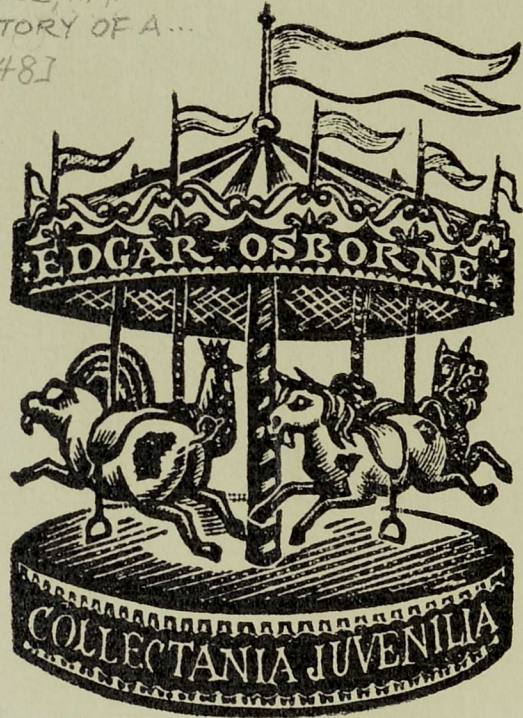


THE HISTORY
OF
A SANDAL WOOD BOX.



SB
BELL, H. G.
HISTORY OF A...
[1848]



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St George's Road
Greenwich

1847

My dear Mrs. Kitchener,

I request your
acceptance of the
accompanying volume
to me a very dear
memorial of her who
has left me & I have
no doubt that it will
be valued as such by
you.

Yours always
Henry

Bequeathed by her Mother
to
Emily Carter Frances Kitchener

Deed 19 Feb 1849 ——— Received 15 July 1853

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OF

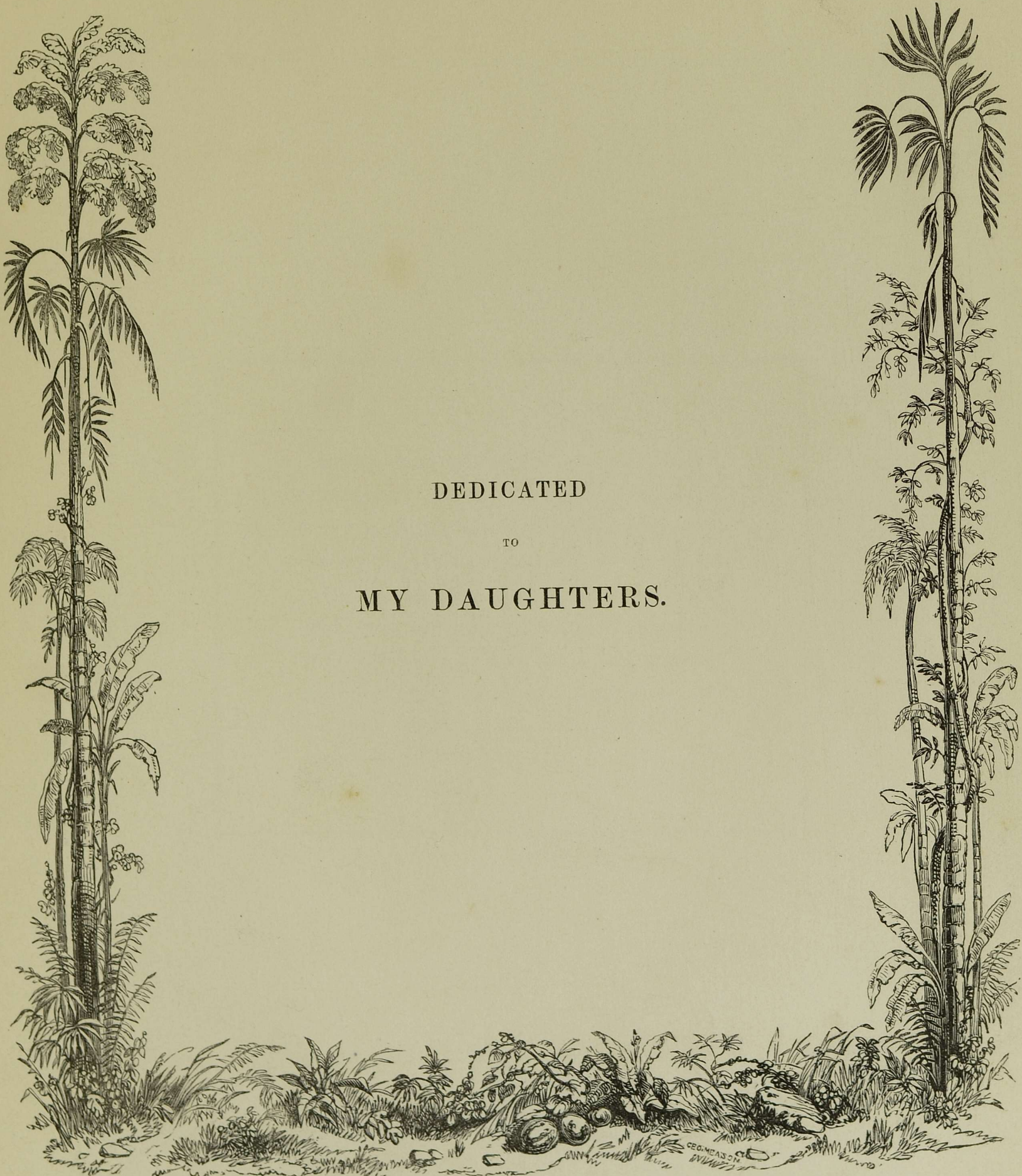
A SANDAL WOOD BOX:

WRITTEN BY ITSELF.

A TALE FOR YOUTH.

NOT PRINTED FOR PUBLICATION.

DEDICATED
TO
MY DAUGHTERS.



GEORGE MASON
DRAWN

SHE by whom these pages were written, and who looked forward with a cheerful pleasure to seeing them in their present form, died on the 17th December, 1847. The story they contain was her first and only attempt at literary composition. As a dear and gentle relic of a pious, pure-minded, and most beloved wife and mother, it has been got ready, in sadness of heart, for private distribution among the friends by whom her memory will ever be cherished with unceasing affection.

THE HISTORY
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THE first thing I can distinctly remember is finding myself a slender plant, growing along with some others of my own species, amidst tall pines and wide-spreading Banian trees in a vast plain of Hindoostan. This must now be at least one hundred years ago; and as season after season passed away, I increased in strength and beauty, till I far surpassed all the trees of my kind in size and rich foliage.

There grew near me a venerable Banian, remarkable for its large dimensions, even amongst its gigantic fellows, and the downward shoots of whose far-spreading branches, having taken root in the ground, formed a natural grove,

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under the shelter of which the tired traveller found a refuge from the oppression of the mid-day sun, and soothed his weariness in the delicious perfume which my foliage emitted. Ah! in those days of my peaceful happiness, flourishing in quiet beauty under a blue and cloudless sky whose cooling breezes delighted to rustle in soft music through my fragrant leaves, little did I dream of the sorrowful destiny that was in store for the flower of the forest.

The Banian and I stood near a path which was now and again taken by the Indian hunter in search of his prey, and he rested beside us the more gladly, that close at hand, and partly overshadowed by my branches, was an ever-springing fountain of crystal water. We must, however, have been far from cities, or the habitations of men, for few disturbed our solitude,—indeed, as I afterwards ascertained, the great mountains which on one side bounded the valley where we grew, were very inaccessible, and rarely crossed except by the adventurous hunter, or by the traveller seeking to explore the beauties which the bountiful hand of heaven has lavished on our eastern hemisphere.

