and is moreover adorned with many a lesson; though to tell it as it should be told would require the most sweet-voiced poet. But where is there anyone like Firdawsí or like Jámi whose fame will be high in either world? Although Hamdí himself is weak and a stammerer in verse, yet as his plight has been that of Joseph, he had resolved to attempt his history when of a sudden he received a draught from Jámi. ¹ And so his own poem is in part translation, in part parallel. He then prays that for the love of Joseph God may deal leniently by him and make his poem a worthy memento so that his name may be remembered like those of his illustrious predecessors.

The story opens with a brief account of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, through whom the office of the Prophetship descends to Joseph. This leads up to the birth of the last-named, who, as well as his brethren, is born in Syria, whither his father Jacob has fled for fear of his brother Esau. After the birth of his children Jacob returns to Canaan, where he makes his peace with Esau, and where Rachel, Joseph's mother, dies in giving birth to Benjamin.

Joseph, as we have already seen, is described as the most lovely of all human beings, and Hamdí here interrupts his story to repeat the legend that on his creation, the eyes of Adam were opened so that he beheld in the Spirit World the whole multitude of his descendents, when, on looking down the long ranks, his gaze fell upon a youth of such exceeding beauty that in love and wonder he asked of God who yon might be; whereupon the answer came that yon was Joseph, the flower of Israel, upon whom was conferred two thirds of the beauty of humanity; the remaining third (such was the inference) being for distribution among all the rest of mankind.

¹ i. e. he saw Jámi’s poem and received inspiration therefrom.
So lovely, continues the tale, is Joseph even in his early childhood that Inás, his aunt and Jacob's sister, who nurses him after the death of his mother, unable to bear parting with him when his father wishes to take him to himself, devises a trick by means of which she contrives to keep him with her till her death, which occurs not long afterwards. Without the boy's being aware of it, she manages to fasten round his waist a belt which has descended to her as an hierloom from her father Isaac. When Joseph leaves to go to Jacob she pretends to miss this belt, which being found on the lad, he is adjudged a thief, and as such made over as slave to the person whose property he has stolen, that being the law in those days.

On the death of his aunt, Joseph goes to live with his father Jacob, whose love for his beautiful child grows stronger day by day, so that he begins entirely to neglect his other sons. This arouses the jealousy of the latter, whose hatred towards their young brother is yet further increased by hearing of a dream in which the lad saw the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowing down before him like slaves. They therefore scheme among themselves to get rid of the obnoxious youth. Some propose to kill him off-hand, but at the suggestion of Reuben they decide on casting him into a pit in the desert and there leaving him to perish of hunger. They consequently suggest to Jacob that as it is now springtide when the fields are gay with flowers he should let Joseph accompany them when they go forth to pasture their flocks that he may divert himself by playing in the meadows. Joseph himself, being anxious to go, begs his father's permission, and so Jacob, though filled with misgivings, is induced to grant his consent. At first the demeanour of the brothers towards Joseph is very kind, but as soon as they are well out of their father's sight, they begin to beat and abuse
him in the most cruel fashion, driving and dragging him along the thorny way, till they reach the mouth of the black and noisome pit. Into this they lower the beautiful boy, heedless of his prayers for mercy, cutting the rope after they have let him down. It so happens that Joseph lights on a stone which rises above the water in the bottom of the pit; and there he remains in safety, ministered to, say the chroniclers, by an angel sent from Heaven, for he was of the goodly fellowship of the Prophets. His brothers gather round the pit-mouth and begin to revile him, excepting only Judah, who addresses to him some kind words.

In the meantime Jacob is longing for the return of his beloved Joseph, and as the day passes and night comes on without any word of his sons he begins to dread some catastrophe. At length the elder brothers arrive without Joseph, and seek to deceive their father by telling him that while they were playing a wolf devoured the boy who was watching over their clothes, in proof of which story they show him the lad's coat which they had smeared with the blood of an animal. Jacob refuses to believe them, but is so overcome at being severed from his dear son that he swoons. The brothers, angry at his doubting their word, propose to return and slay Joseph, and, by producing his mutilated members, convince their disbelieving father; but from this they are dissuaded by Judah, who even threatens to kill anyone who attempts to injure the boy. On recovering, Jacob looks at the coat, sees it is untorn, and tells his sons that their story is a lie, since, if a wolf had devoured Joseph, it must have torn his coat while doing so. They are discomfited, but invent another story to the effect that a robber killed their brother; but this also Jacob denies, saying no robber would kill a boy and leave his coat. The old man then goes out into the wilderness and wanders about seeking
Joseph for seven days, when the angel Gabriel appears and bids him be patient, whereupon he returns to his home and continues to dwell there in sorrow.

His sons, annoyed at his disbelief of their story, go out and catch a wolf which they bring to their father, declaring him to be the same beast which devoured Joseph. At Jacob's prayer, God opens the mouth of the wolf, who declares his innocence, and, in answer to Jacob's questioning, says that he has come from Egypt to Canaan in search of a lost brother. Jacob, touched at the sight of so much affection in a wolf, prays that he may find his lost brother, whereupon the wolf in turn prays that Jacob may find his son. He then returns to the desert, calls the wild beasts around him, and tells them of Jacob's loss and how they have been blamed; so they go in a body to the Prophet, protest their innocence, and implore him not to curse them, which he, convinced of the truth of their words, promises not to do.

Judah, moved with pity, goes with food for Joseph to the pit, wherein he sees the latter seated conversing with an angel, upon which he returns, tells his brothers what he has seen, and persuades them to accompany him and release Joseph. But when they get near the pit they are met by Satan in the form of a man, who, having asked their purpose, turns them from it by pointing out that if Joseph is restored to his father, they will stand self-convicted of falsehood, and will be distrusted and despised ever after. They therefore give up the idea and retire.

And now there passes by that way a Midianite caravan in which is a merchant, Malik by name, who has come to Canaan in consequence of a dream in which he was shown that he would in that land become the possessor of a slave through whom he should attain to high fortune. When the caravan approaches the pit where Joseph is, all the camels
appear attracted towards it, whence Malik divines that the object of his quest is there. So he and his men go up to the pit-mouth and let down a bucket, into which Joseph climbs at the bidding of the angel. When he is drawn up, Malik is delighted beyond measure at the beauty of his prize, and at once recognises that this is the lad promised to him in his vision. He has not long rejoined the caravan before Joseph’s brothers, who have been lurking near, come forward and claim the lad as their run-away slave; but eventually they agree to sell him to Malik for twenty pieces of silver, and sign and deliver to the merchant a contract to that effect. Before parting from his brothers Joseph is allowed to say a few words to them, when by the gentleness of his speech he rouses their compassion so that they regret the evil they have done. The caravan then moves on. It passes by the tomb of Rachel, the mother of Joseph, when the latter slips aside, and throwing himself upon the tomb, weeps and implores his dead mother’s protection. Ere long his absence is noticed and search is made for him; he is discovered on the tomb by Eflah, the black slave whom Malik had placed in charge of him, and who, enraged at his disappearance, begins to beat him. The youthful Prophet then prays to God and a terrific storm bursts over the caravan and throws everyone into consternation. Eflah rushes in with a huge snake clinging to his neck, and, speechless with terror, points to Joseph as the source of the trouble. Thereupon, at Malik’s entreaty, the lad again prays, and the storm ceases, and the snake falls away from Eflah’s neck. This incident causes all the travellers to treat Joseph with the greatest respect as a favourite of Heaven, and to make him master of the caravan.

They pass through Nablus, where the beauty and wisdom of Joseph (who being a Prophet is of course an inspired
teacher) convert the people to the Unity; then through Bisyán, the inhabitants, of which make an image in the form of Joseph and worship it; then through ʿAsqalán, where the savage king is turned from an intended attack on the caravan by the sight of the boy's beauty; and then through ʿArish, previous to entering which Joseph thinks in himself how all the people will come and admire his beauty, and is much surprised to find that the citizens, being themselves very beautiful, pay no heed to him; he perceives that this is the punishment of his pride, and humbles himself before God, whereupon the people approach and pay their respects to him. The caravan enters Egypt and halts on the bank of the Nile. When Joseph bathes in the river to wash away the dust of travel, a dragon comes up from the stream and watches over him, scaring away would-be onlookers and only retiring when the boy has finished his toilet.

As the caravan comes into Egypt a celestial herald proclaims to the people the advent of the fairest of human beings, in consequence of which all, rich and poor, high and low, go forth to meet the travellers. At the request of the chiefs of the people Malik allows Joseph to come out of his litter and show himself to the crowd, who, enraptured by his beauty, accompany the caravan to the capital of the country. Here the people throng round Malik's house eager for a glimpse of the wondrous beauty, and the merchant reaps a rich harvest by admitting visitors to see the lad on paying each a piece of gold. He, however, determines to sell the boy, and so he prepares a splendid stage at one end of a great square, and on this stage he erects a magnificent throne on which Joseph is to sit during the transaction. When the morning of the sale arrives the square is crowded with the pavilions of the highest and richest of the Egyptian nobles, all eager to look upon, even if they cannot acquire
the wondrous boy. Prominent among these nobles is Potiphar (Qitfir) the Grandee of Egypt,¹ the greatest man in the country after the King Reyyan who has practically committed the royal power into his hands. This magnate has had a pavilion erected in the square for the use of his young wife Zelikhá, a lady of peerless beauty, with whose appearance on the scene what we might call the first part of Hamdi's romance closes.²

The second part begins with the story of Zelikhá. Taymús, the mighty King of the Sunset-land,³ has one only daughter, by name Zelikhá, the paragon of loveliness, who is nurtured in every luxury, and who spends her days in all delight, playing in the palaces and gardens with her young companions, beautiful and high-born girls of her own age. Her heart is free; she knows nothing of love and its many sorrows; and so she is happy as the day is long. But one night she sees in a dream a youth of superhuman beauty, and her peace of mind is gone for ever; for no sooner has she looked upon the glorious vision than she falls passionately, hopelessly, in love. When she awakes she looks round about her, dazed and bewildered, vaguely hoping that she may see some sign of the beloved; then realising the position, she bravely controls herself and goes among her companions smiling and gay as usual, but with her heart on fire. However, they soon discover from her demeanour that there is something astray, and her nurse, who has watched over her from her infancy, asks her what has happened, but she

¹ Aziz-i Mísír, 'Grandee of Egypt' or 'Magnate of Egypt', is a title given exclusively to Potiphar and (after him) to Joseph, the word 'Aziz, 'Grandee' or 'Magnate' being used in the Koran as the title of these two personages. It is equivalent to Grand Vezir.

