

ZADIG THE BABYLONIAN

By Francois Marie Arouet De Voltaire

THE BLIND OF ONE EYE

There lived at Babylon, in the reign of King Moabdar, a young man named Zadig, of a good natural disposition, strengthened and improved by education. Though rich and young, he had learned to moderate his passions; he had nothing stiff or affected in his behavior, he did not pretend to examine every action by the strict rules of reason, but was always ready to make proper allowances for the weakness of mankind.

It was matter of surprise that, notwithstanding his sprightly wit, he never exposed by his raillery those vague, incoherent, and noisy discourses, those rash censures, ignorant decisions, coarse jests, and all that empty jingle of words which at Babylon went by the name of conversation. He had learned, in the first book of Zoroaster, that self love is a football swelled with wind, from which, when pierced, the most terrible tempests issue forth.

Above all, Zadig never boasted of his conquests among the women, nor affected to entertain a contemptible opinion of the fair sex. He was generous, and was never afraid of obliging the ungrateful; remembering the grand precept of Zoroaster, "When thou eatest, give to the dogs, should they even bite thee." He was as wise as it is possible for man to be, for he sought to live with the wise.

Instructed in the sciences of the ancient Chaldeans, he understood the principles of natural philosophy, such as they were then supposed to be; and knew as much of metaphysics as hath ever been known in any age, that is, little or nothing at all. He was firmly persuaded, notwithstanding the new philosophy of the times, that the year consisted of three hundred and sixty-five days and six hours, and that

the sun was in the center of the world. But when the principal magi told him, with a haughty and contemptuous air, that his sentiments were of a dangerous tendency, and that it was to be an enemy to the state to believe that the sun revolved round its own axis, and that the year had twelve months, he held his tongue with great modesty and meekness.

Possessed as he was of great riches, and consequently of many friends, blessed with a good constitution, a handsome figure, a mind just and moderate, and a heart noble and sincere, he fondly imagined that he might easily be happy. He was going to be married to Semira, who, in point of beauty, birth, and fortune, was the first match in Babylon. He had a real and virtuous affection for this lady, and she loved him with the most passionate fondness.

The happy moment was almost arrived that was to unite them forever in the bands of wedlock, when happening to take a walk together toward one of the gates of Babylon, under the palm trees that adorn the banks of the Euphrates, they saw some men approaching, armed with sabers and arrows. These were the attendants of young Orcan, the minister's nephew, whom his uncle's creatures had flattered into an opinion that he might do everything with impunity. He had none of the graces nor virtues of Zadig; but thinking himself a much more accomplished man, he was enraged to find that the other was preferred before him. This jealousy, which was merely the effect of his vanity, made him imagine that he was desperately in love with Semira; and accordingly he resolved to carry her off. The ravishers seized her; in the violence of the outrage they wounded her, and made the blood flow from her person, the sight of which would have softened the tigers of Mount Imaus. She pierced the heavens with her complaints. She cried out, "My dear husband! they tear me from the man I adore." Regardless of her own danger, she was only concerned for the fate of her dear Zadig, who, in the meantime, defended himself with all the strength that courage and love could inspire. Assisted only by two

slaves, he put the ravishers to flight and carried home Semira, insensible and bloody as she was.

On opening her eyes and beholding her deliverer. "O Zadig!" said she, "I loved thee formerly as my intended husband; I now love thee as the preserver of my honor and my life." Never was heart more deeply affected than that of Semira. Never did a more charming mouth express more moving sentiments, in those glowing words inspired by a sense of the greatest of all favors, and by the most tender transports of a lawful passion.

Her wound was slight and was soon cured. Zadig was more dangerously wounded; an arrow had pierced him near his eye, and penetrated to a considerable depth. Semira wearied Heaven with her prayers for the recovery of her lover. Her eyes were constantly bathed in tears; she anxiously awaited the happy moment when those of Zadig should be able to meet hers; but an abscess growing on the wounded eye gave everything to fear. A messenger was immediately dispatched to Memphis for the great physician Hermes, who came with a numerous retinue. He visited the patient and declared that he would lose his eye. He even foretold the day and hour when this fatal event would happen. "Had it been the right eye," said he, "I could easily have cured it; but the wounds of the left eye are incurable." All Babylon lamented the fate of Zadig, and admired the profound knowledge of Hermes.

In two days the abscess broke of its own accord and Zadig was perfectly cured. Hermes wrote a book to prove that it ought not to have been cured. Zadig did not read it; but, as soon as he was able to go abroad, he went to pay a visit to her in whom all his hopes of happiness were centered, and for whose sake alone he wished to have eyes. Semira had been in the country for three days past. He learned on the road that that fine lady, having openly declared that she had an unconquerable aversion to one-eyed men, had the night before given her hand to Orcan. At this news he fell speechless to the ground. His

sorrow brought him almost to the brink of the grave. He was long indisposed; but reason at last got the better of his affliction, and the severity of his fate served to console him.

"Since," said he, "I have suffered so much from the cruel caprice of a woman educated at court, I must now think of marrying the daughter of a citizen." He pitched upon Azora, a lady of the greatest prudence, and of the best family in town. He married her and lived with her for three months in all the delights of the most tender union. He only observed that she had a little levity; and was too apt to find that those young men who had the most handsome persons were likewise possessed of most wit and virtue.

THE NOSE

One morning Azora returned from a walk in a terrible passion, and uttering the most violent exclamations. "What aileth thee," said he, "my dear spouse? What is it that can thus have discomposed thee?"

"Alas," said she, "thou wouldst be as much enraged as I am hadst thou seen what I have just beheld. I have been to comfort the young widow Cosrou, who, within these two days, hath raised a tomb to her young husband, near the rivulet that washes the skirts of this meadow. She vowed to heaven, in the bitterness of her grief, to remain at this tomb while the water of the rivulet should continue to run near it."--"Well," said Zadig, "she is an excellent woman, and loved her husband with the most sincere affection."

"Ah," replied Azora, "didst thou but know in what she was employed when I went to wait upon her!"

"In what, pray, beautiful Azora? Was she turning the course of the rivulet?"

Azora broke out into such long invectives and loaded the young widow with such bitter reproaches, that Zadig was far from being pleased with this ostentation of virtue.

Zadig had a friend named Cador, one of those young men in whom his wife discovered more probity and merit than in others. He made him his confidant, and secured his fidelity as much as possible by a considerable present. Azora, having passed two days with a friend in the country, returned home on the third. The servants told her, with tears in their eyes, that her husband died suddenly the night before; that they were afraid to send her an account of this mournful event; and that they had just been depositing his corpse in the tomb of his ancestors, at the end of the garden.

She wept, she tore her hair, and swore she would follow him to the grave.

In the evening Cador begged leave to wait upon her, and joined his tears with hers. Next day they wept less, and dined together. Cador told her that his friend had left him the greatest part of his estate; and that he should think himself extremely happy in sharing his fortune with her. The lady wept, fell into a passion, and at last became more mild and gentle. They sat longer at supper than at dinner. They now talked with greater confidence. Azora praised the deceased; but owned that he had many failings from which Cador was free.

During supper Cador complained of a violent pain in his side. The lady, greatly concerned, and eager to serve him, caused all kinds of essences to be brought, with which she anointed him, to try if some of them might not possibly ease him of his pain. She lamented that the great Hermes was not still in Babylon. She even condescended to touch the side in which Cador felt such exquisite pain.

"Art thou subject to this cruel disorder?" said she to him with a compassionate air.

"It sometimes brings me," replied Cador, "to the brink of the grave; and there is but one remedy that can give me relief, and that is to apply to my side the nose of a man who is lately dead."

"A strange remedy, indeed!" said Azora.

"Not more strange," replied he, "than the sachels of Arnon against the apoplexy." This reason, added to the great merit of the young man, at last determined the lady.

"After all," says she, "when my husband shall cross the bridge Tchinar, in his journey to the other world, the angel Asrael will not refuse him a passage because his nose is a little shorter in the second life than it was in the first." She then took a razor, went to her husband's tomb, bedewed it with her tears, and drew near to cut off the nose of Zadig, whom she found extended at full length in the tomb. Zadig arose, holding his nose with one hand, and, putting back the razor with the other, "Madam," said he, "don't exclaim so violently against young Cosrou; the project of cutting off my nose is equal to that of turning the course of a rivulet." Zadig found by experience that the first month of marriage, as it is written in the book of Zend, is the moon of honey, and that the second is the moon of wormwood. He was some time after obliged to repudiate Azora, who became too difficult to be pleased; and he then sought for happiness in the study of nature. "No man," said he, "can be happier than a philosopher who reads in this great book which God hath placed before our eyes. The truths he discovers are his own; he nourishes and exalts his soul; he lives in peace; he fears nothing from men; and his tender spouse will not come to cut off his nose."

Possessed of these ideas he retired to a country house on the banks of the Euphrates. There he did not employ himself in calculating how many inches of water flow in a second of time under the arches of a bridge, or whether there fell a cube line of rain in the month of the

Mouse more than in the month of the Sheep. He never dreamed of making silk of cobwebs, or porcelain of broken bottles; but he chiefly studied the properties of plants and animals; and soon acquired a sagacity that made him discover a thousand differences where other men see nothing but uniformity.

One day, as he was walking near a little wood, he saw one of the queen's eunuchs running toward him, followed by several officers, who appeared to be in great perplexity, and who ran to and fro like men distracted, eagerly searching for something they had lost of great value. "Young man," said the first eunuch, "hast thou seen the queen's dog?" "It is a female," replied Zadig. "Thou art in the right," returned the first eunuch. "It is a very small she spaniel," added Zadig; "she has lately whelped; she limps on the left forefoot, and has very long ears." "Thou hast seen her," said the first eunuch, quite out of breath. "No," replied Zadig, "I have not seen her, nor did I so much as know that the queen had a dog."

Exactly at the same time, by one of the common freaks of fortune, the finest horse in the king's stable had escaped from the jockey in the plains of Babylon. The principal huntsman and all the other officers ran after him with as much eagerness and anxiety as the first eunuch had done after the spaniel. The principal huntsman addressed himself to Zadig, and asked him if he had not seen the king's horse passing by. "He is the fleetest horse in the king's stable," replied Zadig; "he is five feet high, with very small hoofs, and a tail three feet and a half in length; the studs on his bit are gold of twenty-three carats, and his shoes are silver of eleven pennyweights." "What way did he take? where is he?" demanded the chief huntsman. "I have not seen him," replied Zadig, "and never heard talk of him before."

The principal huntsman and the first eunuch never doubted but that Zadig had stolen the king's horse and the queen's spaniel. They therefore had him conducted before the assembly of the grand desterham, who condemned him to the knout, and to spend the rest of

his days in Siberia. Hardly was the sentence passed when the horse and the spaniel were both found. The judges were reduced to the disagreeable necessity of reversing their sentence; but they condemned Zadig to pay four hundred ounces of gold for having said that he had not seen what he had seen. This fine he was obliged to pay; after which he was permitted to plead his cause before the counsel of the grand desterham, when he spoke to the following effect:

"Ye stars of justice, abyss of sciences, mirrors of truth, who have the weight of lead, the hardness of iron, the splendor of the diamond, and many properties of gold: Since I am permitted to speak before this august assembly, I swear to you by Oramades that I have never seen the queen's respectable spaniel, nor the sacred horse of the king of kings. The truth of the matter was as follows: I was walking toward the little wood, where I afterwards met the venerable eunuch, and the most illustrious chief huntsman. I observed on the sand the traces of an animal, and could easily perceive them to be those of a little dog. The light and long furrows impressed on little eminences of sand between the marks of the paws plainly discovered that it was a female, whose dugs were hanging down, and that therefore she must have whelped a few days before. Other traces of a different kind, that always appeared to have gently brushed the surface of the sand near the marks of the forefeet, showed me that she had very long ears; and as I remarked that there was always a slighter impression made on the sand by one foot than the other three, I found that the spaniel of our august queen was a little lame, if I may be allowed the expression.