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Thus time passed on in silence, till gradually the vast plain, which at first contained only a few clumps of trees scattered here and there, became a mighty forest whose impervious masses were almost never penetrated by the foot of man, and the spot which once had been the resting place of the wanderer, was now only the lair of the wild beast—the lion, the panther, or the tiger. Often did I sigh forth my sorrow in the balmy breeze of evening, as it lingered among my branches, at the change which years had thus brought about, for I had ever been ambitious of human companionship, and wearied to exchange the fierce howl of the hyena for the echo of the voice of man. I was ignorant then of what I too soon learned, with a wondering and sorrowful heart, that the lion and the tiger are less savage in their wild nature, than man when left to the devices of his own wicked imagination.

It was near the evening of a day in one of the hot months. Stillness reigned profound. Not a leaf stirred; and the wild animals, overcome by the sultry influence of the atmosphere, slept heavily in their places of rest. All nature seemed asleep, when suddenly a distant sound broke

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the stillness of repose. It came nearer and nearer like the rushing waters of the Ganges, or the echo of distant thunder. Onward it came with a crashing sound and the noise of many voices. It was an eager and well-armed band of hunters in hot pursuit of a tiger, which they had tracked in the jungles of the forest, and were following with yells and loud shouts to his lair. Desperate for life and liberty, he turned upon his enemies, but, before he had time to spring upon the foremost, a lance from an unerring hand pierced him through, and sending forth one roar of vain fury and agony, he dropped dead on the green turf.

Once more the Banian gave its shelter to the unaccustomed hunters. For two days they remained in the adjacent woods seeking game such as the forest afforded, the buffalo and the wild deer, and returning at night to the more open space where I grew.

I remarked amongst this party two men differing in colour and in garb from the others, though they both spoke the language, and one of them, at least, seemed to have been brought up in, or adopted, the manners and customs of my countrymen. Both were young. The elder of the

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two was of a noble aspect, but grave and sad. He seldom joined in the mirth of his companions, and his thoughts seemed far absent from their sport. Tired with the fatigues of the day, to which the strangers appeared less used than their Indian companions, Murad, for so was he of whom I speak named, came with his friend to my side, and as they sat by the fountain which I overshadowed, they expressed a grateful sense of my perfume. I was pleased to feel myself of use to man, and to become the object of his commendation, and I listened with interest to all that was said. Long after their associates had gone to rest in the deep shade of the Banian grove, the strangers sat in earnest conversation together, and Murad endeavoured to cheer and strengthen the heart of his less resolute companion, painting, in glowing colours, the freedom and happiness before them in a forest life; and gradually his words stirred the heart and nerved the feebler mind of the other, who, forgetting his fears and anxieties, talked boldly and exultingly of their escape from the yoke of the oppressor.

Early the following morning the party roused themselves from slumber and prepared to leave their place of

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repose, and long ere the sun shone in its full strength they had quitted the forest.

I watched them till they were hid in the darkness of the wood, and I could perceive that Murad cut with a knife, niches in the trees along the path as they went on their way; thus marking the road, so that at a future time he might be enabled to retrace his steps back to our valley.

But day after day passed wearily away, and no human voice broke the mighty solitude, and no footstep trod down the springing flower, excepting the red deer or the antelope, as they came at noon to drink of the well at my side, or seek from my shady neighbour repose from the scorching sun. The rainy season had come and gone, and again refreshed nature was in her renewed beauty; my leaves had fallen and my branches sent forth anew their buds; and I feared greatly that the guiding marks made by Murad must have disappeared, and that he might seek in vain for the path which led through the tangled wood to his former retreat, and I grieved lest I should see him no more. But I was soon happily undeceived.

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One morning ere the heavy dew was yet dried upon my leaves, voices afar off proclaimed the approach of man, and the two strangers, Murad and his friend, emerged from amongst the thicket, and along with them came four Indian men, a young Indian woman, and a small child. They seemed to have journeyed far and in haste, for they were worn out with fatigue and fasting, and the woman silently wept as she soothed the feeble babe to rest. They made a hasty meal of provisions which they carried with them, and spreading a tiger's skin for the girl to repose on, the men departed again into the thickness of the woods, while she and her child slept in the shelter heaven had provided for the weary under the Banian tree.

I watched them in their slumbers. Beautiful they looked in their innocence, and all nature smiled around them. The sun pierced not through the odoriferous branches which guarded their couch, and the air above them sparkled with brightness and joy; and yet for some time heavy sighs burst from the lips of the Indian girl, and in her troubled sleep she pressed the babe closer to her side as if fearful to wake and find herself alone. But gradually a deep quiet rest shed itself over her troubled

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spirit; and some hours afterwards when she was aroused by the return of the wanderers, she welcomed them with smiles of happiness. Murad and his party brought with them many implements never seen before in the forest, and for days they continued to absent themselves at intervals, returning with articles of use, and even luxury, which they had, it seemed, for many weeks been by the help of their camels storing up in a hidden place on the outskirts of the wood, as near as they could to the solitary spot which they had fixed on for a home.

And now commenced operations which made a great change in the appearance of things around me. The axe was heard early and late, and my blooming companions, the tall pines and stately palm trees, were hewn down to form habitations for the new possessors of the soil. Soon, on a smooth green space near where I grew, arose two or three simple and cheerful dwellings, for many a happy season the abodes of contentment and love. Even the stern Murad grew gentler in his mood, and less wayward in his speech; gradually his soul was filled with the heavenly repose of the vast solitude that surrounded him, and I rejoiced as I saw him each morning and even, kneel in

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thankfulness with his gentle wife and child, and bless the Great Spirit that had preserved him in perils, and enabled him to fly to a haven of rest. And the Indians loved to decorate the hut of Leila their beloved mistress; and skins of rare beauty, of the tiger, and the leopard, and the angola, were spread in the forest home; and the ivory of the elephant, and the horn of the buffalo, contributed their share to its adornment, while the ever-bright and blossoming wild flowers of Hindoostan, gorgeous in their rare beauty, grew, with the fragrant musk-rose and jessamine, in clusters around the peaceful dwellings.

Leila loved to come in the evening, and sit with her child by the spring which my branches shaded, watching the return of the hunters from the wood, or of Achmet and Hassan, her faithful followers, from their labours in cultivating the ground, or beguiling the time by singing the plaintive airs of her country, as she prepared the fibrous leaves of the date tree, or wove them into matting, or baskets to collect the fruit in, while the little child, Adel, gambolled among the flowers, and made the wood echo with her clear sweet laugh.

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Two seasons thus passed by, when methought there was again a dark cloud on the brow of Murad, such as it wore when he first came to our valley. But in the course of the third season, two persons arrived to join my first friends, and their meeting seemed to be a source of great satisfaction to all. The new comers were Zaire, the only sister of Murad, and an old Indian, her companion. It appeared that Zaire had been long looked for, and she was welcomed with thankful gladness. Many and earnest were the conversations between her and Leila, and numerous the tales they told to each other of the great world beyond the mountains, and of how Zaire, by the help of the old Indian, escaped from the men who watched her motions with the view of discovering the retreat of her brother, and how, after eluding their vigilance, she had come at length to join her friends in their hidden refuge. They loved to talk over the scenes, sad as they were, of their past lives, and from their discourse, as they for hours reclined in the Banian grove, or sat beneath my branches, I learned the history, I had been so long curious to know, of Murad and his friends.

