

# The Story of Valeh and Hadijeh

Translated from the Persian

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**The Story of  
Valeh and Hadijeh**

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## INTRODUCTION

THE Mirza and I were sitting together on one of the bare stony hills which look down on the capital. North was the long range of the snowy Elburz, dominated by the immense cone of Demavend ; South was the dusty brown plain with the broad green stains on it, the largest of which was the town hidden in its gardens. We were talking politics, and I was discoursing on the benefits of progress and civilisation as exemplified in the recent history of European nations. As a *pièce justificative* I pointed to the long line of iron telegraph poles, neat and well kept, in that "land without any order," which stretched out, one behind the other, till they vanished in the West. "Along that wire," I said, "English people are speaking to each other from opposite sides of the earth."

"Yes," said the Mirza, "you have done wonderful things. Once in Persia the lightnings and the fire were our

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gods. And you have made the lightning your courier, and the fire we worshipped at the hill of the winds\* is your baggage mule to carry your merchandise. You know in one hour what happens all over the world. It is more wonderful than the cup of Jemshid, in which he saw all that passed on the surface of the earth. Alas for Jemshid, his cup did not save him from Zohauk." He looked up at the cone of Demavend, and then pointed to the plain below. "There," he continued, "was Zohauk's palace, where for two hundred years he feasted the serpents which grew out of his shoulders, where Satan had kissed him, on human flesh. He, too, was a great conqueror and a mighty ruler, till Kawah the blacksmith overcame him, and threw him into the fiery furnace which burnt from the mountain there. It is cold now." He paused, and then went on: "What things has the mountain seen! There was nursed Zab, the father of the Great Rustam; there Rustam overcame the White Devil of the North; there Kaikobad took refuge. And I have heard that Kai-Khosroo, whom you call Cyrus,

\* Alluding to the petroleum at Baku, which was the site of one of the most famous fire temples of ancient times. The remains still exist. The steamers on the Caspian are driven by petroleum.

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when he had conquered the world, weary of his glory, went up into those mountains to seek rest, and none knows where he lies, or if, as some say, he will come again—perhaps” (with a smile) “to fight the White Devil again.

“ And look at the low hills to the East. There Derab,\* the Great King, Lord of Bokhara and Iran, and Egypt and the isles of the Greeks, he who sent bat and ball to Sikander Roumi,† to mock him with his youth, there he fell wounded by his own people. And there Sikander found him dying, and wept over him, and heard the word which kings are loath to hear : ‘The world has a thousand doors, through which its tenants continually enter and pass away.’ And here, five hundred years after, was fought, they say, a great battle between the glorious Khosroo and the Emperor of Rome,‡ who came to avenge the wasting of his land and the destruction of the sacred city of the Christians. And listen. Those two great kings received in the day of their pride letters from a certain naked lizard-eater of the South,§ bidding them submit to his God and to him. And they laughed the letters to scorn—and in less than twenty years

\*|Darius.

† Alexander.

‡ Heraclian.

§ Mahomed : the Persians used to describe the Arabs as lizard-eaters.

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the armies of both were destroyed, and their empires shattered. Yes, these mountains have seen many things, and many rulers : Mahmoud of Ghizni, who ruled from India to Bagdad ; the lion of the Seljooks,\* who took captive the Emperor of Rome ; Malek Shah, in whose name prayers were said in every city from Mecca to Bokharah—and the destroying flood of Ghenghiz. But the greatest of all was the Amir Timour,† who destroyed Rhe ‡ down there, and Alamut § up there in the mountains. What country did he not visit ? What enemy did he not destroy ? And what remains now of the empire which stretched from China to the Grecian sea ? You will see in the Shah's treasury the peacock throne of the Emperors of Delhi ; || and that is all that remains—the throne in which a stranger sits. Oh, you young peoples ! You rise on the great sea, like a wave swelled by the wind ; you rise and grow great ; but we see, not the wave but the ocean.”

\* Alp Arslan.

† Timurlane. He would take no other title than “ Amir.”

‡ Near Teheran.

§ The castle of the Assassins.

|| Nadir Shah took the peacock throne of Delhi when he sacked that town in 1739 ; but the so-called peacock throne at Teheran is probably not the same one. (See Curzon's examination of the question.)

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And then the Mirza repeated, half to himself, the Persian verse : “ Hail to you, you who after me will come and will go : sweet may your days be in this place of no-abiding.”

“ And now,” he said, “ let us go down into the garden.”

We rode down among the bare billowy hillocks, the refuse brought down by vanished rivers into a sea long since dried up—till we reached the flat land, and entered the tall gate decorated with the achievements of Rustum. A few minutes brought us to the gate of the garden, and in a moment we were out of the pitiless glare, reflected from the bare gravel under a cloudless sky, and in the cool green shelter of an avenue of planes, with smooth white trunks like marble pillars and thick fresh foliage. The clear water ran along little channels, under thickets of roses. There were roses everywhere. Not in beds, nor in plots, but growing as underwood, in untrained luxuriance. The fruit-trees, peach, almond, cherry, apricot, and apple, had had their day. The Judas tree still stood in the pink circuit of its own scattered flowers : the violet and the narcissus still held out against time ; but it was the day of the roses, and they triumphed everywhere. I had watched with the Mirza the appearance of every flower and the arrival of every bird,

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and from the abundant stores of Persian verse the Mirza had hailed, each as it came, with poem or story. Here he was happy. "I know," he said, "what you Europeans like is to look at the mountains, or go up among them and kill things. But I like the running water, in a quiet garden, with a rose reflected in it, and the nightingale singing to it. Listen." It was nearly nine in the morning when, I think, the nightingales\* sing their best. And the thickets were indeed resonant.

We sat down. The Mirza was still in a historical vein. "I am thinking," he said, "of what has been not so long ago, and what may be yet. Less than two hundred years ago our native rulers, the Sevarviye, had ruled the country with honour for two hundred years, and had their chief palace in my town, Isfahan. And an Afghan robber, of mean birth, with a few thousand ragged soldiers, came down from the mountains and took the city and slew the people. And the Turks on the West and the Russians on the North came in and took what they wished of Persian land. And then rose in

\* The Persian nightingale is not the same as the English nightingale, but a different species. He is a summer migrant, arriving in spring, and wintering, as has recently been discovered, in the Soudan.

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the mountains of the North, Nadir, who came to Isfahan and drove out the Afghans and destroyed them utterly. Then he turned upon the Turks, and, by war and negotiation, he drove them and the Russians back. And in less than twenty years from the time when, as it seemed, the empire of Persia was destroyed, the power of Nadir extended from the Caucasus to Delhi."

"And what," I said, "remains of that?"

"What remains of the snow of two years ago? You will say, nothing. But the snow of two years ago has sunk into the rocks, and is drawn into the wells which feed the *kanat* which waters this garden—this garden of ours. Let us come to the pond and look at the water."

I followed to where the water was collected into a deep basin, walled and paved with green-blue tiles.

"Look into it and tell me what you see," he said.

I saw in the clear water the reflection of the bright blue sky, and the willows which stood round the pool, and the red geraniums growing by the side.

"A poet has said that even such is the mirror of thought in which man sees the reflection of the things that are—of the branches of the tree of life. But he only sees the image."

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A light green leaf fluttered from the willow into the pond.

“ And sometimes, as you see, a leaf from the tree, a real leaf, falls on to the mirror and hangs between the image and him that looks. And then he knows that there is a real tree as well as the image.”

A goldfish swirled to the surface and broke the reflection.

“ And then our passions come from the bottom of our mind and break the image, hunting for worms. But I forgot ; you asked me what was the outcome of Nadir’s victories. I will tell you one thing that came of that troublous time.” He drew out a book from the bosom of his dress. The binding was lacquered, the lacquer covering rich flower-paintings, the colour dimly showing through the golden film. The leaves were of fine vellum ; each letter of the text was lovingly and carefully finished by a skilful penman ; and the margin was illuminated with delicate tracery-work in gold. But the peculiarity of it was that here and there verses were written in the margin in a careless, hurried handwriting, and that round these verses the delicate gold tracery was lovingly drawn so as to make a rich framework for them.

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The title-page was covered with writing in red and black, written in every direction ; also there were the impressions of seals large and small : and when I looked closely I saw that thin pieces of paper with writing on them had been pasted into the page. Only one of these remained : there had been two others, which had vanished. And all round the seals and the writing, in every available place, the illuminator had drawn with minute and loving care his curves and flowers and branching lines, in gold, red, blue and yellow.

“ What is the book ? ” I asked. “ Tell me its history. ”

“ It was written, ” he said, “ by a poet called Fakrir, who lived in India two centuries ago. It is the history of the love of a friend of his who called himself Valeh. And he wrote it to please his friend. His friend had been in Isfahan when the Afghans took it and went to Delhi, where he lived when Delhi was taken and sacked by Nadir. I said the book was the history of Valeh’s love—and he wrote verses of his own in it, and he fastened into it fragments from the letters of his beloved, who lived in Isfahan. And when he died it was sent to his beloved, and it remained in her family, till one of them sold it : and here it is. ”

The Mirza opened the book at the first page and said :

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“Here you see Valeh’s writing, here he bids the reader listen to him.” And then he read from the manuscript the verses :

“ ‘ We all have read the stories of hapless lovers, but no story tells of a sorrow greater than mine : the story of Majnun and his Leila is old and out-worn : read the story of me ; waste not your days reading old stories : listen to mine.’ ”

“You see,” said the Mirza, “ he wants an attentive listener. Now hear what comes next ;” and he proceeded :

“ ‘ In my heart may the sorrow of the world become the sorrow of my beloved, even as new wine ripens in the vat.’ ”

“Do you understand ?” said the Mirza.

I confessed that I did not.

“ Perhaps you will understand before you have finished. But have you seen the vine-picking ? If the grapes are not picked they fall to the ground and no one is the better. But the earth does not grow them to be picked. Yet you may pick them if you will. And then we put them together in the vat, and in a month we have wine and in ten years good wine. And so is the sorrow and the joy of the world, even as the grapes of the earth. Make them your own, through

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love, and store them in your own soul, and you will have the excellent wine which we call by many names.”

The Mirza turned the page. The next page was elaborately illuminated. In the centre was a medallion. Written on it in white on gold was an Arabic inscription. “This,” said the Mirza, “is the verse of the Koran with which the story of Joseph begins. ‘Now I will tell a story better than all the stories of the world.’ And here is the title of the book, ‘The Tale of Valeh, King of Words, Lord of Knowledge, the Darvish of Delhi.’ And above and below are the seals of Valeh and of his lady Hadijeh Sultan. And here along the sides are written verses in Valeh’s handwriting.” And the Mirza read : ‘Save my beloved let me have no friend, save her let me know no refuge.’

“Here he has added in the Arabic language : ‘Oh, my friend, thou art my God, and, save thine, I know no worship.’

“And here, you see, down the side, he has written some more lines : ‘I am the wine in the cup of Hadijeh, the lips of Hadijeh are wet with me. Oh death, I fear thee ! for Hadijeh would mourn for me, Hadijeh would weep. Alas for the nightingale who mourned outside the garden : so weep I,

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parted from Hadijeh.' And then you see the impress of the seal he made for Hadijeh: 'Hadijeh, daughter of Hassan, the glory of Daghestan, and by the Grace of God Queen of the Kingdom of Purity.' And now look at these two blank spaces. Once there were fastened there fragments of Hadijeh's letters, as you see by what Valeh has written beside them. 'These three fragments of her letters bear witness how my heart was broken in three pieces when I read her words, the preface of the book of my life. I was drunken with love. Lost to me, far from me, she wrote them : and I have fastened her written words to this page, that they may abide there as a blessing and good omen, living and present. I have lost her, but her words are there. Ali Ghuli Valeh : may Allah make great his love.'

"But, as you see, the paper has dropped off, or been removed. Only one of the fragments remains. You see it there. That is the writing of Hadijeh. It is good writing for a woman. It is a quotation from Hafiz : 'Oh friend, if one said to thee, "enquire not after her welfare," let him be a stranger to thee, cursed be his name.' And here you see Valeh has written beside it, 'This also is from her letters.'"

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“We will read the book together,” I said.

“Yes,” he answered, “but you must remember when we read that our language is not yours, and that our thoughts are not like your thoughts. And you must remember too what this man, who wrote these words, has seen with his eyes. He had seen in Isfahan a great monarchy shattered to pieces, and the streets of his native town red with the blood of the princes and nobles of his country. He had seen in Delhi, the descendant of Ghenghiz and Akbar, the Emperor of the Kings of the East, bowing himself in supplication before a robber of the mountains, that at least some of his people might be spared, that his city might not be left utterly desolate. You say, ‘as solid and steadfast as the earth.’ But did you live, as some do, where the earth is shaken daily, you would look for steadfastness not in the earth, but in the stars. I have heard that it is written in your holy book that the wise men who sought for knowledge in the heavens, after long waiting, learnt from the writing of the stars that the child was born who was to be Lord of the whole earth. And they followed the leading of the stars, and they brought with them the tribute which it was the custom of their country to bring to a king, as the Queen of Saba did to Solomon, gold

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and incense. And they found not a queen in the royal chamber of a great palace, but a beggar woman in a stable. And they returned to their own country, having learned from the earth that which the stars had never taught them. Oh, wise men of the West, you who seek knowledge not in heaven but in earth, and who bring to the East your gifts, the iron and the woven stuffs and the new knowledge you have learnt, you too, perhaps, may find with us that which you have not sought, and which the earth will never teach you. To-morrow I will come to the garden, and will bring the book, and we will read it together."

The next day, an hour after sunrise, I found the Mirza pacing slowly along the garden. He had the book in his hand. We sat down and he read, and as he read he explained the meaning of the lines, and I wrote it down in English.

## THE PRAISE OF GOD

IN the name of God the most merciful.

Oh lord of beauty, oh life that slays the heart, thy love is king of the two worlds : the world of things is the revelation of love and beauty : the sweetness and the salt of love and beauty : thy beauty makes the eye as it were a garden : thy love makes the heart as it were a feast of lamps : thine is the flush on the cheek of beauty : thine is the burden in the heart of love.

In this old world one spark has made the two lamps<sup>(1)</sup> bright : from thee is the scar where the heart was burned : from thee is the lantern that lights the house : visible art thou in the face of the lover : in the lover and in that which is not he : one thousand wise men are made mad by thee : the tents of thy Leila are a thousand :<sup>(2)</sup> with my eyes I see thee : without eyes I see thee : oh light of my eyes, where art thou ? Every eye is oppressed

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by the glory of thy might : every heart burns with thy desire.