² Throughout the first part Hamdi follows in the main Firdawsi; through the whole of the second he follows Jámi almost step for step.

³ See vol. 1, p. 278, n. 3.
answers that she cannot tell. They then inform her father, and to his questioning she replies that she has fallen in love with a youth whom she has seen in a dream, whereupon he bids her keep the matter secret. Some time after this Zelikhā again sees the same beautiful youth in her dreams, when, in response to her entreaties, he tells her that he is a human being, that he knows her love to be sincere, that she shall never give herself to any but to him, and that he himself is in love with her. This second vision sets the girl beside herself, so that for safety's sake they have to fetter her with golden chains. Yet a third time her beloved appears to her in a dream, and on this occasion, when she prays him to reveal his name and dwelling-place, he tells her that he is the Grandee of Egypt. This news so delights her that it effects her cure; she recovers from her frenzy, the golden chains are removed, and she mingles again with her girl-companions, but her thoughts are ever full of the Grandee of Egypt.

There now arrive at the court of Taymūs ambassadors from seven monarchs, the Kings namely of Yemen, Abyssinia, ʿIrāq, Syria, the Frankish Sea, Rūm, and Thibet, all of whom are anxious to obtain the hand of the fair Zelikhā, the fame of whose beauty has spread through all lands. But that lady, faithful to her troth, refuses to have any dealings with the envoys when she learns that there is among them no representative of the Grandee of Egypt. Her kind father, seeing how strong is her resolution, sends an envoy to that noble with a letter in which he says that he has an only daughter, peerless in beauty, whom the Kings of the earth desire, but whose heart is set on Egypt, and praying the Grandee to return a favourable answer. The latter, delighted at the proposed honour, at once despatches his grateful acquiescence by carrier pigeon; then dismisses the King's messenger laden with rich gifts and accompanied by an envoy of his own.
This envoy is received with every honour by Taymús, who makes over to him his daughter, and she, accompanied by her nurse and a splendid retinue, joyfully sets out for Egypt. On their arrival in that country they are met by the Grandee Potiphar and all his retainers who have marched out to welcome them. Zelíkhá is all eagerness to look upon the Grandee, so her nurse makes a little slit in the pavilion through which she peeps, but great indeed is her dismay when she sees a withered old man instead of the radiant youth of her dreams. She is well-nigh bereft of her reason by this trick that fortune has played her, the more especially as she has pledged her troth to the fair boy; but an inward voice bids her be of comfort, and know that though this man is not the object of her desire, he is the means through which she shall attain it. The escort forms round her caravan, and they enter the Egyptian capital in state, when she is taken to the magnificent palace of the Grandee, where, though surrounded by every luxury and splendour, she remains very unhappy. Her days are spent in yearning for her beloved and in prayers to the breeze to seek him out in its wanderings, while her one consolation is that she is able to keep her troth as Potiphar is a eunuch. ¹ So she dwells in the palace of the Grandee with her heart full of her love, and wherever she hears of a beautiful youth she seeks him out in the hope that he may prove to be the object of her passion. And this brings the story of Zelíkhá up to the point where we first meet her.

The love-sick lady, having heard of the arrival of Malik the merchant with a slave-boy of extraordinary beauty, at once determines to attend the sale at which the latter is to be offered. She accordingly repairs thither, accompanied by

¹ As in the Vulgate, where in Genesis xxxvii, 36, we read, in Wyclif's translation, of 'Potiphar, the geldyng of Pharao.'
her faithful nurse who knows her secret, and takes her place in the pavilion Potiphar has had erected for her. No sooner is Joseph exposed for sale than Zelíkhá recognises in him the beautiful being who has visited her in her dreams and the love of whom has brought her to Egypt from her native land. She swoons at the sight, but is restored to her senses by her nurse, who sprinkles rose-water on her face. She then sends the nurse to Joseph to tell him that the Grandee's wife wishes to purchase him and adopt him as her son. The beautiful young Prophet replies that he knows Zelíkhá's case, and is himself in love with her, but that they must yet wait many years ere they can attain to their desires. The nurse returns with this message. Then the auction begins. Everyone is eager to bid; even a poor old woman comes forward with a bundle of yarn, her only possession, which she offers. Someone bids a purse of gold, this is soon increased to a hundred; then someone offers the boy's weight in pure musk, this is bettered by another's offer of his weight in jewels. At last Zelíkhá makes her bid, double that of the others, who are thus put to silence. She then sends to the Grandee asking him to buy the boy and adopt him as his son, and on Potiphar's replying that he has not treasure enough to supply the price, she provides for it from her own store of jewels. The Grandee then purchases Joseph from Málík and hands him over to the care of Zelíkhá.

Here the narrator pauses in the course of his history to tell the story of another lady who was present at the sale. This is Bá zigha, a young lady of high lineage, great beauty and immense wealth. All this good fortune had made her proud, and when she had heard of Joseph, though she loved him from the accounts brought to her, she had thought to humble him before her own loveliness and magnificence. She had therefore arrayed herself in splendid apparel and
ridden with a gorgeous retinue to the square where the lad was exposed for sale. When she had reached the place she had perceived that no one did so much as cast an eye upon her, for all her fairness and her bravery, so intent were all in gazing on the surpassing beauty of the boy. No sooner had she herself looked upon him than she had been dazzled by his radiance, and going up to him, had asked who was his Maker. The young Prophet had replied so sweetly and so wisely, telling her how his Maker was the one God, speaking of the Heavenly Beauty whereof he himself was but a mirror, and praising the virtues of humility and self-sacrifice, that she, casting aside all her pride, had gone straightway and given away all her wealth, and built for herself a mud hovel on the banks of the Nile, wherein she spent the rest of her life worshipping the true God.

When Zelíkhá brings Joseph home with her to her palace, she has difficulty in believing that this meeting too is not a dream. She is filled with delight at possessing her beloved, and spends her days in attending on him, clothing him in the richest garments and feeding him with the daintiest foods. On one occasion when they are communing together, Joseph tells Zelíkhá the sad story of his brothers' treachery and his imprisonment in the pit. This recalls to the remembrance of the lady a strange feeling of depression which had one day possessed her, and for which she had been unable to give any reason to her solicitous nurse, but now, counting back, she discovers that this occurred at the very time when Joseph was imprisoned in the pit; — such is the telepathy between lovers.

One day when Joseph is seated beside the Grandee, there arrives before the palace-gate an Arab, whose camel, despite blows and curses, had insisted on bringing him there; and no sooner does this camel see the lad than it goes up to
him with its eyes filled with tears. Joseph also weeps, and, on being asked the reason, says that this camel had been present when he parted from his father. He bids the Arab return and speak with him when he is alone. This the Arab does, when Joseph tells him who he is and asks concerning his father. The traveller then informs him of the old man’s desolation at his absence, and how he has left his home and raised for himself the House of Sorrows\(^1\) where he abides in sadness, yearning for news of his dear son. Joseph then charges him to return and tell his father of his adventures and his present position in Egypt, and how he has known no happiness since they parted. The Arab does as he is bidden, goes to Jacob in his House of Sorrows, and tells him that his beloved son is well and honoured, but that he is a servant of the servant of the King of Egypt. The old man is glad to hear the news, and is filled with hope that his son will yet himself become lord of the land.\(^2\)

As the Prophets are the ‘shepherds of mankind’, the shepherd’s calling has ever been affected by them. Joseph, knowing this, is anxious to act as a shepherd for a short time, so Zelikhá, eager to gratify his every wish, gives orders that a flock of beautiful sheep be collected and placed in his charge. He therefore goes out into the country, and for a few days pastures his sheep among the hills and valleys.

Before Zelikhá had met with Joseph her greatest desire had been to behold him, but now that she is under the same roof as he, and in daily communion with him, she yearns for a closer union. The fair young Prophet, however,

\(^1\) Beyt-ul-Ahzán, ‘the House of Sorrows’, is the name of the dwelling which Jacob made for himself after Joseph’s departure, and in which he dwelt during the weary years of separation. It is often referred to by the poets, who are fond of comparing it to the home of the lover parted from his beloved.

\(^2\) This incident of the Arab and of Joseph’s message to his father is taken from Firdawsi. It does not occur in Jāmi.
gives her no encouragement; when she looks lovingly upon him, he bashfully averts his eyes, and when she would approach him, he flies from her. This coldness distresses the lady so that it begins to tell upon her beauty, and when her nurse, who perceives this, asks her the reason of it, she confesses that it is owing to the indifference displayed towards her by Joseph. She then sends the nurse to the lad with a prayer that he will take compassion on her love, to which he replies that though he can never repay Zelíkhá for all her kindness towards him, he cannot consent to her wishes in this matter, nor betray his master who has treated him as a son and placed him in charge of his house; and that, moreover, to commit so unholy a deed as she suggests is impossible for a Prophet descended from a race of Prophets. Zelíkhá then goes to him herself, tells him of her passionate love, and entreats him to have pity on her. He weeps at her words, and answers kindly but firmly, telling her with tears in his eyes how sorrow has ever been the lot of all who have loved him.