"With regard to the horse of the king of kings, you will be pleased to know that, walking in the lanes of this wood, I observed the marks of a horse's shoes, all at equal distances. This must be a horse, said I to myself, that gallops excellently. The dust on the trees in the road that was but seven feet wide was a little brushed off, at the distance of three feet and a half from the middle of the road. This horse, said I, has a tail three feet and a half long, which being whisked to the right

and left, has swept away the dust. I observed under the trees that formed an arbor five feet in height, that the leaves of the branches were newly fallen; from whence I inferred that the horse had touched them, and that he must therefore be five feet high. As to his bit, it must be gold of twenty-three carats, for he had rubbed its bosses against a stone which I knew to be a touchstone, and which I have tried. In a word, from the marks made by his shoes on flints of another kind, I concluded that he was shod with silver eleven deniers fine."

All the judges admired Zadig for his acute and profound discernment. The news of this speech was carried even to the king and queen. Nothing was talked of but Zadig in the antechambers, the chambers, and the cabinet; and though many of the magi were of opinion that he ought to be burned as a sorcerer, the king ordered his officers to restore him the four hundred ounces of gold which he had been obliged to pay. The register, the attorneys, and bailiffs went to his house with great formality, to carry him back his four hundred ounces. They only retained three hundred and ninety-eight of them to defray the expenses of justice; and their servants demanded their fees.

Zadig saw how extremely dangerous it sometimes is to appear too knowing, and therefore resolved that on the next occasion of the like nature he would not tell what he had seen.

Such an opportunity soon offered. A prisoner of state made his escape, and passed under the window of Zadig's house. Zadig was examined and made no answer. But it was proved that he had looked at the prisoner from this window. For this crime he was condemned to pay five hundred ounces of gold; and, according to the polite custom of Babylon, he thanked his judges for their indulgence.

"Great God!" said he to himself, "what a misfortune it is to walk in a wood through which the queen's spaniel or the king's horse has passed! how dangerous to look out at a window! and how difficult to be happy in this life!"

THE ENVIOUS MAN

Zadig resolved to comfort himself by philosophy and friendship for the evils he had suffered from fortune. He had in the suburbs of Babylon a house elegantly furnished, in which he assembled all the arts and all the pleasures worthy the pursuit of a gentleman. In the morning his library was open to the learned. In the evening his table was surrounded by good company. But he soon found what very dangerous guests these men of letters are. A warm dispute arose on one of Zoroaster's laws, which forbids the eating of a griffin. "Why," said some of them, "prohibit the eating of a griffin, if there is no such an animal in nature?" "There must necessarily be such an animal," said the others, "since Zoroaster forbids us to eat it." Zadig would fain have reconciled them by saying, "If there are no griffins, we cannot possibly eat them; and thus either way we shall obey Zoroaster."

A learned man who had composed thirteen volumes on the properties of the griffin, and was besides the chief theurgite, hastened away to accuse Zadig before one of the principal magi, named Yebor, the greatest blockhead and therefore the greatest fanatic among the Chaldeans. This man would have impaled Zadig to do honors to the sun, and would then have recited the breviary of Zoroaster with greater satisfaction. The friend Cador (a friend is better than a hundred priests) went to Yebor, and said to him, "Long live the sun and the griffins; beware of punishing Zadig; he is a saint; he has griffins in his inner court and does not eat them; and his accuser is an heretic, who dares to maintain that rabbits have cloven feet and are not unclean."

"Well," said Yebor, shaking his bald pate, "we must impale Zadig for having thought contemptuously of griffins, and the other for having spoken disrespectfully of rabbits." Cador hushed up the affair by means of a maid of honor with whom he had a love affair, and who had great interest in the College of the Magi. Nobody was impaled.

This levity occasioned a great murmuring among some of the doctors, who from thence predicted the fall of Babylon. "Upon what does happiness depend?" said Zadig. "I am persecuted by everything in the world, even on account of beings that have no existence." He cursed those men of learning, and resolved for the future to live with none but good company.

He assembled at his house the most worthy men and the most beautiful ladies of Babylon. He gave them delicious suppers, often preceded by concerts of music, and always animated by polite conversation, from which he knew how to banish that affectation of wit which is the surest method of preventing it entirely, and of spoiling the pleasure of the most agreeable society. Neither the choice of his friends nor that of the dishes was made by vanity; for in everything he preferred the substance to the shadow; and by these means he procured that real respect to which he did not aspire.

Opposite to his house lived one Arimazes, a man whose deformed countenance was but a faint picture of his still more deformed mind. His heart was a mixture of malice, pride, and envy. Having never been able to succeed in any of his undertakings, he revenged himself on all around him by loading them with the blackest calumnies. Rich as he was, he found it difficult to procure a set of flatterers. The rattling of the chariots that entered Zadig's court in the evening filled him with uneasiness; the sound of his praises enraged him still more. He sometimes went to Zadig's house, and sat down at table without being desired; where he spoiled all the pleasure of the company, as the harpies are said to infect the viands they touch. It happened that one day he took it in his head to give an entertainment to a lady, who, instead of accepting it, went to sup with Zadig. At another time, as he was talking with Zadig at court, a minister of state came up to them, and invited Zadig to supper without inviting Arimazes. The most implacable hatred has seldom a more solid foundation. This man, who in Babylon was called the Envious, resolved to ruin Zadig because he was called the Happy. "The opportunity of doing mischief occurs a

hundred times in a day, and that of doing good but once a year," as sayeth the wise Zoroaster.

The envious man went to see Zadig, who was walking in his garden with two friends and a lady, to whom he said many gallant things, without any other intention than that of saying them. The conversation turned upon a war which the king had just brought to a happy conclusion against the prince of Hircania, his vassal. Zadig, who had signalized his courage in this short war, bestowed great praises on the king, but greater still on the lady. He took out his pocket-book, and wrote four lines extempore, which he gave to this amiable person to read. His friends begged they might see them; but modesty, or rather a well-regulated self love, would not allow him to grant their request. He knew that extemporary verses are never approved of by any but by the person in whose honor they are written. He therefore tore in two the leaf on which he had wrote them, and threw both the pieces into a thicket of rose-bushes, where the rest of the company sought for them in vain. A slight shower falling soon after obliged them to return to the house. The envious man, who stayed in the garden, continued the search till at last he found a piece of the leaf. It had been torn in such a manner that each half of a line formed a complete sense, and even a verse of a shorter measure; but what was still more surprising, these short verses were found to contain the most injurious reflections on the king. They ran thus:

To flagrant crimes His crown he owes, To peaceful times The worst
of foes.

The envious man was now happy for the first time of his life. He had it in his power to ruin a person of virtue and merit. Filled with this fiendlike joy, he found means to convey to the king the satire written by the hand of Zadig, who, together with the lady and his two friends, was thrown into prison.

His trial was soon finished, without his being permitted to speak for himself. As he was going to receive his sentence, the envious man threw himself in his way and told him with a loud voice that his verses were good for nothing. Zadig did not value himself on being a good poet; but it filled him with inexpressible concern to find that he was condemned for high treason; and that the fair lady and his two friends were confined in prison for a crime of which they were not guilty. He was not allowed to speak because his writing spoke for him. Such was the law of Babylon. Accordingly he was conducted to the place of execution, through an immense crowd of spectators, who durst not venture to express their pity for him, but who carefully examined his countenance to see if he died with a good grace. His relations alone were inconsolable, for they could not succeed to his estate. Three-fourths of his wealth were confiscated into the king's treasury, and the other fourth was given to the envious man.

Just as he was preparing for death the king's parrot flew from its cage and alighted on a rosebush in Zadig's garden. A peach had been driven thither by the wind from a neighboring tree, and had fallen on a piece of the written leaf of the pocketbook to which it stuck. The bird carried off the peach and the paper and laid them on the king's knee. The king took up the paper with great eagerness and read the words, which formed no sense, and seemed to be the endings of verses. He loved poetry; and there is always some mercy to be expected from a prince of that disposition. The adventure of the parrot set him a-thinking.

The queen, who remembered what had been written on the piece of Zadig's pocketbook, caused it to be brought. They compared the two pieces together and found them to tally exactly; they then read the verses as Zadig had wrote them.

**TYRANTS ARE PRONE TO FLAGRANT CRIMES. TO
CLEMENCY HIS CROWN HE OWES. TO CONCORD AND TO
PEACEFUL TIMES. LOVE ONLY IS THE WORST OF FOES.**

The king gave immediate orders that Zadig should be brought before him, and that his two friends and the lady should be set at liberty. Zadig fell prostrate on the ground before the king and queen; humbly begged their pardon for having made such bad verses and spoke with so much propriety, wit, and good sense, that their majesties desired they might see him again. He did himself that honor, and insinuated himself still farther into their good graces. They gave him all the wealth of the envious man; but Zadig restored him back the whole of it. And this instance of generosity gave no other pleasure to the envious man than that of having preserved his estate.

The king's esteem for Zadig increased every day. He admitted him into all his parties of pleasure, and consulted him in all affairs of state. From that time the queen began to regard him with an eye of tenderness that might one day prove dangerous to herself, to the king, her august comfort, to Zadig, and to the kingdom in general. Zadig now began to think that happiness was not so unattainable as he had formerly imagined.

THE GENEROUS

The time now arrived for celebrating a grand festival, which returned every five years. It was a custom in Babylon solemnly to declare at the end of every five years which of the citizens had performed the most generous action. The grandees and the magi were the judges. The first satrap, who was charged with the government of the city, published the most noble actions that had passed under his administration. The competition was decided by votes; and the king pronounced the sentence. People came to this solemnity from the extremities of the earth. The conqueror received from the monarch's hand a golden cup adorned with precious stones, his majesty at the same time making him this compliment:

"Receive this reward of thy generosity, and may the gods grant me many subjects like to thee."

This memorable day being come, the king appeared on his throne, surrounded by the grandees, the magi, and the deputies of all nations that came to these games, where glory was acquired not by the swiftness of horses, nor by strength of body, but by virtue. The first satrap recited, with an audible voice, such actions as might entitle the authors of them to this invaluable prize. He did not mention the greatness of soul with which Zadig had restored the envious man his fortune, because it was not judged to be an action worthy of disputing the prize.

He first presented a judge who, having made a citizen lose a considerable cause by a mistake, for which, after all, he was not accountable, had given him the whole of his own estate, which was just equal to what the other had lost.

He next produced a young man who, being desperately in love with a lady whom he was going to marry, had yielded her up to his friend, whose passion for her had almost brought him to the brink of the grave, and at the same time had given him the lady's fortune.

He afterwards produced a soldier who, in the wars of Hircania, had given a still more noble instance of generosity. A party of the enemy having seized his mistress, he fought in her defense with great intrepidity. At that very instant he was informed that another party, at the distance of a few paces, were carrying off his mother; he therefore left his mistress with tears in his eyes and flew to the assistance of his mother. At last he returned to the dear object of his love and found her expiring. He was just going to plunge his sword in his own bosom; but his mother remonstrating against such a desperate deed, and telling him that he was the only support of her life, he had the courage to endure to live.

