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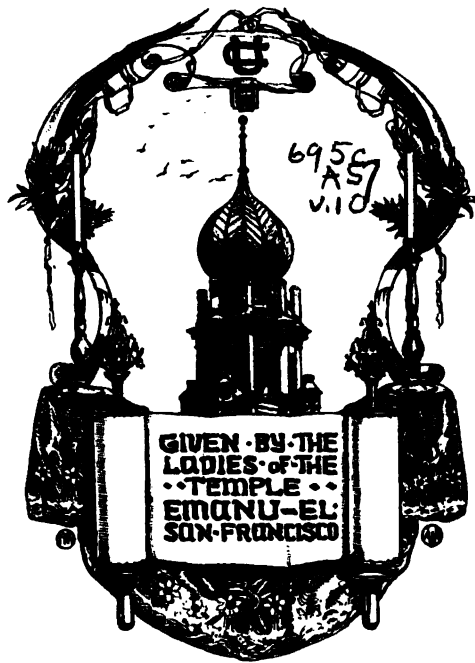
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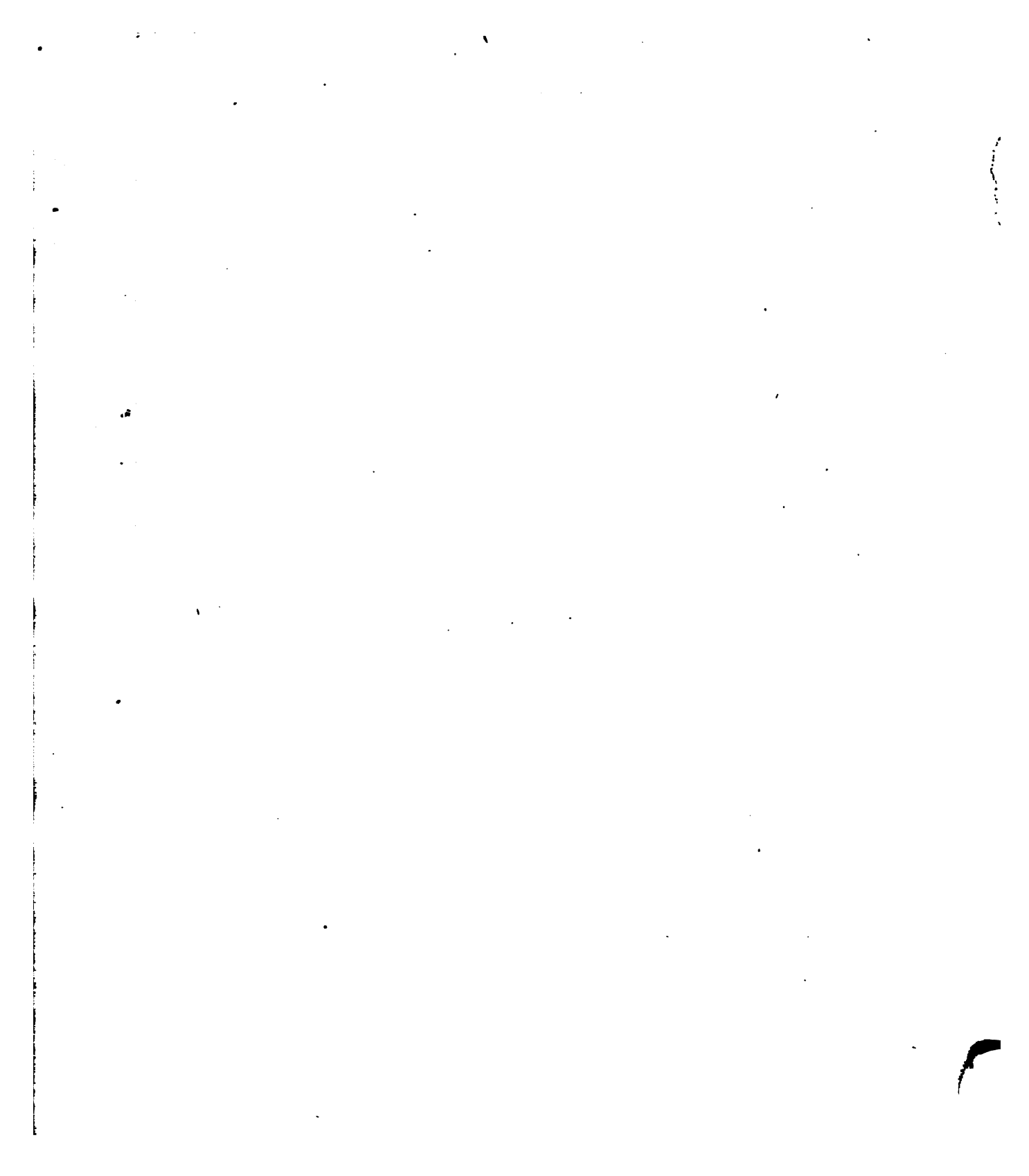
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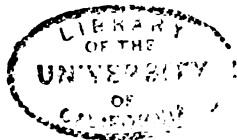
SEMITIC SERIES. PART X

THE LETTERS OF ABU 'L-ALĀ

EDITED FROM THE LEYDEN MANUSCRIPT

WITH THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR BY AL-DHAHABI, AND WITH
TRANSLATION, NOTES, INDICES, AND BIOGRAPHY, BY

D. S. MARGOLIOUTH, M.A.



Oxford

AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

1898

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THE
LETTERS OF ABU 'L-'ALĀ
OF
MA'ARRAT AL-NU'MĀN

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BY
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PREFACE.

THE present edition of the Letters of Abu 'l-'Alā was undertaken several years ago, when the editor, impressed by the high estimate formed of Abu 'l-'Alā by Von Kremer¹, thought that many Arabists would be glad to have access to the poet's correspondence. Through the kindness of the eminent Orientalist, Prof. M. De Goeje, the Leyden MS. was twice deposited in the Bodleian Library for a period of

¹ Von Kremer speaks of Abu 'l-'Alā at length in his *Kulturgeschichte* (1877), II. 386-396, and in his *Abhandlung über die philosophischen Gedichte des Abu 'l-'Alā* (*Sitzungsberichte der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien, Hist.-phil. Klasse*, vol. CXVII, 6te Abhandlung, 1889). He also translated many poems from the *Luzūmiyyāt* at different times: *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, XXIX. 304-312, XXX. 40-52, XXXI. 471-483, XXXVIII. 498-529; *Sitzungsberichte*, as above, XCIII. 636-640. Of other writers who have dealt with Abu 'l-'Alā the first place must be assigned to Ch. Rieu, *De Abu 'l-'Alae poetae vita et carminibus*, Bonn, 1843. Poems from the *Sakṭ al-Zand* have been translated by Fabricius (Dantzig, 1638), Golius (in Erpenius' *Arabic Grammar*, 1656), De Sacy (*Chrestomathie Arabe*, 2nd ed., 1827, III. 81-121), J. Vullers (*Harethi Moallaca et Abulolae carmina duo inedita*, 1827). Poems from both collections are translated by Von Hammer in his *Literaturgeschichte der Araber*, VI. 900-972. Attention was first called to the poet in this country by Pococke, *Specimen Historiae Arabum*, p. 42; the notice by Abu 'l-Fidā, *Annales*, ed. Reiske, III. 163-165, has been frequently excerpted, e. g. by Weil, *Geschichte der Khalifen*, III. 72. A highly interesting note was contributed by I. Goldziher to vol. XXIX of the *Z. D. M. G.*, and the same writer in his *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie* (1896) quotes the Letters. Those who feel pleasure in correcting errors would find ample opportunity in many of these works: even De Sacy translates *رهن المحبسين* 'Gage des Prisonniers'; and Von Kremer, *S. B.* CXVII. 91, makes the astounding assertion that 'none of Abu 'l-'Alā's biographers know of such a work as *Al-Fuṣūl wal-Ghāyāt*, that it is nowhere quoted, and must be another name for the *Luzūmiyyāt*,' although Goldziher, l. c., in an article dealing with Von Kremer's translations, had produced a passage from the book in question.

weeks for the editor's use. In 1894 however, when most of the text was already in type, there appeared at Beyrut an edition of the Letters, fully pointed and accompanied by a brief commentary, the work of Shāhin Effendi 'Aṭiyyah, clearly a most competent scholar, whose book might seem to render a European edition unnecessary. The present work was however continued on the following grounds: (1) although the Beyrut editor's MS. is occasionally better than the Leyden MS., it has a large lacuna, all the Letters occupying pp. 38-55 of the present edition being lost; (2) although the Beyrut editor's commentary is deserving of praise, it nevertheless leaves much that is difficult unexplained; (3) the addition of a translation and indices will, perhaps, render the book more accessible to those interested in the East than the Beyrut edition has rendered it.

For the text then I have employed the Warner MS. described in the Catalogue of the Leyden Library (2nd ed., pp. 190-193), with occasional corrections from the Beyrut edition; some of these will be found in an Appendix. The whole of Letter II is to be found in the *Tadhkirah* of Ibn Ḥamdūn (ob. circ. 562 A. H.; MS. Marsh. 316), and in the *Ṣubḥ Al-A'shā* of Al-Ḳalkashandi (ob. 821; MS. Marsh. 317); since Ḳalkashandi was acquainted with Ibn Ḥamdūn's work, it is probable that the former got his copy from the latter: but from both these MSS. a little help can be derived. Al-Bākhari, the author of a continuation of the *Yatīmat al-Dahr*, of which there is a copy in the British Museum, makes a reference to the same letter, but does not cite any of it. These are the only writers, (other than bibliographers,) known to me¹, who were acquainted with this collec-

¹ Von Hammer, l. c. 906, states that a work in the Leyden Library, called *Jamharat al-Islām*, contains a letter by Abu 'l-'Alā occupying eight folios, and quoting thirty-six poets. The list of names (many seriously mutilated), which Von Hammer proceeds to give, makes it probable that this is Letter XXVII. The account of this work given in the new edition of the Leyden Catalogue shows that it contains much that bears on our author. Ḥajji Khalifah's notice of the Letters is clearly taken from Al-Dhahabi.

tion; Kamāl al-dīn Ibn Al-'Adīm (ob. 666), whose History of Aleppo is preserved in the Paris MS. excerpted by Freytag in his *Selecta ex Historia Halebi*, and who not only studied the antiquities of Aleppo and its neighbourhood with great diligence, but is said to have composed a biography of Abu 'l-'Alā, though he goes out of his way to mention the occasions on which some of Abu 'l-'Alā's Letters were composed, and displays great interest in his personality, tells us nothing about the Letters in this collection; and I have found no allusion to them in the writings of Ibn Ḥujjah of Hamath (ob. 837), who otherwise shows considerable acquaintance with Abu 'l-'Alā's works, and, of course, is greatly interested in elegant epistles. His contemporary and friend Ibn Nubātah (ob. 823) does not appear to have known them either.

The interpretation is constantly a matter of considerable difficulty, and the handbook which the author compiled in elucidation of his Letters would be of great help. In parts they are a tissue of quotations and allusions. Where the sources of these are known, the meaning can be made out with tolerable certainty: elsewhere there is great danger of falling into error. And, as the author was blind and unable to verify his references, his quotations frequently contain some inaccuracy, and it may be suspected that some of the passages in which the difficulty seems insuperable owe their character to slips of memory on the author's part. He tells us¹, too, that owing to his pronunciation some of the sounds would be likely to be misrepresented by those to whom he dictated, and of this the Beyrut and Leyden texts offer examples.

Many pages will illustrate the difficulty that has been noticed; one example may be quoted here. On p. ۳۱, 9, speaking of his affection for his correspondent, the author says: تذكرى لآوقاته تذكر الفطيم ندى . والوالده . والمقسم بالملح لبنى خالده . The first part, 'I think of his times as

¹ Letter XXXVI, p. ۱39.

the weaned child thinks of its mother's breast,' is taken from a line of Abu 'l-Hindi quoted in the *Kāmil* of Mubarrad (Egyptian ed. II. 42):—

إِدِيرَا عَلَى الْكَأْسِ أَتَى فَقَدْتَهَا ♦ كَمَا فَقَدَ الْمَفْطُومَ دَرَّ الْمَرَاغِ

As however it contains no difficulty, the source has not been cited. The remainder of the passage could never be made out without the help of the source whence it is taken, a line quoted in the same work (Eg. I. 295; Wright, p. 284) as 'the poet's':—

لَا يَبْعَدُ اللَّهُ رَبَّ الْعَبَا -- ♦ د وَالْمِلْحِ مَا وَلَكْتُ خَالِدًا

'May God, Lord of men, by the milk, not remove the children of Khālidah¹;' the line being quoted to show that *milh* sometimes means 'milk' or the collactaneous relation, which, for some purposes, counts in Mohammedan law as equal to consanguinity.

In this and similar cases those whose opinion is worth having are by no means likely to condemn the rendering before they have investigated its ground.

The original being in rhymed prose, to which the sense is often sacrificed, there is much in the translation that will necessarily seem pointless or insipid. No attempt has been made to reproduce the rhyme of the original, rhymed prose not being with us a recognized form of composition; but occasionally English proverbs or plays on words have been substituted for those in the text.

To the Letters there is appended the Life of Abu 'l-'Alā by Al-Dhahabi, which is more copious than that by Ibn Khallikan, and also follows different sources; it is taken from the copy of Al-Dhahabi's

¹ We also learn that Abu 'l-'Alā (rightly or wrongly) read *walmilhi*, not, as the printed editions, *walmilhu*. The passage whence the verse comes is given in *Khizānat al-adab* IV. 164, where the opinions of the ancient critics about its authorship and meaning are stated. The wish implies that the 'children of Khālidah' were dead (note on *Ḥamāsah*, p. 405). The verse is also quoted by Sheikhho, *Commentaires sur le Diwān d'Al-Khansā*, p. 31, pointed as above.

History of Islam in the British Museum. The Biography which follows this Preface has been compiled from it and also from such other works bearing on the subject as were within the author's reach. One of these is the Biography¹ prefixed to the Boulāk edition of the commentary on the *Saḥīḥ al-Zand* called *Tanwīr*; the author of which seems to have drawn his bow at a venture when he refers the reader to the *Yatīmat al-Dahr* for further information; for not only do the printed copies of the *Yatīmah* say nothing of Abu 'l-'Alā, but the existence of a notice of the poet in Bākhārzi's supplement shows that there never was one in the *Yatīmah*. Bākhārzi is however nearly as much inferior to Tha'ālibi as the latter is inferior to the author of the *Aghāni*. The Biography by Ṣafādī² contains some of the same matter as the others, but preserves some valuable notices which are not found elsewhere. The list of Abu 'l-'Alā's writings appended to Al-Dhahabī's Biography gives it special value. It will not escape the reader however that there is a discrepancy between the number of titles given and the number which Abu 'l-'Alā asserted that they reached. The discrepancies between this list and Ṣafādī's are collected in the Appendix.

¹ The information given by this writer is similar to that quoted by Goldziher, l. c., from a Leipzic MS.

² In the Bodleian MS. (Seld. Arch. A. 21). The text of this volume is exceedingly corrupt, but can often be restored from other sources.

CHIEF ABBREVIATIONS, ETC.

F. W. = *Fawāt al-wafayāt*.

Ibn Khall. = Ibn Khallikan (cited by the edition of Boulāk, 1299).

Luz. = *Luzūmiyyāt* of Abu 'l-'Alā (rhymes up to ; cited by the edition of Cairo, 1891; the rest by the edition of Bombay, 1303).

S. Z. = *Saḥḥ al-Zand* of Abu 'l-'Alā (cited by the edition of Boulāk, 1286).

Maydāni's 'Proverbs' are ordinarily cited by the pages of the edition of Beyrut, 1312, called *فرائد اللآل في مجمع الامثال*. For Ibn Al-Athīr and Mas'ūdī's *Murāj al-dhahab* the edition of Boulāk, 1303, has been employed; for Ibn Ḳutaibah's *Kitāb al-ma'ārif* that of Cairo, 1300; and for Damīri and Ḳazwīni that of Cairo, 1309.

L. A. = *Lisān al-'Arab*.

T. A. = *Tāj al-'Arūs*.

The sign of prolongation is sometimes omitted in the transliterations of proper names.

BIOGRAPHY
OF
ABU 'L-'ALĀ AL-MA'ARRI.

Abu 'l-'Alā¹ Aḥmad son of Abdallah son of Sulaiman was born at Ma'arrat Al-Nu'mān in Syria in the year 363 A. H., corresponding with the year 973 A. D. Ma'arraḥ, called by European travellers² Marrah, is a town somewhat South of Aleppo or Ḥaleb, at a distance of one day's (or more accurately, nineteen hours') journey. Originally, it is said, it was called Ma'arraḥ of Ḥuṣṣ, but after the conquest of Syria by the Moslems it was called Ma'arraḥ of Nu'mān, after Nu'mān son of Bashīr³, who was governor of Ḥuṣṣ for the Umayyad Caliph Marwān Ibn Al-Ḥakam, and one of whose sons died and was buried at Ma'arraḥ. Such, at least, is the account of the name given by Al-Balādhuri⁴; but some of the authorities⁵ are not satisfied with it, and suggest other and less probable explanations. The second part of the name was in any case given the town in order to distinguish it from another Ma'arraḥ, also in this region, and called Ma'arrat

¹ The custom of giving *kunya*s to persons who had no children is too familiar to need illustration. An earlier Abu 'l-'Alā of Ma'arraḥ is mentioned in Aghāni XII. 8; and an Abu 'l-'Alā of Tanūkh, Aghāni VII. 86. Another Abu 'l-'Alā related to Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī Ibn Ja'far is mentioned by Bākhari among the poets of Ma'arraḥ.

² So R. Pococke, Walpole, and others.

³ A long and interesting account of this person, who was famous as a poet as well as a statesman, is given in Aghāni XIV. 119 sqq.

⁴ Ed. De Goeje, p. 131.

⁵ So Yāqūt, s. v. It would seem more probable that Al-Nu'mān was the name of a god.

Maṣrīn. Of the first part of the name the geographers give a variety of derivations, to which our author adds a humorous one¹; but it is doubtless the Syriac M"artā, 'a cave², to which Maghārah would etymologically correspond in Arabic. The province in which it was situated was called in Abu 'l-'Alā's time 'Awāṣim or 'the Forts³, a name which, according to some authorities, denoted a very vast expanse of territory, while others limit it to the region between Ḥaleb and Ḥamath; and others, again, expressly exclude these districts from it. In our author's time it was subject to the governor of Ḥaleb. The whole region seems to have been peopled from pre-Islamic days by the tribe Tanūkh, whose migrations form an interesting chapter in the mythology of the Arabs⁴; and the range of mountains drained by the Orontes, which further south becomes the Lebanon, was called after their name⁵. Ma'arraḥ, in particular⁶, was said to be inhabited by families descended from this tribe, and from such a family our author claimed to be descended.

The account repeatedly given by Abu 'l-'Alā of both the physical and intellectual condition of his native town⁷ is lugubrious, but it is not confirmed by other writers, save in the one detail of its being destitute of running water. Ibn Ḥaukal, who died about the time when Abu 'l-'Alā was born, speaks of Ma'arraḥ as 'a rich and pros-

¹ *Infra*, p. 61.

² In Joshua xiii. 4 M"ārah of the Sidonians is the name of a city.

³ Abu 'l-'Alā uses this name so frequently that there can be no question that in his time Ma'arraḥ belonged to 'Awāṣim. In S. Z. II. 43 he wishes for a drop of the water of Ma'arraḥ, and in the same poem (p. 46) pines for the land of 'Awāṣim. Ibn Khallikan (I. 445) argues the same from S. Z. II. 53; and from I. 25 it appears that Ḥaleb was in 'Awāṣim also. The commentator on I. 25 and I. 87 limits the region as above. Ṭabari however (III. 604; cited by Ibn Khallikan) states that Ḥārūn Al-Rashīd in 170 turned Ḳinnesrīn and Al-Jazīrah into a single province called 'Awāṣim. Of the geographers, Iṣṭakhri (*Bibl. Geogr. Arab.* I. 61), Ibn Ḥaukal (ibid. II. 118), and Muḳaddasi (ibid. III. 154) place Ma'arraḥ in Jund Ḳinnesrīn; while Ya'ḳūbi (ibid. VII. 324) and Mas'ūdi (ibid. VIII. 153) place it in the Jund Ḥumṣ. Clearly Abu 'l-'Alā's opinion is worth more than all these. Ibn Ḳāḍi Shuhbah in his description of Ḥaleb (Brit. Mus. MS., p. 7) states that Ḥamath used to be 'attached' to Ḥaleb, and Ma'arraḥ to Ḥamath.

⁴ Aghāni XI. 161; Al-Bekri, preface (translated by Wüstenfeld in his *Wanderungen der Arabischen Stämme*).

⁵ Iṣṭakhri, p. 56.

⁶ Ya'ḳūbi, l. c. The double title Al-Ma'arri Al-Tanūkhi is given to several poets noticed in the *Fawāt al-wafayāt*.

⁷ *Infra*, pp. 8, 62, 67. S. Z. I. 145 is yet worse.

perous town, well supplied with figs, pistachios, grapes, and other produce¹; and Ibn Baṭūṭah, who visited it in the eighth century of the Hijrah, gives an account that is scarcely less favourable². Although the population is now small, modern writers³ still speak of the region as fertile and well cultivated. What is known of the people of Ma'arraḥ would also lead us to rate their intellectual capacity higher than Abu 'l-'Alā rates it. The tribe of Tanūkh, like that of Hudhail, had a store of tribal lays⁴; and in the third century A. H. the people of Ma'arraḥ on Abu Tammām's recommendation gave the poet Buḥturī a salary of 1,000 dirhems for praising them, this being the first money he earned by his verses⁵. Although our author was the writer of Ma'arraḥ who achieved the greatest distinction, the number of poets taking their name from this place who figure in the biographical dictionaries is quite out of proportion to its political importance⁶.

The author's family on the father's side is said to have produced many persons of distinction both before and after his time⁷. His grandfather is said to have been Kāḍī of Ma'arraḥ, and afterwards of Ḥumṣ. His father was a poet of some note, of no ordinary merit,

¹ Ibn Ḥaukal (*Bibl. Geogr. Arab.* II.) 118.

² Ed. Defrémery, I. 144. Some of the geographers speak of it as in ruins (Ya'qūbi, l. c.), but this can have been only temporary; Ibn Kāḍī Shuhbah, l. c., p. 177, says its walls were destroyed by Abdallah Ibn Ṭāhir in 207, when sent by Ma'mūn against Naṣr. Ya'qūbi's notice probably refers to this event.

³ Seetzen, *Reisen* I. 8; Walpole, *Ansayrii* I. 194 (1851).

⁴ S. Z. II. 112. It was called the Diwān of Taim Allāt, *ibid.* 120 ult. A grandson of Al-Kāḍī Al-Tanūkhi lent it to Abu 'l-'Alā when in Baghdad: the latter, on leaving Baghdad, left it with his friend 'Abd Al-Salām; but in spite of numerous inquiries he could not trace it even after twenty years (S. Z. II. 140). Šafādī, in the notice of 'Abd Al-Salām, says he used to give books to beggars.

⁵ Aghāni XVIII. 169.

⁶ To the notices in Dhahabī there should be added those in Bākhari, the Fawāt al-wafayāt, and Ibn Al-'Adīm's dictionary. Abu 'l-Ḥasan Aḥmad Ibn Al-Duwaidah is mentioned by Ibn Khallikan (II. 14) as a distinguished poet in the year 460. Others were Abu Mohammed Al-Adīb, Abu Munajjim Ibn Muṣ'ir, Abu 'l-Kāsim Ibn Jalabāt (an older contemporary of Abu 'l-'Alā), Abu 'l-Kāsim Al-Muḥri (a younger contemporary), Abu Naṣr of the family of 'Amr Ibn Sa'īd Ibn Al-Muḥjahhar, a poet called Ghurāb, &c.

⁷ Šafādī, f. 62 a. Lists of these were drawn up by Ibn Al-'Adīm and Yāqūt in his Mu'jam al-Udabā.

if the dirge in which he is lamented is to be believed¹. He would seem to have died when Abu 'l-'Alā was young. From the poem that has been quoted he appears to have been a modest and retiring man—indeed it quaintly suggests that on the Day of Judgement he would try to avoid the crush. One of his brothers survived till the days of Ṣāliḥ Ibn Mirdās (about 420), if any reliance may be placed on an otherwise apocryphal anecdote².

We have one prose lament³ and two verse laments⁴ by Abu 'l-'Alā over his mother, who survived till his thirty-seventh year. She belonged to the family of Sabīkah, some members of which would seem to have filled posts of importance in Syrian towns; but although we learn that one of them was resident in Damascus⁵ and another in Ḥaleb⁶, the contemporary chronicles of those cities apparently do not notice their existence. They were great travellers, if the poem⁷ addressed to one of them do not exaggerate; and the relation between Abu 'l-'Alā and his maternal uncles appears from the letters to have been exceedingly close and affectionate.

Both these families would seem to have entertained to some extent those liberal opinions in religious matters for which the author became notorious. In a poem written by him late in life⁸, he represents himself as being upbraided for having neglected the pilgrimage, one of the essential duties of a Moslem; and his answer is that neither his father nor his cousin nor his maternal uncle had performed it. If, he argues, they are forgiven, he may expect forgiveness too; if they are lost in consequence, he would sooner share their fate.

At an early age—the biographers say, at the beginning of the year 977 367, when Abu 'l-'Alā was three-and-a-half years old⁹—he had an attack of small-pox, which not only left his face scarred, but caused the complete loss of the sight of his left eye, and the partial loss of that of the right. How long he retained any sort of vision is not certain; the frequent references in his writings to stars, flowers, and

¹ S. Z. I. 193.

² Ṣafadi, f. 67 a.

³ Letter VII.

⁴ S. Z. II. 87, 137.

⁵ *Infra*, p. 131.

⁶ *Infra*, pp. 35, 36.

⁷ S. Z. I. 165-167, 'Have you made Alexander the Great your model?' Cp. *infra*, pp. 48-51.

⁸ Quoted by Ṣafadi, f. 67 a.

⁹ *Infra*, p. 111. Cp. Ibn Khallikan I. 41.

the forms of the Arabic letters¹ imply that he could see a little at least some years after this calamity, and of this there is some external evidence²; but it is not probable that he obtained much, or indeed any, of his learning by reading. As a sort of compensation for the loss of his sight he was gifted with a prodigious memory, of which tales, not to be taken as literally true, are told by his contemporaries, which, even after allowance has been made for exaggeration, give evidence of extraordinary retentiveness. His pupil Abu Zakariyyā of Tabriz asserted that a conversation between himself and one of his countrymen in the dialect of Adherbaijan was repeated verbatim by Abu 'l-'Alā, though ignorant of the dialect³; and similar tales are told by others⁴. The letters, which abound in quotations, enable us to gauge the power of his memory better than these wonder-loving narrators. His acquaintance with the literature of his nation was certainly great, but it was wanting in accuracy. Those who study his quotations will perceive that he could no more than others less gifted afford to leave his references unverified.

From his twentieth year, he tells one of his correspondents⁵, he had sought neither instruction nor money from any inhabitant of Syria or 'Irāk. His life therefore falls into three periods: that of his youthful studies, which terminated in 383; his life in Ma'arrāh ending 993 with his visit to Baghdad, which lasted from 398 to 400; and his seclusion in Ma'arrāh, which lasted from his return from Baghdad 1008 to his death. 1010

His first instruction, we are told, was from his father; he also studied tradition in Ma'arrāh under Yahyā Ibn Mus'ir, 'of a distinguished family⁶;' the rest of his education was obtained in other Syrian towns. Owing to the fame of the Hamdanide prince Saif

¹ *Infra*, p. 17, &c. In S. Z. II. 44 there is an allusion to a ω written with gold ink by Ibn Hilāl, a famous caligrapher of the time in Baghdad (ob. 412).

² The author cited in the preface to S. Z., p. 4, l. 5.

³ *Ibid.* Šafādī gives the same story, but is rightly sceptical.

⁴ Usāmah Ibn Munqidh, *ibid.* p. 3. This writer died in 584 (Ibn Khall. I. 79), but was well-versed in the history of this region.

⁵ *Infra*, p. 40.

⁶ *Infra*, p. 131. He cited traditions on the authority of Abu 'l-Faṭḥ Mohammed Ibn Al-Ḥusain, *infra*, p. 137.

al-daulah, and the eminence of the authors whom his liberality attracted to Haleb, the literary renown of Syria stood very high at this time; Abu 'l-'Alā's contemporary Al-Tha'ālibi not only places the poets of Syria at the head of his well-known anthology, but also endeavours in the preface to that work to account for their superiority over the poets of other Mohammedan countries¹. Among the scholars whom Saif al-daulah had attracted to Haleb was the grammarian and archaeologist Ibn Khālūyah, whose lectures were crowded with disciples from all countries²; and although Abu 'l-'Alā can scarcely have attended these, since Ibn Khālūyah died when the former was seven years old, we are told that he studied under Ibn Khālūyah's successors, of whom one was probably that Abu 'l-Kāsim Al-Mubārak who is mentioned in Letter XXVII³. The Banu Kauthar, of whom less is known, are also mentioned among his instructors at Haleb; while the name of another teacher is given as Mohammed Ibn Abdallah Ibn Sa'd⁴. Most of these Syrian towns possessed great libraries—one of those at Haleb is said to have contained 20,000 volumes⁵; and after making use of those at Haleb, Abu 'l-'Alā proceeded to commit to memory some of the contents of those at Antioch⁶ and Tripoli⁷. At the former of these places he is said to have exhibited some of those feats of memory to which reference has been made. 'Passing by Latakiah,' the biographer adds, 'he made the acquaintance of a monk, who suggested to him doubts concerning revealed religion from which he was never able to free himself⁸.'

¹ In Aghāni XV. 113 there is an account of an earlier controversy about the merits of the poets of different countries; but this was to a large extent political.

² Ibn Khallikan I. 197, 198; Yatimat al-Dahr I. 76.

³ *Infra*, p. 74.

⁴ *Infra*, p. 121.

⁵ Ibn Al-'Adīm, Paris MS. 56 b.

⁶ S. Z., preface, p. 3, l. 2 a. f. Antioch was at this time in the possession of the Greeks.

⁷ *Infra*, p. 121. The custom of leaving libraries to mosques is well known; Abu 'l-'Alā's contemporary Abu Naṣr Al-Manāzī left his to the mosques of Āmid and Mayyāfāriqīn (Ibn Khall. I. 55); and likewise Al-Wazīr Al-Maghribi left his books to the people of Mayyāfāriqīn (MS. Marsh. 333). Notices of the price of books at this time (Ibn Khall. I. 425, 'A copy of the Jamharah of Ibn Duraid fetched sixty dinars;' *ibid.* II. 463, 'A copy of the Diwān of Jarir fetched ten dinars') show that such benefactions were very necessary. For the fortunes made by booksellers see Ibn Khall. I. 79.

⁸ *Infra*, p. 121. Ṣafadi has the same.

This may have been so: but the Christian monk is a person who figures in so many of these narratives¹ that we are justified in suspecting the truth of this statement. The scepticism for which Abu 'l-'Alā afterwards became famous can be accounted for by other causes than the suggestions of a monk. The poet whom Abu 'l-'Alā took for his model in his early compositions, and who has, ever since he wrote, been the most popular of the Arabic poets, Al-Mutanabbi, more than once in his early writings speaks with insufficient respect of the Prophets², and even his mature poems are not quite free from the taint of unorthodoxy³, albeit the victories of his patron Saif al-daulah over the Christians not unfrequently warm him to religious fervour and fanaticism. But by Abu 'l-'Alā's time events had changed. What he witnessed was a three-cornered duel between two Mohammedan powers and one Christian power: and of this war Ḥaleb formed the centre. More than once in Abu 'l-'Alā's time Ḥaleb owed its deliverance from Mohammedan conquerors to Christian allies.

Abu 'l-'Alā's studies were the natural preparation for a lucrative career to which blindness was no obstacle. In the Aghānī we read of many blind poets, and indeed of one⁴ whose blindness was brought about by the same malady which deprived Abu 'l-'Alā of his sight. The custom of bestowing large sums in return for complimentary odes was inherited by the Caliphs from the pre-Islamic dynasties; and what the Caliphs did on a large scale was also done by their ministers, provincial governors⁵, and in general by men of wealth and station in a scarcely less lavish fashion. The reader of the Kitāb al-Aghānī is astounded by the size of the gratuities earned by verses often of moderate merit; and yet the statements of this work often rest on excellent evidence, and the autobiography of 'Umārah of

¹ See, e.g., the story in the Aghānī VIII. 185.

² Mutanabbi, ed. Dieterici, pp. 30, l. 6; 32, l. 18; 35, l. 36 (perhaps he owed his name Al-Mutanabbi 'the Prophetaster' to the last two passages; poets who were named after a single verse are enumerated by Jāḥiẓ, Tibyān II. 51, Kāmil I. 322, Zahr al-Ādāb I. 39); 96, ll. 18, 19.

³ P. 622, l. 41.

⁴ 'Alī Ibn Jabalah, Aghānī XVIII. 101. The same calamity happened later in life to Naṣr al-Numairī, Ibn Khall. II. 206.

⁵ An Ibn Ḥayyūs became wealthy from the gifts of the governor of Ḥaleb, Ibn Khall. II. 14 (anno 464).

Yemen¹, who flourished in the middle of the sixth century of Islam, is a record of parallel experiences. One is inclined to wonder, when studying these narratives, that the profession of poet was not more overstocked in Mohammedan states than it appears to have been; for in no other was the disproportion greater between effort and remuneration. There were however one or two objections. In the first place the profession was to many people's thinking² not respectable. The three great poets of the Abbasid period all beg in a manner that to almost any taste is shameful and disgusting; and some of their fellow-craftsmen condescended to even greater humiliation. Even where the *lex artis* did not enforce this, the only encomia that had commercial value were of a sort that bore no relation to the truth. Besides the degradation that this calling entailed, it was not free from danger. Fortune was fickle, and it rarely happened that a patron had the will and the power to subsidize the same encomiast for a great length of time; and although some of the poets wisely retired from the business when they had 'made their pile,' most of them squandered their gains as speedily as they were acquired, and were constantly in search of fresh patrons. When, after serving a patron, one of them wished to enter the service of his enemy or his murderer, the celebrity of the odes that had under the former *régime* won him fortune, now stood in his way; and though some could, owing to their talent, command any patronage, others could never explain with grace that their earlier compliments had been intended not for their patron's person, but for his strong-box.

Although Abu 'l-'Alā repeatedly asserts³ that his poems were not written for hire, it is nevertheless probable that he originally intended to follow the profession that has been outlined, and indeed the admiration of Mutanabbi that appears in his early efforts makes it likely that he at one time intended to imitate that poet's career as well as his style. He might seem to have started in a manner not unworthy of his model: for, as Dr. Rieu has pointed out, his earlier panegyrics

¹ Recently published by M. Derenbourg.

² See Kāmil I. 269, 362; Aghāni XII. 112.

³ *Infra*, p. 40; Tabrizi's preface to S. Z. (Bodleian MS.); S. Z. II. 45, 66.

are addressed to Sa'id al-daulah, the Hamdanide prince who was proclaimed ruler of Haleb in 381, and probably belong to the years 991 383 and 384; while the next are addressed to the two generals sent 993 by the Faṭimide Caliph to oust Sa'id al-daulah from his government. 994 We learn however from one of the chronicles that during this war¹ Ma'arraḥ at one time dissociated its fortunes from those of Haleb; Abu 'l-'Alā's muse may therefore have but followed the politics of his native town. Although his Saḡt al-Zand contains not a few encomia, those that have been quoted are the only poems addressed to men of high station who would be expected to reward them. From one poem however² admitted into the Saḡt al-Zand the portion containing the encomium has been deliberately omitted; and in another³ the identity of the prince eulogized is carefully concealed. In a later composition, addressed to some men of note, he gives it to be understood that he seeks no remuneration⁴. The assumption that he commenced a career as professional poet, but almost immediately abandoned it, will accord sufficiently well with the assertion that from his twentieth year he had lived and studied independently.

Returning to Ma'arraḥ after the termination of his studies he appears to have been assigned from a trust-fund an income of thirty dinars yearly⁵—a smaller sum than was often earned by a single encomium; and this, we are told, he shared with the attendant whom his blindness rendered indispensable. At a time when the governor of Haleb was carrying on war against the Egyptian forces and calling in the aid of the Greeks, we need not ask how it came about that any of the inhabitants of towns subject to Haleb were so impoverished. Probably owing to the sacrifices demanded by Sa'id al-daulah and his mayor of the palace Lu'lu', Ma'arraḥ in 386, at the instance of 996 a certain Riyāḥ al-Saifi, rebelled and joined the Egyptians; and the inhabitants of Ma'arraḥ probably owed their deliverance to the Egyptian minister to whose son the First and Second Letters are addressed.

To the period between 386 and 399 many of the poems included 996 1008

¹ Ibn Al-'Adīm (Paris MS.); see below.

² S. Z. I. 156.

³ S. Z. I. 152, l. 3.

⁴ S. Z. II. 66.

⁵ *Infra*, p. 121.



in the Sakṭ al-Zand apparently belong. It seems clear, too, that the First Letter is in answer to an official communication addressed to the people of Ma'arraḥ by Al-Maghribi; who probably, when restored to favour at the court of the Egyptian Caliph¹, took that opportunity of renewing his relations with the town to which he was already favourably known. The fact of Abu 'l-'Alā replying to it—although he speaks somewhat uncourtously of his fellow-citizens therein—shows that he had by that time (near the end of the period with which we are occupied) acquired a position of consequence in his native town. This position would be confirmed by the favourable reception accorded to his communication. For although Al-Maghribi's fame as a politician was not of the best sort, the importance of the posts offered him shows that as a writer he ranked very high.

The governor of Ḥaleb, Lu'lu', had before the end of this period 100; consented to be the vassal of the Egyptian Caliph; in 399 he died and was succeeded by his son, who for several years had shared the government with him. Before Abu Naṣr's accession, however, the event had happened which led to Abu 'l-'Alā's journey to Baghdad. 'The governor of Ḥaleb,' we are told, 'disputed the poet's pension²,' and he went to Baghdad to maintain his claim to it. This statement is not free from difficulty; for the governor of Ḥaleb at this time was not dependent on Baghdad, but on Cairo. We may, however, believe that the loss of his pension was the reason for the poet's quitting Ma'arraḥ, without supposing that he went to Baghdad to recover it³. His letters and poems say nothing about the pension; but it is clear from them that he went to Baghdad with the idea of

¹ See note 2 to Letter I.

² *Infra*, p. 121.

³ The date of the journey to Baghdad can be fixed by the statement in Letter VII (p. 41), that he left Baghdad in the last third of Ramaḍan; for all authorities agree that he left Baghdad in May 12, 400. The author of the note appended to Tabrizi's commentary on the S. Z., probably Tabrizi 1010 himself, says that he stayed in Baghdad one year and seven months, that he started in 398, and arrived in Baghdad in 399. The Euphrates Valley route is estimated at twenty-five days (Cowper, Sept. p. 55); this would make Abu 'l-'Alā to have started at the beginning of 399. But we know that 1008 he was seriously delayed on the way; and thus Tabrizi's statements are shown to be accurate. The apparent discrepancy between his having started in 398, and left Baghdad in Ramaḍan 400, after seventeen months' stay, led to the idea that he had made two journeys; and this opinion, which appears in Ibn Khallikan, was adopted by Von Kremer.

staying there permanently¹. It is not unnatural that a man who had won some provincial reputation should have wished to try his fortune at the capital; we know of many others who went to Baghdad on a similar errand². The project was countenanced, if not encouraged, by the poet's mother³, and the expenses of the journey defrayed by one of his maternal uncles⁴. He even commenced a letter to the Ḳāḍī Abu 'l-Ṭayyib Ṭāhir⁵, originally of Ṭabaristān, but resident in Baghdad, informing him of his intended journey to the latter's happy hall. The letter 'was never finished so as to reach its destination;' Abu 'l-'Alā may have learnt before sending it something of the character of the 'happy hall' of a man who seems to have belonged to a class who, 'when they washed their fine garments, used their houses as clothes till the washing was over⁶.' But the ideas in the letter were worth employing for another occasion: and that occasion soon presented itself.

Mr. Cowper in his work *Through Turkish Arabia* tells us of three ways by which it is possible to reach Baghdad from Aleppo; in going Abu 'l-'Alā followed the first of the three, i.e. the Euphrates Valley route. Mr. Cowper in his journey went by land, following the course of the Euphrates; but from Mr. Ainsworth's *Narrative of the Euphrates Expedition*⁷ it would appear that the river is navigable as far as Anbār, and Abu 'l-'Alā descended the Euphrates in a vessel provided by his uncle. Where he embarked is not certain; if he went by Aleppo, Bālis is the point at which the road touches the river. The vessel got safely to Anbār⁸, where a canal leads to the Tigris, forming the most direct route to Baghdad; but for some reason this route was not practicable at the time, and the vessel proceeded down the river to Ḳādisiyyah, with the intention of reaching Baghdad some

¹ *Infra*, p. 35.

² We may instance Tabrizi.

³ *Infra*, p. 35.

⁴ *Infra*, p. 39.

⁵ Letter XXV.

⁶ See Ibn Khallikan I. 293, where this verse of Abu Ṭāhir is quoted. Since Abu 'l-'Alā, in the verses cited there, calls Abu Ṭāhir 'a man who is not rich,' we are justified in supposing him to have been very poor. He was, according to Ibn Khallikan (I. 38), the only centenarian from 300 A. H. to Ibn Khallikan's own time, having lived from 348 to 450. He was Ḳāḍī in the quarter of Karkh. We should have expected a Ḳāḍī's earnings to be considerable.

⁷ London, 1888.

⁸ S. Z. I. 160.

other way. At Kādisiyyah it was seized by the 'Sultan's'¹ officers², and the poet was left to proceed to Baghdad as well as he might.

He found a lodging in an old part of the city called 'Suwaikat Ibn Ghālib'³, where other men of letters had resided⁴. Complimentary verses were sent him by the Kādi Abu 'l-Ṭayyib⁵ to which he improvised replies⁶. Abu 'l-Ṭayyib was a pupil of Abu Ḥāmid al-Isfarā'ni, then in the zenith of his fame as a theologian, and ever since known as 'the Professor' *par excellence* in works on metaphysics and the principles of jurisprudence. Abu Ḥāmid had recently received a mark of the Sultan's favour, having been rescued by him in one of the religious riots so common at this time in Baghdad, and restored to his mosque⁷. It is probable that it was by the Kādi's mediation that Abu 'l-'Alā solicited Abu Ḥāmid's services in the recovery of the confiscated vessel. With this view Abu 'l-'Alā addressed to him the poem⁸ whence the above notice of his voyage has been taken, embodying the ideas he had intended for the Kādi, with learned allusions which may well have puzzled its recipient. Abu Ḥāmid was either unable or unwilling to perform the service required of him, which was afterwards rendered by a certain Abu Aḥmad Al-Ḥakkāri, who is thanked for the favour in a poem written after the author's return to Ma'arraḥ⁹.

As in ancient Rome, so in the great Mohammedan cities, public recitation was the mode whereby men of letters made their talents known to their contemporaries. From very early times it had been customary to employ the mosques for this purpose; and in Abu 'l-'Alā's time poems were recited in the mosque of Al-Manṣūr at Baghdad¹⁰. Better accommodation was, however, provided by the Maecenates, who took a pride in collecting savants and littérateurs

¹ The 'Sultan' was doubtless the Amīr al-Umarā at Baghdad; at this time Bahā al-daulah.

² In S. Z. II. 121 they are called 'the collectors of tithe.'

³ Ibn Khall. I. 292. In S. Z. II. 140 (A. H. 420) he says his residence in Baghdad was 'in the Kaṭī'ah, by the river;' but this is like saying 'in the Square, in London.' See Yāqūt, s. v. Probably Abu 'l-'Alā's Kaṭī'ah was that of Al-Fuḡahā, S. Z. II. 100.

⁴ Yāqūt, s. v.

⁵ Ibn Khall., l. c.

⁶ His talent for improvisation is also referred to by Dhahabī, *infra*, p. 13., l. 14.

⁷ Ibn Al-Athīr, anno 398.

⁸ S. Z. I. 158 comm.

⁹ S. Z. II. 121.

¹⁰ This was done by Miḥyār, Ibn Khall. II. 195. Cf. *ibid.* I. 447 for the mosque at Kufah.

in their houses. The biographer Ibn Khallikan gives a description of the gatherings held at the house of Abu 'l-'Alā's contemporary Ya'kūb Ibn Kils, Vizier of the Faṭimide Caliph Al-'Azīz in Cairo, which illustrates the plan followed by the wealthy patrons of literature: 'Every¹ Thursday night he would hold a *salon*, in which he would recite his compositions, and thither would flock the Qādis, the Jurisconsults, the Readers of the Koran, the Grammarians, all sorts of men of eminence, and the chief Assessors, the Ministers and the Traditionalists; and when his recitation was over, the poets would rise and recite their encomiums of him,' &c. The Maecenas of Baghdad shortly before Abu 'l-'Alā went there was Abu Naṣr Sābūr Ibn Ardashīr², repeatedly Vizier to the Buyid prince Bahā al-daulah, then supreme in the Eastern Caliphate. Sābūr's liberality to poets was such that Tha'ālibi in his literary history finds it necessary to devote a whole chapter to his encomiasts. A story told, probably, of him³ illustrates the manners of the time too well to be omitted here. To one of his encomiasts, the Sharīf Al-Raḍī⁴, on the occasion of a birth in the Sharīf's house, he sent a dish containing 1,000 dinars. Al-Raḍī sent it back, saying that he did not receive presents. Sābūr sent it once again, saying it was intended for the nurses. Al-Raḍī returned it again, saying that in the family of the Prophet which he represented none but women of the family were employed on such occasions. Sābūr sent it a third time, requesting Al-Raḍī to distribute it among the men of letters who attended his Academy; for Al-Raḍī had taken a house for the use of his admirers, to which he had given that name. One of these persons took a single dinar, broke off a piece, and returned the dinar to the dish. This, he said, was to pay for some oil which he had taken on credit from a dealer the night before, when, owing to the absence of the Custodian, he could not get at the stores of the Academy. Thereafter Al-Raḍī had a number of keys made, one

¹ Ibn Khall. II. 441.

² Ibn Khall. I. 250; Yatīmat al-Dahr II. 290-297. The biography by Ṣafadī is far fuller and more instructive. He was in exile in 400.

³ This anecdote is told in the biography prefixed to the poems of Al-Sharīf Al-Raḍī, Beyrut, 1307 A.H. It is told there of Al-Wazīr Al-Muhallabī; but this person was dead before Al-Raḍī's birth.

⁴ Note that this, and not Al-Riḍā, is the right spelling.

of which was given to each member of the Academy, so that they could get what they required when the Custodian was away.

This anecdote illustrates the duties of the Custodian of an Academy, and also shows that membership was a valuable privilege. Now Al-Raḍī's Academy would seem to have been modelled on that founded by Sābūr¹ which bore the same name, and which was celebrated by Abu 'l-'Alā both in verse² and prose³. It was founded in the year 381, in a part of Baghdad called 'Between the Two Walls' in the quarter Karkh⁴. Expense was not spared in furnishing it with a choice library; there were a hundred copies of the Koran written by the Banu Muḳlah⁵, and 10,400 volumes belonging to other departments of literature, most of them either autographs⁶, or such as had been in the possession of famous men. Sābūr provided funds for the maintenance of the establishment, and put the whole under the direction of two members of the family of Ali⁷, one of whom, Abu Abdallah Al-Baṭḥāwī⁸, was alive after Abu 'l-'Alā's visit to Baghdad. Although the fortunes of Sābūr were variable, his institution was left unmolested till his death in 416, and survived till 451, when the part of Baghdad in which it was situated was burnt, and the books and other treasures became the object of official and private plunder⁹. In Abu 'l-'Alā's time it was a rendezvous for men engaged in literary pursuits, and provided a place for literary and musical entertainments¹⁰. Among Abu 'l-'Alā's acquaintance two are given the title 'Custodian of the Academy in Baghdad.' One of these persons, 'Abd al-Salām of Baṣrah, who in any case held some official post at Baghdad, and whose grammatical and geographical studies were famous¹¹, was on terms of warm friendship with Abu 'l-'Alā, as we know from another

¹ Ibn Khall. I. 250.

