and to which the slaves have never shouted 

The shadow erect; following a camel with upturned eyes which you (would think mad or seeing what camels do not see.)

When the shadow becomes a sock or shoe, she OUTDOES the walking camels both in trot and gallop:

'Tis as though my pack-saddles were on the back of a wild ass chased since a year, tamed by competing with the dry-uddered camels.

Whose time of thirst was passed in midsummer after the Goats had sojourned in the domain of the Dogs,

Which spent the day in Ublj, with eyes like used-up wells looking to the sun to see whether it would approach.

Fine creatures, wary, like lances aimed by some markman at the air.

The midday heat has milked them behind the ears, for no relics of milk will be found in the adders. 'Vain! indeed are the promises that are made you!' And a plague on Meekil son of Diar when he says,

Her arms are like those a pert woman, who, after scolding, would fail to defend herself; behind her ears there might seem to be kerchiefs, that bad left the hands of men who had been squeezing turpentine. And when she passes by the waters of 'Udthab,' her eye is like a hole in a rock, no circle round it can be seen.

She dips her beak at one time into sweet water, at another into milk, and passes the night without supper; she comes suddenly upon the flock in its hummings, and labours hard as usual; she is as it were the leader of the camels, having upon her a bed of toil and fatigue:

'There they cross our path while the gravel is burning; the wind at rest, and

1 Verse of AlWah alBahr, Janzub, p. 57. Several words in the line are usually interchanged, e.g. for 'dough' some render 'date-stones.'
2 See same, p. 14, n. 8.
3 Koran XXIII. 38.
4 Name of Al-Abdunnabil. See Kirkil II. 34.
5 Hesper, p. 41, n. 7.
6 Janzub, p. 132.
LETTERS OF ABU 'L-ALÀ AL-MA'ARRI.

p. 96 Till you came down to a well of stale water, dug by the byrnes and about to fall in, such as when the drawer trotts it, he spits it out, the sun having sunk or being about to sink—or to some foul rain-puddle, which the showers turn rendered turbid and swollen, whereas the herds gather, and truly it is a vile drink, being as the brother of the Bazn Nummir says

'And water compared with which the wells are like wine of Burtak, and which has turned worse than stale. Whereof I mired the depths and scared away from it companions that had enounced themselves thereon, —into a traveller's tabil-cover and its tags I gathered them all weak and strong.'

Or it may be that your saddle should be on the back of a big-checked mule-cum-carrier, that harasses like a hopping ostrich, fearing not the attack of weariness, and not guilty of slackness at midday.

'Making no noise when the sun is at its hottest—the best of some silent droves.'

As though she were a spotted wild cow brought out by the evening to feed, with her a dusky calf, into pasture land as fragrant as musk, when some miscellaneous wolf is set on her, who waits for the moment when she is not looking; and when occupied with some sweet pastures such as will fill her udders with milk, she thinks distractedly of her calf, and how her only one is in a wilderness, and, having too long to look for her own, he finds he has become a more name like yesterday, and finds nothing but head and shins, and a hide that the robber prince has left over. She it is that is meant in the verses of Katimī,

'The wooden frame of my saddle when it enclosed dry thistle-seeds and hungry entrails might have been upon a wild cow, which went off at a flying pace, having to provide for a calf which got lost; and coming to him after her return, she finds the wild beast at his hair; they had made sport of him, and left nothing save a torn hide or a shin-bone.'

Or you might be upon a horse of Amrī lineage, one that will not readily stumble, with a body that might be made of gold, and loins of emerald, whose 'blaze' you would think a star of night, and his gallop the advance of a torrent.

1 The first of these verses is cited by Yākūt as by Al-Abtalī, whereas M. Skandari has pointed it among those authent's descendants, but there seems no ground for ascribing Al-Abtalī a brother of the Bazn Nummir. Probably this time Ala 'Y-Alla is right, and the verses belong to some Nummir priest, e.g. Al-Abtalī, to whom Al-Abdalī I. 179 assigns his line.
2 Quoted by Yākūt Al-Hamādānī, Muqaddima II. 380, from Al-'Alī.
3 The poem whence these lines probably come is quoted in the Ashīrī XX. 169.

LETTER XXVII.

He does not compel his rider to say 'Ass and ass, but dashes on with fiery energy. One that raises above him that rears him a neck tall as a palm-trunk, and rivals the north wind with his proud lineage; each time there comes in the way a wild herd of flocks such a hero can set fetters on it. He is always fresh-minded for his riders; he is bound to sustain them while in the desert. He is the enemy of the wild ass whom his morning visits frighten, as though he were a kite sweeping from a high mountain, or glanced with the eyes of a hawk. He leaves the ostrich f. 99 behind as though it were an orphan chick. He is too haughty to pick his way cautiously over the stones. The eyes of the enemy are intent upon his rider as upon a star in the heavens that shines to give them guidance. The points of the spears are not levelled at him; neither can he be reached save with the keenest gun.

But if a horse falters you, then you might make your expedition upon a knaying mule, a good beast to accomplish one's purposes; a cross between an ass and a horse of tough build like a coil of rope: the sort of animal wherein to traverse wide lands, and execute one's designs. Witness the verse of Ibn Al-Jasrafi,

'They took the bridge off the couriers and went off attacking them to drawing mules,'

and of Ibn Makhīl,

'From the plain of Himyar where are the stallings of mules—how could thou climb all this distance at midnight?'

and that of the Asayyīn,

'After Ghumātā they passed a land wherein are pools of mules' stallings.'

Similar passages are very frequent; and so you whose fame is heaven-high might well be content to ride the 'thirsty beast.' Many a good thing has been reached by the aid of the ass; and many a donkey-rider is better off than one mounted on a restless steed. God Almighty says, 'Look unto thy ass, and it is that we may make thee a sign unto mankind.' Nor were it surprising if God were to strip off a man the apparel of the rich and put upon him that of the Prophets; in which case he would rely for his journey on a mount of acacia-wood, such as neither grows weary nor gives cause for rebuke. A mount which when you rest in a place saves you the services of various people, since it needs neither water nor provender; and, if it perish, it can easily be replaced. A fine mount, indeed! God says, 'And what is that in thine hand, Moses? He answered, My staff wherewith I lean, and wherein I drive my flock, and it has other uses as well!'

1 Jamshidī, p. 166.
2 None of a pre-Islamic poet in Yemen.
3 Korān II. 217.
4 Korān XX. 99.
5 The whole passage is a reminiscence of Job, Tāhīn II. 62 sq.
LETTERS OF ABU ‘ALÀ AL-MÀARRI.

(90) Now I have only exulted travelling and afterwards described its inconveniences, because all great things have trouble connected with them; and the kelpie is the plant which leads up to the honey. An ancient writer says, "Think not glory a date which thou canst eat; thou shalt not attain to glory till thou hast licked wormwood."

A long letter this! God make your life proportionately long! And profligacy is unlike the brave. But now I am going to be brief and concise. I have answered you in prose instead of verse only because I have for years abandoned such frivolities. Our friend Abu Hamshah (on whom God have mercy!) has been gathered by God Almighty from the shade of woe to that of bliss and perpetuity, p. 89 who has wasted his grave till his body has become like food to the earth that swallowed it. And I with my companions send you with every traveller on the highway, every wind that blows, every flash of lightning, every phantom that crosses the path, such salutations as will perfume the saddles of the caravan that is entrusted with them, and gently the hearts of men when their ears hear them.

LETTER XXVIII.

Answer to a letter addressed to me by some one about a Kufi’s assessor, who has asked me to be discharged from the duty of witness.

The facts stated by you, dear sir, are a ‘warning to him that has a heart, or hears being present.’ However, ‘the heart of Khilifah has ears.’ Now he has spoken correctly who has given good advice: but ‘what is there to be done with a lad whose father was too much for me!’ and who is a ‘chip of the old block?’

The father of this man had abandoned the office of assessor at the end of his life; and ‘happy is he who takes warning by others.’ Now I have tested this man’s

1. The kelpie is said by the T.A. to be a plant resembling squawgrass, with soft leaves somewhat the colour of the violet, and exceedingly bitter.
3. The assessor is a person who witnesses the contracts made between individuals. ‘They set their seal to these documents, and in case of litigation are bound to give evidence. They have offices in all the large towns, where they interview the persons who desire to make a contract whether verbal or written. In the latter case it is the assessor who draws up the deed’ (Deyy).
5. The name of Khilifah occurs twice in Mayzlin’s commentary on the proverb, but not in such a way as to illustrate this saying, which would seem to mean ‘one so blind as those who went after.’
7. Mayzlin I. 199.
that time he was accused of belonging to the Kaysanite sect, and was accordingly in disfavour.

Every capital has in it persons of this character; among our own contemporaries I may mention Abu 'Abdullah Al-Nasirī of Basrah, whose evidence was received by the Kūli in Basrah, he being one of the poets of that city. And if you are so generous to the mob of the Medesmen, what say you to the people of your own profession? Methinks I see you walking to-day over the death of the father of Imran 'al-Kātib, out of your extreme attachment to the Kindite bard! How big a fine would you not pay to the poet if only it could be shown that Al-Hārith Al-Yashkūnī had not written the verse in which Mīn 'al-Samī is mentioned in his poem with the rhyming word in the nominative! With how many dīnār would you not redeem the false rhyme in Al-Nāshīhūn's poem,2 and the censure which he, in consequence incurred from the people of Medesmen? How many hundreds would you not give to buy Abū-Būrūt5 a pair of handsome feet, —for it is said that he had pearsce's feet? How many a pilgrimage would you not have made to the Kūli to pray God to increase the height of Farandah the son of Ghalib by one span—for he was dwarfish? What would not you have given to preserve to 'Asha of Kāli a little of his eyesight to find his way with? I can see you grieving over the one-eyedness of Ibn Almar, Al-Shamsib, and Al-Kūli Al-Nasirī. And if this be your way with men of a different age and religion from your own, what are you like to the people of your own time? You are to them like a mother 'who' lays a bed and puts an infant to sleep.' Methinks

1 Verses of this poet are cited in Thāhib's Yawmāt al-Dīrā, ed. Fawāsirūn H. 116. Thāhib was in personal communication with him, and calls him one of the most eminent scholars of his time.
2 The account of his death is given in the Agāhil VII, 9. His name was Hājī, and he is said to have been killed by 'Abd-Allah Ibn Al-Hārith Al-Kūli after having taken bloody vengeance on the Anzānīs for refusing him tribute. The traditions vary as to the exact mode of his death.
3 The poem is the Muḥallāk of Hājī; see the account of it in Agāhil IX, 174, 181. The verse in which Mīn 'al-Samī is mentioned is the following: 'And we issued the brack of Imran 'al-Kātib off him after he had been long bound in prison!' Imran 'al-Kātib means here Mīn 'al-Samī's son of Al-Mufīrī. It refers to a victory of the tribe Bahr over the Ḥāja mentioned in the last note.
4 This story is told in Agāhil IX, 169. In the first version of a poem rhyming in Al-Nāshīhūn of Thāhib made allusion to the loyal line, whereas all the rest ended in aad. When he came to Medesmen the people were too numerous to tell him that he had made a mistake, and so put on a professional singer to perform the piece. Nāshīhūn hearing the false rhyme altered the verse in which it occurred.
5 This fact does not seem to be mentioned in the account of Al-Hārith Al-Naṣīrī given in the Agāhil and by Ibn Khaddūmī.

