

Shah Ismail and Qamberta

1. ONCE there was a King in a country like Baghdad-land. This King had no children.* For a long time he prayed and worshipped his God. After some time he called his right-hand vizier and said, 'O vizier, you be deputy in my place while I go as a dervish and let us see what God will do.' The vizier sat in the King's place and the King put on a suit of dervish clothes and set off for the mountains, chanting his creed.

2. After a long time he met a grey-bearded old fellow. Greybeard asked him, saying, 'Majesty,¹ what are you doing here, what ails you?' He said, 'By your leave,² since you know that I am a king you will also know what ails me.' (Greybeard) said, 'Well, you and I shall make a bargain. I shall give you an apple, God will give you a male child (but) you will not name him until I come and name him. I promise that if you do this with me he will always be in my thoughts³ until death and I shall not forget him.' Greybeard put his hand into his bosom,⁴ brought out an apple and put it into the King's hand. The King took the apple from his hand, put it into his bosom and went back home.

3. When he returned home he went upstairs and called his wife, saying, 'Wife, God has opened a gate unto His mercy for us.' He divided the apple into three pieces, one piece of it he ate himself and one piece he gave to his wife, one piece he took for his mare. They ate the apple and after a long time God gave them a child, and his mare foaled.

4. Some time passed by, the lad's age reached thirteen and was approaching fourteen. Some people, sitting in audience with the King, asked him saying,¹ 'Majesty, it is a great pity for this boy that people have no name to call him by. It seems best to us that we should give him a name until his master comes and names him.' The King said, 'My brothers, I cannot name him myself until his master comes.'

5. They were engaged in this conversation when 'ratatat', someone knocked at the door. The King said, 'Go and see who it is knocking at the door.' They went and opened the door and when they looked an old fellow was standing before the door, asking for the King. They informed the King, saying, 'Majesty, there is a greybearded old fellow standing at the door, asking for you.'

* For the notes to these translations see pp. 368.

6. The King ran to meet him, gave him a fine welcome and paid him great respect and honour. He gave him private audience and brought the boy before him. (Greybeard) called the boy, saying, 'Come lad, sit down.' He initiated him well, spoke into his ear and named him Shah Ismail. He called the foal and named it Qamberta.¹ He initiated the steed and recited a prayer over it.

7. They were conversing thus when old Greybeard¹ vanished. The people called to the King, saying, 'Majesty, what secret was this that you have shown us? Why did you not tell us?' He said, 'My brothers, he made me swear before the door that I would not disclose his name, so that whatever may befall he will come to no harm.'² The people were very pleased at this and said nothing.

8. Some time passed by, the boy's father called him, 'Shah Ismail, be so good as to tell me which girl you love, which girl you desire, that I may bring her for you.' The boy replied, saying, 'Father dear, I do not want a wife. As long as I live I shall not take a wife.' He said, 'My son, be a good fellow. While I still live, before I die, let me see children of yours and look upon their faces.'¹ (The boy) said, 'Father dear, it is impossible, I shall marry no woman.' The father did not press the matter.

9. After some days the boy chose some horsemen, young like himself, and they set out for the wilderness to hunt.¹ For some days they went about in the plain, then, as the boy was observing the plain with field-glasses, he caught sight of some gazelles grazing in a garden. There was one gazelle among them with a collar of gold round its neck. He said, 'My brothers, of these gazelles grazing yonder the one with the collar of gold round its neck is for me, those which are grazing apart are for you. Do your own hunting and do not abandon the chase.'