² Ibn Khall. I. 250.

³ *Infra*, p. 58. See also p. 40, end.

⁴ Yāḳūt, s. v. *بين السورين*.

⁵ Ṣafadi, s. v. Sābūr. On the style of writing alluded to, see Ibn Khall. II. 80.

⁶ Yāḳūt, s. v. *بين السورين*.

⁷ Ṣafadi, l. c.

⁸ Ibn Al-Athīr, anno 402.

⁹ Ibn Al-Athīr, anno 451.

¹⁰ Ṣafadi's words are *وقف عليها بدار الغزل*. Cf. Ibn Khall. I. 250.

¹¹ Index to Yāḳūt, s. v. Ṣafadi (MS. Arch. A. 26, 175 a) says he died in 329 (read 429): he praises his generosity and learning.

source¹, besides the prosé and verse epistles addressed to him. He had attended the lectures of the younger Sīrāfi; now we know that Abu 'l-'Alā was commissioned by his uncle² to get a copy of one of the elder Sīrāfi's works when in Baghdad; but whether this quest led to the poet's acquaintance with 'Abd al-Salām or whether it was formed through the mediation of the poet's fellow-tribesman and pupil Abu 'l-Ḳāsim Ibn Al-Muḥsin Al-Tanūkhi³, or in any other way, we do not know. The other Custodian of the Academy, who certainly had a right to that title, was a certain Abu Maṣṣūr, who apparently is only known to us from Abu 'l-'Alā's writings⁴. The friendship of these persons could not fail to be of use to a man who came to Baghdad on such an errand as Abu 'l-'Alā's.

At Sābūr's Academy he probably met most of those persons of literary renown with whom he is known to have been on friendly terms. He experienced some uncivil treatment, as when, attending a lecture by Abu 'l-Ḥasan Al-Rabā'i⁵, regarded as the greatest grammarian of the time⁶, then in his seventy-second year, he was admitted with the uncourteous phrase 'Bid the *Istubl* enter;' *Istubl* being Syrian slang for 'blind'. On this occasion Abu 'l-'Alā left the room indignantly; but on another, in Al-Murtaḍā's salon, he turned an insult into an opportunity for displaying some rare erudition, which brought him into note⁷. On the whole it appears that the reception accorded to his Saḳṭ al-Zand was favourable⁸, and that the savants of Baghdad treated him as one of themselves.

Doubtless his fame had to some extent preceded him, and his relations with eminent men of letters like Al-Maghribi and Abu 'l-Ḳāsim Ibn Jalabāt¹⁰ (himself a poet whom Sābūr had patronized¹¹)

¹ Ibn Khall. II. 462.

² See Letters X and XI.

³ That he was a friend of 'Abd al-Salām we know from S. Z. II. 112. On him and his family see Ibn Khall. I. 565.

⁴ Letter XIX with notes.

⁵ Ṣafadi, f. 62 b.

⁶ Ibn Khall. I. 433.

⁷ Ṣafadi spells the word اصطبل and اسطبل. Greek *ρυπαλός* (?).

⁸ Ṣafadi, *ibid*.

⁹ *Infra*, p. 13.; S. Z. II. 45.

¹⁰ S. Z. I. 99.

¹¹ Yatīmat al-Dahr II. 170. The poem quoted in the last note contains allusions which show us that this person must have been considerably older than Abu 'l-'Alā. From p. 103 he appears to have been a favourite of 'Aḍud al-daulah, who died in 372, when Abu 'l-'Alā was eight years old; the commentator states that he was entrusted with the government of Baghdad.

would facilitate his admission to the inner circle. Besides the persons already mentioned he found a friend in Ibn Faurajah¹, famous for his commentaries on Mutanabbi's poems, to whom on leaving Baghdad he addressed a poetical epistle; and another in a certain Abu Bakr Aḥmad Al-Ṣābūnī, whose address he gives so accurately in Letter XV. It was in 'Lotus-street in the quarter of the Oil-merchants.' More important than these were the family of the Naḳīb, or head of the descendants of Ali, whom he may have met at Ṣābūr's Academy. The head of the family when Abu 'l-'Alā entered Baghdad was Abu Aḥmad Al-Ḥusain, called 'the Pure' and 'the Meritorious;' his name meets us frequently in the contemporary history, and he appears to have been a capable man, often entrusted with difficult commissions, which he discharged with ability. His eldest son Al-Murtaḏā² was a poet of no great note, but of considerable renown as a theologian. The father's honours, however, fell not to him, but to his younger brother, Al-Raḏī, who was inferior to his brother as a theologian, but is regarded by Mohammedan critics³ as the greatest poet of the 97½ Prophet's line. His bulky *Dīwān*, containing poems written from 369, 101½ when he was ten years old, to 406, the year of his death, is not only of considerable poetical merit, but forms a highly valuable supplement to the chronicles of this period. We have already seen that he played the part of literary patron on a great scale; but the same biographer who admires his liberality states that he used the administrative powers that were sometimes committed to him with great cruelty; and though he devoted his poetical talent to the flattery of the successive Caliphs and their Buyid master, he appears to have had the vanity to aspire to the Caliphate himself.

Jan. 1010 Towards the end of Jumāda I in 400 A.H., when Abu 'l-'Alā had been some months in Baghdad, Abu Aḥmad (the father) died⁴, and

¹ See index to Mutanabbi, ed. Dieterici. The person whose life is given in the *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, as having died in 380, also a commentator on Mutanabbi, was probably this man's father.

² Ibn Khall. I. 423. Fakhr al-dīn Al-Rāzi in his *Arba'in* (Bodleian MS.) quotes some of his opinions.

³ See preface to his *Dīwān*, ut supra.

⁴ *Dīwān*, p. 736.

Abu 'l-'Alā composed a lament over him¹ which is regarded as one of his finest performances², and which, though it complimented the sons, also contained a distinct assurance that their alms were not required. This refusal to write verse professionally was doubtless deserving of respect; but Abu 'l-'Alā was probably defeating thereby the object with which he went to Baghdad. For though other roads towards obtaining the means of supporting himself at Baghdad may have been open to him, that which he refused to follow was the most certain. Something, perhaps, was to be got by dedication fees³; something, perhaps, by teaching—but it is probable that this profession was really overstocked at the capital, and Letter VII distinctly asserts this. Still, although in one of the odes written in Baghdad⁴ he laments his want of means and friends, it appears from other utterances⁵ that it was in his power to obtain employment there, and that he had friends both willing and able to help him. Nevertheless four months after the death of Abu Aḥmad we find that he is compelled to quit Baghdad.

In a poem written⁶ after his return he assigns as the reasons for this step the news of his mother's illness, and his diminishing resources. Perhaps however the true reason is to be found in an event to which allusion is made by the historian Abu 'l-Maḥāsin. Speaking of the poet Mutanabbi, he mentions⁷ an ode 'on account of which there took place what is known to have taken place between the Sharif Al-Raḍī and Abu 'l-'Alā Al-Ma'arri.' Abu 'l-Maḥāsin does not elucidate this mysterious phrase any further; but one of the MS. biographies⁸ tells us what happened, substituting however for Al-Raḍī's name that of his brother Al-Murtaḍā. As we have seen, Abu 'l-'Alā was received at this person's salons; but it so happened that Abu 'l-'Alā was a passionate admirer of the poet Mutanabbi, while Al-Murtaḍā had a strong dislike for that poet. Had Abu 'l-'Alā been wise, he would have kept his predilection to himself when in the presence of Al-Murtaḍā; not being

¹ S. Z. II. 55.

² Ibn Khallikan II. 4.

³ A contemporary of Abu 'l-'Alā got 5,000 dinars (in Spain) as the price of the dedication of a book, Ibn Khall. I. 287.

⁴ S. Z. II. 53.

⁵ Ibid. II. 54.

⁶ Ibid. II. 119.

⁷ *Annales*, ed. Juynebol, II. 371.

⁸ Ṣafadi, f. 62 b.

so, one day when the latter was attacking Mutanabbi, our poet declared that had Mutanabbi only written one particular poem¹, it would have demonstrated his excellence. Al-Murtaḍā, on hearing this, ordered him to be dragged out of the room by the feet. He alleged as the reason for this violence that Abu 'l-'Alā must have been alluding to a verse in the same ode in which Mutanabbi says that the criticisms of inferior writers are the best proof of his own perfection². Abu 'l-'Alā must therefore have called him, Al-Murtaḍā, 'an inferior writer,' under cover of this quotation. This anecdote, which is too circumstantial to be fictitious, probably gives us the real reason why Abu 'l-'Alā left Baghdad; for such a humiliation was so likely to bring others in its train that it was unsafe for him to remain. The family of the Sharīfs were on a familiar footing with both sovereigns, and at times Al-Raḍī was given dictatorial power in Baghdad³. The event must have taken place within the four months specified, for Abu 'l-'Alā was far too spirited a man to write such an ode as the dirge on Abu Aḥmad, if he had already undergone the insult that has been described. How far Al-Murtaḍā's interpretation of his quotation was justified, or what were the motives which dictated it, cannot now be settled.

The return journey, when determined on, was made by a route resembling the third of those described by Mr. Cowper; by boat as far as Mausul—scarcely the same boat as had descended the Euphrates, which, when recovered, had probably been sent back the way it came; from Mausul by road to Ḥasaniyyah, Mayyāfāriḳīn, Āmid, Ḥaleb, Raḳḳah⁴. By this route the Euphrates is crossed at Birejik, and at Urfah this more northerly route separates from the more southerly which passes through Mardin. The northern route goes through some high passes, which the author's blindness excuses him for not describing. Between Ḥasaniyyah and Āmid the road was safe; elsewhere it was full of dangers, which however he seems to have escaped. He passed by Ḥaleb, where his benefactors resided, unwilling, it would seem, to

¹ Ed. Dieterici, p. 265.

² Verse 39 واذا اتتك مذمتي من ناقص فهي الشهادة لي باني فاضل.

³ *Dīwān* of Al-Raḍī, p. 873 (388 A. H.); in this very year (400) he applies to Bahā al-daulah to be relieved of some of his offices (*ibid.* p. 746).

⁴ Letter VII.

bring them in person the intelligence of the disappointing result of his journey. He halted at Raḡḡah instead, and thence despatched a letter to Abu Ṭāhir; followed shortly afterwards by the highly interesting document which forms No. VII of this collection. Among all his compositions this is the one which should make us rate his character highest.

The resolution to quit Baghdad would appear to have been regretted as soon as it was carried into execution; and the poems¹ and letters in which this subject is treated are of interest as showing the impression left by the capital of Islam on the mind of a provincial who visited it at a time when the brilliancy of the Caliph's court was a thing of the past, and who, owing to his blindness, was incapable of enjoying many of its attractions. None of the language used by Italians about Rome or by Frenchmen about Paris could exceed in warmth and enthusiasm that which Abu 'l-'Alā repeatedly employs about Baghdad. He who has seen Baghdad, he thinks, will never find a place like it²; the same person must have induced him to leave Baghdad as had induced Eve to eat the apple³. Syria, he confesses, is more friendly and less expensive.

A contemporary of Abu 'l-'Alā, it may be observed, has left us some very similar experiences. The Kāḏī 'Abd Al-Wahhāb⁴, a native of the capital, told his fellow-citizens that if he could only have been sure of getting a meal of bread every morning and evening, he would never have left them. Passing by Ma'arraḥ on his way to Egypt, some twenty years later, he was entertained by Abu 'l-'Alā, and the two authors, both rejected of Baghdad, had an opportunity of comparing their sentiments.

Unable permanently to enjoy the society of the savants, the poets, and the thinkers of the capital, Abu 'l-'Alā determined, even before he left Baghdad⁵, not to put up with that of the provincial wits of Ma'arraḥ; in the letter addressed to his uncle and also in a public epistle⁶ sent before his arrival to the citizens of Ma'arraḥ he signified his intention of retiring from the world and 'confining himself to his

¹ S. Z. II. 68 sqq.

² Ibn Khall. I. 383.

³ *Infra*, p. 64.

⁴ *Infra*, p. 48.

⁵ S. Z. II. 125.

⁶ Letter VIII.

dwelling¹, as the phrase ran. He therefore requested that he might be spared the greetings ordinarily accorded to returning friends. His biographers also date from his return to Ma'arraḥ his adoption of a rigidly ascetic regime, involving abstinence from animal food and clothing as well as wine. Like many of those who have failed to secure material prosperity, he found comfort in a system which flatters the vanity of those who have not succeeded by teaching them that success is not worth attaining. The news of his mother's death, of whom he speaks with much pathos in Letter VII, reaching him about this time, put his philosophy to a fresh test.

'In the morning the traveller shall praise the night-journey; the darkness will then have cleared away.' The result of his visit to Baghdad, where the leading writers of the time had treated him as one of themselves, became apparent as soon as he came back. Disciples began to flock to Ma'arraḥ from all quarters to hear his lectures on the grammar, poetry, and antiquities of the Arabs². The house or cave which he inhabited became the chief sight in Ma'arraḥ, and he himself the most important inhabitant. What he says of Al-Maghribi in the First Letter became literally true of himself: 'As Sinai derives its fame from Moses and the Stone from Abraham, so Ma'arraḥ' is from this time known by him.

The complete isolation which he promised himself in Letters VII and VIII seems never to have been carried out. The change from failure to success reacted on his temper, and an eminent contemporary speaks of him on the authority of one who knew him, as a man who, in spite of his blindness, could play chess and *nard*, and was an adept in all forms of literary endeavour, both earnest and sportive, and who thanked God for his blindness as others thanked Him for their sight³. The letters, most of which were written after the return from Baghdad, exhibit the author as anything but a hermit; he appears rather as a man of many friends, who takes a kindly interest both in men and things. The correspondence with his uncle, of which we have specimens in Letters XIV, XVIII, and others, demonstrates this.

¹ Jāḥiẓ, *Tibyān* II. 101; Ibn Khall. I. 294.

² *Infra*, p. 130.

³ Tha'ālibi (quoted by Ṣafadi, f. 62 a) after Abu 'l-Ḥasan Al-Dulafī Al-Maṣṣīṣī.

He kept up relations with the successive governors of Haleb by dedicating to them some of his numerous writings. To 'Azīz al-daulah, an Armenian slave of Manjūtakin, one of the generals sent against Haleb in 384, who, having found favour with Al-Ḥākim, was made 994 governor of Haleb in 407, Abu 'l-'Alā addressed his works called 1014 *The Horse and the Mule*¹ and *Al-Kā'if*; and to Sanad al-daulah, who in 414 was transferred from Apamea to Haleb, he dedicated his treatise called *Sanadiyyah*² after that governor's name. 'Azīz al-daulah, as we learn from the letters³, made an attempt to engage Abu 'l-'Alā as court-poet at Haleb—perhaps when on the death of Al-Ḥākim he had leisure to attend to such matters; for two years after his instalment, hearing that the Egyptian tyrant's feelings towards him had changed, 'Azīz al-daulah broke out into open rebellion and caused coins to be struck in his own name. His request was addressed to Abu 'l-'Alā through a man who afterwards, at any rate, was employed in important posts; when in the year 428 Muntakhab al-daulah was sent from Egypt 1034 to restore order in Syria, the same Ṣadaḳah Ibn Yūsuf Al-Fallāḥī, who on the occasion with which we are dealing had communicated 'Azīz al-daulah's proposal, was sent with him as financial adviser⁴. Abu 'l-'Alā's courteous and witty refusal of the offer made him forms the subject of Letter XXIV. 'Azīz al-daulah had to content himself with the services of Mufaḍḍal Ibn Sa'd instead⁵.

Of the disciples who came to learn of him, many attained distinction; the best known to Europeans is Abu Zakariyyā of Tabriz, who having studied in the Nizāmiyyah College in Baghdad was recommended to pursue some special line of research under Abu 'l-'Alā⁶, some forty years after Abu 'l-'Alā's journey. His well-known commentary on the Ḥamāsah preserves some of his master's learning⁷.

Abu 'l-'Alā maintained a learned correspondence with men of letters in various parts of the Mohammedan world. Letter XXVII, the most learned of the collection, is a specimen of it; but at times he would

¹ Ibn Al-'Adīm (Paris MS.).

² Ibid.

³ Letter XXIV.

⁴ Appendix to the History of Damascus (MS. Hunt. 126).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibn Khallikān II. 307.

⁷ Several more disciples are mentioned by Dhahabī, *infra*, p. 13v.

seem to have been importuned with unimportant questions, and Letter XXVI, which is somewhat obscure, is apparently addressed to some one who pestered him in this way. Like other eminent writers he was sometimes compelled to employ his pen for more practical purposes. The Saḫṭ al-Zand contains a poem written on behalf of a certain Abdallah Ibn Al-Saḫḫā¹, a secretary, whose employer had reason for suspecting his fidelity. Letter III is clearly addressed to some governor on behalf of a political exile; and Letter IV seems to show that Abu 'l-'Alā's intercession was successful. Letters XX and XL clearly have a political tendency, and with the aid of Letter XVII something like a consistent narrative may be evolved. Letter XVII is about a recommendation by the poet's uncle of a certain Abu 'l-Ḥasan Mohammed Ibn Sa'id Ibn Sinān, who was then contemplating a journey to Ma'arraḥ. This man's son is mentioned as ¹⁰⁴ a poet of note in Ḥaleb in the year 439²: Letter XL represents Abu 'l-Ḥasan himself as deputy-governor of Ḥaleb in the absence of the 'Sultan'; and the visit to Ma'arraḥ would appear to be an episode in a pilgrimage which he was then planning, from which Letter XL is written to dissuade him at the instance of certain other residents in Ḥaleb who required his presence to protect them from the Greeks. This is clearly the letter to which reference is made in Letter XX, addressed to another Abu 'l-Ḥasan son of 'Abd Al-Mun'im, whose ¹⁰²⁹ father appears to have been Kāḍi in Ḥaleb in the year 420³. The letter of Abu 'l-Ḥasan Ibn 'Abd Al-Mun'im to which Letter XX is an answer was clearly a request to the poet to dissuade Ibn Sa'id from staying at Ma'arraḥ, whence the words 'albeit the people of Ma'arraḥ will not relish what it contains' can easily be interpreted. We shall probably be right in dating these letters about 412. For in Letter XXXVI the same Abu 'l-Ḥasan Ibn Sa'id figures as having conveyed a literary proposal for the 'Sultan' to Abu 'l-'Alā; and the Sultan of that letter is certainly 'Azīz al-daulah, to whom we know the work called *The Horse and the Mule* to have been dedicated. The 'Sultan' of Letter XL is probably the same, and indeed 'Azīz al-daulah was the only ruler of Ḥaleb since the days of the Ḥam-

¹ S. Z. I. 174.² Ibn Khall. II. 157.³ Ibn Al-'Adīm (ut supra).

danides¹ who arrogated to himself the independence which that title implies.

In 418 Abu 'l-'Alā undertook the office of public intercessor for his town with Ṣāliḥ Ibn Mirdās, called Asad al-daulah, then governor of Ḥaleb. In the preceding year² a riot had been got up by a woman who declared in the mosque of Ma'arraḥ that she had been insulted by the keeper of a tavern, doubtless a Christian. The fanatical population had, on hearing this, proceeded to demolish the tavern and plunder its contents. Ṣāliḥ's Vizier, Theodore, was also a Christian; and being incensed against the people of Ma'arraḥ, whom he supposed to be implicated in the murder of his father-in-law³, had encouraged his master to arrest seventy of the leading men of the place. The event must have occasioned some noise if it be true that prayers were offered for these persons in the mosques of Amid and Mayyāfāriḳīn⁴. Ṣāliḥ, passing by Ma'arraḥ, summoned Abu 'l-'Alā to his presence; and the poet's eloquent address induced Ṣāliḥ to liberate the prisoners—but not, apparently, to remit the fine which Theodore had imposed on them, without Abu 'l-'Alā's knowledge. Abu 'l-'Alā celebrated the success of his mission in a humorous epigram⁵. It is not surprising to find this matter slightly exaggerated in the account quoted by Dhahabī 'from the back of an ancient MS.⁶,' which however agrees substantially with that of the historian whom we have followed. In the next year another conqueror took Ḥaleb, and his emissary, passing by Ma'arraḥ on the way to Hamath, enquired after the poet⁷. A yet later traveller⁸, whose narrative is in Persian, speaks not only of the honourable position held by the poet, but also of his wealth. Von Kremer thought this must be an exaggeration; but the Persian is probably correct⁹. In the letters the author appears in the character

¹ Ibn Al-Athīr in his flimsy sketch of the history of Ḥaleb (anno 402) calls 'Azīz al-daulah a Ḥamdānide; but this is an error.

² Ṣafādī, f. 66 b, after Ghālīb Ibn Al-Muḥadhdhib, a historian of Ma'arraḥ.

³ Ibn Al-'Adīm, ut supra.

⁴ Ṣafādī, l. c.

⁵ Published by Rieu, l. c.

⁶ Infra, p. 13..

⁷ Ibn Al-'Adīm (ut supra), anno 419.

⁸ Von Kremer, *Philosophische Gedichte*, ad fin.

⁹ Ṣafādī quotes Abu Naṣr Shākir of Ma'arraḥ (who was descended from Abu 'l-'Alā's family, and was secretary to Nūr al-dīn in Egypt) to the effect that Abu 'l-'Alā was offered the contents of the treasury in Ma'arraḥ lawfully, but refused to take them.

of a liberal man, helping persons of his own rank with gifts¹. Before
 1021 the year 412 the poet Abu 'l-Ḥasan 'Alī son of 'Abd Al-Wāḥid sent
 to him requesting a present of wine; this Abu 'l-'Alā's principles forbad
 1029 him to send, but he sent some money instead². In the year 420, as
 we have seen, he entertained the Kāḍī Abu Mohammad 'Abd Al-
 Wahhāb on his way from Egypt to Baghdad³. It is indeed unlikely
 that the disciples who crowded to Ma'arraḥ from distant countries to
 hear Abu 'l-'Alā left their teacher without some solid mark of their
 approbation. In the best days of the Caliphate a student at Baghdad
 had paid 300 dinars annually to the grammarian Ibn Al-A'rābi for
 instruction in the subjects which Abu 'l-'Alā afterwards professed⁴.
 Although Ma'arraḥ was not Baghdad, and the fifth century was
 different from the second, it is difficult to suppose that Abu 'l-'Alā's
 1047 instruction went entirely unrewarded⁵. Whether in 439, when Ma'arraḥ
 was taken by the Egyptian forces, the poet, who was then advanced
 in years, suffered or not, we do not know.

The long period of his retirement was spent, partly, as we have
 seen, in teaching; but chiefly in writing. A certain Abu 'l-Ḥasan
 'Alī Ibn 'Abdallah Ibn Abi Ḥāshim acted as his amanuensis, taking
 no reward for his services⁶; it would be interesting to find memoirs
 by this Boswell, if he left any. Another of the poet's helpers was
 named Abu 'l-Majd⁷, perhaps the same Abu 'l-Majd who is mentioned
 by Bākhārzi among the poets of Ma'arraḥ⁸. That it was not always
 easy to get amanuenses capable of satisfactorily executing such skilled
 labour as copying from his dictation, we learn from the letters⁹, and
 could have guessed without them.

The long list of his works, now published after Al-Dhahabī¹⁰, gives
 proof of great industry, although it would seem that Abu 'l-'Alā was
 disposed to overrate their quantity. As has happened with many
 authors, the work of which he thought least was his most popular

¹ Letter IX.² Ibn Khallikan I. 452.³ Ibn Khall. I. 382; S. Z. II. 140.⁴ Aghāni V. 55.⁵ There are occasional references to presents received by the author in the letters, e. g. p. 51.⁶ *Infra*, p. 130.⁷ *Infra*, p. 132.⁸ British Museum MS.⁹ *Infra*, p. 139.¹⁰ *Infra*, pp. 130, 131. Ṣafadī also gives a list which in some respects may be more accurate than Dhahabī's. See Appendix.

production; the early poems which, with some few composed shortly after his return from Baghdad, were collected in a volume called *Saḥṭ al-Zand*, or *Primitiae*¹, both won and retained a degree of popularity which none of his other books ever secured. Tabrizi, in the preface to his commentary on them², states that on coming to Ma'arrāh he requested the author to read them with him; but this Abu 'l-'Alā refused to do, on the ground that he had 'boasted' in them (after the fashion of Arabic poets)³, and that his mature performances were better worth study. Tabrizi nevertheless composed a commentary explaining them, which is not the only commentary on them, nor the best⁴. The number of MS. copies of the *Saḥṭ al-Zand* in European libraries is evidence of their undiminished popularity; rhetoricians⁵ frequently illustrate from them the elegances of style; and a poet of the eighth century of Islam⁶ took the trouble to turn into a eulogy of the Prophet Mohammed one of the odes in the *Saḥṭ al-Zand*⁷, in which the irreverence of the poet Mutanabbi had been imitated or outdone.

The best known of Abu 'l-'Alā's works after the *Saḥṭ al-Zand* is the large collection of poems called *Luzūmiyyāt*, from the nature of the versification, in which every verse of a poem is made to rhyme in two consonants instead of one, whereby the difficulty of manipulation, which in all the Arabic metres is considerable, is very greatly increased. These poems were composed at intervals during the third period of Abu 'l-'Alā's long life, but were edited and elucidated by himself. Their contents are well known in Europe from the repeated descriptions of them by Von Kremer. For the most part they consist of pessimistic and ascetic reflexions in the style of Abu 'l-'Atāhiyah; of thoughts on death and the mutability of fortune, and exhortations to virtue and humility. Many passages however are devoted to the promulgation of the poet's peculiar tenets, called by his biographers

¹ The latest poem was composed 420 A. H.

² Bodleian MS.

³ The poem to which he refers is probably S. Z. I. 65. Ibn Ḥujjah in his *Ta'hīl* quotes examples of successful *ḥfīkhār* (boasting) from Abu 'l-'Alā. (Margin of *Muḥāḍarāt* of Rāghib II. 312-313.)

⁴ The author of the *Tanwīr* severely criticizes Tabrizi's work. Cf. Ḥājji Khalifah.

⁵ See especially Ibn Ḥujjah's *Khizānat al-adab*.

⁶ Ibn Al-Wardi; see Ibn Ḥujjah, *ut supra*, p. 382.

⁷ S. Z. I. 30.

Brahminism, and identified by modern authorities with the opinions of the Jainas, which the author may have learned at Baghdad, or possibly during his earlier travels. Three doctrines in particular are deserving of notice: (1) He is strongly of opinion that animals should not be slaughtered for food, or injured in any way; to let go a flea he regards as a more virtuous act than to give a dirhem to a beggar¹. The biographers associate his adoption of this doctrine with his return from Baghdad, and the evidence of the letters is in favour of that assertion². (2) He approves strongly of the Indian practice of cremation, it must be added, on practical grounds³. (3) He is anxious for extinction⁴, in the real sense of that word, and not in that with which we are familiar from the writings of the Sufis.

Besides these themes, the Luzūmiyyāt contain the poet's opinions on a variety of subjects; but what attracted most attention, both when they were first issued, and when they came to be studied by Europeans, were the passages in which the doctrines and institutions not only of the Jews and Christians, but even of the poet's own co-religionists are ridiculed or made light of. Several of these passages were picked out by those who wished to prove the author a heretic; and these were copied by Abu 'l-Fidā in his history, and thence became known in Europe. The passages in the Luzūmiyyāt in which the author speaks as a pious Moslem, as, e. g., where he goes so far as to advocate religious intolerance⁵, or where he from the standpoint of a believer in the future life tells the 'naturalist and the physician,' who deny it, that if they are right, it will be no worse for him, whereas, if he be right, it will be worse for them⁶, were naturally neglected. Owing to the unorthodox passages, and also owing to the fact that Abu 'l-'Alā took up the challenge of the Koran, and wrote a rival work, which he thought only required 'to be polished by the tongues of four centuries of readers' to be equal to the sacred volume⁷, the question of the poet's orthodoxy became the subject of considerable discussion⁸. Confronted

¹ Ed. Eg. I. 212.

² Šafadi quotes verses by several writers controverting this opinion of Abu 'l-'Alā.

³ Ed. Eg. I. 235.

⁴ Ibid. p. 374.

⁵ Luzūmiyyāt, ed. Bomb., p. 296, med.

⁶ Ibid. p. 243.

⁷ Infra, p. 137.

⁸ The other works supposed to be tainted with heresy were the *غفران* and the *استغفر*.

with the charge of heresy, Abu 'l-'Alā replied to one of his accusers that the charge was false, and had been started by persons who envied him¹; which reply led to the retort that there was little to envy about a man who had forfeited both worlds. Another anecdote is interesting, as taking us into the poet's lecture-room. A poet of Ma'arraḥ, of little repute, called Abu 'l-Ḳāsim Al-Mukri², entered the room, and was requested by the lecturer to read—the subject was apparently the Koran. The new-comer read the verse 'Whoso is blind in this world shall be even blinder and more lost in the next'³, with evident reference to Abu 'l-'Alā's misfortune and the rumours current about him. When the lecture was over, Abu 'l-'Alā complimented him on his orthodoxy, but sent him away with a biting epigram⁴.

Not all however judged Abu 'l-'Alā quite so harshly. One of his pupils, who afterwards acquired a great reputation for sanctity, and who belonged to the same family as had helped Abu 'l-'Alā when at Baghdad, when asked on his return from Ma'arraḥ what he thought of his teacher's orthodoxy, expressed himself satisfied with it⁵. Another, who afterwards attained the post of Ḳāḍi, or judge, declared that he had heard Abu 'l-'Alā, at a time when he fancied no one was by, recite the Koran in a way which left no doubt of the reality of his belief⁶. Eminent Syrians as well as savants of other countries in later times wrote books in defence of the poet⁷.

¹ *Infra*, p. 132. The same story is told by Ibn Khallikan I. 55. The author complains of the envy of his contemporaries elsewhere, e.g. S. Z. II. 45.

² Dhahabī, in his notice of this person (British Museum MS.).

³ XVII. 34.

⁴ هذا ابو القاسم اعجوبة ♦ لكل من يدري ولا يدري
لا يحسن الشعر ولا يحفظ الـ ♦ قرآن وهو الشاعر المقرئ

⁵ Ibn Khallikan I. 437.

⁶ *Infra*, p. 132. The discussion of the author's orthodoxy in Ṣafadi is fuller than elsewhere.

⁷ So Ibn Al-'Adīm, who said that all who attacked the poet had never met him, while all those who had come in contact with him admired him. His book was called *Al-'Adī wal-Taḥarri*, &c. Another work by an unknown author was called *Daf' al-ma'arraḥ 'an shaykh Al-Ma'arraḥ* (preface to S. Z., p. 3). Ibn Al-'Adīm's work is mentioned by the author of F. W. in his notice of the Aleppine scholar. The work of Ṣadr al-dīn Al-Silafī (472-576, if Ibn Khallikan is to be believed) called *Memoirs of Abu 'l-'Alā Al-Ma'arri*, which is probably the source of the stray anecdotes that have been collected from Ibn Khallikan, was not, apparently, of an apologetic character. Silafī was a pupil of Tabrizi, and so had good opportunities of

Still the passages in the Luzūmiyyāt remained; and the explanation given of them saved the poet's orthodoxy at the expense of his ability. His eccentric opinions were attributed to the necessities of the difficult metre in which he wrote¹. And in general, it may be added, although Eastern writers respect the ingenuity of the Luzūmiyyāt, and the great command of the Arabic language which they display, they regard the contents as 'poor stuff'². It was therefore a rise in the world for these poems when the Austrian critic, Hammer-Purgstall, declared that their author showed himself in them to be a philosopher as well as a great poet³. Little value was indeed assigned to Hammer-Purgstall's opinion: but a writer of great authority, Von Kremer, made them the subject of repeated study, and in his most exhaustive treatise on them declares that Abu 'l-'Alā was many centuries before his time⁴. The value of Von Kremer's essays will be acknowledged even by those who regard his estimate as seriously exaggerated. That there are suggestions contained in this Dīwān which are remarkable for the age in which it was composed need not be denied: but it is very clear that the author was unconscious of their value, unable to follow them out, and unable to adhere to them consistently. The Mohammedan critics who thought he let his opinions be guided by his pen probably came near the truth. And any man who writes in such fetters as the metre of the Luzūmiyyāt imposes can exercise but slight control over his thoughts.

Some more of his poems were yet more artificial in character than the Luzūmiyyāt; and one epigram in this style is preserved⁵. A work called *Forgiveness* would also appear to be in existence, and to be remarkable in character. Of his philological writings we possess the first half of his commentary on Mutanabbi⁶, which was superseded by later works, which however mention it honourably. 'A worthy

gaining information. A considerable portion of Dhahabi's narrative comes from Silafi also. Šafadi quotes a work by Abu Naṣr Shākir of Ma'arraḥ, who was Kātib al-inshā in Egypt to Nūr al-dīn, and who belonged to the family of Abu 'l-'Alā.

¹ So Ibn Ḥujjah, *Khizānat al-adab*, p. 435. Cf. *infra*, p. 131.

² So Abu 'l-Fidā, l. c.

³ *Litteraturgeschichte der Araber*, l. c.

⁴ *Philosophische Gedichte*.

⁵ *Thamarāt al-Aurāk* (margin of the *Mustaṭraf*) l. 90.

⁶ MS. of the British Museum.



man,' according to Dhahabi, having seen a work of Abu 'l-'Alā in 101 volumes, called *The Wood and the Branches*, thought that work rendered all other books superfluous¹. Otherwise the great bulk of the works, fifty-five in number, which Abu 'l-'Alā composed seem to have been little known outside Ma'arraḥ. A writer who died in 646 asserted that the greater number of them perished when Ma'arraḥ was attacked by the 'Infidels,' meaning doubtless when it was captured in 492 by the Crusaders, in whose hands it remained till 529²; but the writer of the copy of Dhahabi in the British Museum, probably of the ninth century A. H., states that he himself had seen the greater number of them in Egypt.

The letters which are here published with translation belong to a collection made by the poet himself out of his correspondence, to which he added a handbook, which would be of great use, if it could be found. The collection made by the author was much more considerable in size; according to him it occupied 800 quires or 16,000 pages³; and although Dhahabi points out that Abu 'l-'Alā's 'quires' consisted not of twenty pages, but of eight or perhaps four, the lowest estimate would give us a work of 3,200 pages, some sixteen times the size of the Leyden MS., the pages of which contain no great amount. Abu 'l-'Alā's estimate doubtless included some lengthy compositions, of which one specimen still exists at Leyden⁴, and also some private letters, not to be found in the Leyden MS., which there is nevertheless some reason for supposing to be still in existence. Perhaps, too, it included a highly interesting correspondence on religious and philosophical topics carried on between the author and a certain 'Hibat Allah son of Musa son of 'Imrān,' who, having read in Egypt one of the poems in the *Luzūmiyyāt*⁵, in which the author proclaimed his vegetarian and ascetic views most emphatically, wrote to Ma'arraḥ to ask for spiritual medicine⁶. This correspondence was excerpted by Yāḳūt in his *Dictionary of Litterateurs*. The assertion of the editor of

¹ *Infra*, p. 137.

² Ibn Khallikan I. 42. Walpole, *Ansayrii* I. 200, gives a pathetic account of the taking of Ma'arraḥ from the historians of the Crusades.

³ *Infra*, p. 137. Ṣafadi says 200 quires.

⁴ The Letter of the 'Angels.' See the Catalogue, ed. 2, I. 194.

⁵ Ed. Eg. I. 232.

⁶ Ṣafadi.

the copy whence both the Leyden and the Beirut MSS. are derived that 'the poet's correspondence was not large' is therefore erroneous.

The occasions which led to the composition of several of these documents have already come under our notice: one or two others refer to literary schemes or literary matters; we learn that Abu 'l-'Alā was not only visited by disciples, but that his help was sought by persons in need of books, and that literary projects were submitted to him by persons doubtless willing and able to remunerate them; and though in Letter XXXVI he expresses doubts about his ability to abridge Kalilah wa-Dimnah for 'Aziz al-daulah, we learn from the catalogue of his writings that he actually carried this project out. Letters II and XXVII also are connected with books; and the authors who are congratulated in them must have felt flattered by the intimate acquaintance which Abu 'l-'Alā displays with their writings. Letter XXVII is not only extraordinarily learned, but also gives some interesting observations on metrical questions which the ordinary hand-books pass over. The longest, Letter XXX, as a letter of consolation challenges comparison with the many classical attempts that have been made to deal with this subject. A writer somewhat later than Abu 'l-'Alā, Ibn 'Abdūn, in composing a poetical letter of condolence¹, adopts the same line as Abu 'l-'Alā, i.e. he endeavours to make a characteristic list of persons who had died before, and hence gives a sketch of universal history. There is no great originality about this idea, which was anticipated by Lucretius. The first part of Abu 'l-'Alā's list is little more than a paraphrase in rhymed prose of some chapters of Ibn ẖutaibah's *Manual of History*. The second part, containing descriptions of the animals that die, is closely modelled on earlier performances by Arabic writers, in particular a poem by an author called Dik al-Jinn, of which a large fragment is preserved in the Aghāni². The accounts of the animals are taken from many authors³, especially the Hudhalite poets and Farazdaq. The concluding part of the epistle however rises to warm and affecting eloquence, of which it may be hoped that all the force is not lost in the translation.

Those letters which have not been noticed are private and domestic

¹ Published by Dozy.

² Aghāni XII. 147.

³ The description of the lion seems modelled on that by Ibn ẖais Al-Ruḡayyāt, Aghāni IV. 162.

in character, and can be paralleled from the correspondence of the other eminent letter-writers, as well as from the ordinary collections of poems. In all the style is highly artificial, and the employment of proverbs¹ and idioms carried to a degree which even native taste might not approve. It is a style which is as far as possible removed from European ideas of letter-writing in the nineteenth century; but it has a good deal in common with the elegant epistle of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries².

The most striking characteristics of the epistolary style are three—the verbosity of the proems, the artificial and pedantic character of the language, and the rhyme. The epistolary style, possibly in all three points, is said to have been started by Abu Ghālib ‘Abd Al-Ḥamīd³ (ob. 132), the secretary of the last Umayyad Caliph, Marwān, whose epistles were at one time greatly admired, and served as models to later epistolographers. The employment of choice or even obsolete diction in letters addressed to eminent persons is however earlier than Abu Ghālib’s time; one of the correspondents of Ḥajjāj in the first century, according to an oft-quoted anecdote, employed a philological expert to select phrases for him⁴; and those compositions which were intended not only to convey a message of immediate importance, but to have permanent literary value, had a tendency to get more and more obscure; and thus the letters of Jāḥiẓ which had a high reputation in the third century were criticized by Abu ‘l-Faḍl of Hamadhan in the fourth as wanting in artifice⁵. Abu ‘l-Faḍl indeed boasted that he could employ no less than 400 different artifices in his epistles⁶, many of which had already been tried in poetry by Razīn the metrician, while others ascribed their introduction to a yet earlier writer, Ibn Harmah⁷. These artifices were however rarely employed but as experiments, and in the manipulation of them Abu ‘l-Faḍl was outdone by his successor Ḥariri.

Long before Abu ‘l-‘Alā’s time an elaborate system of conventions had been devised, whereby the mode of address differed with the rank

¹ Letter VII is in parts little else than a cento of proverbs.

² Bentley, in the preface to the *Dissertation on Phalaris*, asks if proverbs may not be used in epistles, where may they be used?

³ Ibn Khallikan I. 386.

⁴ Kāmil I. 164.

⁵ Zahr al-Ādāb II. 100.

⁶ Letters, margin of Ibn Ḥujjah’s *Khizānat al-adab*, p. 61.

⁷ Aghāni IV. 106.

of the individual addressed. As Letter IV is an apology for pitching a former letter (Letter III?) too high, it is interesting to read the rules on this subject given in a handbook some hundred years earlier than the letter to which reference has been made. 'There is a convention,' says the author of the 'Umdah¹, 'that the most honourable form of initial greeting is *God prolong our lord*, and the next most honourable *God prolong the existence of my lord*. They regard it as a blemish to vary the mode of address in different parts of the same letter, and think any one who does so a rustic; I mean for a man to write first *God prolong the existence of our or my lord*, and to say in the course of the letter *God accomplish your hopes*, and *if you think fit*. . . . 'There is a convention that when a man addresses his equal he should say *so, if you think fit to do so and so, you will do it*, not *then please yourself*; but if the person addressed be slightly below the writer, he may say *then please yourself* or *I desire that you should do so and so*; but if he be considerably below the writer in station, he should write *then it behoves you to do so and so*; if he be lower still, he should write *then do so and so*.' The letters not only of Abu 'l-'Alā but of the other writers of the time show that attention had to be paid to this etiquette².

The employment of rhymed prose in letters seems to have become regular and normal in the fourth century, but had been frequent far earlier. This mode of composition³ would seem properly to belong to solemn utterances such as oracles, religious formulae⁴, prayers⁵, and elogia⁶, and from the third of these uses its employment in addresses to princes, whether written or delivered orally⁷, does not differ materially. The author of the Aghāni quotes lengthy encomia in rhymed prose, pronounced by poets both before pre-Mohammedan⁸ and post-Mohammedan⁹ princes; and although the genuineness of the

¹ 'Umdah of Abu Ja'far, Bodleian MS.

² The title 'most glorious' (الجليل), given the author by Abu 'l-Ḥasan Ibn Sinān (infra, p. 140), implied very great distinction; the Sharif Al-Raḍī wrote a long poem to Bahā al-daulah, thanking him for substituting *ajall* for *jalil* (Dīwān, p. 752).

³ See the discussion on rhymed prose in Jāhiz, Tibyān I. 111-113; it would seem that Mohammed discouraged its use, but that its popularity won the day.

⁴ Aghāni III. 6.

⁵ Jāhiz, Tibyān II. 82.

⁶ Ibid. II. 30.

⁷ Aghāni XIV. 136.

⁸ Ibid. XIV. 3.

⁹ Ibid. XV. 118.

former composition is more than doubtful, the opinion of this very learned writer who regards such a composition as no anachronism is worthy of consideration. It is probable however that it was employed in addresses from men to their superiors long before it became usual in letters between equals; and thus we find no trace of it in the famous correspondence between the Caliph Al-Manşūr and 'Isā Ibn Mūsā¹, and that between the same Caliph and Mohammed Ibn Al-Ḥasan²; but the letter to Hārūn Al-Rashid's minister, which according to Al-Jāhiz was known by heart by the people of Baghdad³, was in rhyme throughout; and the fact that Al-Jāhiz wrote letters in simple prose⁴ may perhaps have occasioned the criticism of his style to which reference has been made. It may be observed however that the ablest writers are not slaves to the rhyme, but occasionally, for variety or some other effect, abandon it.

Abu 'l-'Alā died in 449 at an advanced age, after three days' illness.¹⁰⁵⁸ Many men of letters attended his funeral, and many dirges were composed in his honour, of some of which fragments remain. Dhahabi's biography contains some interesting notices of visits paid to his tomb, which seems to have survived the storming of Ma'arraḥ by the Franks, but of which recent explorers seem to have found no trace. For those who were curious about the final doom of this free-thinker, 'a worthy man' recounted a dream in which Abu 'l-'Alā's terrible fate was revealed to him⁵; while his admirers in their turn ascribed to him an escape from the hands of the governor of Ḥaleb by means only to be paralleled from the histories of Elijah and Elisha⁶. Neither his letters nor the rest of his published writings seem to make any allusion to his two brothers, Mohammed and Abu 'l-Haitham, who are both said to have acquired some fame as poets⁷.

¹ Ṭabari III. 341.

² Kāmil II. ad fin.

³ Jāhiz, Tibyān II. 114.

⁴ Zahr al-Ādāb II. 95.

⁵ *Infra*, p. 137.

⁶ Preface to S. Z., p. 3. Ṣafadi tells the same story at greater length.

⁷ Ṣafadi after Ibn Al-'Adīm and Yāqūt.

DATES OF THE CHIEF EVENTS IN ABU 'L-'ALĀ'S LIFE.

A. H.

- 363 Rabi' I. 28, Abu 'l-'Alā born.
Sa'd al-daulah takes Ḥaleb.
- 370-380 Abu 'l-'Alā visits various Syrian towns.
- 381 Death of Sa'd al-daulah. Accession of Sa'īd al-daulah.
Al-Maghribi sent to Ḥaleb.
- 386 Ma'arraḥ revolts from Ḥaleb.
- 392 Death of Sa'īd al-daulah. Lu'lu' puts his infant son on the throne.
- 394 Lu'lu' with his son Murtaḍā al-daulah undertakes the government.
- 398 Journey to Baghdad.
- 399 Death of Lu'lu'. Accession of Murtaḍā al-daulah.
- 400 Abu 'l-'Alā returns from Baghdad. His mother dies.
- 407 'Azīz al-daulah governor of Ḥaleb.
- 412 'Azīz al-daulah killed.
- 414 Sanad al-daulah governor of Ḥaleb; ousted by Ṣāliḥ Ibn Mirdās.
- 418 Ma'arraḥ visited by Ṣāliḥ.
- 420 Ṣāliḥ killed. His son Shibl al-daulah governor.
- 429 Muntakhab al-daulah governor of Ḥaleb and Syria.
- 433 Death of Muntakhab al-daulah. Mu'izz al-daulah, son of Ṣāliḥ, governor of Ḥaleb.
- 439 Ma'arraḥ taken by the Egyptians.
- 449 Makīn al-daulah governor of Ḥaleb.
Rabi' I, death of Abu 'l-'Alā.



LETTERS OF ABU 'L-'ALĀ AL-MA'ARRI.

LETTERS of Abu 'l-'Alā Aḥmad son of Abdallah of the tribe of Tanūkh, p. 3 the Blind, the twice-bound captive¹; with other fragments of his writings.

Note.—His correspondence was not copious, being merely occasional.

LETTER I. [Before 399 A.H.]

To ABU 'L-KĀSIM AL-ḤUSAIN son of 'ALĪ AL-MAGHRIBI². *This letter is known (5) as 'THE SCENT OF THE LOSING NUMBER'.*

If scholarship (God give your honour a long life!) emits any fragrance, or wit any flame; even at this distance⁴ we have felt the perfume of your scholarship, and your wit has turned our darkness into day; it has suspended

¹ After his return to Ma'arraḥ, he shut himself up in his house, as we shall see in Letter VII &c. The two prisons to which this name refers are his seclusion and his blindness. In Luz. p. 201 (Eg.) he speaks of *three* prisons, including his body among them. Compare Luz. p. 212 (Bomb.), where he speaks of his 'three nights,' the third being want of religion and guidance.

² A distinguished contemporary, 370-418 A.H., whose biography is given by Ibn Khallikan (I. 195, ed. Boulāk), whose notice however, like the references in Ibn Al-Athīr's history, deals with a period after the date of this letter, which is fixed within certain limits by the references to Al-Maghrībī's residence in Egypt. According to Al-Dhahabī (MS. of the British Museum) the father of the person addressed, also named Abu 'l-Kāsim, was born in Ḥaleb, where he became Vizier to the governor Sa'd al-daulah (son of Saif al-daulah), whom he helped to defeat the Greeks in 371; but having fallen out with Sa'd al-daulah, he in 380 joined the latter's enemy Bakjūr, then supreme at Raḳḳah. He played a double game with Bakjūr, and when the latter invaded Ḥaleb, finding his counsel neglected, escaped before Bakjūr's defeat

[³ ⁴ See next page.]