The judges were inclined to give the prize to the soldier. But the king took up the discourse and said: "The action of the soldier, and those of the other two, are doubtless very great, but they have nothing in them surprising. Yesterday Zadig performed an action that filled me with wonder. I had a few days before disgraced Coreb, my minister and favorite. I complained of him in the most violent and bitter terms; all my courtiers assured me that I was too gentle and seemed to vie with each other in speaking ill of Coreb. I asked Zadig what he thought of him, and he had the courage to commend him. I have read in our histories of many people who have atoned for an error by the surrender of their fortune; who have resigned a mistress; or preferred a mother to the object of their affection; but never before did I hear of a courtier who spoke favorably of a disgraced minister that labored under the displeasure of his sovereign. I give to each of those whose generous actions have been now recited twenty thousand pieces of gold; but the cup I give to Zadig."

"May it please your majesty," said Zadig, "thysself alone deservest the cup; thou hast performed an action of all others the most uncommon and meritorious, since, notwithstanding thy being a powerful king, thou wast not offended at thy slave when he presumed to oppose thy passion." The king and Zadig were equally the object of admiration. The judge, who had given his estate to his client; the lover, who had resigned his mistress to a friend; and the soldier, who had preferred the safety of his mother to that of his mistress, received the king's presents and saw their names enrolled in the catalogue of generous men. Zadig had the cup, and the king acquired the reputation of a good prince, which he did not long enjoy. The day was celebrated by feasts that lasted longer than the law enjoined; and the memory of it is still preserved in Asia. Zadig said, "Now I am happy at last;" but he found himself fatally deceived.

THE MINISTER

The king had lost his first minister and chose Zadig to supply his place. All the ladies in Babylon applauded the choice; for since the foundation of the empire there had never been such a young minister. But all the courtiers were filled with jealousy and vexation. The envious man in particular was troubled with a spitting of blood and a prodigious inflammation in his nose. Zadig, having thanked the king and queen for their goodness, went likewise to thank the parrot. "Beautiful bird," said he, "'tis thou that hast saved my life and made me first minister. The queen's spaniel and the king's horse did me a great deal of mischief; but thou hast done me much good. Upon such slender threads as these do the fates of mortals hang! But," added he, "this happiness perhaps will vanish very soon."

"Soon," replied the parrot.

Zadig was somewhat startled at this word. But as he was a good natural philosopher and did not believe parrots to be prophets, he quickly recovered his spirits and resolved to execute his duty to the best of his power.

He made everyone feel the sacred authority of the laws, but no one felt the weight of his dignity. He never checked the deliberation of the *diran*; and every vizier might give his opinion without the fear of incurring the minister's displeasure. When he gave judgment, it was not he that gave it, it was the law; the rigor of which, however, whenever it was too severe, he always took care to soften; and when laws were wanting, the equity of his decisions was such as might easily have made them pass for those of Zoroaster. It is to him that the nations are indebted for this grand principle, to wit, that it is better to run the risk of sparing the guilty than to condemn the innocent. He imagined that laws were made as well to secure the people from the suffering of injuries as to restrain them from the commission of crimes. His chief talent consisted in discovering the truth, which all men seek to obscure.

This great talent he put in practice from the very beginning of his administration. A famous merchant of Babylon, who died in the Indies, divided his estate equally between his two sons, after having disposed of their sister in marriage, and left a present of thirty thousand pieces of gold to that son who should be found to have loved him best. The eldest raised a tomb to his memory; the youngest increased his sister's portion, by giving her part of his inheritance. Everyone said that the eldest son loved his father best, and the youngest his sister; and that the thirty thousand pieces belonged to the eldest.

Zadig sent for both of them, the one after the other. To the eldest he said: "Thy father is not dead; he is recovered of his last illness, and is returning to Babylon," "God be praised," replied the young man; "but his tomb cost me a considerable sum." Zadig afterwards said the same to the youngest. "God be praised," said he, "I will go and restore to my father all that I have; but I could wish that he would leave my sister what I have given her." "Thou shalt restore nothing," replied Zadig, "and thou shalt have the thirty thousand pieces, for thou art the son who loves his father best."

THE DISPUTES AND THE AUDIENCES

In this manner he daily discovered the subtilty of his genius and the goodness of his heart. The people at once admired and loved him. He passed for the happiest man in the world. The whole empire resounded with his name. All the ladies ogled him. All the men praised him for his justice. The learned regarded him as an oracle; and even the priests confessed that he knew more than the old archmage Yebor. They were now so far from prosecuting him on account of the griffin, that they believed nothing but what he thought credible.

There had reigned in Babylon, for the space of fifteen hundred years, a violent contest that had divided the empire into two sects. The one pretended that they ought to enter the temple of Mitra with the left

foot foremost; the other held this custom in detestation and always entered with the right foot first. The people waited with great impatience for the day on which the solemn feast of the sacred fire was to be celebrated, to see which sect Zadig would favor. All the world had their eyes fixed on his two feet, and the whole city was in the utmost suspense and perturbation. Zadig jumped into the temple with his feet joined together, and afterwards proved, in an eloquent discourse, that the Sovereign of heaven and earth, who accepted not the persons of men, makes no distinction between the right and left foot. The envious man and his wife alleged that his discourse was not figurative enough, and that he did not make the rocks and mountains to dance with sufficient agility.

"He is dry," said they, "and void of genius: he does not make the flea to fly, and stars to fall, nor the sun to melt wax; he has not the true Oriental style." Zadig contented himself with having the style of reason. All the world favored him, not because he was in the right road or followed the dictates of reason, or was a man of real merit, but because he was prime vizier.

He terminated with the same happy address the grand difference between the white and the black magi. The former maintained that it was the height of impiety to pray to God with the face turned toward the east in winter; the latter asserted that God abhorred the prayers of those who turned toward the west in summer. Zadig decreed that every man should be allowed to turn as he pleased.

Thus he found out the happy secret of finishing all affairs, whether of a private or a public nature, in the morning. The rest of the day he employed in superintending and promoting the embellishments of Babylon. He exhibited tragedies that drew tears from the eyes of the spectators, and comedies that shook their sides with laughter; a custom which had long been disused, and which his good taste now induced him to revive. He never affected to be more knowing in the polite arts than the artists themselves; he encouraged them by rewards

and honors, and was never jealous of their talents. In the evening the king was highly entertained with his conversation, and the queen still more. "Great minister!" said the king. "Amiable minister!" said the queen; and both of them added, "It would have been a great loss to the state had such a man been hanged."

Never was a man in power obliged to give so many audiences to the ladies. Most of them came to consult him about no business at all, that so they might have some business with him. But none of them won his attention.

Meanwhile Zadig perceived that his thoughts were always distracted, as well when he gave audience as when he sat in judgment. He did not know to what to attribute this absence of mind; and that was his only sorrow.

He had a dream in which he imagined that he laid himself down upon a heap of dry herbs, among which there were many prickly ones that gave him great uneasiness, and that he afterwards reposed himself on a soft bed of roses from which there sprung a serpent that wounded him to the heart with its sharp and venomous tongue. "Alas," said he, "I have long lain on these dry and prickly herbs, I am now on the bed of roses; but what shall be the serpent?"

JEALOUSY

Zadig's calamities sprung even from his happiness and especially from his merit. He every day conversed with the king and Astarte, his august comfort. The charms of his conversation were greatly heightened by that desire of pleasing, which is to the mind what dress is to beauty. His youth and graceful appearance insensibly made an impression on Astarte, which she did not at first perceive. Her passion grew and flourished in the bosom of innocence. Without fear or scruple, she indulged the pleasing satisfaction of seeing and hearing a man who was so dear to her husband and to the empire in general. She

was continually praising him to the king. She talked of him to her women, who were always sure to improve on her praises. And thus everything contributed to pierce her heart with a dart, of which she did not seem to be sensible. She made several presents to Zadig, which discovered a greater spirit of gallantry than she imagined. She intended to speak to him only as a queen satisfied with his services and her expressions were sometimes those of a woman in love.

Astarte was much more beautiful than that Semira who had such a strong aversion to one-eyed men, or that other woman who had resolved to cut off her husband's nose. Her unreserved familiarity, her tender expressions, at which she began to blush; and her eyes, which, though she endeavored to divert them to other objects, were always fixed upon his, inspired Zadig with a passion that filled him with astonishment. He struggled hard to get the better of it. He called to his aid the precepts of philosophy, which had always stood him in stead; but from thence, though he could derive the light of knowledge, he could procure no remedy to cure the disorders of his lovesick heart. Duty, gratitude, and violated majesty presented themselves to his mind as so many avenging gods. He struggled; he conquered; but this victory, which he was obliged to purchase afresh every moment, cost him many sighs and tears. He no longer dared to speak to the queen with that sweet and charming familiarity which had been so agreeable to them both. His countenance was covered with a cloud. His conversation was constrained and incoherent. His eyes were fixed on the ground; and when, in spite of all his endeavors to the contrary, they encountered those of the queen, they found them bathed in tears and darting arrows of flame. They seemed to say, We adore each other and yet are afraid to love; we both burn with a fire which we both condemn.

Zadig left the royal presence full of perplexity and despair, and having his heart oppressed with a burden which he was no longer able to bear. In the violence of his perturbation he involuntarily betrayed the secret to his friend Cador, in the same manner as a man who, having

long supported the fits of a cruel disease, discovers his pain by a cry extorted from him by a more severe fit and by the cold sweat that covers his brow.

"I have already discovered," said Cador, "the sentiments which thou wouldst fain conceal from thyself. The symptoms by which the passions show themselves are certain and infallible. Judge, my dear Zadig, since I have read thy heart, whether the king will not discover something in it that may give him offense. He has no other fault but that of being the most jealous man in the world. Thou canst resist the violence of thy passion with greater fortitude than the queen because thou art a philosopher, and because thou art Zadig. Astarte is a woman: she suffers her eyes to speak with so much the more imprudence, as she does not as yet think herself guilty. Conscious of her innocence, she unhappily neglects those external appearances which are so necessary. I shall tremble for her so long as she has nothing wherewithal to reproach herself. Were ye both of one mind, ye might easily deceive the whole world. A growing passion, which we endeavor to suppress, discovers itself in spite of all our efforts to the contrary; but love, when gratified, is easily concealed."

Zadig trembled at the proposal of betraying the king, his benefactor; and never was he more faithful to his prince than when guilty of an involuntary crime against him.

Meanwhile the queen mentioned the name of Zadig so frequently and with such a blushing and downcast look; she was sometimes so lively and sometimes so perplexed when she spoke to him in the king's presence, and was seized with such deep thoughtfulness at his going away, that the king began to be troubled. He believed all that he saw and imagined all that he did not see. He particularly remarked that his wife's shoes were blue and that Zadig's shoes were blue; that his wife's ribbons were yellow and that Zadig's bonnet was yellow; and these were terrible symptoms to a prince of so much delicacy. In his jealous mind suspicions were turned into certainty.

All the slaves of kings and queens are so many spies over their hearts. They soon observed that Astarte was tender and that Moabdar was jealous. The envious man brought false reports to the king. The monarch now thought of nothing but in what manner he might best execute his vengeance. He one night resolved to poison the queen and in the morning to put Zadig to death by the bowstring. The orders were given to a merciless eunuch, who commonly executed his acts of vengeance. There happened at that time to be in the king's chamber a little dwarf, who, though dumb, was not deaf. He was allowed, on account of his insignificance, to go wherever he pleased, and, as a domestic animal, was a witness of what passed in the most profound secrecy. This little mute was strongly attached to the queen and Zadig. With equal horror and surprise he heard the cruel orders given. But how to prevent the fatal sentence that in a few hours was to be carried into execution! He could not write, but he could paint; and excelled particularly in drawing a striking resemblance. He employed a part of the night in sketching out with his pencil what he meant to impart to the queen. The piece represented the king in one corner, boiling with rage, and giving orders to the eunuch; a bowstring, and a bowl on a table; the queen in the middle of the picture, expiring in the arms of her woman, and Zadig strangled at her feet. The horizon, represented a rising sun, to express that this shocking execution was to be performed in the morning. As soon as he had finished the picture he ran to one of Astarte's women, awakened her, and made her understand that she must immediately carry it to the queen.