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Murad was the son of a Faringhee* soldier. His father came with a great army from a far distant country across the mighty ocean, by the command of his sovereign, who sought to wage war against the powerful sultans of India, because they refused to give up their hereditary possessions and become the vassals of the king of the white nation. But the army of the invader had made but little progress in the work of conquest, when a dreadful disease spread like a plague amongst them, and they sunk in numbers under it, for they were unused to our climate, and, fainting under our burning suns, they could not struggle with the heavy sickness that fell upon them, and few of those who had come across the sea to engage in unprovoked war with their fellow-men, returned again to sleep in their father-land.

Murad's father had some command among the Faringhee troops, but, for what reason I could not learn, he was looked upon with suspicion by his superiors as being lukewarm in their cause. Happening on one occasion to have accompanied a party in an attack made upon one of the

* *Faringhee*, the name given by Indians to Europeans.

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cities of the sultan, while sickening with fatigue under a burning noon-day sun, a javelin from an Indian soldier struck him to the ground. Stunned and bleeding, he was carried to his tent, and there left to live or die, as it might chance. When he recovered from his stupor he was alone—no comrade near to give him a drop of water to allay his thirst. They had forgotten him in his extremity, and left him to perish in a strange land. His spirit was fast failing, and scarcely could he collect his thoughts to offer up one prayer for mercy to the great God. The darkness of the shadow of death was about to overwhelm him, when an aged Brahmin, of a sorrowful and gloomy aspect, passed stealthily into the tent, and stood by the side of the dying man. For a minute he regarded fiercely the pale face before him, but suddenly his countenance changed, and his lip quivered with vehement emotion. He knelt, with clasped hands, and eyes dimmed with tears, on the mat by the side of the soldier, and his soul was filled with compassion. Taking from the folds of his girdle a small vial, he dropped some drops of a clear liquid, which the vial contained, into the nostrils of the soldier, and, with earnest gaze, anxiously watched their effect. A minute passed, and the brow of the sufferer was covered with moisture ;

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he drew his breath long and heavily; then feebly opening his eyes, encountered the keen glance of the Indian. He would have spoken, but his preserver motioned him to silence, while, with some healing leaves which he also carried about him, he skilfully and tenderly dressed the wound on his shoulder. The soldier could no longer keep silence.

“Generous Indian!” he said, “thou hast saved me, whilst my own countrymen left me to die. Thou hast raised me from the couch of death, and the life that was fast ebbing flows again in my veins with renewed vigour. I cannot now thank thee as I would do, for my heart is faint and heavy. Yesterday the friend I loved as a brother perished by my side, and I am now alone in the world.”

“Son,” replied the old Brahmin, “thank me not; for a mightier power than my own will compelled me to save thy life, when I thought to compass thy death. Such a one as thou art, I have lost. In the pride of his beauty, and the noon-day of his strength, my son fell before the blood-thirsty swords of thy countrymen, and I vowed a solemn vow, to sacrifice to his memory one of his mur-

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derers, fair and young as himself. It was on this errand I entered thy tent, supposing thou wert taking repose from the sun's heat; but as I looked upon thy face I saw the hue of death passing over it, and it became to me as the face of my lost child. Then the Great Spirit whispered to me, 'Thou art sent here to give life, not to take it away; and he whose life is now in thy hands, shall replace to thee thy son.' I resolved to save thee from death by virtue of the cure, which is a sacred gift to our race alone, and which I carried in my girdle. Thy wound is small, and will soon be whole. I have preserved thy life when thine own forsook thee. Wilt thou follow me, and fill *his* place in my dwelling whom my heart mourns for?"

He folded his hands on his breast, and, with suppressed breath, he waited for a reply. The soldier raised himself feebly up, and, stretching forth his hands to the Brahmin, said;—

“Thou hast brought me back from death, and my life is thine; to thee I dedicate my future days.”

“My son,” answered the Brahmin, “if thy heart is truly

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inclined towards me, and if thou wilt forsake the yoke of the white man, to dwell in freedom with the Indian, none must know thy resolve save they who are worthy of trust. Hearken, and I will show thee a way of escape. When the sentinel comes his nightly rounds, to enable him to make a return of the dying and the dead to thy chief officer, then do thou lie motionless and silent. I shall be there and solicit leave to bear away thy body for burial. I am known to them as one skilled in Indian medicine, and they will not refuse my request."

A week after this, and the white man, whom his comrades believed to sleep the sleep of death, was an inmate of the dwelling of the Brahmin; and the heart of the old man already clung to the stranger, whom he believed sent from heaven to replace his dead son. But they feared to tarry near the city where the army was encamped, and they fled from discovery to a distant territory possessed by a friendly tribe, far up on the fertile plains watered by the Ganges. Here they fixed their habitation, and they grew in friendship the two thus strangely brought together; and the daughter of the Indian became the wife of Hamet, for so had the old man named the young soldier—the son

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of his adoption. And years passed away, and two children were born to Hamet—a boy who bore the name of Murad, in memory of the son of the Brahmin who perished by the hand of the white man; and a daughter, a graceful girl, whose fair face, more resembling the complexion of her father's than her mother's country, often called forth from Hamet a passing sigh to the memory of the land of his birth.

Thus was the old man blessed in his children, and, in his peaceful happiness, he forgot the evil days when he mourned in hopeless sorrow over the ashes of his beloved one; or, if he did sometimes remember them, it was but to lift up his soul in thanksgiving to the Great Being who had filled his heart with pity when he thirsted for blood, and guided his hand to a deed of mercy when he sought sacrifice. But all things under the sun pass away; and the time drew near when the Brahmin must leave those he loved so well—who had solaced him in the days of his sorrow, and brought light into the darkness of his soul.

It was one bright morning—ere the dew was dry on the brilliant flowers under the sycamore tree which grew

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by the porch of the dwelling, and where he had loved to sit with his children, guiding the hand of Murad to write after the manner of the Brahmins on the thick leaves of the palm tree, and instructing the boy and his sister in Indian lore, there, where oft his eyes had been raised to heaven in the fulness of thankful contentment—did the old man's spirit pass away to the better land. Bitterly was he sorrowed for by his children, and his household; and his tribe lamented for him whom they valued as a wise and faithful counsellor.

At the time when the Brahmin was thus called away, his grandson, Murad, was of the age of sixteen, and Zaire his sister two years younger. Already was Murad first and most daring in the chase; no javelin was so deadly as his, and no other arrow flew with aim so unerring. Neither was any adventure wild enough for his dauntless spirit. Passionate and vehement in his nature, yet generous, fearless, and affectionate, he won the admiration of the Indians, who looked upon him with pride and affection, both for his own sake and as the grandson of the Brahmin. Before the old man had taken farewell of the world, and, indeed, while his grandson was yet but a child, he, as is often

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the custom among the Hindoos, entered into a solemn contract with a man of high caste, belonging to a neighbouring tribe, one by name Abdel Hakim, who had been his friend in his youth, that his grandson Murad should marry the daughter of Hakim, then also in her infancy, if they both lived to arrive at the age of maturity.

The time now approached when it was deemed proper that the promise should be fulfilled, and Murad went as was usual to spend some weeks in the house of the father of his betrothed before he should bear away his daughter from her kindred. These weeks soon flew by, and the faithful messenger, Achmet, came to give warning that the elephants and camels, carrying Murad and his bride Leila, with their attendants, were journeying on their way across the mountains; and gladly were the travellers welcomed to the home prepared for them.