(10) on our ears ornaments never to be detached, and kindled in the secret chambers of our hearts stars that will never set. For to us, the inhabitants of this town⁵, a great honour has been given, and 'there has been delivered unto us an honourable missive⁶'; proceeding from the residence of the great Doctor, who holds the reins of prose and verse⁷; a missive which it is an act

to Rakkah, but on Sa'd al-daulah's approach fled to Kūfah, and thence to Al-'Azīz, Fatimite Caliph in Egypt, who in the following year (381) sent him as adviser to the general whom he entrusted with the invasion of Ḥaleb. He would seem to have remained in the neighbourhood of Ḥaleb some years, intriguing with the inhabitants against his fellow-commander; and it is probably during this period that the services which Abu 'l-'Alā acknowledges were rendered. He was finally recalled by Al-'Azīz, but seems to have been restored to favour by his successor Al-Ḥākim (386-411); for under this prince his son was given control of the Dīwān al-Sawād, whence he was ejected through the influence of Maṣṣūr Ibn 'Abdūn; and though he gained a temporary advantage over Maṣṣūr, the latter, coming to power again, caused the death of Al-Maghribi and his son Mohammed, about A. H. 399, Al-Ḥusain escaping. These details are taken from the fragmentary history of Ḥaleb called *Al-yawāqit wal-ḡarab* (MS. Marsh. 36), and the valuable 'Appendix to the History of Damascus' (MS. Hunt. 126); both these seem to confuse the father with the son. After the murder of his father and brother (which he deplors in verses cited by the geographer Yāqūt, and more fully in the Appendix quoted) Al-Ḥusain escaped to Arabia, and there stirred up another descendant of 'Alī,' named Abu 'l-Futūḥ, to endeavour to oust Al-Ḥākim. Failing in this plot, he fled to 'Irāq, where he obtained the patronage of Abu Ghālib Fakhr al-mulk, who however, owing to the representations of the Caliph Al-Kādir, was compelled to discharge him, when he became secretary for a time to Kīrwāsh at Maṣṣil. In 414 he became Vizier to Musharrif al-daulah at Baghdad, but held this office for ten months only; and having again given offence to the Caliph, he took refuge with Ibn Marwān at Diyārbakr. He died at Miyyāfāriḳīn. The character given him by Ibn Al-Athīr (anno 414) is bad; 'he was low-minded, deceitful, and envious.'

⁵ The title is derived from the opening words, and the allusion on p. 4, l. 9. The word means literally the arrow which got no share of the camel for which the arrows were tossed in the celebrated pre-Islamic game referred to, of which most of the introductions to the study of Arabic contain some account.

⁶ The distance between Ma'arraḥ and Egypt.

⁷ It would seem that a public letter had been addressed to Ma'arraḥ by Al-Maghribi. According to MS. Marsh. 36, when in 386 the Egyptian forces were besieging Ḥaleb, Ma'arraḥ, which was in the territory of Ḥaleb, joined the Egyptians; it was attacked by the Ḥalebites, but rescued by an Egyptian force. It is probable that the connexion of Al-Maghribi with this town began at that time.

⁸ Koran XXVII. 9, referring to Solomon's letter to the Queen of Sheba.

⁹ Although the anthologer Al-Bakharzi says that the passages in Abu 'l-'Alā's letters first called his attention to the eminence of Al-Maghribi as a writer, the phrase used is scarcely an exaggeration. More than two and a half centuries later he is still spoken of as 'the perfect Vizier' by the geographer Yāqūt, who refers to the work spoken of in the following letter as an authority on questions of language; while fine verses of his are quoted by

of piety to read, and whose peroration, or rather whose entirety, is frankincense. 'Imitate it who can!'¹ It is too grand to be kissed², kisses are for its shadow : p. 4
 too precious to be handed about, let that be done with copies! For us it is a sort
 of Sacred Book! Were we not so chary of its witty contents, and so afraid of its
 ink running, and the light of its ideas being blurred, every mouth would have
 hastened to kiss it, and every nose to inhale its perfume. Its lines would have
 become the cherry-colour on the lips, the scar produced by prostration³ on the (5)
 brow. Were it not, too, that our religion forbids gambling, and reprehends
 the practices of our ignorant forefathers,—were it not, in other words, that the
 code of Islam objects to the tossing of the arrows, we should have tossed for
 it with the seven that win, and the three that lose. But sound sense⁴ forefend that
 the eager and interested mind should be satisfied with the decision of the winning
 and losing arrows! And the friends of my lord (God give his enemies the shooting
 stars⁵ and the Debaran⁶!) could only cast lots for hanging the letter in their (10)
 houses that they might have it for a constant companion, not to obtain portions
 of that written parchment. They would only throw for it the sort of lots that
 were thrown by the Rabbis for the guardianship of the Virgin⁷, or that would
 settle which of the Prophet's wives were to accompany him on a journey⁸.
 O how grand a document, the honour of which will make us surpass our rivals
 evermore! Adorned with every gem that is sweeter than new-made wine, and
 fairer than genuine coin! Appearing like a flash of lightning, or a rising sun!
 I have never ceased yearning for a sight of your honour as the captive girl yearns

Ibn Khallikan and others. Extracts from his letters are given as models of style in the *Matla' al-Fawā'id* of Ibn Nubātah (ob. 768).

¹ Koran LXXXIII. 26.

² The custom of kissing letters is not unfrequently alluded to. See e.g. Letters of Hamadhani, Beirut ed. p. 334.

³ In Koran XLVIII. 28 the Believers are said to show a mark on their foreheads produced by constant prostration. The authorities are in doubt whether it should be a discolouring of the skin or an actual scar. The Koran asserts that this description of the Believers is to be found in the Gospel and the Law, perhaps referring in the former case to Rev. vii. 3.

⁴ In Koran LII. 32 'sound sense' is personified. The phrase has a flavour of impiety.

⁵ Explained by the Koran as discharged against the Jinn who endeavoured to pry into the heavenly counsels.

⁶ This constellation was considered unlucky, ẖazwīnī I. 77. In Aghānī XVII. 158 a poet says that after some one's death the good luck has all left the Su'ūd and attached itself to Al-Debaran.

⁷ Koran III. 39. The *Protevangelium Jacobi Minoris*, c. ix, is the source of this story.

⁸ This is not mentioned in the ordinary Lives of the Prophet.

- (15) after the life of the pampered beauty, or as those who are stricken with sickness yearn after the dawn of health. Could my desire for your honour but take shape and form—could it enter into a body and be examined—it would fill the world in both directions, and occupy the whole space between heaven and earth. It would not rest satisfied till it had forced its stride to cover a valley, and its hand to spread out like a plain.

- I have received your greeting, which if it passed by a flinty rock would
 (20) moisten it, or by a bare tree would give it leaves: and the joy of it set me as it were on the horns of an antelope, or the wings of a sparrow. I felt as though I had been uplifted by the pole, or addressed by an angel—so elated was I with what, were an alteration of one's nature possible, would have metamorphosed me from my humble birth to a man of exalted pedigree, as an elixir might turn a quicksilvered coin into a mass of fine gold. Indeed, were it not for the dangers which encompass this place, and all hearts being possessed by the fire of thirst¹, I might have thought your greeting that which is mentioned by the Blessed
 (25) Creator, when he says, 'Enter it with greeting, safely².' Is then our township Paradise, or have its inhabitants been granted forgiveness? Have they been
 p. 5 restored to life after burial, or 'been recompensed with the seventh heaven for their patience, and are they receiving therein greeting and salutation³?' Still, though through your favour they have received some of the privileges of the blessed saints, one characteristic of the damned is to be found with them; and that is that they are torn by the demon of rhetoric, that they are tongue-tied by its cords, and rendered dumb. You might think they had heard the words, 'This is a day whereon they shall not speak, nor leave be given to them to make excuse⁴.' Really they are silent because they are drowned in your wit, and the flashes of your eloquence have rendered them speechless. The pen of their ready
 (5) writer has become the stick wherewith a bewildered man scratches the ground⁵; and the ready response of their orators has turned into the silence of amazement. Fain would they have rounded an answer, but they have been checked; they became aware of your superiority and acknowledged it; looking up from their camels' kneeling-places they espied you among the thrones on the constellations, and their ambition excited them to approach you, but they failed and they promised their minds that they would be foolish, and were as good as their word.

¹ The scarcity of water at Ma'arrāh is insisted on by the geographers. See also Letter XX.

² Koran XV. 46.

³ Koran XXV. 75.

⁴ Koran LXXVII. 35, 36.

⁵ Compare Swayne, *Seventeen Trips through Somaliland*, p. 87: 'Then he looked down and began absent-mindedly scratching the earth with a bit of stick.' Cf. Ṭabari III. 307.

✓ A camel's track is not to be found in an eagle's nest; so they may ponder on (10) your brilliant flashes, and thank God for having given your honour the power of reducing the sea to a 'traitorous' pond by the subtlety of your conceits, and increasing the smallest star in the tail of the Great Bear to the size of the full moon. Now a resolute man on foot is faster any day than the man who is mounted on a jade; but faster than either must he be whose resolution has mounted him on the wind's back, and whose lucky star has secured him success; whose Creator (hallowed be his name!) has provided him with a capacity that has broken in every restive subject, and made it docile, and tamed and disciplined every savage phrase; so that the rough places of the Arabic tongue become plain (15) when he uses it, and its weak points, aided by his art, become strong and vigorous; so that he is quite like the busy bee which feeds on bugloss and then fills the scoops; and which turns the canary-seed by feeding on it into honey: which culls the bitter flowers, to change them into sweetness when the time for hiving comes. Or like the air in a system which I do not believe¹, though others may approve of it, which, attracting particles of vapour, rains them in sweet showers on those below. And oh, if only a polished style could be imitated as (20) a handwriting can be! Should we not exercise our wits with riding unbroken steeds of style, till perchance they yielded some polished paragraph, or succeeded in extracting some pearl of speech? Albeit it is a troublesome task to beg of the stingy, and to teach the old²; and the moon's station³ in the Virgin is further than a chamois can leap; and the lightning is too quick for the fingers of a pickpocket; ✓ and the sun is too grand to be deposited in a tomb; and though the hare were to practise the whole of its life, its cry would not sound like a lion's roar; and a line of motes has not the tenacity of a line of hemp. O that your person (25) might last as long as your writings! You would then be immortal; and fortune would give you a safe-conduct. You are, indeed, the most suitable person to light the lamp of culture, planted as you are in the nursery of high-mindedness, p. 6 and in contact with the branches of wisdom ever since you grew up; so that you have risen to the top of the tree, while your rivals have shown the white feather⁴.

¹ Probably the philosophy of the Greek schools.

² Maydāni II. 264.

³ Three small stars; 'they rise on the 18th of December, and set on the 16th of April' (Kazwini).

⁴ Literally, 'have ridden the roots of the *sakḥbar*,' a species of *schoenanthum*. The phrase occurs in a verse of Ḥassān Ibn Thābit, but the connexion of the plant with treachery is not clear. The theory that its roots were infested by snakes is more probable than that which derives the phrase from the supposed unsteadiness of the tree.

Now among men of bygone days there were some who employed epistles as links¹, and adorned themselves with rhyme as a young horse does with a trot; but none of them have risen to your eminence, nor even set foot upon your path. They differed in style without being distinguished; and they had contests² but won no prizes. Had they wanted to attain to such compositions

- (5) as these, they might have substituted a life of hardship for one of dignity, have trudged on many a hard road, and eaten much humble pie, ere they could attain what you have attained without trouble or expense. And each of them, had they seen you, would have been right glad to be the last horse in the race in which you came in first; or the butt-end of the lance of which you were the head.

- Now when your servant Moses arrived, bringing these welcome guests, these
- (10) precious necklets—they seemed like the nine signs which God gave to Amram's son, to dissolve the spell of the magicians, and sweep off the chaff of the poet. On his tables there came two rods, the poems rhyming in *m* and *w* respectively. You found in your country various lengthy metres disporting themselves, various intellectual sand-heaps collapsing³; 'then Moses cast down his rod, and behold it swallowed up their devices⁴.' I speak only of what I know, and testify to that which I have proved. In what I have heard I have witnessed the compression
- (15) of ideas into brief verses like the image of Kisrā in the drinking cups⁵, or the effigy of Caesar on the golden coins⁶. You are not humiliated by the straitness of your quarters; your love-verses are like the throbbing of the lyre; your grave periods like the reverberation of the thunder. You indeed—long may the earth boast of you—may think little of what we make much of, and depreciate the learning which we prize; but so do the cattle marvel how the kite can perch himself on the pinnacle of a castle, while the kite thinks little of his performance
- (20) and regards it as no great flight. Still if our weak minds have some spurt left, and the vessel of our intelligence some trace of polish, they may get some good out of you (God bless you!), and shine with rays borrowed from you, as copper shines when it faces the bright luminaries. The reflexion of the Great Bear, lofty

¹ Such as Abu 'l-Faql Al-Hamadhāni and Abu Bakr Al-Khwārizmi.

² Such a contest is described at length in Abu 'l-Faql's letters.

³ The phrase is from Jamil (Aghāni VII. 97).

⁴ Koran XXVI. 44.

⁵ References to cups with an image of Kisrā at the bottom are not uncommon; see Kāmil of Mubarrad, ed. Eg. II. 95, Wr. p. 515, where several verses are quoted on this subject. Sābūr is said to have been recognized at a banquet by his image being on the cup (Thamarāt Al-Aurāk I. 169).

⁶ Of course there were none on the Mohammedan coins.

as it is, may yet be seen in the water of a pool; by the blessing of the Su'ūd¹ the wood will produce leaves; and the puddles will swell when the moon is in the Lion's Brow². Could the lifeless speak, or the lowly be proud, Ma'arrāh would (25) spread its sails and rear its crest, glorying in the fact of your bestowing on it even a vexed and angry glance, supposing you did not speak of it in terms of studied p. 7 praise³. Leaving it, you are like a living body transferred from the shell to the air; while Ma'arrāh is left like the coquette's perfume-pot, when the perfume is gone and only the receptacle remains. Its only title to be respected more than other cities in the vicinity lies in your residing there during those days, and lulling to sleep the eyes of famine⁴ that were gazing on its inhabitants; since which time (5) Ma'arrāh is known by you and takes rank from you, as indeed happens to every dwelling you inhabit; for the abodes wherein you take up your residence are like those northern and southern constellations, twenty-eight in number, which only are famous because the moon takes up its quarters in them, and to which in consequence the Arabs ascribe every rain-bringing mist. Many a shining sphere there is in the blue ether which, because the moon avoids it in its orbit, has no renown, neither gets credit for any drop that ever drizzled from a cloud.

It is, I feel, incumbent upon a serious student to make the places where your (10) feet have trod (hard luck to your enemies!) shrines of learning and gathering places for ardent devotees, just as a pious posterity turns the places where sainted ancestors have walked into temples of choice purity and mosques favoured for their associations. As Sinai derives its fame from Moses, and the Stone at Meccah from Abraham, so might we through being your neighbours, before conversing with you, have enjoyed honour similar to that which accrues to the inhabitant of Medinah from the neighbourhood of the Prophet! It may be that Ma'arrāh (15) has taken a correct, or rather indisputable view of the matter, and perceived that you are too fine a necklace for her neck, too grand a bracelet for her wrist, too massive a crown for her head, too bright a star for her horizon; and indeed you are like a pearl transferred from the shell to the head of a mighty king, while your former home is like a tree after the fruit is plucked, an oyster without the jewel, a quiver without the arrows, a rain-cloud without the rain.

¹ The constellation Sa'd Al-Su'ūd (Feb. 12-Aug. 14). The Arabs connected its rising with the beginning of vegetation (Kazwini).

² The constellation which rises Aug. 14, to which copious rain is ascribed (Kazwini).

³ The reading in the text is probably right. From the note on Hamāsah, p. 427, we learn that the author interpreted the verb سمد as a synonym of سيم 'to change colour.' On the other hand the Beyrut ed. rightly inserts the words لا وان كان before 5.

⁴ Cf. page 2, note 5.

- (20) Now we know well that the rain is imprisoned in a cell of fog, and that the flower is more honourable than the stalk which bears it: the moon was not created for the benefit of the darkness. The borrower should not regard the loan as a gift, or think it a shame to have to restore it to its lender; on the contrary, it is an honour to a poor man to be allowed to borrow from a king. Now this region won far-reaching fame and held the reins of fair fortune, what time happy circumstances placed it in your hands, and virtue entrusted it to the noble
- (25) qualities of your heart and tongue: so now that you are departed your odour still remains, and the tent of your fame is still standing though you yourself are gone; and Ma'arraḥ is like the two months called Spring, which originally were at the beginning of the year, but afterwards shifted to the middle, and two others called Frost, which from the days of frozen water have shifted to those
- p. 8 of windless heat; yet their titles have refused to change through all these years, and the names remain the same though the characteristics have altered. And were it not that dust and stones are unable to assume the character of their neighbour, the squares of Ma'arraḥ would by now be devoted to learning, and the supplies of eloquence would be drawn from its inhabitants.

- Now it is said the origin of perfume among the idolaters¹ was that the
- (5) blessed Adam fell in the places where it grows. Yet the hard rock refused to be imbued with noble qualities, even as the fire, smothered in ashes, has good excuse for going out. Your fellow-man would seem better suited to assimilate character, and his organs are better fitted for the pursuit of virtue. Why then, when they were exhorted², did they not wake up? Why not, when they counterfeited, counterfeit what had been shown them³? True, the raven cannot think of hunting the gazelle, still less can it pick up a camel in its beak, or cover a dromedary with its wing. A tent cannot be spread out of a strap, nor a sword-belt be cut
- (10) out of a shoe-latchet. It would be clear injustice—not to speak of the impossibility—to compel the pole⁴ on the ground to approach the pole in the sky, or to force the frog⁵ of the hoof to leap like the frog of the marsh. And if ever

¹ Literally, the Buddhists. The story is told by Mas'ūdi, *Murūj al-dhahab*: 'Adam fell in Ceylon on mount Rāhūt. And it is said (with whatever truth) that the reason why so many sorts of perfume grow in India is that when Adam was ejected from Paradise, he took with him a bag containing various sorts of spice, &c.'

² Apparently, the people of Ma'arraḥ.

³ The reading does not seem quite certain. The Beirut editor reads *mariyya*, meaning a cow whose milk flows copiously.

⁴ The Arabic here means a kind of thorn.

⁵ The Arabic signifies 'vulture;' the pun has therefore been altered.

the pot boil through the running of the horse with a white spot on one leg¹, or one well water five hundred cattle, that can be accident only, not by desert, and is an ideal beyond which further progress cannot be made. So too the racing ground may contain old jades as well as the horses that are fit for it, and vermin as well as its masters, the birds of prey, are to be found in the fields of air; at times the man of 'Udhrah² has won the first prize, and the dove gone a-hunting. And if people call one learned and another clever, the (15) similarity of the name does not preclude difference between them when they come to be tried, just as the battering-ram has a namesake among the sheep, and the fly has in Arabic the same designation as a sword-blade. The same word in Arabic signifies *glorious* and *thatch*; and part of the head is called a hemisphere. Not every one who *thawwabs*³ is a bearer of good tidings, nor has every one who yawns pearly teeth to show. You have shown us an ideal after which it were useless to strive, a goal which we should vainly endeavour to reach. The fruit of the date-tree is assigned to him only who has looked after it in the grafting season⁴, and he only should hunt the ostrich of the desert who has been sparing with the bottle of the liquor-dealer. Let the lazy (20) take their rest, he who is in earnest must rise early.

'Umm Wuhaib asks me for a camel that shall move slowly and yet be first⁵.'

'And leaving Laila next morning I was like one who in the morning gazes after a star that is moving to the West⁶.'

Now pretended victory is not so honourable as real victory, nor is the chamomile the moon; and it is a falsehood if the barren woman professes to be prolific. Even though the gardens rustle on the heights and the valley be turbaned with corn-poppies, yet the rough places are not cushioned with tapestry, nor the watercourses with rugs⁷.

¹ The reference would seem to be to a line of Imru 'ul-Kais (ed. Ahlwardt, 149, 150) in which the noise made by a horse is compared to the boiling of a pot. The spot mentioned is said to be a bad sign (T. A.). Perhaps the winning of a prize of meat is meant.

² Compare with this phrase Luz. (Eg.) p. 413: وسيرجد الغدري عظيما ناخرا, where the note implies that العذري 'a member of the Banu 'Udhrah' should be read; the Mu'aidi of the proverb (Maydāni I. 269) 'Mu'aidi has won' was of that tribe.

³ This means (1) to say, 'Prayer is better than sleep;' (2) to be tossed about.

⁴ Reference to the 'award of Ibn 'Ajlān,' quoted in Luz. (Eg.) p. 359: 'Your world be for you, not me; I award it on the principle of Ibn 'Ajlān, "let him that grafted it reap its fruit."' Cf. Agh. XIII. 121, Kāmil (Eg.) I. 141, Muwaṭṭa (Zurkāni) III. 102.

⁵ Maydāni I. 116. The proverb in the ordinary form has *Umm Al-khiyār*.

⁶ Verse of Kais Ibn Mu'adh, quoted in the Kāmil of Al-Mubarrad, ed. Eg. I. 172 (ed. Wright, p. 166).

⁷ Perhaps the author is thinking of a line of Abu Tammām, p. 199, l. 3.

- Far off as our habitation is from yours, and many as are the hills and dales
- (25) that come between us, we are sure to receive from you some correction of our faults and guidance to the right way through the wise letters you send us and the
- p. 9 sagacious counsel you bestow; just as Jupiter and Venus, though they be distant, still bring the objects of desire to those whose tutelar stars they are—in the opinion, of course, of the astrologers and certain of the ancient philosophers—(God forbid that we should say the same or plunge into the paths of paganism! However, when a phrase has become popular, people instinctively employ it).
- (5) And so, although you have pitched the tent of your sojourning in Egypt, making light of all business, however heavy; yet our villages are still by God's grace under your protection¹, and the fields of Ma'arraḥ among the territory which you guard and save. Just as, according to them, the tutelage of a single planet may extend to distant climes and different zones.

- Every man of pure metal and ancient vein², every one with a trace of intelligence that he can call into play, and a touch of discrimination on which he can rely, ever since he heard the first droppings of your shower, and pictured to himself in thought the brightness of your blade, has been as dumb as a crab, and as
- (10) numb as Saturn. Their silence is longer than a bridal veil, and their memory drier than a wether's breast. Well would it be for them if they were like semi-articulate animals, or people with a twist in their tongues! For a foreign accent is better than dumbness; and it is better to stammer than to be tongue-tied. However to regret a lost chance is like trying to raise the dead, and a hillock cannot be turned into a garden any more than Saturday can be turned into Friday. And it is useless to say one's prayers before prayer-time comes, and to
- (15) adopt the pilgrim costume³ after the sacred month is passed. And albeit their hasty utterances have no value in themselves, and win no attention from literary folk; still the delight of the finder in a coin which he picks up is no less than that of the lady's maid in the central pearl of the necklace. The beauty of a fair girl does not persuade the mother of an ugly one to hate her: on the contrary, she will caress her ugly daughter all her life, and mourn over her loss when she is gone. It is a shame to slaughter a camel because it is not equal to the load of an elephant, to knock down a humble cottage because it is outtopped by a lofty
- (20) castle, to break the arrow because it is shorter than a spear, to bury the old camel because it cannot keep pace with the young. On any such principle we ought to abandon all utterances except 'yea' or 'nay' to express our meaning, and

¹ Allusion to his post at the Dīwān al-Sawād.

² Literally, 'every man in whom that which bears the same name as the sword is ancient.'

³ See the description of this in Keane's *Six Months in the Hijāz*.

employ such as these very scantily, out of respect for your words; and also both rhymed prose and verse should be forbidden: just as the tribes called *Hums*¹ in the time of paganism and the Keepers of the Ka'bah in old days would not take to themselves square houses out of respect for that temple. And indeed any one who tries those forms of composition except yourself is like one who wastes his prime in spinning horse-hair, or spends his youth in the search after *baram*² and *markh*³. Now you cannot with fat⁴ stop an enceinte woman's appetite, and freckles do not count as tattooing. And all except you spend out of a slender capital, whereas your tide never ebbs. It is a pond (not the sea) which is exhausted p. 10 by draughts, a candle (not the sun) which is spent in giving forth faint rays. And they in this region are like the teeth of combs or the molars of white asses five years old⁵; the thought of profit will turn them in any direction like a blind arrow or a vagrant caravan

'In a region wherein the enemy has alighted surrounding it like the circle of hair on a horse,'

where 'choking interferes with verse-reciting⁶,' and caution with elegant (5) apologizing. Their feet are sore from treading on rocks, and robbers have gone off with their camels. Their life is ease followed by violence, and 'after the arms are stripped nothing but captivity remains⁷.' They are on the look out for 'the snare of the fowler⁸,' and expect daily the archer's arrows. The water-seeker is next neighbour to the drinker, and the last cub is not very different from the first. *Tasm* was nearly allied to *Jadīs*⁹, and the nine-year-old camel is not far off the six-year-old. Yet and again they try to answer¹⁰, but the answer shows no talent, any more than a galled place shows fur, or the lion is the hyena's friend; and their fear of ruin betrays their deficiencies, just as the yellow shows between the interstices of the teeth. A little knowledge shown by them is thought wonderful (10) and strange, and unfamiliar as an earring upon the nose, a waist-band round an eagle, a string of shells upon a camel's calf, or an antelope in a village. For those of them who are sound 'will be dead to-day or to-morrow¹¹,' and if his fears be

¹ An account of these tribes is given by Azrakī.

² According to Dozy a name for long-leaved thyme, or for the yellow and fragrant flower of 'Abraham's tree.'

³ *Asclepias ignivoma*.

⁴ See the story in Aghāni X. 28.

⁵ Maydāni II. 303 and I. 277; i. e. they are all alike.

⁶ Maydāni I. 159.

⁷ Maydāni II. 156.

⁸ *Ḥamāsah*, p. 111.

⁹ Names of mythical tribes, the founders of which were supposed to be brothers. *Ḥamāsah*, p. 79, the two are called the two tribes of *Jadīs*.

¹⁰ The form used does not occur except in a proverb.

¹¹ Proverbial phrase for an old man, Maydāni II. 355.

- not yet realized, 'it is as though they were ¹.' Had they moved before they got embedded in the mud, and had they relied on God to help them to make way before they grew tired, then the refugee would have benefited by his flight ², and the back would have had a respite to lay down its burden. And how long can the camel behind which the hunter shelters himself endure the onset of the white-breasted beast, or the mouse the cat? Although the acquisition of the necessary
- (15) equipment be harder than 'the plucking of thistles ³,' yet is the packsaddle of a swift camel easier to ride than a horse with a ring of hair on its back ⁴, and a bed is of little use to a porcupine. The singers among them produce their music, and the distinguished among them shine amongst men whose waking time is shorter than the twinkling of their eyes, and whose sleep is longer than their year, who think good ink the finest of their accomplishments, and fine paper the acme of eloquence. Supposing if, when one of them produce some milk and water, another pronounce it mighty fine,—well, many a wretch bowed down before
- (20) Isaf ⁵, and dates have been offered to idols. The termite takes an upper chamber for its use, and often the sheep have been humiliated by the lamb ⁶, and a woman's veil has been put on the face of an ass. Seaweed ⁷ is no luscious food. Moreover, reflection should come before hasty action, and wooing before marriage. In your presence however (God preserve your life until the midday hurries into the light of dawn as fast as the midday prayer flies from abbreviation ⁸!) nothing will serve them but capitulation and to surrender at discretion: and if you hear such
- (25) a statement as that the digger of a well came upon pure milk, or that honey has been drawn from camels, or that a spring of wine appeared in a desert place—
- p. 11 your eloquence knows best how to refute such a statement, and the force of your intellect to prove it false. Sufficient for the sod is a tear-drop to quench the mourner's grief: sufficient for the she-camel is a milking pail when its udders are full: sufficient for a well in flat ground if it serve instead of rain-clouds.

Your bestowing on me epithets equal to your favours is a service to which my gratitude is unequal, and which I shall rise from my grave reflecting on; it has planted joy in my inmost heart, and taught me to think much of myself, and filled

¹ Part of a verse of Nābighah; see Mufaṣṣal, sect. 577.

² This appears to be the meaning. The Beirut editor takes another view.

³ Maydāni I. 216.

⁴ Said to be a bad sign in a horse. There is a play on the words in the original.

⁵ Name of a pre-Mohammedan idol, according to some set up in the Ka'bah, according to others on Ṣafa.

⁶ Maydāni II. 63. The proverb is فَرَارَةُ تَسْفِهَتْ قَرَارَةً. We should therefore alter the text accordingly.

⁷ Maydāni II. 139.

⁸ i. e. the reduction of the number of prostrations.

my soul with lasting pride until I shall find myself in the grave-digger's care, (5) holding converse with death. My wit has begun to flow again after it had run dry, and the remains of my existence have been watered and revived after they had all but failed. The generosity which I have experienced at your hands—a quality whose Arabic name signifies cool winds—has filled my breast, and made me presume upon my station: just as the south wind stirs up the dust from the ground, and the north wind moves the quiet sand. At last I upbraided myself, and turning to my hidden soul said: 'The mark of a branding-iron on the face is more ornamental to a man than pride.' This Zephyr has been (10) blowing and roaring too long: let me not be like the sand, which, rising from the heels, gets into the nostrils. Am I intoxicated or asleep? If it be the first, then it is an intoxication that is encouraging; if the latter, then my sleep is showing me a fair dream.

Nevertheless, I know well that a dog's leash cannot be made out of *ghadham*¹, and that a ram does not deserve to be clad in silk, and that a skin is not to be filled with a he-chamois' milk. Bitter draughts increase the gall, and potations of aloes will not make a man rubicund. And who am I to be described as a high-stepper, and to be set in the scale against the heavy? Let the inexperienced person blacken his mouth with *barir*²—what has a coy lass to do with rouge, or (15) a herd of cattle with perfume? Surely my learning is to yours like a drop to the ocean, or a bee to a palm-tree! Still a man with two dirhems is rich in the eyes of him who has only one, and a snubnosed man aquiline as compared with him who has no nose at all. But as for Shaddād son of 'Ād³, and 'the slaughterer of the horses', it would be strange if *they* thought the possession of great wealth lay with pedlars and collectors of dry sticks. I am as unable to thank you adequately for your generosity as is the ant to carry a cloak, or a moth to pierce a pearl. (20) Would that you (God bless you!) could but get a glance at my secret soul and the contents of my heart—since you would then learn that my heart and sides are filled to overflowing with respect for you, and foaming like bowls with your love. Not because you have represented my molehills as mountains⁴, and mixed my dust with musk, nor because the noble prince your father⁵ (whose reign God

¹ Dozy gives for the word in the text the equivalent *salicornia fruticosa*.

² Name given to the fruit of the *arāk* when ripe.

³ A mythical king of Yemen, who endeavoured to outdo the splendours of Paradise with his wealth.

⁴ This probably means Hātim Al-Tā'i; the occasion on which he slaughtered the horses is described Aghāni XVI. 100.

⁵ Lit. 'Thabir,' name of a mountain in the neighbourhood of Meccah.

⁶ See p. 1, n. 2. His favours to Abu 'l-'Alā are otherwise unknown.

- prolong!) conferred favours on me sufficient to attach me to him, and benefits that
- (25) it would be tedious to recount; but, because you have been given the keys of style, and the sentences you utter are like 'the stars that hide behind Ḥaḍār¹,' and you occupy a place among the devotees of learning similar to that of Tubba'² among the Arab giants, I have grown as much attached to you as are the populace
- p. 12 to a munificent king, when he practises generosity and decides suits with justice. Hence I am as faithful to you as was the hoopoe to Solomon³, and asseverate with an oath what I have asserted about your goodness. Those assertions are true to the letter, and my oath most solemn, and I repeat them till the ignorant account me foolish, and the vain talkers would prove me wrong. For not satisfied with placing you above the moderns, I have exalted you above those that are in their graves as well, and have declared you superior not only to those that remain
- (5) but also to those that have gone before. I have gagged the loud snorter, and given the prize to the last-comer; for the victory is not to him that comes first in time, neither is the prize given to antiquity: the rhyming letter comes after the vowel called *ṭawjīh*⁴, and the horse Akhdar⁵ was earlier than Al-Wajīh⁶. And even though the fact be unalterable, and there be no pleasure in recounting it, still it must be confessed that the grain comes before the wheat, and the grey before the dawn. No person has denied your brilliancy, nor rivalled what you have written: only people have a hankering after what is old, and any deviation from the beaten track throws a cloud of dust on people's minds⁷, aye, tinges with
- (10) blackness, like that of lava, their inmost hearts; even so did not the worshippers of Alilat and Al-'Uzza find fault with the texts revealed by the blessed Mohammed? God is my witness that I have not ceased dyeing the sky with red, and tanning the earth with fog⁸, till both lusty youths and decayed old men, and those between who are approaching maturity or turning grey, have shown themselves to belong to one of two classes, either intelligent and safe from the clutches of the ignorant, or unintelligent and subservient to authority.

¹ The *فُرُود* of the constellation *حُصَار* are mentioned in a verse quoted in the Lexx.:

أرى نار ليلي بالعقيق كأنها ♦ حُصَار إذا ما اعصمت وفرودها

L. A. V. 276.

² See below, Letter XXX.

³ Koran, Sura XXVII.

⁴ Vowel preceding the rhyming letter, when no vowel follows it.

⁵ A horse or ass, the supposed progenitor of a breed called Akhdari.

⁶ Stallion of Ghāni Ibn A'sār (T. A. X. 419). It is not clear how Abu 'l-'Alā knew their respective dates.

⁷ On the justice of this see Goldziher, *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie*, I. c. ii.

⁸ Perhaps this means working day and night.

You (God preserve your power!) are a branch sprung from a pure stem, which (15) has risen to the stars¹; you have guarded your pearls well² before producing your secret store: and between³ squeezing the dry udder, and letting the full one flow, between throwing stones to collect the dirt in muddy wells, and quaffing large vessels a breastplate was formed out of the links, and a cloud collected out of the fleeces.

I had intended asking you to present me with some of your sayings—things of beauty which are better than wealth, but I was dissuaded therefrom by my respect for you and my low opinion of myself, and out of reverence refrained and kept (20) still. God forbid that your benefits should be other than spontaneous!

You promised to send me occasional compositions in prose and verse, and our souls crave after the fulfilment of your promise as the thirsty lips crave after pure water or the verse after a rhyme, and importune us for them as the sick man importunes for health. But how can the dust produce a sweet savour, or the wilderness provide camping-places for travellers? I have ventured to enter your service as correspondent in order to inform you of this, not out of any desire to overwhelm you with my loquacity,—would indeed that as a writer I could be called your slave! However the prayer of the unlettered is sometimes heard, and (25) the request of the stranger granted. Moreover, your critical powers will be too exalted to scrutinize me too closely, and your generosity will overlook any slips I may make. For the knife is not applied to the rock-lizard till after the animals p. 13 that pasture are finished, and the property of the people exhausted. I ask God's protection from any phrase which, like a dove's collar, is regarded as an ornament, but is in reality more like a widow's weeds. All such I would decorate with hail-stones and leave to shiver in cold. Rather than such I would have a tumour under the tongue or a palsy in the frame.

Attention bestowed on the person criminally inclined will save his fingers from (5) the hatchet of justice. And I will finish what I have been saying by the prayer that if in the praises I have uttered I have knowingly blinded myself or been seeking any bribe for telling the truth, may I be struck by a sand-wind and an abiding punishment. The night of him who shivers with cold is happier than the night of the liar, and the day of the perjured is worse than the day of him who perishes with thirst. For me, when I praise you to lie or to imitate 'the smith', (10) is as unnecessary as for a young child to wear a turban, or a lad to dye his hair

¹ Lit. 'the Spica.'

² A line in *Sakṭ al-Zand* I. 37 may be compared.

³ The original is exceedingly difficult, and I give this translation as a tentative one.

⁴ *Maydāni* I. 36. The smith is supposed to declare he is going away in order to hurry on customers.

- black. Lengthy as is my discourse, I am still like one floundering in the dark or stretching out a maimed hand. Were I to produce a bushel of indigo, it would not be comparable with one fine pearl, nor is a whole flock of *kaṭa*¹, however big, equal to one kite, however lean and small. It is foolish to play off a candle against the sun, or a lump of glass against mount 'Aṭalah². And my learning looks up to yours as a scabby camel might look up to the tract of the sky which
- (15) the stars of the She-goat line. What is the water as compared with the sky, or a torrent as compared with Canopus' rising-place? What are stray ostriches as compared with those that give their name to a mansion of the moon³? And shall I play off my few drops against your sea? 'No man ever comes to grief √ who knows his place⁴!'

p. 14

LETTER II. [After the last: not later than 399 A.H.]

Copy of the letter called 'THE PALM-FLOWER,' addressed to ABU 'L-ḲĀSIM AL-MAGHRIBI, when he sent the author the abridgement he had composed of IṢLĀḤ AL-MANṬIḤ⁵. The letter contains an account of this compendium, which is complimented for its excellence and utility.

- Hail to thee, O Western⁶ wisdom in Arabic words! What air bred thee?
- (5) What rain fed thee? Its lightning flashes must have been like saffron dye, its

¹ The Egyptian partridge, smaller than our partridge, something like a ptarmigan, with head shaped like a quail (Dozy). Described Aghāni VII. 161.

² Yāḳūt gives a number of suggestions for the locality of this mountain; most of the authorities place it in Bahrain.

³ Eight stars which rise on the 22nd of December. Four in the milky way are called Al-wāridah; four out of it are called Al-ṣādirah; meaning respectively the stars that have gone down to drink, and those that have drunk. ẖazwīni I. 84.

⁴ Maydāni II. 152.

⁵ Two works of importance bore this name: one by Ibn Al-Sikkīt (ob. 244), the verses quoted in which were commented on by Al-Sirāfī (ob. 385), to whose father frequent allusion is made in these letters; the other by Abu Ḥanīfah Aḥmad B. Dāwūd Al-Dīnāwarī. Although Abu 'l-'Alā's words (infra, p. 23, l. 21) imply that it was the former work which Al-Maghribi abridged, Ḥajji Khalifah (no. 829) wrongly states that it was the latter. Ibn Khallikan (II. 411) states that Ibn Al-Sikkīt's work was abridged by Al-Maghribi, and (I. 195) in an account of this performance which tallies with Abu 'l-'Alā's description, asserts on the authority of Al-Maghribi's father that it was finished before the author had attained his seventeenth year. The present letter cannot therefore have been written before 387, and is probably not very much later than that date. See p. 1, n. 2.

⁶ Allusion to the author's name Al-Maghribi. Ibn Khallikan mentions that there was a controversy as to the origin of this name, and settles in favour of the supposition that the family originally came from the Maghrib.

drops like palm-flowers! Thou hast alighted on a hill-top, where thou art safe from the dust, and I say unto thee what the brother of Numair¹ said to the lady of the Banu 'Umayr—

‘A lucky star rise for thee, and blame pass away from thee, and fair auspices bid thee good morning,’

for I regret thy presence more than the raven of Ḥijāz his fair attire when, having gone into the wilderness, and become a wayfarer, he approaches the hills of Rūm (10) in a season which brings down the snow-flakes from the air, and looking at his side finds it has turned grey, which grieves him so much that neglecting or forgetting to croak, he falls to earth, and walking as though in fetters, bethinks him of the verse of Duraid²—

‘He passed his prime in pastimes till the grey rose to his head, and when it did so, he said to vanity Begone,’

and longing to return to that robe, and fearing the jibes of his enemies, he pines till he dies. Now many an admirer by excess of eulogy renders himself tedious,—the Arabic *ibrām* may mean either the production of tedium or that of sloes, I refer to the former,—so I will merely pray that God may guard you till a *T* (15) coalesce with a *H*, which is equal to eternal protection, for these two letters are contraries and heterogeneous withal, being respectively surd and sonant, and from the top and bottom of the throat, and in respect of clearness and dullness of utterance as distinct as to-day from to-morrow. God make your rank, which is like that of the subject and the agent, also resemble the verb in that it never declines! For you have made me to be known about if I be present, and my existence not p. 15 to be forgotten if I be absent, like the *yā* of the vocative and the omitted inchoative in such sentences as ‘Zaid, come here,’ and ‘the camels, the camels!’ after being like the *H* of the pause which it is necessary in certain cases to omit, and nowhere necessary to employ.

Truly, though I find myself in a period of frivolity, like the *H* of the numerals which is attached to the masculine form and violates all analogy,—in my relations with a friend who regards me essentially as an *Alif al-waṣl*, which he pronounces (5)

¹ The ‘brother’ sometimes stands for the member of a tribe; e.g. Aghāni XVIII. 44 a man is asked if he can recite any of the verses of the brother of Khuzā'ah, and asks in reply which brother? The poet ordinarily known as Al-Numairi was Mohammed Ibn Abdallah (Aghāni VI. 24). Another was Abu Ḥayyah, who is frequently cited in Al-Mubarrad's Kāmil, and may be the author of the verse referred to. Another was the poet known as Al-Rā'i or the camel-herd (Aghāni XX. 168).

² Verse of Duraid Ibn Al-Ṣimmah; Ḥamāsah, p. 380.

- without emphasis, and omits when he can dispense with it; and circumstances like the *Hamzah*, which undergoes essential changes, becoming sometimes intermediate between a vowel and a consonant, sometimes a long vowel and sometimes a mute, a letter which has no consistent representation and no peculiar form; and among events which reduce the great to the small as though they were the mutilating diminutive which reduces *Mustahlis* to *Hulais* and *Kābūs* to *Kubais*,—still I prolong my commemoration of your favours as the Kufan reader prolongs his voice in *hā-ulā'i*¹, albeit I abbreviate my messages to you, the great Doctor, as
- (10) the reader of Medinah abbreviates such *Hamsahs*² as he can. If I address you an epistle, it is not because I wish to be answered. If I am verbose in my thanks, it is not because I wish for a reward. I am quite satisfied with such favours as I have already received, and the abundant benefits bestowed on me by your illustrious father. God maintain your power so long as the first form of the *Tawīl* metre remains sound, and the *Munsariḥ* remains light and free: and contract the hand of your enemies from the attainment of all success, even as the first hemistich
- (15) of the first metre on the table is *contracted*³. May humiliation and arrest be united in his case as they are in the second species of *Madīd*⁴! May your enemy be pared like a nail and *damaged*⁵ like the seven-syllabled word in *Basīf*! God bind mischief round the subjected head of him that hates you, even as the third form of *Wāfir* is *bound* when the last foot is omitted⁶! Nay, may the earth hide him as the third form of *Kāmil* is *hidden*⁷, and may he be precluded from all hope! And may you and your father and all you both love and honour be sound, sound as the middle letter in the compound peg⁸, which is safe from

¹ The Kufan reader was 'Āṣim.

² The shortening of the Hamzah was supposed to be a peculiarity of the dialect of Ḳuraish; and hence the readers of Meccah and Medinah carried this process out wherever possible. (Suyūṭī, *Iḥṣān*, sect. 33.)

³ The first metre on the table is the *Tawīl*. The first form of this has the penultimate vowel of the first half shortened, an alteration of which the technical name is *Ḳabḍ*. (Al-'Iḳd Al-farīd III. 155.)

⁴ In the first half of the second form of *Madīd* the foot *fā'ilan* is substituted for *fā'ilātun*. The terms used in the text are not apparently technical, and scarcely appropriate.

⁵ 'Damaging' means omitting the second and fourth letter. By this process the foot *mustaf-ilan* is reduced to *fā'ilun*. This change occurs in the last forms of *Basīf*.

⁶ To 'bind' means to substitute *sukūn* for a vowel in the fifth place; in the form of verse alluded to *mafā'ilan* for *muḥā'ilātun*.

⁷ To 'hide' means to substitute *sukūn* for a vowel in the second place. This form of contraction is not peculiar to the third form of *Kāmil*.

⁸ The compound 'peg,' if the author refer to this, is a word like *ayna*, of which the middle letter is *y*. According to the Arabic metric the 'peg' is so named because it is not liable to alteration.

all disturbances! I have been as variable in responding to your gratifying favours as is the fourth of the metrical circles, which is the source of six metres that are (20) in use¹ and three that are not employed.

Now I promise to correspond with you as the Pleiads 'promised to meet the Moon²,' and as Thurayyā, wife of Suhail, promised 'Umar³'; and I honour you at all times,—with the honour of affection, for indeed some honour proceeds from hatred. You have erected a cupola to learning compared with which Syria is like a wen, and 'Irāk a wallet-strap; its shadow does instead of the shade of the morning and evening, and is a substitute to mankind for the two Hinds, the Hind (India) whence the perfume comes, and the Hind of the love-lays: the owner of the veil (25) and the lords of Kīmār⁴; the merchant brethren and the wandering lady⁵.

No wearer⁶ of a collar black as night, and spring garment with folded train, p. 16 who, perched on a palm-branch, tells the mourner what he wants, sounding in his ears an inarticulate melody, neither *Raml* nor *Masmūm*⁷, cooing, as it were, in verses, responded to by the palm-flower whose branch shakes to her melody, while he whom she misses does not return, mourning over some mate that is gone, for whom some disaster or other was decreed,—even such a dove, I say, is not more desirous of her mate than I am of getting some whiff of your news, nor longs more after her partner than I after a visit to your court. Not indeed that the ring-dove has any longings, or that her melody is accompanied by tears,—nay, (5) rather, having seen the two stars of the Ram called *Sharaṭān* before the three small ones called *Buṭāin*, and the Northern Fish before the time of the evening prayer, she imitates the sound of rippling water, and produces a frequently repeated r-r-r. Some one, not knowing this, suggested that she must be mourning some dear

¹ *Sarī*, *Mujtathih*, *Muḥtaḍab*, *Muḍārī*, *Khaṣīf*, *Munsariḥ*. The system of the metrical circles is explained in Palmer's Arabic Grammar. The account of these matters given in Al-'Iḳd Al-farīd III. 147 sqq. is very simple and clear.

² Maydānī II. 327. 'Proverbial expression for a true promise, as they meet once a month.'

³ Thurayyā, wife of Suhail, was one of the women to whom 'Umar Ibn Abi Rabī'ah composed amatory verses; the 'promise' referred to is probably that mentioned in Aghānī I. 92, 'Thurayyā promised to visit 'Umar on a certain day, and came punctually.' Thurayyā seems at one time to have been the wife of 'Umar. For the play upon her name see also Al-Mubarrad's Kāmil (Eg.) I. 378.

⁴ Name of a place in India whence perfume was supposed to come; otherwise Kāmīrūn (Yākūt).

⁵ Apparently equivalent to الظعينة. The ladies of the erotic prologues are ordinarily represented as travelling.

⁶ This image of the ring-dove is worn threadbare, both in the Saḵṭ al-Zand and in these letters.

⁷ Names of melodies of frequent occurrence in the Aghānī.

friend, or have been bereaved of a first-born son. Nay, nay, O mourner—in the morning only dost thou mourn, but at eventide thou dost feign forgetfulness! No matter, no matter! I know nought stranger than the wailing dove: unhurt she complains, and is silent when her wing is broken! Longing is his whose memory
(10) is at all times awake and is not dulled by the rolling years!

✓ You, dear sir, whose existence God prolong, are the author of verses as beautiful as the moon, indestructible as gems: whose opening lines are like a crown raised far above the brow, and their conclusion like an anklet on the foot; compressing noble sentiments in scanty words, just as the venom of the viper is scanty but incurable. Your poetry is grand when rough, and not trivial when smooth. Now the softness of the mane indicates the high breeding of the steed, and the roughness of the coin the genuineness of the metal. All other verses after yours
(15) are like the *a* of Salam, which is indeed expressed in pronunciation, but represented by no sign after the *l* in writing. Your verses come out of criticism as unscathed as gold from the fire, or silver from the hands of the smith; they are like a spray of pearls on beauty's neck, while all others might be a string of gourd-seeds on the neck of a cat. The force of your faithful intellect never leaves you in the lurch, nor has any one detected in your compositions a false rhyme or a false stop. What has the Lion's Nose¹ to do with a false step, or the Pointer with a thorn-bush? He that would rival your verses had best ride the staff of 'the man with eyes,'—even the 'Staff' of *Ḳaṣīr*² will not do! My conviction on this matter is as
(20) immovable as an indeclinable vowel, and I assert it without reservation; an oath is unnecessary, but is not lacking; and in the oath which I swear I neither perjure myself, nor shall repent. And just as the pearl is only hidden in its shell for the sake of fair ladies, so oaths are only lavished when an object of value is at stake. And how precious must be your mind, which can produce silver out of shingle, and date-branches out of gravel! Still, oftentimes resemblances disappear, and a man fails to resemble his father; nor is this strange, seeing that the green plant
(25) gives birth to flame, and a headache is the product of the grape. Even so have you, dear sir, produced out of the magic of the ancients wisdom for the pious
p. 17 followers of Mohammed! How many a rhyme is yours guaranteeing your

¹ Name of a star.