At midnight a messenger knocks at Zadig's door, awakes him, and gives him a note from the queen. He doubts whether it is a dream; and opens the letter with a trembling hand. But how great was his surprise! and who can express the consternation and despair into which he was thrown upon reading these words: "Fly this instant, or thou art a dead man. Fly, Zadig, I conjure thee by our mutual love and my yellow ribbons. I have not been guilty, but I find I must die like a criminal."

Zadig was hardly able to speak. He sent for Cador, and, without uttering a word, gave him the note. Cador forced him to obey, and forthwith to take the road to Memphis. "Shouldst thou dare," said he, "to go in search of the queen, thou wilt hasten her death. Shouldst thou speak to the king, thou wilt infallibly ruin her. I will take upon me the charge of her destiny; follow thy own. I will spread a report that thou hast taken the road to India. I will soon follow thee, and inform thee of all that shall have passed in Babylon." At that instant, Cador caused two of the swiftest dromedaries to be brought to a private gate of the palace. Upon one of these he mounted Zadig, whom he was obliged to carry to the door, and who was ready to expire with grief. He was accompanied by a single domestic; and Cador, plunged in sorrow and astonishment, soon lost sight of his friend.

This illustrious fugitive arriving on the side of a hill, from whence he could take a view of Babylon, turned his eyes toward the queen's palace, and fainted away at the sight; nor did he recover his senses but to shed a torrent of tears and to wish for death. At length, after his thoughts had been long engrossed in lamenting the unhappy fate of the loveliest woman and the greatest queen in the world, he for a moment turned his views on himself and cried: "What then is human life? O virtue, how hast thou served me! Two women have basely deceived me, and now a third, who is innocent, and more beautiful than both the others, is going to be put to death! Whatever good I have done hath been to me a continual source of calamity and affliction; and I have only been raised to the height of grandeur, to be tumbled down the most horrid precipice of misfortune." Filled with these gloomy reflections, his eyes overspread with the veil of grief, his countenance covered with the paleness of death, and his soul plunged in an abyss of the blackest despair, he continued his journey toward Egypt.

THE WOMAN BEATEN

Zadig directed his course by the stars. The constellation of Orion and the splendid Dog Star guided his steps toward the pole of Cassiopeia. He admired those vast globes of light, which appear to our eyes but as so many little sparks, while the earth, which in reality is only an imperceptible point in nature, appears to our fond imaginations as something so grand and noble.

He then represented to himself the human species as it really is, as a parcel of insects devouring one another on a little atom of clay. This true image seemed to annihilate his misfortunes, by making him sensible of the nothingness of his own being, and of that of Babylon. His soul launched out into infinity, and, detached from the senses, contemplated the immutable order of the universe. But when afterwards, returning to himself, and entering into his own heart, he considered that Astarte had perhaps died for him, the universe vanished from his sight, and he beheld nothing in the whole compass of nature but Astarte; expiring and Zadig unhappy. While he thus alternately gave up his mind to this flux and reflux of sublime philosophy and intolerable grief, he advanced toward the frontiers of Egypt; and his faithful domestic was already in the first village, in search of a lodging.

Upon reaching the village Zadig generously took the part of a woman attacked by her jealous lover. The combat grew so fierce that Zadig slew the lover. The Egyptians were then just and humane. The people conducted Zadig to the town house. They first of all ordered his wounds to be dressed and then examined him and his servant apart, in order to discover the truth. They found that Zadig was not an assassin; but as he was guilty of having killed a man, the law condemned him to be a slave. His two camels were sold for the benefit of the town; all the gold he had brought with him was distributed among the inhabitants; and his person, as well as that of the companion of his journey, was exposed to sale in the marketplace.

An Arabian merchant, named Setoc, made the purchase; but as the servant was fitter for labor than the master, he was sold at a higher price. There was no comparison between the two men. Thus Zadig became a slave subordinate to his own servant. They were linked together by a chain fastened to their feet, and in this condition they followed the Arabian merchant to his house.

BY the way Zadig comforted his servant, and exhorted him to patience; but he could not help making, according to his usual custom, some reflections on human life. "I see," said he, "that the unhappiness of my fate hath an influence on thine. Hitherto everything has turned out to me in a most unaccountable manner. I have been condemned to pay a fine for having seen the marks of a spaniel's feet. I thought that I should once have been impaled on account of a griffin. I have been sent to execution for having made some verses in praise of the king. I have been upon the point of being strangled because the queen had yellow ribbons; and now I am a slave with thee, because a brutal wretch beat his mistress. Come, let us keep a good heart; all this perhaps will have an end. The Arabian merchants must necessarily have slaves; and why not me as well as another, since, as well as another, I am a man? This merchant will not be cruel; he must treat his slaves well, if he expects any advantage from them." But while he spoke thus, his heart was entirely engrossed by the fate of the Queen of Babylon.

Two days after, the merchant Setoc set out for Arabia Deserta, with his slaves and his camels. His tribe dwelt near the Desert of Oreb. The journey was long and painful. Setoc set a much greater value on the servant than the master, because the former was more expert in loading the camels; and all the little marks of distinction were shown to him. A camel having died within two days' journey of Oreb, his burden was divided and laid on the backs of the servants; and Zadig had his share among the rest.

Setoc laughed to see all his slaves walking with their bodies inclined. Zadig took the liberty to explain to him the cause, and inform him of the laws of the balance. The merchant was astonished, and began to regard him with other eyes. Zadig, finding he had raised his curiosity, increased it still further by acquainting him with many things that related to commerce, the specific gravity of metals, and commodities under an equal bulk; the properties of several useful animals; and the means of rendering those useful that are not naturally so. At last Setoc began to consider Zadig as a sage, and preferred him to his companion, whom he had formerly so much esteemed. He treated him well and had no cause to repent of his kindness.

THE STONE

As soon as Setoc arrived among his own tribe he demanded the payment of five hundred ounces of silver, which he had lent to a Jew in presence of two witnesses; but as the witnesses were dead, and the debt could not be proved, the Hebrew appropriated the merchant's money to himself, and piously thanked God for putting it in his power to cheat an Arabian. Setoc imparted this troublesome affair to Zadig, who was now become his counsel.

"In what place," said Zadig, "didst thou lend the five hundred ounces to this infidel?"

"Upon a large stone," replied the merchant, "that lies near Mount Oreb."

"What is the character of thy debtor?" said Zadig. "That of a knave," returned Setoc.

"But I ask thee whether he is lively or phlegmatic, cautious or imprudent?"

"He is, of all bad payers," said Setoc, "the most lively fellow I ever knew."

"Well," resumed Zadig, "allow me to plead thy cause." In effect Zadig, having summoned the Jew to the tribunal, addressed the judge in the following terms: "Pillar of the throne of equity, I come to demand of this man, in the name of my master, five hundred ounces of silver, which he refuses to pay."

"Hast thou any witnesses?" said the judge.

"No, they are dead; but there remains a large stone upon which the money was counted; and if it please thy grandeur to order the stone to be sought for, I hope that it will bear witness. The Hebrew and I will tarry here till the stone arrives; I will send for it at my master's expense."

"With all my heart," replied the judge, and immediately applied himself to the discussion of other affairs.

When the court was going to break up, the judge said to Zadig. "Well, friend, is not thy stone come yet?"

The Hebrew replied with a smile, "Thy grandeur may stay here till the morrow, and after all not see the stone. It is more than six miles from hence; and it would require fifteen men to move it."

"Well," cried Zadig, "did not I say that the stone would bear witness? Since this man knows where it is, he thereby confesses that it was upon it that the money was counted." The Hebrew was disconcerted, and was soon after obliged to confess the truth. The judge ordered him to be fastened to the stone, without meat or drink, till he should restore the five hundred ounces, which were soon after paid.

The slave Zadig and the stone were held in great repute in Arabia.

THE FUNERAL PILE

Setoc, charmed with the happy issue of this affair, made his slave his intimate friend. He had now conceived as great esteem for him as ever the King of Babylon had done; and Zadig was glad that Setoc had no wife. He discovered in his master a good natural disposition, much probity of heart, and a great share of good sense; but he was sorry to see that, according to the ancient custom of Arabia, he adored the host of heaven; that is, the sun, moon, and stars. He sometimes spoke to him on this subject with great prudence and discretion. At last he told him that these bodies were like all other bodies in the universe, and no more deserving of our homage than a tree or a rock.

"But," said Setoc, "they are eternal beings; and it is from them we derive all we enjoy. They animate nature; they regulate the seasons; and, besides, are removed at such an immense distance from us that we cannot help revering them."

"Thou receivest more advantage," replied Zadig, "from the waters of the Red Sea, which carry thy merchandise to the Indies. Why may not it be as ancient as the stars? And if thou adorest what is placed at a distance from thee, thou oughtest to adore the land of the Gangarides, which lies at the extremity of the earth."

"No," said Setoc, "the brightness of the stars commands my adoration."

At night Zadig lighted up a great number of candles in the tent where he was to sup with Setoc; and the moment his patron appeared, he fell on his knees before these lighted tapers, and said, "Eternal and shining luminaries! be ye always propitious to me." Having thus said, he sat down at table, without taking the least notice of Setoc.

"What art thou doing?" said Setoc to him in amaze.

"I act like thee," replied Zadig, "I adore these candles, and neglect their master and mine." Setoc comprehended the profound sense of this apologue. The wisdom of his slave sunk deep into his soul; he no longer offered incense to the creatures, but adored the eternal Being who made them.

There prevailed at that time in Arabia a shocking custom, sprung originally from Leythia, and which, being established in the Indies by the credit of the Brahmans, threatened to overrun all the East. When a married man died, and his beloved wife aspired to the character of a saint, she burned herself publicly on the body of her husband. This was a solemn feast and was called the Funeral Pile of Widowhood, and that tribe in which most women had been burned was the most respected.

An Arabian of Setoc's tribe being dead, his widow, whose name was Almona, and who was very devout, published the day and hour when she intended to throw herself into the fire, amidst the sound of drums and trumpets. Zadig remonstrated against this horrible custom; he showed Setoc how inconsistent it was with the happiness of mankind to suffer young widows to burn themselves every other day, widows who were capable of giving children to the state, or at least of educating those they already had; and he convinced him that it was his duty to do all that lay in his power to abolish such a barbarous practice.

"The women," said Setoc, "have possessed the right of burning themselves for more than a thousand years; and who shall dare to abrogate a law which time hath rendered sacred? Is there anything more respectable than ancient abuses?"

"Reason is more ancient," replied Zadig; "meanwhile, speak thou to the chiefs of the tribes and I will go to wait on the young widow."

Accordingly he was introduced to her; and, after having insinuated himself into her good graces by some compliments on her beauty and told her what a pity it was to commit so many charms to the flames, he at last praised her for her constancy and courage. "Thou must surely have loved thy husband," said he to her, "with the most passionate fondness."

"Who, I?" replied the lady. "I loved him not at all. He was a brutal, jealous, insupportable wretch; but I am firmly resolved to throw myself on his funeral pile."