While years passed thus tranquilly among this secluded Indian tribe, strange and unthought of events were taking place in the world from which Hamet had fled. The army of the foreign king having recovered from the calamities it had suffered through the effects of climate and disease,

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and being aided by numerous and bitter domestic quarrels among the Rajahs and rulers of our people, gradually gained, by their wisdom and generosity, much of the confidence of the Indians inhabiting the country around their neighbourhood, and many of the natives had enrolled themselves in the service of the stranger, fighting the battles of another country against their native princes. At length some uncertain rumours of those events were, from time to time, carried by some wandering Banjarie, on his way with his merchandize from tribe to tribe, and communicated to Hamet, who could not help feeling secretly glad that his country was extending her beneficent sway over the ignorance and barbarism which, amidst much that was great and good, still reigned over the most glorious handiworks of the Creator. Murad listened constrainedly to his father's observations on the subject, but his fiery spirit rejected with scorn all suggestions of good will towards the invaders, and even to listen to such, seemed to him a betrayal of his country. But circumstances were about to happen, which were to change the whole face of things for the young Hindoo.

It was on an evening just after the rainy season was

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over, and some months after the return of Murad and his bride. The earth was yet in her greenest verdure, the fruit was beginning to ripen on the date tree, and the rice and the sago nearly ready to be gathered, as the father and mother, with their children, sat under the shade of the great palm tree, conversing together of the future and the past. Murad spoke with haughty indignation of some of their tribe, who, tempted by the benefits which they had heard the white men bestowed upon those of their race who submitted to his government and laws, had fled from their native homes, and gone over to the foe. There was an ominous silence, till Zaire suddenly burst forth into a plaintive Hindoo melody, and her touching notes, soothed, as she hoped they might, the wrathful spirit of her brother, and she then spread out upon the grass, and called Leila's notice to some merchandize she had that day purchased from a Banjarie, giving him in exchange baskets of exquisite workmanship, rare lacquered ornaments, and fine mats, of her own and her mother's handiwork. But Leila, usually so gay, responded not.

“I am very sad to-night, my mother,” she said; “yet

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I know not why I should feel thus, for nature smiles around me in all her beauty, and those I love best are by my side."

She stretched out her hand to her sister as she spoke, but the reply of Zaire was arrested on her lips, by the sudden appearance of Hassan, the brother of Achmet, and one of Murad's devoted attendants. He burst through the jungle in the distance, and flew across the space to the cottages, before any one had time to utter a word. He stood by Hamet, and, bowing before him, cried out—

"Alas! my kind master, some enemy hath betrayed thee; thy place of security is known; even now the soldiers are upon thee, seeking thee as a deserter from their army, and an enemy to their king."

For an instant there was a dead silence. It seemed as if a thunderbolt had fallen on the heads of the listeners to Hassan's words. They were scarcely aroused from stupefaction, when the men of blood, emerging from the wood, stood within gunshot of the cottage. Murad had started to his feet at the first alarm, and, with quivering lip and

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form rigid as death, stood with his bow bent, and his arrow on the string. Hamet spoke first: bidding his trembling daughters conduct his hardly conscious wife into their dwelling, he calmly advanced to meet his unwelcome visitors, but first turning to Murad,

“My son,” he said to him, “govern thy wrath, and I have good hope that no harm will befall me. Be not rude to those soldiers, who are here only in the performance of their duty. Doubtless some enemy—it may be one of our tribe who has joined my countrymen—has given information concerning me; but suffer me, without opposition, to accompany the soldiers, and when I shall have related my strange history to their commander, I feel assured that I shall be permitted to return to you in peace, to end my days in security amongst my children.”

Nevertheless, his voice faltered as he spoke, for he well knew how hardly the deserter usually fared, and that the anger of the chiefs of the army being excited by the numbers who had deserted from their ranks, to live with the Indians in freedom in the far off woods, there was the

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less chance of the extenuating circumstances of his case being listened to.

“I am ready,” he said to the soldiers, “to give myself up to your just authority; but I beseech you to leave my family in peace; they at least are devoid of guilt.”

But, unhappily, the officer at the head of the party was a man of an arrogant and overbearing disposition, who listened to the peaceful words of Hamet with contempt, and replied to them with insolence, which, already burning with indignation, Murad ill could brook. It was only the imploring looks of his father which restrained him from levelling to the earth his ungracious captor.

The heart of the strong man failed, as the harsh soldier bound the fetters on his wrists, and he gazed around him with speechless agony. There stood his beloved home, where he had been carried a weak feeble invalid, and nursed to new life and happiness by his adopted parent. There he had wedded his dark Indian wife, and found in the deep devotedness of her trusting affection, compensation for the fictitious advantages possessed by her educated

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countrywomen over the simple Hindoo. There, too, he had first heard the voices of his children, and forgot, in the caresses of those loving and beloved ones, the land of his birth. Richer than heretofore seemed in his eyes those trees in their leafy beauty, budding ever anew, and never had the perfume of the henna's scarlet blossoms been to him sweet as now—now that he was about to be torn from them all. He thought to have passed the evening of his days in peace, to have sat by the palm tree, or under the pomegranate with his children's children playing at his knees, when thus suddenly had the destroyer come, to dash the cup of bliss from his lips. No wonder, as those recollections passed in array before Hamet, that his spirit fainted within him. He would have fallen to the ground, had not Murad's arm supported him. His distracted wife and daughters, forgetting their own terrors in their love for him, whose every motion they had been watching fearfully, rushed from the cottage to afford their aid.

But it had been well had they restrained their overwrought feelings, for the officer, grown yet more arrogant by the submission which he attributed to cowardice, offered

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some rude gallantry to Leila, and Murad, unable longer to control his passion, sprang upon the aggressor, and ere he could defend himself, buried his javelin in his side, and stretched him at his feet. A desperate conflict instantly ensued, for Hassan and Achmet had lost no time in apprising all of the tribe within immediate reach, of the misfortune that threatened the house of Hamet, and the attempt made by the soldiers to seize Murad was for a moment delayed, by a shower of deadly arrows sent from the thicket which surrounded the houses. But the Indians were soon forced to retreat, under the fire of musketry, and the soldiers, many of them wounded, and enraged by the loss of their officer, who lay senseless on a palanquin which they had hastily constructed for him, were now little disposed to grant any concession, but having secured and fettered Murad as well as Hamet, they departed in all haste with both, and not without many threats of vengeance to come.

That night the wife of Hamet, who had been struck by a random shot as she clung to her husband's side in the skirmish, slept to wake no more in the home of her departed happiness.

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And Zaire and Leila sat together alone in their desolate dwelling. The morning had risen upon them in happiness, as unclouded as the cloudless canopy of the heaven above them, the evening saw them bereaved of all that made life precious—father, mother, husband, brother. So suddenly had their calamity overtaken them, that they each felt as if walking in a frightful dream, out of which morn would come and awake them. Their kinsmen sought to comfort them, but their words fell unheeded on the ears of the sufferers.

Achmet and Hassan, as soon as they had laid their beloved mistress in her tomb, assumed the disguise of travelling merchants, and set out to follow and learn the fate of Hamet and Murad. It was many days—days of fearful and distracting anxiety to the poor Indian girls—ere Hassan returned to tell that Hamet had received a pardon, conditional on his re-entering the army of his sovereign, and that Murad, though strictly guarded, was kindly treated, for it seemed from what Hassan could learn, that the chiefs of the army saw in their recovered countryman, and his Brahmin son, much knowledge of the people and the country of Hindoostan, which they

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deemed they might turn to advantage, could they succeed in attaching the father and son to themselves. But Murad was determined, at all hazards, to escape, and return to his own free home, and what an ardent spirit such as his firmly resolves to accomplish, is commonly achieved at last.