* Kāmil I, 24.
* McLaughlin I, 20.
(5) wherever I turn I find myself swimming in your favours. Now the Syrians are to the people of 'Idrīs like half-breeds to thorough-bred, or domestic cattle to wild cattle; and fruit excels fruit just as man excels man. We read in the Koran, 'And of what we have bestowed on them they spend!' And the Prophet said, 'Were I invited to partake of a mārim, I should accept;' a mārim being an excrescence in the hoof of a sheep. The Arabic proverb says, 'A man is like part of his clothes;' and were I to present you with the sky, the Pleiads, and flowery spring with its perfume, I should still think I had fallen short of my duty. Now in this country there is a bad kind of pistachio, called 'the neighbours' annoyance,' the meaning of this designation being that when it is cracked its split-offed neighbours suppose that it is full and are envious of it, whereas they do not know, it is empty. Now I have sent some of it for your acquaintances to amuse themselves with; I should never have ventured to do this, did I not know the amiability of your character; it is only right, however, that you should treat me with your ordinary generosity.

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Letter XXX. Letter of consolation, written to one of his friends (truly his uncle Abu l-Kāmil son of Shu'ayb) on the death of his brother Abū Bakr, who died in Damascus.

You (God bless you!) are like a sword of Yemen, not worn out by the passing time, and a lofty star, safe from all wrong actions; you are like wine, which, the older it gets, the better and more fragrant it becomes. Has the sun's skin ever got tanned, or does it suffer by its light being old? Have the passing years robbed Sabrah of its splendour, or Sabrah of its durableness? Were my letters to you in proportion to my feelings, I should despatch one to you every hour, with some message to do duty in my stead. I should have described the anguish that I feel, which memory constantly makes stronger. And indeed many a secret question reveals an excessive longing. God maintain His favour towards us, and keep it whether His decree please or pain us. Face is imperious and dominant; and God forbid that we should say an Al-Muḥāzīb said,1

1. Muwatt (Haddāt) I. 140.

You are my guide in the best of ways, and in the best of paths. I do not feel I can express the grief that fills me. I shall cease to write to you, not because I am lazy, but because I see no hope for the future. The same fate awaits us all, and I fear that we shall be buried together. The only comfort I can find is that we shall be together in the hereafter. Let us hope for the best, and may God grant us His mercy and forgiveness. Amen.

p. 93

LETTER XXX. The throne of God all glorious shook at the death of my uncle, the day my uncle died.

No! 'We are God's, and to God do we return!' All that are on the earth shall perish, and man is but a dissolving view; and God bless Abu Khālid for saying, 'Knowest thou not that before us the true friends Malik and 'Abbās had to part?'

And man lives ever in hope which flees far from him; everything he has is a loan (4) even to his brother. An ancient writer says,2 'Everything down to thy brother is "furniture," and fate rules both separation and gathering.'

O thou that givest and art sore distressed! Others than thou have dead friends who are as it were asleep. Despair will bring nothing back, neither will grief bring him to life whom the sword of fate has once slain!

'Their grief' avails not the daughters of Rāf', they sleep not, yet the sleeper feels no pain!3

If the vicissitudes of time have dealt falsely by our good friend Abu Bakr, are we not familiar with the treason and falsehoods of fate? Men's goods are but luxury; and a man's life is a garment that is borrowed.4 Each of us in this transitory life is like a captive at large, yet fettered; he cannot move even though he fancies that he is at rest:

'Truly there is a time for resting and a time for travelling, and a time for the traveller to linger. God has claimed for Himself justice and faith; (4) fulness, and assigned the blame to man.'

Were the world a bride, she would have been divorced; but rather she is a mother who has nursed, and whom her children love in spite of unkindness, and albeit she defunds them of their rights. What have we to do with her? O earth! Thou art not satisfied with the loss of chastity. 'Thou didst displease me when thy teeth were white, how much more now when thou art toothless?' I cared not for thee when thou wast in the bloom of thy youth, how much less now when thou art a withered bag? But alas, it is not thou that becomest old or tired, but thy

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1. Haddāt poet; the verse is often quoted, e.g. Agūṭi IV. 75: the story of these persons is told later on in the letter.

2. Cl. Agūṭi IX. 4.


4. Agūṭi VII. 47. Verses of 'Abād ibn Ζā'īr: they were quoted to prove that the author was a Ζā'īrī, i.e. a believer in free will.

p. [IL 106]
while they were taken in guilt and rebellion. He forgot what the two Jurtaha had sung to him, and was given a storm, no summer shower.

After him another Prophet, for whom the camel with the foul was created, and who galloped on in his job like a horse. He came an unlooked for fate, which made him in rank no better than the followers of Kafr. Save that their final end was different—going to Paradise, and they to Hell.

Near the man who came safe out of the blazing fire, who felt no pain from its heat; except that death made him and Nimrod equals. God protect us from attending concerts and music till.

Then the man of the cloud was noble and renowned; yet he lay down in the grave, and did not budge.

Then the man who saw the light and thought it a fire—who made the night-journey, and removed disgrace from the Children of Israel—albeit he hated and abhorred death, yet he could not exceed the term that had been fixed for him—fixed by him who neither errs nor falls, who is far beyond and above all evil.

Then the author of the Psalter, who was honoured both in his youth and age: who initiated in his Psalter the voices of the birds, who held with the right and the good.

Then Saramus, who combined sovereignty with the prophetic office—still even that did not rescue him from death.

Then the man who was supposed to keep back the sun, he too set and abode in the grave.

Then the Son of Mary, whom many worship, and the day of whose coming is expected—still even he left his Mother, and could not escape the repudiation of many tribes.

1 The two Jurtaha were Singing-women supposed to have performed at Mursil in the time of the Prophet Is. In Tabilit I. 133 we read that certain youths of the tribe of Ijil were entertained at Mursil by Baka Is. Mulejajh, who gave them wine to drink, and made the Jurtaha play to them. The verses of the Jurtaha recorded ibid. p. 173 were to warn these youths that they were spoiling too long. It does not appear however from Tabilit that Baka Is. Mulejajh himself had any opportunity of hearing these songs. See also Agzial VIII. 2.

2 Still.

3 Krum VII. 31.

4 The name of the 'Wrench' of Taimot who stabbred the sacred camel. (Not in Tabilit.)

5 These words seem to be the correct rendering of the original, but here very little point has.

6 Sh'illa, or fishers. The word rendered 'cloud' is interpreted in various ways. The story is told in Koan XXVI. 107.

7 Allusion to a tradition in Tabilit I. 133, that Moses was unwilling to die, and that in order to make him prefer death to life the Deity took away the prophetic power from him and gave it to Joshua.

p 3
Then Muharram, who strove to serve his Lord, and won victories for God's people and his allies. He too lay down in the grave, though the most honourably excelled of the people. And if this be the case with the blessed Prophets, what think ye of the wretched and miserable? Even so unto kings do God's messengers pay visits. Such of the Arabs as have reigned have not escaped death by the fittest flight. Saba's son of Yashhub had the veil fall over him,—he was the first, according to the legend, who took captives; and he was named thereafter, the last letter being turned into a consonant, being made a hamaz against analogy. As when you say, 'I have sweetened the potestas,' substituting balin' an' ba'liyut.

He passed on a feisty by the sacred territory, and found there no opponent. And seeing its inhabitants in great poverty before the time of Al-Nafir son of Khimshah, father of Kuranah, he asked them why they stayed in so wild a country, and were so greatly attached thereto. And they answered that that land had a God who fed its people, and who let no one perish who attached himself to Him. Praise, said they, to God the exalted, who feeds both those who dwell in sacred territory and profane, and him who basks in the sun and him who loves the shade. Then what they said struck in the king's mind, and he perceived that they were not to be gained over; and he hid himself three days to ponder on the divine government, and on the third he said, after a long silence, 'I see nothing in the sky more luminous than the sun;' and so he prepared to worship it, and bade his followers and troops to do the like. And he only did this in order to please God most High, who has no known rival, and whom no for ventures to oppose. And when he beheld him of going down to the watering-place of the dead, he handed over to Kahlil a protecting shield, and to Hisyar a piercing sword. And those of the ministers who were present said, 'He has assigned to Hisham the sovereignty and the throne, and to Kahlil the administration of the government.' Then Hisham remained king until the Eternal decreed his death, and God only endures without change. He who creates men with gentleness and ease. 'There endures nothing save the face of thy great Lord.' Now the chroniclers mention no king of the sons of Hisham until fifteen generations had passed,1 who wanted.

1 The same etymology is given by Usamah bin Is-hak, p. 214, who however declares that he will not be responsible for it; by others, e.g. Ibn Ikhla and Marzuki, without any objection.

2 The name Kuranah is said to be derived from a root signifying trade, and Al-Nafir is supposed by no less to have become wealthy. This is the account given of the name by Ibn Ikhla, p. 60, who would seem to identify Al-Nafir with Kuranah.

3 Not in the ordinary history.

4 The ordinary chronology makes Al-Razi's move Kahlil infinitely or after one intervening reign (Tabshir, Marzelli, Usamah). These chroniclers however make no claim to any exact information. The author's statement resembles that of Kuranah's (p. 209).

whole ages over their sovereignty, without making forays into other people's territory, living and dying. Until at last arose Al-Harith, called Al-Razi's, who made raids upon the surrounding enemies, and clad himself in an honourable (3) role of fine deeds. He was called Al-Razi's (the feathered) because he took captive whole families, and made much booty. Whereby he 'feathered' the inhabitants of Yemen, this being in his early time; then one of God's messengers summoned him, and his kingdom became like a deceptive mirage. Then in the time of Al-Razi's passed Ghalibn,1 be of the valiant, after drinking the last drops of life; for indeed God has chosen for Himself perpetuity, and has decreed that there shall be no escape. Then after Al-Razi's arose his son Abrahah,2 who endured for a period; he brought no reproach upon his people, and was called in his lifetime the man of the Light-beams, because whenever he RAIDED the enemy, (30) he set up lights on the way, so that when his army wished to return they were safe against losing their way. This did he until his life came to an end, when he resigned his kingdom, and took up his shade in a hollow of the earth. 'The living then forgot him, and his friends parted from him after they had benefited by his gifts, and obtained captive maidens from his spoils. 'The life of this world is but a deceptive ware,' and God is exalted in power: He has left none, just or unjust, whom He has not made to swallow the cup of death, even though during his (30) lifetime he accomplished his desire. Then rose after Abrahah Ifitdh, who invaded the West, and travelled over the mainland and took the Berbers out of Syria,3 and settled them where they now are; they being the remnant of those whom Joshua the son of Nun slew, who dwelt in Ramilah and the neighbourhood. He built Ifitdh,4 which was named after him; and his arrows, when he shot them, went straight to the mark; but then Shabab5 took him down, and the joints of his shafts became loosened. Meeting with a reverse of fortune, he lay him down in a grave. 'Verily God encompasses them.' After him rose his brother 'Abd Ibn Abrahah,6 who took the Nasam6, and frightened his people when he brought them home. For their frames were not like men's frames, even as the histories tell. For this

5 Yathrib makes him a son of 'Ad of He (see p. 190, n. 2). His life according to the legend was 96 years.

6 In the list of things the seers were allowed to wish for perpetuity was expressly excluded. 

7 Tabshir 1. 441. If the name, which occurs in a verse of Ba'mm al-Safa, is correctly reported, it is more probable that Marzuki was the name of a place. 