Realizing now that she cannot obtain her desire by entreaty, Zelíkhá determines to try craft. She has a beautiful garden, into which she sends Joseph attended by a hundred lovely girls, telling him that all of these are free, being unmarried, and that he may take whichever among them pleases his fancy. She also instructs the girls to do all in their power to please the boy, and bids them, if he shows a fancy for any one of them, at once send word to her; for in that case it is her intention to slip at night into the favoured maiden’s place. When evening comes these fair girls gather round Joseph and seek in various ways to entice him to their love; but he resists all their allurements, and speaks to them with such sweetness and wisdom that they all forsake their false gods and confess the Unity. And so when
Zelikha comes to the garden in the morning she finds Joseph, his face illumined with a new beauty, surrounded by a bevy of fair disciples hanging on his inspired words. But he will not look on her, and, when she approaches, he turns, as always, his eyes to the ground, for he fears to look upon her beauty and sorrow lest at the sight his resolution should give way.

Zelikha returns to her nurse and complains bitterly of Joseph’s disregard, and when the old woman tells her to go before him in her irresistible beauty, she replies that this is vain, since he refuses even to look upon her. The nurse then suggests a device by which he may be compelled to look on the lady; she proposes to Zelikha to build a pavilion, and to have painted on the walls, ceiling and floor thereof pictures of herself and Joseph locked in one another’s arms, and then to bring the youth thither, when, even if he turn his eyes away from her, he will see both her and himself wheresoever he look; and in this way she will compel his acquiescence, for ‘when the eye sees, the heart desires.’ A magnificent palace, consisting of seven pavilions one within the other, is therefore built under the nurse’s direction; the whole is splendidly decorated, especially the seventh or innermost pavilion, the walls, ceiling and floor of which are covered with beautifully executed pictures of Joseph and Zelikha kissing or embracing one another. When the palace is ready, Zelikha arrays herself in all her splendour, and summons Joseph. She leads him into the first pavilion, locks the door, and there again declares her love. He displays his usual modesty; but is led from one pavilion into another by the lady, who locks each door after them. When they are shut up in the seventh pavilion, Zelikha renews her prayers, and when Joseph turns his eyes to the ground he sees there the pictured figures of himself and herself clasped
in tender embrace. He looks away to the walls, where the same sight meets his view; he turns his eyes upward to pray for help, and the lovers look down on him from the ceiling. Thus seeing the beauty of Zelikha everywhere, he begins to incline towards her, and she, perceiving this, presses her advantage. He summons up his faltering resolution, and tells her that he dares not accede to her desire, adding, when she enquires the reason, that he fears the anger of the Grandee and the wrath of God. She replies that she will poison the Grandee, while as for the wrath of God, Joseph has often said that his God is a forgiving God, and to appease Him she will give for His service a treasury of jewels. Joseph answers that he cannot consent to the murder of his kind master, and that God, who is Lord of all things, is not to be bribed. Driven to desperation, Zelikha then draws a dagger, and is on the point of slaying herself before him, when he seizes her hand and bids her stop, for she will surely attain her goal. When she hears this, she casts away the dagger, and throws her arms about Joseph. He is on the very point of yielding when he notices a golden curtain drawn in front of some object in a corner of the room. He asks what is behind; she answers that it is her god, before whom she has hung up a curtain that he may not see what she is about to do. This recalls Joseph to himself: shall he, the Prophet of the Omnipresent God, from whose sight nothing is hid, do this deed which a heathen woman shrinks from doing in the presence of her idol? He springs from the couch and rushes to the door, which flies open before him, as do all the others. Zelikha pursues him, and as he is escaping through the seventh door she catches his flying garment which tears in two, the hinder portion remaining in her hands while Joseph himself escapes.

As he is fleeing from the pavilion, the lad meets Potiphar
and his retinue, and, being asked what is astray, makes some excuse which casts suspicion on no one. The Grandee takes him by the hand and enters the pavilion; and Zelíkhá, seeing them thus, fears that she has been betrayed, and at once charges Joseph with having attempted her honour. Joseph denies the charge and tells the truth, declaring that it was Zelíkhá who tempted him. But the Grandee believes his wife, and, bitterly reproaching Joseph, orders the gaoler to bear him off to prison. Joseph silently prays to God to manifest his innocence; and, in response, an infant three months old in the arms of its mother (a kinswoman of Zelíkhá’s who is present amongst the suite) lifts up its voice and declares that if the garment of Joseph be rent in front Zelíkhá is the truth-speaker, but that if it be rent behind then it is Joseph. Potiphar examines Joseph’s garment, and, finding it rent behind, is convinced by this miracle of the lad’s innocence; whereupon he upbraids Zelíkhá, and prays Joseph to keep silence on the whole matter.

Nevertheless the report of Zelíkhá’s unrequited love for her Hebrew slave spreads through the city, and the Egyptian ladies are loud in their denunciations of the Grandee’s wife. In order to silence them, Zelíkhá invites them to a splendid banquet, and at the close of it she asks them whether they would like to see the slave for loving whom they blame her so bitterly. On their replying that they would greatly like to do so, she persuades Joseph to come before them, having previously given to each lady an orange, which was held to be an aid to digestion. They are holding these oranges in their hands, ready to cut them after they have seen the wondrous slave; but on his appearing they are so overcome by his dazzling beauty that they all cut their hands instead of their oranges. Some, moreover, die of ecstasy straightway; others go mad for love, and never again recover
their reason; whilst those who retain their wits are love-sick for the rest of their lives, and declare that no blame attaches to Zelikhá, since it is impossible not to be smitten by such beauty; and they there and then offer themselves to Joseph, since he cares not for Zelikhá. This makes Joseph pray to God to send him to prison, where he will at least be safe from women and their importunity. When the ladies see this obduracy, they advice Zelikhá to throw the youth into prison until he consents to comply with her wishes.

That night, accordingly, the lady suggests to her husband that the best way to clear her name before the people would be to send Joseph to prison, having first paraded him as a criminal through the city on an ass's back, proclaiming at the same time that such is the reward of him who abuses his master's trust; for no one would believe she loved the lad when she allowed him to be treated in this fashion. The Grandee consents, and so Joseph is disgraced and led to prison; but no sooner is he there than Zelikhá sends word to the gaoler to treat him with all honour and kindness. Separated from her beloved, the lady knows no peace; she wanders to and fro in her lonely palace, and seeks to solace herself with kissing the different garments that Joseph has worn. In her despair she even seeks to kill herself, and is prevented from doing so only by the intervention of her faithful nurse. Eager to see again her beloved, Zelikhá goes with her nurse to the prison, where, hidden in a corner, they gaze on Joseph, whom they find occupied in prayer.

And so for many a day the unhappy lady finds her only consolation in surreptitious visits such as this, and in gazing on the prison-roof from the terrace of her palace.

Meanwhile Joseph in the gaol makes friends of the other prisoners by his kindly sympathy and by his gift of the interpretation of dreams. Amongst these prisoners are two
young officers of the King's household. One night each of these has a singular dream which they relate to their Hebrew friend, who tells the one that his vision signifies impending execution, the other that his indicates approaching release and restoration to favour; and at the same time he requests the latter to mention his own hard case before King Reyyán. Things fall out as Joseph has predicted, but the fortunate officer forgets all about his friend until long afterwards, when Reyyán himself has a strange dream of seven fat kine followed by seven lean, and seven full ears of corn followed by seven thin. None is found able to interpret this vision, the dream-readers pronouncing it to be of the class of 'tangled dreams' and consequently without significance, till the officer, bethinking him of Joseph, mentions him to the King, who bids him go straightway to the prison and inquire of the youth the interpretation. Joseph answers that it foretells seven years of plenty followed by seven years of dearth. Hastening back to the King, the officer relates what he has been told; and the monarch, delighted at this sagacity, desires Joseph to appear before him. This the latter declines to do until his innocence is established. So at his desire Zelíkhá and the ladies who were present at her banquet are summoned to the royal presence, where they all admit that Joseph is blameless and Zelíkhá confesses that she alone is the guilty one. Joseph is then led with great pomp before King Reyyán, who, won by his wise words, makes him Grandee of Egypt and virtual ruler of the country.

The old Grandee, Potiphar, dies soon after this, and Zelíkhá, still wildly in love with Joseph, parts with all her riches to those who bring her news concerning her beloved. With hair turned white through bitter sorrow, and eyes blinded from constant weeping, she dwells, a poor beggar, in a hut of

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1 See vol. i, p. 57, n. 1.
reed by the roadside, finding her only solace in listening to the noise made by Joseph's cavalcade as from time to time it passes by.

One day when the Grandee is about to pass she goes before her idol and prays it to restore her sight and to grant that Joseph may deign to look on her; then she goes and stands in the way along which he is to come. But no one takes any heed of her, and in despair she rushes back to her hut and breaks her idol in pieces, reproaching it with its disregard. She then turns to the true God and humbles herself before Him and craves His pardon and favour, after which she goes forth again and stands in the way. When Joseph is returning she cries out, 'Glory to Him who raiseth the fallen and maketh the slave to be King!' Her cry is heard by Joseph and pierces his heart, and he orders an officer to bring her who uttered it to his palace.

Joseph does not recognise her when she is shown into his presence, and has to ask her name and story. When she says that she is Zelikhá who has loved him all her life, his heart goes out towards her, and he asks her what is her wish. She answers, to recover her beauty and her sight; so Joseph prays, and her beauty and sight are restored so that she is more lovely than she had ever been before. He asks her what more she wishes; and she replies that if he will promise not to take her answer amiss, she will tell, but that otherwise she will remain silent. He promises, and she says that her one wish is to be his love and to be ever with him. He hesitates a moment, but his scruples are set aside by a voice from the Unseen World which tells him that Zelikhá has found favour in the eyes of God and bids him accede to her desire. So Joseph gladly consents; and he and Zelikhá are married with all splendour and in all happiness.

Love begets love; so the perfect love of Zelikhá affects
the heart of Joseph in such measure that he cannot endure to be a moment parted from her, day or night. Then the grace of God enters into Zelikhâ's soul; she sees the Celestial Beauty everywhere, and thus her heart passes over the Bridge of the Typal love of Joseph to the Real love of the Divine Perfection; and this before Joseph himself has reached the farther side. And thus it comes about that one night, when Joseph would caress her, she springs from his embrace; he rushes after her and seizes her flying garment, which tears in his hand: and in this way he and she are made equal in their love. Then, when Joseph perceives that Zelikhâ's heart is turned to the love of heavenly things, he builds for her a splendid temple where she may pass her days worshipping The Truth.