² *Al-Asa* was the name of the horse of *Ḳaṣīr*, the Lakhmite, a pre-Islamic hero, supposed to be the fastest horse of the time. Several proverbs are connected with the fortunes of this hero and his horse, which are collected by Maydāni, VII. 9; in Freytag's *Proverbia Arabum*, I. 424-8. *Baṣīr* (the man with eyes) was the name of a famous letter-writer *Abu 'Alī*, of the third century, specimens of whose style are given in the '*Umdah*' of Abu Ja'far Aḥmad (Bodleian MS.). As we are told that he pondered long over an epistle before writing, the 'Staff of *Baṣīr*' will refer to the staff used during the process of deliberation.

sovereignty, and discomfiting the envious, till they become like those who are slain by old red wine, whose resurrection is at hand, with rebuke for their reckoning! Where are those who compare the camel to a castle, or the plain to a silken robe? 'Tis time to leave the house that has stood too long! A poet has arisen after them, compared with whom they are mere slaves! When any one in his quiet home hears your description of the broad desert or the worn-out camel, he wishes (5) that the camel-cloth were between his sides, and that he had liquid pitch for ointment, and dreams when he is asleep of the long necks of camels, and forges camels' nose rings from the anklets of white-skinned maids: abhorring the pearls that are for the neck and Ḥūrīs' eyes, and taken with affection for trickling milk and eyes like wells! He exchanges the moons that dwell in his harem for camels as sterile as the moons that rise over barren land (are of rain); camels that are bent as bows, and fleet as the ostrich of the desert. Or, if you begin to describe a horse, how utterly defeated is he who compared the wild beasts to things that are fettered¹, and the hoof to a child's ankle²! Your description makes the half-bred envy the (10) thorough-bred, and the hawk the queen-bee, which has been given a privilege which many of the birds of prey have not, since, small as she is, she is the name-sake of certain kinds of 'blazes'.³ And the time is past and the doctrine obsolete that the horse with a ring of hair on its back had the worst of auguries, and that the grey horse was to be avoided because one haunch was higher than the other⁴:—at present the horses are safe from such caprices, and share each other's good fortune: the horse with two rings on his forehead is confident that his master will not come to grief, and the rider of the beast with a ring on his chest⁵ is sure not to fall. (15) The driver of the spotty shall not be robbed, and the leader of the animal with white on his hind legs need not come down⁶. And even if any blame attach to Al-La'āb⁷, yet the draught-horses are free from it. Said Imru 'ul-Ḳais's mare Khaifānah⁸ 'the pumpkin is for the housekeeper, and the tripod for the ample pot'—objecting to his comparing her mane to a bride's tresses, and her brow to the

¹ Imru 'ul-Ḳais in a well-known line.

² Imru 'ul-Ḳais (Ahlwardt, *Dīwāns of the six most ancient Arabic poets*) XIX. 26.

³ The white spot on a horse's forehead.

⁴ The good and bad signs in horses are collected in 'Abd Al-Mu'min's *Book of the Excellence of the Horse* (MS. Hunt. 469). A horse with one eye grey was said to be ill-omened (p. 147).

⁵ This mark was at first thought unlucky, afterwards lucky: yet some said that such a horse could never win a race (l. c. p. 141).

⁶ Also a bad sign (l. c. p. 139).

⁷ Name of a famous horse, mentioned in a verse of the *Dīwān of Hudhail*.

⁸ Reference to Imru 'ul-Ḳais XIX. 37, 38, where the mare is said to look like a pumpkin from the front, and like a tripod from behind.

well-modelled shield¹. And whence had Imru'ul-Ḳais rhymes such as yours, which are like the camel-train of the son of Sa'd²,

'When its two sides were squeezed in a narrow place, Asjadiyyah and Laṭīm met together?'

- The rippling of water may be heard in your erotic verses, and youth is lodged
 (20) in your poems. Without being anagrammatic, so well do your rhymes solace the heart, that they combine the brightness of polished steel with the noise of the drinking of thirsty antelopes. Your hemistich is like the stranger's looking-glass³, counterfeiting both beauty and its reverse, so as to show the fair one how fair she is, and the ugly one what gives her pain. And wine, when you describe it, becomes a cure for old age, and disowns the vine to claim descent from the generous vein; and the casks, dissatisfied with their pitch, and the cobwebs on their shoulders, put on embroidered raiment, and change their tar into gold-
 (25) leaf. And I have heard you describe a tent in such wise that the musk envies the ground on which it is set up, and the stars in Aquarius called Sa'd of the tabernacles wish they were Sa'd of the tents.

- p. 18 I have also come across the *Abridgement of the Reformed Discourse*, the titles of the chapters of which almost serve as a substitute for the rest of the book: and I marvelled at your being able to tie camels with lambs' cords, and to pour the ocean into the hollow of the chest, and to make the Euphrates flow through a needle's eye. Noble composition which sets all doubts at rest, and makes Al-Asma'i⁴ unnecessary! Which expresses by a hint sentences of vast content,
 (5) just as a pronoun expresses a lengthy name! I say in narration 'I commanded Abu 'Abd Al-Jabbār,' but if I, substituting a pronoun, say 'I commanded him,' I am understood. A book whose constitution has been freed from weakness and disease by the omission of the poetic examples, which have been reduced to the condition of witnesses who have been testifying to what is false before a judge who knows their faith to be infringed, and who, being acquainted by personal knowledge with the truth of what they impugn, is in need of no demonstration. Now having examined the proof-passages quoted in the book which you have abridged,

¹ In verses 32 and 33 of the same poem. Abu 'l-'Alā wrote a book in which dialogues were assigned to animals.

² From a passage quoted in the *Nawādir* of Abu Zaid (Beyrut, 1894, p. 16), from a poet of the days of paganism, Ghāmān B. Ka'b B. 'Amr B. Sa'd. Asjadiyyah and Laṭīm are the names of two camels.

³ Kāmil (Eg.) I. 5. 'A woman among strangers would keep her mirror bright.'

⁴ Famous grammarian of the days of Hārūn Al-Rashīd, who died 214. Constant reference is made to his philological writings.

I found them to be of ten sorts, the same number as the brethren of Joseph who conspired together to do wrong, *plus* one sort, like 'that brother of Joseph (10) who was not there'.¹ Now ancient poetry, although it be worthy of admiration, and an archive of memorable deeds, nevertheless is false in its statements, and given to drawing the 'long bow.' The first of the Mu'allakahs, beautiful as it is, and venerable as is its antiquity, nevertheless confesses to acts sufficient to invalidate the testimony of a man of acknowledged authority, not to speak of a woman of doubtful character.² A curse upon her for a hag, who had she been a human being, would have been among the most misled of the race! Now the author of the *Reformed Discourse* (God have mercy on him!) went far afield in his search for proof-passages—he even quoted the 'Rhyme of the Lizard',³ which (15) annoyed the Arabs very much: for when the language is so rich, must it help itself with loans, and obtain assistance from vermin? What, when even Ru'bah⁴ is of no account with them, should they imitate the language of a lizard with bleeding claws⁵? Whoever examines our author's work will find it carelessly arranged, except the portion dealing with the *nomen actionis* and the verb, which is arranged in twenty letters, six pronounced with the tip of the tongue⁶, three with the roof of the mouth⁷, four tight letters⁸, one servile, two dental spirants (*TH* and *DH*), one rising letter⁹, and the two 'sisters' *Ain* and *Ha*: and *Shin* included in the province of *R*. God have mercy on him! Were he alive, he would die (20) of chagrin or burst with jealousy! He outstripped all others did Ibn Al-Sikkīt,

¹ See various readings.

² This name is clearly applied to the Mu'allakah itself. The immorality of the first Mu'allakah was criticized at an early period: even by Jarīr (Agh. VII. 60), who might be supposed indifferent to such matters.

³ One Rejez of the Lizard is quoted in Kāmil I. 356; another in L. A. IV. 280, on the authority of Abu Haytham; some one said to the Lizard ورداً ورداً, and it replied

اصبح قلبى مردا ♦ لا يشتهى ان يردا
الا عرادا عردا ♦ وصليانا بردا
وعنكنا ملتبدا

⁴ Writer of Rejez, ob. 145. Rejez was not accounted a sufficiently literary performance to deserve to be cited as an authority. The reference to Ma'add (the Arabs) is from the tradition quoted by Ibn Khallikan I. 234; a man asked the grammarian Yūnus the etymology of the name Ru'bah, which he said the poet himself did not know. Yūnus replied, 'Perhaps you think that Ma'add the son of 'Adnān speaks more correctly than he and his father.'

⁵ According to the naturalist Damīri, the lizard wears away its claw by digging its hole in rock.

⁶ *M R B N F L*.

⁷ The grammar enumerates four, *Ṣ Ṭ Ḍ Ḍ*.

⁸ The grammar enumerates eight, *W J D T Ṭ B K Ḳ*.

⁹ The grammar enumerates seven, the same as those in note 7, together with *KH GH Ḳ*.

- and now is become the last horse in the race! After being at the top of the tree, he is turned into a tent-peg! His book was like rough gold, lying in a mine, amid rubbish dry and moist; then you come to extract and refine it, to polish it and elaborate it with your ingenuity! And now the stars may envy its brightness and the brilliancy of its polish. And it is no worthless friend, albeit it appear
- (25) with a new face—a friend who never tells tales nor bears malice, a friend who never speaks and yet is never silent! It has acquired the same place in the ancient language of the Arabs that the astrologer's glass holds in the science of
- p. 19 astrology—a thin but compact object that contains sun, moon, and stars¹.

- Let me add besides in respect of his repeated treatment of the same word, that to mention the same vocable twice in a literary work is like uniting two sisters in marriage at once. Marriage with one may be lawful and desirable; with the second it is unlawful and horrible. How can one litter contain two 'fair ones,' or the week two Thursdays? Mother of the lasses, enough of the name Hind²:
- (5) father of the lads, enough of the Sa'ds! Name thy daughters, thou, Zainab and Da'd; and name thy sons, O man, with any name but Sa'd! The precious are few, but the names are many. The author of the *Reformed Discourse* was like a coquette, who sets plenty of ornaments on her neck, but leaves her waist and ankles without ornament.

- The day the copy of your work arrived was a frosty day, which penned up beasts and men, and 'annexed' the genus to the heterogeneous. It brought no bonds on the antelopes, neither did it throw the wild herds in danger's way. However, opposites can be united and obey the same law, and be handled at once with
- (10) pleasure and without injury. Your servant Moses, meeting me without previous appointment, said, 'Here is a book which will be a credit to you, and a proof of your close connexion with our master whom God preserve.' And I read aloud to him the two texts: 'There thou shalt neither be hungry nor be naked³;' 'There thou shalt not thirst nor suffer heat.' And methinks you must have seen the light of supremacy, and called out to those that are behind you what Moses, the blessed, called out to his people, 'Verily I have seen a flame, perhaps I may bring you a spark therefrom, or find guidance at the fire⁴.' And would I knew whether the spark you went to seek is a spark of flame or a spark of gold; what-
- (15) ever it be, the brilliancy of your character wins admiration, and its purity brings

¹ Compare Luz. (Eg.) p. 390, 'The astrologer's glass, small though it be, shows him all the inhabited world and desert.'

² The names *Sa'd* and *Hind* were the most hackneyed forms of appellation. There was a proverb, 'Wherever I turn, I meet a Sa'd;' 'every belle is a Hind.' (Zahr al-Ādāb II. 111.)

³ Koran XX. 116.

⁴ Koran XX. 9.

blessings on your head. 'Laila's wood-gatherers spent the night seeking for her a torch that should be neither faint nor smouldering¹.'

You returned from your first journey, bringing with you a torch of fire, which, if touched, was the fire of Abraham, and, if accosted, the fire of Moses; and having plucked aromatic herbs such as the Marzubans presented to Kisra, such as were accounted a prisoner's ransom, such as having witnessed Noah's times, yet (20) remain fresh to this day.

Moses, indeed, only sought pasture in the most fertile meadows, and made ever for the skies whose clouds are most faithful; but your servant Zuhairi came from your blessed presence like a flower from a garden, or a rose of spring, leafy and sweet-smelling; nor is he while enjoying your protection to be compared to an antelope under the shadow of night, or a lion under a cloud that sweeps: for the darkness gives way to dawn, and the clouds to sunshine; rather is he to be compared with a fish in the wave, or a gazelle in a covered well.

I have on a former occasion informed you that learning is like rain coming (25) after rain: it waters the highlands, how much more the lowlands? I, however, have been stranded on a place² where the impressions of any such shower are as completely obliterated as those of the paint on the hands; a place where fighting has prevented the growth of the herb. 'Unhappy children of Sadūs³! The enemy is fierce and the pasture far away! Lucky children of 'Abd Al-Madān, with sheep in the *hurbuth* and sheep in the *sa'dān*⁴!' Seeing this, I wearied the soles of my feet and found nothing but colocynth! Nay, there was nothing but its fruit⁵ in my sack. I had plucked it off a tree torn up from the earth, without roots⁶. The milk of a camel that eats wormwood becomes bitter, whereas if it eat *arāk*⁷ it becomes sweet and luscious. This is my case in the matter of (5) learning: and as for my worldly goods, I still have by God's grace and your favour a couple of mouthfuls, one of patience and another of wealth, which keep

¹ Verse of Kuthayyir, cited by Zamakhshari, *Kashshāf*, ed. Lees, p. 1052. The author of *Shawāhid Al-Kashshāf* however assigns it to Ibn Muḥbil after Kāmil (Eg.) I. 331.

² Ma'arrāh; compare the description below, Letter XX.

³ The tribe 'Abd Al-Madān is mentioned in Agh. IX. 17; Sadūs is well known. The source of the quotation in the text is not clear. Compare however the proverb 'Empty as the pot of the Banū Sadūs' in Maydāni II. 121; and for the glory of 'Abd Al-Madān, Kāmil I. 56, 72.

⁴ 'Wild anise' and *Neurada procumbens* (Dozy and Redhouse). Both were regarded as excellent pasture; there is a proverb 'Pasture, but not like *sa'dān*.' In L. A. II. 442 the two are coupled as rendering the cattle fat and their milk copious. See also Al-Mubarrad's Kāmil ad init.

⁵ Mentioned as the food of slaves in Aghāni XVIII. 161, 'We are slaves whose rations are *habūd*.'

⁶ The meaning seems to be that he had to get all his learning from books.

⁷ *Capparis sodata*.

me between them as between a watchful night such as is my year, and a milch-camel which forms my property and my food. Now a little may be made the means of acquiring a great deal, even as he that prays seeks for light by protracting his ablutions, and atonement for his sins by wallowing in the mire; and he who visits God's house washes away his sins by the long privations he undergoes.

- (10) In writing to you, dear sir, and refraining from doing so to your noble father (whose reign God protract!), I am like Saba son of Ya'rub when he tried to conciliate the Creator of light and Governor of the world¹: looking about and finding nothing more generous than the sun, he bowed down and worshipped that. Nor is your father to be blamed for contemning the spring anemones, and the hypocritical compliments addressed to him, out of dislike for the people of the town that is named, like the anemones, after Nu'mān; only one would have no
- (15) excuse for hating on their account the line of the founder. The people of that town in relation to his sublime majesty are of two classes, importunate beggars and infelicitous orators. And I hid myself from them as the hungry stomach is hidden by a garment, or as one who, having committed a fault, lies low. But I was forced out by your generosity, which is like the dawn, the appearance of which is a signal for each animal to set about its business, for the jerboa to come out of its hole, and the king out of his lordly mansion. And the ape would fain chatter in the desert before the tawny lion.
- (20) Having been told that my former letter was exhibited in your sublime residence, this encouraged me to let its sister go, hoping to enjoy similar fortune: for surely falling in the sea, she must be wetted. Right proud is she to think whom she is to visit; but 'had² the first been shut out, the second would never
- (25) have started.'

p. 21

LETTER III.

To one of the Sultan's³ ministers to intercede for a friend, who had been governor of a province, named AL-HUSAIN⁴ son of 'ANBASAH son of 'ABDALLAH.

This letter is addressed to a minister whom God keep long at the head of affairs, treading on the necks of the ages; a letter written in circumstances such as engender gratitude, and favours that should not be disavowed; albeit

¹ Letter XXX.² Maydāni II. 144; Aghāni XXI. 199.³ Probably the Sultan is 'Aziz al-daulah. It is clear that Letter IV concerns the same business as this, and therefore that the request which this letter contains was granted.⁴ Not otherwise known, it would seem.

I confess that I fall short of the gratitude which is your due, and if I reveal some (5) of your favours, I conceal others. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, and His favour on His chosen saints! I swear the most solemn oath that no dove with inseparable collar, and garments never stripped off, the gift of spring, which, when the early rain has been bounteous to her, strikes up, and, refusing to be comforted, deploras her case—which, mounting some lofty tree-tuft, neither in heaven nor upon earth, repeats her refrain in both major and minor keys¹—no such dove, I say, longs more for her mate than I do to see you; or grieves more over him than I grieve over the occasions when I have missed the opportunity of serving (10) you. If, however, I have neglected to write, thereby violating my inclinations as ‘the lizard violates its offspring’² or the robber his hand³, this is to be attributed to anxieties and distractions, to the desire of sparing you, and unwillingness to trouble you; for in truth I long for you as the aged beast longs for the familiar spot, or one interlacing branch for another; and sigh all the time after an interview with you as the she-camels sigh after the calves or the thirsty ones after the water-trough. Your guests have not to pass the night in the wilderness, nor your neighbours to toss stones down miry wells. I snuff after the fragrant news of you (15) as men snuff after the scent of flowers, and look eagerly for them every night and morning: I feel about them as the thirsty one feels about the drops of morning rain. The early comer and the late returner alike gladden me if they bring them. God make them always to have smiling faces, rejoicing both friends and comrades! Your friendship makes me as conspicuous as ‘a black swan’; and the finger is pointed at me as one who knows you, just as it is pointed at the lightning by him who looks for it. Did I attempt to conceal the fact, my heart would betray me as the phial betrays the wine⁴, or the palm-tree betrays itself in the open plain. p. 22 And how can he be hidden who goes before the camel⁵, or he who goes through the mansions⁶? Now one look from a lover⁷ is sufficient, and the first taste of water after a day of thirst suffices. Now I know well that if a man stay in your court the antelopes will not come in his way, nor will any of his secrets be revealed. He has not to drink the water of Naṣāt⁸, nor does there befall him that

¹ The terms in the original are technical.

² Maydāni II. 40. The lizard is supposed to devour its progeny (Damiri, a.v.), whence the proverb.

³ Which is cut off when he is caught.

⁴ Maydāni I. 366. The Arabic is ‘a pregnant stallion.’

⁵ Maydāni II. 311. The proverb is ‘More treacherous than a glass.’

⁶ Maydāni II. 264. The proverb owes its origin to the verse of Kulākh cited infra, p. 81. Compare also Maydāni I. 325.

⁷ i. e. the moon. Maydāni II. 354.

⁸ Maydāni II. 297 with an alternative form.

⁹ Naṣāt was the name of a well at Khaibar supposed to produce fever; Yāḳūt and T. A.

- which doubles the ring on the forehead¹. But—so secure is he—he sleeps as
 (5) soundly as the slave-girl when the clouds of night are passing², and his thoughts
 cast away care as a runaway slave casts away his fagot, or a disappointed
 fisherman his net. Those on the other hand who are other men's guests
 are 'like the chestnut, which, if it come first, has its throat cut; if last, is
 hamstrung³'.

- Now my friend Abu — has not ceased to be enchanted with your gifts, and
 indeed through your care for him he is safe after his wounds and rescued after his
 illness. Otherwise he would have been reckoned the first comer's spoil, and
 a stone for him that drives away camels to pick up. He would have been given
 filth to drink, and would have been left abandoned 'like Mina on the night when
 the pilgrims leave it⁴'. But God has mercifully saved him through you from
 (10) emptiness of pocket, and a deserted courtyard; and has given you a permanent
 reward as well as temporary gratitude. You have kept him from being 'chopped
 up like a leek,' from being peeled off like resin from an acacia, from being thrown
 out like the tooth of a ten-year old, from turning colour like water at the bottom
 of a new waterskin. These are 'handles that have been tied' and cords that
 have been fastened; since your attentions were 'close at hand for him⁵,' and out
 of other men's reach; and you were his companion in solitude⁶, and where the
 (15) gazelles lick their young into shape⁷. You 'drink in safe places⁸,' and light your
 fires on a high hill⁹:

'His friends are a circle who fear not in the combat, and eloquent orators.'

'Tis¹⁰ the same to him what time you come to him, whether at the time he
 fears misfortune or in the day of prosperity.'

- Every third day there comes a letter from him enclosing heavy loads of gratitude,
 constantly recurring to the theme. And herein he has started no strange byway,
 nor followed any disused track; he has followed a course which to his family is
 (20) smooth as the back of a serpent, or the matting of the skilful maker:

both quote a verse in which a man in a fever is compared to one who had drunk the water of
 Naṣāt.

¹ A single ring on a horse's forehead was thought to be lucky, but a double one unlucky.
 (Ibn Kṭāibah quoted in 'Abd Al-Mu'min's *Book of the Excellence of the Horse*.)

² The sense is not clear.

³ Maydāni II. 110. The colour was supposed to be unlucky.

⁴ Maydāni I. 101.

⁵ Maydāni II. 342. Literally, at the top of the *Thumām*. This grass (*Panicum dichotomum*)
 is supposed to be so low that the top of it is within any one's reach.

⁶ Maydāni II. 153.

⁷ Maydāni I. 101; i. e. in the desert.

⁸ Maydāni I. 307; i. e. are a good guide.

⁹ From Al-Ḥuṭay'ah.

¹⁰ Zuhair III. 30.

'Can¹ the spear-wood be produced save by its own tree? can palms be planted save in their own ground?'

Small blame to him who is fond of fame, for that is the fairest mistress one can visit, the most enduring treasure one can store up! He who praises you gives you full payment for your gift, and acknowledgement is sufficient recompense for a benefit. Now the family of Abu — have offered prayers in every chapel for you, and have been hoping for you as men hope for the spring rain—

'For² their unfledged fowls, like chicks of the *kaṭā*, when her delay seems (25) long to those who are unable to rise with their red crops.'

Now he and I are two branches of one tree, two stalks of one *arāk* plant, two birds of one nest, two habitués of one *wadi*; the same cloud keeps the heat off both of us, and one flame gives us both light; indeed I may, improving on this p. 23 simile, say that we are two fingers of one hand, two feathers of one wing, two twigs of one branch. If the wind bend him, I bend; and if it deal gently with him, I feel it gentle; and my tongue interprets his mind as the flute speaks for the mouth of him who blows it, or the string for the fingers of him that plays upon it.

Now I have fallen short of what is due to your lordship, even as the stature (5) of a girl falls short of the length of a spear, or as the contents of a mountain puddle fail to saturate a galloping herd. Nor do I now know what turn I had better take. 'Let him whose mouth is empty greet thee³!' I can speak to no one, nor ask any one that answers. It is enough for the tongue to praise its benefactor, and for the heart to love its generous friend.

Still I shall not cease to ask for further favours, although these be sufficient, or to draw out fresh pearls of liberality, although they abound. Now to perfect a kindness is like letting a horse follow its bridle or a camel its rein; and even so (10) were it to help Abu — with word after word and counsel after counsel, till he be restored to his children, who are pining by reason of his absence, and asking constantly concerning his fate, just as the sufferer from drought asks about fodder, or the lonely about company; and who await his emerging as the young in a *kaṭā*-flock await the arrival of their mothers with water⁴. But your good (15)

¹ Verse of Zuhair, Ahlwardt, p. 91, cf. Aghāni IX. 153 and Al-'Iqd Al-farid III. 3.

² Verse of Al-Ḥuṭay'ah in Dīwān Mukhtārāt Al-Shu'arā, p. 137.

³ Maydāni I. 160. A man who was eating made this excuse for not saluting.

⁴ The naturalists (e. g. Damīri) state that the *kaṭā* goes to very long distances to fetch water for its young.

health is the greater matter, and the favour which is beyond all others: and if you have any request, honour me by mentioning it, and slake my thirst by letting me serve you.

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LETTER IV.

*To a friend who asked him to place him lower in the rank of his correspondents*¹.

- This letter (God preserve the prince to whom it is addressed, who excels all others without exception, and is clad in the garments of praise!) is written from a place haunted by his fair memory, and inhabited by persons who are indebted to his favours, and proceeds from a heart that swims in affection for him like a bubble in a pond or a raindrop in a mountain tarn. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, and His favour be upon His chosen servants! My longing for a sight of
- (5) your blessed person is like wine which gets better with age, or like a story-teller who acquires authority with seniority. It is a longing such as no cooing dove could adequately express, nor she-camel descended from Jadīl².

- Your letter when it arrived was like a bird of good tidings alighting, or refreshing water suddenly found at the bottom of a *wadi*. Now loquacity in describing that of which the reality is familiar is a habit that should be avoided, just as explanation of the obvious had far better be eschewed. When I broke the seal, that letter sent forth an odour like musk or incense. And grateful did I feel to Almighty God when I read that you are covered over with salubrity as with
- (10) a mantle, and that comfort is your house and home; since I regard you as my shield of defence and my permanent protection, and when any whiff of your virtues catches my nostrils, or any tuft of the branches of your heroism my fingers, my face brightens, and my inner man is healed. Even so does 'the handmaid boast of her mistress's carriage³,' and the nursemaid of the fortune of the household to which she belongs.

- I am aware that your delay in answering was only in order 'to bring the mischief home to its author⁴,' and the punishment for the error to him who committed it. For I wrote after the 'leather was rotten⁵,' and the garment
- (15) decayed. Now the tears that flow slowest are those that contain most comfort for

¹ There are similar letters in Al-Khwārizmī's collection.

² A camel stallion supposed to have belonged to Al-Nu'mān Ibn Al-Mundhir; often named together with Shadkām.

³ Maydāni II. 108. A proverb used of those who boast of what is not theirs.

⁴ Maydāni II. 174.

⁵ The proverbial phrase for 'the mischief had become irremediable' is 'like one who tans after the leather is rotten,' Maydāni II. 117. 'The fat was in the fire' would be our equivalent.

the afflicted; and the cow-camels that have been ten months with young are the hardest for men to drive.

I am aware that your counsel is cream without whey, and that you can discover the right course without a guide. My letter about Abu — was in the first place one of thanks, and only in the second contained a reminder and a request for help: inasmuch as it is not your custom to put off your suppliants to a lengthy term, or to offer barren promises to those that hope in you.

‘Let go your hands and be at ease; the firesticks can only be made of (20)
*markh-wood*¹.’

And as for the efforts you have made to set right such errors as have been committed—when ‘the bow is given to him that can handle it²,’ and the steeds p. 25 to them that can ride them, and the lance to him who can wield it, the foot of falsehood slips as the truth remains firm, and at the rising of the sun of veracity the darkness of deception disappears. And Abu — has been leaning against mount Mutālī³, and has attached himself to the stirrup of a horse that goes not lame. It is no blunt sword that he has shaken, no stumbling steed that he has sped to the goal. Yet had it not been for your care, he would have leant with his hands upon crumbling stones, and followed the lightning with his eyes, and met death ‘upon the pale horse⁴.’ And even if you did not trouble your fingers to (5) write, and your pen to answer, the effects of your benefits would have spoken, and the marks of your beneficence would have been eloquent narrators. ‘The countenance shows what the lip has taken in⁵.’ Its brightness is a sufficient guide, and its openness gives full information. And your gratifying us by the restoration of Abu — is a favour which has followed on others, and also has brought others in its train. For his presence is as grateful to the better sort as *sa’dān*⁶ to a camel, or the shore to an oyster. For they are all dependent on his bounty, and are plants which he has planted.

As for the section of your letter which deals with the style of address, assuredly I must mount a step or two for one who has descended so many for me, and must (10) needs traverse a high road for the sake of one who has gone through the jungle on my account. This is merely an act of civility, ‘the service of one who can render but little⁷.’ I have therefore only acted like one who stands on tiptoe to

¹ According to Maydāni I. 254 a proverb, meaning that when you are applying to a generous person, importunity is unnecessary.

² Maydāni II. 57.

³ Mountain in Nejd.

⁴ Maydāni I. 141. The literal meaning is ‘on a pale camel;’ it is not impossible that this proverb may be distantly connected with the familiar passage in the Apocalypse.

⁵ Maydāni I. 242.

⁶ P. 25, n. 4.

⁷ Aghāni XVII. 13.

- meet a cloud in his desire for the sweet water which has come down the whole way between heaven and earth. I had indeed wished to ask you to return to your proper style¹, and to treat me according to mine, but was afraid I might lay myself open to a suspicion of which I am innocent, and of the contrary of which
- (15) I might be more reasonably suspected. My delaying to do this was therefore a slip, and an act of negligence; for our friend had commissioned me to move a mountain, to climb up to the shining moon. And what is the extra load to the two burdens, or a finger to the two hands? Surely I am not to be blamed if I responded with a few drops—a last squeeze—to your copious shower. You commenced by giving me titles that I did not deserve, and I answered in such wise as my duty enjoined; I could not be like the barren sand which is rained upon but produces nothing, nor like the grave which takes but never gives. I could not
- (20) do less than the mirror of the stranger, or the great cistern in a rich man's house, into which the handsome beau looks, and it endeavours to show him his like. And your stroke has the same advantage over my response that the fair face has over its image in the polished glass. And when your language recovers its youth and becomes mild and modest, I too will change my note and come down a peg, and once more adopt a humble style. Now Abu — is the Pointer of my night, the rose of my spring, and the garden of my hopes; and since you and he are two moons in one halo, two suns in one ring, two good words in one message,
- (25) I have contented myself with writing to one of you, and offer you both most fragrant compliments and copious salutations, to last so long as the mountains remain firm, and the *salam*-tree² has leaves.

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LETTER V.

Portion of a letter written to a person who, it was supposed, had been devoured by a lion after his muleteer had played him false: the name of the latter being MOSES³.

I have been in a great state of trepidation ever since we were told that it was not known where or whither you had gone. Some said you had been benighted and attacked by a lion, to which I replied, 'stuff and nonsense,' 'fiction and

¹ The opening words of Letter III were probably objected to by the correspondent. We learn from the Aghāni that the Caliphs and other rulers resented hyberbolic compliments paid to subordinate officials. The correspondent's objections were therefore in all probability prompted by a sense of danger.

² A sort of acacia.

³ A common name, it would seem, of messengers, &c. The subject of this letter seems to recur in Letter XXII, the person meant being probably 'Abū Maṣṣūr Muḥammad son of Sakhtakin.'

fabrication¹¹! A lie invented by some enemy! Nevertheless I was alarmed (5) thereat; for the fonder people are, the more anxious they feel. But when Ḥusain's caravan arrived from Apamea, and they told me that they had seen you, I said 'the sun shines first on Thabīr³,' and 'none can tell you so well as he who knows⁴.' And when your letter arrived assuring us that you had never entered Apamea, I wondered at both Musa and Ḥusain; hoping for the best, and 'scaring the birds that were on the left⁵.' As for Musa, he has only followed the ordinary custom of muleteers and camel-drivers, a custom as natural to them as it is to adulterate milk⁶, or to put stripes on a garment. But Ḥusain is an honest man, and must have made a mistake, or been heedless and computed without making (10) due inquiries.

'And men bring thee tidings thou didst not engage⁷,'
and with whom thou madest no appointment. But since God has brought you safely home, what matters a thistle in a distant spot, a torrent in Yemamah, a shingle in Tihamah?

LETTER VI.

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To a man who had lent another 166 dirhems with which he desired the latter to buy him bedding.

I am writing on the first day of the month—God give you good luck on both its bright and its dark nights! And my longing to see you is like that of the poet of Asad⁷ after his meagre drops, or that of the poet of the Banu Numair after his camels⁸. God gather us in the abode of vanity with piety and joy, and in the (5)

¹ Maydāni I. 218, where the first words are spelt *دُرَيْن*. The account given by Maydāni is that a Persian trader in pearls endeavoured to deceive his customers by the resemblance of the Persian words *du* (two) and *duh* (ten), whence his words became a proverbial expression for a fraud.

² Maydāni I. 310. According to the story told in explanation of the proverb, the pilgrims did not leave mount Arafat till the sun shone on mount Thabīr. *Here* the sense must be similar to that of the next proverb quoted.

³ Koran XXXV. 15. ⁴ From a verse of Abu Dhu'alb, *زجرت له طير الشمال*.

⁵ There are several proverbs in which 'watered milk' figures, but none of them seem quite appropriate here.

⁶ Maydāni II. 375. Taken from the Mu'allakah of Ṭarafah.

⁷ The reference is to the verses of Abu 'l-Qamkam Al-Asadi quoted in Ḥamāsah, p. 604, commencing: 'Salute Al-Washal for me, and tell it that all water since I have left it is distasteful.' The commentators there doubt whether *Al-Washal* stands for 'meagre drops,' or is the name of a particular fountain.

⁸ The poet referred to is 'Ubaid Ibn Ḥusain, ordinarily called Al-Rā'i, 'the camel-herd,'

- best habitation may He 'take the rancour out of our breasts'¹. And the proverb says, 'Half a loaf is better than no bread'. So I have done what I could to get back from — dirhems to the amount of one century, and the number of years in which Ibn Muḥbil contended with Mub'id², and the number of the Pleiads, and one half—in other words, 166½ dirhems; and I have asked him to purchase with these certain garments woven by a skilled workman and his son. For
- (10) I thought to myself that you were on the seashore quite close to the ocean, and that these garments would find you under the constellation of the Scorpion or the Goat, and avert the mischief of the winter months, Shīban⁴ and his brother, and the icy days and nights. But he gave me the desires of the camel that waits for the rest to drink and the promises of 'Urḡūb⁵.

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LETTER VII.

Written to his maternal uncle ABU 'L-ĀSİM⁶ ALI son of SABĪKAH when he came up from Baghdad and found his mother dead, not having heard of her death before his arrival. [400 A. H.]

- God preserve you so long as cloud rises or mountain presses! This letter is written from Ma'arraḥ of Nu'mān, whither I have returned after fatigue like Ka'b
- (5) son of Ma'mah⁷. 'We are God's, and to Him do we return!' Praise be to God, praise mixed with tears, and to which the ears are deafened through pain! 'And I pray God be gracious to our lord Mohammed and his family; though grief make thick the utterance of this prayer, albeit at the resurrection it will count the more therefor! And now I will tell you about myself.

owing to the frequency with which camels are described in his poems. For an account of him see Aghāni XX. 168.

¹ Koran VII. 41.

² Literally, 'if you cannot have success, do not have failure,' Maydāni I. 19.

³ Ibn Muḥbil was a poet of the time of the Prophet, whose proper name was Tamīm Ibn Ubayy. Accounts of him which, however, throw no light on this allusion, are given in Ibn Hajar's Biographical Dictionary, and the Khizānat al-adab.

⁴ A name for the 'white' or snowy months, December and January.

⁵ Maydāni II. 271. A familiar phrase for promises that are not realized.

⁶ Sabīkah is the family name, not the name of the immediate progenitor of the person addressed. Letters XVII and XVIII are addressed to the same, and also the poem in Saḥṭ al-Zand I. 165. From this poem Abū 'l-Āsīm would appear to have been a great traveller; the poem is intended to dissuade him from a visit to Egypt, and from leaving the regions watered by the Euphrates.

⁷ A pre-Mohammedan hero, who is said to have handed over his share of the water (which was measured out with a pebble) to some one else in the wilderness.

'O would that I and he were dead! But "would that" is no help against fate¹.'

'Would that 'Amr (albeit "would that" is a vain delusion) had never raided (10) Fahm, nor descended on their valley²!'

'Were the beginnings of things but as clear to a man as are the endings, he would never be found repenting³.'

God's mercy on thee who now dwellest in the grave, whose life is become as though it were yesterday!

'Though hope be cut off from thee, yet regret shall remain for thee so long as time lasts⁴.'

I can hope for no good after her death, nor can I do anything but plunge deeper and further into misery.

'God be gracious to thee⁵, how we miss thee! And how little does the (15) wilderness befit thee! How canst thou, who wast wont to be so timid, make for thy dwelling a place which the champion fears to pass?'

→ 'God grant no blessing on our world, now that it is no longer thine!'

'O final consolation, thy date is the resurrection⁶!'

Truly a far-off term! There is no consolation 'till the 'Anazite of the acacia-fruit return⁷, 'till Al-Nu'mān return to Hīrah⁸, till a prophet be raised out of Meccah. Were it not that the death days are fixed in writing, gladly should I have been killed for her sake in cold blood! Howbeit I did tell her that I was bent on travelling, and that I was fully intent thereon, and she gave me leave. Maybe she thought it an idle fancy, the lightning of a cloud without water! However 'the term of each is fixed in writing⁹, and my grief over her loss is like the pleasures of Paradise, which are

¹ Verse assigned to Nābighah infra. Cf. Maydāni II. 328.

² Verse of the poetess Janūb in the Dīwān of Hudhail (Kosegarten, p. 243). It is here quoted incorrectly, the second half of the first hemistich being *وما ليت بنافعة*, and the second hemistich having *يحلل* for *يهبط*. The author has confused it with a line in the second part of the Dīwān of Hudhail (Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, p. 58), *يا لهف نفسي ولهف ضلة جزعا*.

³ Verse quoted in Al-'Ikd Al-farid.

⁴ Ḥamāsah, p. 408; by an uncertain author.

⁵ Ḥamāsah, p. 409. Verses of Muwailik son of Mazmūm.

⁶ Ḥamāsah, p. 544; part of a verse by Abu Ṣakhr the Hudhalite.

⁷ Maydāni I. 176. The proverb is 'till the two gatherers of the acacia-fruit return,' or 'till the 'Anazi who collected the acacia-fruit return,' Maydāni I. 63. His name was Yadhkur son of 'Anazah. See also Ḥariri, p. 292, ed. 1. In Aghāni XVII. 152 some other proverbs of this sort are collected.

⁸ In the verse of Abu Dhu'aib cited by Ḥariri, l. c., 'till Kulaib be raised from the dead' is appended. The reference here is to a verse of Nābighah, infra, p. 116.

⁹ Koran XIII. 38.

- renewed so oft as they are consumed, and to dilate thereon would weary the hearer and be waste of time. God make her and me your ransom from every ill,
- (5) and give you consolation instead of me! 'Many who have heard my story have not heard my excuse¹,' and indeed 'apologies are lies².' However 'the scout tells no lies to his people³.' And if you say 'the milk in the skin contradicts the excuse⁴,' and 'when you hear that the smith is going away next night, you may be sure of meeting him in the morning⁵,' and 'even a veracious person will tell lies at time of absence⁶,'—by him who produces the palm from the date-stone, and the fire from the flint, I have not turned away from Ḥaleb either in going or returning, except as a pearl-shell might be avoided owing to the dangers of the sea which lie between. And, as you know, though born a man, I am like a wild
- (10) animal in character.

'When the wolf howls and whines, it sounds familiar; but if a man makes a noise, I feel scared⁷.'

'He thinks the wilderness the best society, and finds his way whithersoever the galaxy finds hers⁸.'

'He would give his nose if only the earth's surface were as clear of men as tanned leather is of hair⁹.'

- Had I entered Ḥaleb, I should have been obliged to perform certain duties which it would have fatigued me to perform; whereas had I neglected them,
- (15) I should have been blamed and given offence. And if a man have not travelled to Na'mān of *arāk*¹⁰, he cannot be blamed for not bringing presents of tooth-picks; from the traveller to Hajar¹¹ dates are expected, and salt-fish from the traveller to Baḥrain¹². None the less my desire to see you is like an old man's desire for youth, or a she-camel's for her young. Were it put on the backs of camels, it would not allow them to gallop; or were it turned into the collars of

¹ Maydāni I. 245.

² Maydāni II. 260.

³ Maydāni II. 196. His interests being bound up with theirs.

⁴ Maydāni I. 37. The proverb refers to an excuse being contradicted by some obvious fact; the man in the legend having declared that he had nothing to offer his guests.

⁵ Maydāni I. 36. See above, p. 15, n. 4.

⁶ Maydāni II. 17 (with *عند* for *في*).

⁷ Verse quoted by Damīri, *Nat. Hist.* I. 327, without giving the name of the author.

⁸ Ḥamāsah, p. 43; verse of Ta'abbata Sharran.

⁹ Author uncertain.

¹⁰ Name of a wadi between Meccah and Al-Ta'if, inhabited by the Hudhail. It is also the name of many other places; but the Na'mān famed for the *arāk* is the one specified.

¹¹ Maydāni II. 119; the words of the proverb are 'like one who imports dates to Hajar.' Neither Maydāni nor Yāqūt tells us to which of the towns named Hajar the proverb refers.

¹² 'Round Baḥrain the fishery is abundantly copious, and furnishes occupation to at least half the inhabitants of the island.' (Palgrave, *Central and Eastern Arabia*.)

ring-doves, their throats would be too tight to coo. For, indeed, the brown dove is not more capable than a band of eloquent relatives; rich apparel is better than (20) ruddy feathers; a house is better than a nest; and a golden collar than a black one. Nor can a she-camel compare with a man of sagacity and intelligence; the camel-calf's mother is not an intelligent being, since all she can do is to cry and afterwards be consoled, to be grieved and afterwards appeased; whereas my grief over lost opportunities of being near you is like that of an antelope that has nursed a fawn in plain and desert, taking herself a house that is like a lion's lair, under the shadow of some solitary lotus, then some afternoon she falls asleep and the fawn strays and becomes the lot and portion of the wolf. And when she wakes (25) from her sleep, she looks and sees only some remains of skin, and is frantic and distraught. And may Almighty God grant that we meet and be gathered together like the stars of the 'Arṣā¹, which fear not separation nor diminution of their number.

I wrote to you from Rakḥah explaining my purpose in staying there. If that p. 30 letter have arrived, it is well; but if it have been delayed, it would be inconvenient to reiterate its contents. 'Every occasion has its proper formula², every season its fruit, every valley its acacia. I found Baghdad 'like a pie's wing³,—fair, but carrying nothing.

'Truly 'Irāk⁴ is no home for my people, and its door is shut against (5) Abu Ghassān.

So pile the carriage upon some powerful camel, sprung from Mahrah, at whose birth the people of 'Id presided⁵.

'How many⁶ an up-and-down hill-path lies between me and Mayyah, how many a wilderness wherein the camels are left dead!

It whined for far-off Nakhlah; but I said, "fie for shame! Trouble is there; so make for Syria. For 'Irāk has no people that we love; its people are of proud looks."

'And if the measure of Yemamah be scanty, that of Mayyāfārīḳīn is not (10) more so⁷.

¹ Four stars.

² Maydāni II. 168; taken from a verse of Al-Ḥuṭay'ah.

³ Maydāni I. 323 has a proverb 'unluckier than a pie,' to which there is perhaps a reference. The ill-luck was due to the habit of tearing the backs of quadrupeds practised by this bird.

⁴ Verses of Dhu 'l-Rummah.

⁵ Yāqūt I. 110 says this tribe was called 'Id or 'Idi son of Nad'ah son of Mahrah son of 'Idan, after which the camels are named.

⁶ Yāqūt IV. 769 ascribes these lines to Jarir, reading Maryah for Mayyah. In Aghāni XXI. 193 they are quoted from Mutalammis with Asmā for Mayyah. See the whole poem in *Christian Arabic Poets*, I. 333.

⁷ Yāqūt IV. 703 cites this verse, but cannot specify the name of the poet. Al-Bekri 569 cites

I say to my soul, 'You¹ disgusted me when you had pearly teeth, how much more when you have none?' 'You² have defied me from youth to dotage.' 'This³ is not your nest, be off.' 'This⁴ place 'twere best to leave.' 'You⁵ spoiled the milk in the summer.' 'You neglected the mushroom in the spring.' 'You have spilt the waterskin on the sand.' 'Return⁶ to your proper kneeling-place.' 'Mischief⁷ bring you to your people! What have you to do with men?' The summit of the mountain is no fit home for the ostrich, neither is the plain the feeding ground for the young chamois!

- (15) 'Every⁸ tribe of Ma'add has its nook or quarter whither it can flee.'

Now I had thought that the days would vouchsafe to me to abide there: but the wild beast sticks tight to his bone, the maidservant is chary of her blow⁹, the slave greedy of his trotter, the raven stinting of his date;—and I found learning at a greater discount at Baghdad than gravel at the 'Aḳabah heaps¹⁰, cheaper than dates at Medinah, more common than palm-branches in Yemamah, more copious than water in the ocean. However, there is some obstacle in the way of every (20) blessing, and some storm-cloud or roller in the way of every pearl.

'If¹¹ you cannot succeed in a thing, then leave it, and pass over to what you can do.'

'Be¹² satisfied with what brings you to your destination;' if there is not shade enough for your whole body, there is sure to be enough for one of your members. And when the camel kicks her milker, and the horse stops still under his rider, and the bow baulks the archer, and the cloak is not wide enough for the chilly

it from Tha'lab (ob. 291) from 'Amr from his father, and adds that 'measure' here means 'price.'

¹ Maydāni II. 5. The proverb recurs in these letters. It is supposed to have been said to a woman who, finding that she had been supplanted in her husband's affection by a toothless infant, thought that by becoming toothless herself she would regain it.

² Maydāni II. 6.

³ Maydāni II. 151.

⁴ Maydāni II. 342.

⁵ Maydāni II. 54. The proverb refers to people who miss an opportunity that they have thrown away.

⁶ Maydāni II. 20.

⁷ Tabrizi on Ḥamāsah, p. 252; Freytag, *Proverbia Arabum*, III. 1144. His translation is slightly different.

⁸ Verse of Al-Akhnas, Ḥamāsah, p. 346.

⁹ Maydāni I. 354 (see Appendix); for the 'trotter' compare Freytag, *Proverbia Arabum*, III. 2041, 'Give a slave a trotter, and he will want a fore-arm;' for the rest, Maydāni II. 48, 212.

¹⁰ See Keane, *Six Months in the Hijās*, where it is stated that after each pilgrimage these heaps are removed.

¹¹ Verse of 'Amr Ibn Ma'di Kariba, Al-'Iḳd Al-farid II. 70, Aghāni XIV. 25.

¹² Freytag, *Proverbia Arabum*, III. 444. Cf. Maydāni I. 310.

wearer, and the swarm cover the face of the honey-gatherer, when the cloud deceives the forage hunter, and the lightning makes a fool of the sky-gazer, and 'the supposed pasture leaves the poor shepherd in the lurch'—'the dog returns to (25) his vomit again'; and Reynard bethinks him of his hole, and the raven becomes contented with his nest.

All through my journey I neither entered valley nor climbed mountain, nor was carried by ship, nor bestrode beast save by God's grace in the first place, and in p. 31 the second your kindness, favour, and consideration: your benefits are too many for my thanks, too copious for my memory to take in; and I am aware that you deal with me in this way without thought of either recompense or gratitude. Since, however, silence is in such cases accounted rudeness by the majority, whereas gratitude is vexatious to the doer of the kindness, I find it easier to bear the blame of one than the blame of many. (5)

Abu Tāhir had given me a load of benefits to carry so great that I can scarcely sustain a portion of it: you have not therefore inherited your kindness to me from a distant relation, nor taken your affection for me from a strange house. You are 'a³ chip of the old block.' You are but reproducing your father's conduct, and 'the³ undergrowth springs from the thorn,' and the *baram*⁴ from the *salam*⁵; and 'no⁶ man can be blamed for resembling his father.' [Your letters constantly knock at your friends' doors, reminding them to be generous, and keeping them to non-obligatory duties, till you have made them as closely attached to me as the mane of a horse, or the coils of a rope.] And whenever they offer to perform (10) any service, I endeavour to avoid troubling them, believing as I do in the wisdom of Zuhair's saying—

'Whoso⁷ is ever soliciting others, and does not refrain, shall one day be humiliated and vexed.'

Had I known that I should have to come back I should not have gone upon this journey; however 'misfortune⁸ attends the tongue:' and fortune is fickle; and eyents are like waves of the sea, some of them revealing foul vegetation, others (15) fair rows of pearls. Man knows not to what his mind is attached, nor to what thicket his luck will bring him. Had I known the future, I should have got

¹ Maydāni I. 196 and II. 4. The Arabic is 'Lamis returns to her bad ways.'

² Maydāni I. 308. The Arabic means 'a nature I know from Akhzam,' originally, it is said, applied to the unfilial conduct of the children of Akhzam, who had in his youth displayed similar behaviour to his father.

³ Maydāni II. 58. The Arabic is *في عفة ما ينبتن شكيرها*.

⁴ Supra, p. 11, n. 2.

⁵ Supra, p. 32, n. 2.

⁶ Maydāni II. 264.