8 Tabshir 1. 594. 

9 The early Arabian historians thought Abrahah the name of a city; hence Wycliffe has to explain that when this city was destroyed its name was inherited by the surrounding regions. 

10 The Arabic destroyed.
reason he was called ‘the man of terror.’ Then, overcome by pity, he left the borrowed throne, being robbed of an eminence of fate. He turned into a mere name and a tradition, and, after gathering many a host of men, both kings and host perished, and the name of beheld them as beheld Shamil. *There is no God but God;* He destroys the nations, but persists Himself, and His slaves cannot turn (45) fugitives. Then there rose after *the man of terror,* Ilhâdd, son of Shamshîl, son of ‘Arsh son of ‘Arsh, who, after a little, was slain, and his kingdom was not prolonged, but shortened. He, it is said, was the father of Bîhâh, and to him reverted the throne when he was summoned, and when the time of his destruction p. 96 came. Then came the period of Solomon, and when his death was proclaimed—against which there is no insurrection that can be given to true man or false—Bîhâh survived for a period, and then went off fast to the next world. *Praise to God all-powerful!* All men perish, and none returns! Then reigned Yâsîr the son of ‘Arsh son of Yâsîr; and none had any quarrel with him, for he was called Yâsîr of favour, as having restored the kingdom after it had been taken away, thereby (4) conferring a mighty favour. For it had gone out of their hands, and no allies were left them. Thus the power had come into the hands of Solomon. Yâsîr invaded the West, and armies were gathered unto him; and he came forth with a host numerous as the ants, till he reached the valley of said, and he despatched a force which perished, no one ever going the same way again. And he ordered an image of brass, whereon Dûd ‘Uthânîa wrote in Hûriyâ characters *there is no path for any one beyond.* And he set up that image as an ensign, to be a terminal (10) mark to travellers. Then time overtook Yâsîr, and he found his edge bit. Thus impartial are the dealings of God with the nations. Then there reigned after Ilhâdd, Shamshîr Yâsîr, his son, who lived for a while, and complained of palpitation, and rose up with a mighty army, and triumphed on *Irâz* like a man of valour, and, meaning to invade China, said to his army, March! And passing

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1 Hâddâh son of Shamshîl, according to Ḥasanî Al-Iḥṣâ‘î, p. 139.
2 ‘Aṣir ‘Aṭîr ‘Alî, the chronologies were mountains where exactly Bîhâh came in. The author follows Ḥasanî Al-Iḥṣâ‘î throughout.
3 Tâbârî I. 64a gives Yâsîr ‘Ali with the same genealogy as our author, and the same ground for the second appellation; Ḥasanî makes the second name Yâsîr, which is like other second names that meet us on the Sunnîs monuments; ‘Abî ‘Umar gives Shâhîr, but his form of the second name agrees precisely with Abî ‘Umar’s. But see Tâbârî I. 25a.
4 Perhaps this only means a broach. The story is told by Tâbârî I. 1, who gives the inscription *Shâmîr of Yâsîr Alî the Hûriyâ.* There is no way beyond, but none therefore indebted such a venture and perished.
5 Ḥasanî gives his name as Shâhîr ‘Aṣir ‘Alî ‘Abd ‘Arsh ‘Ilhâdd. *After Ilhâdd* is an error for ‘Before Yâsîr.’ Tâbârî gives a different name.

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by Sîqil he took it, and called it after his name (God knows best his purposes) Sâmarqand, whereas the original is Shamârakan. Yet did not this avail him one shoe-binder when he was visited by the puns of death. After him there reigned (45) his son Al-Aṣir—-and all that is on the earth is rubbish.” So, when the divine decree fell upon him, he left all that he had built and raised; albeit had a throne benefited any one, it would have benefited him. Then rose Al-Aṣir’s son Tubbâh, whom all the chieftains obeyed. He subdued the lands and invaded them. He humbled the champions and made them ashamed; Yet had he to humble himself before God, and the evidence of his inferiority was established. Twenty years he remained at home and made no forays; then there reached him a report of the Turks, whose injuries he resolved to avenge, so he marched against them by way (40) of Ashbîr, and fell upon them unexpectedly. China was the next object of his ambition, which he attacked once, and then returned, leaving at Tubbâh some of his troops. And it is said that they are found there to this day, generation succeeding generation. Then there came to him *the pillars of envy,* and* each man needs the services of the grave-digger!* Then rose his son Aṣir, to whom those near and far alike paid homage. He followed the ways of his father, and dealt hardly and hardly with Hûriyâ. And the Hûriyâ were greatly vexed by the length (40) of his reign, seeing that he dealt unjustly and harshly with them. Then they said to his son Ḥasanî, from whom they hoped for good, *What saith thou to P. 97 killing thy father, and to our making thee a king whose swords shall be feared?* But he would not agree to the killing of his father, and feared to spill kindred blood. Then they gathered together against Aṣir and slew him—either they assassinated him openly or else they slew him by guile; then they sought a king to reign over them, and returned to Ḥasanî to bind their wound. On his brow they set the crown, and when his control was supreme over the ways, he left alone none of those who had had a hand in the murder of his father, but tried to kindle (45) against each of them some mischief which he hid, albeit the Hûriyâ’s had made him swear that he would not have recourse to extremities in taking vengeance for the murder of his father. Now Ḥasanî, according to tradition, trampled on the
Jads until he left them a mere name, and their stable root in splinters. This was because their brethren the Yasm treated them with great tyranny. They had a king, surrounded by troops, to whom the brides were brought before their husbands. And Jads fell upon Yasm, and applied a violent remedy to the disease, and destroyed their chief; so Yasm invoked Hasen’s aid, and he helped them. Now Vynamah was at that time called Jaw, and was greatly under the frown of the king. And there was there a woman named Vynamah, and she is it who is known as the Zarka; she could see a long distance off, and one day she climbed up the watch-tower (now all new things are from God), and she said, ‘Know that Hinyar is coming against you, or else that the trees are coming towards you.’ Then they said, ‘What shall we do?’ She said, ‘I see a man who would seem to be eating a shoulder, or patch shoes with trees.’ Now Hasen had commanded his army each of them to cut down a tree, and to carry it in front of him as a strong defence. This was a strategem that he tried till he should overcome Jads. But they would not believe what Vynamah told them, so that the troops came upon them and cut them in pieces; and Jaw was called Yynamah, after the woman. Now the chiefest dislikes Hasen, and openly reviled from him; and went over to his brother ‘Amr, and desired him (horrible act!) to kill his brother. And he complied with their request, and plunged and stirred up mischief for himself. Now among the Hinyar was a man called Dhi Re‘a‘sin, who was experienced in all things hidden and manifest; who warned ‘Amr against slaying his brother (now God knows well what He intends). But ‘Amr determined to go on (and God it is who controls destiny), and he slew Hasen (for indeed love of the present world blinds mankind), and he lost his sleep, all night and all day. Now the Hinyar of those days used to suppose that any one who killed his brother would be unable to sleep however hard he tried; and ‘Amr complained of his sleeplessness, and was told by trusty folk that he would not be able to sleep till he had destroyed those persons who had hidden him slay Hasen, who had brought him down to the shambles and not brought him out. So the king made a herald proclaim that the king wished to make an ordinance the following day, and the people gathered in thousands to the palace court; and he ordered that they should be introduced in companies, and he moved them down like herbs with his swords;

1 Talasi 1.771.
2 In the story told by Talasi, the captain of the Jads got up a host (in the style of one told by Herodotus) at which he and his compatriots slaughtered the king of Yasm and his nobles. A Tanaki named Siki escaped, and demanded help of Hasen.
3 Talasi 1.770, L. 18.
4 Rather, according to Talasi, to conceal himself.
5 Talasi 1.314; this took place, according to Talasi, in the midst of an expedition to Tabi.

...and when Dhi Re‘a‘sin entered, he reminded the king of his counsel, and he ordered him to be honoured and rewarded. Then ‘Amr’s affairs became confused, and the flame of his fire came near extinction; and being too weak and feeble to go on expeditions, he was on account called Mandali; for mutataf in their language means ‘to sit.’ And mankind have days of good and days of bad luck; and the day of death approached, and he, like others, found it come too soon. Then (4) there reigned after him ‘Abd Ku‘ail;—and God, be it remembered, stands alone in His majesty. He, according to the tradition, was a believer, one who believed in Jesus, and hoped for good fortune thereby; then he came to grief, and it was as though he had never been feared. Then reigned Tubi‘a son of Hasen; the last of those who were called Tubi‘a, and he, out of ambition, invaded Syria; the kings of Syria paid him homage, and, after having been revered, obeyed him. Then there came unto him men from Yathrib with complaints, telling of evil deeds of the Kurajah and Banu Naffir; and he made for Yathrib, and slew of the (10) Jews both rich and poor; but there came to him one of them who was old, and wrinkled like a wither’skin, and told him that he could never destroy Tubi‘a, because it was to be the refuge of a prophet of the family of Ishmael, and that whoever sought to do it harm, himself would come to grief. So the king listened to what the man told him without meanour, and took a wise course, covering the Khazib with painted robes, and slaughtering six thousand camels. And, going off to Yemen, he bade his people adopt the Jewish faith,—and thy Lord was witness of both secret and manifest. Then on him too death hid her hand, and he took up his abode in the tomb. Then after him arose Marhab;—and none of the furniture (72) of this life endured; after him reigned Walfah; and to him came a troop of calamities. Then reigned Abrahah son of Al-Sabah; and what sanctity is not profaned? Then arose Hasen; whom ‘Amr had begetten, after whom the kingdom fell to pieces; wide confusion came over Hinyar, and the neglected throne was seized by Dhi 1-Samah, who ‘put on the garments of treason’ 10:**
and when he played false and acted deceitfully, he was slain by the king Dhi (20) Nuwā, and found no refuge for his wounds. After him reigned his slayer; and the divine power betrays him that is secure. God only is everlasting! His word falls upon the rock and it becomes like mists. Now Dhi Nuwā was a rebel, and fanatically attached to the religion of the Sabbath; he dug the 'trances'¹, and humbled the faces. He bore certain to be burnt who believed in the Gospel, and made a lamp thereof. Then Dhi Thul'abbah² went to the Abyssinians, and set up the designs of the Hunsayn, unto a Hâsime king of the friends of Caesar; and he equipped an army for them, which set blazing the furnace of war. And Dhi Nuwā was put to flight, and went with his horse into the sea, and plunged into it for fear of his pursuers. This was the last that was heard of him, and was not heard of his latter days; and he was slain by a partizan of Thul'abbah. And when the Abyssinians drove him to the shore, he did even as Dhi Nuwā had done, so grieved was he. These were the kings of the Hunsayn, whom destruction seized, and the eye saw them not again. Then the Abyssinians got control of Sarf, and they plundered Yemen (3) when it had no protectors. First of them rose Ayyi却没有, and he was slain by Abū Al-Hāshim, who thirsted for vengeance. He attached the Khâshîn with his elephants², and God guaranteed his destruction. After him reigned Yâkârîn—every one being the victim of events—until he perished, and Mâs'îb came, who also was proscribed by death, being shot with arrows by the Persians, until he was made like unto them that perish. Then Sa'il⁷ became lord of Yemen, and neither mountain nor vale was safe. He took into his service certain Abyssinians⁸, and being one day apart from his attendants, they threw their spears at him and slew him, being angry with him for what he had done, wherefore they slew him. Is then any man immortal? Or can the good escape from harm? Nay, God has decreed death after trouble and anxiety! As for the land of Syria, the first of the Arabes who settled there was Sa'il⁹; and who does not fear and tremble at fate? And the first of their kings was Al-Nu'mân son of 'Amr⁴⁴,—but his power abode not. Then there reigned after him his son Mâlîk, who walked in the footsteps of his father; then 'Amr son of Mâlîk,—now all dynasties come to an end save the power of the Creator, for He ceases not. And when 'Amr son of 'Amr went out from Mâlîk⁹ for fear of the dust which burst, he sent three of his sons foraging, and hoped that he should see them returning. The three passed on with a large company, each of them desiring some benefit, and their father 'Amr perished ere he heard any tidings of them. He was followed by his son Thul'abbah,—and the decree of God is victorious. Now the Asud had invaded the country of the 'Akk, seeking to alay their doubts; and there was in 'Akk a king called Sundâlah, against whom Jâlíl son of Shâm Al-Azâdî plotted mischief, and brought it upon him; and the Asud killed the 'Akk, and took goods whereon title had not been paid. Then the 'Akk took to flight, and traversed the wide earths without certain direction; and Thul'abbah son of 'Amr was displeased by the hard hap that had befallen the 'Akk, and swore that he would not stay, and went off, leaving the throne a bone of contention: till he encamped with his followers in the Thumath, and fought with the Juruman with his troops. From them he won the Kirsh—yet each living being must certainly one day fall prostrate and dead. Then Khânzâd remained in the sacred territory, being a tribe of royal virtue and chivalry. Till there came (9) the Khâshîn, who gathered together Kuraish between the plain and the Jurumah. And he caused Khânzâd from the kingdom, nor yet did his achievements save him from destruction. Then came Khânzâd; they being the brethren of Khânzâd, to the land of Syria, and ousted their predecessors therefrom; and p. 100 them too God destroyed when he wished. And of their kings whose names are handed down, the first was Al-Hâtîb the Great; he too joined the rest, and became a warning after he had persecuted and aggrieved himself, and burned the Arabs