"It would appear then," said Zadig, "that there must be a very delicious pleasure in being burned alive."

"Oh! it makes nature shudder," replied the lady, "but that must be overlooked. I am a devotee, and I should lose my reputation and all the world would despise me if I did not burn myself."

Zadig having made her acknowledge that she burned herself to gain the good opinion of others and to gratify her own vanity, entertained her with a long discourse, calculated to make her a little in love with life, and even went so far as to inspire her with some degree of good will for the person who spoke to her.

"Alas!" said the lady, "I believe I should desire thee to marry me."

Zadig's mind was too much engrossed with the idea of Astarte not to elude this declaration; but he instantly went to the chiefs of the tribes, told them what had passed, and advised them to make a law, by which a widow should not be permitted to burn herself till she had conversed privately with a young man for the space of an hour. Since that time not a single woman hath burned herself in Arabia. They were indebted to Zadig alone for destroying in one day a cruel custom that had lasted for so many ages and thus he became the benefactor of Arabia.

THE SUPPER

Setoc, who could not separate himself from this man, in whom dwelt wisdom, carried him to the great fair of Balzora, whither the richest merchants in the earth resorted. Zadig was highly pleased to see so many men of different countries united in the same place. He considered the whole universe as one large family assembled at Balzora.

Setoc, after having sold his commodities at a very high price, returned to his own tribe with his friend Zadig; who learned upon his arrival that he had been tried in his absence and was now going to be burned by a slow fire. Only the friendship of Almona saved his life. Like so many pretty women she possessed great influence with the priesthood. Zadig thought it best to leave Arabia.

Setoc was so charmed with the ingenuity and address of Almona that he made her his wife. Zadig departed, after having thrown himself at the feet of his fair deliverer. Setoc and he took leave of each other with tears in their eyes, swearing an eternal friendship, and promising that the first of them that should acquire a large fortune should share it with the other.

Zadig directed his course along the frontiers of Assyria, still musing on the unhappy Astarte, and reflecting on the severity of fortune which seemed determined to make him the sport of her cruelty and the object of her persecution.

"What," said he to himself, "four hundred ounces of gold for having seen a spaniel! condemned to lose my head for four bad verses in praise of the king! ready to be strangled because the queen had shoes of the color of my bonnet! reduced to slavery for having succored a woman who was beat! and on the point of being burned for having saved the lives of all the young widows of Arabia!"

THE ROBBER

Arriving on the frontiers which divide Arabia Petraea from Syria, he passed by a pretty strong castle, from which a party of armed Arabians sallied forth. They instantly surrounded him and cried, "All thou hast belongs to us, and thy person is the property of our master." Zadig replied by drawing his sword; his servant, who was a man of courage, did the same. They killed the first Arabians that presumed to lay hands on them; and, though the number was redoubled, they were not dismayed, but resolved to perish in the conflict. Two men defended themselves against a multitude; and such a combat could not last long.

The master of the castle, whose name was Arbogad, having observed from a window the prodigies of valor performed by Zadig, conceived a high esteem for this heroic stranger. He descended in haste and went in person to call off his men and deliver the two travelers.

"All that passes over my lands," said he, "belongs to me, as well as what I find upon the lands of others; but thou seemest to be a man of such undaunted courage that I will exempt thee from the common law." He then conducted him to his castle, ordering his men to treat him well; and in the evening Arbogad supped with Zadig.

The lord of the castle was one of those Arabians who are commonly called robbers; but he now and then performed some good actions amid a multitude of bad ones. He robbed with a furious rapacity, and granted favors with great generosity; he was intrepid in action; affable in company; a debauchee at table, but gay in debauchery; and particularly remarkable for his frank and open behavior. He was highly pleased with Zadig, whose lively conversation lengthened the repast.

At last Arbogad said to him; "I advise thee to enroll thy name in my catalogue; thou canst not do better; this is not a bad trade; and thou mayest one day become what I am at present."

"May I take the liberty of asking thee," said Zadig, "how long thou hast followed this noble profession?"

"From my most tender youth," replied the lord. "I was a servant to a pretty good-natured Arabian, but could not endure the hardships of my situation. I was vexed to find that fate had given me no share of the earth, which equally belongs to all men. I imparted the cause of my uneasiness to an old Arabian, who said to me: 'My son, do not despair; there was once a grain of sand that lamented that it was no more than a neglected atom in the desert; at the end of a few years it became a diamond; and is now the brightest ornament in the crown of the king of the Indies.' This discourse made a deep impression on my mind. I was the grain of sand, and I resolved to become the diamond. I began by stealing two horses; I soon got a party of companions; I put myself in a condition to rob small caravans; and thus, by degrees, I destroyed the difference which had formerly subsisted between me and other men. I had my share of the good things of this world; and was even recompensed with usury for the hardships I had suffered. I was greatly respected, and became the captain of a band of robbers. I seized this castle by force. The Satrap of Syria had a mind to dispossess me of it; but I was too rich to have any thing to fear. I gave the satrap a handsome present, by which means I preserved my castle and increased my possessions. He even appointed me treasurer of the tributes which Arabia Petraea pays to the king of kings. I perform my office of receiver with great punctuality; but take the freedom to dispense with that of paymaster.

"The grand Desterham of Babylon sent hither a pretty satrap in the name of King Moabdar, to have me strangled. This man arrived with his orders: I was apprised of all; I caused to be strangled in his presence the four persons he had brought with him to draw the noose;

after which I asked him how much his commission of strangling me might be worth. He replied, that his fees would amount to about three hundred pieces of gold. I then convinced him that he might gain more by staying with me. I made him an inferior robber; and he is now one of my best and richest officers. If thou wilt take my advice thy success may be equal to his; never was there a better season for plunder, since King Moabdar is killed, and all Babylon thrown into confusion."

"Moabdar killed!" said Zadig, "and what is become of Queen Astarte?"

"I know not," replied Arbogad. "All I know is, that Moabdar lost his senses and was killed; that Babylon is a scene of disorder and bloodshed; that all the empire is desolated; that there are some fine strokes to be struck yet; and that, for my own part, I have struck some that are admirable."

"But the queen," said Zadig; "for heaven's sake, knowest thou nothing of the queen's fate?"

"Yes," replied he, "I have heard something of a prince of Hircania; if she was not killed in the tumult, she is probably one of his concubines; but I am much fonder of booty than news. I have taken several women in my excursions; but I keep none of them. I sell them at a high price, when they are beautiful, without inquiring who they are. In commodities of this kind rank makes no difference, and a queen that is ugly will never find a merchant. Perhaps I may have sold Queen Astarte; perhaps she is dead; but, be it as it will, it is of little consequence to me, and I should imagine of as little to thee." So saying he drank a large draught which threw all his ideas into such confusion that Zadig could obtain no further information.

Zadig remained for some time without speech, sense, or motion. Arbogad continued drinking; told stories; constantly repeated that he was the happiest man in the world; and exhorted Zadig to put himself

in the same condition. At last the soporiferous fumes of the wine lulled him into a gentle repose.

Zadig passed the night in the most violent perturbation. "What," said he, "did the king lose his senses? and is he killed? I cannot help lamenting his fate. The empire is rent in pieces; and this robber is happy. O fortune! O destiny! A robber is happy, and the most beautiful of nature's works hath perhaps perished in a barbarous manner or lives in a state worse than death. O Astarte! what is become of thee?"

At daybreak he questioned all those he met in the castle; but they were all busy, and he received no answer. During the night they had made a new capture, and they were now employed in dividing the spoils. All he could obtain in this hurry and confusion was an opportunity of departing, which he immediately embraced, plunged deeper than ever in the most gloomy and mournful reflections.

Zadig proceeded on his journey with a mind full of disquiet and perplexity, and wholly employed on the unhappy Astarte, on the King of Babylon, on his faithful friend Cador, on the happy robber Arbogad; in a word, on all the misfortunes and disappointments he had hitherto suffered.

THE FISHERMAN

At a few leagues' distance from Arbogad's castle he came to the banks of a small river, still deploring his fate, and considering himself as the most wretched of mankind. He saw a fisherman lying on the brink of the river, scarcely holding, in his weak and feeble hand, a net which he seemed ready to drop, and lifting up his eyes to Heaven.

"I am certainly," said the fisherman, "the most unhappy man in the world. I was universally allowed to be the most famous dealer in cream cheese in Babylon, and yet I am ruined. I had the most

handsome wife that any man in my station could have; and by her I have been betrayed. I had still left a paltry house, and that I have seen pillaged and destroyed. At last I took refuge in this cottage, where I have no other resource than fishing, and yet I cannot catch a single fish. Oh, my net! no more will I throw thee into the water; I will throw myself in thy place." So saying, he arose and advanced forward, in the attitude of a man ready to throw himself into the river, and thus to finish his life.

"What!" said Zadig to himself, "are there men as wretched as I?" His eagerness to save the fisherman's life was as this reflection. He ran to him, stopped him, and spoke to him with a tender and compassionate air. It is commonly supposed that we are less miserable when we have companions in our misery. This, according to Zoroaster, does not proceed from malice, but necessity. We feel ourselves insensibly drawn to an unhappy person as to one like ourselves. The joy of the happy would be an insult; but two men in distress are like two slender trees, which, mutually supporting each other, fortify themselves against the storm.

"Why," said Zadig to the fisherman, "dost thou sink under thy misfortunes?"

"Because," replied he, "I see no means of relief. I was the most considerable man in the village of Derlback, near Babylon, and with the assistance of my wife I made the best cream cheese in the empire. Queen Astarte and the famous minister Zadig were extremely fond of them."

Zadig, transported, said, "What, knowest thou nothing of the queen's fate?"

"No, my lord," replied the fisherman; "but I know that neither the queen nor Zadig has paid me for my cream cheeses; that I have lost my wife, and am now reduced to despair."

"I flatter myself," said Zadig, "that thou wilt not lose all thy money. I have heard of this Zadig; he is an honest man; and if he returns to Babylon, as he expects, he will give thee more than he owes thee. Believe me, go to Babylon. I shall be there before thee, because I am on horseback, and thou art on foot. Apply to the illustrious Cador; tell him thou hast met his friend; wait for me at his house; go, perhaps thou wilt not always be unhappy."

"Oh, powerful Oromazes!" continued he, "thou employest me to comfort this man; whom wilt thou employ to give me consolation?" So saying, he gave the fisherman half the money he had brought from Arabia. The fisherman, struck with surprise and ravished with joy, kissed the feet of the friend of Cador, and said, "Thou art surely an angel sent from Heaven to save me!"

Meanwhile, Zadig continued to make fresh inquiries, and to shed tears. "What, my lord!" cried the fisherman, "art thou then so unhappy, thou who bestowest favors?"

"An hundred times more unhappy than thou art," replied Zadig.

"But how is it possible," said the good man, "that the giver can be more wretched than the receiver?"

"Because," replied Zadig, "thy greatest misery arose from poverty, and mine is seated in the heart."

"Did Orcan take thy wife from thee?" said the fisherman.

This word recalled to Zadig's mind the whole of his adventures.

He repeated the catalogue of his misfortunes, beginning with the queen's spaniel, and ending with his arrival at the castle of the robber Arbogad. "Ah!" said he to the fisherman, "Orcan deserves to be

punished; but it is commonly such men as those that are the favorites of fortune. However, go thou to the house of Lord Cador, and there wait my arrival." They then parted, the fisherman walked, thanking Heaven for the happiness of his condition; and Zadig rode, accusing fortune for the hardness of his lot.

THE BASILISK

Arriving in a beautiful meadow, he there saw several women, who were searching for something with great application. He took the liberty to approach one of them, and to ask if he might have the honor to assist them in their search. "Take care that thou dost not," replied the Syrian; "what we are searching for can be touched only by women."