10. The lads went towards the gazelles until they were near them. When they came near them they surrounded the gazelles. The boy wanted to capture (his gazelle) by hand. He advised his comrades and said to them, 'My brothers, as far as it is possible for us let us take it by hand. It would be a great pity to kill it. When we have captured it we shall put it in my father's court. It is fitting that this one should be put in my father's court.' When they heard these (words) they said, 'As you wish, as far as it is possible for us we shall catch it by hand. If it is not possible then it cannot be helped.'¹

11. The lads approached it and all of them surrounded it. When

they surrounded it the boy looked and spoke to them, saying, 'Whoever's head it escapes over, I shall chop his head off.'¹ The gazelle raised its head and jumped over the boy's head. The people said, 'Brother dear, it jumped over your own head.' He said, 'My brothers, you sit down here, I am going after it. I shall not return until I bring it back.'

12. He went after the gazelle for a long time. He saw that the gazelle went into a tent. The boy stopped before the door of the tent. A white-headed woman came out of the door and said, 'Handsome youth, pray dismount and eat, take your rest and then go.' He said, 'Mother dear, my quarry has come hither. Give me back my quarry. I shall not sit down, I have left my comrades behind, I must return to them.'

13. She said, 'By your leave, that which you have seen is not your quarry, that is my daughter, the daughter of the Sheikh of the Arabs. She has left her own country in disgust and come here. She robs on the highway, brings us (the spoils) and we live on them. And she has studied in the school of magic and learnt this sort of thing. She turns herself into a pigeon, a gazelle, a snake, she turns herself into everything. If you do not believe me go inside and see.'

14. The boy went inside and saw the girl. (The woman's) words were really true. By the time the girl's mother had prepared bread and stew for them the boy had exchanged his handkerchief and ring¹ with the girl. They were smitten² by the arrow of love for one another. The boy ate bread, and took his rest there, then he returned to his companions and said, 'Let us return home. Abandon the chase.' They returned home.

15. The boy's father came to meet him and said, 'Son, you went saying it was for seven days, today it is only two days and you have returned.' He said, 'Father dear, I am ill, do not touch me.' The boy came back home, lay down on his bed and did not rise for three nights and three days. They kept bringing doctors to him but he had no illness.

16. The boy had a very wise cousin. The boy's father summoned her, saying, 'If it should be that you find out what is the matter with the boy, I shall give you whatever you desire in the world.' She said, 'Very well, uncle dear, I shall now go to my cousin and ask him and discover what ails him.' She went to her cousin and said, 'Cousin dear, how are you? Why do you act thus? What ails you? Tell me truly, with whom have you fallen in love that

you have sickened in this way?' The boy sighed and said, 'Cousin, I have fallen in love with the daughter of the Sheikh of the Arabs, in such-and-such a place. You must bring her for me within two or three days.'

17. The girl called her uncle and said, 'Uncle dear, do you know? He has fallen in love with the daughter of the Sheikh of the Arabs. Find out where she is, bring her for him as soon as possible.' The boy's father came and said, 'I beg you, wherever (she may be) tell me, so that I may bring her for you by the power of gold.'

18. They set out¹ and departed. Certain wise viziers and deputies wrote a fine letter to the Sheikh of the Arabs, saying, 'We would like to see your Excellency, that you should present your compliments to me² so that I may behold you.' These viziers arose, set out and went to the house of the Sheikh of the Arabs.

19. When they went there the Sheikh of the Arabs was not at home. His wife came to meet them and said, 'Welcome, dear guests. Why have you come, have you come for good or evil?' (The leader) said, 'By God, we have come in peace. Where is his Excellency the Sheikh?' She said, 'He is not at home. Not today (but) tomorrow he will return.' They waited until he returned. (The leader) put his hand in his pocket, brought out the letter and gave it into the hand of the Sheikh of the Arabs.

20. When the Sheikh had read the letter he said, 'What does this King of yours want with me?' I have never done his country any harm. Now he summons me that he may see me—what is the meaning of it?' He said, 'By God, he very much wants to see you, that his eyes may behold you and that he may know you.' (The Sheikh) said, 'Very well, tomorrow, God willing, I shall come with you, we shall go together to the King.'