Like the riders of the desert thy beauty goes forth : on every side it goes forth to plunder : before thy face every gate flies open. He that is sick for love giveth thee his heart : and in exchange thou givest him the fulness of life. Oh life, oh life, glory to him that gave thee ! my heart bows before his loving kindness. Thou art the stranger and thou art the friend : and thou art thou. Thou art the lover, thou art the beloved, and thou art thou. To the crooked eye thou art divided : thou art no more one. For here and there, now and then, thy colour changes : thy form is other : now Leili, now Majnun.

From thee is the curve of the beloved's eyebrow : from thee is the drop in the lover's eye : in the slender form of the fair one thy loveliness is made manifest. Thine is the light of the loving glance : thou temperest the edge of the sword of the eye. In the face of the beloved thou kindlest a fire : and, lo, in the heart of him that loves the fire becomes a garden like the fiery furnace of Nimrod.<sup>(3)</sup> Thou art the cupbearer, and behold we are drunk with thy wine ; thou art the fire and we are burnt in the furnace : from thee is

## The Praise of God

the hue of the rose and the desire of the nightingale : burnt on its bosom the tulip, the bride of the garden, wears thy brand ; the narcissus bends its fair head before thee ; the iris praises thee with purple lips.

For thy arrow has pierced the heart, and its wounds praise thee. Its wounds are as eyes which look in thy glory. But they look in vain, for in thy light is the brightness of the eyes : and by thy glory we see : yet seeing see not : in thy presence seeing avails not : before thee is no place for speech nor hearing.

## A PRAYER

OH thou who hast put on me the robe of life and opened to me the door of mercy : in that which thou art we are and were : thou hast breathed into the dust the breath of life : thou gavest the gift of life and hast asked no thanks. Before thee kings are as beggars, and of thy abundance a Dervish is a king. O Mecca of all the world, oh holy place of all mankind ; thy nature is the place of praise ; thy presence is the house of prayer. We are thy slaves and thou art our master : wherever we are we stand in need of thee : in all our searchings we search for thee : in all our speech we speak of thee. Save thee we need naught else : what is beside thee ? where is it and when is it ? Have mercy, have mercy upon thy poor servant—he sighs and longs for thy perfection,<sup>(4)</sup> he seeks for thy purity. And his task is made hard by thy deceits and thy disguises, for they are marvellous and wondrous, O Lord. My heart is full of

## A Prayer

wonder at thy works. Make great that wonder, O Lord : not the wonder of them that have no understanding, but the wonder which the prophet prayed for. Make me thy friend by wonder, make me a mirror to show thy face. Make me free from the prison of "I and thee," that with *thy* eyes I may see thee and be glad. When I gaze on this world of confusion draw me nigh to thy majesty. Make my soul single in the contemplation of the one and many ; I am the moth and thou art the candle. In the world of colour and shape make steadfast my soul, that certain faith may become religion. I pray for a heart, a little heart, full of thee ; a mirror for the brightness of thy glory.

Save thy likeness, O Lord, in this world of change, may I see no face within it ; and when from this perishable world I haste to the eternal country, be thou my guide and companion, oh familiar friend of my longing soul. Keep me while I live among the followers of the true prophet, and in the resurrection may I stand beneath his banner !

## THE PRAISE OF LOVE

WHEN the water and the dust of the world were kneaded the seed of love was sown ; and when the young plant raised its head the four quarters of the world were troubled ; the earth wept, and its tears were Water ; the earth sighed, and its breath was Air. The stripling grew and waxed, and bore fruit in season. And its fruit was the hearts of men, and in its fruit it held the seed, the same which was sown at the beginning—that germ which was sown on the first day, in the fulness of time the ripe fruit bore it.

The angels were free of love, but on men it fell like lightning. And in their life love was the beginning and the end, the substance of all that was and is. Love empties the mosque of its priests, the desert of its hermits ; the idolater forgets his idol ; the believer turns from the Most High.

. . . . .

## The Praise of Love

How long, how long will you speak in riddles? Canst thou tell his nature in words who is as God? For he becomes darker by words; his revelation is in concealment. It were better you told the story which is on your lips, that his wisdom may be made manifest. Look not on the sun without a curtain; through a mist of cloud shall he be seen.

## THE SUBJECT OF THE BOOK

ONE day in the fulness of joy and in the delight of youth I was in the garden. Good fortune stood at my right hand and wealth was at my feet. On my bosom I held my beloved, Wisdom sat over against me, I reclined on the throne of Knowledge, and Thought stood before me holding up his Glass.

And my heart within me burnt with fire, and my soul was heavy with the burden of words unsaid. How shall I tell the desire of my heart? How shall I utter the thought within me? Oh, for an unpierced pearl of fancy; oh, for a story yet untold.

And of a sudden came a messenger to my door, like the first warm wind of the spring. "Oh you," he said, "whose thought blooms in his face like a rose, oh you who sit in sorrow, hasten, for your good fortune remembers you; it is come to pass even according to your desire." And I

## The Subject of the Book

said, "Oh chosen messenger, oh bird of good omen, even as the hoopoo that brought King Solomon tidings from Sheba, (5) oh lift up the curtain from the face of thy speech!" And the messenger said: "The Khan has summoned you, the glory of lovers, the pride of Daghestan, he whose name is sweet on the lips of men, Ali Ghuli Khan."

When I heard that name I delayed not, I ran to his house, ran as a pilgrim to the Kaabe.

And when he saw me he rose and embraced me and made me sit down beside him, and he said: "Oh you, whose speech is the food of the world, and whose thought is the savour of it, know that I am a prisoner in the net of love; even as the tulip on my heart is branded love's mark. Hadijeh of the Lazgi (6) is my idol; she it is whose touch has fired my harvest. Lo! at her name my soul flew to my lips. I am tossed as in a whirlwind of joy and sorrow. Alas, far from her I am a prisoner in Hind; even as you, I am far from home, far from my love, far from garden and the freshness of spring. Now hear me, oh fellow wanderer, and make me a picture with thy magic pen, a picture of the fading flower of love, that the world may ever have it in remembrance, even as Maani (7) made his "Book of

## Valeh and Hadijeh

Flowers," make thou the book of my love. For so out of an old story will spring new life; and even as blood is washed out with blood so shall love be love's remedy, and at this fire which burnt house and home you will light a candle, a little candle to light my heart with a tranquil flame."

And I made answer: "Oh, noble one, your love is famous in the world. Like last year's almanack is (5) the story of Ves and Raaman, the fire of Ferhod, the love of Majnun. Why talk of them, why sell old merchandise? I will sell you to yourself. I will hold the mirror up to your eyes; you will look and see your hidden soul revealed."

When he heard my word he flinched, he hid his eyes as if lightning had fallen from heaven; his tears fell like the first rain of spring, and he cried: "I am as one dead, but in your verse I shall live. Now I am a name, now am I as one risen from the dead, and in my story shall your fame grow strong, and the two shall be as soul and body."

So he spoke, and so I accepted the task, and went to the temple of my heart to pray for help in the work.

## THE STORY

### BIRTH OF ALI GHULI KHAN

OH hearers, incline your ears, make ready for a hundred cries of pleasure.

In Isfahan dwelt an emir, peerless in pomp and state, his lineage was from Shamhal of the Lazgi<sup>(9)</sup>; the root thereof was in Dagestan; in his face shone the light of government, and the faithfulness of his heart was to the Sefarviye<sup>(10)</sup>. His Shah made him Separsalar<sup>(11)</sup>, but his name I cannot put into verse<sup>(12)</sup>. And he had a brother who was his peer in merit, he also held the same proud title, and his name was Hassan Ali Khan. Now to the brother whom I have not named, God in his goodness gave a child; a child so beautiful that every finger pointed to it—a child, say? rather a full moon shining from the tower of excellence, a pearl from the casket of perfection; if love went a-trading, surely

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this were his merchandise! The father rejoiced in his countenance, and when he saw him he opened his treasury to the poor.

Then was the time of high feasting—the table was spread, the musicians were called, and friends innumerable came to wish the father joy. There came also a troop of astrologers, and sitting together, they examined the fate in store for the child, and they said: “A happy birth has found a happy time; the fate of this child is a thousand joys, and a thousand joys shall he shed around him. Great shall be his beauty and great his wit, but yet shall he be ever distraught and the fool of love.”

Then the father took the Koran and opened it and took a lot and said: “My son’s name is Ali Ghuli Khan.”

## THE BIRTH OF HADIJEH

Now when four years were passed from the day of Ali Ghuli's birth, God visited the house of Hassan Ali Khan, and gave, to lighten it, a fair daughter most glorious in her beauty ; not a child, but a shining star—not a star, but the light which is in the eye of the soul ; her face was the lamp of beauty, her body a flower from beauty's garden.

And when her father saw her he sent for all his friends and then summoned the musicians, and he spread his table, and great was the merriment of the guests, and the wine flowed fast. And they said, "What is thy daughter's name?" And the father said, "Hadijeh." And they said, "Who shall be her husband?" And the father said to his brother, "Hast thou not a son?" And all the guests shouted for joy, and said, "Surely she shall be the wonder

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of the world, and she shall marry her cousin, and shall bear him noble children.”

This is the thought of man ; and even as his days, so is his thought, it passes away and is gone. Even as we are so is our will, and our children are even as we. Save God, none is master of his will ; man's life is but a blank sheet on which God's finger writes.<sup>(23)</sup>

## THE DEATH OF THE HERO'S FATHER

WHEN three years were over the two brothers were divided. For the father of Ali Ghuli Khan, for the love he bore the Shah, was made governor of the province of Erewan.<sup>(14)</sup> Thither he went, and by his rule he made the province blossom like a garden in spring. Justice flourished, and his charity filled the barns of the gleaners (*i.e.*, the poor). Suddenly Time, the magician, struck his fortune with his wand, and the king gave him charge of Candahar, on which the curse of Afghan rule had fallen ; but hardly had he said farewell to Erewan when he parted from life too, and for that high lord there was lamentation in the house of heaven. And his little son was sent to Isfahan, where he abode in his uncle's house. And there his uncle became as his father, and Hadijeh was his playmate.

## HOW VALEH LOVED HADIJEH

THEY knew not, they thought not, as they played. But the signs of love were manifest in them : the beloved was coy and winning, and the lover was hot in supplication. And all this without sense or knowledge, nor did either know what path they were treading. It is an old story. Love is a conjurer, and we are the dolls he plays with. When the heart and the heart-compeller dwell together, it is like the straw and the amber : the straw knows not why it is drawn to the amber, nor the amber that it draws the straw. Love is victor and the world his captive, he is supreme and the world without will.

Now when Ali Ghuli Khan, who was called Valeh, was six years old, they set him to his tasks that he might learn. And to him the school was as heaven, for he studied that he might be a better lover than Ferhod. In every "Aleph" he saw the cypress form of his beloved (<sup>15</sup>), and in every "Jim" a curl from her locks.

## How Valeh Loved Hadijeh

So passed the years till the time came when each knew the other's secret. The eyes and eyebrows spoke, though the lips were dumb ; but the heart knew. And every day Hadijeh grew fairer, and every day Valeh was more deeply in love.

## DESCRIPTION OF HADIJEH

OH that beloved one, who has seen her like? For when she reached her fourteenth year she was like the moon in beauty—a moon of fourteen days. Beauty shall I call it? or the woe of hearts, the robber of patience, and the strength of life? Her form was like the cypress by the margin of a brook, and Valeh's eyes were like the still waters which hold its image. Her face shone forth from her hair like morning out of night: the sun was a prisoner in the snare of her locks. What shall I say of the morning of her brows? Of that great splendour what shall I say? The whole world has not the like of her two eyebrows for hearts' enchantment—and from her eyelashes, when she was merry, a two-edged sword was flashed at your soul; and when she smiled her teeth and lips were as the shining evening-glow set with stars; and when she laughed her mouth was as the bud of a red rose in which a white rose is hidden. I saw the white

## Description of Hadijeh

ear below the curtain of her locks, and I said, "Morning has come and kissed the night."

Wherever she moved she made captive the hearts of men ; and her finger tips were red as a tiger's with blood (<sup>16</sup>) ; and ever from the light of her breast her heart shone forth like a jewel shining in clear water.

Such was Hadijeh ; and night and day those two were burning in a sevenfold furnace. And when the flower was in Valeh's hand and the wine in the cup, suddenly the frost of the world withered the flower and the stone of fate shattered the glass.

## THE RUIN OF IRAN

HEAR the tale of the sorrow of Valeh! For two hundred years the race of the Sefarviye ruled Iran with wisdom and good fortune; they exercised justice and judgment, and the land was made the envy of Paradise. But a young gazelle was sleeping beside a lion, an antelope had made a pillow of a lion's head! When for many years there is peace in the land, mankind makes a trade of pleasure; eyes are fixed on the goblet and the bowl, till, because of their very sloth, they lose all peace and quietness; every quarter is like the eye of the beloved (<sup>17</sup>), and from deep sleep awakes disquiet. Suddenly from Kandahar arose a noise of weeping; from the horde of the Afghans a ghoul raised his head for mastery. His name was Mahmoud, but his nature Abomination! In the land of Kandahar he became king, and there, for some space, abode in hope and fear. For every day, across the frontier, came news from

## The Ruin of Iran

Iran of weakness and disorder, and at last he sent forth his armies to take Kerman—and well they did their business. And from Kerman he turned his face towards the throne and the royal city of Isfahan. And as he came near the Shah ordered his vizir, with a great troop of commanders and many soldiers, to go forth to meet him. But what are numbers without merit? That countless host became as nothing.

Then in the city was great tribulation, for without was the Afghan host and within hunger and terror. Then the Afghans sent messengers, and said that they wished to make peace with the Shah and that he should be their guest. And he went out with all his nobles, and they took him, and Mahmoud became Lord of Isfahan. Now hear the tale of the sorrow of Valeh !

## THE DISAPPOINTMENT OF VALEH

THEY say that when the Shah and his commanders fell into the Afghans' hands they were cruelly racked and tormented, and among their number was Hassan Ali Khan, father of Hadijeh. Valeh, with a heart full to the brim with love, remained in the house, sick and sorrowful. His feet and hands were bound as by a chain by the memory of two curling locks ; not a friend had he to speak with, he repeated his own sad story to his own heart ; one memory and a hundred thousand sorrows ; one heart with the load of a hundred mountains ; not a friend save his sorrowful heart, not a companion save his fiery sighs.