¹ Hunsayn, p. 115; Mašûdî IV. 47.
² According to Mašûdî, l.c., the first of the Yazakiyya kings who reigned in Syria. According to this author the ascetic of Sa'il was posterior to this. The names of Al-Nu'mân's successors are also given differently.
³ Celebrated town in S. Arabia, visited in recent times by Glaser.
⁴ The whole of this paragraph diverges very widely from the historical authorities cited in the notes.
⁵ Much platform of platonic formation. For Mr. Dougherty's map of this region.
⁶ An account of the Gassulid dynasty is given by Hâsham, l.c., and also by Mašûdî; in the former, names are evidently repeated over and over again in order to fill up a space of time; but neither agrees with the list given here.
dil he was called the ‘Burser’ 1. Many a great hero did he play; his surname was Abu Shâmî, and his son Al-.hdâth, from whom the kingdom was inherited by an heir who brought terrible punishment upon the king of Hîrah. Now Al-Hdâth was the father of Hâlmsah, whose name is made proverbial by them that are no, (4) saying, ‘The day of Hâlmsah is no secret;’ meaning thereby the day wherein the two sons of Al-hdâth were slain after hard fighting, and wherein Al-Mundhir son of Ma’â’s-Bashî was overthrown by destruction. Now he had gone out on a foray to the land of Syria with a hundred thousand, who hastened past every mountain. And against him Al-Hdâth sent a hundred lads, this being a harmless plot against Al-Mundhir, bidding the lads inform Al-Mundhir that they had come out to aid him; but of a truth they were messengers of destruction, who stripped him of the royal crown. And in this battle Ziyâd 2 came to Al-Hdâth, and asked (10) him concerning certain prisoners of the tribe of Asal, who were in chains, whom he loosed out of respect to Al-Nâbiyâh. And his fame, as he had desired, survived. Then ‘Alkamah asked him concerning Shâhî; and he replied, ‘A house that remains among mankind.’ And how many a faithful recorded verse was chanted concerning Al-Hdâth, and how many a rhyming lay! He was the father of Shâhî’s, whose earnings are mentioned in the proverb, albeit death did not overlock her any more than him. Then regained his son Al-Hdâth the less, after his father; until the days humbled his pride. These three reign’d one after the (15) other in a direct line, their names being alike, and they have remained. But they who had them are departed, and their spirits are returned to their Lord.

After them came Al-Nâmim son of Al-Hdâth, whom Al-Nâbiyâh hoped would return, and by whose death he was afflicted 3. He was the son of Hâtî, whose followers returned with clear eyes 4, having left him in Jâhliyâ’s, being wary of him. Al-Nâbiyâh prayed that his grave might be watered with vehement showers; till it produced flowers and nembaph. This assuredly is

1 Hâzûmah gives this name to a king named Jishîn the Less, ‘and he it was who burnt Al-Hdâth.’
2 Hâzûmah, p. 128, gives this name to a Ghassûni king Al-Mundhir the Al-Udîbah.
3 Name for Al-Nâbiyâh Al-Ütûn在过去.
4 I.e. begat the life of his brother Shâhî, whom Al-Hdâth had taken prisoner at ‘Arb Al-âtîh, which was granted. Kitâib (Eg.) I. 143; Ibn Esîmîlah, p. 120.
5 Sayyâh, p. 57; Hâzûmah gives this tuly a different father.
6 The dregs on this king, to which allusion is made, is given in the Christian Arabic Poets, II. 566.
7 Allusion to Al-Nâbiyâh’s verse, l. c. 32a. The meaning was disputed in antiquity, different readings and interpretations are quoted in the editor’s note.
8 Name of a mountain in the Jâhliyâ.”
LETTERS OF ABU ‘L-‘ALĀ AL-MA‘ARRI.

Jahilmān. ‘You have done well, so choose what you will have.’ And they chose to remain Jahilmān’s companions so long as they lived, and they were his associates forty years, and never in all that time repeated to him the same story. Then he was castrated by Al-Zubayr, and his story is well known. After him (14) reigned ‘Amr, for Kāfir 4 had planned that he should succeed 5 , and it is said that it was ‘Amr who built Al-Hirah and marked it out,—and he remained king until the severity was withdrawn from him by a destiny which slew him, when he repented of the acts of piety that he might have performed but omitted. After him reigned his son Imrūn ‘al-‘Ulāriyya 6,—and the folly of a foolish man will not hasten his end. Others however say that after ‘Amr his son Al-Hirah Muharrīr 7 reigned,—and indeed every kingdom save that of the Eternal becomes dispersed. After Imrūn ‘al-‘Ulāri reigned his son Al-Nu’mānas the Great, who built Al-Khawāṣṣa 8 , and abode for a time, until one day he looked pensively at Al-Khawāṣṣa and his kingdom so full of pleasures, and asked, ‘Must all that I see perish?’ They answered, ‘Yes, notwithstanding thy pains.’ So he disdained the throne, and (20) sought the face of his Lord before the evil day. This is recorded by ‘Abd al-Samīr 9 son of Zaid; and all of them walk in the footsteps of destiny. After him reigned his brother Al-Mundhir 10 , and each of us has had to beware of God. His mother was Hāzimah’s sister, but she did not escape for the purity of her name. Al-Mundhir invaded Syria 11 , and was slain by the Ghassanids and his son Al-Mundhir reigned after him,—some of time’s wrongs are kind. This Al-Mundhir went to take vengeance for his father, and met with a fate, which occasioned great trouble at the time, at the hands of Al-Hirah’s 12 . He was slain while seeking to arrange his

1 The story is told at length in Table I. 557, 559.
2 Owner of the horse Al-‘Aṣr, see supra, p. 26.
4 The story told by Tāhir and others is that Kāfir astounded himself, like Zoppas, to obtain the confidence of Al-‘Ulā, and then introduced an army into Al-‘Ulā to seize it.
5 Tahař I. 258.
6 Hāzimah, p. 99, after Tahař I. 534, who assigns him 114 years.
7 According to Hāzimah after Tahař, Imrūn ‘al-‘Ulāri came to the throne after it had lapsed, and he it was who called the first Muharrīr. And according to both historians Al-Nu’mānas was the second. Imrūn ‘al-‘Ulāri, it is perhaps not surprising that the author should have got into some confusion about these names which are repeated by the chroniclers to make the lists of kings suit their chronological schemes.
8 The following story with the version of ‘Adī bin Zaid at tais it is given by Tahař I. 853.
9 The story of Tahař I. 891, and others.
10 According to Tahař it was his grandfather who was killed by Al-Hirah. The opinion adopted by the author is, he Kāhirī’s.

LETTER XXX.

father at ‘Ain Uzbī. Then reigned his brother ‘Amr son of Hīn; 1—yet could he find no refuge in rock or mountain. By God’s command Ibn Kulsūm slew him, whether he was guilty or innocent. Then reigned Al-Nu’mānas 5 son of Al-Mundhir, who was not wanting in firmness: it was he about whom the poet ‘Adī son of Zaid 7 used his efforts with the king of Persia until he set him on the throne, and left his brethren and tried not him. Afterwards he put ‘Adī in fetters, and he died in prison. No one in this world can be ransom. Then the son of ‘Adī Ibn Zaid accused Al-Nu’mānas 5, so that a trap was laid for him by Kīsa 6, and Abu Kāfūs was thrown into the elephants’ house to meet his end. Then ended the dynasty of Al-Mundhir, and fate is quite strong enough for that. (2) And Kīsa set over Al-‘Ulā, a slave son of Kāfūs, and then came Islam, and put an end to the trouble. ‘Ihya was perpetrated at ‘Ain Tamr. He was murdered by Zaid of the houses, since they were of one family, both of them being sprung from Twa, albeit a peddler will not keep a man alive. Old is the tale of the kings of Persia; yet their line too ended. Darius was slain by Alexander, and the royal blood was left unavenged. Then after him rose the kings of the provinces, and indeed the world consists of new-comers and those that are gone by.—and (10) when their time was over ‘Adī son of Zaid succeeded in the throne, and he announced the return of the sovereignty to the Persians. Then he perished and Sākib arose, and the gifted palm will give thee of its fruit; 1 after him rose Hurmuz, with whose good sense scandalmongers found fault. After him Bahram, 2 name-sake of Mars, and he found no helper. Likewise Bahram the Second was looked upon by the Christian kings. Then rose Bahram the Third, and time, when it cheers, is false. Then rose a king called Y ūsu, but according to others Nīsa 3. Then succeeded a second Hurmuz, and what king’s reign does not cease? He (26)
too perished, leaving an unborn child Sibûr; and the kingdom get into confusion after him. Then was born Sibûr of the Shoulders, whose story is not unknown. After him rose Ashdrîl, and some one pointed him out to death. Then rose Sibûr and dealt justly with the people, had not his soul resolved a death-warrant. Then rose Bahrim son of Sibûr, and succeeded to the throne, but afterwards perished. Then rose Yadda-mij, and he, as the Persians tell, was unjust and tyrannical towards them. But God's fate does not overlook tyranny; and he was kicked, it is said, by a horse, and so that cord was broken. Then there rose after him his son Bahrim jîr; and is there on earth a king who does no wrong? Verily God has implanted wrong-doing in men's nature, and given them authority over all other creatures. Antichrist had a coffin for his castle after his famous palace; Ka'bîlah was removed from this world by death; Khwa is-Abrâwî lived long without a rival, then perished, and became as though he had never reigned. And when the blessed Prophet heard the story of his daughter Bûthma, he said, "Never shall a nation prosper that has given a woman charge of its affairs." Many, many a king, of Arabs and other nations, has been lost like one who cannot find his way or refuses to appear. And if this be the way with kings, what can the common people or the poor say? Destruction has not spared the liberal either; over Hûtûm the funeral blackened sounded; Khawwâm Mûsâm saw a look on the face of one of those who were sharing the water, and, giving his share to the brother of Nazir, perished in the wilderness. Likewise the heroes and champions of the Arabs have not been spared by the shahs and dars of formine. What (5) happened to 'Uqilîah son of 'Aûbîsrîn, brother of Yârubî, albeit he had a great following in the field? Fate sent against him Dhûn-is of Baniyûf at Khawwâm, who brought upon him a day of mischief. 'Bûthma son of Kain' made a raid to keep off famine; and he was slain by Khabîb son of Ka'bîlah. 'Anna son of Mâdî Kâthîma' 13 was slain at Nahawand; he died a martyr indeed, and it was through his sacrifice that the Persians were driven back from the Arab hearts. 13