"Strange," said Zadig, "may I presume to ask thee what it is that women only are permitted to touch?"

"It is a basilisk," said she.

"A basilisk, madam! and for what purpose, pray, dost thou seek for a basilisk?"

"It is for our lord and master Ogul, whose cattle thou seest on the bank of that river at the end of the meadow. We are his most humble slaves. The lord Ogul is sick. His physician hath ordered him to eat a basilisk, stewed in rose water; and as it is a very rare animal, and can only be taken by women, the lord Ogul hath promised to choose for his well-beloved wife the woman that shall bring him a basilisk; let me go on in my search; for thou seest what I shall lose if I am prevented by my companions."

Zadig left her and the other Assyrians to search for their basilisk, and continued to walk in the meadow; when coming to the brink of a small rivulet, he found another lady lying on the grass, and who was

not searching for anything. Her person worried to be majestic; but her face was covered with a veil. She was inclined toward the rivulet, and profound sighs proceeded from her mouth. In her hand she held a small rod with which she was tracing characters on the fine sand that lay between the turf and the brook. Zadig had the curiosity to examine what this woman was writing. He drew near; he saw the letter Z, then an A; he was astonished; then appeared a D; he started. But never was surprise equal to his when he saw the last letters of his name.

He stood for some time immovable. At last, breaking silence with a faltering voice: "O generous lady! pardon a stranger, an unfortunate man, for presuming to ask thee by what surprising adventure I here find the name of Zadig traced out by thy divine hand!"

At this voice and these words, the lady lifted up the veil with a trembling hand, looked at Zadig, sent forth a cry of tenderness, surprise and joy, and sinking under the various emotions which at once assaulted her soul, fell speechless into his arms. It was Astarte herself; it was the Queen of Babylon; it was she whom Zadig adored, and whom he had reproached himself for adoring; it was she whose misfortunes he had so deeply lamented, and for whose fate he had been so anxiously concerned.

He was for a moment deprived of the use of his senses, when he had fixed his eyes on those of Astarte, which now began to open again with a languor mixed with confusion and tenderness: "O ye immortal powers!" cried he, "who preside over the fates of weak mortals, do ye indeed restore Astarte to me! at what a time, in what a place, and in what a condition do I again behold her!" He fell on his knees before Astarte and laid his face in the dust at her feet. The Queen of Babylon raised him up, and made him sit by her side on the brink of the rivulet. She frequently wiped her eyes, from which the tears continued to flow afresh. She twenty times resumed her discourse, which her sighs as often interrupted; she asked by what strange accident they were brought together, and suddenly prevented his answers by other

questions; she waived the account of her own misfortunes, and desired to be informed of those of Zadig.

At last, both of them having a little composed the tumult of their souls, Zadig acquainted her in a few words by what adventure he was brought into that meadow. "But, O unhappy and respectable queen! by what means do I find thee in this lonely place, clothed in the habit of a slave, and accompanied by other female slaves, who are searching for a basilisk, which, by order of the physician, is to be stewed in rose water?"

"While they are searching for their basilisk," said the fair Astarte, "I will inform thee of all I have suffered, for which Heaven has sufficiently recompensed me by restoring thee to my sight. Thou knowest that the king, my husband, was vexed to see thee the most amiable of mankind; and that for this reason he one night resolved to strangle thee and poison me. Thou knowest how Heaven permitted my little mute to inform me of the orders of his sublime majesty. Hardly had the faithful Cador advised thee to depart, in obedience to my command, when he ventured to enter my apartment at midnight by a secret passage. He carried me off and conducted me to the temple of Oromazes, where the mage his brother shut me up in that huge statue whose base reaches to the foundation of the temple and whose top rises to the summit of the dome. I was there buried in a manner; but was saved by the mage; and supplied with all the necessaries of life. At break of day his majesty's apothecary entered my chamber with a potion composed of a mixture of henbane, opium, hemlock, black hellebore, and aconite; and another officer went to thine with a bowstring of blue silk. Neither of us was to be found. Cador, the better to deceive the king, pretended to come and accuse us both. He said that thou hadst taken the road to the Indies, and I that to Memphis, on which the king's guards were immediately dispatched in pursuit of us both.

"The couriers who pursued me did not know me. I had hardly ever shown my face to any but thee, and to thee only in the presence and by the order of my husband. They conducted themselves in the pursuit by the description that had been given them of my person. On the frontiers of Egypt they met with a woman of the same stature with me, and possessed perhaps of greater charms. She was weeping and wandering. They made no doubt but that this woman was the Queen of Babylon and accordingly brought her to Moabdar. Their mistake at first threw the king into a violent passion; but having viewed this woman more attentively, he found her extremely handsome and was comforted. She was called Missouf. I have since been informed that this name in the Egyptian language signifies the capricious fair one. She was so in reality; but she had as much cunning as caprice. She pleased Moabdar and gained such an ascendancy over him as to make him choose her for his wife. Her character then began to appear in its true colors. She gave herself up, without scruple, to all the freaks of a wanton imagination. She would have obliged the chief of the magi, who was old and gouty, to dance before her; and on his refusal, she persecuted him with the most unrelenting cruelty. She ordered her master of the horse to make her a pie of sweetmeats. In vain did he represent that he was not a pastry-cook; he was obliged to make it, and lost his place, because it was baked a little too hard. The post of master of the horse she gave to her dwarf, and that of chancellor to her page. In this manner did she govern Babylon. Everybody regretted the loss of me. The king, who till the moment of his resolving to poison me and strangle thee had been a tolerably good kind of man, seemed now to have drowned all his virtues in his immoderate fondness for this capricious fair one. He came to the temple on the great day of the feast held in honor of the sacred fire. I saw him implore the gods in behalf of Missouf, at the feet of the statue in which I was inclosed. I raised my voice, I cried out, 'The gods reject the prayers of a king who is now become a tyrant, and who attempted to murder a reasonable wife, in order to marry a woman remarkable for nothing but her folly and extravagance.' At these words Moabdar was confounded and his head became disordered. The oracle I had pronounced, and the

tyranny of Missouf, conspired to deprive him of his judgment, and in a few days his reason entirely forsook him.

"Moabdar's madness, which seemed to be the judgment of Heaven, was the signal to a revolt. The people rose and ran to arms; and Babylon, which had been so long immersed in idleness and effeminacy, became the theater of a bloody civil war. I was taken from the heart of my statue and placed at the head of a party. Cador flew to Memphis to bring thee back to Babylon. The Prince of Hircania, informed of these fatal events, returned with his army and made a third party in Chaldea. He attacked the king, who fled before him with his capricious Egyptian. Moabdar died pierced with wounds. I myself had the misfortune to be taken by a party of Hircanians, who conducted me to their prince's tent, at the very moment that Missouf was brought before him. Thou wilt doubtless be pleased to hear that the prince thought me beautiful; but thou wilt be sorry to be informed that he designed me for his seraglio. He told me, with a blunt and resolute air, that as soon as he had finished a military expedition, which he was just going to undertake, he would come to me. Judge how great must have been my grief. My ties with Moabdar were already dissolved; I might have been the wife of Zadig; and I was fallen into the hands of a barbarian. I answered him with all the pride which my high rank and noble sentiment could inspire. I had always heard it affirmed that Heaven stamped on persons of my condition a mark of grandeur, which, with a single word or glance, could reduce to the lowness of the most profound respect those rash and forward persons who presume to deviate from the rules of politeness. I spoke like a queen, but was treated like a maidservant. The Hircanian, without even deigning to speak to me, told his black eunuch that I was impertinent, but that he thought me handsome. He ordered him to take care of me, and to put me under the regimen of favorites, that so my complexion being improved, I might be the more worthy of his favors when he should be at leisure to honor me with them, I told him that rather than submit to his desires I would put an end to my life. He replied, with a smile, that women, he believed, were not, so

bloodthirsty, and that he was accustomed to such violent expressions; and then left me with the air of a man who had just put another parrot into his aviary. What a state for the first queen of the universe, and, what is more, for a heart devoted to Zadig!"

At these words Zadig threw himself at her feet and bathed them with his tears. Astarte raised him with great tenderness and thus continued her story: "I now saw myself in the power of a barbarian and rival to the foolish woman with whom I was confined. She gave me an account of her adventures in Egypt. From the description she gave me of your person, from the time, from the dromedary on which you were mounted, and from every other circumstance, I inferred that Zadig was the man who had fought for her. I doubted not but that you were at Memphis, and, therefore, resolved to repair thither. Beautiful Missouf, said I, thou art more handsome than I, and will please the Prince of Hircania much better. Assist me in contriving the means of my escape; thou wilt then reign alone; thou wilt at once make me happy and rid thyself of a rival. Missouf concerted with me the means of my flight; and I departed secretly with a female Egyptian slave.

"As I approached the frontiers of Arabia, a famous robber, named Arbogad, seized me and sold me to some merchants, who brought me to this castle, where Lord Ogul resides. He bought me without knowing who I was. He is a voluptuary, ambitious of nothing but good living, and thinks that God sent him into the world for no other purpose than to sit at table. He is so extremely corpulent that he is always in danger of suffocation. His physician, who has but little credit with him when he has a good digestion, governs him with a despotic sway when he has eaten too much. He has persuaded him that a basilisk stewed in rose water will effect a complete cure. The Lord Ogul hath promised his hand to the female slave that brings him a basilisk. Thou seest that I leave them to vie with each other in meriting this honor; and never was I less desirous of finding the basilisk than since Heaven hath restored thee to my sight."

This account was succeeded by a long conversation between Astarte and Zadig, consisting of everything that their long-suppressed sentiments, their great sufferings, and their mutual love could inspire in hearts the most noble and tender; and the genii who preside over love carried their words to the sphere of Venus.

The woman returned to Ogul without having found the basilisk. Zadig was introduced to this mighty lord and spoke to him in the following terms: "May immortal health descend from heaven to bless all thy days! I am a physician; at the first report of thy indisposition I flew to thy castle and have now brought thee a basilisk stewed in rose water. Not that I pretend to marry thee. All I ask is the liberty of a Babylonian slave, who hath been in thy possession for a few days; and, if I should not be so happy as to cure thee, magnificent Lord Ogul, I consent to remain a slave in her place."

The proposal was accepted. Astarte set out for Babylon with Zadig's servant, promising, immediately upon her arrival, to send a courier to inform him of all that had happened. Their parting was as tender as their meeting. The moment of meeting and that of parting are the two greatest epochs of life, as sayeth the great book of Zend. Zadig loved the queen with as much ardor as he professed; and the queen loved him more than she thought proper to acknowledge.

Meanwhile Zadig spoke thus to Ogul: "My lord, my basilisk is not to be eaten; all its virtues must enter through thy pores. I have inclosed it in a little ball, blown up and covered with a fine skin. Thou must strike this ball with all thy might and I must strike it back for a considerable time; and by observing this regimen for a few days thou wilt see the effects of my art." The first day Ogul was out of breath and thought he should have died with fatigue. The second he was less fatigued, slept better. In eight days he recovered all the strength, all the health, all the agility and cheerfulness of his most agreeable years.

"Thou hast played at ball, and thou hast been temperate," said Zadig; "know that there is no such thing in nature as a basilisk; that temperance and exercise are the two great preservatives of health; and that the art of reconciling intemperance and health is as chimerical as the philosopher's stone, judicial astrology, or the theology of the magi."