And Hadijeh, too, in her chamber, burnt with the secret fire of love, in secret she suffered a hundred sorrows, and the light of her heart flickered like a dying lantern.

[Here, written in the margin in Valeh's handwriting, are the quatrains :

## The Disappointment of Valeh

That fair one whose head was bowed down with pain and  
sorrow,

Had a mother compact of love ;  
Not a woman, but a revelation of mercy,  
And of justice to adorn the world.

That cypress of the world, that fair lady, the envy of the  
planets,

That mother of Hadijeh, bright as the sun—  
She bore a child to be my heart's sole business,  
Not a daughter, but the ruin of my soul.

I wrote this in the month of separation in the year of  
disappointment.]

And Hadijeh's mother saw her sorrowful condition, and  
knew the reason of her sorrow ; and she loved Valeh as her  
own child. And she went to Valeh's mother and said :  
“ My heart grieves to see a mother's eyes so blind. Do  
you not see how your son wears himself out like a caged  
lion ? Do you not know that the mote which is far from  
the sunbeam can have no rest ? ” And Valeh's mother knew  
her meaning, but made answer : “ All my kin are in chains  
and in the hands of the tormenters. How, then, can I  
make a marriage for my son ? ” And Hadijeh's mother

## Valeh and Hadijeh

said : “ Indeed, we are as deer caught in a trap, and our enemies sit round and watch us. I fear me some wild wolf will come and clutch my lamb.” Then Valeh’s mother began to make all manner of excuses ; for she loved not the mother of Hadijeh, and she would not consent. “ The time is not yet ripe,” she said ; and knew not that she would die far from her son.

## HOW MAHMOUD'S COURTIER WOOED HADIJEH

WHEN that moon of beauty became celebrated, lovers came from every quarter to see her and woo her. They sought admittance, but in vain, for her mother would let none come nigh her but only Valeh alone. Now among the favoured of Mahmoud <sup>(18)</sup> was one who spent nights and days with his master. He was hated of God and man. Every corner of the land told a story of his vileness ; men fled before him as if from the devil himself. His face was like the sole of a camel's foot, his body crooked as a scorpion, his form and gait were like a frog's, his speech was like the barking of a cur, his teeth were like crooked spikes of iron, his lips were like a camel's, and his breath smelt of rottenness. And that foul monster, as soon as he heard of the beauty of that moon, girt up his loins for wooing because of his trust in his master Mahmoud. And

## Valeh and Hadijeh

coming to the house of the mother of Hadijeh, he said to her : " You have a daughter who is the desire of the world. Give her to me out of kindness and I will be your friend ; refuse her and I will tell my story to my master Mahmoud." And when she heard his word she became hot with anger, and said : " Shall a jackal mate with a gazelle ?" And that vile beast was wrath and bore the news to Mahmoud. And Mahmoud said : " Tell that woman that if she will not give up her daughter her house shall be made desolate and all her people perish." Then came her kin weeping and praying, and begged her for all their sakes to yield and to give up her daughter. And at last for pity's sake she yielded.

## THE MARRIAGE OF HADIJEH

AND when the wedding day came round, there came a troop of Mullahs with a hundred adornments, all arranged like figures in a Chinese picture ;<sup>(19)</sup> and among them the bridegroom, like a blot on that picture, like an owl on a fair lawn or a thorn in a garden.

And Hadijeh drank blood ; her heart within her breast was like a boiling sea : on her lips was the look of shame. She spake no word, but said in her heart : “ Oh heaven, crooked is the game thou playest. Why aim thy darts at so weary a heart ? The hopes thou thyself hast planted are turned to despair : my wounds are foul and thy medicine is poison. Thou who givest the pain canst thou give no remedy ? What cruelty is greater than thine ? Thou hast torn me from my love : thou hast laid me in an ogre’s arms. I was a hidden treasure,<sup>(20)</sup> but one knew me and was glad : and now his heart is desolate. Thou hast given the

## Valeh and Hadijeh

treasure to a dragon. Behold thy work ! In the house of beauty I was a burning candle, and I shone on all fair things : and now thou hast set me by the fire for the heat to melt me, and in a place where cold winds blow, that my flame may perish.”

And the fair rose was laid on the thistle : the nightingale in vain lamented the rose : a hideous Gin laid hands on a houri : and light held converse with darkness.

And when the cruel news came to Valeh, and when he heard that the choicest pearl from the mines of the world was set on the neck of a jackal, he raised a bitter cry, like Majnun parted from his Leili. [Written in the margin in Valeh's hand, “ Victory met me not on the path of Faith. I heard the voice of Majnun crying—‘ Valeh, I follow in your track.’ And I waited long, I stood and waited, but Majnun came not ” (“).] He said : “ What am I to do ? There is no power in my hands : the power to do is gone. The stone of my fortune has shattered the glass, and the wine is spilt. I know a garden where dwelt a nightingale. He had not waited for the smell of spring. He endured the labour of the world ; he endured the sharpness of the thorn. Cruel was the thorn, cruel the frosts of winter. But when all the

## The Marriage of Hadijeh

garden was glad with spring the gardener drove the nightingale from the garden and gave his nest to an owl. Alas, alas, for the poor nightingale ! Alas for the sharpness of the thorn !

[Written in the margin in Valeh's hand : " I am sick, and my love gives medicine to another : to some one else, to some one else. Hadijeh Sultan is the friend of my heart : Oh Hadijeh, hater of thy friends."]

## HOW HADIJEH CAME TO HER MOTHER'S HOUSE AFTER HER MARRIAGE, AND HOW SHE MET VALEH THERE

OH you who through love have looked on sorrow, let not your heart be withered in despair. Love is : and for him who turns not back from love's path, hope reveals his rainbow : the tears of lovers are not in vain : the night of sorrow will put on the garment of morning : oh, slaves of love, pain is love's sharp medicine : you who know not pain, enter not into love's dwelling, remain without the door. Every heart that falls into love's hands he makes it as wax, though it were iron : by his fire he purges it : by pain he melts it, and in his hands he moulds it to the shape he wills.

They say that when Valeh's heart was bitten by the fang of separation, his beloved knew of his miserable state ; and the fire that burned him scorched her too. And one came to

## How Hadijeh came to her Mother's House

her mother and said : " So the fair moon, your daughter, once the brightness and glory of your house, is pining and fading in her husband's home like a torch at the head of a grave." And when the mother heard she was faint for sorrow, and sent to her son-in-law saying that Hadijeh's mother yearned for her daughter. " Surely," said she, " I grieve for my spiteful tongue : forget what has passed, and let my fair one lighten my home for a few days' space." And when her husband heard the message, he durst not refuse : and so, like Joseph out of prison, came Hadijeh from her husband's house and became again the light of her mother's eyes.

And Valeh heard news of her coming : and like a flood in spring he rushed to the place, a very torrent of love. The moth flew to the candle, the nightingale found the garden, the fish sprang into the water, the motes met in the sunbeam. And when his eyes fell on Hadijeh's face, even as the dews of morning when the sun falls on them, neither his heart nor his eyes remained to him : thought and life were but as a mirror (\*\*) to reflect the splendour of his love : drunk with the wine of her beauty he staggered and fell.

And when Hadijeh saw him thus struck down, for pity of herself and him her fears burst forth : she drew near the

## Valeh and Hadijeh

fallen man—fell from her hand the bridle of patience! Like a cloud her shadow fell on him, like the rain in spring her tears fell on him.

Then Valeh awoke, and his eyes were opened, and he saw the face of his beloved.

[Written in the margin in Valeh's] handwriting: "I awoke and saw her who is my life. And as the sick man dies when Death summons him, so lived I at the voice of my love."]

And Hadijeh looked and Hadijeh smiled, and strove with smile and look to make amends. And there they sat together, as close as body and soul—and they spoke, though their lips were closed: And their hearts were full within them: but their tongues were bound. And at last they broke silence and would have spoken of love: they wandered together in love's garden, but in that garden gathered no flowers.

This is the world's way: to mix the sweetest draught with the deadliest poison.

## HOW HADIJEH'S FATHER WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON, AND HOW HADIJEH CAME TO LIVE IN HER FATHER'S HOUSE

AND in those days the Afghan had pity on Hadijeh's father and loosed his bonds and bade him to return to his own house. And great was Hadijeh's joy : and Valeh rejoiced with her. And the Sultan summoned Hadijeh's husband and took him to his wars : and Hadijeh remained in her father's house : the gazelle escaped the jaws of the wolf ; the nightingale was free from the thorn.

And Valeh came often to his uncle's house : and there into his hands fell the treasure : that priceless treasure that he might hold but might not use. For when he held his joy in his hands, he looked and beheld only sorrow. She sat beside him : his all and yet how little—she was there : how near and yet how far away ! They sat like a houri and an angel

## Valeh and Hadijeh

in the gates of Paradise, where desire is not, nor fleshly longing. Even so were Valeh and Hadijeh : even such was her presence : even so was he bound.

And he sat and gazed on the ruby of her lips, and he laughed for joy to hear her voice. And he answered—how did he answer? In soft riddles, in tender parables—but, ah, how easy to read to her that heard him !

And many a sport and pastime they played together, as children might play, as they had played together in old times : and of all his dearest games was the game they call “ playing at kings.”

## PLAYING AT KINGS

**HAPPY** is he who talks with his beloved ! happy is he whose only trade is love ! He has ears for none, he has eyes for none, save his beloved ; and his life is for her alone. Should he speak to another, he only speaks of love ; should he speak to her, he says no word of love, and has no thought for aught else.

And so with guile in his heart he thought of the game of kings, and he summoned all the children of his kin and class. And they came to Hadijeh's house and played together, like stars for beauty. And he set them round the room like courtiers ; and he set Hadijeh in the midst like the full moon among the Pleiads ; he made her sit on a royal throne. She was king and he was her minister. The other children were ranged, each in his place, according to rank, one as a lord, another as a captain, one as vizier, another as commander. A troop of princes and chiefs stood around

## Valeh and Hadijeh

the throne. They were separated a little space, as was seeming, from the king ; but Valeh, as special counsellor and chief servant, stood beside the throne. Who did not gaze on such a lord and such a servant ? Then came the lords and captains, and one by one presented their petitions ; and Valeh was mediator, and laid their prayers before the throne. And when he spoke, if it were but a little matter, his speech was long ; he was rich in word and unctuous in phrase as befitted his station and his master's, and when his master answered unkindly he was like one at the point of fainting ; he cried, " Oh, king, may my life be your ransom, would I were the dust under your feet ; I am fire from head to foot ; and yet my torture is cold. Look kindly on my faithful service, oh, my lord ; am I not your servant, and is not the servant worthy of his wage ? " So he would urge his merits as a vizier who fears neglect ; or he would chide the king for forgetting his kingdom. " Great is your rank, oh king," he would say ; " and mighty your inheritance. Rich and splendid is the land you rule ; why do you forget it ? You are king, but you let your kingdom go to ruin ; oh, careless one, look for very shame ! "

## Playing at Kings

In this way the play-king and the play-slave would speak together in riddles.

Then Hadijeh would try another turn of the game. For she would make as if the lords and the captains had been neglectful, and as if the king laid all the blame on his chief minister. "My slave," she cried, "is worthy of prison and punishment ; bind him in bonds." And then they came round him and tied his hands and his feet, and they threw him at the feet of her who was his lord, and she set her foot on his neck. And then the lords made intercession for him, and the king had pity, and raised him with his hand and took him back again to favour.

So they played together ; so were they happy till the moment of separation came, and Hadijeh went back to her husband's house, and Valeh sat alone in darkness, and his lip trembled and his eye was dimmed.

## DEATH OF HASSAN ALI KHAN AND CONQUESTS OF SHAH TAMASIB

SUDDENLY, in the midst of his new-found fortune, Hassan, that glory of the land and ornament of mankind, turned his face from this transitory world to the home in the eternal country.

And the devil forged in the fire of hate, Mahmoud, the foul and impious, sat on the throne of Isfahan. And the young spring turned suddenly to winter : the flower of the Sefarviye, the noble Hussein Sultan, was thrown by the tricks of cheating fate into the dungeons of injustice. And all his kin, children, brothers, and cousins, nigh three score in number,<sup>(33)</sup> each worthy of the crown and empire, became the prey of that deaf dog, and perished miserably, save one alone, the elect, the chosen one, Tamasib the King. Fortune was kind to him, and removed him from danger, and soon he spread his wings, and little by little rose triumphant. And

## Death of Hassan Ali Khan

hardly had one year passed when darkness fell on the soul of Mahmoud, and madness possessed his brain, and he died by his own fell hand. And Ashraf sat in his place, and followed the road of justice ; he became the medicine of that wounded land, and followed the path of lovingkindness. But for Sultan Hasein alone the hand of mercy was stayed. He was a shepherd to his people, but a wolf to that poor captive. And when Shah Tamasib heard thereof he brought an army and fell on his father's murderer ; he tore him from his unclean roots, and that destroying torch was plunged into the flood ; of all the Afghans not a trace was left, and the besom of the Shah of Iran swept the country clean of Afghan dirt.<sup>(24)</sup> Isfahan arose from her grave like a dead man called back to life. And Tamasib sat on the throne of his race, and ruled, with the pomp of olden times, a very Kaikabad. And those who of the race of Iran had espoused the cause of the Afghans were pardoned by his kindness. And thus that hated one, the rival of Valeh, for all his treachery and wickedness received forgiveness. And as Jesus brought the dead to life, even so the Shah raised him from the dust. But though his soul was free from the fear of death, yet wandering became his fate, for by the Shah's

## Valeh and Hadijeh

command he followed with the army wheresoever it might go ; he was ever in the camp, possessed with sorrow ; and his fair wife Hadijeh remained behind in her mother's house: Happy Valeh, whom fortune favoured so !

In his uncle's house abode his heart's desire ; there was his Mecca, there his idol ! As the compass turns to the north, so turned his face to his Kaabe ; and as two gamesters play together, one losing, one winning, turn by turn, and as their thoughts are fixed on the stake, and their desire is to that alone, so did Valeh and Hadijeh play together, and the stake was love ; and when he had his fill of the house he would go out into the garden.