1 According to Tâbût he went as a spy into Caesar's camp, and being recognized, was sewn into an saddle; out of which he escaped, and afterwards took the Roman Emperor prisoner. See note 5, p. 170. 14 According to Tâbût he was exposed owing to his cruelty. 15 See Tâbût, p. 486. 16 Tâbût, p. 487. 17 Tâbût, p. 489. 18 'Anna is mentioned by Tâbût; tradition of what the Prophet said is in Ibn Kântîmâ, p. 274. 19 Khanum, p. 277. "On the day of Khawwâm the Arab won a victory, and 'Uqilîah son of Al-Shâbirî, who is called 'Abdul Al-Fanûrî (the banner of the housemen), was killed by Dhûn-is." 20 Khanum, p. 457; Kitalî (181) L. 134. 21 A poet and champion who was contemporary with the Prophet, and died in the Caliphate of Omar, or according to others Othman, on an expedition. There were different accounts of the place and time of his death, which is said to have been caused by a stroke of paralytic, Agilîm XIV. 28.

he had not perished. 'Anstâsh 14 son of 'Abbâs 15 met his doom at the hands of 'Abbâs Al-Râdîq. Al-Sâlih son of 'Abbâs was slain by the Banû Hatîf. It is idle to require or to be angry with fate! 'Amûz 16 son of 'Abbîs died of scab, and Zaid of the hounds died of fever; only 'Amûz was taken unbelieving; whereas Zaid came on a visit to the Prophet, and swore allegiance to him like a firm confessor. Khâlid 17 son of 'Abbâs was slain by Ibn Sâlih in the protection of Al-Nâ'mân, so wonderful are time's vicissitudes. How many a brave champion is gone, who fought so well with his opponent! And this is no exhaustive list of those that are gone, but merely a selection. You know well too that time's hand does not spare the trumpeting brute 18 called Abu 'Abbâs Al-Mashîh, with which the kings frighten their enemies, and by whose help they benefit their friends. Albeit he tramples on the ground with four mighty pillars, and distinguishes between friend and foe. He came to battle and was slain by the Thafrâf; 19 had he been given a longer span, the ravages of time would still have carried him off. And by the hand of Al-Muhammad there perished another like unto him, who came in search of food. And were any living creature save God given a life as long as that of the stars, escaping from all mischief and hurt, he would still, as Roû'ah 20 says, 'he kept in store for old age or death.' Three escapes not from the claws of time the twenty him, whose food is not sefîa 21 or mardî, 22 but who rears every day some prey which the robber's arts.

1 This and the following passage are copied with the last in Agilîm l. c., as heroes of irresistible prowess.
2 'Abbâs was a distant ancestor, and the poet is usually called 'Abdshîr of 'Abbâs. Various accounts of his death are collected in the Agilîm VII. 172, among them this.
3 Described in the Agilîm XVIII. 124 as the defender of the Arabs, the greatest poet, the fastest runner, and the best at finding his way.
4 See supra, p. 57, note a and b. 5 Agilîm X. 19, where the story is told at length. Khâlid was chief of the Hatîfîs, and, having surrounded the encamp of the tribe Absh and Dhîshyân, went to the court of Al-Nâ'mân, being a present of a horse. Here he met Al-Hâfiz Ibn Sâlih, surviving of the tribe Yârubî, which had been railed by Khâlid years before. A quarrel ensuing led to the murder of Khâlid by Al-Hâfiz at the court.
6 Name for the elephant.
7 The Thafrâf referred to is Al-'Abbâs En Mâsâlî, who killed an elephant at the battle of Sama Al-Nâ'mân, Agilîm XXI. 177, Ibn Al-Qâfarî, 489. His death was hailed by his fellow enmies Abu Mâjîm. Al-Muhammad Ibn Al-Sâlih was his contemporary, whose wars with the Khawwâm are described at length in Kitalî of Al-Mohâmmad.
8 An account of this poet is given in the Agilîm XXII; but the line referred to is not quoted.
9 None of a plant.
10 A form of the fruit of the n. [UL. 10.].
the flock, and loosening some of its cords. Chased by the farmer's hounds he escapes them, and seizes the keeper's own lamb and devours it. He protects the (15) calves of the byre a after she has drunk the intoxicating cup that is not wine but death, treating them as his own, and feeding them with the product of his arts. At times he is starving and miserable, and even when hungry is envied for his fullness. 'Tis supposed that he has been drinking blood, whereas in truth he has had no lack of destitution. And often indeed the flocks perish before him and he (20) has a merry time, and he catches the shepherd aalep and has a feast. Yet are his fatts longer than his feasts; and thirst is co-partner with his vile nature. With such a life holboit he is satisfied with all its hardships, and why should his miserable nature avoid it? Then one day he saw a lad, who is no fool, alone with a small flock, and this excites his cupidity. Holboit 'there is many a wound in the arrows of a lad;' so when the wolf makes his attack, our stripling having a bow in his hand, sends one of his arrows into the last place that the wolf would wish, and the wolf's side becomes open, and sadly do they miss their shored and sagacious father. The hyena too is no stranger to death, whether he die a natural death, or whether there chase him from behind his ears the father of a 10 young some family who makes him their food, so that they avert with his flesh the pangs of hunger when they overtake them. Or some morning, it may be, a savage dog surprises him, and harries after him furiously, and takes him cunningly, so that neither running nor leaping saves him. Or, a torrent of water comes while the hyena is with his spouse in his lair, and the water carries them both away, and when morning comes he is drowned and voiceless. He might as well have never howled under a carcasse; and never battered on the remains of the lion's feast. How meanly used lie to run over the stones! And now his skin is made into a mantle! Such are time's vicitimis! It makes the saturated thirsty; the fox does not escape for all his cunning, neither does the spirit of the dun hyena of the sand-hills. Death too separates the hare from his mate, and cuts him off; neither is the rabbit's mother helped by her prayer 'God make me quick-footed, and stay-at-home, able to esteem the arrow up the hill.' She too is troubled by some snare, and finds herself suddenly in a bag; or else by some early-rising sporting Nimrod, whose heart is madly set upon the chase, who sprints against her on the high ground a fiery hunter, with a ribbon (16) round his neck, or else sends against her some falcons which break the vertebrae of her back; or else an eagle pounces upon her, and so trouble overtakes her.

1 There is an allusion to this in a proverb, Maylami I. 18a.
2 The flesh of the hyena is harmful for fools.
3 The neck of the horse that went in the chase was marked with blood. Montana II. 72.
LETTERS OF ABU 'LALĀ AL-MĀʿARĪ.

Or can the decree of God be foiled by the wild ass, over whom day and night pass, keeping him still fresh, by no means decrepit, now braying, now rambling, with fire or eight mates, who trample the ground with no light step, having fed on plants watered by the spring rain, and scrambled for the puddles and Sawīt? 1

16 Off flies their fur, and only their flesh and bones remain, until the meadow plants dry up, when he takes them wherever there is the trace of a stream; and when Al-Hanūb or Al-Dhāḥir rises, and they are hastening to a watering-place, the summer heat kindles fiery thirst, and they both of them of some deep pool, when at the false dawn they descend. But fate has set some howman on the watch, with a twang weapon in his hand, a weapon which says to the victim die! and it dies, a weapon selected by some vagabond of the tribe Alī or Kalībā: who watched it when it was a growing wand, until it became a magician’s wand in his hand. Every summer 2 he would bring it water to shorten the dry period for it; and at last when its growth was complete and it was suitable for the shears, he came one morning and detached it, with no hunger or violent wrench, and set it on a stand in his tent. There he let it imbibe the juice of the back, and then applied the knife. And when he had shaped it to his satisfaction, he took it to one of the cities of the Arabs, merely intending to learn its value, not with any idea of selling it to any one to live upon its spoil. There, though offered for it sacks and garments, he fluted it among the people, and refused to come to terms, and was unwilling to return home without it; and though offers were constantly increased, he thought it was to part with it, and going off to the watering-place with it in his hand, set down to watch for the beasts. At the end of the night the she-asses come trooping, with the warlike champion in front; and now piercing death approaches, and he is shot by one who feeds on wild-beasts’ remnant, who earns the title ḥandūr or ḥa‘īr. Straightway he hits him, and the mistress abandons the mate who has found his death-blow, and the straight-shooter coming out of his hiding-place takes him to his little children, and makes of his flesh strips and slices, while his skin is despatched to the tanner. Like him does the short-nosed wild bull meet death—the creature who troubles p. 16 if a man sees him, who endures a long time, during which the beast can devise nothing against him; and then one day he looks in the direction of the river-bed, and the channelled greet him with a flowery carpet, and the high wind inspires him with his skin free from wounds, till the north wind drive him to take refuge near some far-off loons, nowhere near the other loons, where he

1 According to the Bayyān edition the name of a spring. The description here given is after Farahalā.

2 The whole of this description is from Shamsānī (Jāmsūnsh, pp. 155, 157).

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remains the long night complaining of the cold, the clouds emptying their load of hail upon him: and at morning the hunter comes upon him with his hounds, keen-scented after game, stooks, tough fighters, with eyes like grey ‘ājezh 3 flowers; 10 with hooves fastened to their necks, a very torment to the quarry. When he sees them, he turns his back to fly, fancying that a fire is raging in the desert. Then, after fleeing far, he rounds in fear and cold, and plunges with the two spears that grow apart from each other in his head; and the dogs retreat from him and leave him the victory, while the boldest of the pursuers lies prostrate in the dust. And when he feels sure of escape there crosses his path a mounted horseman, from whose arrows he receives a wound in the breast or in the thigh, and who returns bringing with him the wild bull to his heart after his hunt. 4 Death over him looks neither the absent nor the present, and ‘God’s is the matter before and after, and that day shall the believers rejoice.’ So also with his smitten mate, she too has no long term here; for often her calf falls into the power of some hungry wolf, some savage, wandering, rebellious creature; he makes the attack while she is in a desert land, heedless; and when she returns to give milk to her calf, she finds nothing but blood and bones. Then she abides distraught three or four days, and after that returns to her feeding and watering. This makes her forget her calf, and she is satisfied to let things go their way. Had time overlooked her, she would not have blamed it; as it was, time afflicted her 10 with adversity, and not she. Neither is security from the assaults of destiny granted to the gazelle which never is sheltered by wall, but strays at large in the wide and empty plains, that spends its nights between ḍāgh and ḍāgh, but haunts instead the countries that abound in qamān arcā and arāb, where it is safe from the hunters’ acts. God sends it fitness, and mischief is removed from it. There it passes itself with the arāb fruit, ripe and unripe, having taken to itself a hair with a bed, the fruit having stained its mouth cherry-colour, it being red (Adam) and its mate black (Eve), and the two in a Paradise if only they could abide there. Not indeed that they resemble our first parents, though their colours correspond with their names—and while they are in this humble existence, fate 10 fuels their clear water, and the snake is sent to them, the snake by which it was decreed that the old Adam should fall; which finds our fair gazelle astray under the shade of some bush, fearing no mischief; and the seducer falls upon it with its poisonous fang, and gives it a taste of death, death which separates it from all its friends. It might as well never have tasted young herb or old; and never

1 Said to be a plant with a red flower, capable of retaining moisture in great quantity.
2 Compare Abu Ḫanīfah, Jāmsūnsh, pp. 153, 433.
3 Fumes of wormwood.
(4) snuffed the pleasant Zephyr. Off flies his mate, miserable for loss of him; and then after the lapse of time becomes the mate of another; to be herself in her turn the prey of that destruction which gathers them that come after to them that have gone before. "The life of this world is but a deceptive war!"