It were tedious to enter into all the details; suffice it to say, that being permitted to accompany a large party of Faringhee officers and soldiers to a buffalo hunt, well mounted on horses and camels, and intent on some days enjoyment, the sport became so exciting that Murad was forgotten, and was not missed for many hours, by which time he was far beyond the reach of pursuit, travelling under the guidance of the devoted Achmet and Hassan through vast thickets that seemed almost impenetrable.

It was then that the fugitives came, weary and careworn, to our lovely valley, seeking a home in the desert. They left, as I have already mentioned in the beginning of my story, after a sojourn of two days, satisfied that they had found in that hidden place a safe and pleasant retreat; and they proceeded cautiously to the desolate abode of

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Leila and Zaire, to carry them from the home which the spoiler had laid waste, to a more distant refuge.

Leila was now the mother of the little Adel, whom they found a feeble infant, and the rainy season being just at hand, Leila feared, with her delicate babe, to venture on a long and hurried journey. It was therefore agreed, that, till the rains were past, and the earth again dried, Murad should remain concealed with some of the tribe, and that Achmet and Hassan should secretly make the necessary preparations for the journey. At length the time came. As soon as the sun again burst forth in brightness, calling into being and beauty the green verdure of the woods, the Hindoo family, with the exception of Zaire, departed for ever from the home of their birth and early happiness, and found a new resting-place in my immediate vicinity. Zaire did not come with the others at first. Being still too weak to travel, from the effects of fever, and afterwards from the dread of discovery, a considerable period elapsed, as has been seen, before she was able to join her friends.

Such was the history which I gathered from the lips of

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Leila and Zaire, as those two gentle sisters, night after night, spent their peaceful evenings in the Banian grove, conversing by themselves or with Murad upon all that had occurred to each of them. From these conversations I also understood that much of the anxiety I had at first observed in Murad's manner, was occasioned by the protracted absence of his beloved sister.

And now many seasons passed away, with little to mark the flight of time, save that the little Adel was grown into a tall and beautiful girl, the star of the lonely dwellings, the light and happiness of our solitude. Graceful as the bounding antelope, playful and fleet as the young fawn, to the household occupations taught her by her mother, and in which she bore a willing part, she added accomplishments more unusual among the Hindoos, being by them generally confined to the stronger sex. She knew how to guide her pen to write upon the palm leaf, and with her father, and attended by Hassan and Achmet, she delighted to join in the chase, skilfully using her small bow, and boldly throwing a light javelin. And after the fatigues of the day—even now, through the long vista of years, I seem to see her before me—she would seat herself

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by the fountain at my side, and, stooping over the clear water, which gave back the reflection of her sweet face, twine round her stately brow fresh wreaths of the golden acacia flowers, mingled with the sweet blossoms of the pomegranate. Nor were more costly decorations wanting, for Hassan never went his annual journey with fruits, spices, and such other merchandize as the forest and the busy hands of Leila and Zaire could supply, without bringing back with him some ornament for Adel—an amulet of turquoise, an ear-ring, or a bracelet for her delicate wrist, or a chain for her small ankle.

As nearly as I can remember, twelve seasons might have gone by in this manner, unbroken in their solitude, save by now and then a visit from some of Murad's tribe, who found their way even here to inquire after his welfare, and to bring him such intelligence of what was passing in the world without as seemed painfully to affect his mind, and stir up the memory of his wrongs. But about this time another painful event occurred.

Zaire, who had never recovered from the effects of the shock which her health sustained in the time of her great

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affliction, became visibly more feeble. So gradually had she faded, that for long none saw the decay, and when at last they saw it, they refused to believe that the icy hand of death had grasped their beloved one. At length hardly was her strength sufficient to carry her across the little distance from the cottages to my side, where for some time past it was her delight to sit, and where, reclining on cushions carefully arranged by Adel's affectionate hands, she would remain for hours together. Sometimes after a gentle slumber she would awake, and, fixing her gaze on the bright sky above, her large eyes would beam with heavenly light, and her spirit seemed already to hold communion with beings of a higher sphere. But as she turned her gaze earthward, the brightness passed from her face, and tears fell fast, fast, for those she was about to leave behind. Feeble and languid, she would yet endeavour to comfort Leila and Adel, by speaking of that rest for which her soul longed, and where her freed spirit would await the coming of those dear ones to that happier world where parting and tears are unknown, and where the sun's heat scorches no more, nor the dews of night chill.

It was on the evening of a sultry noon, Hassan had been

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absent for many days, having been despatched by Murad to learn farther intelligence of the war which was now being carried on between one of the most powerful of the native princes and the invading army. Impatient at his messenger's delay, Murad had gone forth to meet him, and Zaire, who had been reclining by Adel in the portico of the cottage, signified a wish to be laid, as usual, on her couch near the fountain. It was still sultry, and the fatigue of being moved, exhausted her failing strength. She closed her eyes as if in sleep, and Adel and Leila went softly on with their usual occupations. Zaire had a favourite small wild deer which Murad had brought home, a few weeks old, and wounded, and which Zaire, taking compassion on, had carefully tended and fed from her hands, till it was able to provide for its own wants. It was years since then, but the wild deer never sought to return to its mates in the forest. It grazed on the green plain by the habitation which had sheltered it, and morning and evening sought to share in the bounty of its mistress. On this evening it came bounding to her side, but sought in vain for its usual caress—it stooped and whined with a low moan in her face, then looking for an instant steadfastly upon her, suddenly, as if affrighted,

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darted into the depths of the woods. Leila and Adel rushed forward trembling, and then for the first time Adel looked upon the face of death. The spirit of the gentle Zaire had departed, borne on the soft evening wind to the home of the blest.

Ah! terrible was the grief in those dwellings, which till now had been filled with contentment and joy. It was the first grief of Adel's young and happy heart. Often afterwards did her wailing seem to flit through my leaves in the hush of the morning, and the evening breeze recalled to me her low deep sighs.

Murad, too, mourned for his sister, but his grief was less marked, as he began to be anxiously engrossed by the accounts he received of the wars in which his countrymen were engaged. I felt as I heard him talk to Hassan and others, that the death of the lamented Zaire was but the forerunner, alas! of the breaking up of that course of unruffled happiness which, for twelve revolving seasons, had flourished in our solitary valley. For man is never satisfied with present good, but ever pursuing some ideal and unattainable object of desire, seen in the far mirror

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of fancy, bright as the star of the morning, until, as approached, it becomes a dark and overshadowing cloud, dissolving itself away in tears.

Leila and Adel, with soothing words and caresses, tried in vain to win Murad from his purpose, and Adel wept for hours as she sat in the porch covered with the flowery luxuriance of the wild creeping plants, which it had been her childhood's delight to train over it. She could hardly in her heart believe that she was to be torn from the home where, for so many years, her young life had flown by in uninterrupted felicity.

Yet she must go. Ere sunrise of the day which followed the evening of Murad's return from a reconnoitering expedition, I saw my sweet Adel and her mother mount, for the last time, their sure footed ponies, to join the elephants and camels which I learned, from the conversation of Hassan and Achmet, were in waiting to carry the party to a far distant part of India.

And now they were all gone. Again I was left desolate.

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I was never to see them more. The evening wind seemed mournfully to echo the tread of their horses threading the way through the forest. Alas! their dwellings were the abode of silence, their places were vacant. They had thrown the radiance of their truth and affection on the loneliness of the desert, but they had left its peaceful shelter to seek for happiness in the turbulent abodes of strife and ambition. Ah! vain pursuit. And Adel! whose guileless childhood knew no other home, sought none more beloved,—no more did her clear sweet voice awaken the forest from its slumbers, to join in her morning song of praise, her evening hymn of gratitude. In the vastness of the eternal mountains—in the majesty of the mighty woods—in the beauty of the ever blooming flowers, the child had delighted to read of the wondrous hand that made them all, and her soul was filled with the goodness of God. And *she* was departed!—her home yet bloomed in its beauty, and the animals she tamed sought her hand—but Adel was far away. Yet I knew she would sometimes weep for the tranquil happiness of her early youth, and for her lost home, nor forget the deer that fed from her hand, her birds, and her sandal wood tree. My neighbour, the gay pomegranate, spread forth its blossoms,

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brilliant as when the small fingers of the graceful child gathered them for her rich dark tresses ; but I felt that my branches were dull in their perfume, and my heart was faint at the loss of my beloved ones.