Oh, give me wine, for my heart is heavy, I can abide no more here, I must forth into the garden. Sing, musician, I am troubled. I long to hear the nightingale ; perchance when I have heard him my heart will be lightened ; give me wine, for my heart is heavy, and when I have drunken I will forth into the garden.

In the season of the spring, when the lamps of the world are lit anew, when the wind of the new year brings a pleasant smell, and the earth gives forth sweet savours, the nightingale, the master of a thousand tones, lifted

## Conquests of Shah Tamasib

up his voice to sing a marriage song. The nightingale made his sweet complaint, and the rose was lit by the flame of beauty ; and when she heard the voice of her singer, the flaming rose, for smoke, uttered sweet savours. There stands the cypress by the waterside, like a fair Alef ; and the skirts of the desert are loaded with yellow roses.<sup>(53)</sup>

In such a season came Hadijeh into the garden ; like spring she came into the garden, and with her came a troop of friends and servants ; she like the spring, they like the flowers of spring. She came smiling, in content and jollity, and all the flowers bade her welcome. And when they were aware of her presence they held their tribute ready, the gold of their petals and the jewels of their dew. And when the nightingale saw Hadijeh, he forgot the rose ; when the ring-dove beheld her form, the cypress mourned neglected.<sup>(54)</sup> The rosebud smiled when she saw her, and said, " My mouth is like hers " ; and the nightingale answered, " Like, but not so fair." When she raised her veil all the flowers said together, " Behold, another spring is come ! "

And from behind her fell Valeh's shadow at her feet : fell from her hands the reins of waiting.

## Valeh and Hadijeh

And they passed from flower to flower. And for Valeh Paradise with its houris was nought in comparison with her : without her life itself was nothing : pleasure and sorrow and death and life what were they in the light of love? Without love, Paradise is as hell : with love, hell the envy of Paradise.

And as they walked they came to a flowering tree ; not a tree, but Sinai aflame ; on every branch was the white hand of Moses, <sup>(\*)</sup> and from every branch the wind scattered flowers, when, like a sportive fair one, the tree flicked her shining skirts. And in the tree sat a nightingale, and he was busied with the song of his desire. And when Valeh heard the song of that fellow-servitor of love, he wept and raised his voice and sang :

“ Oh eye and light of living things, the garden of life rejoices in thee ; without thee the joy of life is gone. Thou art the cupbearer, but the wine of life moistens not my lips. How long shall I live bereft of love? I shall die from the pain of living.”

And when she heard his song, she answered :

“ Oh tulip from the garden of love, heart-weary prisoner of love, we are not strangers, though lovers we may not be ;

## Conquests of Shah Tamasib

stretch not out thy hand for the cup of meeting, enough for thee is the wine of friendship : for he that drinks that pure wine shall thirst no more ; seek not a guide to that forbidden road ; forget it, sweet friend, for friendship is here.”

## THE LOVE PAIN OF HADIJEH AND VALEH, AND HOW VALEH MADE HIMSELF A DERVISH

AND Hadijeh went home sorrowful, and her heart was full of love. And her husband became an abomination to her ; and she went about the house not knowing what she did : as a dead man is carried to the grave. <sup>(28)</sup>

And Valeh, like a wounded bird, strove with his fate ; every moment love bore over him like the spring torrents from the mountains ; in the flame of love his whole world was consumed. Day and night he roamed about her house. In the darkness he sat at her threshold, and gazed at the stars like a wanderer in the desert. And he cried out : “ Who am I to come near her threshold ? The earth at her door is pure gold ; the dust of it is medicine for all the ills of the world. Ungrateful that I am to weep, I who kneel at her gates.” And when morning threw out his

## The Love Pain of Hadijeh and Valeh

banners of light he left his station and went to the town and the streets and the bazaars, if haply he might find peace there, but found no peace.

And one day he bethought himself of a cunning plan. And he got himself a Dervish's tattered robe and the staff and the gourd, and so went to the house of his beloved. And when he came nigh he called aloud : " Blessed be the threshold of this house ! May all happiness wait on it, and may all who enter in be blessed ! " And above in her chamber Hadijeh heard the cry, and said to her maid : " That is no Dervish : it is the voice of one whose trade is love." And the maid went down and came up and said : " It is Valeh." And Hadijeh rose from her place and ran to the door, and, lo, there was Valeh standing. He was clothed in rags, and his cheeks were pale and thin and haggard. And when she saw his piteous state her eyes were dimmed with tears ; and then she spake to that poor beggar-man : " Alas, poor beggar, what can I give you ? Why are you a beggar ? What would you more ? For all I have is yours, and I myself ; if you want my soul, I give it here and now ; if you ask my heart, I throw it to your dogs. Behold, oh beggar, I kneel in the dust at your feet." And she led

## Valeh and Hadijeh

him by the hand and brought him to her chamber. And she made him sit at her side. Who would cry out on royal pride who saw that high Queen put the poor beggarman at her right hand? And there was he rewarded for his pains and waiting, and there was the great grief rolled from his heart; and there in all content at his beloved's side he abode till morning. And so great was the power of honour and purity that no thought of uncleanness entered his soul. In the kingdom of love when Love is king there is no place for lust. Lust is born of unclean desire, even as pride of ambition; and when the heart is afire with love, the heart glows and the rubbish of uncleanness is consumed.

And even so they abode together, those two twin souls. Hear my words, oh reader, and understand.

[Valeh here has written on the margin (in Arabic): "May the Lord prosper my Beloved. (In Persian): He whose heart is afire with love is one man, he who is the bond-slave of lust is another man; he who drinks at the well of love is one man, he who is drunken with desire is another man. In the battle-field of love fortune is various; victory is one thing, defeat is another—crying and lamentation and mourning and woe—even such is lust; but love is something else.]

## HOW VALEH STOLE HADIJEH'S SHOES

AND when day came he took his lost cause about the streets and the roads, and at last for very weariness lay down in the dust and slept. And in his dreams he, a helpless beggar, was set on the throne of Kings, and then he awoke and found his head pillowed on a stone. And all day long he waited for the night to come that unnoticed he might go again to the house of his beloved : the world was dark for him until the sun was set and darkness came. Then when the world's night appeared his night became morning, and he was drawn on to Hadijeh's house by his secret longing ; like an owl he loved the darkness and roamed about clothed in night. And he made himself a running noose and bound it round his waist, and he got store of nails and a hammer. And swift as the wind and like the wind unseen he sped to the house. Oh Valeh, why dost thou walk round that house as the pilgrims walk round the

## Valeh and Hadijeh

sacred stone of Mecca ? That is no kaabe, it is a woman's dwelling. Then he undid the rope and threw it, and it caught on the roof, and he climbed to the roof as a lover's sighs fly upwards. And he stood on the roof of her house, trembling for fear and love. The dust of the roof was like medicine to the eyes : <sup>(99)</sup> it cured them of their blindness : it showed them how to find the loved one's chamber. And he stood at the door wild with longing. And he cast down his eyes and he saw on the threshold two little shoes, like bodies empty of their souls. And he stooped and took up the shoes and hid them in his bosom, rejoicing greatly. And then he kissed them, and then he set them on his head like a crown, and smiling went home ; and he who had gone out like a thief came home as a king. He cried : " I am master of the two worlds ; what can death and life do for me more than Hadijeh's two shoes ? I am the lord of night and of day, of death and of life, for I own these two priceless treasures."

And when morning came Hadijeh woke and dressed herself and called for her shoes. And her maid searched everywhere, but could not find them, and said : " Surely some thief has stolen them." And she said : " I know what

## How Valeh Stole Hadijeh's Shoes

thief it was ;” and she sent for Valeh and bade him come to her. And when he came she smiled to him and said : “Once you came as a beggar and now again as a thief. But what a thief you are ! You have stolen my heart, and now you steal my shoes.”

## HOW VALEH DID HONOUR TO HADIJEH'S DOG, AND HAD DISHONOUR OF THE PEOPLE

Oh love, thou art the curse of the world and the enemy of wisdom! Where thou art wisdom is no more; to him in whose brain thou dwellest evil is as good and good as evil.

One day Valeh was nigh his beloved's house; he mourned like a nightingale outside the garden, like a ringdove he called, "Where? where?"<sup>(30)</sup>; his thirsty heart, afire with love, longed for the cool waters of meeting; and he recked not that the waters he longed for were but oil to the flame, that the flame burnt hotter the nearer he came to it.

In a fair room there stood a candle<sup>(31)</sup>, and the light flame flickered and danced. And many moths flew round it; and for fear of the light they kept far off. And only one, in drunkenness of heart, in fearless<sup>!</sup>love, came near;

## How Valeh did Honour to Hadijeh's Dog

and the light was his bane, and like an over-ripe fruit from the branch he fell at the candle's foot, all singed and scorched. And the others mocked at him, and said, "What have you gained by your foolishness? The candle recks not for your burning, she is not touched by your pain. Hence, and leave us; we love not the company of fools." And the moth made answer: "Heed me not, and go your ways. Though the bright fire when it was near me scorched and branded, yet would I rather be burnt by the light of nearness than by the fire of separation. If fate wills that I be burnt, then let me be burnt by the light of my love. What do you know of burning, you chilly souls who have never known the fire, you whose hearts are as cold stones, and as a lamp that is gone out? Of the candle all you know is the light; you have not felt the fire; you are congealed like ice. I am aflame; the fire that burnt me utterly has not touched the hem of your garment; but as for me, the fire of the candle is as the wine of my soul; you have not tasted it; I blame you not who mock me." (3<sup>r</sup>)

Alas! I have strayed far from my story; love is a truant guide, and the thought of love filled my soul. Now let me tell you of Valeh and his foolishness. For as he wandered

## Valeh and Hadijeh

round Hadijeh's dwelling his eyes fell suddenly on her dog. If ever dog were worthy of the joys of Paradise, surely it was Hadijeh's dog! From head to foot his shape was perfection, in every hair there were a thousand graces; small was he, but his heart was great, and his teeth were the bane of wolves. His tail was raised aloft like the banner of the host of Faithfulness; in the army of Truth he was standard-bearer. And when Valeh saw him, he fell upon him, and raised him in his arms and carried him under his robe and thought that he had stolen a treasure. He bore it away like a thief, and none saw him take it. He carried the dog to his home, and made of him a medicine for his wounded heart. And he said, "How small is the glory of kings beside the majesty of Hadijeh's dog! The dog is dear to me as my heart, may my life be its ransom!" And he made for him a coat of satin and a collar of gold. Days and nights he kept aloof from men and in company with the dog. He pressed him to his heart, he kissed his nose and his paws, and he talked with him as to a friend. "Oh you," he said, "who dwell with my love, your hair is scented with the scent of her locks. Oh messenger from my love, oh peace of my longing soul, oh balm of a heart sick with

## How Valeh did Honour to Hadijeh's Dog

sorrow, your form is but the veil ; be your name Friend of the Friendless (33), oh confidant of my heart's love, oh treasure of my treasure ; your hue is black, and in it dwells delight as the light that gleams under dark eyebrows ; you have a white star on your brow, as the morning glitters on the forehead of night ; your eyes are like the lanterns in the house of love ; you are a king and your tail the standard, even as the banner of the hosts of Solomon ; you are more terrible than an eagle or a lion, for you have snatched my heart away and made prey of my soul."

Even so he spoke to the dog and eased his heart in speaking. And ever he attended on the dog—he was as the dog's dog. They dwelt in one room together ; they ate together ; if the dog had been hungry he would have torn his own heart out of his breast and thrown it to the dog. And sometimes he would say : "He that is a true lover, be he the slave of his beloved's house-dog, it is better to prostrate oneself before a dog than to raise the head high in pride. They who are Satan's slaves are viler than dogs, even as a jackal is viler ; they reproach honest men, they curse him that worships a dog, but they forget that they themselves in their ignorance and drunkenness are

## Valeh and Hadijeh

worshipping a beast, they see the faults of others from afar, and they are blind to their own. But he that has his heart full of love, he has naught to fear from their tongues, he whose thoughts are love has no thought to spare for idle chatter.” (34)

## HOW VALEH'S MOTHER REASONED WITH HIM IN VAIN

ALAS for the poor dog-worshipper ! For now his secret became known to all : what was hidden in his heart was proclaimed in the market-place ; in the corners of the streets men met together and told the story ; the sweetness and savour of those two lovers became the spice of market gossip ; wherever two people met they would talk of Valeh and mock his misfortune. And his kin were wroth with him and counted his love their infamy.

And when his mother heard of it and saw his face grown yellow with grief her heart burned within her, and she came near her well-beloved and opened the door of counsel, and said : " Oh you, whose face is the light of my eyes and the glory of my house, my heart is scorched within me to see you thus. Drive her from your thoughts ; what can she profit you now ? The first house you built for your

## Valeh and Hadijeh

desire has fallen into ruin, it can rise again no more. Set not your heart on a thing impossible. When I see you thus I heap reproaches on my own heart. For it was I who was the cause of your great sorrow. I prevented you from your love. And now I who have caused your grief am seeking a remedy. I know the way along the paths of the deep. Hadijeh is fair, but I know one fairer. I will hang a jewel round your neck more precious than rubies, worthy of a king. And in her sight you will forget all the world and Hadijeh."

When Valeh heard these words he struck his head on the ground and cried aloud : " You rub salt into my wounds ; open some other door of counsel ; take away the fire, I say ; and you pour oil on it and fan it with your skirts. All that have but a little share in love know that their life is but one thought ; you took from me the substance, then let the thought remain. Let Hadijeh alone, fret not yourself for what may come after. I cannot take your counsel, for the body cannot exist without the soul. If I may not see her with my eyes, I will lay my hands on the skirts of the thought of her ; yea, thought is sweeter than the seeing of the eyes, thought is enough, and every time the shadow of

## How Valeh's Mother reasoned with Him

her face crosses my heart all other forms are clean forgotten. I am drunk with love, I am mad ; reproach me not for my worship of her dog ; yea, I would rather throw my soul at her dog's feet than live for a thousand years. I chose her of all the things of the world, the idols of the world are naught to me. Her dog is more precious to me than all the world's good things. I have given her my heart and my soul ; how can I give them to another ? I will not be deceived by the fairest of idols ; in the face of Hadijeh I learned the secret of faith, may I never look on any but her. I have but one heart, one faith, and one worship ; tell me not there is not one God, but many ; <sup>(35)</sup> speak not as one of the idolaters, seek not to corrupt my faith. I know my love is not mine, but I am hers, even for ever, in all verity and truth. From afar I look on her face ; that is better than being a stranger ; teach me not new knowledge ; I know and my love knows. Lo, I am as a barren tree, your digging will bring no fruit. I burn, I burn ; and you too, oh my mother : my day is black because of you."