⁷ In his Mu'allakah.

⁸ Freytag, *Proverbia Arabum*, III. 44.

myself great good fortune, and no harm should have touched me; there was found written on a tablet—

'O thou whose heart is full of care, fear not; if fever be ordained for thee, thou shalt take it.'

The favour of God is upon all those whom you know in Baghdad; they treated (30) me with singular courtesy, and spoke well of me in my absence, and honoured me above my equals and my peers. And when they learned that I was getting ready to leave them, and, indeed, on the point of going, they manifested great sorrow and said many kind words, they put on fresh garments of grief, and the eyes of old men shed tears. 'There is no god but God!' What plant is there on which nothing feeds? Every fragrant herb has some one to smell it; every dunce¹ has p. 32 her task; every beast, however slow, its driver; every slave-girl, however ugly, (her owner;—and so anxious were they for me to remain their neighbour, that they gave me commands which a contented mind forbade me to execute, and which went beyond all that is customary. But Naḍād² is at a distance from the snow-mountains, and he who makes for the hollow takes a different direction from him who makes for the hills.

'Very³ different was the day I spent upon her saddle from the day I spent with Hayyān brother of Jābir.'

(5) 'What⁴, when I am far on in years and the crown of my head is white, am I bidden to do what was too much for me when I was beardless?'

'Māwiyyah⁵, little use is wealth to a man when his throat rattles, and the breath leaves his chest.'

God reward them! If what they did was done out of kindness, it was a great benefit; and if they did it for pretence, still it was an act of good fellowship; and so I left Baghdad, with my honour still in a vessel that did not leak; not one drop of it had I spilt in quest of either wealth or learning. Indeed, since I passed my (10) twentieth year, it never occurred to me to seek knowledge from any inhabitant of either 'Irāk or Syria. 'He⁶ whom God leads finds his way rightly, and for him whom God causes to stray thou shalt not find a guiding friend.' It was the Library that attracted me thither.

'Even⁷ if I do love one who dwells in Al-Ghaḍa, I am not the first aspirant after a thing who did not get it.'

¹ Maylānī II. 181; with 'artist' for 'dunce.'

² Name of a mountain in the Ḥijāz.

³ Verse of Al-A'ala, discussed in *Khizānat al-adab* III. 56.

⁴ Verse of Ḥatīm Al-'A'ī; see *Aghānī* XVI. 107.

⁵ Verse of Ḥatīm Al-'A'ī; see the *Calro* edition, p. 118.

⁶ *Koran* XVIII. 16.

⁷ *Ḥamāshī*, p. 174. Verse of an unknown author: Al-Ghaḍa is a valley in Nejd (Yāḳūt).

All honour to Baghdad and its inhabitants! And to the Tigris as a river and as a drinking-place!

'Truly' in my passion for 'Azzah after the ties between us have been loosed, (15)

I am like one who seeks the shadow of a cloud, which fades away so soon as he thinks he can put himself to sleep beneath it.'

Every one whom I informed of my intended departure displayed sorrow and looked sad. So that I concealed my intention from them as a woman conceals her personal defects from her rival. And when the chameleon of parting climbed his *landub*² and the *qurad*³ of separation perched on its place, I and they were like Abu Kābūs and the Banu Rawāḥah⁴.

'He spoke them fair and thanked them, and bade them a last adieu.' (20)

So I started from Baghdad the sixth day before the end of Ramaḍān, with camels pulling sideways, and straps creaking, and ships expecting to sink; a journey wherein the traveller on foot wished he were mounted, if only on a palm-trunk; and that he were shod, if only with the skin of his face and brow; and that he were lying down, though it were on thorns and brambles; 'in the morning' the people will be thankful for their night-journey; 'troubles will then be cleared away.'

I passed by Ḥaleb (since I went on the road that leads by Maṣīl and Mayyā-fārikīn), where are waters like those of Ṭathrah⁵ and 'Udhaib⁶, and praise be to (25) the God of ages!

¹ Verses of Kuthayyir, out of a poem of which large portions are quoted in Khizānat al-adab II. 376-381.

² The chameleon is said when climbing this tree (of which the authorities only know that arrows are made of its wood) not to remove more than one foot at a time.

³ Name of a bird, said to be somewhat larger than a sparrow, and the sparrow's enemy. The grammarians mention that it is a bird of ill-omen, but not apparently that it signified departure.

⁴ Ibn Al-Mundhir, when attacked by 'Kisra' the king of Persia, fled for refuge to the tribe of Ṭay', who refused it, and then was offered it by the Banu Rawāḥah, but was unwilling to endanger them. The story is often told, e.g. Aghāni XX. 132. The verse is by Zuhair; Diwān Mukhtārāt Al-Shu'arā, p. 57, Ahlwardt, p. 102.

⁵ Maydāni II. 2; i.e. they must wait till it is over to praise it.

⁶ Maydāni II. 44.

⁷ 'A valley or river in the territory of the Asadites' (Yāqūt). 'A well in the territory of the Banu 'Ukail' (Al-Bekri).

⁸ Famous spring 'between Kādisiyyah and Mughithah, four miles from the first, thirty-two from the second' (Yāqūt). For the waters of Aleppo, see Cowper, *Through Turkish Arabia* (1894), p. 74, 'The river of Aleppo, the Kuweik Su, which is identified with the Chalus of Xenophon, is a somewhat sluggish stream wandering through orchards of ash, maple, poplar, and other trees.' According to this writer the water is not particularly good.

p. 33 'I went down to the salt waters and loathed them; so God water my first folk and my spring!'

Each time the ravens croaked, I said, Fair words, sweet bird, thou knowest nothing of what was or is to be; back, back! Try to frighten some one else, not me! Long time hast thou alighted upon carcasses, and have children broken thy wings!

- (5) 'Who¹ will tell 'Amr son of La'i, wherever among mankind he may be:—
Let not the binding of spells keep thee from the pursuit of good. At one time I would never go out if I met a raven or a sparrow; but now I find the birds that fly to the right and to the left are the one as the other. And even so neither good nor evil is abiding with any one.'

- (10) And when we alighted at Ḥasaniyyah² the bearers of sand and of money were alike, and the day-traveller had little trouble where he should sleep, and the night-traveller where he should start and where pass the night. And we went on thus till we reached Āmid, when the troubles of the road returned, and the travellers were again involved in dangers.

'You³ brought us home half-dead yourself, without marrow in the bones and without a hump.'

- Being unable then to remain in the spot I had chosen, I decided upon isolation such as should make me like an antelope in its lair, and should completely cut me
(15) off from mankind, except, indeed, those with whom God should join me as the arm is joined to the hand, or night to morrow. And I beg to offer you and your father (God help me by preserving you both!) salutations as beautiful as the *Ala*⁴, as clear as water, as sweet as honey, as continuous as raindrops, as enduring as
(20) the stars, as fragrant as the *'Arār*⁵, as brilliant as the lightning.

LETTER VIII.

Written to the people of MA'ARRAH, when he was coming from Baghdad, before his arrival. [400 A. H.]

In the name of God the merciful and clement! This letter is addressed to the people of Ma'arraḥ (whom God encompass with happiness!) by *Aḥmad son of 'Abdullah son of Sulaymān*, and is meant for his acquaintance and kindred.

¹ Verses of Al-Kuzaz Ibn Laḏḏhan, quoted L. A. XVII. 350, and in part XV. 408. They are also a commonplace in anthologies, where the worthlessness of omens is discussed (Agh. IX. 164, Zahr al-Ādāb II. 79). See also *Christian Arabic Poets*, I. 286.

² 'Town to the east of Maṣṣāl, two days' journey from Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar' (Yāḳūt).

³ Author unknown.

⁴ An evergreen tree.

⁵ Said to be the Juniper.

God give peace to all these and abandon them not, and gather them and grieve them not!

This is my address to them at the time of my returning from 'Irāk, the gathering place of the wranglers, and the home of the remainder of antiquity: after having (5) ended my youth and bidden farewell to my spring-time; after 'milking' all the udders of time,' and proving its good and evil. I have found the best course for me to pursue in the days of my life is to go into retreat, such as shall make me stand towards mankind in the relation that the chamois² in the plain stands to the ostriches that are there. Nor have I been a bad counsellor to myself, nor have I failed to secure my fair share of benefits. So I decided upon this course after asking God's help, and revealing my idea to a few friends on whose characters reliance could be placed, all of whom thought it wise, and considered it could be carried out with prudence. And it is a matter 'over' which night-journeys have (10) been undertaken,' which has been 'settled' at Baḳḳah,' and 'carried' on the ostrich's back.' It is no offspring of an hour, no nursling of a month or a year; it is the child of past years and the product of reflection. I have hastened to inform you of this for fear that one of you out of courtesy might be fain to go to the house it is my custom to inhabit in order to meet me, and if he found this impossible, I might find myself afflicted with two bad things—bad manners and estrangement. And indeed 'many people incur blame through no fault of their own'; and the proverb says 'leave' a man to his choice.' And my soul did not (15) consent to my returning till I had promised it three things—seclusion as complete as that of Al-Fanīḳ³ in the constellation of the Bull; separation from the world like that of the egg-shell from the chick⁴; and to remain in the city even though the inhabitants fled through fear of the Greeks¹⁰. And this, even though those who are attached to me, or profess attachment, flee like grey antelopes or white

¹ Maydāni I. 162. A proverbial phrase used for trying both good and evil fortune.

² Maydāni I. 24 and 115. 'A chamois is rarely to be seen in a plain, while ostriches are common.'

³ Maydāni I. 29; said to mean a matter which has received due deliberation.

⁴ Maydāni I. 74. 'Baḳḳah is a place in Syria; the words were said by Ḳaṣīr son of Sa'd the Lakhmite to Jadhimah Al-Abrash, when he fell into the hands of Al-Zabba.' The meaning is an affair that has been irrevocably settled.

⁵ The proverb is 'riding the two wings of an ostrich' (Maydāni I. 252), used of any one who is serious about a concern.

⁶ Maydāni I. 248.

⁷ Name of a star.

⁸ Maydāni I. 219 (with *دع* for *خئل*).

⁹ Maydāni I. 80.

¹⁰ The chronicles of Aleppo at this period are full of the Greek invasions, which were made in part with the active support or connivance of some of the Mohammedan candidates for sovereignty.

camels. And I swear that I did not travel to increase my means, nor to gain by interviewing my fellows.

- (20) What I wanted was to stay in a place of learning: and I found out the most precious of spots, only fate did not allow me to stay there, and only a fool will
p. 35 quarrel with destiny. So I abandoned all thought of the privilege which fate thought too dear to grant.

- God grant that you may be able to abide in your homes and not have to be always on your horses and stirrups; and God shed upon you his favour as the full moonlight¹ is shed upon the hare-brained gazelle. And may he give good recompense to the people of Baghdad, for they praised me more than I deserved,
(15) and testified to my merits before they knew them, and quite seriously offered me their goods. Albeit they found me not fond of praise, neither eager for other people's charity. And when I went away, it was against their will, 'and God is enough for me, and on Him let whoso will, rely.'

LETTER IX.

To one of the family of 'ALI.

- The affection of my friend the Sharif is no new thing, but an heirloom. For
(10) 'the fondness² of the dry-nurse' is only sham. I am told that you generously enquired after me, and found only the remains of a dwelling. And indeed I informed you when in 'Irāk of my intended retirement, which would prevent my seeing you as you desired. Arriving here, I found my mother had been carried off by destiny, and should gladly have died myself: so I wrapped myself up in despair and isolation, having come exhausted myself to a state of affairs I by no means liked, such as a general dearth continuing from year to year with other mischief
(15) which only God can remove. For this reason I have only sent a little money, the smallness of which grieves me exceedingly. However, a journey is like an old camel in a level place, it plays with every plant. 'Part³ of a man's clothes resemble him; and the dry well will not quench your thirst; the exhausted camel will

¹ Reference to a proverb 'more easily deceived than a gazelle on a moonlit night,' which is explained by the supposition that the animal is blinded by the moonlight, and so is easily caught.

² There are several proverbs more or less resembling the words here used; see Maydāni I. 215, II. 257. The word rendered dry-nurse in these proverbs is explained as meaning 'the camel that refuses its milk.'

³ Freytag, l. c., III. 244; quoted in Maydāni's gloss on the proverb 'a bad speech and a bad answer,' I. 278.

only give you part of your night draught of milk. Take thy sparrow, hawk, and be thankful: 'take' from Jidh' what he gives you.' And I beg you to accept my excuses, and to favour me by accepting what I have sent.

LETTER X.

p. 36

To ABU ṬĀHIR AL-MUSHARRIF son of SABĪKAH, written from Baghdad, and containing an account of the commentary of SĪRĀFĪ and the trouble taken by him over it. [400 A. H.]

In the name of God, &c. Praise be to God so long as acts intentional and unintentional are enumerated, and his favour be upon Mohammed so long as tribes assemble, and knot rise above knot in the spear-wood. My longing after you, dear sir, is like that of thirsty lands for the downpour of the cloud, and the benefit which I derive from your neighbourhood is similar to that which accrues to the fertile (5) land from fresh streams. And I strain my senses after tidings of you as the herdsman who has suffered from continuous years of drought strains his after some thundercloud from the south for which he anxiously waits. And my regrets over your absence are as those of the wild cow, which having gone in pursuit of pasture some evening is betrayed by some lion who comes and seizes its calf which has strayed and lost its way. The cow wanders all round the sand-hill, and shows no 'comely patience'. And I think of the times when I was with you as the weaned child thinks of its mother's breast, and as he² who swore by the milk thought of the children of Khālidah. And I wait for your arrival as the Meccan tradesman waits for the foreign pilgrims, or the owner of cattle for the first appearance of vegetation. (10) And I fly to you for help as the drowning man turns to the nearest shore, or the timid man to a sword that is not blunt. And I am as reluctant to trouble you as is the dove to be inconstant, or as was Abu Jahl to appear at Badr. And my confidence in your generosity is as great as a mariner's in his float, or that of Al-Ḥārith in Nu'amah⁴ his horse. And my gratitude for your benefits is like a horse dedicated to pious objects which cannot be held in. It is renewed with every breath.

On this day the — of — your letter reached me, and I rejoiced thereat

¹ Maydāni I. 191. 'Jidh' Ibn 'Amr Al-Ghassānī, when Sabtah, the collector for the king of Salih, came to demand the tax, produced a sword, and giving the collector a death-blow, said, Take from Jidh' what he gives you.'

² Koran XII. 18.

³ The reference is to a line quoted in the Kāmil (Eg.) I. 295, Wr. p. 284, 'May God, by the milk, not keep far the children of Khālidah.'

⁴ Name of the horse of Al-Ḥārith Ibn 'Ubad, of which the story is told in Ḥamāsah, p. 252.



- (15) as a thirsty man rejoices when he reaches fresh water, or a wakeful one when he finds some one to talk to. And the news of your good health which it contained delighted the mind with the pleasure of him who cries (small blame to him!) 'Good news! a son is born!' God grant us a meeting after which there shall be no more parting!

I understand what you tell me about the copy to be procured, and you herein have shown yourself kind and generous, whereas I am vexatious and importunate. You have been as liberal as usual, and I as troublesome as before. As for the

- (20) commentary, if fate favour, you shall have it; but if not, it is poor stuff. I remember having written in one of my letters to you, 'though the texts differ, and the sections overlap, no matter; a patchwork garment will do as well as one of
p. 37 silk.' I must, however, except the text of 'Alī Ibn 'Īsā, for he was a man who relied on what was in his breast, and did not trouble himself about the rules of writing. And I had hoped that by your good fortune people might agree, and as the Koran says, 'sell it for a small price, a fixed number of dirhems, and think
(5) little of it'. I will not add 'since perhaps it may help us or we may take it for a child.'

What you tell me about the corrupt state of the people is, as surely as leather rots, an ingrained disease. One panther breeds another, and the thorn is the sister of the bramble. But you, God help you, are well protected from all blame. Is the book you want 'the hidden volume, which none save the pure shall touch?' Let not disappointment lead you to be importunate. Surely it is all frivolous trash, medicine for the time of health. 'And this life is but a delusive ware'. And
(10) as for Abu 'Amr my master, his name corresponds with a verse which constitutes a most excellent omen—'it is like a tree whose roots are firm, and whose branches are on high'. I and my companions offer you and all your friends greetings such as make the paper that bears them fragrant, and whose rain makes a garden of the desert.

p. 38

LETTER XI.

To ABU 'AMR of Astrabād about the commentary of SĪRĀFĪ. [400 A. H.]

May salutation as fragrant as Indian saffron, or a garden in Nejd, be brought by a rain-cloud to the eminent shaykh Abu 'Amr, whom God preserve so long as an Elif quiesces, or an oath requires an 'apodosis;' and couple him with good

¹ XII. 20, 21.² Ibid. LXVI. 77, 78.³ Ibid. III. 182.⁴ Ibid. XIV. 29. The person in question would seem to be the same as the individual to whom the following letter is addressed; perhaps his name was Ṭ'ayyib.

fortune for his neighbour, as the Pointers are coupled, that fear no parting so long as dawn is followed by day! My longing for you would weary a mountain were (5) it laid thereon, and terrify a valley did it traverse it. God grant that we may meet in some place of rest, secure from all ill-will! Your letter reached me, and made me as exultant as a caged bird that is released, or a fettered prisoner who is unloosed. And the news of your good health gave me the joys of the two Dārīs, the one¹ in his devotion, and the other² in his perfume. God preserve them both for you till Canopus become the moon, and until the juice of the thorn-bush turn into fruit. I have expressed my gratitude and recognition; and have started importuning my friends, and assailing them from every point; but I have found (10) their resolution impeded by distractions which are to the student at Baghdad like the 'ura³ trees whose leaf never falls, or stale water of which one is likely to choke; especially if one gather the flowers of learning from every hill and sandy plain—sooner than trouble him with this I would throw the book into a pond till the cheek of Shuraiḥ⁴ blossom;—he, according to tradition, being smooth-faced, and never having had any hair. God, the giver of all good gifts, grant that the *ṣā* become not a *ḥ*, the 'exposition' an 'affliction' to my friends. Should we connect this (15) word with the verse of the Koran, 'Have⁵ we not expanded thy breast?' or the verse, 'And⁶ whomsoever God would guide, he expands his breast unto Islam?' As a matter of fact, it is but a compilation of facts learned by tradition and by analogy. It will not give eternal life to one that can recite it, and men have got on well without it. By your precious life I have been afraid my friends would set me on its account among those whose 'breasts had been expanded' to unbelief! Not indeed that I am afraid of any ill-treatment on their part; I have polished no (20) swords, and climbed no heights; and the surpassingly great man is like the high-stepping horse who is made to contend for one prize after another, and returns from all with 'flying colours,' with never a stumble, indicating his good luck with his bright 'blaze' and the conspicuous ring of hair on his neck. I shall not say, 'If any one absent himself, may his arrow be fitted with crooked feathers;' nor

¹ Tamīm Ibn Aus, one of the followers of the Prophet. His devotion is described in the notice of him in *Usd Al-Ghabah*.

² Dārī signifies a perfume-dealer.

³ A name for certain shrubs that keep their foliage through the winter.

⁴ A *kāḍī* of Kufah in the early days of Islam, who was beardless. The tradition referred to by Abu Ḥ-Alā is given in the notice of him in *Usd Al-Ghabah*. In the account of him in *Aghāni* XVI. 35 it is not mentioned.

⁵ XCIV. 1.

⁶ VI. 125.

- shall I apply to the work of Abu Sa'id¹ the words of the Koran, 'They shall be
 (5) summoned from a far-off place².' Still I dislike giving trouble, and would fain
 avoid doing so; I merely ask that, owing to your unique ability, we may be
 favoured with your help. You yourself are too important and the book too un-
 important for me to trouble you to take any steps, though they were as short as
 the hopping of a *ḥaṭa*. I will only ask you to be so kind as to favour me with
 a letter of a few lines, which will be as fragrant as incense, containing good tidings
 more permeating than the scent of amberggris, together with commands and pro-
 (10) hibitions which I shall be no fool if I obey. And now I commit you to God as
 a miser might commit his treasure to a faithful keeper.

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LETTER XII.

*To ABU ṬĀHIR IBN SABĪKAH, who on his journey from Baghdad had been
 hit in the finger with a spear and badly hurt.*

- God has blessed us with your safety as he has blessed birds with wings, or as
 he blesses those who are at death's door with recovery and health. Nor was this
 one favour, but a series, and I know of no good tidings which I could compare
 (5) with them. I need not speak of the tidings brought to a king of victory over the
 enemy, or to the poor man of the acquisition of wealth,—but not even the
 announcement made to those who have drunk the water of life and been raised
 from the dry dust to eternal joys in Paradise could compare with this.

- Our souls crouch before our Maker, and our fingers are raised in imprecation
 against the man who stretched out his hand to wound you; may he never follow
 a travelling beauty, and never while he lives find any abiding rest! May his right
 hand never help his left! God give him misery, and neither comfort nor long life!
 (10) God never fill his cup with milk! Should he approach any friend, may that friend
 repulse him! Should he ride a beast, may it throw him! God turn him into
 a lizard in a rocky place³, where he shall not be safe from the blade of the knife!
 May he all his life be scratching the ground, whereby his hands and fingers may
 bleed! May he be left so far as is possible like a falcon with clipped wings⁴, that
 can neither rise from the ground, nor chase other birds! May he never so long as
 he lives be satisfied with drink, and may the Arab lads be set upon him! May he

¹ Abu Sa'id Al-Ḥasan son of Abdallah, ordinarily known as Al-Sirāfi, a famous grammarian
 and critic, author of the most important commentary on the Kitāb of Sibawaihi, ob. 368. A brief
 notice of him in Ibn Khallikan I. 162.

² XLI. 44.

³ Maydāni II. 234.

⁴ Maydāni II. 139.

want water more than a fish, and may he be set down in a desert where it is uncertain! That he may always be thirsty and alarmed, and have no control over a watering-place. (15)

Wealth is only lent us, and there is no shame in losing it. And hopes are like clouds, some of which drift, whereas others shed water. Men can only be blamed for bad actions, not for disappointed hopes. So we beg of the Almighty that he may replace what has been lost, and make us your ransom.

To return, however, to our purpose and recommence; the joy produced by this gift of God was threefold: first, that of your father, who rejoiced as much to see you as the tree rejoices in its fruit; secondly, your own on your arrival at Haleb (20) was like that of Al-Ḍaḥḥak on his arrival at Baram¹, or of the pilgrim when he reaches the house of God; and last, not least, mine and that of the rest of our friends, whom God bring together with you in a meeting which we shall approve, and which by His grace shall not terminate. Truly we long for you as the labourer longs for his hire, and the child that is frightened by the darkness longs for the light of dawn. And as for the commission which you were kind enough to undertake, I could have wished that, important and precious as it is in my eyes, it might be the ransom of one of your saddle-girths, or of your torn shoe-lace. (5) In the words of 'Adi Dhū 'l-Ḳamar² when he slew Bujair son of 'Amr: 'Redeem, but no mistake, one latchet of a shoe of Kulaib!' And the fact of your being on this journey compels me to ask for news of the Banū Ja'far as though they were friends, whereas they really are enemies; just as he that suffers from drought might ask where the rain falls, or the raven enquire where is the seed that he can pick up. And before we learned the news we were in darkness like that of Al-Kindi³; for we should dread a hair, thin or thick, hurting you,—how much more the head of a lance! And we thank God, who has caused the misfortune to fall on your (10) goods rather than on your family, and upon what would be consumed by your outgoing, not upon what would touch you keenly. I congratulate you and your father upon your escape, and feel that of its benefits I have the lion's share.

I have already confessed to being troublesome, and had better not repeat myself. I am asking you to make the acquaintance of certain persons who, like old clothes, are not smooth, but fit easily. I know that one of your journeys is worth all the gold and silver of 'Irāk, but your courage is as well known to me as (15) the striped cloth to the dealer of Yemen; 'and none can tell like him who knows.' And this is a course that does not admit of refinement; and to make the benefit

¹ Reference obscure.

² Ḥamāsah, p. 251.

³ i. e. that mentioned by Imru 'ul-Ḳais. See his Mu'allakah.

complete it only remains for you to inform me of the price that has been paid that I may send it at once. Had I been present I could never have accomplished what you have accomplished; nor would it be possible for me to discharge the commission as you can.

- (20) I send both you and your father such salutations as will not weary you, though interminable, and the same to your servant Mukbil, who, though his skin be black, is more highly esteemed by us than an untrustworthy white.

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LETTER XIII.

To ABU ṬĀHIR AL-MUSHARRIF son of 'ALĪ, on one of the occasions on which he returned from 'Irāk.

- In the name of God, &c. Neither the desire of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib¹ for the woman of Namir, nor that of Kuthayyir for the daughter of the Banu Damrah² would win the day if compared with my continuous longing for you, dear master, whom God preserve so long as a house is built in the plains or a birch springs on
- (5) the eternal hills. It is natural that the flame of longing should burn fiercely when produced by ties of blood, nursed by affection, and fostered by a series of benefits. May God slake my thirst by enabling me to meet you, and may He bless the community by keeping you alive. You are the star of those that travel by night, the protector of those that stay at home, their arrow that hits the mark. I pray God He may grant us a meeting after which no separation need be feared, and which will be indissoluble. So rejoiced am I at your safety (long may it be continued, and often and again do I think of it) that I have been mixing complaint with gratitude.
- (10) Since the Bedouins have not been raiding, and the thieves in Baghdad have not been nibbling, and since God has granted earnings such as could not have reasonably been expected, it would have been right for you to restrict your public charity to that troublesome business of provisions which they asked you, and which gave you so much annoyance, annoyance of a kind to which you were not accustomed. But as it is while the need has been lessened the gift has come doubled and trebled; as the Koran says 'you have done a strange action',³ and as the Arabs

¹ The mother of his children Al-'Abbās and ʿIṣrāʾ (Azraqī, p. 287).

² 'Azzah, to whom the poems of Kuthayyir were addressed, was of the Banu Damrah. Kuthayyir's death-date was 105.

³ Koran XVIII. 70.

say 'both and the dates'¹. Praise be to God who has made us like the people of (15) Bahrain² and you like the generous palm-tree whose fruit can be eaten dry or moist, and whose leaves can be taken for garments. And were we not anxious to obey you, and afraid to displease you, we should have liked to take the dates and disobey you in the matter of the clothes, being like the people to whom Ibn Al-Zubair said, 'You³ have eaten my dates and disobeyed my orders.' God make you to be of those 'who when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but a mean (5) between the two'⁴. Your conduct would be no prodigality, even though you were to give as it were bucketfuls from the sea; and whether much or little, acceptance of it would be equally excusable. But as for this sum which would be a treasure to a refugee, and capital to a trader, to take it would be improper depredation, whereas the tongue cannot utter a refusal of it. Now every fool knows that the (5) Tihamah is full of acacia, and that your generosity exceeds your means, as well as your readiness to undertake journeys and imperil your life; and we only put on airs before strangers, not before relations, and before new friends, not before those of old standing. And a letter was sent from all of us, wherein we swore solemn oaths admitting of no exception that on this journey we should not waste your substance, even though famine should urge its camels. And we sent it early, so that it might reach you at Ḥaleb, being afraid of what you might do; and it was neither too short nor too long; and the letter was sent by a traveller named (plague on him!) Mi'yar, who stated that he gave it to the worthy Muḥbil; so I do not know (10) whether the letter reached you, and you refused to listen to it, or the carrier made off with his trust. Whichever be the case, we must make atonement for a broken oath, and offer you and your excellent father greetings such as fill their abiding-place with light, and whose breath is fragrant with musk. (15)

LETTER XIV.

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To ABU ṬĀHIR, the author having heard that he intended travelling to Al-Fusṭāṭ without passing by Ma'arrat Al-Nu'mān. [After 400 A. H.]

My anxiety to see you (God preserve you!) is fostered by each passing hour, just as a young child is fostered by its nurse, or the kindled spark by tinder—or shall I say like the fire of coals thrown among dry bramble-bushes? For such (5)

¹ Maydāni II. 118. The proverb is supposed to have been spoken by a man who offered three things to one who had asked him for two.

² In respect of the abundant stores of dates.

³ Maydāni I. 66.

⁴ Koran XXV. 67.

produce a blaze to which no amount of language can do justice. God will one day quench that burning flame, and remove that mass of care, by bringing us together and making us neighbours too close to need visits. The times by God's grace may become friendly again, albeit for a long time they have been troublous, and the days as you know gloomy. Still, so long as you remain alive, there is no real disaster, and we may hope to see you.

- Your letter held out hopes of a happy meeting, but then the times became
- (10) contrary and vexatious again. God couple *you* with luck and good fortune hereafter as before! You hinted in your note that you would not be passing by Ma'arraḥ; and this woke up a burning sore, and spoiled the pleasure which your letter had aroused. Now since continuous fasting has been forbidden, fasting on consecutive days only being permitted, how much less can continuous absence resulting in continuous disappointment be tolerated? Surely your better plan would be to touch at Ma'arraḥ without fail, and pay a visit to both the living and
- (15) the dead. God knows that my dwelling is kept moist with your rain, and that you are my benefactor. There are fresh kindnesses of yours that have not been covered up; and old acts which are not likely to be forgotten. And did I profess generosity, I should say I had learned it from the family of Sabīkah, whom God make numerous! But such a profession would require evidence, and since the evidence is not forthcoming, it is best to be silent about so doubtful a matter. Your generosity in time of need is like a mountain of gold, or a pillar of emerald,
- p. 45 but you are in the middle of a journey, and one drop after another exhausts the bottle, and one shell added to another makes a collar for the mount. Now he who has been offered a pearl and has accepted it is not to be excused for failing to return a string of false pearls when he has borrowed it.

- I offer you and your father greetings, which, if they could be seen, would sparkle, and if they could be smelt, would be fragrant; worthy to come first like
- (5) the *takbir*¹, though put at the end.

LETTER XV.

Written from Ma'arraḥ to ABU BAKR MUḤAMMAD son of AḤMAD AL-ṢĀBŪNĪ of Baghdad. [After 400 A. H.]

- Praise be to the God of heaven from the first breath of life to the last! And
- (10) God's favour be on the star that rose after the 'interval'², and the family that dwarfs all other families. God keep you as secure as is a word of three letters

¹ The ejaculation *allāhu akbar* in the Mohammedan prayer.

² The interval during which there were no prophets, between Christ and Mohammed.

from elision for the sake of abbreviation, and may He prolong your existence till the Anbarites one and all become ambergris such as is devoured by the flame. My desire for your society and that of the rest of my acquaintance at Baghdad is like the air which does not congeal, and the fire of the Persians which never went out. And my craving for a sight of you and them is like that of a ruined man for a present, or of a verse of poetry for a rhyme. God bring us together by some wise arrangement, making of us a 'sound,' not a 'broken' plural. My existence (15) since I parted from you has been like the last letter¹ of a proper name in the vocative, or the first of a diminutive which is not a pronoun. As for the desire I feel for Abu Aḥmad, it cannot be committed to writing; and were it to pass by the square of the Banū 'Attāb, what time the water is low, they would think the river had been overflowing. And I have submitted a matter to you in which I make you the prop of the business, not a 'prop' in the sense of the grammarians of Kūfah². And my reason for assigning it to you rather than to p. 46 any other of my acquaintance is that your name is the same as that of the Prophet who has the right of intercession, while your patronymic is the same as that of the first Caliph. And your surname Ṣābūnī may be analyzed *Ṣāb*, *wanī*, of which the former may be connected with *Ṣaub*, a shower of rain, and the latter³ means a pearl in Ibn Ḥajar's poem. Now the rain is admired when it produces no more than flowers; how much more when it produces pearls! And your house is in the street called Lotus Street, which is as truly the lotus of wisdom (5) in this world, as the lotus of the extreme end is in heaven; in the district of the oil-merchants, the oil 'which' almost gives light before fire touch it! Light upon light! God guides to His light whom He will!

LETTER XVI.

To ABU AḤMAD 'ABD AL-SALĀM⁴ son of AL-ḤUSAIN. [After 400 A. H.]

God prolong your existence till 'Urayya⁵ be removed, and till the Arabs speak (10) of the Pleiads without the diminutive form; and continue your prosperity until

¹ Dammah, properly 'closing.'

² What others call the pronoun of separation.

³ Quoted by Ibn Al-'Arābi, whose words are copied in L. A.

⁴ Koran XXIV. 35.

⁵ This person is mentioned in Saḥṭ al-Zand II. 101, where his full name is given as above, with the additional epithet *صاحب الدولة البصري*, and we are told that Abu 'l-'Alā saw much of him when he was in Baghdad; according to *ibid.* p. 112 comm., the son of Abu 'l-Fahm, known as Al-Ḳāḍi Al-Tanūkhī, had left with Abu 'l-'Alā a parcel of pre-Mohammedan poems belonging to the tribe Tanūkh; these Abu 'l-'Alā, on leaving Baghdad, had deposited with the person to whom this letter is addressed with injunction to restore them.

⁶ Reference obscure.

Irāb¹ turns one morning into a hawk or raven in the sky! Often as I write, my letters do not reach you, and through no fault of mine.

'How fair a mountain is mount Rayyān²! And nobler still he who dwells there! How sweet too those southern breezes that at times reach you from mount Rayyān!'

- (15) By Rayyān I mean your dwelling, wherever it may be; and by its inhabitant yourself, wherever you happen to be. And this is allowable in a quotation, just as I may say 'there is no hero like 'Amr³;' though the person whom I mean be not named 'Amr. And my grief at parting from you is like that of the turtle-dove, which brings pleasure to the hot listener, retired in a thickly-leaved tree from the heat of the summer, like a singer behind a curtain, or a great man hedged off from the frivolous conversation of the vulgar; with a collar on his neck almost burst by his sorrow; were he able, he would wrench it with his
- p. 47 hand off his neck, out of grief for the companion whom he has abandoned to distress, the comrade whom Noah sent out and left to perish, over whom the doves still mourn. Varied music does he chant in the courts, publishing on the branches the secrets of his hidden woe; if he strike up the note of Al-Gharīd⁴, he leaves the lover at death's door; and if he imitate a tune of Ma'bad⁵, he does so wondrous well. He summons mourners, such as invite to melancholy; fie upon
- (5) them, may they be bereaved, who trust not in the Eternal, whose father moaned for Wadd⁶, and who have inherited his lamenting from generation to generation. Truly they wail excessively, and yet their eyes shed no tears. I know not, and indeed it is a puzzle, whether it be singing or moaning. Every grey-green bird is like an orator, on moist branch, with a band of pitch on its beak, with fire kindled in its heart, and with its feet dipped in blood, with a collar of coals and a garment of cinder.

- Or rather my grief is like that of the she-dove, when she perceives the star of the waste, having dwelt in Yemen till some divine doom brought her to an
- (10) arid land that had neither dew nor showers; and when she looks at Canopus, it reminds her of companions she had known in the land of Yemen, none

¹ A spring in the desert (Yāqūt).

² The highest peak of Aja. The verses are by Jarīr.

³ Maydāni II. 202. The words are supposed to have been said by the wife of Luqmān about her first husband 'Amr son of Tikh.

⁴ Famous singer, whose real name was Abū Yazīd 'Abd al-Malik. He is frequently mentioned in the Aghāni, and there is a special account of him in II. 129 sqq.

⁵ Another famous singer.

⁶ An Arabic Adonis.

of whom had ever dealt unkindly with her; and feeling her throat oppressed with regrets she begins to cry and grieve, alleviating by the emission of these sounds the grief which she feels for the dead; thinking that there is no escape from the confinement of the cage, she wishes that God would change her into a mewling day-cat, or moaning night-wolf; that she might escape by such deliverance from some of her troubles.

My abode is Ma'arraḥ of Nu'mān, and civil strife¹ is rife among us; there are (15) spear-thrusts and bow-shots; and by the time summer comes swords will have been drawn as well. Had I been able, I should have used no wood but *markh* for firesticks, and inhabited no city but the capital. However, my camel's legs are tied; and God bless Labīd for saying—

'When Lubad² saw the rest of the vultures fly away, he raised his feathers like a poor man who has no arms.'

I offer you, my friends, and your children salutation such as would enliven the (20) waste wilderness, and stretch from Syria to Yemen. If it pass by men who are burning a fire of tamarisk, they will think the tamarisk must be aloes, so fragrant will it leave the air.

LETTER XVII.

p. 48

To his uncle ABU 'L-KĀSİM 'ALĪ son of MUḤAMMAD son of SABĪKAH, in reply to a letter concerning ABU 'L-ḤASAN MUḤAMMAD son of SA'ĪD son of SĪNĀN.

In the name of God, &c. Should I try to describe my longing for your society, I should have to compress and abridge, and hurt my desire by compression, and it would have no way of defending itself. This being so, it is (5) but meet and right for me to be satisfied with the inner thoughts, since they convey information with the most becoming expression. I pray God to grant us a meeting for mutual kindness which may relieve that pain of separation which wastes our bodies, and save our minds from the anxious expectation of news. On this day, the 7th of Rejeb the noiseless—God make a disturbed time help on your happiness, and render all the months noiseless so far as evil rumours about you are concerned!—your letter reached me, bearing date of the (10)

¹ Apparently the same sedition is described in Saḡt al-Zand II. 121.

² The last of Luḡmān's vultures. The verse does not occur in the poems of Labīd edited by Khālīdī and Huber, but is quoted by Ibn Ḳutaibah, p. 209.

20th Jumāda ii, written with generous fingers that are earnest in pursuit of good. And when I had grasped its meaning, I thanked God for the safety of your noble person, so assiduous in all your duties. And as for our friend —, my knowing that you do not doubt about his attachment renders it unnecessary for him to write me a letter.

- Now I am a man who have been well treated by my countrymen, and have been assigned a place which I do not deserve. Very likely then our friend (15) listened to what they said about me, and 'he who hears, opines'.¹ And albeit I am no niggard, still I am afraid he may be like the diver who puts a leather belt round his waist, and plunging into the waves of the sea, draws out a shell, the acquisition of which leaves him but a spark of life. And when he puts that shell into a merchant's hands, he finds therein an unpleasing thing, neither pearl nor glass. I hope, however, that he will find in me one who will be his benefactor and p. 49 not abuse him; and give him what will do him good. And if he be contented, good; but if he seek anything more, then 'he who seeks is sure to find'.² For myself, I will acquaint him with what I know, nor shall he have any annoyance in the search; but shall be like one who finds a shell on the seashore, in which if he can find anything of value, he can take it, whereas, if he find nothing, he can throw it away. And, taking into consideration his rank and your (5) desire to assist him, if the lost dove were to return to the ring-doves, they would not rejoice as much in the lost dove's return as I at your arrival. And the present which I send to you and the rest of our friends is a greeting whose bright light may burn, and whose rich perfume may spread like musk, so long as the sky reveals a sun, or day follows day.

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LETTER XVIII.

Letter to his uncle about an old dame who had been in his service and whom he summoned to Haleb to look after his house. Her brother having fallen ill, she wished to go to him; and ABU 'L-'ALĀ having fallen ill likewise, she explained that she was going to him, and that he was in need of her assistance.

- (5) In the name of God, &c. My desire to be with you yields in no way to that of a grown camel, which grew up in a valley full of *rabl*³, with green tufts of *salam*, rendering the cattle who feed upon it safe against worms, and after passing a year or more, regarded separation as a vain terror: when some morning the

¹ Maydāni II. 263.² Cf. Maydāni II. 279.³ The account of this plant quoted by Dozy is the following: 'odoriferous and oleaginous plant, which grows on the mountains, having an odour resembling that of mint.'

horsemen make a raid, and take the grown beasts, leaving the young; and bring our camel from Najd to 'Irāk, where she looks longingly for some cloud with lightning, and whines piteously among the beasts every morning and evening.

This letter, however, is not for the purpose of describing my personal feelings, but rather to tell you of a divine fatality. Sukainah, the culprit, was in service (10) with Mu'tadhir¹ in Ma'arraḥ, from whom she got some poor wage, and when the fruit-season came, she used to pick the grape-clusters from the *samurah*; Mu'tadhir, however, got free of her, 'the cautious one being assailed where he deems himself secure'; and she wanted to get back, little caring who was sick. And I shall not, please God, treat her unkindly,—God knows the truth of everything; and some one who is in the habit of speaking to her shall advise her to give up all other things and stick to the loom, as that is healthier and more profitable. And I assure you that had I the fever of Zaid Al-Khail², or the scab of 'Āmir son (15) of Al-Ṭufail³, I should not have applied for assistance to the young women, let alone an old woman of a past generation. And what should I want from that old dame? God have mercy upon her! I should have wanted to get a substitute for p. 51 her to fetch the *su'd* and *sidr*⁴ for the bath, and to light the fire, and look after the kettle, so bent is her back, I have been told, and so furrowed is her brow by the lapse of time. She is quite without strength in her body, and unable to utter a noun or a verb. It is certain that you can have called for her only to protect her from mischief, and to glance at her with your eyes. And the person who professes relationship to her can only have mentioned her as Sāmāh⁵ might mention the Banu Lu'ayy, or Mālik Ibn Raib⁶ the members of the tribe whom he (5)

¹ Not otherwise known.

² Maydāni II. 270.

³ An Arab chevalier, who came to pay homage to the Prophet, but caught fever at Medinah, and died almost immediately. Aghāni XVI. 47.

⁴ Chief of the Banu 'Āmir in the time of the Prophet; he came on a visit to the Prophet, but refused to accept Islam, and being cursed by the Prophet, died of a scab similar to that which attacks camels. Ibn Ishāq, pp. 939, 940.

⁵ Cyperus, and a sort of lotus, used for soap.

⁶ His story is told by Ibn Ishāq, p. 63. He was one of the sons of Lu'ayy, an ancestor of the Prophet; who being driven out of his home by his brother 'Āmir, whose eye he had knocked out, died on camel-back through the bite of a serpent. Some verses ascribed to him are quoted l. c. The meaning of the allusion would seem to be that any relationship claimed could only be of a sort that had been interrupted. See also *Christian Arabic Poets*, I. 355.

⁷ A robber-poet of the early days of the Umayyads. There is an account of him in the Aghāni XIX. 163. Sa'id son of Uthman when appointed governor of Khurasan by Mu'āwiyah offered him 500 dirhems a month on condition of his giving up brigandage; which offer he accepted; the tribe whom he deserted may mean his comrades. Cf. Jamharah, pp. 143-145.

- deserted. And I beg you, nay I conjure you not to let her see this letter lest she feel what ordinary mortals feel when they hear this sort of thing said about themselves. Had I been able I should have sent to your house the mother of king 'Amr¹ with her two threads of pearls, or Māriyah² of Ghassān with her two earrings, to be servants in your house; and they would have been an honour to it. By God's grace I am not ill, so your informants must have obtained some 'mysterious
- (10) information,' in order to learn about some illness that is to befall me—God keep me from that and other misfortunes hereafter as heretofore! Now I have indeed been ill many times, and never did attendance help me much except this time when I have been attended in such a way that if the sparrow were to perform such service to the kite, the latter would vow never to hunt a small bird again; or if the gazelle were to deal in such a way with the wolf, the wolf would never alarm a goat again. However, this slight indisposition is over; I might, if I liked, eat cock's³ flesh, only I shall abstain from it as any one should who prefers an
- (15) hour's health, not to speak of a year's, to the gratification of his appetite. I cannot, however, bring myself to call that indisposition an illness, nor can I reckon my getting over it a recovery. It was merely a trifle to be cured by the letting of some 100 drachms of blood; only my quack doctor forbade any bleeding on the fourth day; whereas the right course would have been to let the bad blood even after the seventh.
- (20) We have good news of Abu Ṭāhir, and hope there will be more to follow; and I send to you and your friends and retainers greetings more fragrant than flowers in spring, and more durable than the Pleiads.

p. 52

LETTER XIX.

To ABU MANṢŪR⁴, *Custodian of the Academy of Baghdad.*

In the name of God, &c. Of a truth I am fluttering more with anxiety than pleasure, so that those who would blame me say, 'Is thy passion for the "House of Learning" from folly or sound sense?'

¹ Hind, mother of 'Amr king of Ḥīrah. For her luxury see Aghāni IX. 182.

² Maydāni I. 192 has a proverb, 'take it even at the price of the two earrings of Māriyah.' 'The daughter of Zālim son of Wahb; she gave her two earrings to the Ka'bah, each having on it a pearl the size of a pigeon's egg, such as had never been seen before, and were quite priceless.'

³ A cock was apparently not ordinarily regarded as a delicacy; in Aghāni XVIII. 33, a story is told of a cock flying into a house and being killed and roasted, for which act the people in the house were afterwards reproached.

⁴ The poem in Saḥṭ al-Zand II. 121, to which allusion is made in this letter, is addressed to this person. The 'Academy' was Abu Naṣr Sābūr's house, Ibn Khall. I. 250.

'By heaven ¹ I know not, when I think of her, whether my morning prayer was two or eight inclinations.'

God prolong your existence so long as camel-rings are let loose in the morning, or night-journey be made in the dark. My desire for you and the rest of my friends is like that of a ring-dove, full of yearning with nothing to excite it, since she had a lofty home in Meccah, whither the hands of the wanton could not reach. And when fate's inevitable decree comes upon her, it brings her out of the sacred territory, and she is waylaid by a petulant lad, who cares not to avoid forbidden things, who breaks her wing with a stone, driving offspring and alliance from her mind. And he confines her in a secure dove-cote, whose inhabitants cannot escape; she is consoled by the light of dawn, but her pain (10) increases at midday; for when she sees the birds of the air at large, her head almost bursts with grief; for separation never came into her mind, until misfortune drove her from her nest.

'She ² has two chicks left to starve, and their nest is torn by the winds.

When they hear the wind blowing, they raise their heads; but their mother is already foredone by the appointed doom.'

Each time the raven says caw! I fancy it is a mounted messenger from Baghdad. (15) And I have wearied out both couriers and cawers, and the raven will not answer any questions, and I find the couriers know nothing of what I ask. And I am like Dabbah ³ son of Udd, who, whenever an 'Amr or Zaid appeared, asked about Sa'd and Su'aid; and when the figure came within sight, it was found to be neither Su'aid nor Sa'd. And if any person came bringing any information, I would say with the sister of 'Amr, 'a fragrant breeze clad in a garment of Kīṭr ⁴.'

I ask of God's mercy that we may be brought together again like the Pointers, p. 53 never to part—such a reunion as he who enjoys lacks nothing afterwards. And had not fate laid a bond upon me, a tedious journey would not have kept me from you; but as it is I am caught in the net, and might seem to be the person referred to by the 'camel-driver ⁵'—

'Like a bird, whose wing the archers have broken, which, lying on the kerb, calls its mate.'

Now my letters to Baghdad in past times were like the birds of a nest which (5)

¹ Verse of Dhu 'l-Rummah.

² Ḥamāsah, p. 577. Verses of Nuṣāib.

³ Maydānī I. 277. The story is told *ibid.* I. 163.

⁴ The proverb is 'scent and the smell of 'Amr' (*Jamharat al-amthāl*, p. 146). Kīṭr was in Bahrain.

⁵ i. e. the poet called Al-Rā'ī, *supra*, p. 17, n. 1. The verse is quoted in L. A. IV. 445.

- went off early in the morning, one after another, seeking the bounty of the Lord in the land; but they get no answer, so that they might seem to have strayed, to have been trapped like gazelles in the plain, and to have come to grief while seeking the right path. However, it is quite right that I should be put to trouble, and I find no fault if I have to put up with privation. Now I should mention that I composed a poem in your honour in the *Ṭawīl* metre, no. 1, rhyming in the hard palatal (*T'*) with two constant letters and one vowel; ending in an open
- (10) syllable with a *ṣilah* after the rhyming letter; and I know not whether this poem has been made away with, or whether it is in prison and cannot get forth. 'We' ask God's help against their conceits.'

'I chose² out from Na'mān a piece of arāk wood for Hind; but who is to bring it to her?'

- And were not too much complimenting tedious, and repetition a sort of reproach, I should have sent another copy by the bearer of this letter, who seems to be
- (15) a worthy wight. And I present such greetings as were they to pass by a heap of dust would make it resemble a heap of musk; were they to approach one of foul breath, you would think he had been perfumed; were they to go near a thirsty garden, they would be a substitute for rain. And if you charge me with anything you desire, I shall be mightily proud of your commands.

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LETTER XX.