Nur are the eyes of misfortune closed to the speckled ostrich, who goes without shoes and sandals, who drinks neither at watering-place nor channel, and is satisfied with colocyth and myrrh. When he is feeding in the Zaumawâr, he might seem an Ethiopian (not a Greek) slave. He wears neither bracelet nor earrings, and rarely leaves the ṣarayfû; he talks to his mate in a brawny croak: and the female lays her eggs in haste. She wraps them in her wings so that they sustain no damage, and weakens in ṣajû till they are saturated. He is deaf and understands nought that is said; he wears no covering on his head, light or heavy. Lank and blinking, with a bend like a pointless arrow, he too has death ready to seize him, whom, though he run in fear, he cannot forecast. Whether it come in a horseman's house, or some unforeseen wise, such as, when he goes feeding with the females, when they come out at morn or even, and there comes suddenly across the sky a thundercloud, not one that has spent its water. Hastening down the valley to his young who have no warm coat of feathers; a lightning bolt strikes his shoulder, and, see! death creeps over him. Nor does the arrow of adversity miss the chamois half white, half black, the chamois who is so shy of mankind, who wanders feeding in the red herbs and the black; never fearing orphanhood for his young; whose drink is the pure water flowed by no spring: water given directly by a booneess heaven to its reservoir, clear blue water which inspires no fear in him that drinks it, water, the flashing of which delights him that has well drunk—

how much more him that is athirst, and whose throat is parched! The chamois then, after staying long on a crag below which is the nest of the falcons, suddenly finds that some prince has called from his land a horseman who used to be ever shooting the wild game with his arrows; who is driven by hunger and fright to a mountain-top covered by faky clouds. And when he has fasted long and feels that his Lord has misguided him, he shoots the chamois, and bites his liver, and rising to relieve his hunger takes his knife and divides him into pieces, and kindles a fire where he is, and after eating a little of his flesh, goes away and leaves him to broil. Likewise the chamois' mate does not fulfil the tale of her years; she goes the way of the old beast who leaves the pure stream: and in the main matter

1 A black plant.
2 "Name of a bitter herb; but it may also mean a robe.
3 Liqueur ex postis parte struthionum tenuem lucanur effusus.

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the two are alike. And the young one does not escape either, but is sure to perish by some painful doom.

Nor do the feet of trouble slide off the fiery stallion, that is neither galloped nor jaded, but is set down among valuable flocks, which kill their time among sand-dunes, that from early morning consume the arid and the pure-sown; the mortal who shoots them might as well have never shot; the enemy are driven off them with kheses, and the riders pull tight their reins in order not to approach them. Yet even this stallion decays and becomes decrepit, though he never carried one stick of a saddle. He drinks such a draught of death as makes him forget the bitter herbs, after he has grown secure and ceased to fear rivalry. Else there beholds (5) him some appointed and other than this, such as fate can always divert itself with.

Some nightly guest comes to his master in a year wherein the clouds have played false; bringing in his train riders who have been ever since evening in the saddle, making for this man, hoping to obtain from him a service, whereby they might avert the misery of that year. He, wishing to build up glory for his young ones, glory based on a secure foundation, and thrilled with ambition, makes for his stallion and hamstrings him. The nightly host strikes him with a sword, and one of death's ministers fetches him; and he delivers the fat of his hump to the cooking-pot, and the mistress of the house saves up dreed strips thereof. His flesh is set in pans that are filled for the entertainment of the guests. And for one that meets his doom it is the same in whatever way he meets it; he may have guarded against it, but he did not escape it notwithstanding. Neither are the eyelids of death closed against the swift steed, who outruns the wind, who presents ever fresh beauties to the eye, and whose iron hoofs carry gold. Ample of skin, how greedily he seizes on the course! Round his feet are bands of silver; his hoofs are of emerald and crush the stones. No spots has he, nor whitens over his eyes; when he neighs he arouses delight; food is brought him every morning and evening, and he is visited when the barking cesses. Every winter evening milk camel with abundant milk are brought him; and all Anzar1 gives him the palm for rating. Some day his owner is surprised by a fox (the shafts of time cannot be averted); he is wounded in the chest with a speer-point; and he and his master perish with bleeding foreheads. He might as well never have won a race, and never had an evening dragoon. Neither do God's fore-ordained shafts (56) make a mistake and pass over the beaked eagle, who drags to his eye the creatures of the desert, who makes the top of Rajdârī 8 or else Tadîm 9 his home; his beak is like an axe; some cold morning when shaking off its wing

1 = Aralim.
2 Mountain near Mallinh.
3 Locality unknown.
the hoar-frost, it was far off a gazelle, and hopes to bring it home to its chick too meagre as yet to move; so it swops hoping to get some good, but its chance of booty fails it; for it strikes again some jagged crag, which breaks its wing where it joins its body; and it falls, being at the last gasp, on land, whether far from or near water; and up comes Reynard, Reynard whom it has long oppressed, 

(54) robbing him of his mate and young; and he makes its flesh food for his cubs; thus p. 199 is the time of its end come, and the cichls are left on a high mountain, "poor things that stretch their wings each morning, when they hear the blowing of the wind, or the croaking of the raven." Thus destiny has dealt with their dam.

For the raven, too, the sword of fate has an edge—the raven that hopes about the house, as though his thigh shoves were fed; the raven clothed by God (5) with the garments of youth, which, when it bears of a palm-tree with ripe dates, travels thitherward, avoiding the fowlers; and when secure it alights in the plain, with eyes so clear that they might be the water in the hollow of a rock. Though secure, it still is prudently excited, and though chated, still well-skilled in its trade. Maybe it alights on some camel old and galled, and picks out its eye with its beak, then makes for the flesh on its back. When the time arrives for the parting of the tribe, it croaks, and it is sport to it when the caravan hammers. Many a man (10) has cursed it, and prayed that it might pass its morning in a pool of blood. And so it goes on until it becomes old and is called by the Arabs Ghulatif, when by the command of the Eternal it drinks a cup of poison. When its offspring and progeny increase, fate marks for it some soul with a big stone in his hand, who hits it some moment when it heeds not, and when fate is lying in ambush behind it. And then the name 'parabid,' by which it was called in jest, not in virtue of any natural defect, turns out to be true. So it is wounded, and has to put up with trouble like that of him who has drunk too much wine; and the sporting boy comes up with it, having a crook in his hand, and fasoms a hempen cord to its leg, tying it up like a beast; and begins to mock in its mirth, saying to its captor, 'Why do you not croak?' And thus he continues until the curtain of night is installed, when the child returns to his home, and they fasten the raven to a chair; and the child fearing advantage may have been taken of its sleeping hours comes to it early next morning, not indeed with any intention of letting it loose: and he finds it has breathed its last, and has gone out from prison into liberty.

Neither do God's decree overlook the doves which would mount some branch of the thicket, its wood being green and tender, and time dealing gently with it; her

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1 Supra, p. 66.

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feeling-ground was hard by, and her drinking-place easy of access, so that even (99) a fool could find it. And after each visit to the water she would recite her various measures, like the musician at a drinking-bout, who mounts the platform to play, and drives away the cares of the drinkers by the beauty of her voice and manner. Foods think she is weeping, but she complains not of her life, her notes are all pleasure and delight, and no blame attaches to her. And one evening, when, her heart hiding no fear, she is improvising on her branch, fate sets upon her a kite, with sharp talons, no respecter of persons, that tears open her breast, and she finds (94) death very near. And the chick is left an orphan to weep for her evening and night.

Neither does the locust escape from the assaults of fate, the locust whose p. 119 feeling-ground is every portion of the earth that is covered with green; whereas she alights at night with eye like the nail of a caitiff. The departure of the day gladness her and makes her fly, and it vexes her when she is hit by any rain-laden cloud. She passes her night on a field of some poor man with little of chattels or cattle, around her a flock of locusts, clustering together at the chilly hour; and at that cool time the poor man rises, and brings with him a wallet or a sack, wherein he throws them, well knowing what is he about; and he squashes them in a stream (5) of water, not as the locust of Ayyurib was squashed, and they become food for his young ones, who have long had no proper diet. Neither can the wiles of fate be eluded by the bee, seeking flower-juice on the mountain top, hard of ascent; whence death would have kept aloof, if it feared any height—she bee that flies about amid bagless and dandelions (9), and returns home after midnight. In her house she has a store, such as the most liberal could not supply; into a cup of pleasing sweetly she sets a draught of honey thought to be a medicine. For her destruction some man in rags is appointed, some man not expecting honourable (10) living; who brings with him pans and staves, and some hungryurchins anxious to earn some food, of the tribe of Hudhail8 son of Mudhkal or of Fahan. With greedy heart he rises early and climbs with the climber, until his body is raised aloft, and then he falls upon the bees, hanging between hempen ropes, like a poor man bent on getting honey; and sends a cloud of smoke upon them, till they come

8 Names of melolias.

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1 The phrase comes in a verse of Mas'udi in Adlans Al-Nawawi, quoted in T. A. 726, 44c.

2 According to one explanation, 'Asyfir was a man, and Locust the name of his horse, according to another, a man named 'Asyfir sought a locust which, when he put it into his mouth, escaped through a branch in one of his teeth; according to another, a man sought several locusts, and, as he did not beat them sufficiently, some escaped. See also Madkhal 21, 47.

6 Allusion to the story of 'Uthman ben Shuraim told in Jami'eh, p. 36, where the poet, being of the tribe of Fahan, robbed the honey of the Hudhail.