And when his mother heard his words she made no answer, but went from his presence, weeping.

VALEH'S MOTHER VISITS HADIJEH'S  
MOTHER, AND COMPLAINS THAT  
HADIJEH HAS STOLEN HER SON'S  
HEART AND SPOILT HIS LIFE

AND Valeh's mother went to the house of Hadijeh and said to her : " Behold your daughter, what she has done to my son. Her beauty is her poison : every new dress she puts on gives him a new madness. He speaks to her dog as if the beast were God Himself (<sup>36</sup>). He has no fruit of sense and wisdom, and no pleasure in man or woman. Her dog is his only friend, and he has no shame. Your daughter is the curse of my life and the ruin of my honour. How long will this tyranny endure ? Veil her face : shut the doors on your daughter : it were better that she should be no more seen. For if the candle be put out, the moths will seek the beams no more : and if the rose hides her face the nightingale leaves his lamentation "

## Valeh's Mother visits Hadijeh's Mother

And when Hadijeh's mother heard her she was wroth and cried aloud : " Oh cursed woman, will you whet my scorn with your words ? Why reproach Hadijeh ? you should curse your own folly : you yourself were your own son's enemy, you yourself blinded in your own folly. You say I should make Hadijeh veil herself and shut her out from her kin. Among my people (<sup>37</sup>) you know the women go unveiled : and among my tribe a cousin is as a brother. And now there is idle talk in the market-place : they say my daughter does foolishness with her father's brother's son : with their taunts they make me bathe in blood ; but were I to close my doors, and draw the curtain, and veil her face, surely they would say, ' The tale is true and Hadijeh has sinned. ' "

And when Valeh's mother heard these words she knew that her embassy was in vain, and she went home in utter hopelessness. Her joy in her son was gone ; she knew she could do no more, and that all her effort was vain ; and therefore she resolved on separation. What boots it to make war on love ? As well strike your fist against a sword's point.

## VALEH PARTS FROM HADIJEH

OH love, destroyer of wisdom, the lion of the hunting ground of the world : thy business is strife, thy home is the wounded heart. Thou art the flood that overflows the world : he on whom thou fallest must wander over a hundred lands, he wanders far, he wanders alone ; he whose peace thou hast taken away, he rests no more.

And such a one was Valeh : he wandered over a hundred ways, seeking rest as a lion seeks his prey : they say that when the bolt of love struck him, his whole look and air was altered : his woe was manifest in his bloodshot eyes : he had no thought but of his love ; he went on his way not knowing head from foot : and as he went his love leapt upwards like sparks of fire. His heart was shattered like a broken wave : he sought solitude : his ragged garments gave forth his shame like the scent of a flower when the bud opens. The town was full of talk of his misfortune : every one fell on his

## Valeh parts from Hadijeh

name, all blamed him : his brothers and his friends reproached him.

And Hadijeh likewise was overwhelmed with the reproaches of her kin. And for all her untouched purity evil tales were rife. Her hidden secret was the talk of great and small ; they said, “ She scorns her husband and she loves her cousin. Alas for her who was the light of her father’s house and has now become a destroying fire ! In her eyes is no spark of shame ; she is a traitor to the law of chastity, the honour of her tribe she throws to the wind, alas for the shameless daughter ! ” (38)

And when her husband heard the tale he twisted with rage like a serpent ; his hand was not stretched out to battle, but his heart was heavy with spite.

So was Hadijeh’s fame made a mock of by great and small, and she who was robed in chastity became a byword in the city. And wounded by cruel tongues she fell sick with sorrow ; her cheeks turned from red to saffron, sorrow was added to sorrow and calumny to love.

And when Valeh knew it he became as one distraught. When he saw her miserable state, his own honour, his good name, his happiness and his life became as nothing. All other

## Valeh and Hadijeh

grief was as nothing to that faithful heart. And he resolved that to save her good name he must abandon her and his native land, and say good-bye for ever to her dear presence. Parting was as death : but he looked it in the face like a brave man, and with death in his eyes he went to say farewell. And when he came into her presence he said : “ Oh you who are my yoke-fellow in sorrow, you who, chaste as an angel, have endured sorrow through me, and have suffered from evil tongues and have become the mock of the world, if dishonour falls on me, what fear have I ? The lover loves the world’s dishonour : but if dishonour falls on you, I cannot bear it. If but a grain of dust falls on your heart, on mine there is a mountain of pain. To see you weep but one tear is very death to me. Better to die than see you suffer : and parting is death, and I am come to say farewell. I will trouble your peace no more. Though absence from you be death I must prepare to leave you. Think only that in your garden one little weed is missing. I must go or die : on my heart, God knows, weary enough already, I will bind the burden of parting : poor dying beast, it must bear it ! Oh, Hadijeh, stay not my hand. For if you forbid me to leave you, I must slay myself for sorrow.”

## Valeh parts from Hadijeh

When Hadijeh heard his words wisdom fled from her heart, and from the spark that fell from his lips there ran a fire through brain and bones. Her heart's blood leapt to her eyes : her cheeks were clothed with the red of the morning. And she said : " Oh you who are dearer to me than my own soul, all my sorrows become light in your presence (39) : oh wealth of my happiness, seeing you is my life, dear companion in pain. I am the bud, you are the morning-breeze (40) : how can I open if you breathe not on me ? If the breeze comes no more to my garden what shall I do ? what shall I do ? Though all my people pelt me with slander I care not, if only you do not leave me : save parting nothing is harder than I can bear, neither the bolts of calumny nor the sword of the tongue, far or near : though my heart be sore, I can bear it ; if my love be true, I can bear it : I can bear it all, but not to lose you, no, by heaven, not that ! "

Such were the words she poured out, the magic spells she tried : but when she saw that it availed nothing, she strove no more : she made sweet to her lips the poison of endurance, helpless and hopeless she consented to his going, she bade sorrow like a guest to the table of her heart, she bade farewell to her love as if it were to life itself.

## VALEH GOES TO THE DESERT

OH heaven, who makest war on cowering hearts, by thy hand the robe of the world is rent, thou driest up the waters of hope, thou makest blind the eyes of fortune. By thy power the glass of pleasure is hurled against the stony rock, and the cheek of joy made pale ; 'tis thou who lettest man lose the thread of life so that none finds the desire of his heart ; thy heart is as iron, thou hardenest thy face like stone. Brave art thou in slaying the defenceless : Majnun (4\*) lost his heart by thy will and fell in the dust overwhelmed with sorrow. Ferhool (4\*) died by thy decree ; the hammer that slew him was aimed at thy command ; and by thy tyranny, oh unjust one, Valeh was torn from his love. That chosen one of sorrow, for love all heart from head to foot, pierced with the arrow of separation, he rushed from the house like the breaking out of waters, cursing his star, cursing heaven itself. He knew not which way he went, blind and distraught

## Valeh goes to the Desert

he fled from home and country. Home and country, what were they? He was flying from his love. He knew that he should never meet her again, and that hope was cut off for ever. But in his heart he bore the thought of her as sustenance on the way, sustenance that ever left him hungry and thirsting for love: and when he laid his head on the desert the sand was wet with his tears.

[Here, written in the margin by Valeh's hand: "The way I go is my own. No caravan has left its track behind: and the mark of my footprints none will follow. And I carry no food in my pack; I feed on my own heart's blood" (43).]

At every step he called on the name of Hadijeh; he sought the mountains, he called her name among the rocks; the rocks re-echoed it; mountain and vale and wilderness and field, he made all full of her name; when he sat down he wrote it with his finger in the sand; aimlessly he wandered about mountain and plain till evening; when evening came sorrow suffused his heart ever as the evening glow flooded the West. And he cried to his love: "Oh sun of my heart, how didst thou once turn the night of the world to day: and now far from me, like the dying moon,

## Valeh and Hadijeh

the night has swallowed thee wholly." And when the morning breeze began to blow, he leapt up to meet it, he opened his arms to it, and with streaming cheeks he called aloud : " Oh, courier of love, oh you who whisper love's message, merchant of rosy cheeks, carrier of all sweet things, Joseph (\*\*) gave to you, to reward your friendship, his sweetness in charge. You give lamentation wings to fly with, that heart may send tidings to heart, you waft the savour from the heart of the rose, you give wings to the song of the nightingale. By you is the lamp of the tulip bright, and the garden rejoices at your coming : every bud rejoices at your coming, you who scatter life with full hands. To you lovers confide their secrets—to you the consoler of pain, the friend of love ; save you they need no friend, in your ears they whisper their hidden sorrows. And I too am a lover, my soul is on my lip, I lived in the full glory of love, a mirror in which he saw his face and was glad : my place was in the garden of my beloved, the skirts of my eyes were laden with roses, my heart was clean from all reproach, if love be no reproach—I kept my heart pure within and had no thought of evil. But they loaded me with the burden of slander and heaped reproach upon my

## Valeh goes to the Desert

back. And the infection of my fame reached my love and her heart too became heavy; the poison of their tongues was upon her too. And I fled from her presence, and I carried the plague away from her, that it might abide with me and not with her. And now by the hard decree of heaven I am become an exile and a wanderer. I have chosen separation, I have renounced her presence: by my own desire I see what I see. Yesterday my eyes were alight with her presence: to-day I am far from her and my eyes are darkened. Dear friend, I pray you bring me a grain of dust from the house of my beloved that my sore eyes may be healed! If you pass her house give sometimes news of me. Say "he who loves you is blind for longing of your eyes, spare him a grain of dust from before your threshold. If his name be your reproach, yet is your name ever on his lips: the rocks re-echo it, the desert hears it. Oh pity him who is dying for lack of you."

[Here is written on the margin in Valeh's handwriting: "For my love's sake I practised faithfulness and truth: for her every little thing in me was made great: and heaven itself was the enemy of the faithful people. Dost thou see what thou hast done to thy own?"]

## Valeh and Hadijeh

So spake he to the morning breeze, and when the sun drew back the curtains of the night and showed his face, Valeh cried to him and said :

“Oh eye and light of the day : oh emblem of my beloved face, you are like her, and for your likeness I love you. Who has seen you, who can look into your face, and yet without you we see not. Oh Joseph of the heavens<sup>(45)</sup> who sit and sell where the four markets meet, and traffic in the atoms of the world : the sky came like Zuleika and offered you a price, a jewel casket taken from the Pleiades : that casket she gave you and in exchange received the desire of the heart. Oh you who are the friend of all men, the looking-glass of all, through whom we know good from evil, in whom, as in a looking-glass, we see ourselves. They who know that power in you are chosen to be your worshippers.<sup>(46)</sup> Oh candle which makes the day light, the light of your face is the day of the world. You are king and the stars your courtiers : the gallery of the heavens is the place of your throne. By you hidden things are made clear : the world is turned to you as the clay to the seal. The world of things is given into your hand : you are the cup of Jamshid<sup>(47)</sup> and the ring of Soleiman.<sup>(48)</sup> Wherever

## Valeh goes to the Desert

you go you are the glory of life ; yet everywhere you are an unbidden guest ; and when door and window are shut you shine upon the roof. Every day in your might you make the circuit of the world, and yet your foot is not weary, though there is not a land which does not know you. I pray you, oh sun (may my life be your ransom) that when you go to Isfahan, you enter the window of my beloved, you crave for an audience of her in her secret chamber, and tell her of my sick heart, and say to her : ‘ Oh sun of the heaven of beauty, have you no news of the mote which hovered in your beams ?<sup>(49)</sup> Have you not heard how it is fallen into the dust of neglect ? For in your light he lived, from your cup he drank ; and now his life is as death and his love-drunkenness is turned to hunger and thirst, and the desert is as a prison. He is your prisoner, oh unjust one, spare him, hurt him no more, give him one thought of kindness ; make your thought your messenger, bid it go and bring tidings of him : for lo ! he is sick to death.’ ”

So spake he to the sun ; and when the sun rose high his wanderings ceased not ; like a whirlwind he swept over the plain, hither and thither, crying for grief. He told the story of his love to stone and tree and mountain and desert,

## Valeh and Hadijeh

and he prayed everything he saw to carry a message to his beloved one. He spoke to the dust of her beauty, to the wind of her freshness ; the stones under his feet were his poets and prophets. Friendless and comfortless he went from place to place, from village to village, with that ceaseless fire burning in his heart, that restless sea raging in his soul, till his sad fortune stranded the wreck of his life on the shores of India.

## THE PRAISE OF HINDOSTAN

HIND is the friend of the wounded heart, her earth is the remedy of sickness ; her soil is rich, may ill-luck never befall it. To the people of this land the secrets of heaven are all revealed. There all the treasures of the earth are gathered together. In Hind the traveller has no pleasure in his own country ; wise men are her lovers ; the kings of the earth her beggars. Hind is the mother of holy men ; oh enemies of God, war not with her. <sup>(50)</sup> Hidden in her earth is the treasure of sanctity even as the water of life is hidden in darkness. There is the company of the wise met together, of the wise who boast not their wisdom ; they make their hearts fresh as with water, and not as with a mirage ; the sound of their voices is as a shell full of pearls and not as a drum full of noise and emptiness. In their hand they hold the mirror in which good and bad are made clear by knowledge and humble wisdom ; not for the deception of a

## Valeh and Hadijeh

few fools, not in self-praise, or in vanity. They have a tongue like an Indian sword, but it hurts no one ; they answer bitter words with sweetness. They see with eyes of wisdom that good and bad, pleasure and pain come all from God. Hind is to-day the refuge of wisdom ; every city of the land is the companion of wisdom, and Delhi most of all.

Delhi is the springtime of good fortune, a copy of the garden of paradise ; he who enters that garden obtains all his desire. The ground of Delhi is Joseph's land ; Egypt is jealous of it. Every street shines like a garden with tulip faces ; every house is the home of pleasure, and happiness is native to the soil. Oh heaven preserve her people of thy mercy ; oh God, who honourest the good, confound her adversaries !