This brings us to the third part of Hamdi's story, that dealing with the later relations of Joseph with his father and brothers. The poet proceeds to describe the seven years of plenty and the seven years of dearth that prevail over Egypt, and tells how during the first period Joseph makes the people cultivate all the country while the conditions are favourable, and stores up the grain which results from their labours. We then get in detail the story of Joseph's brethren coming to buy corn in Egypt, of his stratagem to retain Benjamin by hiding a cup in his sack, and of his making himself known to his brothers; — all as related in the Book of Genesis. Joseph sends his brothers back to Canaan to fetch their old father Jacob and all their families, and he gives his shift to Judah (who had carried to his father the blood-stained coat) telling him to lay it over the head of Jacob, who will thereby recover his sight. They set

1 See vol. i, pp. 20—1.
2 In the third part of his poem Hamdi goes back to Firdawsî, whom he follows generally till he reaches the final cantos, those describing the deaths of Joseph and Zelikhâ, when he returns to Jâmi.
out, and, while they are yet a great way off, Jacob, sitting mourning in his House of Sorrows, perceives the scent of Joseph borne on the breeze from the shift that Judah is bringing, and is comforted. When Judah lays the shift over the head of Jacob, the latter then and there recovers his sight, and is straightway rejoiced by the glad tidings of his beloved son's good fortune. They all set out at once for Egypt, on reaching which they are received with every honour by King Reyyân and Joseph, and are conducted in state to the palace, where they are magnificently entertained, and where Jacob and his wife and sons bow before Joseph as he is seated on his throne, thus fulfilling the dreams of his boyhood. Many happy years follow; and at length Jacob dies.

One night Joseph enters the temple to pray, and in a vision he beholds his father and mother, radiant in celestial beauty, and they call on him to come and join them in their true home, which is his as well as theirs. On awaking, Joseph is filled with a great yearning to be reunited with his father and mother where they are, and he lifts up his soul in prayer that God may take him from the world and permit him to accept the invitation he has received. He then tells Zelikhâ of this, and she is filled with sorrow, knowing that Joseph's prayer is never made in vain. She too therefore prays that God may take her soul likewise, as she cannot live without her beloved. One day soon after this, as Joseph is mounting to ride out, the Angel Gabriel appears to him, and bids him descend from his horse and return home, for his hour is come. Joseph thanks God for the good news, and, re-entering his palace, appoints his successor, and dies rejoicing. When Zelikhâ hears that her dearly beloved husband is no more, she swoons for her grief, and lies for days unconscious, and when her senses return
she seeks out Joseph's grave, and, throwing herself upon it, dies. And here Hamdi's poem appropriately ends.

There remain but four lines, which inform us that the work was finished by Hamdi in 897 (1491—2), and that the author leaves it as his souvenir to those who sorrow, begging that they will remember him in their prayers.

To these there have been added four lines in the Persian language in which the writer says that this book is dearer to him than a thousand sons, and in which the reader's prayers are again besought.

The most important of Hamdi's works after the Joseph and Zelîkhâ is his version of the famous romance of Leylâ and Mejnûn which, as a couplet at the end informs us, was completed in 905 (1499—1500). This sad little story, which some say is based upon the adventures of two unhappy Arab lovers of the time of the Umeyyads, has, notwithstanding the slightness of its plot and the monotony of its incidents, been at all times amongst the most popular of themes with the Eastern poets; and this no doubt because these poets looked upon their romantic mesnevis less as narratives than as vehicles for long and elaborate discourses upon Love; and for such a purpose the story of Leylâ and Mejnûn is pre-eminently suited.

According to Kâtib Chelebi, the earliest Ottoman poem on this subject was that written by Sháhidî of Adrianople, the follower of Prince Jem, in 881 (1476—7). But as this work, if it still exists, is not forthcoming, Hamdi's version is actually the oldest in our hands. Here the model is

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1 This poem is unprinted. The British Museum possesses an imperfect MS. (Or. 1163), from which both the beginning and end are lost. There is a perfect copy in my collection.

2 See p. 73, n. 1.

3 One of the poems in Bihishti's Khamsa (see p. 148, n. 2) is said to be a Leylâ and Mejnûn. We have already seen that Sháhidî versified the
Nizámí: Hamdi either did not know, or, less probably, did not so highly esteem Jámi’s setting of the tale, which differs considerably from that of the earlier writers. The Turkish poet, though he does not explicitly state that he has followed Nizámí, lets his readers understand this by the turn he gives to the opening couplet of his narrative.

So far as the incidents of the story are concerned he treads step by step in the pathway of his guide; but his version is by no means so close a translation as is that part of the Joseph and Zelíkhá which he took from Jámi, for although he adopts many of the similes and images of Nizámí, there is much that he omits and much that he adds. Here, as in his other poem, he relieves the monotony of the mesnevi with a number of ghazels, which in this instance also are introduced entirely on his own responsibility. It was a happy idea to break by the introduction of such lyric interludes the seemingly endless succession of rhyming couplets that go to make up those romantic mesnevis. And it seems, moreover, to have been an invention of the Turks, apparently of Sheykhi; at any tale, and that some writers attribute a poem on it to Nejáti. As before stated, Fuzulí of Baghad has treated the legend in masterly fashion. Latífí says that Chákerí, the same who wrote a Joseph and Zelíkhá, has a mesnevi on this tale. Other versions mentioned by Káthib Chelebí are: by a poet whom he calls Khalífa, probably the same to whom he attributes a Khúsrev and Shírín and a Joseph and Zelíkhá; by Jelílí (in Flügel’s edition this name is Jelilí, Jelílí, is erroneously printed خليلی, Khalíli) of Brusa, who also wrote a Khúsrev and Shírín; by Khayálí, who was a defterdár or ‘treasurer’ of Selím I; and by Sálíh bin-Jelálí, who died in 973 (1565–6). The University of Cambridge possesses a MS. of a version composed in 920 (1514) by a poet called Sevdá’í, probably the writer of that name mentioned by Sehí. Qáf-záde Fá’ízí, a well-known writer of the Third Period, began a poem on the tale, which was continued by Seyyid Vehbí, a distinguished poet of the Fourth Period.

1Quoth he who hath given order (Nizámí) to this tale, Who hath ordered his words on this fashion: —

2At least I can find no Persian precedent.
rate it became very popular with them, and there are com-
paratively few among the romancists of the Second and
following Periods who did not more or less avail themselves
of the advantages it offers. In the case of this poem again
Hamdı has departed from his model's lead in his choice of
metre; both poets, it is true, use the hezej, but Nizámi's
Leylá and Mejnún is in one variation, Hamdı's in another.¹

Hamdı was far from being as fortunate with his Leylá and
Mejnún as with his Joseph and Zelíkhá. In the first place,
the former never achieved anything like the popularity of
the earlier work; and in the second it was after a time
wholly eclipsed by Fuzúlí's far more beautiful poem on the
same legend.

The Turkish critics do not say much about this book.
Latifi, who is so full of praise for the Joseph and Zelíkhá,
merely mentions the Leylá and Mejnún when he is drawing
attention to a complaint which the author makes in it con-
cerning the lack of appreciation which was the fate of good
work in his time. Tash-köpri-záde alone is appreciative; he
says that while so many illustrious poets, both in Persia and
Rúm, have treated the story of Leylá and Mejnún in their
Khamsas,² it was beyond the power of mere humanity that
Hamdı, who came after them all, should have presented it
in so admirable a fashion and arrayed it in so beautiful a
garb: by which statement the author of the Crimson Peony
would imply that the poet was divinely inspired. ³Ashiq
mentions the work only in order to quote from it a single
couplet, the rhymes of which took his fancy; while Hasan

¹ Nizámi's metre is: ــــ ــــ | ــــ ــــ ــــ | ــــ ــــ
Hamdı's: ــــ ــــ ــــ | ــــ ــــ ــــ | ــــ ــــ
² I do not know what Tash-köpri-záde means when he says that Hamdı's
Leylá and Mejnún was the latest of many poems on the subject in Rúm. All
the Turkish versions with which I am acquainted, except Sháhidi's and possibly
Bihishí's, are subsequent to Hamdı's.
does no more than name it as being one of Hamdi’s productions.

Like the Joseph and Zelîkhâ, the Leylî and Mejnûn bears no dedication. When he has got through the inevitable introductory cantos in praise of God and the Prophet, Hamdi launches straight into his story. He has not even a ‘Reason of the Writing of the Book’, so we are left without information as to what urged him to his task. He merely addresses the ‘lover’, whom he bids, if he would be love-distraught, read the tale of Leylî and Mejnûn, which, though it is the furnace of love’s fire, is yet the rose-garden of the soul. Then he calls on his own heart to teach the whole world love, making this history his excuse; for though there are many love-stories in the world, there is no sorrow like unto the sorrow of Mejnûn. He then begins his tale, which is in outline as follows.

A noble and wealthy Arab of the tribe of the Benî-‘Amir is, after many prayers, granted a son, whom he names Qays, and who is nurtured with every care. The child grows up into a beautiful boy admired by all; but as ‘he was come with love’ from the other world, his only pleasure is in gazing on beauties; and when he sees them not, he weeps. In due course Qays is sent to school. Now at this school are many girls as well as boys, and amongst the former is one maiden of extraordinary sweetness and beauty whose name is Leylî, and whose father is a prince of another tribe than that to which Qays belongs. With this enchanting creature Qays promptly falls in love. His love is returned; and the pair no longer give any heed to their lessons, studying only one another’s looks and hearts. They try to conceal their feelings, but in vain; for the presence of love, like that of musk, is not to be hidden; and so the story of their passion becomes common talk. So possessed and absorbed is Qays by his
love that the people nickname him Mejnún (that is, possessed by a spirit); but he heeds not, neither resents their words, being wholly lost in his great love.