21. He called his sons and said, 'My lads, make yourselves ready to come with me tomorrow, let us go and see what it is (he wants). His sons said, 'Father dear, we shall not come.' Of these his seven sons three boys came with their father, four of them stayed at home.

22. The King's vizier said nothing until they approached the city. From there he telephoned to the King and said, 'May it please your Majesty, I have brought the Sheikh of the Arabs and we have arrived.' The King went to meet the Sheikh of the Arabs with a fine welcoming party and conducted him home. They waited on him well and gave him a handsome welcome.

23. After the welcome and the compliments (the vizier) asked him, 'O Sheikh, do you know why the King has brought your Excellency hither?' He said, 'No indeed, O vizier.' He said, 'He has brought you because there is a flower in your garden,¹ that you may present her to his son.' He said, 'O vizier, if it be a girl, my daughter, let a thousand like my daughter be at the lad's behest.' When he heard this the boy immediately rose from his bed and kissed the Sheikh's hand.

24. That very minute the girl's father, who was the Sheikh of the Arabs, acted as the girl's proxy and betrothed the girl to the boy. They drank the (betrothal) sherbet, they prepared the bridal things for her, tied them all up for her and loaded them up and got them ready. (The King) said, 'O Sheikh, today is Wednesday. (Next) Wednesday we shall come for the bride.' He said, 'It is most auspicious.' The Sheikh of the Arabs took his leave of them and returned to his own home (while) the boy stayed at home.

25. Let us see the Sheikh home, leaving the boy sitting here. The Sheikh of the Arabs returned home. When he approached his own home these four sons, who had not come from home with him, set upon their father with swords, saying, 'Father, what is all this you have brought with you, all this fine stuff and all this gold?' He said, 'By God, my sons, I have given your sister to the son of the King of this great country.'

26. They said, 'Father dear, we are not going to lose our sister, we shall not give her to the King's son.' The Sheikh of the Arabs said, 'O my sons, now it is settled and has passed out of our hands. It will be a shameful affair if we do not give her.' They said, 'Father dear, we shall not give our sister, you do as you please. Today, tonight is Tuesday and we shall load up, set off and depart. May the King's eyes come out! Let that hero come after the girl and take her.'

27 The boy, Shah Ismail, went before his father on the Tuesday and said, 'Father dear, I wish to pay a visit to my betrothed today. She is my lawful (betrothed). I shall go and see her and return.' He said, 'Go, God keep you.' When the boy set out and went—the boy was going along—some time passed by and when the boy went he saw that in the place of his betrothed there was bare earth, there was no dwelling for her and no trace of her and far or near¹ nobody knew whither they had gone or not gone.

28. The boy was greatly distressed and grieved. When he looked

(he saw that) a piece of paper had been put in a fire-place and a small stone put on top of it. The boy dismounted, read the letter and kissed it. In it was written, 'O Shah Ismail, my beloved,¹ if you follow me you will find me either in Damascus or in Aleppo.'

29. The boy returned home, went to his chest, took out a bag of money and said, 'Father dear, I bid you farewell. You will not see me again. My betrothed has gone, I am going after her to see where I shall find her.'

30. The boy set out and went for some long time. After a time he caught sight of a hill. He saw that there was a house built on this hill but nowhere on it was there a sign whereby the boy might discover what was inside it. The boy uttered the name of God,¹ struck the house a blow with his club and destroyed one side of it, and when he looked a very beautiful maiden came to meet him. When he looked (he saw that) she was much, much more beautiful than his betrothed.

31. She asked, 'Brother dear, what is your business that you have come to my castle?' He said, 'Tell me, what are you doing here all alone?' She said, 'Brother dear, I am the daughter of Islam Shah of the Peris. I and my three brothers—because the son of the King of the Franks asked my father for my hand, and my brothers did not approve of it because he is an infidel and I am a Muslim, it is now three years that these three brothers of mine have been fighting against the army of the King of the Franks.'