## VALEH GOES TO INDIA AND IS HONOURED BY THE EMPEROR

VALEH's heart was sated with desert travel and he at last came down to the sea and took ship for India. <sup>(41)</sup> As the ship moved away from the shore, he turned his face towards Isfahan.

He landed at Tate, and would have stayed there but he was still restless and continued his wanderings. He made for the Punjaub and visited its cities and went about the land till he came to Delhi. That city became his resting-place, and he filled it with the smoke from the fire of his sighs. This is the reason of the heat of Delhi ; let him who blames all things blame Delhi. Delhi is warm, but it warms the hearts of lovers ; the true lover loves Delhi as the salamander loves the fire.

And since he was a Persian noble, <sup>(42)</sup> the nobles and captains of the city came to greet him ; and they brought

## Valeh and Hadijeh

news of him to the Emperor. And the Emperor<sup>(53)</sup> bade them bring him before him. But Valeh's heart was taken up with love, and he had little leisure to talk with king or beggar. The world had lost its savour to him ; king and beggar were alike to him. Hard it seemed to obey the Emperor's command ; easy to remain alone. But at last the nobles prevailed on him to go to Court. And when he came the Emperor treated him courteously and gave him a robe of honour. His honour was great among the peers, and he received high rank ; the Emperor also gave him a village for his sustenance.

And that love-sick one only mourned the more. "Who am I," he said, "to receive honours and lands? I am ashamed when I think of my King, who is Love. For his slave am I ; from him have I received honour and favour ; if I serve another king I am a traitor and idolater. What have I to do in this Emperor's Court? My station is in love's garden."

So he spoke to himself and went sorrowfully back to his house from the Emperor's presence, there to sit alone lamenting. Or if he was with his friends it was in semblance only, for his heart and mind were with his love. Sometimes

## Valeh goes to India

at Court grief would become too strong for him, and he fled home that the bonds of heart and eyes might be unloosed. And not one moment did he forget. And in the stillness of night his cry would arise : “ Oh Hadijeh, my love, my own, your love has destroyed me ; see me, what I am. I am dying ; and if I do not die when I have lost thee I should be ashamed to live.”

[Written on the margin in Valeh's handwriting : “ My heart is gone from me and she knows it not ; I burn and she knows not of my burning. I am like a lamp that is extinguished in a room where one is sleeping, that goes out because it is not tended, and he that sleeps knows it not. I am a slave parted from his master. If I meet her again, how could I look into her face ? I am parted from her and still live.”

“ I had rather be a beggar at your doors than a prince in Delhi. The days I knew you fled as swiftly as the sunrise ; will the day come when you will enter my door ? Will it ever come ? ”]

This which I tell you, this story which I relate, is only one letter of the book of Valeh's lamentation. And yet with all this boiling within him, he kept his secret so that

## Valeh and Hadijeh

few knew it. And in such misery he spent fourteen years. <sup>(54)</sup>

And now my pen will cross the seas and fly to Isfahan.

[written above in Valeh's handwriting :

“Magnun, chief of madmen, was saner than I; he makes confession of my greater merit; he says: ‘Valeh, you are as my brother.’ And wert thou a friend of the garden of love, oh reader, I would call thee as witness. I could find a hundred faults in Magnun, if it were seemly to reproach my brother.”]

## THE SORROWS OF HADIJEH

OH, love, what woes spring from you ! What fire have you lit in the world ! Your hand sets the roof-tree on the house of grief and lays waste the land of pleasure. You add power to misery, you pour water into the channel of impatience ; you make the black spot on the tulip's heart the envy of the garden ; lamentation is the cypress of your grove, and the fire which lit the nightingale's heart has consumed all the harvest of flowers. Even so the axe by which Ferhod fell clove the heart of Shirin ; even so, from the cup at which Magnun drank, Leili in Nezd drank blood. Even so, Hadijeh bleeds from the wound wherewith Valeh was wounded. That fresh rose from the garden of love, the madness of a hundred loves, that sovereign queen of the city of delight, Arabian Leili for her curly locks, Persian Shirin for her ruby lips, that eye of the world, that treasure of life—the lady Hadijeh—there she sat stung to the heart

## Valeh and Hadijeh

by the scorpion of separation, her cheek bereft of its rose, like the sky widowed of the sun. "Valeh!" she cried, "alas for Valeh"; and with that cry the whole world became black; she cared for none else; she thought of none else; she looked east and she looked west, and she sought for him alone. She sat at home, but home was hateful to her; she sat with her kin, but spake no word to them; only to the doors, to the walls, to the roof, to the floor she told the story of her beloved. She wiped the dust from the mirror of her heart, if perchance she might see him. She searched the town for his picture; she gave her heart for the canvas, her soul for the price of his face. And night and day she held converse with it; she gazed into it as once into the mirror; but now, behold, her face was the mirror and the picture a living soul.

One day as she sat at home in sorrow one came and told her that a troop of unfortunates, plagued with the world's troubles, were about to fly from Isfahan and seek refuge in India. When she heard this, her heart was stirred within her like a stormy sea; and she cried, "Now will I discover the purpose of my heart, and make plain the longing of my soul." And she took a pen and wrote. And the pen

## The Sorrows of Hadijeh

drank black ink like sorrow and wrote line by line along the page like waves on the sea of misfortune. Prose she wrote, as pure as the water of life—and that prose I make into my verse.

## HADIJEH'S LETTER

LET me begin<sup>(55)</sup> in the name of that King whose throne is the heart of man ; He is Lord of all, and kings are His servants. He is the secret counsellor of the heart ; He has His home in every eye. By His power every eye sees ; but none can see Him. Hidden, and evident like the scent in the rose, secret and manifest like drunkenness in the wine cup ; beauty is the reflection of His face, love is a sign from His glory. His *One* can never be *Two* ; *there* is neither parting nor meeting. This world, which is the revelation of His wisdom, is but one of many revelations of His majesty. From Him things are made manifest ; from them He is not manifest. For they are not, and He is ; oh you who dare to make the visible a proof of the invisible, you have fallen into the sin of idolatry ; beware, beware ! For without His help we cannot see Him, and the road of speech is thinner than a hair.

## Hadijeh's Letter

Narrow is the garden of reason, the foot of wisdom lame.

No, by that gate I will not enter, not by thought, nor by reason ; I will enter by the gate we made ourselves ;<sup>(56)</sup> I will speak of you and me ; veiled, we will enter behind the veil.

Oh you who are gone from me even as my peace is gone ; oh hapless wanderer in distant lands ; have you so forgotten the path of meeting ? Will you hand me over bound to sorrow ? Oh, my tyrant, source of my pleasure and pain ! When you were with me all was delight ; when you left me, you left me with pain as my companion. Ah, memory ever present day and night, ah pain, familiar friend of my heart ! If you would have news of me, ask Fire and Wind ; for the fire is hot with my love, and the wind is burdened with my sighs. When the sun of your face was in my eyes my night was brighter than day ; and now you are gone, my day is as a night without stars. And as I write of my sorrow see how the tears fall and wash the words away. Ah, dear enemy of my heart, the day you left my side my heart went with you ; you know not what I am now ; how long must I suffer so this horror of separation ?

## Valeh and Hadijeh

A woman is not man enough to bear it.<sup>(57)</sup> You left me and took my heart with you. Would I knew where it has gone. You took my heart, and did you not remember me and my longing? You have made your home in India; were you not ashamed when you saw that lock of hair? Without you I have neither joy nor faith; I dwell in sorrow of soul; but you, without me, you take delight in a strange land, you keep company with the idolaters of India. My heart searches for you day and night; I sit in the corner of the house and pray. You have forgotten your glorious Mecca, you have gone after the strange gods of strange lands. I, with sleepless eyes, turn to the prayer-niche, and with my soul embrace your soul; you, every moment, have some new worship, every day the priest of a new idol. I, without you, turn my face to the wall; you, without me, turn your face to new faces. Oh, new flower of the garden of unfaithfulness, oh drunken with the wine of untruth, oh pledge of love unredeemed, oh promise fleeting as the wind! Your heart is hard as stone, your word unstable as water; oh mirror and example of promise-breakers! For on your word I built, and built on shifting sand. Are promise and word so soon forgotten? Was ever faithlessness like years?

## Hadijeh's Letter

Great was your kindness, but it lasted but one hour and was gone ; oh, for the kindness which knows no change, a kindness even as mine. Were you so bent on forgetfulness, so busy with untruth, that you could not write me one letter ? Could you not make me glad with news of you, could not your pen write my name ? No, there was no place for my name in your heart ; for I am friendship, I am truth. Oh, some day, let your dear pen write my name, oh forgetful one ; tell me the old story of your love, yes, though the story be but lip-worship, tell me once more. If you cannot bring water to my lips, at least show my eyes the mirage. Since your faith was in doubt, I am the reproach of a thousand tongues ; since for loss of you my sorrow was plain, I am become the fable of the market-place. Now that I have lost you, now that I have lost your faith, now that your word is broken, I see that my tongue has erred, my heart has been misled, and that my treasure is but dross. Yet am I so foolish and mad that I would purchase even that mirage with my life ; for, save love of you, my heart can ply no trade, and, save for your wine, my cup is empty. Your love will be buried in the earth with me, and will be mingled with the dust that was my heart. For you, parting

## Valeh and Hadijeh

was easy; for me, I cannot even bear the thought of it. When you were with me, your love was the pride of my heart; now that you are gone and unfaithful, what curse can I invoke on you? Your sins have been the substance of my letters, and my curse must be its end." And at the letter's end she wrote this verse of Hatafi: "Oh, cursed one, that promise which once I gave thee, that promise I will keep as long as I live."

[Above is written in Valeh's handwriting: "The queen of idols calls me cursed, the life of the world calls me cursed; I have worshipped no god but her alone; therefore, rightly like Satan, am I called cursed." (59)]

This poem is sealed with a seal which he has made for himself. "Her servant, the cursed one. A.H. 1160."]

She bound the letter with a lock of her hair, she wrote the address with her own blood, and she set on it the seal engraved with the token of her love (62); and then she gave it to the messenger and bade him speed like the wind.

## OF VALEH'S IMPATIENCE ; AND HOW HE READ HADIJEH'S LETTER

Now hear of Valeh and his grief. Before the letter of his beloved poured the rose of pleasure into his lap, he himself had written a letter to her, full of faith and love. And his letter was already on the road, and lo, her courier entered his house and stood with her letter in his hand. And Valeh knew the messenger, and he fell at the feet of him who brought with him the memory of her home and wept and cried aloud : “ Oh new fruit of the tree of hope, where is my love's letter, where is the writing of my salvation, the writing of my beloved's hand, the amulet of my hope, and the medicine of my sorrow ? Give me her letter.” The messenger, when he saw his impatience and the might of his tribulation and the heat of his burning, kissed the ground before him and gave him the letter. And when Valeh saw his love's handwriting, he burst into tears and laid

## Valeh and Hadijeh

the letter against his face, and then opened his heart to her sweet words. And in her letter he found comfort ; he held it before him like a mirror, in which he saw not his own face but hers ; yea, he saw all the spring in one roseleaf. And he opened it and closed it again, and he turned it in his hand and every moment found a new beauty in it and rejoiced.

And even as when the sun himself follows on the first brightness of dawn (<sup>62</sup>), so on the first letter of his beloved followed the second one, the answer to his. And now, like a porch on two columns, his joy was based on those two letters, and his delight could no more be contained than the rose's fragrance in the rose. His heart danced within him for joy, and he raised aloft the banner of triumph ; his brain reeled with love and words unsought sprang to his lips unbidden.

And he caught his pen and wrote an answer—the words which you see here. This is the copy of his letter, may my soul be the ransom of his pen !

VALEH'S ANSWER TO HADIJEH, WRITTEN  
IN VERSE, A TABLE OF ELOQUENCE  
SPREAD FOR THE FEAST OF POESY

IN the name of that Power who implanted in my heart my heart's desire. Now, he makes friends to meet, now he afflicts us with parting ; now he roots the memory of me from your heart, now he rejoices my heart with your kindness. From him all things revealed have found revelation, in him all things that are inward and outward have their being ; he hides behind the curtain, and the curtain is woven of the heartstrings of lovers. When I praise Him, I praise your beauty, why should I speak in dark language, why should I not speak it out clear and plain : In the religion of love there is but one God ; in that faith there is no such word as "mine" and "thine." Oh thou who art beyond "this and that," "when and how," oh thou who art above all my thoughts and too high for my understanding. Oh

## Valeh and Hadijeh

thou who art manifest in all things and makest manifest all things that are manifest, thou whose being is the cause of all life. I am the slave of thy power. Thy praise has neither bound nor limit, thy nature is pure from signs, for who can point and say, "There He is, or there?" I have been to every country and city; yet never have I met with one who had seen thee. For none can see thee, nor comprehend thee but only Thou thyself.

At one time thou makest thyself a loved one on the crests of the mountains <sup>(63)</sup>, at another thou art Shirin of Persia, fair as the garden of paradise <sup>(64)</sup>; at another thou makest thy home on the desert and findest in madness thy glory; again thou art an Arab in her tent, the envy of the sun and desire of the dawn; thou wast Leili sitting in her tent, and thou didst bind the feet of Magnus; and again thou becomest the envy of moon and stars, in the name of Hadijeh, and again, as Valeh, thou art the slave of separation. And though thou dost disdain form and colour <sup>(65)</sup> a thousand forms are thine and a thousand colours; though thou art all truth, thy deceits have no end; and therefore it is better that I put on the robe of colour and in secret sell thee to thyself. <sup>(66)</sup>

## Valeh's Answer to Hadijeh

Oh light of my two eyes, oh peace of my soul, oh familiar of my heart, Hadijeh ; oh name best lord of all, oh name queen of all names ; oh envy of sun and moon and stars, new rose of the garden of chastity, bud from the tree of faith ! When the rose plights her faith to the nightingale she swears by the hem of your garment.

Oh queen of the beauties of the world, oh glory of the company of mankind, the cypress cannot bear comparison with you, she is ashamed when you pass by. Your lips are as the water of life, meeting with you is the world and all its men, the dome of heaven is your footstool ; and I your slave without end.

[Written above in Valeh's handwriting. Except my love let me have no friend, save her let me seek no refuge, may I be an unbeliever in the religion of the enlightened (67), if there be a god save Hadijeh alone. My lady is the moon in the heaven of beauty, My Lady is Queen of Queens in the country of perfection ; when an angel bade me cry on God's name, I cried " Lady God," " Oh Lady God," and again " Lady God."]