The story reaches the ears of Leylá’s mother, who is very angry, and severely upbraids her daughter for her indiscretion in permitting her name to be mentioned in such a connection. She takes her away from the school and keeps her safely at home; and this imprisonment and separation from her lover grieve Leylá bitterly. When Qays, now always known as Mejnún, finds that his beloved comes no more to the school, attendance thereat becomes impossible for him. In the hope of again seeing Leylá he disguises himself as a blind beggar, and intentionally falls down before the door of her father’s house. Leylá, who is with her mother at the time, sees and recognizes him; and, having obtained permission to go out and help the poor man to rise, she is able to press his hand, and thus to renew their troth. But the trick is discovered, and although Mejnún, disguised this time as a dervish, contrives one other meeting, the watchfulness of Leylá’s attendants is too much for him. And so, unable to endure life in the town, he betakes himself to the country; but the villagers through whose hamlets he passes take him for a madman and throw stones at him, so that he is obliged to seek refuge in the solitude of the wilderness.

Mejnún’s father, hearing of the sad plight of his son, goes forth to seek him, and discovers him with dishevelled hair and torn garments, distracted by his sorrow. So far gone is Mejnún that he does not recognize his father and has to ask him who he is; but he recovers himself to a certain extent on his father’s promising to obtain Leylá’s hand for him, and is even induced to accompany the old man home. Great is his mother’s grief at seeing her son in such wretched plight; but she does what she can, arraying him in clean
garments and trying to console him. His father then endeavours to turn him from the love of Leylá, saying that there are many other fair girls amongst the Arabs, one of whom they will get for him; but he refuses to be comforted.

Mejnün then goes away, accompanied by two or three faithful friends, to the uplands of Nejd, where Leylá is dwelling with her tribe. They find her seated after the Arab custom by her tent door. The lovers exchange greetings; but they are soon discovered, and Mejnün is driven from the district. His father, who is deeply grieved at his sad plight, takes counsel of the chiefs of his tribe, and they decide that he shall go, accompanied by Mejnün, on a mission to Leylá's people, and ask her in marriage for his son. The mission is well received by Leylá's tribe, but when Mejnün's father makes known his object, Leylá's father declines his assent, saying that he cannot give his daughter to a madman. Mejnün's father replies that his son is not really mad, but only distracted by his love; and he calls on him to come forward and answer for himself. As he approaches, Leylá's dog suddenly sees him and recognizes him as a friend, whereupon he throws himself on the ground beside the dog and begins to caress it, because it comes from his beloved and has often welcomed his visits.¹ The lady's father takes this conduct as a convincing proof of Mejnün's madness, so the mission has to return unsuccessful. His father and the others again urge the lad to drive Leylá from his heart; but all is in vain, he tears his garments and flies from them into the wilderness, and there, wandering half-naked amongst the hills and valleys, he makes the rocks re-echo with his beloved's

¹ In consequence of the affection shown by Mejnün for the dog of his dear Leylá, it has become a convention with the poets to represent the lover as eager to be on terms of friendship with, or even to humble himself before, the dog of his beloved.
name. At last he falls fainting by the way, and is there found by some compassionate people who carry him back to his father's house.

His kinsmen now advise the old man to take Mejnūn with him on the pilgrimage to Mekka, thinking that the sanctity of the place and rites may have some good effect on his monomania. They go thither; but when Mejnūn is told by his father in the Ka‘ba itself to pray God to deliver him from the curse of his love, he raises his hands and thanks God for it and implores Him to increase it to him. So the father, seeing that this too is useless, sadly turns home.

His friends next advise the father of the love-stricken Mejnūn to have recourse to a great saint who dwells in a cave amongst the mountains and whose prayers will cure the lad, if cured he can be. He therefore takes Mejnūn to this holy man; but though he tells his son to implore the hermit’s prayer that he may be freed from his love, Mejnūn on the contrary begs him to pray for its increase. The old man can therefore do nothing, so he leaves Mejnūn in the wilderness and returns to tell his people of his bootless errand.

The story of Mejnūn’s love is noised abroad and his name is always coupled with that of Leylā. The latter’s tribesmen look upon this as a disgrace to their clan, the more so as Mejnūn is a famous inditer of ghazels, and the poems he is constantly composing about his love become popular, and thus greatly assist in spreading the scandal. When the matter

[1 A collection of love-poems in Arabic purporting to be the work of this Mejnūn is extant, and has been printed at Cairo (A. H. 1294): see p. 65 of Carl Brockelmann’s excellent Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur (Leipzig, 1901). The following couplet is one of the most celebrated: —

"They say that Leylā lies sick in ‘Iraq: would that I were the physician in attendance on her!" Ed.]
is brought to the notice of the chief of the tribe, he draws his sword declaring that this will be his answer to the audacious lover. An 'Amiri man who happens to hear this threat hastens back to his own tribe to warn them of the danger which threatens Mejnûn. They go out and look for him in vain; but after a time a man comes and tells them that he has seen the lover lying helpless in a ruin, whereupon his father sets out, and, following the man's instructions, discovers Mejnûn lying starving and singing to himself in the ruin. When the youth sees who has come to him, he falls at his father's feet and implores forgiveness, but prays him to leave him where he is. His father none the less begs and entreats him to renounce the passion that is driving him mad, but he answers that the matter is beyond his power, that he is bound with fetters which no advice or prayer can loose. Once more the grieving father bears him to his house; but a day or two afterwards Mejnûn escapes and flies to Nejd, where he wanders about inditing his love-ghazels.

Leylâ, who has now grown into a peerless beauty, is no less in love than Mejnûn, but she has more self-control. She hides her feelings lest by disclosing them she should bring trouble on her lover and herself; but she goes up to her terrace-roof and addresses the wind that blows from where Mejnûn is. When she hears scraps of the ghazels which Mejnûn has composed, she writes answers to them on slips of paper which she throws on to the road, where they are picked up by passers-by, who learn and repeat them till they reach her lover's ears; and in this way a kind of correspondence is kept up between them. This state of things lasts for a year.

The coming of spring is then described, as well as a beautiful garden where Leylâ and her maidens go to enjoy
the sweet season. As Leylā is sitting there singing to herself about her love she is answered by a plaintive voice which chants a ghazel concerning the woes of Mejnūn. When she hears this she weeps; and when they have returned to the house one of the girls who has seen her distress tells her mother, who is much grieved at her daughter’s sorrow, but can find no other remedy than calling on her to be patient. When Leylā was sitting in the garden she had been seen by Ibn-us-Selām, the noble and wealthy chief of the Esed tribe, who had then and there fallen in love with her. He now sends to ask her in marriage of her parents, who do not decline the offer, but pray the suitor to wait for a little.

Mecnūn in the meantime is wandering about the wilderness making friends of the wild beasts and inditing ghazels to the gazelles. He has, however, made one human friend; this is Nevfel, a great Arab chief, who, when out hunting, had come upon Mejnūn singing to a group of wild animals and had asked him his story, on hearing which, filled with pity at his sad lot, he had promised to aid him to obtain his beloved. Mejnūn is so glad at this that he comes to himself again, dresses and behaves like a sane man, and is ever in company with Nevfel, who delights in the ghazels which he composes. After a while Mejnūn hints to his friend that it is about time he should redeem his promises. Stung by this reproach, Nevfel seizes his arms, springs upon his steed, summons his warriors, and dashes off to the district where dwells the tribe of Leylā. When they have reached the border they halt and despatch a messenger demanding the lady on threat of instant attack. The envoy receives an insulting refusal, being told that a dog does not get the moon by baying; this he carries back to Nevfel, who, enraged thereat, at once orders an assault. A furious battle ensues, though this is very grievous to Mejnūn, who is present, and who hates bloodshed,
especially between his friends and the clansmen of his beloved. The battle rages all day, and is about to be resumed next morning, when the sight of an army approaching to reinforce the enemy induces Nevfel to ask a truce. Mejnún, distracted by the fighting and the want of success, reproaches Nevfel for what he has done; but the latter only laughs at him, and as soon as he has received reinforcements, resumes the battle. The hostile clansmen are now scattered, and their chiefs, including Leyla's father, are brought before the victorious Nevfel, who at their prayer grants them their freedom. He then demands Leylá for Mejnún; the lady's father replies that his daughter is at Nevfel's service, but declares that unless that chief swear not to give her to the madman Mejnún, he will kill her with his own hand and throw her head to the dogs. Some of Nevfel's companions support Leylá's father and persuade their leader to return to their own land. Mejnún, in bitter disappointment, upbraids Nevfel with the worthlessness of his friendship, and when the latter speaks about compensation through other beauties, the faithful lover, in hatred and disgust, breaks away from him and disappears; and though Nevfel sends out to seek him, he is nowhere to be found.

Flying from Nevfel's people, Mejnún gallops off into the wilderness. As he is riding along he sees in the distance some gazelles caught in a snare and the hunter approaching knife in hand to slaughter them. He hastens forward and prays the hunter to have mercy on the innocent creatures, whose plaintive eyes remind him of his love, telling him that it is cruel and unmanly to kill the guiltless and helpless. The hunter replies that Mejnún's words are good, but that he is a poor man with a large family who have to be fed and so cannot afford to lose his game, but that if the traveller wishes to liberate the animals, he is willing to sell them to
him. Mejnún springs from his horse and presents it to the hunter, who straightway jumps on it and rides off, leaving Mejnún with the gazelles. These the lover liberates, kissing each between the eyes as he lets it go. When all are free he follows in the direction they have taken, and spends his days and nights wandering about in the desert.

In the course of his wanderings he one day comes upon an antelope caught in a snare and just about to be killed by the hunter. He reproaches the latter for his barbarity and bids him release his victim. The hunter replies that he is willing to give him the animal if he will pay for it. So Mejnún hands him his arms, with which he goes away contented. Mejnún then releases the antelope, which he kisses fondly, and to which he addresses many tender words. The next day, when seated under a tree by a pool, he pours out his sorrows to a crow which is perched in the branches above, and is sadly grieved when the bird flies off; he then lies down where he is, and there passes the night.