To ABU 'L-ḤASAN 'ALĪ son of 'ABD AL-MUN'IM son of SINĀN, in reply to a letter of his about ABU 'L-ḤASAN MUḤAMMAD son of SA'ĪD son of SINĀN¹.

- My anxiety to see you is as permanent as time, which is not exhausted by months and years, and as often as one period elapses, another comes to take its
- (5) place. I pray God that we may meet in a way that will leave no room for parting; such as will resemble the union of the Pleiads in constancy, and in fragrance a garden that has enjoyed the spring rain. I received your letter, which was a joyous document to me, albeit the people of Ma'arraḥ will not relish what it contains. I inhaled from it a perfume like that of Indian ambergris, and

¹ Koran XII. 18.

² A verse quoted in *Al-'Iqd Al-farīd* III. 198 among verses the sound of which caused a hearer to fall down dead. It was recited by a singing girl at the court of Yazid son of Mu'awiyah. The author was Al-Murakkish Al-Akbar, *Aghāni* X. 128, where it is stated that very few could name the writer of the poem in which it occurred.

³ The person to whom Letter XL is directed.

Nejdian flowers after the rain. Its fragrance filled our nostrils, and put earrings on our ears. And I answered it on Sunday the 20th of Sha'bān as it is called in the new style, or 'Ādil as it was called in the old. May God make every new (10) moon bring you some great good luck! As for your cousin Abu 'l-Ḥasan, I have no control over him, my sword having become quite blunt. What can I do with a man who has been trained and practised in fighting with rebellious unbelievers, and gone through a course of law to enable him to beat down Satan under his feet?—a man who has fought with both men and spirits, and to whom God has given the victory over both these races? Nor can I have any prior obligation upon him which should compel him to obey when I order; I have indeed offered him counsel, and exhorted him, reminded him of the value of the reward, and (15) have urged him not to abandon us, and in the end had to repeat the words of the Koran, 'exhorting¹ the unbelievers is only unto error.' I might as well have been whispering to an ostrich, or floating an inflated skin up a mountain. The Kādi Abu Ja'far indeed exhorts, but does not constrain; and it is only in the presence of our Amīr Abu Naṣr² that our success is prolonged and not contracted. p. 55 And if my letter have reached him, I have hopes that it may have influenced him. Now this city has been given the same relation to Abu 'l-Ḥasan that Medinah bore to the Prophet, or the desert bears to the Bedouin; nor can we wonder at any such occurrence: God by His own wise decree placed His Prophet 'in³ a valley without vegetation.' And we often see a man of mark, who (5) has in his house women of high degree, setting above them a slave-girl in a striped gown, whom he purchased for a few coins. And so we may see a man whose grandfather on the father's side is a fair-haired descendant of 'Ali, while his maternal grandfather is a black idolater. And for some such reason 'Antarah⁴ was born black as a raven, and Nadbah produced Khufāf⁵. Were it not for the Kādi Abu Ja'far, his visit to this city would be like the vulture, who is a king and a chieftain among birds, and from whose limbs there issues a musk-like odour, (10) falling on a foul carcass. This is such an epithet as may be applied to Ma'arraḥ, which is the opposite of the Paradise described by the Koran, 'the Garden⁶ which is promised to those that fear, wherein are rivers of water that does not corrupt,' &c. Her very name 'mischief' is ominous; God save us from it! The water-

¹ Koran XIII. 15.

² The person to whom Letter XXIV is addressed; he held some post at the court of 'Azīz al-daulah.

³ Koran XIV. 40.

⁴ Aghāni VII. 148; his father was an Arab and his mother an Abyssinian.

⁵ An early poet, called one of the 'ravens' of the Arabs. His mother Nadbah was a black.

⁶ Koran XLVII. 16.

- courses are blocked up ; and the surface of its mould in summer is dry. It has no flowing water, and no rare trees can be planted there. When a slaughtered
- (15) beast is offered to the inhabitants by which they might hope to profit, you would fancy it had been dyed with indigo, yet still they gaze at it as longingly as at the new moon that marks the end of the fasting-month. And there comes a time when a goat there is as precious as Capricorn, and a ram of inferior breed as rare as the Ram of the heavens ; when the poor get up earlier to look for alms than a crow with two chicks ; when a man standing by a milk-seller fancies himself standing in Paradise asking for the water of life. And if he come not before dawn he must return empty, and his arrow be idly spent. And what think you of a place which gives not as much milk as a camel with dry udders produces ?
- (20) If Ibn Hinzābah¹ were to stop there, he could not find a parsnip. As for sweet juiced plants, and birds with 'painted plumage,' while the former would elsewhere be thrown away on the river-bank, they are here valued like molten gold ; and as for the latter, if one is wanted here for a sick man, it is as hard to find as a friend. And the broken eggshells of birds that swoop are accounted among us as valuable as precious pearls exhibited in the windows. Nay more, praise be to God, we have in the winter fruits in rich places, which like white belles, being ashamed to be seen
- (25) nude, remain all day covered with earth, and though growing in the wet, are more spotlessly white than the daughters of Caesar, being like maidens' breasts to look at, with locks that are green for black. They appear when *Spica* rises, until *Sa'd bula'*² appears, and they remain after that till the rising of the prior *Fargh'*³. Whoso eats them⁴ is sure to repent. I shall not eat them, nor advise any one else to do so.

- I have given my advice quite freely, and if Abu 'l-Ḥasan will accept my friendly counsel, it will not be long before he visits Ḥaleb. But 'only those who are obeyed can advise⁵.' And I and — and — offer your excellence and
- (5) your excellence's father greetings similar to those sent by Dhu 'l-Rummah to Mayyah, and Al-Ḥādirah⁶ to Sumayy. And we beg you to favour us with a communication containing a notification of whatever you may desire.

¹ A wealthy Vizier of Kāfūr, also a great naturalist, Ibn Khall. I. 139, F. W. I. 134.

² Three stars left of Aquarius, which rise the last night but one of January. *Spica* rises October 9.

³ March 9.

⁴ The 'fruit' to which the author refers would seem to be the mushroom. According to Arabic authors the spring is the best time for them.

⁵ Maydāni II. 204. The saying is ascribed to 'Alī.

⁶ Aghāni III. 81-84. Ḥādirah was a pre-Mohammedan poet, of little note.

LETTER XXI.

Answer to an epistle from ABU 'L-KĀSIM AL-MAGHRIBI¹. (10)

Whenever I feel on my last legs, I receive a fresh lease of life by receiving a salutation from you, which makes me feel like a garden on a hill-side, or a cloud full of lightning and rain. Were I satisfied with myself, I should do myself the honour of a visit to you, but I do not feel satisfied, and seem close to my last end. My nest is dispersed, and my will vacillating; I am reckoned among those of whom the Koran says, 'They' are a people whose time is gone by, (15) they have what they earned, and ye have what ye earned; and ye are not responsible for what they did.' But whether I be happy or unhappy, I shall always pray for you.

LETTER XXII.

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Answer to ABU MANṢŪR² MUḤAMMAD son of SHAKHTAKIN.

No apathy has diverted my mind from thinking of you; on the contrary, my heart is full of memories of you, and where there is union of hearts, distance of habitation does little harm. My desire to meet you is still as ever mature in vigour, infantile in power of growth and development. I pray the merciful God to grant us such fellowship as is followed by no further parting; and such as time can neither overcloud nor put an end to. I read what you told me about the camel-driver, and 'may God take vengeance on every treacherous camel-driver,' (5) even though this imprecation include the *mukāri* of Jarir, I mean in his line 'which imitates the *mukāri akhnasi*⁴,' meaning the camel's shadow, which seems to plunge into the ground.

I am grieved to hear of your risking yourself on the sea; surely you must have read in Ibn Al-A'rābi's *Anecdotes* the verses of Yahyā⁵ Ibn Ṭālib Al-Ḥanafī—

¹ See Introduction to Letter I.

² Koran II. 135.

³ The person to whom this letter is addressed would seem to be the same as the hero of Letter V; nothing seems to be known of him.

⁴ The rest of the verse is given in T. A. X. 313:

لحقت واصحابي على كل حسرة مروح تباري الاحشي المكاري

The line was of doubtful reading and interpretation; the reading recorded would mean 'a camel's shadow.' The other reading was 'Ahmasi,' which would be a tribal name.

⁵ Poet of the time of Al-Rashid; see Aghāni XX. 150.

- (10) 'When a caravan makes for Yemamah, passion calls you, and memories are roused in your heart. Surely it is better to drink among the sand-heaps foul water mixed with pure than to venture on the sea.'

And Damascus is the dearly loved bride of Syria, and the chief jewel of her necklet; and I may hope that the Mosque of Damascus has made you forget the Mosque of Al-Medinah, and that its water has consoled you for the water of the Tigris. I have indeed told you ere this that he who leaves Baghdad finds no place that will do instead, however well-watered it be; for there the old learning is still fresh, whereas sound knowledge is sickly elsewhere. Syria is more friendly (15) and less expensive.

'You' will find in every city, if you only settle there, friends and neighbours instead of those you have left.'

You tell me you have been trying to amuse yourself with copying, which is like what Al-A'sha says—

'One cup I drank for pleasure; and with another I tried to cure myself of the first.'

- p. 58 Were your pen a Ḥātim for generosity, it would stop; or an 'Amr for bravery, it would grow weary of its strokes. And I had hoped that you would find companions like those of Ghassān about whom Ḥassān² wrote—

'How good a company were they who entertained me one day at Jilliḳ in the olden time!'

- (5) Now whoso deals kindly with you, does so in the first place to himself, and pays the debt he owes himself. And I offer you greetings with smiling countenance and pervading perfume.

LETTER XXIII.

To some POET or other.

God preserve your good example to the poets and your poetry to the kings! You have long sucked the breast of learning, and led your camels in pursuit of rhymes; had poesy any child, you would have been he; and if any one could

¹ Ḥamāsah, p. 137. Verse of an unknown author.

² See his *Diwān*, ed. Tunis, p. 72. The verse is inaccurately cited, the word طراز, which Abu 'l-Alā substitutes for زمان; of the original, giving no meaning here, though it occurs a line lower down in the poem. The word Jilliḳ, according to Yāqūt, is a name for Damascus or its immediate vicinity.

inhabit a 'house' of verse, you would. And I am as desirous to see you as is a Bedouin woman to see her thatch¹, or a ring-dove to find her missing mate. (10) I have received your verses; the relations between us are not so strained as to require any nursing, nor is there any danger of their being broken off and requiring strings of verse to stitch them together again. And methinks, if you are able, you will have ready against the day of judgement some fine verses to win the good graces of the Guardians of Paradise. Now I have been informed by a good authority that you have taken to devotion, and become a strict adherent of religious discipline; having become as A'sha of Bakr says,

'Know² that your brother, whose nights with us at Jifār you know all about, (15)
has after a gay youth become a sage, and covered his white hairs with
a hood of wisdom.'

And my friend — would gladly, if he had been able, have put the enclosed dirhems with the rest of your receipts from him, and still more gladly have substituted dinars for them. And I offer you special greetings, &c. (20)

LETTER XXIV.

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To ABU NAṢR ṢADAQAḤ IBN YŪSUF AL-FALLĀḤĪ, when he endeavoured to obtain promotion for him at the Court of the AMIR 'AZĪZ³ AL-DAULAH. [? 410 A.H.]

Were I to offer your excellence the spring decked in its most precious treasures, I should think I had done less than was your due; what then can I say, when I am unable to offer a flower or to fish up an oyster, let alone (5) a pearl! However, 'the scout⁴ tells no lies to his employers,' and if a slave speak false to his master, he gets no good therefrom, but rather loses. He is stupid who does not remember yesterday, and ignorant who does not know himself. And so I say to my deceitful self, 'you⁵ did not please me when your teeth were white, how much less when they are gone?' It is useless to teach the old, as useless as to squeeze water out of a burning coal. If I lie, then may I forfeit all good!

¹ i. e. her hut. Verses by such women are quoted by Ibn 'Arabi Muḥāḍarāt II. 31.

² Quoted by Yāqūt, s.v. Jifār, which he locates in Nejd.

³ This prince, whose name occurs several times in these letters, is called 'Aziz al-mulk by Ibn Al-Athir; from the history of Aleppo, of which Freytag gives an abstract in the preface to his *Selecta ex historia Halebi*, we learn that he was Al-Ḥākim's governor there 407-411. In 411 he threw up his allegiance to Al-Ḥākim, and in 412 was murdered. For Ṣadaqaḥ see Index of Subjects, Yūsuf Ibn Ṣadaqaḥ, p. 152.

⁴ Maydāni II. 196.

⁵ Maydāni II. 5.

I did not retire from the world till I had both worked and played, and finding myself unfit for either, I had to be satisfied with *ennui*.

- (10) No ring-dove whose fondness is proverbial, which had been in a secure nest amid trees and branches, with a companion of her own species, with whom she used to communicate in song, dwelling in Na'mān rich in arāk, where she was secure from the fowler's toils,—which, betrayed by destiny, against which no (15) caution can avail, has left the sacred territory, in a love-fit, and been trapped by a treacherous lad, who puts her in a bird-cage, and keeps all food from her,—which, when out of the lattice of her nest, she sees the other doves on their morning flight, passes the time in pangs like those of death, asking her brother with her eyes what her chicks are doing, and receiving for answer that they are perishing, being hidden by the leaves from all eyes—

'Two chicks¹ that spread their wings at morning-time, whenever they hear the wind blow or the raven croak ;'

- p. 60 —no such dove, I say, desires a life of comfort more than I desire the Amir's presence ; however, fate has followed its ordinary course, and an obstacle has come between me and good ; 'the² choking in our throats prevents our speaking,' and the rattle keeps us from reciting poems. The fountain is of clear blue water, but none the less the sick man is choked by the draught.

'When³ Lubad saw that the vultures had all fled, he raised his feathers like a poor man, who has no arms.'

- (5) 'Arise Lubad !' Nay, nay, eternity prevents it !

The day I received your letter containing so many undeserved compliments, the ravens all came to wish me good luck with treble and decuple caws ; if any of them made a friend of me, I would present him, if he wanted, with anklets for his legs and a collar for his neck ; and would smear his wings with musk and ambergris, and clothe him with embroidery and Yemen work, albeit he struts already in the fairest of the garments of youth.

- (10) Ah, raven ! Misfortune hereafter be for others, not for thee ! If God please, I shall give thee such food as shall please thee most, a tax to be paid by me not every year, but every day.

Your dear letter might have been a box of ointment, diffusing fresh perfume ; methought I had been visited by a Nejdian garden, watered by the moon's stations in Leo, till its soil grew fat, and fragrance spread from it—and its

¹ Verse of Šakhr Al-Ghayy in Kosegarten's *Dīwān* of Hudhail, p. 7.

² Maydāni I. 159.

³ *Supra*, p. 55.

⁴ Supposed to have been said by Luḡmān to Lubad when the latter was dying. Maydāni I. 363.

buphthalmum showed to the eye like little dinars fresh from the mint, and it put on ornaments of agate-like anemones, and with the water playing in it, it, (15) although earth, looked like heaven, with flowers for stars, and dew distilling from the trees like tears. And I besought the messenger to favour me by leaving it with me, that I might enjoy therefrom something like your protecting cloud in a hot month; and be like one seated near a garden, who, even though he cannot see the beautiful view, still can inhale the fragrant odour.

Now the populace, seeing me during the early days of my youth enjoy the companionship of ancient lore, called me a scholar, very wrongly; and others, seeing me forced to practise resignation, called me an ascetic, albeit I am keen in (20) the pursuit of worldly things. And people talked more and more about me, till I grew afraid I might become one of those ignorant folk about whom the tradition says, *God will¹ not take away knowledge by removing it from men's breasts, but rather by slaying the learned, so that, no learned man being left, the people will take ignorant ones for their chiefs, who will give judgement, when asked, without knowledge, going astray, and leading others astray after them.* So I decided to stick to my house like a man who has been dead three or four days; and (25) I became the victim of an unmentionable complaint, such as prevented my attending mosque on Friday, albeit the Koran says, 'O ye² that believe, when ye are summoned to prayer on Friday, hasten to the mention of God!' Now I have only mentioned this in order that my lord 'Aziz al-daulah may know that p. 61 I am kept away from his service by a disease which prevents my performing even my religious duties; and that one man may be very famous, while it is another who is really eminent. Many a thorny bush is there with but scanty shade and bitter fruit, called *samurah*, and surnamed 'mother of demons,' that is famed in the remotest regions, while other fruitful trees are not known, when called to mind. Names do not prove any real superiority in their subjects; many a hideous (5) ill-smelling black is called Camphor or Amber; many an ugly creature has the name 'New Moon,' or 'Full Moon.' How is it possible for me to be learned when I am blind,—a misfortune 'which it is sufficient to name³?' Then I was brought up in a city which contains no scholars, and the vine cannot grow without trellis-work to cling to. Nor am I rich—and how can 'camel-driving be done without a camel⁴,' or 'the bow be twanged unless it first be strung⁵?' And if you have ever heard of a night-traveller laying hands on Canopus, or of the earth bringing forth embroidery and silk, or a cloud raining wine and spice, you are (10)

¹ This tradition is quoted in the Tibyān of Jāhiz I. 102; cf. Al-'Ikd Al-farid I. 154.

² Koran LXII. 9.

³ Maydāni I. 60.

⁴ Maydāni II. 111.

⁵ Maydāni II. 303.

quite able to set such fabrications right. It is enough for the earth to produce sweet and bitter herbs; for the cloud that rises in the sky to give water to the thirsty. Our night-journey has now been protracted until dawn: I deeply regret the loss of this post; but how is the dove to get at the star which guides in the desert, or he that sleeps by the thorn-bush to get next morning to the Pointer? If a man be not fit to associate with his equals, how can he dare to meet the great lords?

- (15) 'Truly¹ thou hadst been heard hadst thou called a living being; but that which thou callest has no life.'

Can I hope for a recompense from God, being like the victims of Badr, hearing, but unable to answer? To obtain such honours many a scholar has kept wakeful nights; the ocean is before us, but the swimmers are nowhere: and the lightning flashes, but where is the gazer? The tribe is from home; 'ah, would² that I had been with them that I might have gained a mighty prize!'

- Now our prince 'Aziz al-daulah can indeed help a broken limb by binding, but
(20) how can he order a dead man to be raised from the grave? Had I been free from this defect, I should have been afraid of being found out and disgraced, for the description that has been given of me is not correct. And our prince 'Aziz al-daulah is unlike other princes and lords: the word *fāris* applies to him in many senses: he *lacerates* his rivals like a lion, he *rides* on a stately charger, and he is *sagacious* as well: free from pride and vainglory. Now a man is ashamed
(25) before his peers, how much more before the prince and hero of the age! Think how crestfallen would be the girl said to be white, graceful as a water-lily, discreet, prudent, an ornament when unadorned to the assembly, with eyes of clear colour
p. 62 and swan-like neck,—who, when the wedding-day comes, is discovered to be quite the reverse, her white colour being a horrid black, and her gracefulness deformity, her pure eyes being of different colours and grey and livid, and her swan-like neck dumpy; and is besides a fool and a gossip, no possible object of affection! Besides the proverb says, 'It³ is better to hear of Mu'aīdi than to see him.'

- I shall not be satisfied with offering you the greeting of Nuṣaib⁴, who was content to salute ten times at morn and ten at night. I send his highness the
(5) prince the greeting of a grateful and loving servant, a greeting which joins sunrise

¹ Aghāni XIII. 153; verse of Abd Al-Raḥmān B. Al-Ḥakam.

² Koran IV. 75.

³ Maydāni I. 108.

⁴ There were two poets of this name, about both of whom there is some information in the Aghāni; but the verse referred to is by ʿKais Ibn Dhuraiḥ, Aghāni VIII. 124.

to sunset, and continues the attack with the rise of Hesperus till the time when the garments of night are rent; a greeting which, passing by the dusty plain, renders it fragrant as Indian perfume.

LETTER XXV.

To the KĀDĪ ABU 'L-ṬAYYIB ṬĀHIR son of 'ABDALLAH¹, resident in Baghdad. (10)
The letter was never finished so as to reach its destination.

In the name of God, &c. God prolong the life of the Kādi, the rescuer of the helpless, and the successor of Al-Shāfi'i as long as 'the option of the sitting²' is permissible, and the restraint of bankrupts requisite; and preserve your power so long as the grammarians chatter about 'Amr and Zaid, and *ruwaid* remains a diminutive. This letter is from the inhabitant of the city called after Nu'mān, written on the 9th of Ramaḍān—God make all your months proud with pros- (15)
 perity, and the earth bright and pure by the continuance of your days! Now my news at the commencement are the name of the foot³ which is free from contraction, and my tongue moves as ceaselessly in gratitude to you as if it were the 'perfect' metre. Praise be to God so long as the act of purchase requires a contract, or whelp is born to lion; and God be gracious to Mohammed and his family till the order of pilgrimage can dispense with the circuit, or a poem can do p. 63
 without a rhyme. And my desire for your noble presence is like that of a dove caged in Yemamah, caught on a rainy day, and thrown into prison, after its Nejdian home; a dove that is neither ransomed nor set free, which has left its comrades never to return, and whenever morn arises, sounds its rhyme.

I pray God to facilitate my journey to your happy hall on some surefooted beast with but one foal, with eyes like caves, with broad sides rare as the 'desert (5)
 eagle,' or another creature⁴, painted with pitch, albeit for no disease, that has never set foot on desert; that is not affected by want of pasture, and knows nothing of four days without water or five; and why indeed should it fear thirst, when it only gallops on the water?

And I would have you know that I love you as truly as if I had been commanded to, with love that has no time limit like a loan, in which I am as firm as is the believer in his faith, and of which I am as proud as is a string of its pearls.

¹ An account of this person is given by Ibn Khallikan I. 292-294.

² The right of annulling a contract so long as the parties have not left the room in which it was made. See Minhaj al-Ṭalibin, ed. Berg, I. 369.

³ i. e. 'sound.'

⁴ i. e. 'a ship.' Cf. S. Z. I. 160.

- (10) And on this day, the —th of —, I received a visit from your friend Abu Sa'īd of Khwārizm, on his way to God's sacred house; God help him to obtain his desires, and deliver him from calamity and disaster! And he gave me such news of your health as will give pleasure to every Moslem, learned or unlearned; and he seemed to be so weighted with your benefits that he had neither thought nor fancy for ought but you. And he informed me that he had a letter with him
- (15) graced and adorned by your fingers, but that the Bedouins had seized it, and carried it off with the rest of his papers. Fine fellows! Did they think its lines necklets, or its rhetorical jewels actual ones? Or did some sweet perfume of ambergris or musk get wafted to them from it, so that they supposed it an image of perfume made out of fresh Indian herbs? Had they known what it was, they would have paid it reverence and respect; and if eloquence remain among them,
- (20) they would have covered it with a shield!

p. 64

LETTER XXVI.

Part of the answer to a set of questions recorded by 'URĀM¹.

- Praise to God, &c. Bravo, owner of the seventh of the arrows, the most advantageous of the lot to the miser, and the arrow which can best dispense with the liberal. Auspicious parallels be drawn to thee, not the likeness of 'Adī² and Bujair! You, who bring me a branch of the tree of which bows are made, know that my time for archery is gone by! Have you not heard (God prolong your
- (5) power!) that I have cast my learning 'after Kulaib,' and tied it to a lizard's ear! It has taken 'the road of 'Unḡulain³,' and been divided between two swords. I have parted from it as the nestling parts from the *zan*-tree, or the poet of Bakr⁴ with the sister of Hizzān.

'Who⁵, O face of love, has brought thee to youths and maids with loose

¹ The name 'Urām occurs as that of a geographer, who wrote a book on the names of the hills of the Tihamah, but as the editor of this book died in 368, he must be put earlier. I'rbahā, however, the words mean 'which it is unnecessary to record' (cf. S. Z. I. 107).

² I'rbahāh, p. 254. Both were killed. For Kulaib see ibid. 421.

³ Maylānī I. 30. Said to be a road from Yamamah to Baṣrah. The source of the proverb is a line of Farasdaq.

⁴ Al A'ala. Aghānī VIII. 83: 'Al-A'sha married a woman of 'Anazah, and, to go further, of Hizzān, but, not liking her, he divorced her.'

⁵ Verses of Al-Ḥuṣay'ah, quoted by Yāqūt IV. 554, but also in the selection of the author's poems in Diwān Mukhtārāt Al-Shu'ara, p. 126. The verses are, as frequently, carelessly cited.

tresses, lying on the top of Dhū Ṭuwālah¹, who came to us after the most vigilant of the dogs had slept, and every burner of fire had let it be quenched?’

Were you to ask one of the young men, God bless you, about this, you might (10) obtain a spark out of your firesticks. The discussion of it is skim milk, and stale *half*². Bint Al-Anwur and the camel-colt Malikh are weary thereof, and it is disgraceful for the full-grown horse³ to be compared to a colt. For other goals than this Badhwah was trained and Kaṭīb ran. And it is a token of nobility not to answer, because, when a saying is not correct, silence is the best answer to it; and, if I have to answer, ‘your brother⁴ is forced to fight, and is no fighting man.’ In that case I am like one who rides the back of a strong camel, and meets (15) a traveller from Sahm⁵, and asks him about Ṭā’if, and the ‘wine-pitchers,’ and Ibn Bujrah, and Ḥabīb Ibn ‘Amr; and ‘many⁶ a word says leave me alone! God is my succour against your conceits!’ He who interposes with this speech is burnt with the fire of envy, and the envious man is like a prattler, and ‘the prattler is like one who gathers wood at night’, who cannot be sure but that he will lay hold on a viper, and whoso lays hold on that, is face to face with death, and whoso is face to face with death is like yesterday when it is gone. This is to show the seeker p. 65 after truth that replies are of three kinds, indirect, direct, and one of which mankind are incapable; and that interrupters are of three sorts, the correcting, the captious, and the vexatious; and that poets are of three sorts, those who write correctly, those who write incorrectly, and those who use licence; and that licences are of three sorts, in accordance with analogy, in accordance with usage, and in (5) accordance with neither.

¹ Name of a place in Burkan, where there was a well (Yāḳūt, l. c.). Burkan was a place in Bahrain.

² ‘The name of a plant.’ The reading of the Beirut edition would mean stale milk.

³ Maydāni II. 234. The names are given in the T. A. as belonging to famous animals.

⁴ Maydāni II. 277. There is a proverb ‘sometimes silence is an answer,’ *ibid.* I. 247.

⁵ Why the Sahmites are particularized is not plain. They were a Hudhalite tribe; perhaps, therefore, it would be natural to ask one of them for the interpretation of passages in Hudhalite poems. Ibn Bujrah, as he is rightly written in the Beirut edition, was a wine-dealer mentioned in a poem by Abu Dhū’aib, Aghāni VI. 60; the word used in the text for ‘wine-pitcher’ occurs in that poem also. The Beirut editor states that Ḥabīb Ibn ‘Amr was, like Ibn Bujrah, a wine-merchant. More probably he is the person whose story is told in the second part of the Dīwān of Hudhail (Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, p. 60). Stories about the Sahmites are told by Azrakī, p. 262, and in Aghāni XVI. 65.

⁶ Maydāni I. 248.

⁷ Maydāni II. 266.

LETTER XXVII.

Part of the answer to a letter from a man named ABU 'L-HUSAIN¹ AḤMAD son of 'UTHMĀN AL-NUKTI of Baṣrah.

Joy is abiding, albeit the vision is transient; and love controls the breast,
(10) albeit the dwelling is in ruins.

'How couldst thou find thy way to give greeting to the ruins in Al-Ghamr²,
altered by the passing ages?'

Welcome to your letter, so long as consonant combines with vowel, and times and places vary! Although as God says, 'And³ he bethought him after a space—I will tell you the interpretation thereof, so send me.' Truly you have shone both in prose and verse, praise be to God most High, 'who⁴ adds to His creation what
(15) He pleases, verily God is all-powerful!' Are you Jarīr, most erotic of poets? or Farazdaq? Good luck to you, if you be he⁵! Your words excite in me the feelings which the dove roused in Ḥumaid⁶, or the lion roused in Abu Zubaid⁷. Would I knew who it is within you who speaks in verse, a rebellious Jinn⁸, or an
p. 66 angel of special devotion? I cannot make it out; your mind houses the Koran so that no 'Ifrit⁹ can enter there; and the angels have never produced such verses as yours. Indeed, I know of no one who has recorded any verses composed by an angel, whereas some well-known lines are stated to have been composed by the Jinn. For example, many historians assert that the Jinn bewailed Omar son of Al-Khaṭṭāb, and composed this verse,

(5) 'Thou hast accomplished some things, and left behind mischiefs that have not yet burst their buds.'

They state that these lines were heard before the murder of Omar, although in the

¹ Not apparently otherwise known.

² Verse of Kaṭāmi, Jamharah, p. 151. Al-Ghamr is the name of many places.

³ Koran XII. 45.

⁴ Koran XXXV. 1.

⁵ Abu Firās was the kunyah (parental name) of Farazdaq; there was a later Abu Firās, who belonged to the circle of Saif al-daulah, but the context renders it improbable that the reference is to him.

⁶ Ḥumaid Ibn Thaur, contemporary of Omar I. See his verses, Kāmil (Eg.) II. 85.

⁷ A poet of the early Umayyad period; see Aghāni XI. 32 sqq., where his descriptions of the lion are quoted at length.

⁸ The question of the inspiration of poets by the Jinn is handled at length in the introduction to the Jamharah of Abu Zaid. For a more critical account of the doctrine, see I. Goldziher's Abhandlungen zur Arabischen Philologie, first essay.

⁹ Evil spirit.

Ḥamāsah¹ they are ascribed to Al-Shammākh². And Ibn Kṭaibah³ in his work on the strange words occurring in the Traditions of the Prophet and his Companions, as well as the Prophet's biographers, records the tradition that Sa'd Ibn 'Uḇādah, having turned towards the dust-heap of certain persons, and committed a nuisance, fell down dead, whereupon the Jinn said,

'We have slain the chief of the Khazraj, Sa'd son of 'Uḇādah; we shot two (10) arrows at him, nor did we miss his heart'.

And there are many other verses ascribed to the Jinn, more than can be enumerated; you may indeed quote in favour of the other supposition the words of the Prophet to Ḥassān Ibn Thābit⁴, when he bade him reply to the poets of the Kuraish 'the Holy Spirit is with thee;' and it might be alleged that Ḥassān and other speakers of truth were assisted in their work by the angels.

Bravo, sir! You can write prose without stumbling; and your thoughts in (15) verse are like flying flames; and you can satirize without bathos! When you do so, people think they hear Himyān⁵, or Al-Zafayān⁶! You have presented me with fragrant gardens, over the homes whereof the hearts will always linger;—poems in the Ṭawīl metre of surpassing rhythm; in the Kāmil of *perfect* beauty; in the Wāfir, refreshing to the traveller! As an old writer says,

'Through⁷ them the horse-cloths are shaken off while the cock is still sleeping, and the girths of the horses are fastened, and the horses are set free.'

I hope you will not be offended by what I have said about the Jinn, remembering the popular belief among the Arabs that every poet has a Jinn who speaks (20) through his mouth; and doubtless, too, you have repeated the Rejez verses:

'Although I be young, and men's eyes turn from me, my demon is the prince of the Jinn, who takes me through all the paths of poetry'.

¹ Ḥamāsah, p. 488; Aghāni VIII. 104.

² A poet who lived at the commencement of Islam.

³ Ob. 276.

⁴ These verses are also quoted by Ibn Kṭaibah, Kitāb al-Ma'ārif, p. 87; also in the notice of Sa'd in Usd al-Ghabah.

⁵ Quoted in the Kāmil of Al-Mubarrad (Wr.), p. 778, Eg. II. 314.

⁶ Himyān Ibn Kuḥāfah Al-Sa'di is mentioned by the T. A. as a writer of Rejez, and is occasionally cited in the anthologies.

⁷ The T. A. mentions him as a writer of Rejez.

⁸ A verse of Al-A'sha closely resembling this is quoted in Aghāni VII. 81:

به تعقد الأجمال في كل منزل ♦ وتعقد اطراف للجمال وتطلق

⁹ Quoted by Rāghib Al-Ispahāni, Muḥāḍarāt II. 370.

Indeed, so emphatically do they hold this, that they have given these demons names to know them by: Al-A'sha says¹,

- (25) 'I called my friend Miṣḥal, and they called Jihinnām against him, saying,
Away with the accursed sprite!'

And they suppose Miṣḥal to have been the 'demon' of Al-A'sha, and tell many p. 67 traditions about him, which you have doubtless read.

I was also told by your friend Abu 'l-Kāsim Al-Mubārak Ibn 'Abd Al-'Azīz after Abu 'Abdallah Ibn Khālūyah² after Ibn Duraid a tradition to the following effect. Abu Bakr Ibn Duraid³ informed his friends that he had seen in a dream some one who said to him, 'Why do you write nothing in praise of wine?' He answered, 'What! has Abu Nuwās⁴ left me anything to say?' The apparition answered, 'Your verses are better than his in this passage:'

- (5) 'Oh the red before mixture, yellow after it, who comest in clothes of narcissus and anemone! Pure thou dost counterfeit the face of beauty, and when subjected to the mixing thou putttest on love's colour!'

Abu Bakr asked the apparition who he was: he replied, 'Your demon.' He gave his name when asked as Abu Zājiyah, and mentioned further that he resided in Mauṣil. The Jinn are further said to have very long lives, the same individual (10) having encountered both Noah and the Prophet. And if these poetic Jinn transmigrate from man to man, it is possible that Nābighah's⁵ demon or Imru 'ul-Kais's demon may have taken up his abode with you. Such a thing would be neither new nor strange. But, as you have passed by Mauṣil in your travels, it seems most probable to me that Abu Zājiyah himself has attached himself to you, out of a desire for your society; for you will have reminded him of his Azdite friend⁶. Doubtless this demon will have turned Moslem, since otherwise he would not care

¹ In the Aghāni VIII. 77, Jihinnām is given as the name of a poet who satirized Al-A'sha. The verse itself is quoted in T. A. VIII. 235, where it is stated that Jihinnām was a soubriquet of 'Amr Ibn Kaṭān; but *ibid.* VII. 372, where it is also quoted, the same explanation is given as is given here. A Miṣḥal son of Shaiṭān is mentioned in the Ḥamāsah. See also Aghāni VIII. 101.

² His name was Abu Abdallah Ḥusain Ibn Aḥmad, *ob.* 370.

³ This story is told with some variations by Ibn Khallikan I. 631; Abu Nājiyah (as it is there written) according to one account was the name of a Syrian poet who recited these verses to the critic Ibn Duraid, who made certain animadversions on them; according to another they were verses which he said Satan had revealed to him during the night. Ibn Duraid was a famous poet and grammarian, the author of a great number of works; he lived 223-321. He was greatly attached to liquors.

⁴ *Ob.* 195.

⁵ Name of two famous poets, Al-Ja'di and Al-Dhubyani respectively.

⁶ Ibn Duraid.

for the society of a Commentator on the Koran, an authority on the language of the Prophet, and a man who has professed chastity and orthodoxy from the cradle (15) till he has begun to think of the 'third leg.' Moreover, the Prophet said that no man was free from a guardian demon. 'Not even thou, O Prophet of God?' they asked him. 'Not even I,' he answered, 'only I have been helped, and he has turned Moslem.' Indeed your demon could scarcely fail to be converted when you have written on the *Sūra Ikhlaṣ*¹ only a whole book, of which our good friend Abu Bakr Al-Mu'addib possesses a copy.

I will describe the nature of your compositions in accordance with a logical division. Do you deliberately assign particular metres to particular subjects, or do (20) you write without premeditation? If you compose as did the early Arabs by the light of nature, knowing nothing of the doctrine of the *taujiḥ* and the *ishbā'*, how can you have managed to escape error, so as nowhere to shorten the last syllable of the second foot? And yet the greatest of the poets are guilty of this licence,—for instance, most of the rhapsodies give verses of Imru 'ul-Ḳais the following form²,

'Many³ a fair day have they given thee, best of all the day in Dārat Juljul.'

And the following,

(25)

'Time⁴ is truly nights and days; it continues in no fixed state.'

And the verse of Ḥātim Al-Ṭā'i,

p. 68

'When⁵ they travel they find no tent to house in; and wear no clothing but a striped garment and a fur.'

Ibn Al-A'rābi quotes the following,

'Truly Ḥassān Abu Arbad has claws which rise to the sky while he stands still.'

But say you kept clear of the licence *kaff*, and that your idiosyncrasy did not (5) lead you to it, as was the case with many of the ancient writers in whose poems it is not found—yet how did you escape the contraction of the penultima of the second foot (*ḳabḳ*), which is a licence closely allied to *kaff*? To do this by nature would indeed show delicate perception! For very few pre-Mohammedan poems in the *Ṭawīl* metre are free from it. Imru 'ul-Ḳais commits it very often,

¹ *Sūra CXII.*

² Throughout this passage translation is of little use, since the figures with which the author is dealing cannot be represented in another language. The translation which has been given is therefore intended for those who can compare the original.

³ See his *Mu'allakah*.

⁴ *Diwān*, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 124.

⁵ Not in his *Diwān*.

and Nābighah, Zuhair, and A'sha of Kais still more frequently than the 'king-errant'.¹ Nābighah says,

'Fair² of face, with chaste waist-bands, greeted with odoriferous herbs on Palm-Sundays.'

And in the same poem,

'You³ may see them behind the people looking out of the backs of their eyes, like old men seated in hare-skins.'

Al-A'sha says,

(15) 'Didst⁴ thou not hear the teaching of Mohammed, God's prophet, when he taught and testified?'

Zuhair says,

'Men⁵ ran after them to overtake them, yet did they not overtake them, albeit they neither slackened nor incurred blame.'

Many besides of the later poets employ this licence, e.g. Ibn Aus⁶,

'Flowers have covered thee, deep red, pure white, and bright blue.'

(20) And Al-Walīd⁷,

'I beheld 'Irāk thwart me, so time's will forced me to go to Syria.'

How, too, can you have avoided procatalexis (*kharm*) which poets ancient and modern have agreed to countenance? You know how careful Mutanabbi was about every verse he produced; he would alter verses after they had been published, and avoid licences even when the metre suggested them. Nevertheless, he admits

(25) *kharm* in two places, one in the Ṭawīl metre,

'God bring⁸ no grief to our prince! Still I will bear a portion of his troubles.'

p. 69 The other in Wāfir,

'Even⁹ though Ṭay' be base —.'

And how is it that none of those irregularities occur in the first halves of your Ṭawīl verses which occur in those of other poets? There is a verse ascribed to Nābighah,

¹ Name for Imru 'ul-Kais.

² *Diwān*, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 3; the first two words are, by a slip of the author's memory, taken from a similar line in the *Diwān* of Hudhail (p. 80) and substituted for the original.

³ This verse also is inaccurately cited.

⁴ Ibn Ishāq, p. 256.

⁵ *Diwān*, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 91.

⁶ i. e. Abu Tammām, p. 427 (altered).

⁷ i. e. Buḥtūrī I. 60.

⁸ Mutanabbi, ed. Dieterici, p. 467.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 696.

'God reward¹ 'Abs, 'Abs of the family of Baghīd, with the recompense of the (5)
barking dogs—and indeed he has done so !'

And Abu² Zaid quotes from 'Abd ẖais son of Khufāf Al-Burjūmī,

'When I came up with them I said, Ho, Tamīm ; but where is Tamīm with
reference to Ahwad ?'

And 'Āmir son of Juwain wrote,

'Are³ those camels that are marching Hind's escort ? Truly my heart is (10)
grieved by its forlorn plight. Seest thou not how many a herd of camels
from Malikāt and from Ṣa'īd is in the hamlet ?'

And when you bethought yourself of composing verses in the Wāfir or Kāmil
metres, your innate talent kept you from defacing the former of them by the faults
called *naḳṣ* and '*aḳl*', and the latter by the faults called *ḳhasl* and *wāḳṣ*. And
indeed the fault called '*aḳl*' is not found in genuine poems of the Arabs. Sa'īd⁴
son of Mas'adah declared that he had never heard a case, but a verse of Zuhair,
assigned by some to his son Ka'b, is quoted,

'And my restraining myself from harming my neighbours, and preserving my (15)
affection towards my near brother,'

where there is a case of '*aḳl*' if the *ḳḥ* of '*aḳḥi*' be single. However, Ibn Al-Kalbi
asserted that there were Arabs who said '*aḳḥḥḥ*', and if the author of the verse wrote
in this dialect, as is possible, this will not be a case of '*aḳl*'. The fault called *naḳṣ*
is almost as rare, though two verses are quoted as illustrations of it, which, how-
ever, admit of another explanation. One of them is ascribed to Surāḳah Al-
Bārīḳi⁵, but by others to 'Ubaid Allah son of ẖais Al-Ruḳayyāt. Al-Mukhtār son (20)
of Abu 'Ubaid had taken the poet prisoner; the poet, though well aware that
Mukhtār was an impostor, nevertheless circulated a story in the army that he had
seen men on white horses fighting on Mukhtār's side, that they had taken him
prisoner, and that he had not seen them afterwards. This story Mukhtār was
very ready to accept, and for the sake of it he ordered the poet to be set free.
When the poet had got out of Mukhtār's range, he said,

¹ See *Khizānat al-adab* I. 139. Baghīd was the name of a division of ẖais.

² *Nawādir* of Abu Zaid, p. 114.

³ Yāḳūt IV. 636 with important differences of reading. The irregularity in the second
of these verses was making the first half end with *Malikātin*, which is avoided in Yāḳūt's
reading *Malikāninā*.

⁴ Celebrated grammarian, better known as Al-Akhfash, ob. 221.

⁵ This story with the following verses is told by the historian Ṭabari II. 2, 665.

- (25) 'Tell Abu Ishāk that the white horses I saw were pure black ; in fact I made my eye see what it saw not. We both of us have some idea of imposture.'

p. 70 Abu Ishāk was Mukhtār's paternal name ; Sa'id son of Mas'adah recited the verse with the ordinary form *tarayāhu*, giving a case of *naḳṣ*. But he did not deny that the poet might have restored the original form of the word, *tar'ayāhu*, which occurs in another verse¹ :

'And whoso lives long will see and hear.'

- (5) The other verse in which *naḳṣ* occurs is by Al-Mughīrah son of Ḥabna² :

'Tis as if the pieces of egg-pulp therein were coverlets tinted with powdered saffron.'

Now the ordinary form is *ghirḳi'un*, as in the verse of Aus son of Ḥajar³ :

'Who would give thee that inner envelope which is beneath her shell, like the *ghirḳi*' of the egg covered by the shell above?'

If the verse be scanned in this way, Mughīrah will have employed the licence called *naḳṣ* ; it is, however, possible that he may have added a *y* by a poetical licence which gives such forms as *tawābil* for *tawābil*, and *sawā'id* for *sawā'id*. As

- (10) the poet of Taghlib⁴ says,

'And wings that spread in all directions like arrows flying.'

However, to tell the truth, you are not to be greatly praised for avoiding these two forms of *siḥāf*, just as 'Amr son of Kulthūm did not win much praise for avoiding them in his verse,

'Come⁵ stir up thy cup and give me a drink,'

- (15) nor Nābighah for the verse,

'Does⁶ Ḳaṭām think of giving up her dallying?'

nor Abu Dhu'aib for the line,

'By thy beauty, O wounded heart!'

nor Dhu 'l-Rummah for the line,

- (20) 'Does the house of Mayyah cause thy tears to flow, and do the ruins wake up thy love?'

nor any other of the poets, ancient or modern. I have only said this in order to show that I am not addressing you any compliments proceeding from an insincere

¹ Quoted by Abu Zaid, Nawādir, p. 185 ; our text is inaccurate.

² A poet of the Umayyad age, Aghāni XI. 162.

³ Probably 'Amr son of Kulthūm.

⁴ Dīwān, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 27.

⁵ A Jāhili poet.

⁶ In his Mu'allakah, v. 1.

breast, as is the custom of the vulgar in praising verse-writers; the Prophet said, 'Frivolity and I have nothing in common;' and Ibn Aḥmar says¹,

'Say not "what you tell us is vain;" grey hairs and purblindness have left me no vanity.'

'Vanity' in this place means falsehood. No; but you are to be praised for avoiding (25) those two forms of *procatalexis* into which poets ordinarily fall, and which they employ both in feet that are sound and that are syncopated, such, for example, as p. 71 a verse written by one of the idolaters after the Prophet's mission had been delivered,

'No Moslem I while I remain alive; neither is my creed that of the Moslems.' Or of Hudbah²,

'I am of Qudā'ah; I betray whoso betrays them, but they may be sure of me.' (5)

As for your avoiding *procatalexis* in verses that have suffered 'aḳl, that need not be admired, as the combination of the two has regularly been avoided by both ancient and modern poets alike; and your conduct in avoiding *khasl* and *wakṣ* in the first and second forms of Kāmil is on a par with your avoiding 'aḳl and *nakṣ*. Albeit the combination of the former in Kāmil is more common than that of the latter in Wāfir: Al-Rā'i says,

'Neither³ may I come to Abu Khubaib desiring instruction in the truth, and (10) be plunged yet deeper in error.'

And Ta'abbata Sharran⁴ says,

'When Fahm and Bakr met entire, and the blood flowed between them like a torrent.'

This is a verse of his famous poem in the Kāmil metre, of which the first line is,

'Fire that didst blaze, and whose blaze renewed my spirits, in some habitation at Afyād or Mau'il.'

I only notice this that it may not be supposed that the verse containing the *siḥf* (15) is of the Rejez metre, no. 1; for Kāmil 1 and 2, when all the feet are syncopated, are not distinguishable from Rejez 1 and 2, a fact with which you are well acquainted. The licences, however, called *khasl* and *wakṣ* occur more often in the short forms of Kāmil than in the long ones;—so in the verse of 'Antarah,

¹ Jamharah, p. 160.

² Ḥamāsah, p. 232.

³ Jamharah, p. 174. The verse is so inaccurately cited as to be unintelligible.

⁴ Not apparently in the ordinary collections of his verses. Cf. Khizānat al-ʿadab III. 351.

- (20) 'O house¹ of Māwiyyah in the plain, built for some grand destiny, built under Sa'd Al-Su'ūd, not under Al-Debarān and the Scorpion.'

Or the verse of Imru 'ul-Kais,

'Laila² refuses to meet me any more; she is gone away, and the cords that tied us are rotten.'

- (25) Nevertheless, it is not so very creditable to avoid these licences, for both in ancient and modern poetry these forms of contraction are rare. And you in venturing on this measure have been guided to many forms of exactitude missed by K̄ais son of Zuhair when he wrote his trembling (or, according to Al-K̄āsim³, son of Salām, crippled) verse,

- p. 7² 'After⁴ the death of Mālik son of Zuhair can women hope for the results of their pure days?'

Similar verses have been composed by other great poets: Abu 'Ubaidah quotes,

'Nawār⁵ pined, but got no good, &c.'

- As for the rhyming letters which you have chosen, they are very correct. The *d* (5) which Ṭarafah selected for his Mu'allakah, and Nābighah to describe Al-Mutajarridah; the *ḥ* which is free from all weakness and softness, and is a strong and clearly pronounced letter, of which the hoopoe must be fond, since it repeats it so often. The *m* which is easily articulated, and which is prefixed to the active and passive participles, to the former when they come from roots of four letters or (10) more, to the latter in all cases; the *n* which is the musician among the letters, near of kin to the sound which gives us the case-signs. Further, you have not fettered the hooves⁶ of the words, since such fettering is not helpful, but have given *waḥls*, *riḍfs*, *la'sis*, thereby bringing the rhyme into prominence. I cannot indeed praise you for avoiding false rhymes of vowel or consonant, nor do I regard this as an excellence; for any poet, native or foreign, who knows the

¹ Not in his *Diwān*; in *Aghāni* XII. 53 it is ascribed to Al-Ḥārith Ibn Al-Ṭufail, who lived at the beginning of Islam.

² *Diwān*, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 45.

³ Also known as Abu 'Ubad, a famous scholar and traditionalist, ob. 223.

⁴ In *Aghāni* XVI. 28 and *Ḥamāsah*, p. 447, this verse is assigned to Al-Rabi' son of Ziyad.

⁵ The first part of this line is an allusion to a proverb given by Maydāni I. 159, but read and explained in different ways, though the sense is pretty clearly 'pining after what does not come.' The second line refers to a great famine, but is too coarse to translate. Both are discussed in *Khizānat al-adab* II. 157-159, cf. I. 418-420.