The rainy season had passed away since their departure, and to it had succeeded a summer of unusual hotness, even for our sultry climate. One day,—a day never to be forgotten in the forest,—the heat of the morning was succeeded by so terrific a stillness, that heaven seemed to be holding in its breath, and, amidst fearful silence, the sun glared through the mist in fiery redness like a burning eye, whose glance threatened to annihilate the world. For some hours it continued thus, when suddenly the sky was overcast, and dismal darkness overshadowed the earth, the rain poured down like a deluge, and the raging howl of the wind, mingled with the roar of mighty thunder, as it tore up the trees of the forest, and threw them crashing against each other. Terror stalked abroad. The very earth shook and trembled, and the heavens seemed about to be torn asunder.

Night closed, and ere daybreak the storm had passed ;

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but, alas! a sorrowful sight that morning brought with it. Hardly a vestige remained to tell of the dwelling where Murad had been. Every thing was desolation; I myself had been struck by lightning, and lay along the ground among the shattered branches of the aged Banian.

How long I lay I do not exactly remember; indeed, I have no very distinct recollection of what took place for some days. I was first aroused from my stupor by hearing the hum of voices. It was two Hindoos, who, resting upon my fallen stem, were conversing upon the escape they had made from the destruction wrought by the fury of the recent hurricane. It appeared that they belonged to some one of the cities beyond the mountains, and being engaged in the chase for some days previously, had, while in a part of the forest to which they were strangers, been overtaken by the tempest. Sad as I felt, I listened with intense anxiety to their conversation, in the hope that, by some good fortune, they might have come from the place where Murad had fixed his dwelling-place. But, alas! nought was said of him or of his family. Their talk was of the war, and of the preparation by the great Rajah for another and decisive battle.

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At sunrise the Hindoos began to prepare for their journey. As they were endeavouring to repair the harnessing of their camels, one of them, looking earnestly at my fallen and shattered trunk, said to his companion—

“Is not this a Sandal wood tree?”

“It surely is,” rejoined the other, “and a fine tree it has been, too! Look how beautifully the trunk is marked, and how rarely fragrant its perfume is.”

“I heard my master saying, a short time since,” returned the first speaker, “that the Sultana Zamouna had sent an order for a Sandal wood box for her jewels, and that he had no piece of wood of sufficient beauty and strength of perfume for the purpose desired.”

After some further conversation they went to examine more closely the remains of Murad’s dwelling; and after a short absence they returned, one of them bearing in his hand a hatchet which he had found lying near the porch, and coming where I lay, he with two strokes severed me.

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Old, shattered, and withered as I am now, this part of my history is too painful for me to think of. The portion containing my heart was selected as the finest, and being slung to the side of a camel, I bade adieu for ever to the forest of my childhood, the scene of my peaceful youth. Again would the Banian raise its head in everlasting greenness, and other fresh branches taking root in the earth, form a new shelter for the weary. Once more would the stately palm spring up in verdant beauty, and tower proudly above its fellows. The dark pine and the gay pomegranate would again renew their youth, and the blue sky sparkle in brightness above them as of yore. The clear fountain which my branches had protected from the sun's heat, was still there murmuring sweet melody to the woods, and the mountain sheep and the wild deer would, as of yore, come to drink of its ever springing waters. But I was no more to bear my part in the beauty of the majestic forest. I was to hold no more companionship with my kind; the trees that might spring up in my place would not remember me. And yet methought surely some weary traveller who may chance to retrace the path by my side, will say as he looks on the vacant spot where I stood, "Here

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grew the sweet Sandal wood tree," and give a sigh to my memory!

Long and weary was our journey. I was so much engrossed with my own sorrowful reflections, that I took no note of the conversation of my fellow travellers, till, at the rising of the fourth sun, we arrived at the great city, the place of our destination. I was carried into a large house filled with workmen, arranged in various groups, to which different departments were allotted. Every variety of wood lay scattered round, and some I observed of the richest and most beautiful grain. Ah! how did my old dreams of ambition rise in mocking array before me, as I was thrown carelessly down in a corner. How different was the noisy and rude tumult that now greeted my senses, to the peace and quiet I had left. It was a just retribution for all my foolish wishes for the society of mankind, and my ignorant slighting of my fellow trees.

I was not, however, suffered to remain long undisturbed. Early the following day, the Indians who brought me from my native place, came, along with Janee the master of the workmen, to where I lay, and one of them taking me up

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showed me to him, telling him at the same time of the difficulty he had experienced in getting me conveyed from the forest. His master seemed well pleased, and taking a small glittering purse from within the breast of his caftan, gave a piece of gold to each of the Hindoos. I was now put into the hands of a skilful workman, and in a short space of time I was transformed into a handsome box of an oblong shape, with large brass clasps at each corner, and having an ornamented lock of the same material. I was lined with green silk embroidered in gold, and my appearance was loudly commended, and my perfume pronounced exquisite by the people around me.

I was shortly afterwards carried into an inner room and placed upon a table, where I had been but a brief period when a man entered in a gayer and more elaborate dress than I had seen before. He was followed by the master of the work, who paid him the most profound respect, and who, after a harangue on the fineness of my quality, and the great difficulty of procuring sandal wood of so delicate a perfume, presented me to his visiter. This person I now understood was one of the Sirdars, or chief officers of the palace, by name Meer Thakoor. He expressed his

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satisfaction at sight of me, and praised the workmanship and decorations of my form. He then intrusted me, along with a small basket of gold filligree work which had also been ordered for his mistress, to the keeping of an attendant, and we departed together.

We passed through a number of streets and lanes, until, coming to a wall of great height and thickness, we entered by a small side door into a green alley, almost completely darkened by the thick foliage of sombre shrubs and trees placed on each side, and carefully trained over it. Advancing onwards, we suddenly emerged from the darkness, and a noble garden burst upon my admiring view, which, foolish as I was, notwithstanding the lessons of wisdom I had learned, made me rather ashamed to think of the rougher companions with whom my life had been hitherto spent, and to disparage even the great unpruned Banian and pines of the wild woods.

It was indeed a superb place into which we had just entered. The air was filled with the scent of innumerable orange and citron trees, which grew luxuriantly amongst myriads of beautiful flowers, gorgeous in the brilliant hues

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which are found alone in our eastern world, whilst here and there a dark cypress softened to the eye the glare of their exceeding brightness. A little farther on we arrived at a dazzling marble fountain, throwing its sparkling waters incessantly upwards, and suffusing the sweet atmosphere around it with its delicious coolness. Beyond the fountain there rose before my astonished sight a magnificent building, which I soon learned was the palace of the Sultan. We entered its outer court, which was paved with white marble, and of great extent. Here and there were groups of soldiers; and various domestics and attendants crossed and recrossed. Ascending a flight of steps, we passed into a lofty saloon supported by massive marble columns, and having its walls lighted up with a thousand mirrors. Here, too, were numerous couches covered with rare silks of surpassing beauty, and massive tables, and rare exotic shrubs, which rendered the air heavy with sweetness. This splendid apartment, though it seemed to have been recently occupied, was now untenanted except by some drowsy domestics. We did not remain with them, but passed along a gallery which conducted us to a different part of the palace, and then entered a smaller saloon, having in its centre a fountain, around which were grouped several

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women attendants upon the Sultana. One of them came forward to conduct Meer Thakoor, in whose hands I now was, to her mistress. We were taken into an apartment which entered immediately from the saloon. It was small but gorgeously furnished. The walls were hung with rose coloured silk of the richest produce of the Persian loom, the couches were covered with the same material, some of the tables were of ivory, and some of marble of different colours, mixed with precious gems exquisitely inlaid, representing flowers in all their hues.