When morning comes, Mejnún resumes his wanderings, and as he is making his way towards the district where his beloved dwells, he meets an old woman with a man whose hands are chained and whom she is leading by a rope tied round his neck. Mejnún goes up and asks the woman what this means; she replies that she is a poor widow and that her companion is a beggar who has consented to figure as a wild man that she may lead him about the villages and so get alms from the people, which they afterwards divide between them. Mejnún then implores her to take himself instead of the beggar, as she will thus not need to deceive, for he is really mad, and moreover he will let her keep everything they get. The old woman is pleased with this proposal so profitable to herself, and at once takes the chains off the beggar, puts them on Mejnún and fastens the rope
round his neck. His motive in acting thus is that he hopes
that in this disguise he may be able to penetrate to where
Leylá is. His hope is so far fulfilled; the old woman leads
him about the country, collecting money from the people,
till they come to where the beloved's parents dwell. But
here Mejnún falls down before the tent-door, wailing and
crying, and his madness increases upon him so that he leaps
up and breaks his chains. Leylá's father and mother come
out to look on him; they pity his sad plight, but he is
oblivious of their presence, and so they turn back and
leave him.

The story now returns to Leylá. When this lady hears of
the defeat of her clansmen at the hands of Nevfel she rejoices,
seeing therein a near prospect of union with her beloved
Mejnún. But her joy is short-lived; her father comes before
her and tells her that he has settled the madman's business
by inducing Nevfel to withdraw from him his protection.
This plunges Leylá into grief, though she dare not disclose
her sorrow till her father has departed. Now suitors, attracted
by the fame of her beauty, begin to flock from many lands;
but her jealous father inclines to none of them. Ibn-us-Selám
gets word of these doings and determines to prosecute his
suit. He sets out with a cavalcade for Leylá's country, and
when he has arrived within one or two days' march, he sends
forward an ambassador with rich gifts to urge his claim.
Leylá's father gives his consent. The lady is then wedded
against her will and without her consent to Ibn-us-Selám,
who proudly takes her off with him. But the first time that
he seeks to caress her, Leylá slaps him violently on the face
and swears that if ever again he attempt such a thing, she
will kill either him or herself, for if the gardener may not
eat the fruit of the garden, neither may every crow. This
shows Ibn-us-Selám that his wife is in love with another;
but as he is very fond of her, he promises to respect her wishes, for it is better to be permitted to look upon her than not to see her at all. And so they pass a long time, in the course of which Leylâ, by constantly asking for news of Mejnûn, lets all the world know who is really her love.

One day as Mejnûn, who had fled from before the door of Leylâ’s father back into the wilderness, is wandering about, he meets a man mounted on a dromedary who tells him that Leylâ is married, and adds by way of jest that the lady went with her own consent and is now very happy, having altogether forgotten her old lover. The shock of hearing this is so terrible to Mejnûn that he falls down, and the traveller, who thinks he is dead, repents him of his ill-timed joke. When Mejnûn recovers, the man tells him the truth, how that Leylâ is in reality still faithful to him and will have nothing to say to Ibn-us-Selâm. But the lover has no longer confidence in his words and is plunged in misery, not knowing what to believe. He now scarcely knows what he is doing, and so he writes a letter to Leylâ, upbraiding her with her marriage, to which she replies by a letter telling him the truth and praying him not to add to her own sorrow by his unjust reproaches.

The spring comes round and all is bright and gay, and Mejnûn’s friends determine to make another attempt to bring him back to reason. They go off to the uplands of Nejd, and, searching amongst the hills, discover their mad companion worn and naked, surrounded by wild creatures that he has tamed and made into friends. The visitors vainly try to persuade him to return to civilised life; Mejnûn, who is annoyed at their importunity, refuses to listen to their proposals and tells them that he prefers the society of the wild beasts to theirs. So nothing is left for the well-intentioned
friends but to turn regretfully home, convinced of the hopelessness of poor Mejnúin's case.

After a while Mejnúin bethinks him to go to where Leylá dwells, so he makes his way thither, heedless of the children in the villages who throw stones at him as he passes by. He has a brief interview with his beloved which is soon cut short by one of her attendants rushing in with a naked sword. As the man raises this to smite Mejnúin, his hand drops withered by his side; he then takes the sword in his left hand, which is likewise withered as soon as he raises it. He then falls at Mejnúin's feet and prays his forgiveness. Mejnúin first tells him that if he himself wish to escape hurt, he must not seek to hurt others, and then prays so that the man's hands are restored; after which he flees back to Nejd.

In the meantime his father, who feels old age coming upon him, is eager to find his son, who, he still hopes, will succeed to his position. So he sets out with a few attendants, and after much searching discovers Mejnúin lying naked and unconscious in a desolate ravine. The madman does not at first recognize his father, but when he realizes who it is that is bending over him, he embraces and kisses him. Still to all the old man's prayers that he will come home and gladden his last days with his presence, the demented lover only answers that he is powerless to resist his passion. His aged father then sees that all is hopeless, and, taking a tender farewell of his son, returns to his house and there soon after dies, worn out with years and sorrow.

By and by a hunter who discovers Mejnúin seated on the highest point of the Nejd mountains, cries out to him with many reproaches that his father is dead, and bids him at least go and visit his tomb. Mejnúin is heart-stricken at the news, and at once hastens to his father's grave, upon which he throws himself weeping sorely and reproaching himself
bitterly. After a while he flies back to his mountains of Nejd, where he resumes his companionship with the wild animals, numbers of which, lions and panthers as well as gazelles and antelopes, are ever with him, marching in ranks behind him in his wanderings, and keeping guard over him while he sleeps. Amongst these friends is one gazelle of which Mejnun is specially fond and which he is constantly caressing because its beautiful eyes are so like those of Leylá.

To show that even fierce animals can be made friendly by kindness, the poet here interrupts his narrative by the story of a prince who kept a pack of savage hounds to which he used to throw such persons as fell under his displeasure. A young courtier, fearing the tyrant's fickle temper, deemed it prudent to make friends of the hounds by feeding them with a sheep every day. And so when the prince in a fit of rage flung him to the beasts, instead of tearing him in pieces, they flocked round him and fawned upon him. This so astonished the prince that he liberated the courtier, who then pointed out to him how he was more ungrateful than his own savage hounds.¹

One day, continues the history, as Mejnun is sitting amongst his animals he sees a man approaching him. This turns out to be the bearer of a letter from Leylá. He tells Mejnun that yesterday as he was riding along he saw a beautiful girl sitting weeping by the wayside. He asked who she was and what was grieving her, and she answered that she was Leylá and was weeping for her love Mejnun. In reply to her questions the man told her all he knew about the state

¹ In this story occurs the couplet already referred to (p. 174), the sarcasm of which pleased 'Ashiq, who quotes it as being ben trovato: —

سکه سلا اولوی ادم بیادون بل عنیجمی قدیمی اولسه اک سلا

'The Prince (Beg) who makes men to be eaten by hounds is a hound;
¶: it strange that hound (seg) should be the rhyme for him?'
of her lover, and at her request undertook to deliver to the latter a love-letter which she wrote and handed to him. This he gives to Mejnún, who is overjoyed at receiving it, and immediately writes an answer — the stranger being happily provided with paper and inkhorn — which this accommodating intermediary takes away with him and delivers to Leylá.

Mejnún is now visited in the wilderness by a kind uncle of his called Selím. At first Mejnún as usual fails to recognize who is speaking to him, but when he discovers that it is his uncle he is glad, and succeeds in dispelling that relative's fear of the wild beasts that are seated round him. Selím is horrified at seeing his nephew unclothed and emaciated, and with some difficulty persuades him to put on a garment he has with him in his saddle-bag, though he cannot prevail on him to eat any of the food which he has brought, Mejnún insisting on giving this to his beasts. Selím returns and tells Mejnún's mother of the sad plight of her son, and at her request he takes her to where the latter is dwelling in the wilderness. She is greatly distressed at what she sees and prays Mejnún to return to her. He thanks her, but replies that he has no choice, that it is under the compulsion of love, not of his own free will, that he acts thus; and then he breaks away from her and disappears in the desert. She goes home and dies broken hearted, which, on being told to Mejnún, plunges him in a fresh sorrow.

Leylá manages to escape the vigilance of her harem-guards and sets out to try to find her lover. She meets an old man by the way whose confidence she gains and whom she induces by a gift of jewels to contrive an interview between Mejnún and herself. So the old man goes off in search of Mejnún, and having found him, persuades him to accompany him to where Leylá is staying. When they approach the place, Mejnún and his troop of beasts halt a little way off, while the guide
goes on to announce his arrival. At the critical moment Leylá's sense of duty prevails and she refrains from the interview, but requests that Mejnún sing some love songs to her, which he does and then flies back into the wastes.

The story of Mejnún and the beautiful verses he composes are known everywhere and attract the wonder and admiration of many. Among these is Selám of Baghdad, a young man who, being himself a lover and a poet, is strongly attracted to the now famous Mejnún. He therefore seeks out the latter, and, filled with admiration of his constancy and talents, offers to become his companion, Mejnún tries to dissuade him, but as he is importunate, he allows him to remain. The privations of the hermit's desert-life, however, soon prove too much for the young man, who finds himself compelled to abandon his chosen master and return to the comforts of his city-home. Still he takes back with him many beautiful poems which form the delight of all who hear them.