32. The boy asked her, 'Will you not come and tell me where your brothers are, so that I too may go to them?' The girl said, 'I beg you, be so good and rest this night. Tomorrow I shall show you the road to my brothers.' The boy went upstairs and rested. At night, when it was time to sleep, he saw that he and this girl were to sleep in one bed. The boy reached out his hand, drew his naked sword and stretched it between them both so that they should not touch one another, because the boy had made a bond with his God that he would have nothing to do¹ with anybody until he should achieve his happiness with his own queen.

33. In the morning when the boy awoke from sleep he ate a meal, the girl saddled his steed for him, he mounted and came out of the castle. The girl pointed out the road and said, 'Brother dear, take this road and you will go to my brothers.' The boy uttered the name of God and said, 'Qamberta, I want you to bring me down before the tent of these three brothers.' The horse took him up and brought him down before the tent of the three brothers.

34. When the three brothers beheld this handsome youth they were astonished at this handsome form that God had created. All three of them dismounted him¹ and took him into the tent and said, 'Brother dear, be so good as to eat with us.' He said, 'I shall not eat your food unless you leave today's fighting to me.'² They said, 'Eat your food, we will leave it to you.' The boy was still eating when he heard the war drum. From this side they beat the drum in the name of Shah Ismail.

35. The boy, Shah Ismail, smothered himself in iron and steel, drew a veil over his face and set out for the field of battle.¹ He saw that a great demon came towards him and said, 'Did they not dare to come into the field themselves today that they have sent you, boy? I'll make you into a bit of chewing-gum² and stick it in the hollow of my tooth.' The boy said, 'Accursed one, this is not a law court. The first blow is for infidels, so do your worst.'³

36. The demon, in anger, seized his heavy club to strike him on the crown of the head and turn him into a drop of water. The boy did not let it reach his head but seized his wrist and said, 'Accursed one, hold tight.' The boy jerked the club and took away the skin of (the demon's hand) together with the club, saying, 'Take one of my hands, monster.¹ If you survive, then do not count me a man.' The boy struck him on the crown of the head with the club and laid him low.²

37. By evening he had cut two hundred first-class champions in two pieces with his sword. The boy heard the drum of good tidings being beaten and returned to the three brothers. They came to meet him, took his horse from him, took him inside and served him well. These three brothers were astounded by this boy, saying, 'From where does he get this power and strength, if not from God? This is no earthly creature but something which has come to us from God.'

38. The same thing in the morning, when he rose from sleeping, he set out for the field of battle unquestioningly. When he looked, there was nobody who could do battle with this small boy. The boy said, 'Yesterday you were saying to me, "What are you that you have come to do battle?" Today I say to you, come forward.' None of them came forward. The boy gave a cry of 'God is most great' and all the trees and rocks trembled. He set about this army and began killing. They seized an opportunity and surrounded the boy on all four sides and pierced his whole body with arrows and

swords. The boy was just conscious enough to say, 'Qamberta, take me up, I perish.'

39. Qamberta took him up and carried him off and put the boy down gently from his back on top of a mountain. The boy fell unconscious. By God's command the immortal Lord Khidr appeared before him, drew a hand over the boy's body and said, 'Are you not ashamed to lament over this wound? Arise, return quickly to your brothers. They are now weeping for you and saying, "The boy has been killed." In the morning, when you rise, utter the name of God. There is a green tent pitched above all the others and all this is magic. Strike at the middle of that green tent with a sword and nothing more will remain.'

40. The boy returned to these three brothers. They came to meet him, asking him, 'Where have you been?' He said, 'I had a little business so I went and carried it out and returned.' That night he rested. He rose early in the morning and betook himself to the green tent and struck it with a sword. When he looked it had turned to dust and earth. The boy shut his eyes. When he looked up there was nobody left there but those three brothers and the demon.

41. The boy said, 'Dear brothers, I bid you farewell. I go after my own interests.' They said, 'Since it is so kill us too, then go. Otherwise you must come with us to our house and rest, then go.' The boy said, 'Pray, let us go.'