Ogul's first physician, observing how dangerous this man might prove to the medical art, formed a design, in conjunction with the apothecary, to send Zadig to search for a basilisk in the other world. Thus, having suffered such a long train of calamities on account of his good actions, he was now upon the point of losing his life for curing a gluttonous lord. He was invited to an excellent dinner and was to have been poisoned in the second course, but, during the first, he happily received a courier from the fair Astarte. "When one is beloved by a beautiful woman," says the great Zoroaster, "he hath always the good fortune to extricate himself out of every kind of difficulty and danger."

THE COMBATS

The queen was received at Babylon with all those transports of joy which are ever felt on the return of a beautiful princess who hath been involved in calamities. Babylon was now in greater tranquillity. The Prince of Hircania had been killed in battle. The victorious Babylonians declared that the queen should marry the man whom they should choose for their sovereign. They were resolved that the first place in the world, that of being husband to Astarte and King of Babylon, should not depend on cabals and intrigues. They swore to acknowledge for king the man who, upon trial, should be found to be possessed of the greatest valor and the greatest wisdom. Accordingly, at the distance of a few leagues from the city, a spacious place was marked out for the list, surrounded with magnificent amphitheatres. Thither the combatants were to repair in complete armor. Each of them had a separate apartment behind the amphitheatres, where they

were neither to be seen nor known by anyone. Each was to encounter four knights, and those that were so happy as to conquer four were then to engage with one another; so that he who remained the last master of the field would be proclaimed conqueror at the games.

Four days after he was to return with the same arms and to explain the enigmas proposed by the magi. If he did not explain the enigmas he was not king; and the running at the lances was to be begun afresh till a man would be found who was conqueror in both these combats; for they were absolutely determined to have a king possessed of the greatest wisdom and the most invincible courage. The queen was all the while to be strictly guarded: she was only allowed to be present at the games, and even there she was to be covered with a veil; but was not permitted to speak to any of the competitors, that so they might neither receive favor, nor suffer injustice.

These particulars Astarte communicated to her lover, hoping that in order to obtain her he would show himself possessed of greater courage and wisdom than any other person. Zadig set out on his journey, beseeching Venus to fortify his courage and enlighten his understanding. He arrived on the banks of the Euphrates on the eve of this great day. He caused his device to be inscribed among those of the combatants, concealing his face and his name, as the law ordained; and then went to repose himself in the apartment that fell to him by lot. His friend Cador, who, after the fruitless search he had made for him in Egypt, was now returned to Babylon, sent to his tent a complete suit of armor, which was a present from the queen; as also, from himself, one of the finest horses in Persia. Zadig presently perceived that these presents were sent by Astarte; and from thence his courage derived fresh strength, and his love the most animating hopes.

Next day, the queen being seated under a canopy of jewels, and the amphitheaters filled with all the gentlemen and ladies of rank in Babylon, the combatants appeared in the circus. Each of them came

and laid his device at the feet of the grand magi. They drew their devices by lot; and that of Zadig was the last. The first who advanced was a certain lord, named Itobad, very rich and very vain, but possessed of little courage, of less address, and hardly of any judgment at all. His servants had persuaded him that such a man as he ought to be king; he had said in reply, "Such a man as I ought to reign"; and thus they had armed him cap-à-pie. He wore an armor of gold enameled with green, a plume of green feathers, and a lance adorned with green ribbons. It was instantly perceived by the manner in which Itobad managed his horse, that it was not for such a man as he that Heaven reserved the scepter of Babylon. The first knight that ran against him threw him out of his saddle; the second laid him flat on his horse's buttocks, with his legs in the air, and his arms extended. Itobad recovered himself, but with so bad a grace that the whole amphitheater burst out a-laughing. The third knight disdained to make use of his lance; but, making a pass at him, took him by the right leg and, wheeling him half round, laid him prostrate on the sand. The squires of the game ran to him laughing, and replaced him in his saddle. The fourth combatant took him by the left leg, and tumbled him down on the other side. He was conducted back with scornful shouts to his tent, where, according to the law, he was to pass the night; and as he climbed along with great difficulty he said, "What an adventure for such a man as I!"

The other knights acquitted themselves with greater ability and success. Some of them conquered two combatants; a few of them vanquished three; but none but Prince Otamus conquered four. At last Zadig fought him in his turn. He successively threw four knights off their saddles with all the grace imaginable. It then remained to be seen who should be conqueror, Otamus or Zadig. The arms of the first were gold and blue, with a plume of the same color; those of the last were white. The wishes of all the spectators were divided between the knight in blue and the knight in white. The queen, whose heart was in a violent palpitation, offered prayers to Heaven for the success of the white color.

The two champions made their passes and vaults with so much agility, they mutually gave and received such dexterous blows with their lances, and sat so firmly in their saddles, that everybody but the queen wished there might be two kings in Babylon. At length, their horses being tired and their lances broken, Zadig had recourse to this stratagem: He passes behind the blue prince; springs upon the buttocks of his horse; seizes him by the middle; throws him on the earth; places himself in the saddle; and wheels around Otamus as he lay extended on the ground. All the amphitheater cried out, "Victory to the white knight!"

Otamus rises in a violent passion, and draws his sword; Zadig leaps from his horse with his saber in his hand. Both of them are now on the ground, engaged in a new combat, where strength and agility triumph by turns. The plumes of their helmets, the studs of their bracelets, the rings of their armor, are driven to a great distance by the violence of a thousand furious blows. They strike with the point and the edge; to the right, to the left, on the head, on the breast; they retreat; they advance; they measure swords; they close; they seize each other; they bend like serpents; they attack like lions; and the fire every moment flashes from their blows.

At last Zadig, having recovered his spirits, stops; makes a feint; leaps upon Otamus; throws him on the ground and disarms him; and Otamus cries out, "It is thou alone, O white knight, that oughtest to reign over Babylon!" The queen was now at the height of her joy. The knight in blue armor and the knight in white were conducted each to his own apartment, as well as all the others, according to the intention of the law. Mutes came to wait upon them and to serve them at table. It may be easily supposed that the queen's little mute waited upon Zadig. They were then left to themselves to enjoy the sweets of repose till next morning, at which time the conqueror was to bring his device to the grand magi, to compare it with that which he had left, and make himself known.

Zadig though deeply in love, was so much fatigued that he could not help sleeping. Itobad, who lay near him, never closed his eyes. He arose in the night, entered his apartment, took the white arms and the device of Zadig, and put his green armor in their place. At break of day he went boldly to the grand magi to declare that so great a man as he was conqueror. This was little expected; however, he was proclaimed while Zadig was still asleep. Astarte, surprised and filled with despair, returned to Babylon. The amphitheater was almost empty when Zadig awoke; he sought for his arms, but could find none but the green armor. With this he was obliged to cover himself, having nothing else near him. Astonished and enraged, he put it on in a furious passion, and advanced in this equipage.

The people that still remained in the amphitheater and the circus received him with hoots and hisses. They surrounded him and insulted him to his face. Never did man suffer such cruel mortifications. He lost his patience; with his saber he dispersed such of the populace as dared to affront him; but he knew not what course to take. He could not see the queen; he could not claim the white armor she had sent him without exposing her; and thus, while she was plunged in grief, he was filled with fury and distraction. He walked on the banks of the Euphrates, fully persuaded that his star had destined him to inevitable misery, and resolving in his own mind all his misfortunes, from the adventure of the woman who hated one-eyed men to that of his armor. "This," said he, "is the consequence of my having slept too long. Had I slept less, I should now have been King of Babylon and in possession of Astarte. Knowledge, virtue, and courage have hitherto served only to make me miserable." He then let fall some secret murmurings against Providence, and was tempted to believe that the world was governed by a cruel destiny, which oppressed the good and prospered knights in green armor. One of his greatest mortifications was his being obliged to wear that green armor which had exposed him to such contumelious treatment. A merchant happening to pass by, he sold it to him for a trifle and bought a gown and a long bonnet.

In this garb he proceeded along the banks of the Euphrates, filled with despair, and secretly accusing Providence, which thus continued to persecute him with unremitting severity.

THE HERMIT

While he was thus sauntering he met a hermit, whose white and venerable beard hung down to his girdle. He held a book in his hand, which he read with great attention. Zadig stopped, and made him a profound obeisance. The hermit returned the compliment with such a noble and engaging air, that Zadig had the curiosity to enter into conversation with him. He asked him what book it was that he had been reading? "It is the Book of Destinies," said the hermit; "wouldst thou choose to look into it?" He put the book into the hands of Zadig, who, thoroughly versed as he was in several languages, could not decipher a single character of it. This only redoubled his curiosity.

"Thou seemest," said this good father, "to be in great distress."

"Alas," replied Zadig, "I have but too much reason."

"If thou wilt permit me to accompany thee," resumed the old man, "perhaps I may be of some service to thee. I have often poured the balm of consolation into the bleeding heart of the unhappy."

Zadig felt himself inspired with respect for the air, the beard, and the book of the hermit. He found, in the course of the conversation, that he was possessed of superior degrees of knowledge. The hermit talked of fate, of justice, of morals, of the chief good, of human weakness, and of virtue and vice, with such a spirited and moving eloquence, that Zadig felt himself drawn toward him by an irresistible charm. He earnestly entreated the favor of his company till their return to Babylon.

"I ask the same favor of thee," said the old man; "swear to me by Oromazes, that whatever I do, thou wilt not leave me for some days." Zadig swore, and they set out together.

In the evening the two travelers arrived in a superb castle. The hermit entreated a hospitable reception for himself and the young man who accompanied him. The porter, whom one might have easily mistaken for a great lord, introduced them with a kind of disdainful civility. He presented them to a principal domestic, who showed them his master's magnificent apartments. They were admitted to the lower end of the table, without being honored with the least mark of regard by the lord of the castle; but they were served, like the rest, with delicacy and profusion. They were then presented with water to wash their hands, in a golden basin adorned with emeralds and rubies. At last they were conducted to bed in a beautiful apartment; and in the morning a domestic brought each of them a piece of gold, after which they took their leave and departed.

"The master of the house," said Zadig, as they were proceeding on the journey, "appears to be a generous man, though somewhat too proud; he nobly performs the duties of hospitality." At that instant he observed that a kind of large pocket, which the hermit had, was filled and distended; and upon looking more narrowly he found that it contained the golden basin adorned with precious stones, which the hermit had stolen. He durst not take any notice of it, but he was filled with a strange surprise.

About noon, the hermit came to the door of a paltry house inhabited by a rich miser, and begged the favor of an hospitable reception for a few hours. An old servant, in a tattered garb, received them with a blunt and rude air, and led them into the stable, where he gave them some rotten olives, moldy bread, and sour beer. The hermit ate and drank with as much seeming satisfaction as he had done the evening before; and then addressing himself to the old servant, who watched them both, to prevent their stealing anything, and rudely pressed them

to depart, he gave him the two pieces of gold he had received in the morning, and thanked him for his great civility.

"Pray," added he, "allow me to speak to thy master." The servant, filled with astonishment, introduced the two travelers. "Magnificent lord," said the hermit, "I cannot but return thee my most humble thanks for the noble manner in which thou hast entertained us. Be pleased to accept this golden basin as a small mark of my gratitude." The miser started, and was ready to fall backward; but the hermit, without giving him time to recover from his surprise, instantly departed with his young fellow traveler.

"Father," said Zadig, "what is the meaning of all this? Thou seemest to me to be entirely different from other men; thou stealest a golden basin adorned with precious stones from a lord who received thee magnificently, and givest it to a miser who treats thee with indignity."

"Son," replied the old man, "this magnificent lord, who receives strangers only from vanity and ostentation, will hereby be rendered more wise; and the miser will learn to practice the duties of hospitality. Be surprised at nothing, but follow me."

