

I have been Caliph, only for a few moments, and see what I have suffered. You are Caliph all day long, what must you then suffer?"

If the redoubtable Alexander spared the city of Lampsacus, out of consideration of the wit of a philosopher fool, an equally direful conqueror from the far east spared Neapolis out of consideration for the wit of a fool philosopher. It happened in this wise.

When Timour Leng was approaching the city, the inhabitants prepared to defend themselves with vigour. Nasur ad Deen Chodscha however who had been in the service of the first Bajazet dissuaded them from doing so, telling them to make him their ambassador and leave the rest to him. The people though doubtful of his plans, still yielded to his importunities. Before proceeding on his expedition our ambassador bethought him that he must at least approach the conqueror with some kind of present. He resolved that it should be fruit, but was divided in mind as to figs or quinces. "I will consult my wife" said Nasur; and he did so. The lady was in favour of quinces. Nasur thereupon took figs. When he reached the tent of the haughty conqueror and had announced himself with all due solemnity as the ambassador of the beleaguered city, he presented as an offering of homage his trumpery basket of figs. Tamerlane in a rage ordered the figs to be flung at the head of the presumptuous ambassador. The courtiers accordingly pelted away with right good will, and each time a soft fig struck the imperturbable Nasur, he resignedly exclaimed, "Now, the Great Allah be praised! The Prophet be thanked! How grateful I ought to be!"

"What! fellow! how is this?" said Timour: "we pelt you with figs and you rejoice; and the more we pelt you, the more you rejoice."

"Exactly;" said Nasur. "My wife told me to bring quinces, and I brought figs. Have I not reason to thank the Prophet? Your soft figs indeed hurt, but quinces would have beaten out my brains." The conqueror laughed heartily and gave orders that for the sake of one fool's folly, all the other fool's should be sought out in the city and spared. "Then the whole city is safe!" said

Nasur and started off with alacrity to announce the news.

Hither emboldened by his success as ambassador, or thankful for the favour conferred this same Nasur brought the great Turk a basket of gherkins for his supper. The warrior ordered his major-domo to reward him with ten gold pieces. Again when the season of full grown cucumbers had come round, Nasur set out to the palace with a basketful. But the major-domo remembering the former high recompense would not allow him to pass until he had promised him half the reward. "Half!" exclaimed Nasur; "that were too little for so good a gentleman. Thou shalt have three quarters at least;" and he passed into the presence chamber. Timour who was seated on the throne of cushions, seeing him approach exclaimed what! another present? How much do you expect for this? If it please your greatness, said Nasur, I would wish a hundred stripes. A hundred stripes! my man. Nay; that were indeed a sorry return for so beautiful a basket of cucumbers. But said Nasur I will receive nothing else. "Give them me I pray." Well! by the Prophet's head! if thou wilt have them, thou shalt. Let him receive a hundred stripes.

Folding his arms and inclining his head, Nasur received the stripes, patiently and unflinchingly until he came to the 25th, stroke. Then he cried out to the belabouring official "stop."

Nay! said Timour since thou wouldst have thy hundred stripes, thou shalt. I am one that gives full pay.—Strike away.

"Stay; most puissant and wise warrior," exclaimed Nasur, "I have got all my own. To be honest with you the rest are not mine."

How is that? asked the now bewildered Tamerlane.

I will tell thee, said Nasur. As I entered the pulace, thy major-domo made me promise him half the reward. Thinking half too little for so great and good a gentleman, I promised him at least three quarters. Give him therefore his own. Though I am poor, I am honest; and would not defraud the gentleman of anything.

The major-domo received his seventy-five stripes and Nasur went home re-