42. On the way their eldest brother said to the youngest, in the language of the Peris, 'If the house has been destroyed cut off your sister's head for me, dip her shift in the blood and bring it to me.' The boy went ahead and saw that one side of their house had collapsed. His sister came to meet him. He said, 'Sister, I have come, if the house should have been destroyed, to cut off your head, dip your shift in the blood and take it to my elder brother.' The girl said, 'Brother dear, a boy of such-and-such description destroyed the house. He was here one night, in the morning he came to you.'

43. The boy returned and said, 'Brother, this boy was a guest of my sister for one night.' The eldest brother asked him, 'O Shah Ismail, have you been to our house?' He said, 'Yes, I was there for one night, in the morning I came to you.' The boy was very pleased. They went home and rested and afterwards the eldest of them said, 'O Shah Ismail, I have nothing (else, but) there is a flower in my garden which I give you (gladly).' The boy said, 'I accept.'

44. The eldest brother acted as *cadi*, the younger brothers acted as witnesses and they married the girl to the boy. At night they took the boy's arm and put him behind the curtain. When the boy went inside he (lay down and) went to sleep and gave no heed to the girl. Three or four nights (passed) in this way. One night the girl (sought and) gained her brothers' permission, saying, 'Tonight I shall test him to discover whether he is a girl or a boy.'

45. The same thing (that) night, the boy went, lay down and slept. The girl threw the quilt off him and said, 'Boy, why will you not have anything to do with me? Could you find anyone more beautiful than me?' The boy said, 'My dear, I am going on a journey. Let it not be that I should not return from this journey and afterwards, if you were to have a child, that (people) should say, "Who is his father?"' Then it would be a shame for you. If I return I shall take you with me, if I do not return then you will take another husband.'

46. This pleased the girl greatly. She went and said to her brothers, 'Brothers, he will not have intercourse¹ with me because he has a journey before him. When he returns he will take me with him.' Her brothers said, 'It is very well.'

47. The boy, Shah Ismail, turned to those three brothers and said, 'Let us go. As I have done you this service so you do this for me. Tell me which road goes a minute quicker from here to Damascus and Aleppo.' They said, 'After you.' They took him to where three roads meet and said, 'Brother, this road goes in a year, this road goes in six months, the third road goes in two months, but whoever has gone from here has not returned.' The boy said, 'I go in God's keeping.'

48. The boy took leave of them, set out and went. He travelled a month's road and saw written on a mountain 'The Road of No Return'.¹ The boy gave no heed and said, 'I go in God's keeping.' He saw that some thousands of tents were pitched (there but) there was nobody in them. One tent was higher than all of them and there were two minarets made beside it, one of them of human heads, one of them of bodies.

49. The boy was a little frightened (but) he went into this tent and saw that food and tea were prepared. There was nobody in it. The boy began to eat. There was a bed in it (so) he got on it and lay down. He listened (and heard) a grumbling and moaning saying, 'What bastard has turned (aside) to my place? Be it shod I shall break its shoes, be it winged I shall break its wings.'¹

50. The boy came outside and called, 'Accursed one, stop making idle threats, come forth. Tonight I am your guest until the morning (when) I shall (fight) you with whatever (weapon) you say. If you are successful cut off my head, if I am successful I shall cut off your head as if you were a dog.' The Black Rider came forth, took the boy's hand, took him inside and waited on him till morning.

51. In the morning they rose from sleep, grasped each other by the hand and set out for the arena. The Black Rider said, 'Handsome youth, I do not want to fight you with sword or blade, we shall wrestle. If I throw you to the ground I shall not kill you. I shall put a ring in your ear¹ and make you my slave. If, on the other hand, you throw me to the ground do what you will to me.' Shah Ismail said, 'I do not give a farthing for all this talk.² If you throw me to the ground cut off my head, if I throw you to the ground I shall cut off your head as if you were a dog.'