There is another unfortunate lover, Zeyd by name, who is smitten with an unhappy passion for his cousin Zeyneb, and who, being poor, is rejected by his uncle, the girl's father. Leylá hears of this young poet (he too is a poet), and taking pity on him, tries to comfort him, and from time to time she employs him as a messenger between Mejnún and herself. Her husband Ibn-us-Selám dies, being deeply distressed by her behaviour towards him. Zeyd hurries off to carry the news to Mejnún. On his return, Leylá sends him back with fine robes and turban for her lover, and a prayer that he will come to her. Mejnún dons the garments she has sent and sets out for her dwelling-place, attended by his troop of wild animals. Zeyd brings word of his approach, and Leylá goes out to welcome him; but as soon as they catch sight of one another, they fall down in a swoon, overcome by the intensity of their emotion. They lie there
till Zeyd, by sprinkling water on their faces, restores them to their senses, when Leylâ leads Mejnûn by the hand to her pavilion, where they rest, attended by Zeyd and guarded by the wild beasts who form a circle round them. There the lovers remain for a while, locked in one another's arms with hearts too full for words. At length Leylâ improvises a ghazel to which Mejnûn replies; and then his madness comes upon him, and he breaks away from his beloved Leylâ and rushes back into the wilderness.

Mejnûn's madness being now shown to be beyond cure, Leylâ's heart is broken; and in the autumn she dies, watched over by her now sorrowing mother. Zeyd proceeds to the desert, where he tells the sad news to Mejnûn, and no sooner does the poor crazed lover realize the truth than he trembles all over and falls down as though smitten by a thunderbolt. Then he rises and cries upon death to take him and calls upon his soul to leave his body. Following Zeyd, he hastens to Leylâ's tomb, and, when he sees this yet afar off, he falls upon his face and dragging himself along to it, clasps the stone as though it were his beloved herself. Here he wails and laments, addressing Leylâ in the most piteous and tender terms; and then he turns back again to his mountains.

But he can no longer remain quietly in the desert; he is ever coming and going between his retreat and Leylâ's tomb. His little remaining strength gradually ebbs; and one day of storm he seeks his beloved's grave, and throwing himself upon it, with eyes closed and uplifted hands, he cries upon God to deliver him from his anguish and to re-unite him with his love. And that same moment he dies, all alone, with no one near save one or two of his faithful companions the wild beasts. For a whole year he lies there, guarded by his beasts who will let none approach. But at length the beasts go back into their deserts, and the people gather up the bones
of Mejnún and bury them in the grave by those of Leylá.

Some time after this, Zeyd, who had always been a faithful friend to the lovers, sees himself in a vision transported to Paradise, and there among the blessed he observes a youth and maiden seated together in loving converse and compassed about with dazzling radiance and splendour inconceivable. On his asking who these are and why they are thus pre-eminent in glory, he is told that on earth they were known as Mejnún and Leylá, and that the exceeding glory which surrounds them is their love.

According to Latifi, Hamdí wrote five mesnevis, 'a "Response" in Turkish to the Khamsa (of Nizámi);' but he mentions the names of only four of these, the Joseph and Zelikhá, the Leylá and Mejnún, a Mevlid-i Nebí or 'Birthsong' on the Prophet's Nativity, and a poem entitled Tuhfet-ul-'Ushsháq or 'A Gift to Lovers.' A note to the printed edition of the Crimson Peony, where the statement that Hamdí left five mesnevis is repeated, gives the name of the fifth poem as the Muhammediyye or 'Muhammedan (Poem).'</nowiki>Hamdí's Birthsong which, as we saw in a previous chapter, is the only poem of its class that Latifi considered in any way worthy of a place by the side of Suleymán Chelebéi's far more famous work, is mentioned by 'Ashiq and Hasan as well as by Latifi and the annotator of the Crimson Peony. 'Ashiq calls it Mevlid-i Jismání u Mevlid-i Rühání, or 'The Corporeal Birthsong and the Spiritual Birthsong;' Hasan and Kátib Chelebéi entitle it Mevlid-i Jismání u Mevrid-i Rühání or 'The Corporeal Birthsong and the Spiritual Arriving-Place.' Copies of this work are rare. The British Museum possesses one MS., but this is unfortunately imperfect, both the

1 See vol. 1, p. 100.
2 See vol. 1, p. 238.
3 Or. 1163.
beginning and end being lost. It is therefore impossible to
determine from it which, if any, of the three titles recorded
by the biographers is that given by the author to his work.
There can, however, be no doubt that the British Museum
MS. is really Hamdi's poem; this is proved by the fact
that the writer mentions his name in some of the incidental
ghazels.

The MS. begins abruptly with the glad tidings of her
son's approaching birth brought to Amine, the Prophet's
mother, by the celestial messengers. The story then proceeds
on the same lines as in the poem of Suleyman, to which
this later work bears, externally at any rate, a great resem-
blance. The principal difference here is the introduction of
a number of ghazels, of a fashion unknown in the days of
the old Brusan. This work of Hamdi's is so similar to Suley-
mán's in scope and purpose that it is unnecessary to enlarge
upon it here. It is, moreover, without importance, and never
attained any popularity or repute. 1

The Tuhfet-ul-'Ushsháq or 'Gift to Lovers' 2 appears to
have been no better appreciated. It is mentioned by name
by Latífi, Tash-köpri-záde, 3 'Ashiq, and Kátib Chelebi, 3 but
no details are given; Latífi alone quotes from it, and only
a single couplet: —

1 It is in the same metre as Suleymán's, namely, the hexametric remel.
2 There is a MS. in my collection.
3 Kátib Chelebi mentions three other Turkish poems which bear the title
Tuhfet-ul-'Ushsháq. One is by a minor poet, 'Átá of Uşkub, who died in 930
(1523—4); it is in the manner of the Tejnisát, a work on the rhetorical
figure called Paronomasia, by the well-known Persian poet Kátibí. The second
is by another minor poet, Muhí-ud-Dín Mehemmed bin-el-Khatíb Qásím, who
died in 940 (1533—4); the character of this work is not stated, but it is
unlikely that it resembled Hamdi's. The third is by the historian 'Ali whom
we have so often quoted and who died in 1008 (1599—1600); this poem of
his was written as a 'parallel' to the Matla'-ul-Enwár or 'Rising-Point of
Radiance' of the Persian poet Khusraw of Delhi.
The poem, which is much shorter than those already described, is composed in a very simple style. Indeed so naive is the manner of its presentment and so artless are the attempts at artfulness that one is inclined to imagine it an early effort of the author's. But here we have to rely entirely on the evidence of the style; for no clue is given as to the date of composition, not even a dedication whence we might learn who was then upon the throne. The simplicity of the diction and the large number of pure Turkish words employed would, however, seem to bring it into line with the mesnevis written by such men as Khalili, 'Ishqi, and Gulsheni in the time of Mehemed II. The metre is the same as that of the author’s Leylā and Mejnūn; and as in the case of his other mesnevis, ghazels are freely sprinkled through the poem.

The Gift to Lovers is the only one of Hamdi's poems that can put forward any pretension as to originality of subject. The story here is certainly neither a translation nor a re-setting of a familiar theme. The plot, it is true, is of the slightest, but such as it is, it seems to be Hamdi's invention. The fact that at the close it is explained as a parable tends to strengthen this suggestion; for a tale fortuitously come by would be little likely to fit so perfectly the allegorist's purpose. The neglect which has been the lot of this poem may be attributed in part to the simplicity

1 An 'elif-figure' is a figure slight and erect like the letter elf.  
2 Beauties of elif-figure bare the trays,  
China was borne by fair Cathayan mays.  

The point in this couplet is of course the play on the word 'china', which in Turkish as in English is used equally for chinaware and for the name of the Celestial Empire. Cathay is famous in poetry for its pretty girls; and Cathay and China are associated in men's minds. This couplet occurs in the description of the first entertainment given by the vezir to the young merchant.

3 Some account of these minor poets and their works will be found in ch. xv.
of its style, which was distasteful to the age, and partly to the circumstance that its story was not among the accepted themes of romantic poetry.

Having devoted a few pages, as in duty bound, to the praises of God and the Prophet, Hamdî proceeds to tell how he came to write his Gift to Lovers. One spring morning when all the world was bright and gay the poet's heart cried to him to be up and doing; it bade him not waste his precious time in idleness, for life is fleeting; but to compose a little book of love which should be a joy to all. When he heard the words that his heart spoke, the poet felt himself fired with zeal; and straightway he set to and began the story, of which the following is an outline:

There is in the city of Caesarea, in the days of the great saint 'Sheykh Evhad-ud-Dîn, 1 a wealthy merchant who has a beautiful young son. This son, when he reaches his tenth year, announces to his father that his heart is set on travelling and trading. This causes his father, who loves him dearly, great distress; he points out how young and inexperienced he is, and how commerce is a hard matter, and travel fraught with difficulties of every kind. But all his expostulations and all the entreaties of the lad's mother are in vain; so the parents go to the sheykh, and, laying their trouble before him, ask his aid. The holy man plunges into the state of abstraction, wherein he receives direction from the other world. When he emerges thence, he tells the parents that God's command is that they shall allow the boy to go to Constan-

1 Sheykh Evhad-ud-Dîn is the only character (though one of secondary importance) in the tale to whom a personal name is given. I am unable to account for this. There may actually have been in Caesarea in old times (the story refers to a period prior to the capture of Constantinople by the Turks) a devotee who bore this name and who was popularly regarded as a saint. Or it may be that the name which signifies 'The Most Unique One of the Faith', was emphasized because of its suggestion of the Unity, a doctrine the importance of which in this history will appear at the close.
Cinople, sending with him several slaves as well as seven loads of merchandize for his stock-in-trade, after which they must possess themselves in patience and await what God will show. Although they throw themselves at the saint’s feet and pray him to mitigate his decree, it is in vain; he replies that when the arrow of destiny is shot, the spheres themselves avail not for a shield. So he bids them have patience, and gives his word that, though their son will pass through many adventures, he will at last be restored to them in safety. They therefore resign themselves and make all preparations for their son's departure. Before he starts, the sheykh addresses him and gives him much good advice as to his behaviour when away from home. At length all is ready; the lad says good-bye to his sorrowing father, and sets out upon his way.

