! it is thy slave who kneels." "Alas! how came you here," cried she. "Lured from Bagdad on the Tigris by your song, I came to die at your feet or win your love." "My dream, my fears, my hopes were then true," exclaimed she. "Oh! noble sir, know you where you stand?"

To be continued.

OLD MASTER GRUNSEY AND GOODMAN DODD.

STRAFORD-ON-AVON, A.D. 1397.

[The following poem, by William Allingham, is a rare study of "Merrie England" in the olden time.]

G. God save you, Goodman Dodd—a sight to seeo you!
D. Save you, good Master Grunsey. Sir, how be you?
G. Middish, thank Heaven. Baro weather for the wheat.
D. Farms will be thirsty, after all this heat.
G. And so is wo. Sit down on this here bench: We'll drink a pot o' yale, mun. Hither, weanch! My service—hal! I'm well enough, I fogs, But for this plaguey rheum I both my legs. Whiles I can't hardly get about: Oh dear!
D. Thou see'st, we don't get younger every year
G. Thou'rt a young fellow yet.

D. Well-nigh three-score.
G. I be thy elder fifteen year and more. Hast any news?
D. Not much. New-Place is sold, And Willy Shakespeare's bought it, so I'm told.
G. What! little Willy Shakespeare bought the Place?
Lord bless us, how young folks get on apace! Sir Hugh's great house beside the grammar-school! This Shakespeare's (take my word upon't, no fool. I mind him sin' he were so high's my knee; A stirrin' little mischief chap was he; One day I coteled him peffin' o' my geese Below the church: "You let 'em swim in peace, "Young dog!" I says, "or I shall fling thee in." Will was on t'other bank and did but grin, And call out, "Sir, you come across to here?" D. I know's old John thee live and thy year. In old times many a cup he made me drink; But Willy weren't aborn then, I don't think, Or might a' been a babe on a mother's arm When I did cart 'em fleeces from our farm. I went a courtin' then, in Avon-Lane, And tho' bit further, I was always fain To bring my cart thereby, upon a chance To catch some foolish little hood or glance, Or meet me, Mary, won't 'ee, Charlcote way, Or down at Clifton Bridge, next holiday?—Heath, Master Grunsey.
G. Thank ee friend. 'Tis hot. We might do worse than call another pot. Good Mistress Nan! Will Shakespeare, troth, I know; A mumble-culley-pate, and pretty too, About the street, he growed an idle lad, And like enough, 'twas thought, to turn out bad: I don't just fairly know, but folk did say He vexed the Lucys, and so fled away.
D. He's worth as much as Tanner Twigg to-day; And all 'e plays in Lunnun.
G. Folk talk big: Will Shakespeare worth as much as Tanner Twigg—Tut, tut! Is Will a warth man by trade?
G. Of course he is, o' course he is; and made A wondrous heap o' money too, and bought A playhouse for himself like, out and out; And makes up plays, beside, for 'em to act; Tho' I can't tell thee rightly, for a fact, If out o' books or 'is own head it be. We've other work to think on, thee and me. They say Will is doing amely, howsoever.
D. Why, Dodd, the little chap was always clever. I don't know nothing now o' such-like-toys; New fashions plenty, mun, sin' we were boys; We used to ha' rare mummings, puppet-shows, And Moralities—they can't much better those. The Death of Judas was a pretty thing, "So-lar so-lar!" the Devil used to sing. But time goes on, for sure, and fashion alters.
D. Wot at the Crown, last night, says young Jack Walters.
G. Willy's a great man now!
G. A jollier deal! What does it count for, when all's done and said? Ah! who'll o'us, let Will say: "Come" or "Go?" Such-like as him don't reckon much, I trow. Sir, they shall travel first, like thee and me; See Lunnun, to find out what great men be. Y, marry, must they?—Sants! to see the Court. Take water down to Greenwich; there's a sport! Her Highness in her frills and palls, and pearls, Barons and lords, and chamberlains, and carls, So thick as midges round her,—look at such An' then woudest talk of greatness! why, the touch Is on their stewards and jackies, Goodman Dodd, Who'll hardly answer Shakespeare w' a nod, And let him come doffed cap and bended knee. We know a trifle, neighbour, thee and me.
D. We may, sir. This here's grand old Stratford brow No better yale in Lunnun, search it through. New-Place be'n't such a bargain, when an's don't 'Twas dear, I know it.
G. Thou lovest't better mun. At Hoggan knots, all an't alike in skill.
D. Thanks to the Lord above, I've not done ill. No more has thee, friend Grunsey, in thy trade.
G. So-so. But here's young Will w' money made, And money saved; whereon I lets him down, Sny also who likes, a credit to the town. Though some do shake their heads at player-folk.
D. A very civil man to chat and joke; I've oftimes had a bit o' talk w' Will.
G. How doth old Master Shakespeare?
D. Bravely still. And so doth malm, too, the comely dame.
G. And Willy's wife—what used to be her name?
D. Why, Hathaway, fro' down by Shuttery gate. I don't think she's so much about o' late. Their son, thou see'st, the only son they had, Died last year, and she took on dreadful bad; And so the fay ther did awhile, I'm told. This boy o' theirs was thine or ten years old. —Willy himself may bide here now, mayhap.
G. He always was a clever little chap. I'm glad o' his luck an' t'wero for old John's sake. Thy arm, sweet Sir. Oh, how my legs do ache!

Faulls.—No one sees the wallet on his own back, though every one carries two packs; one before, stuffed with the faults of his neighbours, the other behind filled with his own.—(Old Proverb.)
Benefits please like flowers while the' are fresh.
Let not him that fears feathers come among wild fowls.
God oft hath a great share in a little house.