⁶ This would seem to mean that the person addressed did not use close syllables for rhyming syllables. The rest of the terms used in the sentence can only be understood by those who have some acquaintance with Arabic poetry

alphabet ought to be able to avoid them, . . . but how did you manage to avoid repeating the same rhyme, which both modern and ancient writers have done, writers both copious and scanty? How too did you escape faults in the rhyme (15) itself of which Imru 'ul-Kais and Ziyād are guilty? The following, for example, are ascribed to Imru 'ul-Kais:

'If¹ I say this is a friend with whom I am pleased and in whom I find consolation, I take another in exchange. Such is my fortune; I never associate with a man but he changes and deceives me!'

If you say many editors do not give this verse, and Al-Khalil allowed this (20) licence; my answer is that others disapproved of it, and that even according to Khalil it is better to avoid it. And did I not purposely abstain from comparing your open rhymes with any but open rhymes in other writers' poems, Imru 'ul-Kais might on Khalil's principle be said to have committed *sinād* in his poem rhyming in *r*:

'No² by thy father, daughter of 'Āmiri, the people shall not say I ran away.' (25) For he regards a difference in the *taujiḥ* as a case of *sinād*. Ibn Duraïd in his 'Jamharah' says it is called *Ijāsah*.

In Nābighah's poems the tradition fluctuates; in some of the texts there is p. 73 a poem rhyming in *ā* ascribed to him, which is not found in most of them, commencing—

'The³ two homes of Su'da in Damkh and Dhu 'l-Ḥusa have been razed some day by the morning and evening rains.'

Followed by—

'Maybe their hands are knives, and they have slain each other.' (5)

Now to make *tadhābahū* rhyme with *rā'iḥū* is in Al-Akhfash's opinion a case of *sinād*; and that it is a blemish is proved by the rarity of its occurrence.

Having then avoided these serious faults, how could you escape those minor irregularities which the grammarians do not regard as blemishes, and which the old poets did not avoid? I may mention your persistently adhering to the *i*⁴ for

¹ Diwān, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 129.

² Diwān, p. 126. The second line of the poem quoted ends *subur*, the third *kar*. *Taujiḥ* is the name given to this vowel, while *sinād* is a general name for false rhyme.

³ According to Yāqūt, Dhu Ḥusa is a wadi 'in the land of Sharabah, in the territory of 'Abs and Ghatafan.' Damkh is given as the name of a mountain. The same author says the verse is by Kinanah son of 'Abd Yalil, a contemporary of the Prophet. The verse is not given in the printed recensions of Al-Nābighah.

⁴ In the preface to the *Luzūmiyyāt* Abu 'l-'Alā insists on this.

- the vowel to come between the *la'sis* and the *rawī*, never substituting for it the *u*, which all allow to be lawful; for it is only the combination of *a* with the other
- (10) vowels about which there is any difference of opinion. Nābighah in the poem rhyming in *'Ain* says,

'They¹ go to Al'al at a trot;'

and in that which rhymes in *l*,

'The² Turks and the Persian tribe and Kābul:'

and Abu Dhu'aib says,

- (15) 'Hast³ thou asked the ruined dwelling or hast thou not asked it of its inhabitants or whether it remembers old times?'

And in the same poem,

'If she tighten the rope of affection, be steadfast with her; and if she cut it, then feign ignorance and retreat.'

There is another reading, 'be courteous and retreat.'

Ṣakhr Al-Ghayy⁴ says,

- (20) 'By the life of Abu 'Amr, fate has driven him to a grave to be dug for him on the mountains; the chicks never saw her after the evening, neither did they cease chattering in their nest.'

This irregularity is of frequent occurrence in the best poets; and a much more objectionable one is to be found in a poem of Dhu 'l-Rummaḥ:

'Truly what has drawn the milk of thine eye is some spot in Jumhūr Ḥuzwa or Jar'a Mālik.

The jealous husband left them, and the sun burst forth for us on that short but blessed day.'

- (25) Some excuse may indeed be found for these authors, but what can be said for Al-Buḥturī's poem beginning—

'God⁵, how bright a time was at Suwaikah!'

which contains the following verses:

¹ *Diwān*, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 19. Al'al, according to Yāḳūt, is a mountain either identical with or in the neighbourhood of 'Arafat.

² *Diwān*, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 25.

³ *Aghāni* VI. 60. Abu Dhu'aib lived partly during the days of paganism, partly in those of Islam to which he was a convert. He was the chief poet of the tribe of Hudhail.

⁴ Also a Hudhali poet, whose poems are printed in Kosegarten's *Diwān* of Hudhail, see p. 6; also *Aghāni* XX. 21.

⁵ *Buḥturī*, ed. Constantinople, I. 242.

'Thou wast only called the man of two swords, because the cries for succour p. 74
addressed to thee urged thee to gird thyself with another.'

Nay, he even went further than this—is it not he who said,

'Add¹ not to ill-doing its sister; the worst ill-doing is to do ill twice? And
raise thy hands unto munificence, and be bountiful; the highest places
among the people are to the most munificent; like Abu Ṣaḥr, to whom (5)
Shaibān ascribes the greatest munificence; and it rejoices me that no
man in a nation is perfect in character who is not perfect in descent.'

Buḥturī thought that the *elif* in a single word, separated from the next, where
the second is not attached to a pronoun nor a pronoun itself, might serve as *ta'sīs*,
and be made to rhyme with *wālīd* and *ṣā'id*, whereas both ancient and modern
poets are agreed that it cannot serve as such. The *elif* that stands alone cannot
be made *ta'sīs*. Al-'Ājjāj² makes *idhā hajā* rhyme with *ḡad shajā* in verses of (10)
which the sense is—

'What has roused grief and pain that once was keen?'

and,

'They cling to him when he stands still.'

'Antarah³ says,

'Those who revile my honour when I have not reviled them, and who vow to (15)
have my blood unless I meet them,'

with *alḡahumā damī* in a poem that has not otherwise *ta'sīs*. Only some people
grow inattentive in a poem without *ta'sīs*, and insert one; whereas others, out
of similar forgetfulness, introduce a verse without *ta'sīs* in a poem intended to
have it.

I have studied your poems and find that you employ three metres; of the Ṭawīl
you employ forms 1 and 2. In your verses in Ṭawīl 1 there is no opportunity
for *sinād*, since your penultimate vowel is one which interchanges with no other,
whereas *sinād* is only possible in that form of verse with long penultima in which (20)
an ending without long penultima can be substituted, or in cases where the long
penultima takes the form of *w* or *y*; such are the verses of the man of Zubaid⁴:

¹ Buḥturī II. 163.

² An early poet; his name was Abdallah Ibn Ru'bah.

³ Diwān, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 49.

⁴ The first of these lines is quoted in the Muḡaḡarāt of Al-Rāghib Al-Ispahānī II. 373; the
whole in Khizānat al-adab II. 445; the man of Zubaid is 'Amr Ibn Ma'dī Kariba.

- (25) 'Sooner would I have the rattling of the bridle on a charger's head than marriage with thee. . . . Said my mistress when she saw it grizzled between white and black, "How like Zedoary soaked with musk!" 'Twill pain the louse hunters when they search my hair!'

But in verses where the long penultima was *elif*, the Arabs did not admit p. 75 alteration, nor did any other writers¹ with poetic genius. In Ṭawīl 2, however, when there is an *elif* of *ta'sīs* two forms of *sinād* may occur, one of the consonant, the other of the vowel. Praise be to God who has kept you from both these disasters! The *sinād* of the consonant is that which Al-Buḥturī committed in the verses I have quoted, whereas the vocal *sinād* is that with which Dhu 'l-Rummah protected from mischief the verses of his poem which rhymes in *k*. As for your poems in Wāfir 1, they have an *elif* for the penultima, and in consequence are (5) as clear of *w* and *y* as are verses with those letters for penultima from *elif*. Of the Kāmil metre you have used forms 1 and 2; and as for form 1, you have used that without *ridf* or *ta'sīs*, so that the verses admit only of one form of *sinād*, and that a form employed by Buḥturī. Your verses are therefore as free from *sinād* in all its forms as the 'arrow'² of Ibn Muḳbil, which brought spoil to him that sought it. As for Kāmil 2, you know of course that *ridf* is necessary, except in certain rare verses ascribed to Imru 'ul-Ḳais. Your innocence of *sinād* is therefore greater than other people's, since other people in such verses sometimes use the (10) *ridf* and sometimes omit it, whereas you have used the *ridf* regularly.

If, however, you write poetry according to metrical rule, how is it that you have only ventured on those metres that are perfect and erect, no such accident happening to you as befell Razīn³ the metrician when he eulogized Al-Ḥasan Ibn Sahl in his poem rhyming in *k*, of which the first verse was

'Thy nearest friends have made their camels ready to depart next morn?'

- (15) And we have observed that many of those who write verse according to rule have tried the metre of Al-Muraḳḳish⁴, supposing that people's tastes are not averse to such experiments in these days. But you, dear friend, would seem to have combined genius as profound as the ocean with copious acquired learning.

¹ The author is probably not speaking of different languages, but of the different nationalities of the writers of Arabic.

² 'Ibn Muḳbil won ninety times in the arrow-game, never once losing' (Jamharat al-Amthāl of Al-'Askari, Bombay ed. p. 158). Dozy is mistaken in thinking 'arrow' an error for 'cup.' Cf. L.A. XIX. 274 and Agh. XV. 120.

³ Razīn is mentioned in the Aghāni VI. 11 as a great innovator in poetry, who followed the ideas of Abdallah Ibn Sumaidi of Baṣrah, a pupil of Al-Khalil.

⁴ The notice in the Aghāni does not explain this.

Your letter implies that I, in your opinion, have slighted your affection and forgotten, in all this long time, our relations. Truly in that case 'I were one of the wrong-doers.' You tell me that you are of Baṣrah; I am quite sure that you are of (20) *Baṣīrah* (intelligence), which is implanted in your mind, and is a better city than Baṣrah is. For Baṣrah means 'white stones' such as men and cattle trample on. There is a verse of Dhu 'l-Rummah,

'When our waterers had poured the water into its conduit for the camels
which had been thirsting in the desert, they called to each other *shīb, shīb*,
in that cracked reservoir of which the sides were of "Baṣrah" and shale.'

The people of Baṣrah are noted for their want of home-sickness¹; you may perhaps have met with a story how there was found inscribed on a stone, (25)

'There² is no stranger though he make boast of his fortitude, but remembers
his home at times of sickness,'

and underneath it some one had written 'except the people of Baṣrah.' Now if p. 76
such be their conduct in relation to their own people and fellow-citizens, how much less will they care for mere acquaintances? And a proof of what I say is that you have not written my name correctly. You have written *Mohammed*, whereas my name is *Aḥmad*; and if you argue that these names are the same, because God says in one place, 'Mohammed³ the Prophet of God and those that are with him are strenuous against the Unbelievers,' and⁴ in another, 'and in a Prophet who shall come after me named Aḥmad,' it must be observed that this is true of the Prophet only, since he said, 'My name in heaven is Aḥmad, and on (5) earth Mohammed.' If any one urges that the Arabs often had two or three names or more, quoting the verse of Duraid son of Al-Ṣimmah,

'They cried to each other, saying, "The⁵ horses have destroyed a champion;"
I answered "Is Abdallah the champion that has perished?"'

and from the same poem the verse, (10)

'And if time with its days cause us to forget, yet ye shall know, ye sons of
Kārib, that we are wroth for Ma'bad;'

¹ This statement is surprising. Of the poets mentioned in the Aghāni many long for Baṣrah with affection not unlike that of Abu 'l-'Alā for Baghdad. So Ibn Al-Mufarrigh (XVII. 60), Muḥammad Ibn Wuhaib (XVII. 141), Ibn 'Uyainah (XVIII. 27). Another characteristic of Baṣrah is to be found in the last Maḳāmah of Ḥariri.

² The verse is also quoted by Ibn 'Arabi, Muḥāḍarāt II. 9, with another.

³ Koran XLVIII. 29.

⁴ Koran LXI. 6.

⁵ Ḥamāsah, p. 377; Jamharah, p. 117; Aghāni IX. 4; *Christian Arabic Poets*, II. 758. The verse in which he is called Ma'bad is given in the last of these texts.

such a case as this may be explained in one of two ways. Either a man may have two names, which is not my case; or the poet may have altered the name to suit the verse. And had you altered my name not in prose but in verse, this would be easily excusable, seeing that the best poets alter names; Al-Ḥuṭay'ah says,

- (15) 'And¹ you were not satisfied with them till you had presented them with torrents of a storm-cloud (the family of Bisṭām) containing spears, containing hard, long, well-fashioned cuirasses of Sallām's make.'

Meaning by *Sallām* Solomon; an alteration against analogy, and on a different principle from that according to which Abu Ḳābūs and Abu Ḳubais are both names of Al-Nu'mān Ibn Al-Mundhir, and Zabbār as well as Zubair stands for

- (20) Al-Zubair Ibn Al-'Awwām. These are cases of contracted diminutives, and examples are common; Al-Ḳaṭāmi says,

'The² heart has become tranquil about 'Ulayyah, and the camels are troubled about others than her,'

and in the same poem,

'Is it a glance from a lightning flash that my eye has seen, or the face of 'Āliyah, about which the veil is playing?'

So too Al-Murakḳish³ says,

- (25) 'Fāṭimah, were all womankind in one city and thou in another, still I should follow thee lovingly. Hungry and feasting alike I am ashamed before Fuṭaimah.'

p. 77 'Amr⁴ Ibn Ḥassān Al-Shaibānī says,

'I beseech thee, mother of 'Amr, blame me not, when the feasters are assembled with their wine. What! does my old woman sleeplessly weep and wail over two camels that are dead?

- (5) And was Abu Ḳubais kept alive, bless you, by the wealth of the kingdom and his crowds of cattle? He built in Al-Ghamr a tall gloomy pile on whose sides the doves coo.'

By Abu Ḳubais he means Abu Ḳābūs. It is recorded that Ṣafiyyah, daughter of 'Abd Al-Muṭṭalib, had two sons, Al-Zubair and Al-Sā'ib; Al-Sā'ib was undutiful, and she wrote the following verse about him:

¹ Aghāni XI. 29.

² Jamharah, p. 151.

³ The younger poet of the name who was the nephew of the other. The verses are given in Aghāni V. 194.

⁴ One of these verses is cited (in a considerably different form) by Yāqūt III. 814.

'Al-Sā'ib insults me behind the walls, but Zabbār Abu Ṭāhir deals kindly with me; he spends his money freely, is generous and forgiving.'

Zubair is a contracted diminutive of Zabbār, and she uses the original form; we (10) also do not deny that the poets have been known to call a man by his father's name for the sake of the verse; a Rejez-writer¹ says,

'They started early from Kāẓimah the deserted fortress, bringing 'Abbās son of 'Abd Al-Muṭṭalib.'

Aus Ibn Ḥajar² says,

'Would you give me the care of her? For I understand cases that have puzzled the leech Ḥidhyam,'

meaning Ibn Ḥidhyam. Dhu 'l-Rummāh, speaking of the second day of Al-Kulāb³, (15) says,

'The night the two Ḥārith's fled after Haubar had breathed his last in cavalry combat,'

meaning Ibn Haubar⁴, as is shown by the words of 'Umar son of Laja',

'And we smote at Kulāb the son of Haubar, and the company of the Banu Dayyān till they were dispersed.'

However, I easily pardon you this, and am willing to reckon it not a fault, but an ornament, as being a straw on a seething ocean, or rather the trace of prostration (20) on the brow of a worshipper. Possibly you may say that you concentrated your attention on my surname, making that serve instead of my name; I however have remembered your name, surname, and patronymic; I have forgotten neither the day we met, nor our conversation on that day; and I have made the answer to your letter serve instead of a meeting. Do not find fault with me for my lengthy chatter and my interminable haranguing, and for accusing the people of Baṣrah of want of affection for their home; what I really meant to ascribe to them was firmness and strength of mind—qualities which the Arabs ascribe to themselves. You must have heard the verse of Kaṭādah⁵ son of Maslamah the Ḥanefite, (25)

¹ Kāmil II. 130 (Wright, p. 554); Al-'Iqd Al-farid II. 233.

² Quoted by Ibn Al-Sikkit, *Critique du langage*, p. 541; Khizānat al-adab II. 232.

³ The second day of Kulāb was that whereon 'Abd Yaghuth collected his followers and attacked the Banu Tamim; the Banu Tamim won the day, and he was captured and killed. 'Abd Yaghuth was himself head of the tribe Madhḥij, and their attack on Tamim was due to the fact that the fighting men of that tribe had recently been slain by the Persian king.' Aghāni XV. 73.

⁴ Their names were Adbar and Mu'awiyah, and Ibn Haubar's name was Yazid. Dhu 'l-Rummāh's verses with many others bearing on this battle are quoted Aghāni l.c. 76-78.

⁵ Verses of his are quoted in Ḥamāsah, p. 358; but not this.

'Men weep for us, but we weep for no one; we are harder-livered than camels.'

p. 78 There is another point about your verse that I have carefully scrutinized, not with the view of finding fault, but rather by way of the attention which proceeds from high esteem; you have kept your verses free from licences in both halves of the line, as also in the middle; you have not, e.g. elided the *tanwin* as is done in the verse,

'Abu Firās has saved me from what I feared; and one like Abu Firās is enough and more.'

(5) Neither have you elided any where it should not be elided, as Al-A'sha does in the verse,

'And¹ the friend of belles, who when he chooses cut him and become enemies just after being friends.'

Or as Khufāf says,

'Like² the sides of the feathers of a dove of Nejd; and thou hast rubbed on thy gums the kuḥl-powder.'

Neither have you contracted your words except in the vocative, as in the verse,

(10) 'Abbād son of Julhum³ has ruined his camels; verily the son of Julhum has become the snake of the valley;'

or in that of Zuhair,

'Take⁴ your due, ye family of 'Tkrim, yet remember the ties between us; verily blood-connexion is remembered in absence;'

or that of another poet,

'Truly⁵ if I desire the sight of the son of Ḥārith, or praise him, the folk know all about it.'

Nor have you made any such alterations in words as render them unrecog-

(15) nizable, as does Labīd in the hemistich,

'The hou[ses] are in ruins in Mutālī and Abbān;'

and 'Alkamah in the verse,

'Their⁶ pitcher was like an antelope on a hill, girt with stalks of perfumed plants, and reeking with them; a white antelope which its keeper has

¹ Sibawaihi I. 8.

² Sibawaihi I. c.

³ For Julhumah. Verse of Al-Aswad Ibn Ya'fur cited by Sibawaihi I. 299.

⁴ Diwān, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 82.

⁵ Verse of Ibn Ḥabna, Sibawaihi I. 299.

⁶ Diwān, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 113. The verses are very inaccurately cited.

exposed to the sun, with linen han[gings] on its neck and a strainer in its mouth ;'

and some other poet in a verse quoted by Ibrā' Al-A'rābī, (20)

'Men whose lips are forestalled in tasting the water by animals with long sides and snub tips to their noses.'

Neither have you substituted weak letters for strong, as does a writer in a verse,

'A' watering-place where there are no crowds, and where the frogs in the water are allowed to croak ;'

and another in the verse,

'She' has slices of meat from foxes on which she puts dates, and morsels (25) of hare.'

Nor have you substituted *sukūn* for a vowel where it should not be substituted, as in the verse,

'When' they swerved I said, "Friend, keep these camels erect like floating p. 79 vessels in the desert ;"'

or as in a verse cited by Sībawaihi from Imru 'ul-Ḳais',

'I will drink to-day, not storing up for myself any guilt against God, and not entering as an uninvited guest.'

Nor have you given any nouns wrong formations (I mean ordinary nouns ; I leave my own name out, about which I have already spoken) as is done in (5) the verse,

'Her mouth was like cold hailstones or the odour of a garden which a light rain has besprinkled,'

where '*abakarrun*' is an unknown formation not in Sībawaihi's list, the right form being '*abkarun*' like *Ja'farun*.

Now a man who has avoided all these licences, as well as others which it would be tedious to enumerate, such as inversion of order and separation of words that are in annexion, as for instance in the line of Farazdaq, (10)

'There' is no trouble that does not each evening and each morning come and return ;'

or in the line of Sudaif,

¹ Sībawaihi I. 300.

² Sībawaihi I. c. ; Al-'Iqd Al-farid III. 122. The Arabic text explains in all these cases what are the licences to which allusion is made.

³ Author unknown.

⁴ Ed. Ahlwardt, p. 151.

⁵ Ed. Boucher, p. 221.

'And how¹, when no dispute ever befell thee when thy name was mentioned to mankind?'

or in the line quoted by Abu 'Ubaidah,

- (15) 'And its traces after their beauty are as though a pen had drawn a line.'

How, I say, can so cautious a writer have thought fit to contract his friend's surname, to alter his name and contract his surname? 'We are God's, and to God do we return.' This must have been a divine decree, no slip on the part of the writer, no carelessness of his, but the ill-luck of the person he addressed, the hard hap of the owner of the name and the appellation. Do not say, 'All the

- (20) poets, ancient and modern, poets by nature and poets by endeavour, have substituted the shortened *elif* for the lengthened,' for had you admitted any other licence I should have allowed this argument; but, as I have shown, you have steadily abstained from them all, and avoided every flaw. And I only complain of this because I am contracted in spirit, contracted in hand, contracted in sight (that is, blind), contracted to my dwelling (that is, confined to it) like a prisoner, and all this together with contraction of frame was not sufficient, but I must needs have my name contracted too! 'There is no strength nor power
(25) save in God the Lofty, the Exalted!' Were I longer than the shadow of a lance, I should get shorter than a fly's neck! Indeed I have begun to disappear like a shadow, as the poet says,

- p. 80 'I worked² till the shadow began to grow after it had shortened till it almost dwindled away!'

Were I the longest of nouns, i.e. the infinitive of a verb of six letters like *ihrinjām* or *istikhrāj*, and were I to lose one letter by each form of contraction, nothing would be left of me, or at any rate the utmost I could hope for would be to remain of two letters, one with a vowel and the other silent, which is the shortest possible vocable, no shorter one being possibly uttered. And the poets would

- (5) take all sorts of liberties with me, and elide me in places where I had acknowledged rights. As Abu Du'ād says,

'Thinkest³ thou every man a man, every fire that burns at night a fire?'

No! Complete annihilation were better than life after that style! Were I the seven-lettered word that forms the element of the Kāmil metre, and were then contracted in this way, I should probably get to be the letter which forms the

- (10) annex of the second hemistich of the seventh form of Kāmil. If I were the

¹ Sudaif was a poet who lived partly in the Umayyad, partly in the Abbasid period.

² Kāmil I. 221.

³ A verse cited in most of the grammars and books of rhetoric.

seven-lettered foot of the Raml, and were treated so, the remainder of me would turn into the additional syllable of the fourth form; were I the five-lettered word of the Basīṭ metre, and treated thus, I should depart altogether, and not enough remain of me to form the additional syllable of the third form. Suppose, however, I were a word of five letters and were contracted once and twice according to analogy, not by authority; and then a third time according to Al-Farrā and Al-Akhfash, but no other grammarians—after the third contraction the process (15) would have to stop, according to all systems, unless a quibbling pretext could be got from the fact recorded by Abu 'Ubaidah that certain of the Arabs say Wont you m? meaning Wont you move? answered by Yes, I'll m¹, meaning Yes, I'll move; a fact which is made to explain the Rejez verse,

'Umm 'Amr has promised to an—anoint my hair and take out the l, &c.' (20)

Possibly you think that I have for my patronymic the preposition 'alā in such a sentence as 'there is a debt upon Zaid;' were this so, I should necessarily be called *Abu 'Alā*, without the article; for such particles as this, when they are taken out of their natural functions, become definite, just as proper names are, like Zaid and 'Amr, unlike the letters of the alphabet, which, having no article in their ordinary usage, receive one when they leave it, so that we speak of *Al-Bā*, *Al-Tā*, *Al-Thā*, &c.; when the article is wanting they are indefinite. However (25) 'alā and the like are different. Nor do I refer to prepositions only, but all particles that give a sense; there is a verse ascribed to Abu Zubaid,

p. 81

'Would² I knew, yet what use is "would that!" truly ohs and woulds are only trouble!'

And Al-Nābighah³ says,

'Ah, would that I and he were dead, but "would that" is no remedy against (5) misfortune.'

And Al-Namir⁴,

'She stuck to an "if," which she kept on repeating; truly that "if" was too much for us.'

Perhaps you might argue that the article had been prefixed to 'alā in my supposed name as it is prefixed to 'Amr in the verse of Abu 'l-Najm⁵,

¹ Specimens of this style of contraction are given by Sībawaihi II. 57, Kāmil I. 245.

² Aghāni IV. 184.

³ Some of these lines are quoted by Sībawaihi II. 30.

⁴ Aghāni XIX. 158.

⁵ Quoted in the grammars, e.g. Mufaṣṣal, sect. 12, as well as the next but one following, of which the author was Ibn Mayyādah. The quotations are in both cases inaccurate. For the next see 'Aini I. 498.

- (10) 'He delivered the mother of Al-'Amr from her captive ;'
 or as it was prefixed to *aubar* (mushroom) in the verse,
 'I have plucked for thee truffles and mushrooms, and forbidden thee the
 daughters of Al-Aubar ;'
 or as another writer says,
 'We have found Al-Yazid son of Al-Walid a blessed man whose shoulder
 is fitted for the burden of the Caliphate.'
- (15) The true forms being in all these cases Mother of 'Amr, Yazid son of
 Al-Walid, and Ibn Aubar (a form of mushroom). Abu Ḥatim quotes after
 Al-Aṣma'i,
 'Fruits of earth such as shepherds bring, Ibn Aubar, truffles, and
 mushrooms.'
- These however are all due to the exigencies of the verse. And it is supposed
 in the case of Al-Yazid, where either form would suit the metre, that the poet
 made bold to prefix the article owing to its being prefixed to Walid, where it is
 constant. If however your idea was that I take my name from the third person
- (20) singular of the verb '*alā* (to mount), neither has this any more right to the article
 than the other. You must have heard the verse of Kulākh¹,
 'I'm Kulākh son of Kulākh, son of "Clear away," father of mischiefs, leader
 of a camel ;'
 and that of Suhaim son of Wathil Al-Riyāhī²,
- (25) 'I am the son of "Clear away," and climber of the heights ; when I put off
 my turban you will know me.'
- Nor can any argument be got from the verse of Farazdaq to show that the article
 may be used with the finite verb,
- p. 82 'Thou art not the arbiter whose (lit. the will be acquiesced in) judgement
 will be acquiesced in ; nor of ancient stock, nor of intellect and
 firmness,'
 any more than from the verse of Tārik son of Daisak³,

¹ Quoted in the notes on Ḥamāsah, p. 465. The author has by error substituted Al-Kulākh for Al-Janāb as the name of the poet's father.

² Quoted in the grammars ; also in Al-Mubarrad's Kāmil I. 224 (Eg.).

³ Quoted in the grammars, e.g. Ibn Ya'ish, p. 460, Khizānat al-adab II. 488 ; the preceding quotation is also a grammatical commonplace, see Khiz. Ad. I. 14. The second of these quotations was probably got by Abu 'l-'Alā out of the Nawādir of Abu Zaid, where it is given (p. 66) in

'And he brings the jerboa out of its hole, and out of its house Dhu 'l-Shaikhah "entrenches himself."'

For some persons regard these verses as spurious; while those who think them genuine regard them as cases of metrical necessity.

Or perhaps you may suppose that my name follows the principle by which grammarians explain *du'il*, the 'stoat;' for *fu'il* is not enumerated by Sībawaihi (5) among trilateral forms of the noun; and as the word is nevertheless familiar, those who would account for it say that it is really the third person singular perfect passive of the verb *da'ala*, meaning 'to walk slowly,' 'to dally,' passive participle *mad'ūlun*, used of a place dallied in; they suppose this form *du'ila* is turned into a substantive, and then has the article prefixed, which is the same as the account given of a feminine ornament called *yanjalīb*, which they say is the third person imperfect of the seventh form of *jalaba*, 'to attract,' meaning that with which (10) their husbands will be induced to do what they want. An Arab woman¹ is supposed to have said,

'I caught him with the *yanjalīb*; he neither budged nor stirred away, nor did he loiter by the cords.'

This is indeed a rare usage; but I am quite willing to accept such an explanation in order to give censure no ladder with which to reach your generosity, and tittle-tattle no access to your munificence; especially as you have been excessive in your praise of me, and assigned me attributes which my station does not merit.

You have doubtless met with the tradition² how the Caliph Omar went out (15) one night walking with his hand on Ibn 'Abbās's shoulder, and bade him recite a verse by the greatest of the poets; Ibn 'Abbās said to him, 'Who is that?' He answered, 'The poet who does not make one verse run into another³, nor employ obsolete phrases, nor praise a man for qualities which he does not possess.' He meant Zuhair son of Abu Sulma. Now you, my friend, have aspired to two of these qualifications, for you have not let your verses run into one another, nor have you employed obsolete phrases; but you have praised me for qualities which I do not possess. In this indeed you have only followed the (20) ordinary custom of orators and poets, as indeed the author of the 'Mantīk' in the

a poem ascribed to a poet of the pre-Islamic time, called Dhu 'l-Khiraḡ Al-Ṭuhawī. Ṭarīḡ is mentioned in the poem, whence the author's mistake. Both the reading and interpretation of Dhu 'l-Shaikhah are doubtful.

¹ In T. A. the poetess is further specialized as Al-'Amiriyyah; but the readings seem to have varied.

² Aghāni IX. 147; Zahr al-Ādāb II. 51.

³ Variouslly interpreted; cf. Aghāni I. c.

⁴ Probably Ibn Al-Sikkīt.

second of his four books maintains that mendacity is not objectionable in poetry and oratory, and in consequence of this the Arabs have taken a licence to exaggerate and overstate in their descriptions. A poet describing a sword says,

'Its blows seem always to miss the mark till a victim comes in its way.'

(25) And Al-Namir son of Taulab¹ says,

p. 83 'Events have left what they have of Namir—the furniture of an ancient sword whose traces are conspicuous; if you strike with it, it takes you all day to search for it, beyond the arms, the neck, and the sides.'

In your letter too you complain of shivering; and I know not what cause can have produced it, unless it be overstudy; a poet says,

(8) 'Constant wine-drinking has made me tremble; so that I have become unsteady, not from old age.'

For you are living the most comfortable of lives without jars; no literary plan of yours ever fails; nor does any front tooth fall out. On the contrary, you are like Abu Laila², the Nābighah of the Banu Ja'dah, who says,

(10) 'If any one ask concerning me, tell him that I am in the halcyon time of life; a hundred and twelve years are passed since the year when I was born, and the vicissitudes of time have spared me as they would spare a sword of Yemen make.'³

I observe too that in your letter you find fault with travelling; or at least do so obliquely. Why so? Ought not a man to be satisfied with following the precedent set by Moses, 'who⁴, when he turned towards Midyan, said, "Maybe my Lord will guide me?"' Have you forgotten your entering the mosques at

(15) times of prayer, and your reaching the cities after the deserts? Do not you remember the verse quoted in the Majāz of Abu 'Ubaidah⁴,

¹ The verses are quoted in the Aghāni XIX. 162, with, as usual, several variations. They are quoted a propos of an old sword of such keenness that when a man hamstringed a camel with it he not only cut through all four joints at one blow, but plunged the sword so deep in the earth as well that he had to dig away the earth round it for fear of breaking it if he tried to pull it out. The author's quotation can scarcely therefore come from the Aghāni, since, according to that work, the description given in the verses was not an exaggeration.

² These verses are given in Agh. IV. 129, 130. The quotation is inaccurate. Nābighah of Ja'dah was a poet who is supposed to have lived both before and during Islam, and to have reached a fabulous age; at his death he was according to some authorities 180, according to others 220 years old. At the age of 100 not one of his teeth was broken according to one of the authorities in the Aghāni; this being due to the Prophet's blessing. The text alludes to this.

³ Koran XXVIII. 21.

⁴ Famous grammarian of the time of Harun Al-Rashid. His life is given by Ibn Khallikan II.

'O blessed night and peaceful time, and paths like the seamless texture of the weaver!'

a verse which pleased you so much that you encouraged the persons present to start on their travels, and to camp on the open ground? Travelling is the best expedient for difficulties; and many a time has a traveller some morning found himself near the accomplishment of his purpose. You especially ought not to say this, who, besides attaining your ends, have made the acquaintance of the (20) learned men in the several capitals, and disputed with the subtlest thinkers in original inquiries. You who have had the Pointers for your nightly companions, and passed 'porcupine's nights', have you no yearning after the plodding of the weary beast, and the camel-driver's yodeling?—behind camels like those of the stars, whose eyes never tire of running, whose shoes are wet with blood, and with whose natures the *dhamil*² is intimately linked, looking at the beasts out of eyes like shallow wells, and whose saddles might be hard ground; Dhu (25) 'l-Rummah says³,

'After two nights without water they still outstrip the humming driver; when p. 84 we lead them with *hīd*, *hīd*, they strike their shoulder-tips with their cheeks. And youths with nodding heads like drunken men, who are satisfied with dividing the inclinations, and rubbing their hands on the earth's surface.'

I can well remember your admiring this poem, and reciting the following lines (5) of it,

'The sister of the Banu Labīd scorns the others, and admires Mas'ūd and me; she sees that we are the boys for a long journey, who clothe ourselves in black night as others clothe themselves in a steel cuirass.'

This being so, ought not your saddle to be upon a thin and wiry beast which knows no night-companions but the drivers, which plunges into the mirage like a fish, and glances with a madman's eyes; which has never given suck to a foal, (10)

128. His name was Ma'mar Ibn Al-Muthanna. The work mentioned in the text, according to Ibn Khallikan, was an account of the metaphors and similes in the Koran. The work was attacked by Abu 'Ubaidah's rival Al-Aṣma'i for innovation.

¹ The porcupine is supposed not to sleep at night; hence there are several proverbs which allude to this fact; the present one is given by Maydāni I. 148.

² A mode of motion.

³ A part of this Rejz poem is given in the Aghāni XVI. 114; but none of this first passage; in the second part Abu 'l-'Alā's quotation would seem to be more than ordinarily inaccurate.

and to which the slaves have never shouted *bass* at morning or evening: but is rather as Al-A'sha says¹,

'Of the best of camels rendered hardy by dough, by feeding at the frontiers, and by long sterility?'

While the foam is flowing she might seem a male ostrich that had got loose; the bones behind her ears give forth pitch, and she never rests her fore-neck on the ground. She might in very truth be an ass that has got all its teeth, one year or two, that has been at large in pasture after pasture, and come down to the
(15) lowlands after the highlands, followed by seven or eight females, an *Akhdari*² in descent, and a native of Yemen. Sitting in the saddle of such a beast you should chant the verses of Shammākh³:

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

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

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

Fine creatures, wiry, like lances aimed by some marksman at the air.'

The midday heat has milked them behind the ears, for no relics of milk will be found in the udders. 'Vain⁴ indeed are the promises that are made you!' And a plague on Ma'kil⁵ son of Dirār when he says,

(25) 'Her arms are like those of a pert woman, who, after scolding, would fain defend herself; behind her ears there might seem to be kerchiefs, that had left the hands of men who had been squeezing turpentine. And when she passes by the waters of 'Udhaib⁶, her eye is like a hole in a rock, no circle round it can be seen.'

p. 85 She dips her beak at one time into sweet water, at another into salt, and passes the night without supper; she comes suddenly upon the *kaṭa* in its hummings, and labours hard as usual; she is as it were the leader of the camels, having upon her a bridle of toil and fatigue:

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

¹ Verse of A'sha of Bakr, Jamharah, p. 57. Several words in the line are variously interpreted, e. g. for 'dough' some render 'date-stones.'

² See *supra*, p. 14, n. 5.

³ Jamharah, p. 154 (all but the last verse).

⁴ Koran XXIII. 38.

⁵ Name of Al-Shammākh. See *Kāmil* II. 74.

⁶ *Supra*, p. 41, n. 7.

the shadows erect ; following a camel with upturned eyes which you (5)
would think mad or seeing what camels do not see.'

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

'She came lifting high her neck in the first drove, while the shadow did not
rise above her hoof.'

She gives no trouble to a driver, and fears no impeding weariness :

'When the beasts weary their drover, and their hoofs are riding their necks.'

She and her companions are like castles, and her sea is filled with her quick pace. She (10)
gallops all day and all night, so that she is like the camel of the sons of Suhail :

'Tis¹ as though she had a stuffed calf on the saddle of her rider, and it is
her fashion to wear herself out.'

She asks the camels with her eyes, Are ye all sprung from a slow creature? But
indeed they had been good at travelling till fatigue wore them out :

'Weariness fettered them ne'er fettered before, their necks being erect like (15)
a spear stuck in the ground.'

'They used to be fettered when they passed by a dwelling. And now
weariness serves for them in fetters' stead.'

And you, while riding such a mount, would see some shy gazelle or buffalo
mingling with the herd, or female ostrich with eggs deposited in the sand,
fancying the colocynth a protection against the snakes ; and would look at the
chameleon wriggling on its branch, while you were conspicuous on the back of
your docile beast, hearing the songs of the cicadas, and well pleased by the grass-
hopper, and the gazelles gleaming like shells, and all of them longing for the (20)
shade of Samurah bushes ; so that it might be the wilderness of Dhu 'l-Rummah :

'Tis as if its shrubs, while the sun is in its midday heat, were shells single
and strung strewn about it.

The spotted, black-backed animal brays there at midday as though he
were a strung lute.

A tambour whose notes are accompanied by a drunken man in whose
accent there is a deflexion from Arabic intonation.

It rides over the hot sand trampling upon it, while the sun, as if bewildered, (25)
loiters in the air. His feet might seem to be those of a hasty runner,
whose garments rustle as he passes.'

¹ *Ḥamāsah*, p. 153.

- p. 86 Till you came down to a well of stale water, dug by the hyenas and about to fall in, such as when the drawer tastes it, he spits it out, the sun having sunk or being about to sink—or to some foul rain-puddle, which the showers have rendered turbid and swollen, whereat the herds gather, and truly it is a vile drink, being as the brother of the Banu Numair says ¹,

- (5) 'And water compared with which the wells are like wine of Burāk, and which has turned worse than stale. Whereof I stirred the depths and scared away from it companions that had ensconced themselves therein, —into a traveller's table-cover and its tags I gathered them all weak and strong.'

Or it may be that your saddle should be on the back of a big-cheeked mis-carrier, that hurries like a hopping ostrich, fearing not the attack of weariness, and not guilty of slackness at midday ²,

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

- (10) As though she were a spotted wild cow brought out by the evening to feed, with her a dusky calf, into pasture land as fragrant as musk, when some mischievous wolf is set on him, who waits for the moment when she is not looking; and when occupied with some sweet pasture such as will fill her udders with milk, she thinks distractedly of her calf, and how her only one is in a wilderness, and, hastening to look for her soul's own brother, she finds he has become a mere name like yesterday, and finds nothing but head and shins, and a hide that the robber prince (15) has left over. She it is that is meant in the verses of Kaṭāmī ³,

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

- (20) Or you might be upon a horse of A'waj lineage, one that will not readily stumble, with a body that might be made of gold, and hoofs of emerald, whose 'blaze' you would think a star of night, and his gallop the advance of a torrent.

¹ The first of these verses is cited by Yāqūt as by Al-Akhtal, whence Mr. Salhani has printed it among that author's fragments, but there seems no ground for styling Al-Akhtal a brother of the Banu Numair. Probably this time Abu 'l-Alā is right, and the verses belong to some Numairī poet, e. g. Al-Rā'ī, to whom Al-Bekri I. 165 assigns the first.

² Quoted by Rāghib Al-Ispahānī, Muḥāḍarāt II. 386, from Al-A'sha.

³ The poem whence these lines probably come is quoted in the Aghānī XX. 129.

He does not compel his rider to say *hāb* and *hab*, but dashes on with fiery energy. One that raises above him that reins him a neck tall as a palm-trunk, and rivals the north wind with his proud lineage; each time there comes in the way a wild herd or flock such a horse can set fetters on it. He is always fresh victual for his riders; he is bound to sustain them while in the desert. He is the enemy of the wild ass whom his morning visits frighten, as though he were a kite swooping (25) from a high mountain, or glanced with the eyes of a hawk. He leaves the ostrich p. 87 behind as though it were an orphan chick. He is too haughty to pick his way cautiously over the stones. The eyes of the enemy are intent upon his rider as upon a star in the heavens that shines to give them guidance. The points of the spears are not levelled at him; neither can he be reached save with the keenest gaze.

But if a horse failed you, then you might make your expedition upon a braying mule, a good beast to accomplish one's purposes; a cross between an ass and a horse of tough build like a coil of rope: the sort of animal whereon to traverse (5) wide lands, and execute one's designs. Witness the verse of Ibn Al-Rukayyāt,

‘They took the bridle off the coursers and went off attaching them to braying mules,’

and of Ibn Muḩbil¹,

‘From the plain of Ḥimyar where are the stalings of mules—how couldst thou climb all this distance at midnight?’

and that of the Asadite,

(10)

‘After Ghumdān² they passed a land wherein are pools of mules’ stalings.’

Similar passages are very frequent; and so you whose fame is heaven-high might well be content to ride the ‘thirsty beast.’ Many a good thing has been reached by the aid of the ass; and many a donkey-rider is better off than one mounted on a restive steed. God Almighty says³, ‘Look unto thy ass, and it is that we may make thee a sign unto mankind.’ Nor were it surprising if God were to strip off a man the apparel of the rich and put upon him that of the Prophets; in which case (15) he would rely for his journey on a mount of acacia-wood, such as neither grows weary nor gives cause for rebuke. A mount which when you rest in a place saves you the services of various people, since it needs neither water nor provender; and, if it perish, it can easily be replaced. A fine mount, indeed! God says⁴, ‘And what is that in thine hand, Moses? He answered, My staff whereon I lean, and wherewith I drive my flock, and it has other uses as well⁵.’

¹ Jamharah, p. 160.

² Name of a pre-Islamic fort in Yemen.

³ Koran II. 261.

⁴ Koran XX. 19.

⁵ The whole passage is a reminiscence of Jāhīz, Tibyān II. 62 sq.

- (20) Now I have only eulogized travelling and afterwards described its inconveniences, because all great things have trouble connected with them; and the *khufbān*¹ is the plant which leads up to the honey. An ancient writer says,

'Think not glory a date which thou canst eat; thou shalt not attain to glory till thou have licked wormwood.'

- A long letter this! God make your life proportionately long! And prolixity is unlike the brave. But now I am going to be brief and concise. I have answered you in prose instead of verse only because I have for years abandoned
- (25) such frivolities. Our friend Abu Ḥamzah² (on whom God have mercy!) has been transferred by God Almighty from the abode of woe to that of bliss and perpetuity,
- p. 88 who has watered his grave till his body has become like food to the earth that swallowed it. And I with my companions send you with every traveller on the highway, every wind that blows, every flash of lightning, every phantom that crosses the path, such salutations as will perfume the saddles of the caravan that
- (5) is entrusted with them, and gratify the hearts of men when their ears hear them.

LETTER XXVIII.

Answer to a letter addressed him by some one about a Kāḍi's assessor³, who had asked leave to be discharged from the duty of witness.

- The facts stated by you, dear sir, are a 'warning to him that has a heart, or hears being present'. However, 'the heart⁴ of Khidāsh has no ears.' Now he has spoken correctly who has given good advice: but 'what⁵ is there to be done with a lad whose father was too much for me,' and who is a 'chip of the old block?'
- (10) The father of this man had abandoned the office of assessor at the end of his life; and 'happy⁷ is he who takes warning by others.' Now I have tested this man's

¹ The *khufbān* is said by the T.A. to be a plant resembling asparagus, with soft leaves somewhat the colour of the violet, and exceedingly bitter.

² Bewailed in S. Z. I. 208.

³ The assessors are persons who witness the contracts made between individuals. 'They set their seal to these documents, and in case of litigation are bound to give evidence. They have offices in all the large towns, where they interview the persons who desire to make a contract whether verbal or written. In the latter case it is the assessor who draws up the deed' (Dozy).

⁴ Koran L. 36 (cited inaccurately, perhaps purposely).

⁵ The name of Khidāsh occurs twice in Maydāni's commentary on the proverbs, but not in such a way as to illustrate this saying, which would seem to mean 'none so blind as those who wont see.'

⁶ Maydāni II. 109.

⁷ Maydāni I. 289.

character, and he was as timid as the 'antelope¹ that leaves its lair,' or the 'wild ass² who looks well after his hide.' 'Amr³ has grown too old for the collar.'

'Truly a branch, if straightened out, will become straight; but a plank will not obey if you straighten it.'

He had borne the weight of the assessorship for forty years; had it been a shirt, (15) it would have got torn in those years; had it been a member of the body, it would have got worn out. Now 'well⁴ begun is half done;' the Moslems are not likely to want men of pure and solid character—such, thank God, are plentiful in this city. And the assessorship is a duty binding on the community at large. And as for exposing the young to this hardship,—'the⁵ dead man's family have the best right to vengeance;' and 'give⁶ the hot to him who has had the cold;' and 'the⁷ opinion of an old man is better than the witness of a young one.' And this is not p. 89 a money-earning trade, the loss of which might be to be apprehended, nor a bride sought in marriage whose death might be feared; any honest and worthy man can serve as credible witness: and if you desire one of your friends to have this post, why do you not undertake it yourself, and throw for it your luckiest arrow? The author of the work called 'The Leaf' mentions a number of poets whose testimony was received by the judges; among them Al-Sayyid⁸ Al-Ḥimyari, albeit at (5)

¹ Maydāni I. 101.

² Maydāni II. 9.

³ A favourite proverb with Spanish authors, see Dozy's quotations. In Maydāni II. 108, the first word of the proverb is *kabura*. The story of the 'Amr to whom this proverb is supposed to allude is told below in Letter XXX (p. 117). The golden collar which he had worn when a child was found too small for him when he returned from his wandering.

⁴ Maydāni I. 192.

⁵ Maydāni I. 35.

⁶ Maydāni II. 326. The proverb seems to mean, let those pay the penalty who have enjoyed the pleasure.

⁷ Maydāni II. 297.

⁸ His name was Isma'īl Ibn Muḥammad; a long account of him is given in the Aghāni at the commencement of vol. VII. The Kaysani sect are reckoned by Shahrastāni (p. 109, ed. Cureton) among the Murjites; their chief tenet would seem to have been belief in the Imamate or sovereignty of Mohammad son of Al-Ḥanafīyyah, who was supposed to be the hidden Mahdi who would finally appear. Al-Sayyid flourished at the end of the Umayyad and the commencement of the Abbasid period, and was reckoned as one of the three most voluminous authors of Arabic verse; but owing to his unorthodox opinions few cared to recite his verses. Besides being unorthodox in his opinions he was notorious as a drinker of wine, and according to an authority cited in the Aghāni kicked a man overboard for differing from him in opinion; it is therefore strange that such a man should have been appointed to a post where a good character was essential; and according to the Aghāni (p. 14) his evidence was refused by a Kāqī named Sawwar, who thereby exposed himself to Al-Sayyid's satire. As the Caliph Al-Manṣūr forbade Sawwar to take measures against Al-Sayyid, on another occasion when Al-Sayyid offered his evidence, Sawwar refused to give judgement.

that time he was accused of belonging to the Kaysanite sect, and was accordingly in disfavour.

- Every capital has in it persons of this character : among our own contemporaries I may mention Abu 'Abdallah¹ Al-Namiri of Baṣrah, whose evidence was received by the Ḳāḍi in Baṣrah, he being one of the poets of that city. And if you are so generous to the mob of the Moslems, what say you to the people of your
- (10) own profession? Methinks I see you wailing to this day over the death of the father of Imru 'ul-Ḳais², out of your extreme attachment to the Kindite bard! How big a fine would you not pay to the poor if only it could be shown that Al-Ḥārith Al-Yashkuri³ had not written the verse in which Māu 'l-Samā is mentioned in his poem with the rhyming word in the nominative? With how many *dīnārs* would you not redeem the false rhyme in Al-Nābighah's poem⁴, and the censure which he in consequence incurred from the people of Medinah? How many hundreds would you not give to buy Al-Buḥturī⁵ a pair of handsome feet, —for it is said that he had peacocks' feet? How many a pilgrimage would you
- (15) not have made to the Ka'bah to pray God to increase the height of Farazdaq the son of Ghālib by one span—for he was dwarfish? What would you not have given to preserve to A'sha of Ḳais a little of his eyesight to find his way with? I can see you grieving over the one-eyedness of Ibn Aḥmar, Al-Shammākh, and Al-Rā'ī Al-Numairi⁶. And if this be your way with men of a different age and religion from your own, what are you like to the people of your own time? You are to them like a mother 'who' lays a bed and puts an infant to sleep.' Methinks

¹ Verses of this poet are cited in Tha'ālibi's *Yatīmat al-Dahr*, ed. Damascus II. 126. Tha'ālibi was in personal communication with him, and calls him one of the most eminent scholars of his time.