On his arrival in Constantinople he takes up his quarters in a Khan. ¹ Now the Tekur or Emperor ² has a powerful vezir who has frequent dealings with the brokers of the city, it being his custom to buy the choicest goods of every merchant who comes to Constantinople. The brokers, going about the town, see a beautiful youth dressed in the habit of a merchant seated in a Khan. After admiring his grace they advance and address him, telling him that on the morrow they will show him the bazaars and assist him to do business, at all of which he is much pleased. Next morning the brokers arrive as promised and conduct him through the markets of the city, which interest him greatly, and where his own beauty creates an unusual stir. After the lad has retired to his Khan, the brokers go to their patron the vezir and tell him

¹ i. e. an inn.

² The title Tekfur (more commonly Tekur), from the Greek τέκφορον, was given by the Ottomans to any Byzantine lord, whether he was emperor, prince, or merely governor of a town or fortress. It is the common term in old Turkish books for the Greek Emperor of Constantinople.
that a young Musulman merchant of wonderful beauty has arrived in the city. The vezir is delighted at the tidings, and, having richly rewarded them for their good news, bids them bring the lad before him next morning. Now the reason of the vezir's delight is that he has a very lovely young daughter for whom he is anxious to find a husband as beautiful as herself; but this has not hitherto proved possible; and now the news brought by the brokers raises his hopes and fills him with joy.

Next morning the brokers go to the Khan and point out to the young merchant that as Constantinople is an infidel city, the people might fall upon him, a Musulman, and slay him and steal his goods, so that it is very desirable that he should have some patron among the great. The youth is persuaded by what they say, and asks who will become his patron. They reply that the Tekur's vezir, who is practically ruler of the country, is very kind to strangers, and they advise him to take some little offering with him and accompany them to the great man's abode. The lad complies with their suggestions, and is conducted by them to the vezir's palace.

The vezir is charmed with him, receives him most graciously, and entertains him sumptuously. He is invited to return the following day, when, in the course of the feast, after he has drunk rather freely and whilst his senses are beguiled by the sweet sounds of musical instruments, a curtain is suddenly withdrawn, and the radiant daughter of the vezir is seen behind it. She comes forward and sits beside the young merchant, who is dazzled and overcome by her beauty and falls wildly in love with her on the spot. As she is about to retire he seizes hold of her skirt and prays her not to leave him; but on a motion from her father, who sees that his scheme has succeeded, she withdraws.
Then the youth goes back to his Khan, not to sleep, but to think upon the lovely girl to whom he has lost his heart.

The following morning he is again invited to the vezir's house, where he meets with the same entertainment as before, and again has a short interview with his beloved, after which he returns to the Khan. His servants, seeing his distress, enquire whether they can help him in any way, whereupon he asks them to bring the brokers before him. On the arrival of these he tells them of his case, and says that as they have been the means of bringing this sorrow upon him they ought to find the remedy. He bids them go to the vezir and tell him the whole story, adding that, should it be required, he is willing to become a slave in the palace, if only he can see his beloved. They comply with his request, and the vezir, when he hears what their mission is, smiles but says nothing. He goes, however, to his daughter's apartments and finds that love of the handsome young merchant has filled her heart, so that his own laudations of the youth are almost superfluous. The brokers then receive permission to convey another invitation to the young man, which he joyfully accepts. On repairing to the vezir's house he is entertained as before; but when the girl, who declares to him her love, prepares to retire, he clutches her skirt, and, in spite of her father's remonstrances, refuses to leave go. The vezir then lets him embrace and kiss her, and so great is the rapture produced by touching her lips that the youth swoons away. While in this condition he is taken back to his own dwelling, where, on awakening, he can scarce believe his experience to have been other than a dream.

He is now beside himself so that his servants have to fetter him lest he should do himself an injury. In vain do they and the brokers try to reason with him; he answers that no counsel is of any avail, that union with the beloved
alone can cure him. Filled with compassion for his sad case, they go to the vezir and tell him how matters stand; he answers that, though he has refused his daughter to many kings, he will give her to this beautiful youth on condition that he will abandon his religion and worship their idols. When this condition is reported to the young man he exclaims 'A thousand religions be sacrificed for the beloved! A lover hath no religion other than his loved one. To that lover who distinguisheth between Faith and infidelity cometh no epiphany of the beloved's face!' The vezir is delighted when he receives this answer, and makes all preparations for the wedding. But the lover's servants are vexed at their master's renunciation of his faith, and bitterly reproach him therewith, asking what has become of his early upbringing and of the counsels of the holy sheykh. But he heeds them not, and, when the wedding-morning arrives, filled with love of the vezir's daughter he arrays himself in his most splendid apparel.

And so the young merchant and the vezir's daughter are married and live together in all happiness, and in the course of two years two sons are born to them. Now there is in Constantinople a great church, which is called St. Sophia, and in this church there is held every seven years a special service which all the people of the city attend. Thither accordingly, when the time comes round, go the merchant and his wife. Now when the merchant had abandoned Islam he had placed his Koran in this church, and it so happens that when they go thither to attend this service the lady catches sight of the volume and asks her husband what it is. He tells her that it is the revelation to Muhammed and

1 The reference is to the sacred pictures etc. of the Eastern Christians.
2 Declarations similar to these abound in the writings of the Sufi poets.
3 There is here a gap in my MS., the page or pages describing the apostacy of the young merchant and the consummation of the marriage being lost.
waxes so eloquent in its praise that she becomes eager to see it and to take an augury from its pages, and eventually persuades him to procure it. He accordingly fetches it, and when they open the sacred book to take an augury, this verse meets their eyes: 'Is not the time come for those who believe that their hearts should be softened by the remembrance of God and of what He hath sent down of the truth, and that they should not be as those who were given the scriptures aforetime, and over whom time was prolonged and whose hearts are grown hard?'

When the young man sees this, his eyes are opened and he cries aloud. His wife in amaze asks what the augury is; and when she hears, she is so impressed alike by the words and by their effect upon her husband that she too cries aloud. Her father, who is present, has the church cleared, and when he has heard what the reason of the commotion is, the light of guidance streams down into his soul as into his daughter's, and both embrace the faith of Islam. They tell no one of what has happened; but quietly make their preparations, and, when all is ready, set out with abundant treasure for Caesarea, where they arrive in safety and happiness.

Having finished his tale, Hamdi proceeds to explain that it is in reality an allegory. The young merchant represents the human soul whose birthplace and home is in a Sacred Country like Caesarea, but when God's command is issued it must go forth to this sad Constantinople of a world, here to seek to gain a profit on the merchandize of its capabilities. While here it is beguiled by bodily delights which, like the

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1 Bibliomancy has already been referred to; vol. i, p. 166, n. 3, and p. 49 of this volume. In both these cases the volume referred to is the Diwan of Hâfiz, but naturally the Koran also is often used for the same purpose.

2 Koran, LVI, 15. The reference in the latter part of the verse is to the Jews and Christians, hence its appropriateness in the circumstances.
vezir's daughter, make it forgetful of its celestial origin; while the 'beshrouded reason,' like the vezir himself, presents these to it in the fairest and most desirable of guises. And so this body causes the veil to descend before the soul, just as the vezir's daughter was the cause of the apostacy of the young merchant. But when grace descends from God, and the Koran of the divine guidance is opened, infidelity passes away and faith returns, and soul and body both are beautified thereby, until at length this transient world is left behind, and the Sacred Country is regained.

The poem closes with a few lines in which the poet thanks God for having enabled him to bring his work to a conclusion.

With regard to the other mesnevi alleged by some to be by Hamdî, the so-called Muhammediyye, I am unable to say anything except that it is mentioned only by the annotator of the Crimson Peony and by Kâtib Chelebi. It is probably identical with the Ahmediyye which Von Hammer attributes to this poet. 

Besides these longer poems, Hamdî has a short treatise in mesnevi-verse on the old science of physiognomy. This little work, which contains only some hundred and fifty couplets and bears the descriptive title of Qiyâfet-Nâme or 'The Book of Physiognomy', appears to have enjoyed a much greater share of public favour than some of the author's more ambitious efforts. It is mentioned by all the biographers except Latîfî, and both 'Ashiq and Hasan quote some verses

1 'Aql-i Mahjûb, the 'Beshrouded (or Veiled) Reason', is a term applied in philosophy to the Reason when it is, so to speak, befogged by matter, that is, by the phantasmagoria presented through the five outer senses, to such an extent that it is unable to discriminate between the false and the true.

2 Von Hammer mentions further a poem which he calls Enîs-ul-Ushshâq or 'The Lovers' Familiar' and which he attributes to Hamdî. I can find no trace of such a work in any Turkish authority.

3 The Qiyâfet-Nâme occurs in the British Museum MS. Sloane, 4089. The poem is in the metre Khafîf, the same as the Joseph and Zelikha.
from it. This esteem is no doubt chiefly owing to the subject of the work; for physiognomy, the art of discriminating character by the outward appearance, was a very popular study during the middle Ages both in East and West. The mental or moral characteristics associated with various physical appearances are said to have been first tabulated by Aristotle, and subsequent writers do not seem to have made any essential alterations in what he set down. Hamdî did no more than throw the currently accepted notions into simple Turkish rhymes; but his work appears to be the earliest of its kind in the language, and this may possibly have helped its popularity by giving it the start of any rival.

After a few introductory couplets Hamdî begins at once upon his subject, taking each feature in turn and telling us what moral characteristic we may expect to find according to the appearance of the same. The features discussed are the complexion, stature, girth, gait, hair, head, forehead, ears, eyebrows, eyes, face, nose, mouth, manner of speaking, laugh, lips, teeth, chin, neck, shoulders, waist, fingers, back, belly, and legs. Then follow a few brief instructions as to the reconciliation of apparently contradictory signs appearing in the same individual and as to drawing general conclusions. The book closes with a complaint concerning the brutality of the men of the age, the last lines being a prayer that God will save the writer from despair and at last receive him into bliss. No date or other clue to the time of composition is vouchsafed.

Both 'Ashiq and Hasan mention Hamdî's ghazels, and both speak of them in a depreciatory tone. There is no record of his having left a Diwan. If he did so, the work may possibly have disappeared owing to the scant favour which, as we are told, was extended to his lyrics. But it may be that the ghazels to which the critics refer are those which the poet has introduced into his mesnevis.