Meer Thakoor placed me on a large gold salver which stood on one of the tables, and advanced, carrying me thus, to a recess in which was a window or door of glass that opened into a part of the garden. Here on a low couch reclined the lady who was to be my possessor. She was still in the prime of womanhood and beautiful, though her earlier youth was past. She had a queenly presence, but her look was anxious and troubled. Her long jet hair, plaited and twisted round like a crown on her head, was fastened with jewelled pins, and her transparent veil fell over her in light folds as she turned round at the approach of Meer Thakoor. Kneeling on one knee he presented

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me, and I felt myself transferred to the gentle hands of the Sultana Zamouna. Thakoor then retired from her presence, and the Sultana motioning to one of the slaves, who stood one at the head and the other at the foot of her couch, to place me on an enamelled cabinet by her side, took from the pocket of her embroidered vest a small key, and opening one of the drawers of the cabinet, she drew from it some brilliant jewels, which she placed in one of my compartments.

Hardly was this accomplished when, the door hastily opening, a girl of remarkable beauty entered and knelt by Zamouna's couch, then kissing the hand which the Sultana held caressingly towards her, she placed within it a newly gathered flower with the dew scarce yet dried on its leaves.

Surely that graceful form was familiar to me, though the slender girl was grown into the faultless fullness of womanhood, and I had not dreamt that two short years could have wrought so great a change. Yet the alteration bewildered me only for a moment. I recognised almost instantaneously the stately brow and soft yet brilliant

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eye, the curved lips and the smile of unearthly sweetness, and the voice that had cheered the lonesome desert with its melody. Yes! it was Adel the forest child, and now I regretted no longer the fate which I had that morning deemed so cruel, for I was once more placed beside her whom I loved above all other things.

The Sultana bent, and pressed her lips to the forehead of the kneeling girl.

“Adel,” she said, “I bless the hour that has brought back a smile to thy face. Strive my child to conquer the grief which cannot recall the dead, and grieves the hearts that still are left to you. Could the voice of the mother you so deeply mourn, my Adel, now reach your ear, it would bid you cease to weep. Remember, your father is still here to watch over you, and though he cannot be always with you, his care for you is not the less. And I, the early friend of my beloved Leila, shall I not be the fond guardian of her daughter’s youth?”

The girl had sunk down by the side of the couch, and hid her face in the cushions. She raised her head when

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Zamouna ceased speaking, and the large tears dropped from her long eye-lashes. Like gentle rain clearing away the heavy clouds, so did those tears fall, carrying with them the darkness of her sorrow.

“ Pardon me, my beloved mistress, my kind and patient friend. Pardon the selfishness of my sorrow. Think not that your kindness has fallen unheeded on my broken spirit, because I have mourned bitterly for my terrible calamity. Ah! consider the troubles that, one after another in quick succession, overwhelmed me, and forgive my grief. Alas! my tears were not yet dried for the loss of Zaire and of my early home, when my mother, worn out with the danger and fatigue with which our journey hither was attended, sunk under her troubles and left me amongst strangers. Yet not alone, lady! for heaven guided us to find in you a protector for her helpless child. But, dearest lady, wonder not that I have wept sad tears. Till lately I knew not what sorrow meant. I thought it could not enter into our distant valley; never till the death of our beloved Zaire did I know that the spirit within us may be dark as night, while all nature around us is happiness and brightness. I mourned for Zaire—but childhood soon

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throws off its grief; and I had still my fond mother, my kind father—the faces on which from my infancy I had been used to look. I gazed too upon the glorious woods, and upon the bright blue sky, and my heart forgot its first sorrow. But now my mother also has been taken from me. Yet, lady, you say true—if indeed my sweet mother could speak to me now, she would bid me lay my tears for her an offering at your feet, you who soothed her last sorrow, and sent her spirit away in thankfulness and peace. Last evening as I stood by the fountain, methought she flitted by me in the breath of evening, and whispered to me softly your name as she passed. Do I weary you, lady?”

The Sultana raised herself on her couch, and fixing her deep lustrous eyes on the face of the girl, clasped Adel in a fond embrace. They wept, but not sad tears together.

“Your own heart ere now has answered that question,” replied the Sultana. “Speak to me ever thus, my Adel, even as you would to her who is gone from amongst us, whose place in your heart I seek to occupy. I love to hear of your peaceful home in the wilderness, of the

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amusements and occupations which made up the days and years of your innocent life. Oh, Adel! thou hast brought back to my ear the music long forgotten of other times, to my heart visions of happiness long passed away. Listening to thee I have seemed again to live in the distant home of my childhood, wandering amidst green savannahs to gather bright flowers for my hair, and seek their reflection in the crystal well, the mirror of heaven. My child, your voice has been like the breath of the cooling breeze on my fevered spirit, and makes me forget that I am but a jewelled slave, and the memory of other happier years has cast a soft light on my weary heart. But I meant to have spoken cheeringly to you, and now we both are sad. Look, here is something to remind you of the favourite tree of which you have told me so often and which you prized so much." And she held me up to Adel's view.

"My kindest friend! how good and indulgent you are to your poor Adel. As I look at this box I shall fancy it a piece of my own dear Sandal wood tree. How sweet its perfume is! like the leaves of my tree, ere the sun had stolen their dewy fragrance."

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Conceive my joy at hearing myself thus spoken of! and my secret happiness was increased when I observed the pleasure the girl had in looking at and speaking to me; she seemed to have a feeling that I was in truth a relic of the tree she loved in the desert.

From the conversations of the Sultana and Adel, I became acquainted with the details of Adel's journey after she quitted our valley. I learned how Murad's little party, escorted by some followers of the Sultan, had nearly fallen into the hands of the enemy, and how Leila never recovered from the terror and fatigue of the journey, and lingered for a time and died.

Murad's natural abilities, joined to his education and enthusiasm, had raised him to a considerable share of the confidence of the Sultan. On one occasion shortly after their arrival, while at the head of a skirmishing party, he was seriously wounded, and having, whilst little hope of his recovery was entertained, earnestly entreated that the protection of the favourite Sultana might be extended to his wife and helpless child, Leila discovered in Zamouna, to whom Murad's prayer had been communicated, an early

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and beloved friend. Murad recovered from his wound, but the shock which his danger gave to his wife hastened her already rapidly approaching end.

After the loss of her mother, Adel had remained constantly with Zamouna, and her grief gradually yielded to the fond solicitude of the Sultana.

Some weeks passed thus away and I remained still in the apartment where the Sultana and Adel spent part of every day, for the eventful wars raging without hardly disturbed the inmates of our part of the palace. I began to observe, however, that the friends came more seldom to the favourite retreat, and that their visits were shorter and less at ease than before. There seemed, too, an unusual stir in the fortress, and sometimes tremendous peals as of thunder shook the walls, while the air became illuminated with fiery light. For a time I knew not what this was caused by, but it was too soon explained to me.