Your beauty is above all beauties : nay rather, beauty beside you is beauty no more. Like that mole under your

## Valeh and Hadijeh

curls, my heart is a prisoner in your hair. Your eyes are the wizards of the world ; the people tell of their enchantments ; your eyelash is a poisoned dagger, your eyebrow the scimitar of Ali : your stature is as a cypress in the garden of paradise, your curls as a harvest of amber. Oh, if I ever saw aught as lovely as your face, may I be disappointed of the kindness of your cheeks—child of the Lesghians, my love, my love, without mercy or forgiveness, your love is the spring of my being, the builder of the building of was and is ; to be with you is heaven and all the angels, and to be parted from you is hell and the fiends. Your face is my pure Mecca, your forehead the Kaabe, to remember you the peace of heaven, to lose the memory of your face is to lose my soul ; from you came the wound, from you the medicine. Alas, oh my cousin, for the reproach which fell on you because of my love ! A thousand thanks to you that my pain comes from you. You ask for news of my state. I will tell you. I am one whose day has reached the time of sunset. I am one who knows not whether it be spring or autumn ; who dares not look in a flower because it is fresh and scented, nor a cypress because it is tall and slender ; to whom wine is as blood, and whose voice is the bell of the temple of sorrow. I am like a petal

## Valeh's Answer to Hadijeh

dried up and cast away. I am a lute that once discoursed sweet music, broken now and thrown aside. Whom do you play on now, Hadijeh? Who exults in your presence, while I live shoulder to shoulder with Death; who walks with you in the garden while I am lying among the thorns? Have you not forgotten me, even as I have forgotten myself? For with your memory alone I live, embracing the thought of you. Was not the story of your love written on ice? And I have sown the seed of sorrow in my heart. I have loaded all my hopes on a dying camel: the beast falls and the load is shattered. I am sick; you are doctor to another: I am thirsty, and you are the cup of another: I am poisoned, and you give another the antidote. Oh my crown—but on the head of a stranger; oh my treasure—but in a dragon's cave, with whom do you pass your days and nights? Who looks at your fair face? Who hands you the silken napkin? Who spreads the carpets? Who scatters flowers upon your bed? Who toys with your curls, who tells you stories to make you sleep? Who rubs the perfume into your hair, who puts cinnamon upon your eyelashes, who prepares the collyrium for your magic eyes, who bakes the indigo for your eyebrows? Who lays his head in the dust

## Valeh and Hadijeh

at your feet ? Who binds his heart and soul to your promise ? Who puts your shoes together : and your lips, with whom do they hold converse ? Who listens to your sweet voice, who is made drunk with that sweet wine ? Who brings you the wine at table ; when you are thirsty, who brings you spring water ? Who lays the table near your face ? Who brings the ewer and the basin ? Who uncurls your hair and unweaves the noose of your locks ? Who boasts of the young and slender form ? Who puts henna on your feet and washes the henna with rose-water : who bears the lamp before you ? Who lights you to your chamber ? Oh, cousin Hadijeh, the strength is gone from my body, the misery that I suffer for you—I do not say my friends, but may my enemies not suffer the like. I have no tidings of you—what thought is on your heart, what word on your lips ? How is that cypress form ? how is the scented lock ? That long straying lock, how is it ? And that ruby lip, how is it ? That little mole under your hair, is it still a prisoner in your locks ? What charm are the wizard eyes weaving ? And who falls, slain by your eyebrow ? How is the scimitar of your brow, and the ivory of your arm ? How is the gazelle-glance of your eyes and the little mark beneath the eyes ? And the tulip-cheeks, how

## Valeh's Answer to Hadijeh

do they fare ; and the look like an eagle's talon ? and the nostrils breathing heaven, and the side of the cheek that I remember day and night, and those pearls in comparison with which the treasures of the world are naught. How is the neck, like a candle in a dark night ; how is the arm bright as silver ? What is the silver arm doing, and the china finger, what sport is it playing ? How is the pomegranate growing from the cypress : on whose eyes does its glory shine, who takes light from it ? How is the wild white rose of your body ?

Oh sun of heaven eternal, or full moon of the peerless sky, I am not stone and iron ; how can I live without you ? And now for fourteen years that I pine here alone, have you not thought of me till now ? Have you only written to me now ? I have wrote a hundred letters : I wrote my very heart out ; and no answer came : I was not your lover but the dog of your gate, not your friend but your poor slave ; and was this the way of your love ? Was this the path of your remembrance ? A hundred caravans came from Isfahan : oh unconstant one, did you not once think of writing ? Did you not once remember me : nor once vouchsafe me one kind service ? Yes, once : once came to me a comforter from

## Valeh and Hadijeh

your presence. When I saw him I fainted, when I awoke from my swoon I kissed his feet and his hands : thousand times : thousand times I prayed for his soul : I made my soul the ransom for his foot, I threw dust on my face.

And when I opened the letter there came to my mind the days of meeting ; then I dashed my head against the ground till the blood came. My eyes were full of tears, sighs broke from my heart ; I was sick for the sorrow of separation ; I was racked by the fever of love ; but my heart was renewed with news of you, my spirit left to meet the glad tidings, and in the letter with its amber seal, and in the writing, and the ruby lips my sick heart found its medicine.

And I wrote an answer and gave it to your messenger. I said, "Go to the city of my love and bring it to my queen." But before your messenger came I had sent a swift runner to you, by name Sayan ; I did not threaten him though I bade him speed fast ; I promised him my soul as his wage ; he took my letter to you, and now, by God's mercy, he has returned.

The sun of hope rose again, and he gave me your second letter, he gave me the writing of faithfulness. I put

## Valeh's Answer to Hadijeh

my head at his feet and said : “ Oh hoopoo of the city of friendship, courier of the land of love, the dust of your path is my crown, I am grateful if you set your feet on my head. Say where and how is my love, the envy of the garden and the spring ? Where is my familiar friend, my companion of nights and days ? ” And he answered, “ I know not, I tarried not to ask ; open the letter and read it, and all shall be plain ; oh thou who art drunk with the wine of love. ” And straightway I opened the letter. I said no word, but as I read I thought of the joy of meeting, of the pain of parting, of your great mercifulness, and of the tyranny of fate. And a flood of tears fell from my eyes and I cried aloud. “ Where is the day when we two sat together and none came in ? Where is the day when you were so kind, and the evening and the morning wherein you were my friend ? Now you dwell in Isfahan, and I am dying for love in India. Oh God ! shall I see you again, shall I sit by your side yet once more ? Shall I talk with you of the tyranny of parting, shall I tell you the story of my love ? You will lean an ear to my speech—in your ear I will whisper your praises : my hand will be the necklace on your neck and my soul the hem of your garment. Soul

## Valeh and Hadijeh

to soul we shall embrace. I would swoon, struck by the ruby of the lip ; ah lily limbs, ah hand and lip, sometimes I would take kisses from you, sometimes snatch the goblet, and all the time my eyes would drink and drink !

Alas, alas, what am I saying ? See where you are, and where I am. I am consumed with the desire of your presence ; when shall I meet with you, oh my idol ? It may be, perchance, in dreams. Ah, if my evil fortune would grant me this boon, to see you in a vision—then would I unfold my story face to face, yes, by the language of your wizard eyes I swear, I would tell it all. For should I write it, I fear you would weary of me and my long story, for long is the story of love, and the commentary of my sorrow has no end.”

So Valeh wrote, and he gave the letter to the messenger, who sped away as fast as the fiery stones with which the angels drove the devils from the gates of heaven.<sup>(68)</sup> And when his soul became vacant of the thought of the letter, it made room for another thought—and night and day he was set in one wish that he might see her once again in a vision.

## HOW VALEH SAW HADIJEH IN A VISION

HAPPY is he who loves the way of Thought ; for he has a secret road to the house of meeting. The world so full of beauty is the looking-glass of the majesty of Thought : Thought is a shining Sinai, the cup of Jamshid in which all the world is seen. In the bright mirror of thought things unseen put on the colour of the seen : the meaning of the world is clothed in form, and visible things are robed in beauty. By thought the shapes of things are made clear, and every form becomes substance. The tree of life and heaven and the suns of heaven are a secret message from the throne of Thought ; the message is sent forth, and lo, the life of nations is made anew.

Everything which is hidden from the eyes becomes visible in that magic mirror, and by Thought the lover can see his absent love and rejoice in her presence. Thought

## Valeh and Hadijeh

built a house for love to dwell in, and on the walls I saw painted the picture of one at whom Fate aimed the cruel dart of parting ; but in his hand he held the shield of thought.

[Here written above in Arabic is the quatrain : I love a moon who is queen above me, I am the star of the moon. Her beauty is queen of the world. I asked her name. She said, “ Mark well : I am the Lady Hadijeh.”]

With eyes closed to the small and the great of the world, with heart intent on the things of thought, one night poor Valeh in his soul made war with fortune. With tearful eyes he cried aloud, “ Oh, fortune, how long will you strive with me ? How long will you harry and destroy ? I have not seen one kind look in your eyes ; I think your night has no morning. Your shade has fallen upon my face, and my day has become even as night ; by your command my moon is hidden in the clouds ; justice, oh fortune, I call on you for justice ! For your decrees have made me sorrowful, and my mirror is black with rust. Before your feet gladness flies away, even as day before the feet of night ; but when my beloved was with me, when my moon was bright in the firmament, I grieved not at the night, for

## How Valeh saw Hadijeh in a Vision

night was as bright as the day. But now my moon is hidden, she shines no more, I walk in darkness, night is my guide, and your thick darkness my covering.

“Have mercy, oh Fortune, have mercy for one hour. Awake, arise ; take me by the hand and lead me in dreams to my love.”

So he cried ; and as he spoke sleep came on him. And when he had drunken of the wine of sleep, lo ! the desire of his heart came to his arms ; the door was open to the cherisher of his soul. In a dream, she came ; she lifted the veil from her cheek, and her beauty shone forth like a burning candle. And Valeh looked upon the face of his beloved.

[Written above : “ Every day I beheld the sun of her face ; in every thread of her clothes I saw the sun. Whom saw I save Hadijeh ? What save her came into my vision ? In everything I saw, I saw Hadijeh.”]

For Fortune had heard his prayer and had awoken ; and he, in dreams, stood by the side of the running water, he who had thirsted so long, and drank his fill of the water of life:

He kissed the ground before her feet ; he laid his head

## Valeh and Hadijeh

in the dust ; he knelt at her shrine and worshipped. In the cup of his eyes he drank madness from that perfect wine and desire without end. His arm embraced her ; his hand was on her locks ; he drank sweetness from the ruby of her lips. And then they told the story of their loves, as friends who meet after long parting. And so in sorrow and in joy the night passed on, till the hour of waking came at last.

[Written above : “In sleep my beloved came to my arms ; in the dark night the sun was at my side. Oh Fortune, my enemy, I owe thee but this one service ; and I owe thee life and speech and vision.”

“One night the star-face came and went ; in dreams it had pity on me and came and went. Dost thou know how it went when the dawn came ? It became one with the light of the sun.”]

And when he awoke, behold he was alone. (\*) He was the drunkenness of his own wine ; he himself was the dew and the sun ; he himself Valeh and Hadijeh. In sleep the one was two ; when he awoke it was one ; truth came and fancy vanished. For the heart of that poor wanderer became as a pattern and example of death ; for has not

## How Valeh saw Hadijeh in a Vision

Ali, our Lord, said the words : “ Oh you who have understanding, behold the living, they are as men that sleep ; their waking will be in death, for death is the root and life, the branch and the leaf.”

[Written above : “ In my heart, of myself, I hear her words ; that whisper, every fibre of my body hears ; my limbs and my joints are brimful of Hadijeh ; she speaks with Valeh’s lips, I hear her with Hadijeh’s ears.”]

“ The word of Valeh. I am the eye of the soul, the object of worship, the majesty of human kind. Poor Mansur could but say, ‘ I am God ’ ; Valeh says, ‘ I am Hadijeh Sultan. ’ ” (70)

“ I am the nightingale and the rose and the garden ; I am myself the ringdove and the cypress ; one life have I, one heart ; no more two, but one ; I myself am Hadijeh, I myself am Valeh, I myself am myself.”

“ I did not care to live ; I had not courage to die. In the two worlds, loveless, we dwelt as in a fiery furnace, till the pain of Love, God bless it, fell on our hearts and the furnace became a garden of roses. (71) In sleep, after a death of waking, when she came like life to my arms— oh Valeh, the trembling of thy heart awoke me.”

## Valeh and Hadijeh

“My heart is faint for thinking of the waning moon ;  
my soul is weary for the buffeting of the winds.  
What is life? This, when in the company of the mad,  
the cupbearer of love gives me wine in the cup of  
Hadijeh.”

## THE END

AND NOW my poem is finished. I have drunk blood for a year that its face may be ruddy. But the story is not finished, and I know not what the end may be.

So I have woven a poem out of truth ; for Valeh told me all that befell him and showed me all his letters and the letters of Hadijeh ; and their love-sorrow is no fancied tale, for I have seen it with my eyes.

Oh God, by thy prophet's power, keep me from the sin of idolatry. May I never forget thee, oh my Lord, for in thee is my utmost need. Count not my sin against me and reckon not my misdeeds. Am I not thy servant and art thou not my King ? At whose door save thine should I seek promotion ? Thou art the reason of my life, my life which I have spent in telling stories. And of this story the meaning is Thou, for save in thee nothing has being, neither substance nor thought ; in secret to thee have I turned the

## Valeh and Hadijeh

face of my meditation, and from thy water-springs have I filled the channel of my speech.

Oh my Valeh and my Hadijeh, oh form and substance, he that has understanding knows who is the subject of this story. For thou, oh God, art the life and body of my thought, and in all I write I write but of thee. Wipe out every name but thine ; oh Lord, make plain thy Presence ; lighten thou my words with thy Presence and make their glory shine upon all lands.

The 5th month of the year 1163 (7<sup>th</sup>)

I became free from the  
writing of this book.

Mohamed Rufi.

May God have mercy on him.

## EPILOGUE

WE had finished our work and went out into the garden, the Mirza and I. The long rainless summer was over. The last few days there had been clouds on the mountains: this morning there had been a strange smell of freshness in the air—and now the first drops were falling. The whole garden seemed to wake up and to be busy drinking. We stood bare-headed in the rain for the pleasure of being wet.