Zadig knew not as yet whether he was in company with the most foolish or the most prudent of mankind; but the hermit spoke with such an ascendancy, that Zadig, who was moreover bound by his oath, could not refuse to follow him.

In the evening they arrived at a house built with equal elegance and simplicity, where nothing savored either of prodigality or avarice. The master of it was a philosopher, who had retired from the world, and who cultivated in peace the study of virtue and wisdom, without any of that rigid and morose severity so commonly to be found in men of his character. He had chosen to build this country house, in which he received strangers with a generosity free from ostentation. He went himself to meet the two travelers, whom he led into a commodious

apartment, where he desired them to repose themselves a little. Soon after he came and invited them to a decent and well-ordered repast during which he spoke with great judgment of the last revolutions in Babylon. He seemed to be strongly attached to the queen, and wished that Zadig had appeared in the lists to dispute the crown. "But the people," added he, "do not deserve to have such a king as Zadig."

Zadig blushed, and felt his griefs redoubled. They agreed, in the course of the conversation, that the things of this world did not always answer the wishes of the wise. The hermit still maintained that the ways of Providence were inscrutable; and that men were in the wrong to judge of a whole, of which they understood but the smallest part.

They talked of passions. "Ah," said Zadig, "how fatal are their effects!"

"They are in the winds," replied the hermit, "that swell the sails of the ship; it is true, they sometimes sink her, but without them she could not sail at all. The bile makes us sick and choleric; but without bile we could not live. Everything in this world is dangerous, and yet everything is necessary."

The conversation turned on pleasure; and the hermit proved that it was a present bestowed by the Deity. "For," said he, "man cannot give himself either sensations or ideas; he receives all; and pain and pleasure proceed from a foreign cause as well as his being."

Zadig was surprised to see a man, who had been guilty of such extravagant actions, capable of reasoning with so much judgment and propriety. At last, after a conversation equally entertaining and instructive, the host led back his two guests to their apartment, blessing Heaven for having sent him two men possessed of so much wisdom and virtue. He offered them money with such an easy and noble air as could not possibly give any offense. The hermit refused it, and said that he must now take his leave of him, as he set out for

Babylon before it was light. Their parting Was tender; Zadig especially felt himself filled with esteem and affection for a man of such an amiable character.

When he and the hermit were alone in their apartment, they spent a long time praising their host. At break of day the old man awakened his companion. "We must now depart," said he, "but while all the family are still asleep, I will leave this man a mark of my esteem and affection." So saying, he took a candle and set fire to the house.

Zadig, struck with horror, cried aloud, and endeavored to hinder him from committing such a barbarous action; but the hermit drew him away by a superior force, and the house was soon in flames. The hermit, who, with his companion, was already at a considerable distance, looked back to the conflagration with great tranquillity.

"Thanks be to God," said he, "the house of my dear host is entirely destroyed! Happy man!"

At these words Zadig was at once tempted to burst out a-laughing, to reproach the reverend father, to beat him, and to run away. But he did none of all of these, for still subdued by the powerful ascendancy of the hermit, he followed him, in spite of himself, to the next stage.

This was at the house of a charitable and virtuous widow, who had a nephew fourteen years of age, a handsome and promising youth, and her only hope. She performed the honors of her house as well as she could. Next day, she ordered her nephew to accompany the strangers to a bridge, which being lately broken down, was become extremely dangerous in passing. The young man walked before them with great alacrity. As they were crossing the bridge, "Come" said the hermit to the youth, "I must show my gratitude to thy aunt." He then took him by the hair and plunged him into the river. The boy sunk, appeared again on the surface of the water, and was swallowed up by the current.

"O monster! O thou most wicked of mankind!" cried Zadig.

"Thou promisedst to behave with greater patience," said the hermit, interrupting him. "Know that under the ruins of that house which Providence hath set on fire the master hath found an immense treasure. Know that this young man, whose life Providence hath shortened, would have assassinated his aunt in the space of a year, and thee in that of two."

"Who told thee so, barbarian?" cried Zadig; "and though thou hadst read this event in thy Book of Destinies, art thou permitted to drown a youth who never did thee any harm?"

While the Babylonian was thus exclaiming, he observed that the old man had no longer a beard, and that his countenance assumed the features and complexion of youth. The hermit's habit disappeared, and four beautiful wings covered a majestic body resplendent with light.

"O sent of heaven! O divine angel!" cried Zadig, humbly prostrating himself on the ground, "hast thou then descended from the Empyrean to teach a weak mortal to submit to the eternal decrees of Providence?"

"Men," said the angel Jesrad, "judge of all without knowing anything; and, of all men, thou best deservest to be enlightened."

Zadig begged to be permitted to speak. "I distrust myself," said he, "but may I presume to ask the favor of thee to clear up one doubt that still remains in my mind? Would it not have been better to have corrected this youth, and made him virtuous, than to have drowned him?"

"Had he been virtuous," replied Jesrad, "and enjoyed a longer life, it would have been his fate to be assassinated himself, together with the wife he would have married, and the child he would have had by her."

"But why," said Zadig, "is it necessary that there should be crimes and misfortunes, and that these misfortunes should fall on the good?"

"The wicked," replied Jesrad, "are always unhappy; they serve to prove and try the small number of the just that are scattered through the earth; and there is no evil that is not productive of some good."

"But," said Zadig, "suppose there were nothing but good and no evil at all."

"Then," replied Jesrad, "this earth would be another earth. The chain of events would be ranged in another order and directed by wisdom; but this other order, which would be perfect, can exist only in the eternal abode of the Supreme Being, to which no evil can approach. The Deity hath created millions of worlds among which there is not one that resembles another. This immense variety is the effect of His immense power. There are not two leaves among the trees of the earth, nor two globes in the unlimited expanse of heaven that are exactly similar; and all that thou seest on the little atom in which thou art born, ought to be in its proper time and place, according to the immutable decree of Him who comprehends all. Men think that this child who hath just perished is fallen into the water by chance; and that it is by the same chance that this house is burned; but there is no such thing as chance; all is either a trial, or a punishment, or a reward, or a foresight. Remember the fisherman who thought himself the most wretched of mankind. Oromazes sent thee to change his fate. Cease, then, frail mortal, to dispute against what thou oughtest to adore."

"But," said Zadig--as he pronounced the word "But," the angel took his flight toward the tenth sphere. Zadig on his knees adored

Providence, and submitted. The angel cried to him from on high,
"Direct thy course toward Babylon."

THE ENIGMAS

Zadig, entranced, as it were, and like a man about whose head the thunder had burst, walked at random. He entered Babylon on the very day when those who had fought at the tournaments were assembled in the grand vestibule of the palace to explain the enigmas and to answer the questions of the grand magi. All the knights were already arrived, except the knight in green armor. As soon as Zadig appeared in the city the people crowded round him; every eye was fixed on him; every mouth blessed him, and every heart wished him the empire. The envious man saw him pass; he frowned and turned aside. The people conducted him to the place where the assembly was held. The queen, who was informed of his arrival, became a prey to the most violent agitations of hope and fear. She was filled with anxiety and apprehension. She could not comprehend why Zadig was without arms, nor why Itobad wore the white armor. A confused murmur arose at the sight of Zadig. They were equally surprised and charmed to see him; but none but the knights who had fought were permitted to appear in the assembly.

"I have fought as well as the other knights," said Zadig, "but another here wears my arms; and while I wait for the honor of proving the truth of my assertion, I demand the liberty of presenting myself to explain the enigmas." The question was put to the vote, and his reputation for probity was still so deeply impressed in their minds, that they admitted him without scruple.

The first question proposed by the grand magi was: "What, of all things in the world, is the longest and the shortest, the swiftest and the slowest, the most divisible and the most extended the most neglected and the most regretted, without which nothing can be done, which devours all that is little, and enlivens all that is great?"

Itobad was to speak. He replied that so great a man as he did not understand enigmas, and that it was sufficient for him to have conquered by his strength and valor. Some said that the meaning of the enigma was Fortune; some, the Earth; and others the Light. Zadig said that it was Time. "Nothing," added he, "is longer, since it is the measure of eternity; nothing is shorter, since it is insufficient for the accomplishment of our projects; nothing more slow to him that expects, nothing more rapid to him that enjoys; in greatness, it extends to infinity; in smallness, it is infinitely divisible; all men neglect it; all regret the loss of it; nothing can be done without it; it consigns to oblivion whatever is unworthy of being transmitted to posterity, and it immortalizes such actions as are truly great." The assembly acknowledged that Zadig was in the right.

The next question was: "What is the thing which we receive without thanks, which we enjoy without knowing how, which we give to others when we know not where we are, and which we lose without perceiving it?"

Everyone gave his own explanation. Zadig alone guessed that it was Life, and explained all the other enigmas with the same facility. Itobad always said that nothing was more easy, and that he could have answered them with the same readiness had he chosen to have given himself the trouble. Questions were then proposed on justice, on the sovereign good, and on the art of government. Zadig's answers were judged to be the most solid. "What a pity is it," said they, "that such a great genius should be so bad a knight!"

"Illustrious lords," said Zadig, "I have had the honor of conquering in the tournaments. It is to me that the white armor belongs. Lord Itobad took possession of it during my sleep. He probably thought that it would fit him better than the green. I am now ready to prove in your presence, with my gown and sword, against all that beautiful white

armor which he took from me, that it is I who have had the honor of conquering the brave Otamus."

Itobad accepted the challenge with the greatest confidence. He never doubted but that, armed as he was, with a helmet, a cuirass, and brassarts, he would obtain an easy victory over a champion in a cap and nightgown. Zadig drew his sword, saluting the queen, who looked at him with a mixture of fear and joy. Itobad drew his without saluting anyone. He rushed upon Zadig, like a man who had nothing to fear; he was ready to cleave him in two. Zadig knew how to ward off his blows, by opposing the strongest part of his sword to the weakest of that of his adversary, in such a manner that Itobad's sword was broken. Upon which Zadig, seizing his enemy by the waist, threw him on the ground; and firing the point of his sword at the breastplate, "Suffer thyself to be disarmed," said he, "or thou art a dead man."

Itobad, always surprised at the disgraces that happened to such a man as he, was obliged to yield to Zadig, who took from him with great composure his magnificent helmet, his superb cuirass, his fine brassarts, his shining cuishes; clothed himself with them, and in this dress ran to throw himself at the feet of Astarte. Cador easily proved that the armor belonged to Zadig. He was acknowledged king by the unanimous consent of the whole nation, and especially by that of Astarte, who, after so many calamities, now tasted the exquisite pleasure of seeing her lover worthy, in the eyes of all the world, to be her husband. Itobad went home to be called lord in his own house. Zadig was king, and was happy. The queen and Zadig adored Providence. He sent in search of the robber Arbogad, to whom he gave an honorable post in his army, promising to advance him to the first dignities if he behaved like a true warrior, and threatening to hang him if he followed the profession of a robber.

Setoc, with the fair Almona, was called from the heart of Arabia and placed at the head of the commerce of Babylon. Cador was preferred and distinguished according to his great services. He was the friend of

the king; and the king was then the only monarch on earth that had a friend. The little mute was not forgotten.

But neither could the beautiful Semira be comforted for having believed that Zadig would be blind of an eye; nor did Azora cease to lament her having attempted to cut off his nose. Their griefs, however, he softened by his presents. The envious man died of rage and shame. The empire enjoyed peace, glory, and plenty. This was the happiest age of the earth; it was governed by love and justice. The people blessed Zadig, and Zadig blessed Heaven.