One day when Zamouna and Adel had fallen into a gentle slumber, a knock, softly repeated, roused a drowsy slave who stood with his golden fly brush by the couch of

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the Sultana; opening hastily the doors, Meer Thakoor and Murad entered. The latter advanced to Zamouna who had started from her couch, and sat pale and trembling awaiting an explanation of this intrusion. Adel also aroused, rushed to her father, and flinging her arms around him, besought him to say if danger were near. Bending before the Sultana, Murad thus addressed her in a low and troubled voice—

“Noble lady, I fear that the indomitable courage of the Sultan has made him too regardless of the precautionary counsels which were tendered to him, and that he is not sufficiently prepared for the desperate attack now impending. I have been dismissed from his presence in anger for venturing a remonstrance, and I have sought you thus by stealth to say, that should I be unable to protect you in the coming danger, my faithful Achmet is now amongst the guardians of your apartments, and that in his unfailing affection and prudence you and my Adel may confide. If we are conquered follow his advice. A home in some distant and happier region may yet be yours, when the glitter and gaud of this ill-starred palace is buried in ruins.”

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As he spoke a tremendous noise of fire-arms shook the fortress. The enemy had opened a battery on the bastions, and our Indians returned the fire with no less vigour. Murad, casting one look of anguish on Adel, hurried away with Thakoor, and the Sultana and Adel were again alone. Adel was the first to break the dismal silence. She was unable to restrain her agony.

“ Oh that I had died,” she cried out, “ with Zaire. My father ! what evil destiny prompted thee to leave our home of peace, to seek a violent death amongst men more cruel than beasts of the forest !”

The Sultana drew the girl to her side, and smoothing the luxuriant hair which fell in masses on her face and neck, pressed her lips to the tearful eyes which affectionately sought hers, and endeavoured by silent caresses to calm Adel's distress.

Evening now began to fall, but the battle still raged without. The Sultana grew yet more pale, restless, and fearful, and as she moved uneasily through the chamber, her queenly tread faltered. It was a horror too terrible

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to think of, that the fortress might be doomed to pass that very night into the hands of the ruthless foe.

Another tremendous discharge of artillery had shaken the walls, when suddenly the door was thrown open, and there entered a man whom, from his commanding presence, though he was unattended, and came not with the state which usually surrounded the great Rajah of Mysore, I could not mistake for other than Tippoo Saib. He was of middle height, stout and well proportioned, but what principally distinguished him was the proud and kingly expression of his graceful and finely formed features. His costume was plain, and perhaps the only part of it which distinguished him from the officers of his household, was the superb jewel which fastened his turban.

Advancing to Zamouna, who had hastily arisen to receive her unexpected visiter, he took her hands, and with expressions of kindness, spoken in a low and clear tone of voice, seated himself on the couch by her side. But a shade of haughty displeasure passed across his countenance, as, glancing from the Sultana to Adel, he marked the traces of recent tears; and demanded of Zamouna the cause of

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their melancholy. Zamouna's gentle and submissive reply disarmed Tippoo's rising passion, though it was evident he was chafed to find that even here, in the apartments of the Sultana, Seringapatam was deemed to be in danger. He talked rapidly, and though he disclaimed the possibility of the fortress, which he declared was impregnable, falling into the hands of the enemy, yet it seemed to me that he was endeavouring to convince his own mind of what he wished, as well as to convince Zamouna.

“Ultimate success,” he said, “is certain—India must be free. Behold! Zamouna,” he added, turning up his loose white sleeve, and showing her a small amulet, carefully wrapped in embroidered silk, and fastened round his arm, “see this, and dismiss all childish terror; while this amulet remains on my person, victory will ever be found on the side of Tippoo Saib.”

He was yet speaking when a tremendous alarm of human voices burst over the clash of arms, and at the same instant the whole heavens seemed on fire. In another moment, Meer Thakoor, followed by a crowd of attendants and women, rushed into the presence of the Sultana, and

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a general cry arose that the enemy were masters of the fortress. Starting to his feet, and with his drawn scimitar in his hand, Tippoo dashed forward, and, clearing for himself a passage through the pale fugitives, rushed, his eyes flashing with rage, from the apartment. For a short time his voice was heard calling, with desperate energy, on the overpowered garrison to rally; it was then lost amidst a universal confusion of sounds, and one felt instinctively that the Sultan, at the head of the few who still rallied round him, was fighting with the fury of despair. At length there came a sudden pause—a comparative silence—more dreadful than all the tumult. I knew that Tippoo Saib had fallen, and with him the cause for which he fought.

Zamouna and Adel had sunk into a stupor from which they were hardly roused by the well known voice of Achmet.

“Rise, my child,” he said to Adel, “I am now thy only protector.”

She flung herself on the neck of the old Hindoo, and a torrent of tears saved her heart from breaking.

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“ Our conquerors are generous, and we are permitted to depart in peace. Ere to-morrow’s sun we must be far on our way from this accursed place.”

Adel was passive in his hands, and, with the help of one of Zamouna’s slaves, they raised her also from her couch and bore her from the room, to quit for ever the luxurious palace of the fallen Sultan.

I saw them no more ! They may have wandered to their old retreat in the lone forest. Again may Adel have trode the path that led to where I once stood, and looked for me, and may have wept to find that she looked for me in vain. Or they may have returned again into the busy scenes of life, and again encountered its anxieties and its cares. Whate’er their fate, it is to me wrapped in the shrouds of darkness. I had no longer any share in their pleasures or their sorrows. I saw them no more !

My story is almost told. I have little heart to dwell on aught that followed. I lay for some days unnoticed. I was then picked up by a young officer of the foreign

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army, and thrust into his knapsack as a sort of curiosity. After the lapse of some weeks, I was carried by my new possessor to Madras, and there transferred as a relic from the seat of war to an elderly gentleman who was a friend of the officer, and a British merchant. For months—many long and weary months—I lay neglected in a corner of his counting house among sundry old chests and other lumber. One morning, however, there was a more than usual bustle in the place, and I observed that there was a general clearing and packing going on. A servant took me up, and again threw me carelessly down, but his master observing me, said—

“Ah! that is the poor Indian Queen’s box. Put it among my luggage. It’s a curiosity.”

I was then packed into a trunk and conveyed on board a ship, in which I made a long voyage over the great ocean. On my arrival in this country, the merchant took me to his country residence, where he deposited me in a dark closet, in which I remained unheeded and covered with dust for years. This neglect, however, affected me no longer. I was severed from all I had loved. In my

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youth I had given shelter and afforded solace to the weary wanderer in the vast forest where I was born ; in my maturer years I had been cherished in the palace of the Indian monarch ; but I was now crumbling into dust, and I murmured not at the fate which had overtaken my old age.

One day I suddenly felt myself lifted from my obscure place of confinement, and I was carried by the old Sahib, my master, into a light and handsome room. I was there placed on a table for the inspection of several young and graceful children. The eldest was about the age of Adel when she quitted the forest. But the fair face of the British child resembled not that of the Hindoo girl. Yet I was glad when the old gentleman, addressing her, gave me into her hands, and told her that I had once belonged to the Sultana of the renowned Tippoo Saib. Eagerly was I examined, and many were the conjectures uttered by melodious young voices as to what had been my previous life. Alas ! they fell on a dull and heavy ear—all I had valued in life was gone for ever.

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My course is almost run. I am gradually falling into decay. The fragrance of my perfume is over. My heart is dry and callous. Yet I have a lingering satisfaction in spending my last days among the happiness that ever waits on youth. Glad and innocent voices are ringing around me, such as I heard in the lone desert. Ah! may they never be hushed in sadness as the happy voices I loved there; or if sadness must come, may I be no longer here to witness the change. Such is now the last and only wish of the old

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