[II, 10.]
for they who have obeyed God and his Apostle ‘are with those whom God has (60) favoured, prophets, saints, martyrs, pious men,—a right noble company!’ If he have left the hill of Damascus, with its plain and its waters, he is drinking among large-eyed fishes in a cup mixed with camphor; if he have been provided for his journey with a winding-sheet, he has now changed it for ‘silk;’ if he have left the company of his brethren, he is now near his Lord in the abode of life. He is removed from the narrow quarters to the abode of eternity and joy. ‘Such is the next world, which we shall give unto them that would not exalt themselves nor do (14) harm in this, and the result is to them that fear.’ How many a lost sheep did he seek and guide right? How many a depredant did he guard and faithfully return! How many a promise did he observe and keep! How many a vanity did he abstain from uttering! If Almighty God have removed him from us, He has taken him near Himself; and blessed him; if He have taken him away, He has not left his place without a successor. He saw his son in manhood’s prime, and his son’s sons a growing family. Nor is there a better heritage than a son known to be pious. Each time he makes mention of God he lightens his father’s sins. (non) Not indeed that the dead man, thank God, had any sins to be lightened; but his long array of good acts will be doubled, and his lofty place be raised yet higher. And as for yourself (God lengthen your days!), were it not the custom to administer consolation at times of affliction, I should not have opened my mouth for such a purpose, neither should I have ventured on a word of exhortation, seeing that you know better than I do about the vicissitudes of time, and the ways in which men die. In telling you all this I am like one who presents the people of Yahrim with a sack of sand, or one who should get up early to bid the ants lay up stores. May God preserve you, and give you no more pains; inspire you, and not misguide you; bestow on you blessings, and not afflict you with troubles; increase you with honours, and not burden you with weights; bring you near Him, and not reckon with you too severely! May He show you in my lord Abu 7 Tulár and his son what Sa’d Al-Ashîrî8 saw in his son—doing the opposite of what was done by Al-Walîd9 son of Mughirah! For ye have been blessed

1 Yahrim was a place on the coast of Arabia near Bahrayn, famed for its sand-heaps, whose growth the text.
2 Sa’d Al-Ashîrî was the name of a tribe of Madîhâ, living in Yemen. Ibn Wâsibi, one of their priests, was said to have been an early convert to Islam. (Spranger, Das Leben Oor. des Mahommed, III. 459.) In the anthology called Lâfîf Al-Ma’arif (Bobîhan MS.) It is given as the name of one of the Prophet’s companions, as called because of the number of his family.
3 A contemporary of the Prophet, mentioned by Ibn Hâkâm among the Prophet’s opponents.
abundant wealth, and seems to behold it; and when the 'Memorial' came to him, he rejected it, and was not thankful; but you (God preserve you!) are a tree that can produce none but good fruit, and a sea wherein none but pearls of the best colour can grow. 'From the tree grows the sucker;' and 'If a man resemble his father, none can blame him.' I need to excuse myself, and proffer ceaseless excuses, for what delayed my letter until now was the fact that since that leaf's death there is left me neither a mind to dictate nor an intelligent copyist. To speak truly, I may be reckoned among the desirers. Abu Da'dl says,°

'I do not regard scanty means as poverty, but the loss of those of whom one is bereaved is real poverty.'

As for my master Abu'l-Majd, his occupations, unprofitable as they are, almost deprive him of sleep; and he makes no difference between night and day; his day is like a string that is too short for the occupations that have to be crowded on it; and the bulk thereof are for the benefit of one from whom thanks will never be heard, and from aiding whom no good great is to be gained.

Were it not that you might think my conduct dictated by neglect of duty, I should have bidden a noon, and reckoned silence as gain, since solitude alters the intellect, and diverts the speaker from speaking. Albeit I will not deny that it gives distraction, and causes one not to feel the blow, and so eases the mind.

God never make me like one who does honour till he is envenomed, and whose excuse is worse than his crime; and God forbid that I should be like the owner of nine-year-old camels who put up with painful years of famine, and then exchanged them for ewes with horns of unequal lengths. And what use is the patience of the sea after the trouble has been got over? I have not hastened, so that I could say I had improved; as the man who hurries can make his improvement his excuse.—on the contrary, I have failed in my duty and been neglectful, but rely on my Lord's generosity. Consolation between strangers should be administered within three days, but between relations during a year. Till the year is out, weeping, in the opinion of Laibd,° is the law. I indeed might well weep not a year only or a month, but my whole life; and my internal condition is like what an ancient poet says about his camel;°

'Fond of the foremost, each time she sees a caravan, the foremost camels are her companions.'

I beg you will not drive your reed over an answer to this letter, for I know

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8 Maydání Il. 254.
9 Aghâdi XVI. 29.
10 Majâsâr of Khâthîr Al-Mîqâlî Il. 54.

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LETTER XXXI.

so well what is in your mind that I need not give trouble to your hand. God who is Almighty will protect you, and we all are hoping for you and praying for you. And may the rising sun bring you each morning recruited strength in accordance with your merits.

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LETTER XXXII.

Congratulation on the birth of a child.

We are delighted with the new arrival, God give him a large share of his name, and the utmost of that after which he is called. I have thought of many good omen connected with his birth, his being born on a Friday, the day of assembly, which is a symbol of gathering, and is besides a day of feasting and expenditure—God make him therefore free-handed; it is moreover a day of religious observance; may God therefore graciously bring him whither the pious have attained. His arrival moreover corresponded with the commencement of the 'days of the old woman,' and that is an omen of health and security, for old women are tender to infants than girls. A dyer says,

'She dandles her bucket as an old woman dandles a child.'

There is a proverb too, 'Dander' as an old woman with an infant;' then his arrival coincided with the break-up of winter, and the 'break-up' (Fiyâš, which means the change from cold to heat, or from a forest into the open plain) is considered a good omen. This is illustrated by the tradition of Kâthîr, who (10) came on a visit to the Prophet, and her daughter Hadâyaî (4) said to her, 'Fiyâhî! (deliverance!) your foot shall not cease to be erect;' but the tradition is too long to quote. It is fortunate too for one who arrives into this world to meet the spring smiling in his face, bidding him welcome with its roses and its flowers, presenting him with its rich verdure. For March and April are the merriest of the months of the year, and smile when time frowns. The children of the desert exult in them, marvelling how the wilderness decks itself out in green array, and (13) plucking the mushrooms and other fungi that appear. It is a bad sign for the comer into this world to be met by the two white months, shaking their hoarfrost on him, and sighing with their chilly, soaking winds, and grinning out of their icy mouths, whose pearsallness is far from beautiful. The time when the

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1 The old name for seven days at the end of winter.
2 Mafjûd, § 238; author unknown (Abî, Khâthîr Al-Mîqâlî Il. 54).
3 Not in the ordinary collections.
4 The tradition is quoted in Al-Tâl Al-Athîr I 109.
LETTER XXXIII.

and Al-No'mán son of Bashit ¹ says,

'They were poured upon him, but not poured close to: truly misery is
poured on the most miserable.'

And if the Christian be imprisoned and his poultry slaughtered, then your
secretary is likely to lose the price of the poultry, for he is of the same religion as (90)
his friend, and an old writer says,

'If the thief of others, we avenge on Taim allāt the fault p. 115
of the Banu 'Ijā.'

And the proverb says,

'When the cattle refuse to drink, it is the bull that is hit.'

Now if the thief has slaughtered the cock he ² has made away with the cattle,
stallion, and all; ³ but if he has forgotten him, then he will be some comfort and
consolation to his owners, since they are sure to admire him more than Bashit. ⁴ (4)
admired his cock, though he says,

'What is it that keeps me awake in spite of the charms of sleep? It is
the voice of a creature with a crop dwelling in my house; on his head
there is a thing growing like sorrel, which thinks of producing fruit
from the end of summer.'

If his liberation be too long delayed, his hair may be stolen too; but if you
think fit to enquire into the case, do so.

LETTER XXXIII.

Addressed to the Kalb.

God forbid that I should make any objection to a sentence, and indeed I am
sensible that 'Ali, on whom be peace, took a blanket off his son Al-Hasan,
thinking it belonged to the treasury, as well as of many other traditions, among
them that Shuraih took his son into custody when his son had gone security for
another man, and how Uthman interceded with the Prophet for Al-Mahdi-
Miyash, and was refused. Now the bearer of this letter states that he and his (4)
son were arrested yesterday, and were confronted with one of the 'two Umā-

¹ The story of Kalb and his stallion Ghabayyin is often told, e.g. Ebnashak, p. 421. The
spelling of the name with 'Ash for Gasr is condemned by Mayhānī, who however records that
Ash 'i-Nal al-qitl x 80.
² Al-Nal's mother was a slave, and her masters were sheep-owners, Aqībī, l. 27.
³ Aqībī XV, 35. In a diastasis the tribe of Ilyā divided into three companies, one
of which followed the direction taken by this camel.
⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Qādir, ed. Aqībī, p. 120.
riyaha," and the one whose presence is most hateful to a Moslem. And in the case of his son the judgment was carried out, and undoubtedly the same thing happened to Abu Sulaym son of Harb, although he was the chief of the Quraysh; and his father escaped by 'the skin of his teeth,' being saved by his old age and a bodily ailment. Now of the two Umairiyahs that I have mentioned, one is a feminine robe, and the other is presented by the executioner to one who has erred. The poet says,

"Let not a man be deceived by a lengthy Umairiyah of full size upon an inconsistent woman."

And he complains of Al-Hakim,—now Kureish before Islam set up a member of the Banu Sulaim called Al-Hakim, who instructed people in manners in the sacred territory, and rebuked the foolish; and he is meant in the verse,

"Every day I practise my circuit in the murrabah; for fear lest Hakim may reprove me."

And had not the modern Hakim an article prefixed, according to the believers in transmigration it might well be the same Hakim.

p. 117

LETTER XXXIV.

I am always anxiously expecting news of you, as anxiously as the gazelle looks out for its mother, or one that suffers from drought for the lightning that portends rain. And when I get flash after flash, it produces in me fresh elation, and I ask about you as Dubbah asked after Su'aid, and Muhallab the Ta'llie after Zaid; and I expect intelligence of you from every stranger, and seek it from the students, till some one informed me, after the moon had dried up, and the last months approached, that you had started for Egypt; then some one else told me at the time when the autumn leaves come out, before the rise of the Sphinx, that he had accompanied you to Baghdad. To-day some one else came bringing with him various sorts of gifts, of which the finest was a letter conveying news of your good health; now the confidence that exists between us renders the sending of guarantees unnecessary, and where friendship both in presence and in absence

1 In the verse cited below, which is also quoted in the L. A. and T. A., an Umairiyah is said to be a dyed garment; it was named after 'Umara the Thulath 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud, Aqwal XIV. 106.

Perhaps the other sense is a scourge.

2 Quoted in the lex. with the same explanation.

3 L. A. IV. 235.

4 Supra, p. 59.

5 Probably the father of 'Izid of the house' (Aqhal XVII. 50) is meant; a more famous Muhallab was of another tribe.

6 A herb on which camels browse.
LETTERS OF ABU 'L-ALĀ AL-MAARRI

that since then you have made for Três. And I beg to offer you the sweetest solutions with the fragrance of ambergris or of myrrh.

LETTER XXXVI.

Answer is a letter from Abu 'l-Hasan Muhammad ibn of Suseh about Kalllah wa-Dimmah, and a suggestion from the Sultan that the proverb contained in that book should be put together in an abbreviation.