52. They seized each other and began to wrestle. For seven days neither of them gained the mastery over the other. One day the boy raised his head and said, 'O God, Thou knowest what ails me and what I am facing. If Thou hast brought the hour of my death at the hands of this accursed one, throw me to the ground and let me be quit. If Thou hast not brought my death, let me throw him to the ground and be quit of this agony.'

53. The boy pleaded much with God. He clinched with the Black Rider and said, 'O Immortal Khidr, it is as you wish.' Twice he took the Black Rider to one side and brought him back, then he seized him like a sparrow with his hand, threw him to the earth and flew at his sword to cut off his head. The Black Rider seized the opportunity, opened the buttons of his collar—and bared a woman's breast.¹ The boy's hand grew cold.

54. The Black Rider said, 'Get off my chest. It has been ordained in heaven and on earth¹ that you and I should marry, for I have made a bond with God that I shall marry no one who has not thrown me to the ground.' They took each other by the hand and turned towards the mansion of the Black Rider. The Black Rider set the boy down there, went inside and changed. When she came out the boy beheld that she was much more beautiful than both his betrotheds.

55. The boy said, 'O queen, I have made a bond that until I have gone and brought back my betrothed, and achieved happiness

(with her), I shall not have anything to do with you.' The Black Rider said, 'Whithersoever you go I shall be your horse's attendant, I shall not let you go alone now.' He said, 'How can a woman like you come and suffer the hardships of the road¹ with me?' She said, 'How! You have wrestled with me for seven days. I shall go back immediately into those clothes in which you saw me.' The boy said, 'Since it is so, make yourself ready in the morning, that we may go.'

56. Early in the morning they came out of the mansion riding together and went until they entered the country of Damascus and Aleppo. The boy said, 'Qamberta, I shall lay your reins on your neck. Bring me to a halt before the door of whichever house holds honest people.'¹ The horse went about that city from morning till evening. In the evening it stopped before the door of an old woman.²

57. The boy knocked on the door, saying, 'Mother dear, will you not take guests?' She said, 'My son, if you are satisfied with your own mother's home I shall abase myself before you.'¹ The boy led the horse inside and said, 'Mother dear, come, here is a handful of money. Go and buy whatever the house needs in the market, bring it back and prepare something for us for the evening.' The old woman went to the market, bought whatever she needed, brought it home and made them a fine meal.

58. In the evening, after the meal, the boy said, 'Mother dear, you will probably know if the daughter of the Sheikh of the Arabs has come back here.' She said, 'May I be your sacrifice, it is two years since they came back. His daughter has gone mad. She is (kept) underground, nobody dares go near her.' The boy said, 'Mother dear, if I give you something, can you throw it down to her through a hole?' The old woman said, 'My son, she will kill me, tear me to pieces.' The boy said, 'Mother dear, if it should come about that you die, I swear I shall raise a dome of gold over you, I shall bury you in a handsome manner.' The old woman said, 'Since it is so, I am ready. Give me whatever you have, that I may take it to her.' The boy said, 'Go and bring me a bunch of flowers and sweet basil.' The boy put his betrothed's ring amid the basil and gave it to Granny.

59. Granny set off, went and threw (the flowers) down to her through a hole in the roof. Down below the girl sprang at the flowers like a cat, tore them all up and threw them away. She heard

a clink. When she caught sight of her own ring she shrieked and fell unconscious. After a moment her senses returned and she said, 'Who was it threw those flowers down? For God's sake let him reveal himself.' The old woman said, 'If you are not mad I shall come to you.' The girl said, 'By God, there is no madness about me.'

60. The old woman went towards the house of the Sheikh of the Arabs and saw that there was a great crowd. She said, 'Get out of the way, I am going to cure the daughter of the Sheikh of the Arabs.' These people made fun of her and said, 'If you go inside she will tear you to pieces.' She said, 'I am still going to cure her.' The king said, 'Make way for her, let her go inside.' The king said, 'Your blood be on your own head.'

