A Tale from Florian

Lucian Minor
The following tale was translated from the French of M. Florian, by the present hand, about 7 or 8 years ago, for a Richmond newspaper. That translation its author has not seen since 1827; and lately meeting with the original again, it seemed new enough, as well as sufficiently pretty and interesting, to be worth presenting afresh to the public through the Southern Literary Messenger. It is seldom that so much varied incident has been compressed into so short a compass: yet the rapidity of the narrative has not hindered the writer from indulging a humor both playful and caustic, upon the follies which he butters, and the vices and crimes which he holds up to detestation. And the moral, disclosed in unravelling the mystery of the allegorical personage from whom the story takes its name, is full at once of beauty and truth.

### A TALE FROM FLORIAN.

The Thousand-and-One Nights have always appeared to me charming tales; but I should like them better, if they had often a moral scope. Seelendra, I am aware, is too handsome to be at the trouble of being rational: I know, that with so pretty a face, she has no need of common sense; and that the sultan would have been less enamored, if she had been less silly. These great trusts I devoutly believe: and I merely repeat, that for my own part, I would rather read stories, not of literary but of Persian tales. They are far below the Thousand-and-One Nights in imagination, but exceed them infinitely in useful moral principle. The king of Persia has just sent an army against the Turks. Join that army: in the Persian camp you will find Bathmendi, of whom all the world speaks, but whom few, very few, know. Wretched mortals grope after him in vain: But I, for the love I bear you, will whisper to each of you where he may be found. At these words, Alzim takes Bekir, the eldest brother, aside, and says—"My son, you were born with courage, and great military talents. The king of Persia has just sent an army against the Turks. Join that army: in the Persian camp you will find Bathmendi." Bekir thanks the genius, and already burns to march.

Alzim beckoned Mezour, the second son, to approach, "You," said he, "have shrewdness, address, and a great propensity to falsehood. Take the road to Ispahan; 'tis at court that you must seek Bathmendi." To the third brother, whose name was Sadder, he said, "You are gifted with a lively and fruitful imagination: You see objects not as they are, but as you would have them be: you often possess genius, and not always common sense: be a poet. Take the route to Agra: among the wits and fair ladies of that city, you may find Bathmendi." "T'ai, in his turn, advanced; and, thanks to the pallets of wax, heard not one word that Alzim said. It has since been ascertained, that he counselled T'ai to become a Dervise.

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Bekir defended himself like a lion: but he was neither!

The war lasted fifteen years, and the satraps always obstructed the exchange of Bekir. His dungeon was not opened until peace came; he hurried to Ispahan, to seek his patron the vizier, whose life he had saved. It was three weeks before he could obtain an audience. Fifteen years in prison, made some change in the appearance of a handsome young man. Bekir was not easily to be recognized: and the vizier did not know him again. However, on calling to mind the various events of his own illustrious life, he did remember that Bekir had done him some trifling service. "Aye—yes, friend," said he; "I will requite you. A brave man—but the empire is deeply in debt: a long war, and grand festivities have exhausted our finances. However—come and see me again—I will try—I will see—"

"Alas, my lord!" said Bekir, "I have not a morsel of bread; and in the fifteen days that I have been waiting in a moment's interview with your highness, I should have died of hunger, but for a soldier of the guard, my old comrade, who shared his pay with me."

"That was very good of the soldier," said the vizier; "really, it is quite touching. I will report it to the king. Come and see me again; you know I love you." And with these words, he turned his back upon him. Bekir returned the next day, and found the gate closed. In despair, he left the palace and the city, resolving never to enter them again.

Throwing himself at the foot of a tree, on the bank of the river Zendaron, he reflected upon the ingratitude of viziers, his own past misfortunes, and those which menaced him; and, unable to endure thoughts so dismal, he arose, to plunge into the stream—when he felt himself clasped by a beggar, who bathed his face with tears, and sobbed out, "It is my brother; it is my dear Bekir!" Looting up, Bekir recognised Mesrou. No one can find a long-lost brother without pleasure; but an unfortunate, needy, friendless, and hopeless, who is about to end his life in despair, thinks, that in a brother whom he loves, he sees an angel from Heaven. Bekir and Mesrou once felt this sentiment: they pressed each other to their bosoms—they mingled their tears—and, after the first moments of tenderness, they gazed at each other with affection and surprise. "You too, then, are unhappy!" cried Bekir. "This is the first moment of happiness," said Mesrou, "that I have enjoyed since our separation." At these words, embracing again, they leaned upon each other; and Mesrou, seated beside Bekir, began his narrative as follows:

"You remember the fatal day, when we went to Al-zim's abode. That perfidious genius told me, that I should find Bathmendi, the object of our desires, at court. I followed his advice, and soon arrived at Ispahan. There I became acquainted with a young female slave to the mistress of the grand vizier's first secretary. This slave took a liking for me, and made me known to her mistress; who finding me younger and handsome..."
was embarrassing.

should be angled on the day following. My position "I thought myself on the point of meeting string, of flight; I chose the last, Disguised " as you about the government of

from courts, Mingrelians, and sultana mothers." ment of the insolent minister; but the sultan loved the

which will. sustain us in some nook of Hindostan, far at such audacity, demanded of the suitan the banish;.

her, he demanded my advice. I evaded an answer (or vote My days to singing the I'enown of my benefactress;

sures. As the sultana grew older, she became more divided into chapters. Each chapter comprised a talc;

and a thousand reviled me. The generals whom

all my wealth and glory, I was surprised at not finding mined, before-I appeared in public, to herald myself by

Whatever good the king did, belonged only to himself; every wish; and the favoritesultan with her. own

my station predicted me a thousand tiresome flat-

power to appoint and displace viziers; deciding every thing by my influence, and giving audience every morn-

amidst all my wealth and glory, I was surprised at not finding Bathmendi. "I want for nothing," said I; "why does not Bathmendi present himself?" This thought, and the frightful solicitude of my life, poisoned all my pleas-

her, she became more difficult to please, and my gratitude grew more irksome, and even each talc taught a science perfectly, My book had

Her tenderness for me was a torment. On the other hand, my station procured me a thousand treacherous flatterers, and a hundred thousand powerful enemies. For every favor I conferred, hardly a single mouth thanked, and a thousand reviled me. The generals whom I ap-

I was favor-

Alzin, who, I strongly suspect, delights in the woes of mankind, counselled me to seek this undiscoverable Bathmendi in the great city of Agra, among men of genius and fair ladies. I arrived in Agra; and deter-

At length, the king's passion for a young Mingrelian gave the finishing stroke to my fortunes. The whole court united with her, in hopes that the mistress would expel the minister. I parried the blow, by joining the Mingrelian, and flattering the king's passion. But his love became so violent, that, being resolved to espousc myself up to the liveliest gratitude. I promised to de-

At the end of three years, I was at once prime minister, favorite of the king, lover of his mother, with power to appoint and dispense viziers; deciding every thing by my influence, and giving audience every morn-

Bekir and Mesrou to his little cabin, served them up a little rice for supper, and, after having heard their histories, told his own:

"Ah!" said Bekir, "is genius thus rewarded?"— "You perceive," answered Sudder, "that genius is treated much like value. But philosophy finds in misfortune an ample subject for meditation; and that is somewhat consoling." He then sent his pupils to their home, conducted Bekir and Mesrou to his little cabin, served them up a little rice for supper, and I was consoled for the criticisms. My book and I became all the rage. I was sought for—invo ted into every circle that had any pretension to wit or genius: all that I did was charming: I was the theme of every tongue, and every wish; and the favorite sultana with her own hand wrote me a badly spelled note, praying me to visit the court. 'Bra vo!' thought I; 'Alzin has not deceiv-

She distinguished me, by a friendship as intimate as that of the slave and her mistress had been. Thenceforward, honor, and riches began to rain upon me. The sultana caused me to be presented with all the money in the treasury, and all the dignities of the state. The monarch himself testify-

assassinated on the very day of its consummation. An pared with lur face, neck, and teeth. These refined

and delicate compliments completed my assurance of .

thel' Tid,. where Mesrou's diamondl3 .. would. procure was soon made:7 that is not difficult: it was even

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My glory is at its height : I shall sustain

sultana-mother alkend me by her fondness; and Bathmendi seemed more distant than ever.

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At the end of a month, my work appeared: it was a complete course of all human sciences, in a small octodecimo volume of sixty pages, divided into chapters. Each chapter comprised a tale ; and each tale taught a science perfectly. My book had prodigious success. Some reviews cavilled at it, as too prolix: but all people of fashion bought it; and I was consoled for the criticisms. My book and I became all

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