I felt at the receipt of your letter many forms of pleasure, one from receiving it, and another from hearing it read out, and a third, greater than either, from (1) receiving the news of your good health; and much I marvelled at its language, which was not in rhyme like that of the dark ages, nor in prose like that of the vulgar of our own day, but strong together in verse like pearls of the sea, and fragrant as the garden sapphires in the morning; and the longing of my heart's core for the writer is like that of the pupil of the wakeful eye for sleep; the sun and moon are witness that I speak true; and I repeat my request, and whisper my entreaty, and save your patience by writing so rarely; and have only delayed my answer to this date, because I was unable to do what I am in duty bound to (10) do: for God Almighty says, 'When ye are greeted, then give a better greeting, or return it;' now I can give no better greeting than yours, and God says, 'God will not demand of any soul more than it can do.' Do not ascribe my answer to hypocrisy; had I in my youth been able to do what you ask me, I should have been compelled to resign such tasks when my locks became white; and perhaps his majesty supposes that I still possess the strength and the endurance which he is accustomed to associate with me; but that is not so; my years have mounted, and my frame has become feeble, my steps have become short, and my temper soured; and the mill1 that never did more than buzz has now grown idle. The (14) grinding of that mill I used to confine to myself, and make it serve for me only, in the days when it was not damaged; but now time has dealt hardly with it, and sought remains but for it to quit its habitation, and for its place to become desolate. And all its utility is gone and ended; and if the rest of its sisters like it depart, my pronunciation will be spoiled, and I shall say zin where I ought to my

1 This verse is not apparently in the Newād; the second half is quoted by Maydānī II. 220.
2 Maydānī II, 18. The proverb literally means "saying with nothing to catch hold of?"
3 Name of one of Abu l-Hasan's compositions, which, being in the style of books of fables, might make it likely that the author was familiar with the classical fable-book.
4 Christian Arabic Poets. L. 321.
5 Maydānī I. 245.
by the Sheikh Abu Tahir, about the sour grape; God preserve the author of these two lines! when you addressed me in the way you did I endeavoured to find some allegorical interpretation for the epithet qadil (most glorious) applied to me; I thought that possibly you might be comparing me to jaffi or 'thach,' owing to my foolishness; or that the adjective might be derived from the verb jalis in the sense of 'to be too small,' used of girls too young for child-bearing; or from jalis, to put on an apron, used of slave-girls, as in the verse, 'By Allah, I know not when I put on my apron whether it be made of a beast's skin or of a man's.' I am of course aware that none of these is really the sense you intended the word to suggest, but you used it in accordance with your good opinion, whereas my glosses are based on the real truth; and each of us has both done and spoken rightly, and your conduct will lead to a permanent recompense, and gratitude which will go far towards being eternal, albeit man is not eternal. A poet says, 'When you reach your country, talk of this; for speech gives both death and eternity,' &c.

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LETTER XXXVII.

Your letters come successively, showing that affection is not sinned; and your heart testifies that I too have for you an affection which the trailing blasts cannot obliterate, and the darkness of night cannot hide. And may He who gave us acquaintance and affection add beneficents of His good pleasure a new meeting, Three of your letters have reached me, which I regard as the three stars of the Ram—I prefer this simile to the three legs of the postandam. Kings are like seas—their pearls are not found on the shore—it requires trouble and coaxing to get at them. Hlibous as may be the longest night of winter, still there comes after the commencement of the dawn; and time is long and ever new, and if it affect any of our princes at all, its effects by God's grace will only be like those of the spring showers; for your clouds give no false show. And your family name is 10 Ritual, and that is a good omen, suggesting a cloud bringing copious rain; and events will find in you one who is accustomed to 'drink out of hollows,' and the trials that visit you will find you prepared. And I send a salutation, &c.

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LETTER XXXVIII.

I have received your letter, and can only hope that your new moon may become a full one, and that your pond may turn into a sea, and that the shell of

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1 S. Z. II. 98 is addressed to Abu Tahir Al-Balld.
2 Maynall p. 58. It refers to one who knows his way about, but the origin of the proverb is in other obscure. Cf. supra, p. 22, n. 8.

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LETTER XXXIX.

your fortune may produce a pearl of rare price, and that the buds of your times may open into the sweetest flower. I had been awaiting intelligence from you as the traveller who has lagged behind the caravan asks where his comrades are gone, or the pasture-hunter enquires where the rain has fallen. Were you to appear (2) before the Sultan, you would find him more faithful than the qobl, and better at pedigrees than Al-Bakri; no doors enclose him, and neither servants nor masters are shut out by the chamberlain. Had you not intended to bid adieu to the Picards, and to pay a visit to the rainy South, and been sitting gazing at Casopia with the gaze of a neighbour, not of a stranger, it would have been prudent for you to remain at his court. However, you have made up your mind, and God help you to carry out your plans, and clothe you in the fairest robe of overwhealing blue. I offer you greetings such as one that suffers from drought beseeches on the far-off pastures, and your friends here all think of you as the sufferer in Samikah, thinks of her days in Tabalah, and they praise you as the raised praise their better days.

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LETTER XXXXIX.

I am writing at the commencement of the month of Shuban, called of old the month of shame—and may you never cease to be found fault with for your generosity, and to be envied for your abstinence from faults and follies; and God bring you all the blessings that a month can contain from the new moon to the month's end, and that a day can produce between sunset and sunrise, and that the nights can hold from twilight to dawn; I fancied that ere the Scipio rose you would already have made up your mind, and crossed the Euphrates, and slaked (5) your thirst by a sight of Harran, and returned again to the seashore; and indeed before the centre of 'the Scorpion' appears, you ought most certainly to be near the sounding ocean, or else in the neighbourhood of Prince 'Antu al-salneh, whose power God increase. For one who is in moderate circumstances ought to be near the sea or a prince, especially if the prince be a scholar, and the poor man a man of intelligence and skill. And you, dear sir, have 'tasted both times' (10) adders, and have handled the qobl and the apatriches of travel. If your means are small, they will become easier, for after a year of famine comes a year of abundance, and after the jungle comes the open country. And I offer you greetings which, were they visible, would charm the eyes; and could they be small, you would fancy they were perfumed musk.

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1 Al-Bakri the geographer is mentioned by Ibn Kathir, p. 181.
2 A place in the desert. Tabalah was preserved for its abundant vegetation; the Samikah ofal is mentioned as a typical wilderness in S. Z. I. 86.
LETTER XI.

Part of a letter to the distinguished Sheikh Abū 'l-Ḥasan son of Susīn.  

The populace, dear friend, have been wagging their tongues with the rumour that you were sent on a visit to the 'Mother of Mercy', on getting a draught of the sacred water, and a glance at the conquering town.  And, though they said nothing, they secretly disapproved of your resolution, for there are times and times for the performance of religious duties, and each pilgrimage has its appointed season.  He who owes a fast must not discharge his obligation during (1) either of the feasts, and it is also unlawful to commence prayer at either of the chilly times of day, I mean sunrise and sunset.  Now your going on pilgrimage this year is as unlawful as fasting during the feast of the end of Rāmaḍān, or the use of perfume by one who has entered on the pilgrim's state.  Is there such a thing in the records of the Prophet's followers or of their successors as that a man should have left the battle-field in order to visit God's house?  Now we had a fancy that the Sultan would not permit your starting on a journey this year, and that he would make his preventing you a cumulative benefit.  (10) For you are one of the guardians of the Moslems, one who wields his sword and makes strong his cuirass, and repairs any walls or pinnacles that are insecure; and were it not that the people of Hāleb were occupied with their own concerns, they would have been careful to dissuade you from your plan before it became fixed, and to say how much they will miss you before you were past and gone.  For whom have your subjects got to guard their bricks and mortar, and to provide rations of dates and water to keep them alive?  And on whose opinion shall we rely in making choice of well-woven coats of mail—coats that resemble the skins of leopards?  Who shall act as your deputy in the choice of a serpent-like spear, whose bite is followed by death without delay?  Or when cuirasses have to be repaired, to serve with arrows as the most powerful assurance of safety—cuirasses that look as though they had been stolen from the six-monthers?  Or the inmosts of the quiver, whose notches and wings must be scrutinized, and whose rods and points should be examined by his orders?  (15)

Now in these days there has come an announcement that the Sultan has refused you leave, and this is a matter about which prima facie I know not what to say; the ancient house ever since the days of 'Abūn has been visited by pilgrims, nor has there ever been any fear of transference or alteration, nor has any one changed

LETTER XII.

the ancient custom.  And in Hāleb (which God guard!) there are plenty of garments fit for spoil, and accoutrements which are desirable possessions, and the object of rivalry; and all this will at once come to an end by the conclusion of the truce and the return of the Roman arbiter to his throne at Byzantium.  And if you would remove your people with you, then the Hāleb is a secluded (2) region which is not liable to the dangers to which we are exposed; but if you think of travelling by yourself without your friends, what is the use of that?  Let not that happen which the proverb (3) expresses, 'He wrangled till he won.'  And if one child were to ask another in the dead of night in a discussion, 'Who is rewarded for staying at home many times what he would be rewarded for going on either pilgrimage?' and the second lad answered, 'Mohammed son of Sād,' his arrow would have fallen near the mark; for your protection of your subjects is a greater duty than either pilgrimage.  And your son Abū 'l-Ka'im is young, and (10) it is surely unlawful to desert him; since he is not able to bear up with ill-fortune.  And you must know that the Sultan would not think lightly of such an occasion, and I fear that he may be concerned with the needs of his journey, and require provision, in which case orders will be given to bring you back from your pilgrimage.

If however your object be to get free from harassing occupations, this will be quite feasible without your wearing out any camel, or encountering any strange adventure.  This is how your subjects talk of your departure, which looks like (15) a summer cloud.  God make whatever is best for you come near you at all times, whether it be to travel or to remain at home.  I offer you greetings such as will serve instead of the early showers, and whose fragrance will charm even those that know them not.

If your letters were to come as continuously as rain and as successively as respiration I should always be better pleased with the latter than rain with the former, and like each fresh one better than the last.  You never write except with some kind intention, and never suggest any but prudent courses either openly or secretly.  I know not what I am to say of the happiness which has been granted me in my relations with you, concealing my faults, and hiding the flaws which (4) have spoiled me.  And after this I do not see why pearl earrings should not be got ready for a cat, or gold girdles be cast for an ape.  People might assert that the

1 Mapilal II, 147; the word meaning 'walk' might also be resolved 'went on pilgrimage,' and hence the proverb is very happily cited.  It is not however certain what the proverb originally meant, although the authorities assert that it is to be read of people who are obstinate.
Letters of Abu l'Alā al-Maḥarrī.

Pope's quills are unfailing shafts, or lances like Dhu 'Yaman's. Thankful as I am and grateful for your kindness, I must nevertheless give you some plain advice: by exalting me above my station you set all the tongues to find fault with me—it may be after a time. For when the shell is broken nothing of any value is found inside; and when the bud bursts no flower of any beauty or any fragrance proceeds from it. God knows that my wood produces no fire, and that my writings are bare of bracelet; and I have heard how you occupy yourself, and that gives me happy prospects of your future, while it compels me not to trouble you with overmuch correspondence in this life. There is no question that our hearts meet in affection, and that our spirits shake hands every day, nay, every hour.

Abd al-Rahmān al-Hasan al-Kindī...

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LETTER XII.

My letters to you used to be as rare as a camel in the plain, but now they have become as frequent as rooks or gazelles.

'Khādījah has so many gazelles to aim at, that he does not know at which to shoot.'

And the remedy for importunity is what Bahshār says:

"There is nothing for an importunate man like a refusal."

Accept from me greetings which, if they were a day, would be the day of 'Arafa; and if they were a month, would be the month of Ramadān.

1 Verse quoted Ashbaq XI. 24 and Tālāb III. 72.
2 Ashbaq III. 37.
3 See the description of this in Mr. Kenne's Six Months in the Hijāj.