“And so,” I said, “the book was sent to Hadijeh as we see it now. Do you suppose she understood it?”

As usual, the answer was in a parable. “You understand where this rain comes from, and how the sun sucked up the water from the sea and how the wind brought it. That flower does not understand; but the rain is its life.”

I asked him if he could explain the meaning of the book, for I found it very difficult.

“I told you,” he said, “that our thoughts were not your

## Valeh and Hadijeh

thoughts. But I will try and explain it as my master, who is dead, would have explained it.

“I have been a schoolmaster, and have taught boys to write and count. I have a big black board, and I write on it letters and numbers. And the boys learn them. And to make them learn I give them rewards and punishments. And having learnt the letters they put them together in words, and the words into sentences; and so, from the letters, they arrive at reason. And so, having learnt to read, they go their ways into the world.

“I say, I give them rewards and punishments that they may learn; but the rewards and punishments are not learning, but the means whereby they are brought to learn. And when they grow up they use the knowledge they have learnt. Some are clerks and writers and make money; others read in the mosques and get reputation; others ponder on the word of the Most Merciful and get Truth. And the money and the fame are not learning but the wages of it.

“And even so with counting. For my boys are taught to count and reckon, and, having learned, they go their ways into the world, and some go into banks and shops, or

## Epilogue

into the government offices ; and so their learning receives its wages ; but the wages are not learning, but, at most, a sign that the learning is useful to man, as good fruit is a sign of a good tree. And some go out and think, and from 2 and 3 and 4 they learn to know the One in Many ; and this is learning.

“ Now the world is Allah’s school, and Allah has many schoolmasters ; and they have many names ; and the name of one is Love.

“ And lovers are his scholars. And he holds out to them his rewards and his punishments ; the pleasure of meeting and the pain of parting ; but the rewards and punishments are not the learning.

“ And my master said that those whom the world calls lovers are often but love’s hirelings and not his scholars. They have received his wage : the joy of beauty, the delight of home and riches and the blessing of children. Yet they have not learnt his lesson. But if you can show me one that loves and continues to love without hope of reward or the joy of meeting ; one, in fine, who does his work and asks no wages, and learns his lesson and demands no reward ; then, indeed, you have found a true scholar of love who has

## Valeh and Hadijeh

truly learnt the lesson which love was sent on earth to teach.”

“And what,” I said, “is the lesson?”

The Mirza repeated the verse: “Unless thy knowledge makes thee other than thou wert, that knowledge is worse than ignorance.” And then he added: “Unless my pupils leave me other than they were, my teaching is in vain. And when love the schoolmaster dismisses his pupils how many go from his school even as they came! For they came fond of pleasure, fond of riches, fond of themselves; and even as they came they left him. But he that is truly love’s scholar has learnt something else, even as the figures on my black board are other than the Truth of God written in flame on the vault of heaven.

“For if the pleasure of love be love, then is love greatest where there is most pleasure. But we know that this is not so, for love is great where pleasure is not; as the poet says, ‘where for the joy of meeting there is the pain of parting and for the fulness of life, emptiness and desolation.’ Is it not written in your holy Book that his love is greatest who gives his life for his friend?

“They that dwell in the prison of ‘I and you’ can never

## Epilogue

know the Truth. And love lures men from their prison. For they that love have no longer pleasure in themselves but in some one else. And many who have escaped for a moment out of prison are, as it were, dazzled by the light and overcome by the freshness of day, and after a time they return to their prison, to lie in the straw and feed on prison fare. But others, once freed, are free for ever. And to them it is even as it was to those of whom it is written in your book, that they met a stranger in the road and spoke with him, and, hearing his words, they entreated him to stay with them ; and of a sudden they were aware that he was no stranger, but their Master and Lord.

“For the garden of Truth has many gates ; but the gate is not the garden.”

## NOTES

1. The two lamps are love and beauty.

2. The reference is to the story of Majnun and Leila ; an Arab tale which is the subject of many Persian poems (Mahtabi, 1490 ; Ruhulumin, 1637 ; and others). Leila was daughter of an Arab chief : Majnūn belonged to another tribe. The name means "mad" (or possessed by jins), and the tale is a collection of extravagant actions done by the hero in consequence of his love for the heroine, who, according to some accounts, was not even beautiful. The name in Persia and Egypt has become a sort of synonym for an extravagant lover.

3. Nimrud cast Abraham into a furnace which at once became a rose garden.

4. Perfection, literally "colourlessness."

5. See Koran, xxvii. 20. One day Solomon called together all his hosts of demons, men, and birds. When his eye fell on the host of birds he said : "Where is the hoopoo ? Is he absent ? I will punish him, if he cannot give a good reason for his absence." Then the hoopoo came and fell down before the King and said : "I have visited a kingdom which thy eye has never seen : I bring the tidings of the kingdom of Saba. A woman rules it. She has a thousand beauties. She sits upon a splendid throne." . . . "I will see," said the King, "if thou tellest the truth. Fly to the people of Saba and give the Queen this letter," &c. &c.

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The hoopoe is almost the first spring visitor in Northern Persia.

6. Ali Ghuli Khan and his cousins were Lesghians of Daghestan, in the Eastern Caucasus, then under Persian rule.

7. Mani, the founder of the Manichæans in the third century, whose influence was spread as much by his pictures as by his writings.

8. "Last year's almanack." A reminiscence of Sadi. "Oh master, choose a new wife for every year ; what is so useless as last year's almanack ?" The names of lovers enumerated are those of the heroes and heroines of well-known love stories, which form the theme of famous poems.

9. Shamhal, the title of the chief of the Kumviks, a tribe speaking a Turkish dialect and living near Petrovsk.

10. The Sefarviye. The dynasty was founded by Shah Ismael (A.D. 1519), a descendant of Shaikh Sufi-ed-Din of Ardebil, the great Sufi teacher. Ismail is called by the Persians the Shah-Shiyan, or King of the Shiya, and is regarded as the founder of the national religion of Persia. The dynasty occupied the throne of Persia till the capture of Isfahan by the Afghans in 1722. With the exception of the last Shah of the line (Sultan Hussein), they were ardent adherents of the Shiya sect, and were much honoured by the Sufis for the sake of the founder of the line.

11. Separsalar—commander of the troops.

12. A play on words : the verse might also read, "his name cannot be contained in the world."

13. Koran, chapter xvii. 14. "Man bears his fate fastened round his neck. On the day of resurrection we will show him an open book, and say to him, Read this book and make thy own reckoning."

14. Erewan was then under Persian rule, together with the whole of the Caucasus, which was governed by governors of the stock of the Georgian princes. When the rebellion broke out in Candahar one of these princes was sent with an army to quell it.

## Notes

15. Hafiz says that he never got beyond the Aleph, in which he saw his beloved's shape.

16. Alluding to the custom of dyeing the nails with henna, Hadijeh, as destroyer of hearts, is likened to a tiger with its claws red with blood.

17. The eye of the beloved is the cause of trouble and distress.

18. "The favoured of Mahmoud." Mahmoud spared a number of the chief nobles of Ispahan and made use of them for the administration of the country. Hadijeh's husband was one of these, and not an Afghan.

19. A Chinese picture is the ideal of perfect art. This dates from the Mogul conquest and even before.

20. A hidden treasure : perhaps an allusion to the Sufi text, "God was an unseen pearl and created creation that he might be known."

21. Valeh means that on the path of suffering he so outdistanced the famous lover Majnun that he could never be overtaken.

22. Allusion is perhaps made to the Sufi parable of the mirror : the beautiful things of the earth are reflections from the splendour of God on the mirror of thought.

23. The number of the slain princes was twenty-nine.

24. The destruction of the Afghans, which was complete, hardly one escaping, was due not to Shah Tamasp but to Nadir Shah, who, however, was a Sunni, and a determined enemy of the national faith of the Persians as well as the destroyer of Delhi.

25. All roses were once red ; but when the Queen of Sheba came into King Solomon's garden, the nightingales sang, "Fair is the rose but fairer is Balkais," on which the roses all turned yellow with envy, and from these roses are descended the yellow roses of to-day. They grow in great quantities on the foot-hills at the edge of the waterless plains.

26. The nightingale is the lover of the rose and the ringdove of the cypress.

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27. When Moses stood before Pharaoh he drew out his hands from the bosom of his dress and its whiteness dazzled all present (Koran, vii. 103). The tree is the apricot (zardalou).

28. A well-known Persian proverb runs, "In God's hands we are as dead men in the hands of the body-washers."

29. Allusion is made to the dust thrown up by the feet of Gabriel's horse, which has the power of calling the dead to life. So the golden calf, when this dust fell on it by chance, became endowed with the gift of speech.

30. The Persian is, "Ku, ku." The pathetic iteration is used to great effect in the best known of all Khayam's lines: Ku kuzegār u kuzekhār u kuzeferush—where is he who made the pots, and he who bought them, and he who sold them?

31. The moth and the candle was one of the Sufi images: it is the subject of a long poem by Ahli of Shiraz (1489).

32. The poet's answer to the uninitiated: cf. the famous lines of Hafiz, to which a mystic meaning is attached: "When I drink I see the reflection of my love's face in the wine-cup: hearken, oh ye who know not the reason of my drinking."

33. One of the names of God which the faithful are forbidden in the Koran (vii. 179) to apply to any but God. Here Valeh applies the sacred name to the dog, which is regarded as unclean.

34. One of the Sufi sects was characterised by a great love for animals, which quality was also one of the virtues inculcated in the old and pre-Moslem religions. A Persian tradition relates how Jesus was once walking with his disciples, and bade them love all creatures and all things, for all things made by God were worthy of love. One of His disciples pointed to a dead dog which was rotting by the roadside. The answer was: "See his beautiful white teeth, and remember how he loved his master."

## Notes

35. Koran, xiv. 35 : "The idolaters set gods by the side of God that they might cause men to err from the path of truth." Say to them, "Make yourselves drunk with the pleasures of this world, and in the end hell shall be your dwelling-place."

36. *I.e.*, calls him by one of the titles of God.

37. She was not a Persian but a Lesghian, whose habits were much freer than those prescribed in Persia.

38. A woman's lapse from virtue destroys the sharaf or honour of all her kin, and, in most Mussulman countries, her male relations would be thought justified in killing her.

39. *Cf.* the verse, "I said, when you come, I will talk to you of my sorrow : now you are come, what shall I say, for my sorrow is gone ?"

40. The morning breeze which in hot weather comes just before sunrise, or with the rising sun, and brings the most delicious moment of the day.

41. Majnun committed various acts of folly, among others abandoning his own tribe in the hour of battle because they were fighting against Leila's kin.

42. Ferhod was a stonemason, and was in love with Sherin, one of the two thousand wives of Chosroo Parves, whose war with Constantinople was the last great effort of Persia before the Arab conquest. Chosroo promised Sherin to Ferhod if he would cut through the rock of Baysittoon and make a channel for the water to flow through. The work was nearly finished when the king, fearing to lose his mistress, sent a false message to say that Sherin was dead. Ferhod struck his head with his own hammer and fell dead from the rocks. After Chosroo's murder, his son (who had caused his father's death) wished to marry her. She consented, but asked to take one more look at the dead king's face, and took poison and died.

43. The desert retains for long the trace of the caravans. These foot-

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prints afford a sort of relief from the intolerable solitude. Travellers take with them a train of baggage animals to carry tents and the provisions for the journey. Valeh means that he was utterly alone, not even a path for company, and that none would ever see his footprints. And he travels without provisions or baggage-train ; all the things of the world are left behind. This is the second stage in the Sufi's progress. The first is obedience to law and the fellowship of man : the second is the " way " by which he must travel alone in order to exchange the " acts of the body " for the " acts of the soul."

44. Joseph, in Persian verse, is the incarnation of beauty.

45. Joseph kept a shop and the sun is likened to him, while Zuleika, Joseph's beloved, is likened to the sky. The " four shops " are the elements which make up the world—earth, air, fire and water, The sun, as Lord of the world, owns the elements, the sky exchanges her most precious star for the treasure of Love.

46. The poem is written by a Persian, and on India.

47. Jamshid, King of Persia, was the first to divide his people into the four castes, and to establish the solar year as a measure of time. He had a cup in which he saw everything that took place in the world.

48. Soleiman's ring gave him power over all the forces of the world, and was the charm by which he made the genii work for him.

49. The mote in the sunbeams is a favourite Sufi image. It is invisible except in the light of the sun : in like manner the soul is unconscious of itself till illumined by God.

50. Nadir Shah took and sacked Delhi in 1739, while the author was living there.

51. Valeh goes to sea. Cf. the saying attributed to the Prophet and quoted by Malcolm from the MS. of Captain Graham. "The 'law' is the vessel, the 'path' is the sea, 'knowledge of divine things' is as the

## Notes

shell, 'knowledge of the divinity' is the pearl, but he who desires to obtain the pearl must first embark on the vessel."

52. Persian nobles and poets had always been much in favour with the Mogul Emperors, notably under Akbar the Great.

53. The Emperor was Mahomed Shah, then tributary to the Mahrattas.

54. The years were 1733-1746, during which Nadir Shah was occupied in his numerous wars. In 1739 Delhi was taken and sacked. He was assassinated in 1747 during an unsuccessful attack on the Leaghians of Daghestan, Valeh's people. The book was copied out in A.H. 1163 (1750) and the following letters apparently date (see below) from 1747.

55. "Let me begin," etc. Such an exordium in the name of religion is a general form of correspondence. See numerous examples in the Shah name, e.g., Rostem's letter to his father: "Let me begin with the praise of the Lord of the Sun, the Lord of the snake and the ant, the Lord of the open sky." Cf. also the opening of "the High History of the Holy Graal." "The high book of the Graal beginneth in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. These three persons are one substance," &c. (Sebastian Evans' translation.)

56. The gate we made ourselves—i.e., love: cf. the Neoplatonist doctrine that the last gap between man and knowledge is bridged by a sort of ecstasy and not by reason, and that "the lover has more wisdom than the philosopher."

57. A double meaning: a woman has not a man's endurance; or a woman has not a man's levity.

58. "Cursed one," Lanati, little devil. Her so-called curse is a solemn confession of her own faith.

59. In worshipping Hadijeh and forgetting God he has been guilty of idolatry. He has not yet reached the stage of *Aruf*, knowledge, but worships the creature alone and not the creator in the creature.