61. The old woman went inside and shut the door. The girl said, 'O mother, for God's sake, where is my master?' She said, 'My daughter, he is my guest. I shall bring him now, so that you may see him.' The old woman came outside and said, 'I am going to fetch my daughter to hold one remaining medicine for me, (then) I shall give it to (the girl) so that she may soon get better.' The old woman quickly put an aba¹ over him, put Shah Ismail behind her, and introduced him into the girl's room.

62. The girl saw him and could not restrain herself for joy. The boy said, 'A farthing for all this. Come outside as quickly as possible, let us go.' The girl said, 'How will you take me outside?' The boy said, 'Go and tell your father to heat the bath-house for you, wash yourself clean, (then) say, "Father dear, adorn the garden for me." Then I shall come, bring a mount for you and take you away with me. Then let your brothers be brave and follow us.'

63. The boy came out with the old woman and they went to the Sheikh of the Arabs and said, 'Reward us for the good news. Thanks (be to God), she is cured.' The king danced for joy and gave them a big present. They went, (then) the girl called, 'Father dear, I am not mad, bring me out. Why have you put me in here?' Her father came to meet her, quickly they heated the bath for her, bathed the girl and took her to the garden.

64. At night the boy, together with the old woman, went to the edge of the garden and turned into the middle of it. The old woman gave the girl a sign by stealth. The girl said to her companions, 'I am going to relieve myself.' On that pretext the girl betook herself to the boy. The boy mounted her on his horse beside

himself and carried her off until they were an hour's (journey) from the country, and there they dismounted. He said, 'I am very sleepy. Stretch out your thigh, let me put my head on your thigh and go to sleep.' The boy went to sleep. The Black Rider circled round them like a sparrow so that nobody might overcome them (by surprise).

65. In the morning, when it became light, the girl saw that her father was coming with twelve armies. The girl began to weep. The Black Rider said, 'I swear by God, if you wake the boy up I shall cut you in two pieces with this sword. When you see that I have fallen from the saddle and been killed, then wake the boy up.' The Black Rider said nothing until they approached, (then) she confronted this great army and began killing for as long as her strength remained.

66. When the girl saw that (the Black Rider's) hand had slackened she wept sorely and a tear drop fell on the boy's cheek. The boy looked up and said, 'Why are you crying?' She said, 'Get up and see what the Black Rider is doing.' The boy jumped up like a flea, mounted his steed, betook himself to the Black Rider and said, 'You rest, it is my turn.'

67. The boy made a great killing amongst them. When he saw that the girl's father was standing on a hillock together with his seven sons the boy threw his lasso at them, caught all eight of them like sparrows and dragged them before himself. He said, 'If you don't know, I am Shah Ismail, son of the King of Baghdad-land. Why have you caused me this pain?' (The Sheikh) said, 'Mercy, forgive me.' (The boy) said, 'It is for the girl to forgive you.'

68. The boy took him to his daughter and said, 'Here are your father and brothers. Do whatever you will to them.' The girl said, 'When you had married me to this boy, why did you make me mad, two years in that cellar?' Her father said, 'My daughter, whatever has happened, please forgive us.' The girl said, 'Go, you shall be forgiven for God's sake.'

69. The boy took the girl and departed freely. He set out for the home of the daughter of Islam Shah of the Peris and took her along with him also. He left Granny behind for those three boys, saying, 'Let her serve you in place of your sister.' They were very pleased. ~~The girl had a little puppy called Faithful~~, which she took with her. They set off and went and crossed the border of the country of the boy's father.

70. The daughter of Islam Shah of the Peris said, 'Why should we go into the middle of the city? We shall build a house in this garden and settle in it.' The boy said, 'Very well.' The girl brought out the book and by the power of the book she made a portion of that garden into a house. Everything that was in the houses of the girl (herself) and the Black Rider and the Sheikh of the Arabs she brought into this house.

71. When the gardener returned and saw this house he said, 'O my Lord, what is this? I went just now and there was nothing here.' He saw that Shah Ismail was on the roof with three girls, looking at the garden. He threw away his spade, went to the home of the King and said, 'Majesty, reward me for the good news. Shah Ismail has come back with three girls and they have made a house in the garden.'

72. The King ran to his son and knocked on the door. The daughter of Islam Shah of the Peris opened the door to him and said, 'Pray come upstairs, father dear.' He saw that each of these three girls was more beautiful than the next and fell in love with all three of his son's wives. He went back, called his vizier and said, 'O vizier, should we not deal with the boy, kill him? If I don't marry these three girls I shall go mad.'

73. The vizier said, 'Sire, this boy has brought these (girls) by the power of the sword and he will not be killed by you.' He said, 'I shall take him hunting and deal with him there.' The King wrote a letter, 'My son, be ready tomorrow, we shall go hunting.' The boy said, 'Father dear, I am ready.' The girl said, 'Be a good fellow, do not go.' He said, 'How should I not go?' In the morning he went hunting with his father. The girl said, 'Take this puppy with you.'

74. (They went) until they reached a place where no water could be found and there they began to eat. (The King) had made a very salty rissole for the boy and (others) separately for himself. When the boy ate it he burnt his whole inside. He said, 'Father, give me a little water. I have gone blind with thirst.' He said, 'My son, do you not know that a hunter will not give water away for his eyes? Give me one of your eyes and I shall give you a sip of water.' The boy said, 'Take both my eyes (but) give me a glass of water.'

75. He took out both of the boy's eyes and threw them away. The puppy picked them up and put them under its tongue. He stripped the boy, abandoned him, and came back home by himself.

He sent a hundred policemen after these three girls. The girl who was the Black Rider said, 'Don't say anything, let me go and see what this is.' The girl came outside and said, 'What do you want? Come, sit down, we shall come with you to the King now.'

76. She took them all inside, shut the door, (then) she cut off the ears of all hundred of them, put them in their hands and said, 'Tell the King, if he does not surrender Shah Ismail to us by morning I shall sift the earth of his country through a bag.' The King said, 'There is nothing for it. Proclaim war against them.' The Black Rider began fighting single-handed while these two girls took two glasses of poison, to drink should the Black Rider be killed.

77. The Lord Khidr came to the boy, drew his hand over his eyes and said, 'Rise, go to the help of the Black Rider and see what she is doing.' The boy said, 'Faithful, you go in front, I shall come now.' The puppy betook itself home at full speed and turned toward the Black Rider. The Black Rider took it, kissed it, and said, 'Where is your master?' It kept on playing and glancing behind it.

78. Shah Ismail came to the border of the country. He had made all his face black and dirty so that nobody would recognize him. He came into the country and they seized him and said, 'You must go to fight with these girls.' He went with them to the King and said, 'Majesty, give me Shah Ismail's horse and I shall present these girls to you.' He said, 'Go, take it.'

79. The boy mounted, turned towards the Black Rider and began to fight with her. She said, 'For God's sake, if you are Shah Ismail tell me, I am finished.'¹ He said, 'Run, it's me.' The girl ran home and Shah Ismail followed her. The King said, 'By God, he has caught all three of them for me.'

80. The boy returned and said, 'Majesty, I have brought all three of them for you.' The King bent down to kiss his feet. The boy hit him on the crown of the head with his sword and cut him in two. The boy took the veil from his face and said, 'Now do you accept me as king in place of my father?' The people said, 'We are your slaves.'¹ He became king in his father's place and they all lived happily ever after.

Sultan Mahmud and the Black Rider

81. ONE night Sultan Mahmud, Heyas the Good, and Hasan Memendi¹ were going about the country on night-patrol. When