² The account of his death is given in the *Aghāni* VIII. 62. His name was Ḥujr, and he is said to have been killed by 'Ilbah Ibn Al-Ḥārith Al-Kāhili after having taken bloody vengeance on the Asadites for refusing him tribute. The traditions varied as to the exact mode of his death.

³ The poem is the *Mu'allakah* of Ḥārith; see the account of it in *Aghāni* IX. 180, 181. The verse in which Māu 'l-Samā is mentioned is the following: 'And we loosed the bonds of Imru 'ul-Ḳais off him after he had been long bound in prison:' Imru 'ul-Ḳais meaning here Māu 'l-Samā son of Al-Mundhir. It refers to a victory of the tribe Bakr over the Ḥujr mentioned in the last note.

⁴ This story is told in *Aghāni* IX. 164. In the first version of a poem rhyming in *ad*, Nābighah of Dhubyān made *aswadū* end the second line, whereas all the rest ended in *adī*. When he came to Medinah the people were too courteous to tell him that he had made a mistake, and so put on a professional singer to perform the piece. Nābighah hearing the false rhyme altered the verse in which it occurred.

⁵ This fact does not seem to be mentioned in the account of Al-Buḥturī given in the *Aghāni* and by Ibn Khallikan.

⁶ *Kāmil* I. 24.

⁷ *Maydāni* I. 22.

I see one of them standing before the great Sultan, and you palpitating with fear lest he should commit himself. And yet who is more likely to be generous than he? God bring you to the longest age that poet ever enjoyed, with health like that of the wild beast that is at large in the desert; and sight like that of the raven; and hearing like that of the horse; and preserve you from all the accidents that befall the aged. For not unfrequently they make faulty verses without knowing it. I myself met a man of this sort who nevertheless knew the story of Buḥturī making the following faulty verse,

‘Why¹ should the soul seek for a thing whereof God has made Paradise the substitute?’ (25)

And if your feelings towards stranger contemporaries are so warm, what must they be to the poets of your own city? They are like your brothers and cousins! p. 90
And the case is just the contrary of what the Asadite says²,

‘By your life if I were to bring an action against a snake before Faḳ’as, Faḳ’as would give it against me.’

And praise be to God who has made you the contrary of what Al-Mutalammis says,

‘O Ḥārith³, if our blood were to be mixed, the drops would separate, and not touch each other.’ (5)

And I am astonished, I assure you, at the excellence of your advice and the grand way in which you control your language; but, as the proverb says, ‘The tools to him that can handle them.’ The archer has now got the shooting. I only say this because several poets had no skill in prose composition—indeed it is said that Buḥturī could not write a letter without dropping off into verse. Thank God for having bestowed on you the power of writing both prose and verse; both of them (10) are like pearls; we can almost hear their water trickling.

LETTER XXIX.

p. 91

Part of a letter.

Al-Ḥuṭay’ah⁴ said,

‘I wander about, and then return to a house inhabited by a slut.’

Now the house of my correspondent’s friend is free from women both clever and stupid; and I have only prefixed this verse by way of excuse for my neglect; for

¹ Ed. Const. II. 29; the quotation is inaccurate.

² Quoted by Jāḥiẓ, *Tibyān* I. 207. Faḳ’as is a tribal name.

³ The verses of Al-Mutalammis are collected in the *Christian Arabic Poets*; see I. 337.

⁴ This poet’s satire on his mother and wife was proverbial. This verse is quoted by Al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil* I. 153, 353.

- (5) wherever I turn I find myself swimming in your favours. Now the Syrians are to the people of 'Irāk like half-breds to thorough-breds, or domestic cattle to wild cattle; and fruit excels fruit just as man excels man. We read in the Koran, 'And of what we have bestowed on them they spend.' And the Prophet said, 'Were¹ I invited to partake of a *mirmāt*, I should accept;' a *mirmāt* being an excrescence in the hoof of a sheep. The Arabic proverb says, 'A man is like part of his clothes;' and were I to present you with the sky, the Pleiads, and
- (10) flowery spring with its perfume, I should still think I had fallen short of my duty. Now in this country there is a bad kind of pistachio, called 'the neighbours' annoyance,' the meaning of this designation being that when it is cracked its evilly-disposed neighbours suppose that it is full and are envious of it, when, though they do not know, it is empty. Now I have sent some of it for your attendants to amuse themselves with: I should never have ventured to do this, did I not know the amiability of your character; it is only right, however, that you should treat me with your ordinary generosity.

LETTER XXX².

P. 92

Letter of consolation, written to one of his friends (really his uncle ABU 'L-KĀSIM son of SABĪKAH) on the death of his brother ABŪ BAKR, who died in Damascus.

- You (God bless you!) are like a sword of Yemen, not worn out by the passing time, and a lofty star, safe from all wrong actions; you are like wine, which, the older it gets, the better and more fragrant it becomes. Has the sun's skin ever
- (5) got tanned, or does it suffer by its light being old? Have the passing years robbed Rahwah³ of its stability, or Şahwah⁴ of its durability? Were my letters to you in proportion to my feelings, I should despatch one to you every hour, with some message to do duty in my stead. I should have described the anguish that I feel, which memory constantly makes stronger. And indeed many a secret question reveals an excessive longing. God maintain His favour towards us, and keep it whether His decrees please or pain us. Fate is imperious and dominant;
- (10) and God forbid that we should say as Al-Muḥāribi⁵ said,

¹ Muwaṭṭa (Zurkāni) I. 240.

² This letter, the longest of the collection, must be judged in accordance with Oriental ideas of taste.

³ Rahwah seems to mean a hill, but in Yāqūt's notes on this word great uncertainty is displayed as to the particular hill to which this name was given.

⁴ A rock in the Ṭā'ī dialect. Yāqūt merely knows that Şahwah was the name of a place.

⁵ Famous poets of the Muḥārīb were Khirāsh, Al-Ḥakam Ibn Manī', and Al-Bakī' Ibn Şaffār. In the Kāmil of Mubarrad II. 314 a line of Ḥassān Ibn Thābit is quoted in which the throne of God is said to have shaken at the death of Sa'd Ibn Mu'adh.

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

No! 'We are God's, and to God do we return!' All that are on the earth shall perish, and man is but a dissolving view: and God bless Abu Khirāsh¹ for saying,

'Knowest thou not that before us the true friends Mālik and 'Aḳīl had to part?'

And man lives ever in hope which flees far from him; everything he has is a loan (15) even to his brother. An ancient writer says²,

'Everything down to thy brother is "furniture;" and fate rules both separation and gathering.'

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

'Their grief³ avails not the daughters of Rib', they sleep not, yet the sleeper feels no pain!'

If the vicissitudes of time have dealt foully by our good friend Abu Bakr, are we P-93 not familiar with the treason and falseness of fate?

'Men's goods are but luxury; and a man's life is a garment that is borrowed.'

Each of us in this transitory life is like a captive at large, yet fettered; he ceases not to move even though he fancy that he is at rest:

'Truly⁴ there is a time for resting and a time for travelling, and a time for the traveller to linger. God has claimed for Himself justice and faithfulness, and assigned the blame to man.' (5)

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

¹ Hudhalite poet; the verse is often quoted, e.g. Aghāni XIV. 73; the story of these persons is told later on in the letter.

² Cf. Aghāni IX. 4.

³ Verse of 'Abd Manāf Ibn Rib' in Wellhausen's *Skizzen*, p. 3; Kāmil II. 284.

⁴ Aghāni VII. 85. Verses of A'sha of ẖais; they were quoted to prove that the author was a ẖadari, i. e. a believer in free will.

(10) children that have drunk out of thy vessel. Thy sun still rises and sets! Thy mountains still raise their necks; thy plants return each year to provide food for men and cattle; on thee neither king nor poor man is safe. What could 'Urwah¹ of the poor or Ibn Jabalah² the rich do unto thee? If grief could be weighed, then if my grief were set against Thabīr, it would outweigh it³, even as a stallion outweighs a blade of grass. So I began to think of all those whom the 'two lads' (day and night) have carried off; and I found that all these men became dust and ashes even as the branches of a tree become coals and cinders.

(15) ADAM died after that he had seen Paradise and inhabited it, and been asked by the angels the secrets of the names and divulged them; after he had gone out into the world and become miserable, and experienced its misery, and been bereaved of Abel, till he nearly went mad with grief. So that his death (God have mercy on him!) was a warning to all his descendants that there is no way to secure perpetuity.

NOAH was taken, he who preached to the worshippers of Nasr⁴, and put together the ship with nails, wherein he escaped drowning. He who carried Adam after the stitching of the leaves in planks that had been nailed together, for fear (10) lest all trace of his buried limbs should be effaced by the water, when the heavens poured it so freely. He too did not live for ever, though revelation came to him from on high, and as legend records, he blessed the dove, and it was adorned with the ring.

After him was the Prophet of 'Ād, to whom the wind by God's command was made subservient, and whose people were overtaken by punishment, truly no light one. He too was overtaken beyond a doubt by what overtook the people of 'Itr⁵, and the destroyer made them equal, except that this one was taken in innocence,

¹ An account of him is given in Aghāni II. 190. His name was 'Urwah Ibn Al-Ward, and he was one of the pre-Islamic poets and heroes; he got the name of 'Urwah of the poor because he collected them round him and maintained them, according to one authority, whereas others gave another account of the appellation.

² Perhaps the author should have said Jabalah, the Ghassānid who became a Moslem in Omar's time, but afterwards went to Constantinople and became a Christian, whose story is told in the Aghāni XIV. 2-8, with an account of his great wealth.

³ A commonplace; see Aghāni VI. 10.

⁴ Name of an idol. Mohammedan writers are accustomed to attribute to all idolaters the worship of the idols known to them from the pre-Islamic history.

⁵ 'Itr was the name of the father of Kail, chief of the envoys to Meccah mentioned in the following note. When asked to choose for himself, the fate he chose was that he might suffer the same as befell his tribe. When told it was destruction, he said it made no difference. Tabari I. 241.

while they were taken in guilt and rebellion. He forgot what the two Jarādahs ¹ had sung to him, and was given a storm, no summer shower. (25)

After him another Prophet ², for whom the camel with the foal was created ³, and who galloped on in his piety like a horse. On him came an unlooked-for fate, which made him in rank no better than the followers of Kudār ⁴. Save that their final end was different,—he going to Paradise, and they to Hell. P. 94

Next the man who came safe out of the blazing fire, who felt no pain from its heat; except that death made him and Nimrūd equals. God protect us from attending concerts and music ⁵!

Then the 'man of the cloud' ⁶ was noble and renowned; yet he lay down in the grave, and did not budge.

Then the man who saw the light and thought it a fire—who made the night-journey, and removed disgrace from the Children of Israel—albeit he hated and abhorred death ⁷, yet he could not exceed the term that had been fixed for him— (5) fixed by him who neither errs nor fails, who is far beyond and above all evil.

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

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

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

Then the SON OF MARY, whom many worship, and the day of whose coming is expected—still even he left his Mother, and could not escape the reprobation of many tribes.

¹ The two Jarādahs were singing-women supposed to have performed at Meccah in the time of the Prophet Hūd. In Ṭabari I. 233 we read that certain envoys of the tribe of 'Ād were entertained in Meccah by Bakr Ibn Mu'āwiyah, who gave them wine to drink, and made the Jarādahs play to them. The verses of the Jarādahs recorded *ibid.* p. 236 were to warn these envoys that they were staying too long. It does not appear however from Ṭabari that Hūd himself had any opportunity of hearing these singers. See also Aghāni VIII. 2.

² Šāliḥ.

³ Koran VII. 71.

⁴ The name of the 'Wretch' of Thamūd who slaughtered the sacred camel. (Not in Ṭabari.)

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

⁶ Shu'aib, or Jethro. The word rendered 'cloud' is interpreted in various ways. The story is told in Koran XXVI. 185.

⁷ Allusion to a tradition in Ṭabari I. 503, that Moses was unwilling to die, and that in order to make him prefer death to life the Deity took away the prophetic power from him and gave it to Joshua.

- (10) Then MOHAMMED, who strove to serve his Lord, and won victories for God's people and his allies. He too lay down in the grave, though the most honourably escorted of the people. And if this be the case with the blessed Prophets, what think ye of the wretched and miserable? Even so unto kings do fate's messengers pay visits. Such of the Arabs as have reigned have not escaped death by the furthest flight. Saba son of Yashjub had the veil fall over him,—he was the first, according to the legend, who took captives; and he was named¹ thereafter, the last letter being turned into a consonant, being made a *hamsah* against analogy. As when you say, 'I have sweetened the polenta,' substituting *ḥalla'tu* for *ḥallaytu*.
- (15) He passed on a foray by the sacred territory, and found there no opponent. And seeing its inhabitants in great poverty before the time of Al-Naḍr² son of Kinānah, father of Ḳuraish, he asked them why they stayed in so wild a country, and were so greatly attached thereunto. And they answered that that land had a God who fed its people, and who let no one perish who attached himself to Him. Praise, said they, to God the exalted, who feeds both those who dwell in sacred territory and profane, and him who basks in the sun and him who loves the shade. Then
- (20) what they said stuck in the king's mind, and he perceived that they were not to be gained over; and he hid himself three days to ponder on the divine government, and on the third he said, after a long silence, 'I see nothing in the sky more luminous than the sun;' and so he prepared to worship it, and bade his followers and troops to do the like. And he only did this in order to please God most High, who has no known rival, and whom no foe ventures to oppose. And³ when he bethought him of going down to the watering-place of the dead, he handed over to Kahlān a protecting shield, and to Ḥimyar a piercing sword. And
- (25) those of the ministers who were present said, 'He has assigned to Ḥimyar the sovereignty and the throne, and to Kahlān the administration of the government.' Then Ḥimyar remained king until the Eternal decreed his death, and God only
- p. 95 endures without change, He who creates men with gentleness and ease. 'There endureth nothing save the face of thy great Lord.' Now the chroniclers mention no king of the sons of Ḥimyar until fifteen generations had passed⁴, who wasted

¹ The same etymology is given by Ḥamzah Al-Ispahāni, p. 124, who however declares that he will not be responsible for it; by others, e. g. Ibn Ishāk and Mas'ūdi, without any objection.

² The name Ḳuraish is said to be derived from a root signifying trade, and Al-Naḍr is supposed by trading to have become wealthy. This is the account given of the name by Ibn Ishāk, p. 60, who would seem to identify Al-Naḍr with Ḳuraish.

³ Not in the ordinary histories.

⁴ The ordinary chronology makes Al-Rā'ish succeed Kahlān immediately or after one intervening reign (Ṭabari, Mas'ūdi, Ḥamzah). These chronicles however make no claim to any exact information. The author's statement resembles Ibn Ḳutaibah's (p. 209).

whole ages over their sovereignty, without making forays into other people's territory, living and dying. Until at last there arose Al-Ḥārith, called Al-Rā'ish, who made raids upon the surrounding enemies, and clad himself in an honourable (5) robe of fine deeds. He was called Al-Rā'ish (the featherer) because he took captive whole families, and made much booty. Whereby he 'feathered' the inhabitants of Yemen, this being in his early time; then one of God's messengers summoned him, and his kingdom became like a deceptive mirage. Then in the time of Al-Rā'ish perished Loḡmān¹, he of the vultures, after drinking the last dregs of life; for indeed God has chosen for Himself perpetuity², and has decreed that there shall be no escape. Then after Al-Rā'ish arose his son Abrahah³, who endured for a period; he brought no reproach upon his people, and was called in his lifetime the man of the Lighthouses, because whenever he raided the enemy, (10) he set up lights on the way, so that when his army wished to return they were safe against losing their way. This did he until his life came to an end, when he resigned his kingdom, and took up his abode in a hollow of the earth. The living then forgot him, and his friends parted from him after they had benefited by his gifts, and obtained captive maidens from his spoils. 'The life of this world is but a deceptive ware,' and God is exalted in power; He has left none, just or unjust, whom He has not made to swallow the cup of death, even though during his (15) lifetime he accomplished his desire. Then rose after Abrahah Ifriḳis, who invaded the West, and travelled over the mainland and took the Berbers out of Syria⁴, and settled them where they now are; they being the remnant of those whom Joshua the son of Nun slew, who dwelt in Ramlah and the neighbourhood. He built Ifriḳiyyah⁵, which was named after him; and his arrows, when he shot them, went straight to the mark; but then Sha'ūb⁶ took him down, and the joints of his shafts became loosened. Meeting with a reverse of fortune, he lay him down in a grave. 'Verily God encompasseth them.' After him rose his brother 'Abd Ibn Abrahah, (20) who took the Nasnās⁷, and frightened his people when he brought them home. For their frames were not like men's frames, even as the histories tell. For this

¹ Tabari makes him a son of 'Ād of 'Itr (see p. 106, n. 5). His life according to the legend was 560 years.

² In the list of things the envoys were allowed to wish for perpetuity was expressly excluded.

³ Tabari I. 441. If the name, which occurs in a verse of Imru'ul-Ḳais, is correctly reported, it is more probable that Manār was the name of a place.

⁴ Tabari I. 564.

⁵ The early Arabian historians thought Africa the name of a city; hence Yāḳūt has to explain that when this city was destroyed its name was inherited by the surrounding region.

⁶ The Arabic death-god.

⁷ Tabari I. 441.

- reason he was called 'the man of terrors.' Then, overcome by palsy, he left the borrowed throne, being robbed by an emissary of fate. He turned into a mere name and a tradition, and, after gathering many a host of men, both king and host perished, and the same lot befell them as befell Thamūd. 'There is no God but God;' He destroys the nations, but persists Himself, and His slaves cannot turn
- (25) fugitives. Then there rose after 'the man of terrors,' Haddād¹ son of Sharāḥbīl son of 'Amr son of Al-Rā'ish, who, after a little, was 'shaken,' and his kingdom was not lengthened, but shortened. He, it is said, was the father of Bilkīs, and to her reverted his throne when he was summoned, and when the time of his destruction
- p. 96 came. Then came the period of Solomon, and when his death was proclaimed—against which there is no insurance that can be given to true man or false—Bilkīs survived for a period, and then went off fast to the next world. 'Praise to God all-powerful!' All men perish, and none returns! Then reigned Yāsir² son of 'Amr son of Ya'fur; and none had any quarrel with him, for he was called Yāsir of favours³, as having restored the kingdom after it had been taken away, thereby
- (5) conferring a mighty favour. For it had gone out of their hands, and no allies were left them. Thus the power had come into the hands of Solomon. Yāsir invaded the West, and armies were gathered unto him; and he came forth with a host numerous as the ants, till he reached the valley of sand, and he despatched a force which perished, no one ever going the same way again. And he ordered an image of brass, whereon Dhū Nuḥās⁴ wrote in Ḥimyarī characters *there is no path for any one beyond*. And he set up that image as an ensign, to be a terminal
- (10) mark to travellers. Then time overtook Yāsir, and he found its edge bite. Thus impartial are the dealings of God with the nations. Then there reigned after Ifrīkis⁵, Shamir Yar'ash, his son, who lived for a while, and complained of palpitation, and rose up with a mighty army, and trampled on 'Irāk like a man of valour, and, meaning to invade China, said to his army, March! And passing

¹ Haddād son of Sharāḥbīl, according to Ḥamzah Al-Ispahānī, p. 125.

² Nāshir Ibn Sharāḥbīl, Ḥamzah, p. 126; the chronologers were uncertain where exactly Bilkīs came in. The author follows Ibn Kṭaibah throughout.

³ Ṭabari I. 684 gives Yāsir An'am with the same genealogy as our author, and the same ground for the second appellation; Ḥamzah makes the second name Yun'im, which is like other second names that meet us on the Sabaeen monuments; Mas'ūdi gives Nāshir, but his form of the second name agrees precisely with Abu 'L-Alā's. But see Ṭabari I. 920.

⁴ Perhaps this only means a brazier. The story is told by Ṭabari I. c., who gives as the inscription 'Statue of Yāsir An'am the Ḥimyarī, there is no way beyond, let none therefore undertake such a venture and perish.'

⁵ Ḥamzah gives his name as Shamir Yur'ish Abu Kārib Ibn Ifrīkis. 'After Ifrīkis' is an error for 'after Yāsir.' Ṭabari gives a different name.



by Sughd he took it, and called it after his name (God knows best his purposes) *Samarḳand*¹, whereof the original is Shamarkand. Yet did not this avail him one shoe-latchet when he was visited by the pangs of death. After him² there reigned (15) his son Al-Aḳran—and all that is on the earth is rubbish! So, when the divine decree fell upon him, he left all that he had built and raised; albeit had a throne benefited any one, it would have benefited him. Then rose Aḳran's son Tubba', whom all the chieftains obeyed. He subdued the lands and invaded them. He humbled the champions and made them ashamed. Yet had he to humble himself before God, and the evidence of his inferiority was established. Twenty years he remained at home and made no forays; then there reached him a report of the Turks, whose injuries he resolved to avenge, so he marched against them by way (20) of Anbār, and fell upon them unexpectedly. China was the next object of his ambition, which he attacked once, and then returned, leaving at Tubbat some of his troops. And it is said that they are found there to this day³, generation succeeding generation. Then there came to him 'the pitiless enemy'; and each man needs the services of the grave-digger! Then rose his son As'ad, to whom those near and far alike paid homage. He followed the ways of his father, and dealt with his enemies as he had dealt. This was Tubba' the middle, who dealt hardly and harshly with Ḥimyar. And the Ḥimyar were greatly vexed by the length (25) of his reign, seeing that he dealt unjustly and haughtily with them. Then they said to his son Ḥassān, from whom they hoped for good, 'What sayest thou to p. 97 killing thy father, and to our making thee a king whose swords shall be feared?' But he would not agree to the killing of his father, and feared to spill kindred blood. Then they gathered together against As'ad and slew him—either they assassinated him openly or else they slew him by guile; then they sought a king to reign over them, and returned to Ḥassān to bind their wound. On his brow they set the crown, and when his control was supreme over the ways, he left alone none of those who had had a hand in the murder of his father, but tried to kindle (5) against each of them some mischief which he hid, albeit the Ḥimyarī's had made him swear that he would not have recourse to extremities in taking vengeance for the murder of his father. Now Ḥassān⁴, according to tradition, trampled on the

¹ This means, according to Ḥamzah, 'Shamir destroyed,' perhaps thinking of the Persian *kand*, 'dug.'

² Ḥamzah places between them a king, Abu Mālik son of Shamir, and father of Al-Aḳran.

³ The place signified is Thibet. Tabari assigns this exploit to Tubba', otherwise Tuban As'ad. Ḥamzah interpolates several more kings between Al-Aḳran and As'ad. The destruction of Ṭasm and Jadīs is assigned by him to Dhū Jaishan son of Al-Aḳran.

⁴ Tabari I. 750; Ibn Kṭaibah, p. 211.

- Jadis until he left them a mere name, and their stable root in splinters. This was because their brethren the Ṭasm treated them with great tyranny. They had a king¹, surrounded by troops, to whom the brides were brought before their husbands. And Jadis fell upon Ṭasm², and applied a violent remedy to the
- (10) disease, and destroyed their chief; so Ṭasm invoked Ḥassān's aid, and he helped them. Now Yemamah was at that time called *Jau*, and was greatly under the frown of the king. And there was there a woman named Yemamah, and she it is who is known as the Zarkā; she could see a long distance off, and one day she climbed up the watch-tower (now all new things are from God), and she said, 'Know that Ḥimyar is coming against you, or else that the trees are coming towards you.' Then they said, 'What seest thou?' She said, 'I see³ a man who
- (15) would seem to be eating a shoulder, or patch shoes with trees.' Now Ḥassān had commanded his army each of them to cut down a tree, and to carry it in front of him as a strong defence⁴. This was a stratagem that he tried till he should overcome Jadis. But they would not believe what Yemamah told them, so that the troops came upon them and cut them in pieces; and Jau was called *Yemamah*, after the woman. Now the chieftains disliked Ḥassān, and openly revolted from him⁵; and went over to his brother 'Amr, and desired him (horrible act!) to kill his brother. And he complied with their request, and ploughed and stirred up
- (20) mischief for himself. Now among the Ḥimyar was a man called Dhū Ru'ain, who was experienced in all things hidden and manifest; who warned 'Amr against slaying his brother (now God knows well what He intends). But 'Amr determined to go on (and God it is who controls destiny), and he slew Ḥassān (for indeed love of the present world blinds mankind), and he lost his sleep, all night and all day. Now the Ḥimyar of those days used to suppose that any one who killed his brother would be unable to sleep however hard he tried; and 'Amr complained of
- (25) his sleeplessness, and was told by trusty folk that he would not be able to sleep till he had destroyed those persons who had bidden him slay Ḥassān, who had brought him down to the shambles and not brought him out. So the king bade a herald proclaim that the king wished to make an ordinance the following day, and the
- p. 98 people gathered in throngs to the palace court; and he ordered that they should be introduced in companies, and he mowed them down like herbs with his swords;

¹ Tabari I. 771.

² In the story told by Tabari, the captain of the Jadis got up a feast (in the style of one told by Herodotus) at which he and his comrades slaughtered the king of Ṭasm and his nobles. A Ṭasmite named Riāḥ escaped, and demanded help of Ḥassān.

³ Tabari I. 772, l. 18.

⁴ Rather, according to Tabari, to conceal himself.

⁵ Tabari I. 914; this took place, according to Tabari, in the midst of an expedition to 'Irāq.

and when Dhū Ru'ain entered, he reminded the king of his counsel, and he ordered him to be honoured and rewarded. Then 'Amr's affairs became confused, and the flame of his fire came near extinction; and being too weak and feeble to go on expeditions, he was on that account called *Mauthibān*; for *wathaba*¹ in their language means 'to sit.' And mankind have days of good and days of bad luck; and the day of death approached, and he, like others, found it come too soon. Then (5) there reigned after him 'Abd Kulāl²,—and God, be it remembered, stands alone in His majesty. He, according to the tradition, was a believer, one who believed in Jesus, and hoped for good fortune thereby; then he came to grief, and it was as though he had never been feared. Then reigned Tubba' son of Ḥassān³, the last of those who were called Tubba', and he, out of ambition, invaded Syria; the kings of Syria paid him homage, and, after having been revered, obeyed him. Then there came unto him men from Yathrib with complaints, telling of evil deeds of the Kuraizah and Banu Naḍir; and he made for Yathrib, and slew of the (10) Jews both rich and poor; but there came to him one of them who was old, and wrinkled like a wineskin, and told him that he could never destroy Ṭaibah⁴, because it was to be the refuge of a prophet of the family of Ishmael, and that whoever sought to do it harm, himself would come to grief. So the king listened to what the man told him without murmur, and took a wise course, covering the Ka'bah with painted robes, and slaughtering six thousand camels. And, going off to Yemen, he bade his people adopt the Jewish faith,—and thy Lord was witness of both secret⁵ and manifest. Then on him too death laid her hand, and he took up his abode in the tomb. Then after him arose Marthad⁶,—and none of the furniture (15) of this life endureth; after him reigned Walī'ah⁷, and to him came a troop of calamities. Then reigned Abrahah son of Al-Ṣabbāḥ,—and what sanctuary is not profaned? Then arose Ḥassān⁸, whom 'Amr had begotten, after whom the kingdom fell to pieces; wide confusion came over Ḥimyar, and the neglected throne was seized by Dhu 'l-Shanātir⁹, who 'put on the garments of treason'¹⁰:

¹ Ṭabari derives it from *wathaba*, to jump; Ḥamzah gives an etymology similar to that in the text.

² 'Ubaid Kulāl, according to Ḥamzah; Ṭabari and Mas'ūdi omit him.

³ The statements in the text agree with Ibn Kṭaibah and Mas'ūdi. ⁴ A name for Medinah.

⁵ The Christianity of the last king was, according to Ḥamzah, concealed.

⁶ This name is very familiar to us from the Sabæan inscriptions.

⁷ So Ibn Kṭaibah; in the text of Mas'ūdi his name is printed Waḳ'ah.

⁸ Ḥamzah inserts as a king contemporary with the last Ṣabbān Ibn Muḥrith; Mas'ūdi substitutes for Ḥassān 'Amr Ibn Dhī Ḳī'an.

⁹ Ṭabari calls this king Lakhnī'ah Yanūf Dhū Shanātir, and makes him the immediate follower of Mauthibān.

¹⁰ A euphemism for the crime of which Ṭabari and the other historians make him guilty.

- and when he played false and acted deceitfully, he was slain by the king Dhū Nuwās, and found no leech for his wound. After him reigned his slayer¹; and the divine power betrays him that is secure. God only is everlasting! His word falls upon the rock and it becomes like mist. Now Dhū Nuwās was a rebel, and fanatically attached to the religion of the Sabbath; he dug the 'trench'², and humbled the faces. He bade certain to be burnt who believed in the Gospel, and made a lamp thereof. Then Dhū Tha'labān³ went to the Abyssinians, and set forth the doings of the Himyarite, unto a Hāmite king of the friends of Caesar⁴; and he equipped an army for them, which set blazing the furnace of war. And Dhū Nuwās was put to flight, and went with his horse into the sea, and plunged into it for fear of his pursuer. This was the last that was heard of him, and God knows best whither he went and where he abode. After him reigned Dhū Jadan⁵, who took many a castle and a field. And when the Abyssinians drove him to the shore, he did even as Dhū Nuwās had done, so grieved was he. These were the kings of the Himyar, whom destruction seized, and the eye saw them not again. Then the Abyssinians got control of Ṣan'ā, and they plundered Yemen when it had no protectors. First of them rose Aryāṭ⁶, and he was slain by Abrahah⁷, who thirsted for vengeance. He attacked the Ka'bah with his elephant⁸, and God guaranteed his destruction. After him reigned Yaksūm—every one being the victim of events—until he perished, and Maṭrūk⁹ came, who also was prostrated by death, being shot with arrows by the Persian, until he was made like unto them that perish. Then Saif¹⁰ became lord of Yemen, and neither mountain nor vale was safe. He took into his service certain Abyssinians¹¹, and being one day apart from his attendants, they threw their spears at him and slew him, being angry with him for what he had done, wherefore they slew him. Is then any man immortal? Or can the good escape from harm? Nay, God has decreed death after trouble and anxiety! As for the land of Syria, the first of the Arabs who

¹ Koran LXXXV. 4. A pit in which the Christians were burnt alive.

² Ṭabari I. 927.

³ In the account given by Ṭabari, l. c., this person goes first to the Byzantine monarch.

⁴ Dhū Jadan in Ṭabari appears as a poet, not as a king. The author's narrative agrees with Ibn Kṭaibah and Ḥamzah, while Mas'ūdi has a different story.

⁵ Aryāṭ is represented in Ṭabari as the Abyssinian king's general.

⁶ Two versions of this story are given by Ṭabari with but slight variations.

⁷ Ṭabari I. 941; the Arabs are never weary of telling this story, to which there is an allusion in the Koran.

⁸ Brother of the last, according to Ṭabari, with whom the author's narrative here agrees.

⁹ Saif Ibn Dhī 'l-Yazan. Ṭabari I. 950, &c.

¹⁰ Ṭabari I. 958.

settled there was Salīḥ¹; and who does not fear and tremble at fate? And the first of their kings was Al-Nu'mān son of 'Amr²,—but his power abode not. Then there reigned after him his son Mālik, who walked in the footsteps of his father; then 'Amr son of Mālik,—now all dynasties come to an end save the power of the Creator, for He ceases not. And when 'Amr son of 'Āmir went out from Mārib³ (15) for fear of the dam which burst, he sent three of his sons foraging, and hoped that he should see them returning. The three passed on with a large company, each of them desiring some benefit, and their father 'Amr perished ere he heard any tidings of them. He was followed by his son Tha'labah,—and the decree of God is victorious. Now the Asad had invaded the country of the 'Akk⁴, seeking to allay their doubts; and there was in 'Akk a king called Samlakah, against whom Jidh' son of Sinān Al-Asadi plotted mischief, and brought it upon him; and the Asad killed the 'Akk, and took goods whereon tithe had not been paid. Then (20) the 'Akk took to flight, and traversed the wide earth without certain direction; and Tha'labah son of 'Amr was displeased by the hard hap that had befallen the 'Akk, and swore that he would not stay, and went off, leaving the throne a bone of contention: till he encamped with his followers in the Tihamah, and fought with the Jurhum with his troops. From them he wrested the Ka'bah—yet each living being must assuredly one day fall prostrate and dead. Then Khuzā'ah remained in the sacred territory, being a tribe of royal virtue and chivalry. Till there came (25) Ḳuṣayy son of Kilāb, who gathered together Ḳuraish between the plain and the Ḥarrahs⁵. And he ousted Khuzā'ah from the kingdom, nor yet did his achievements save him from destruction. Then came Ghassān⁶, they being the brethren of Khuzā'ah, to the land of Syria, and ousted their predecessors therefrom; and p. 100 them too God destroyed when he wished. And of their kings whose names are handed down, the first was Al-Ḥārith the Great; he too joined the rest, and became a warning after he had persecuted and aggrandized himself, and burned the Arabs

¹ Ḥamzah, p. 115; Mas'ūdi IV. 47.

² According to Mas'ūdi, l. c., the first of the Tanūkhite kings who reigned in Syria. According to this author the arrival of Salīḥ was posterior to this. The names of Al-Nu'mān's successors are also given differently.

³ Celebrated town in S. Arabia, visited in recent times by Glaser.

⁴ The whole of this paragraph diverges very widely from the historical authorities cited in the notes.

⁵ Black platforms of plutonic formation. See Mr. Doughty's map of this region.

⁶ An account of the Ghassānide dynasty is given by Ḥamzah, l. c., and also by Mas'ūdi; in the former, names are evidently repeated over and over again in order to fill up a space of time; but neither agrees with the list given here.

- till he was called the 'Burner'¹. Many a great hero did he slay; his surname was Abu Shimr², and his son Al-Ḥārith, from whom the kingdom was inherited by an heir who brought terrible punishment upon the king of Ḥīrah. Now Al-Ḥārith was the father of Ḥalimah, whose name was made proverbial by them that err not,
- (5) saying, 'The day of Ḥalimah is no secret:' meaning thereby the day whereon the two sons of Al-Ḥārith were slain after hard fighting, and whereon Al-Mundhir son of Mā'u 'l-Samā was overtaken by destruction. Now he had gone out on a foray to the land of Syria with a hundred thousand, who hastened past every mountain. And against him Al-Ḥārith sent a hundred lads, this being a harmless plot against Al-Mundhir, bidding the lads inform Al-Mundhir that they had come out to aid him; but of a truth they were messengers of destruction, who stripped him of the royal crown. And in this battle Ziyād³ came to Al-Ḥārith, and asked
- (10) him concerning certain prisoners of the tribe of Asad, who were in chains, whom he loosed out of respect to Al-Nābighah. And his fame, as he had desired, survived. Then 'Alqamah asked him concerning Shās⁴, and he replied, 'A house that remains among mankind.' And how many a faithfully recorded verse was chanted concerning Al-Ḥārith, and how many a rhyming lay! He was the father of Māriyah⁵, whose earrings are mentioned in the proverb, albeit death did not overlook her any more than him. Then reigned his son Al-Ḥārith the Less, after his father; until the days humbled his pride. These three reigned one after the
- (15) other in a direct line, their names being alike, and they have remained. But they who had them are departed, and their spirits are returned to their Lord.

After them came Al-Nu'mān son of Al-Ḥārith, whom Al-Nābighah hoped would return, and by whose death he was afflicted⁶. He was the son of Ḥujr, 'whose followers returned with clear eyes', having left him in Jaulān⁷, being weary of him. Al-Nābighah prayed that his grave might be watered with vehement showers⁸, till it produced flowers and nenuphar. This assuredly is

¹ Ḥamzah gives this name to a king named Jafnah the Less, 'and he it was who burnt Al-Ḥīrah.'

² Ḥamzah, p. 118, gives this name to a Ghassāni king Al-Mundhir Ibn Al-Ḥārith.

³ Name for Al-Nābighah Al-Dhubyani.

⁴ i. e. begged the life of his brother Sha'a, whom Al-Ḥārith had taken prisoner at 'Ain Ubāgh, which was granted. Kāmil (Eg.) I. 113; Ibn Kūtaibah, p. 216.

⁵ Supra, p. 58; Ḥamzah gives this lady a different father.

⁶ The dirge on this king, to which allusion is made, is given in the *Christian Arabic Poets*, II. 696.

⁷ Allusion to Al-Nābighah's verse, l. c. 702. The meaning was disputed in antiquity different readings and interpretations are quoted in the editor's note.

⁸ Name of a mountain in the Ḥaurān.

⁹ l. c. 703.

but 'a feeble effort,' yet every one who ventures high is sure to fall¹. Children of his were his namesake Nu'mān and 'Amr, for whom wine flowed freely in the cups. Then both of them lay down in the grave, and those who woke in the morning knew not where they had passed their night. Of Ghassān were 'Amr son of Al-Hārith, to whose favours, as well as to his father's, Al-Nābighah makes acknowledgement, and whom Al-Nābighah made the special subject of his praise²; and Al-Aiham³ father of Jabalah, who when king kept safe from crime. Yet he too drank his draught of death, and fate overcame him and took him. His son Jabalah became a Moslem and a Ḥanif, but afterwards fell away, and joined the Greeks⁴; his story is well known, and who is there whom the vicissitudes of fortune have left alone? These were the kings of Ghassān, who followed the course of the dead; each of them is now but a tale that is told, and God (25) knows who is good.

The kings of Ḥīrah:—First of them was Mālik Al-Azdi⁵, by whom the assemblies were long kept going. Then one of the arrows of fate smote him, and no human fancy could reach him any more. Then came his son Jadhīmah⁶, and he too was bound to die. He stayed for a time in Anbār, then he would reside for a space at Al-Ḥīrah. And he would associate with none but the Pointers, for he was too proud to talk with men in the mornings and evenings⁷. His sister's name was Umm 'Amr, and the most intimate of his attendants was 'Adī son of Naṣr. One day, it is said, he became drunk, having taken more than (5) his fill of wine; and it is said that he gave his sister in marriage to 'Adī, and she passed the wedding night. And when Jadhīmah woke he was told thereof, and repented him after his joy. And being incensed against 'Adī, he bade his head to be struck off. And his sister gave birth to 'Amr son of 'Adī, and he became precious in the eyes of his uncle the Asadī⁸. And when he grew into a stripling, and his countrymen hoped for advantage from him, one day his uncle rode out hunting, and 'Amr went forth at no slow pace, and he got lost in God's wide earth, and remained with the pasturing beasts. And after he had gone far afield, (10) he was brought back by Jadhīmah's two companions, 'Aḳīl and Mālik, who restored him to the king when the hair on his face had become black. Then said

¹ Apparently with reference to Al-Nābighah's dirge.

² l. c. 644. The verse, to which allusion is made, is to be found on p. 645, l. 2.

³ Ḥamzah, p. 121.

⁴ Ḥamzah, p. 122.

⁵ Ṭabari I. 750.

⁶ The author has omitted a king.

⁷ Ṭabari only says that he performed the functions of kāhin, or conjurer; but Rāghib Ispahāni has this story (Muḥāḍarāt I. 167) after Ibn Ḳutaibah, p. 217.

⁸ This should be the Azdi.

- Jadhīmah, 'You have done well, so choose what you will have.' And they chose to remain Jadhīmah's companions so long as they lived, and they were his associates forty years, and never in all that time repeated to him the same story. Then he was cajoled by Al-Zabbā¹, and his story is well known. After him
- (15) reigned 'Amr, for Ḳaṣīr² had planned that he should succeed³, and it is said that it was 'Amr who built Al-Ḥīrah and marked it out⁴,—and he remained king until the sovereignty was withdrawn from him by a destiny which slew him, when he repented of the acts of piety that he might have performed but omitted. After him reigned his son Imru 'ul-Ḳais⁵,—and the folly of a foolish man will not hasten his end. Others however say that after 'Amr his son Al-Ḥārith Muḥarriḳ⁶ reigned,—and indeed every kingdom save that of the Eternal becomes dispersed. After Imru 'ul-Ḳais reigned his son Al-Nu'mān the Great, who built Al-Khawarnāḳ⁷, and abode for a time, until one day he looked pensively at Al-Khawarnāḳ and his kingdom so full of pleasures, and asked, 'Must all that I see perish?' They answered, 'Yea, notwithstanding thy pains.' So he abdicated the throne, and
- (20) sought the face of his Lord before the evil day. This is recorded by 'Adī son of Zaid; and all of them walk in the fetters of destiny. After him reigned his brother Al-Mundhir⁸, and each of us had best beware of God. His mother was 'Heaven's Water,' but she did not escape for the purity of her names. Al-Mundhir invaded Syria⁹, and was slain by the Ghassān, and his son Al-Mundhir reigned after him,—some of time's wrongs are kind. This Al-Mundhir went to take vengeance for his father, and met with a fate, which occasioned great trouble at
- (25) the time, at the hands of Al-Ḥārith¹⁰. He was slain while seeking to avenge his

¹ The story is told at length in Ṭabari I. 757 sqq.

² Owner of the horse Al-'Asa, see *supra*, p. 20.

³ The story told by Ṭabari and others is that Ḳaṣīr mutilated himself like Zopyrus to obtain the confidence of Al-Zabbā, and then introduced an army into Al-Ḥīrah in sacks.

⁴ Ṭabari I. 768.

⁵ Ḥamzah, p. 99, after Ṭabari I. 834, who assigns him 114 years.

⁶ According to Ḥamzah after Ṭabari, Imru 'ul-Ḳais came to the throne after it had lapsed, and he it was who was called the first Muḥarriḳ. And according to both historians Al-Nu'mān was the second Imru 'ul-Ḳais. It is perhaps not surprising that the author should have got into some confusion about these names which are repeated by the chroniclers to make the lists of kings suit their chronological schemes.

⁷ The following story with the verses of 'Adī Ibn Zaid that attest it is given by Ṭabari I. 853.

⁸ His *son* according to Ṭabari I. 882, and others.

⁹ Ṭabari, p. 881, gives a different account.

¹⁰ According to Ṭabari it was his grandfather who was killed by Al-Ḥārith. The opinion adopted by the author is Ibn Ḳutaibah's.

father at 'Ain Ubāgh. Then reigned his brother 'Amr son of Hind¹,—yet could he find no refuge in rock or mountain. By God's command Ibn Kulthūm slew him, whether he was guilty or innocent. Then reigned Al-Nu'mān² son of Al-Mundhir, who was not wanting in firmness: it was he about whom the poet 'Adī son of Zaid³ used his efforts with the king of Persia until he set him on the throne, and left his brothers and tried not him. Afterwards he put 'Adī in fetters, and he died in prison. No one in this world can be ransomed. Then the son of 'Adī Ibn Zaid accused Al-Nu'mān, so that a trap was laid for him by Kisra⁴, and Abu Kābūs was thrown into the elephants' house to meet his end. Then ended the dynasty of Al-Mundhir, and fate is quite strong enough for that. (5) And Kisra set over Al-Ḥirah Iyās son of Kābīḡah, and then came Islam, and put an end to the trouble. Iyās perished at 'Ain Tamr. He was mourned by Zaid of the horses, since they were of one family, both of them being sprung from Ṭay', albeit a pedigree will not keep a man alive. Old is the tale of the kings of Persia; yet their line too ended. Darius was slain by Alexander, and the royal blood was left unavenged. Then after him rose the kings of the provinces, —and indeed the world consists of new-comers and those that are gone by;—and (10) when their time was over Azdashīr⁵ succeeded to the throne, and he announced the return of the sovereignty to the Persians. Then he perished and Sābūr arose, and 'the grafted palm will give thee of its fruit⁶;' after him rose Hurmuz, with whose good sense scandalmongers found fault⁷. After him Bahrām⁸, namesake of Mars, and he found no helper. Likewise Bahrām the Second was looked upon by the clearsighted fates. Then rose Bahrām the Third, and time, when it cheers, is false. Then rose a king called Yūsa, but according to others Nūsa⁹. Then succeeded a second Hurmuz, and what king's reign does not cease? He (15)

¹ Ḥamzah, p. 109.

² The author follows Ibn Ḳutaibah in omitting some names.

³ The story is told by Ṭabari I. 1018, and in the Aghāni II. ad init.

⁴ The story is told at length by Ṭabari, p. 1028.

⁵ The form given by most authors is Ardashir, and this is etymologically right. The Beirut MS. has the same form as the Leyden copy, which probably therefore goes back to the original scribe, and has the authority of Ibn Ḳutaibah.

⁶ The application of this saying, with which cp. p. 9 supra, is to be found in the story of the birth of Sābūr as told by Ṭabari, p. 823, &c. His mother turned out to be a daughter of the king Ashak, whose whole race Sābūr's father had sworn to exterminate.

⁷ Ṭabari, p. 833. According to the story told there, he was accused of intending to rob his father of the crown, and in order to prove his loyalty cut off his own hand, and sent it to his father, alleging that a mutilated person could not be king, and that by this act he had resigned all claim to the crown. Ibn Ḳutaibah speaks more generally.

⁸ An old name for the planet Mars.

⁹ The right form is Narsa.

- too perished, leaving an unborn child Sābūr; and the kingdom got into confusion after him. Then was born Sābūr of the Shoulders¹, whose story is not unknown. After him rose Azdashīr², and some one pointed him out to death³. Then rose Sābūr and dealt justly with the people⁴, had not his soul received a death-warrant. Then rose Bahrām son of Sābūr, and succeeded to the throne, but afterwards perished. Then rose Yazdajird, and he, as the Persians tell, was unjust and
- (20) tyrannical towards them⁵. But God's fate does not overlook tyranny; and he was kicked, it is said, by a horse⁶, and so that cord was broken. Then there rose after him his son Bahrām Jūr: and is there on earth a king who does no wrong? Verily God has implanted wrong-doing in men's nature, and given them authority over all other creatures. Anūsharwān had a coffin for his castle after his famous palace: Kūbādh was removed from this world by death; Kisra-Abarwāz lived long without a rival, then perished, and became as though he had never reigned. And when the blessed Prophet heard the story of his daughter Būrān⁷, he said,
- (25) 'Never shall a nation prosper that has given a woman charge of its affairs.' Many, many a king, of Arabs and other nations, has been lost like one who cannot find his way or refuses to appear. And if this be the way with kings, what can the
- p. 103 common people or the poor say? Destruction has not spared the liberal either: over Ḥātim the funeral melodies sounded; Ka'b Ibn Māmāh saw a look on the face of one of those who were sharing the water, and, giving his share to the brother of Namir, perished in the wilderness. Likewise the heroes and champions of the Arabs have not been spared by the shafts and darts of fortune. What
- (5) happened to 'Utaibah⁸ son of Al-Ḥārith, brother of Yarbū', albeit he had a great following in the field? Fate sent against him Dhu'āb son of Rubayyī'ah at Khaww, who brought upon him a day of mischief. Bisṭām son of Ḳais⁹ made a raid to keep off famine; and he was slain by 'Āṣim son of Khalifah. 'Amr son of Ma'dī Kariba¹⁰ was slain at Nabāwend; he died a martyr indeed, and it was as though

¹ According to Ṭabari he went as a spy into Caesar's camp, and being recognized, was sewn into an oxhide; out of which he escaped, and afterwards took the Roman Emperor prisoner.

² See note 5, p. 119.

³ According to Ṭabari he was deposed owing to his cruelty.

⁴ So Ṭabari, p. 846.

⁵ Ṭabari, p. 847.

⁶ Ṭabari, p. 849.

⁷ Būrān is mentioned by Ṭabari; tradition of what the Prophet said is in Ibn Kūtaibah, p. 224.

⁸ Ḥamāsah, p. 387. 'On the day of Khaww the Asad won a victory, and 'Utaibah son of Al-Ḥārith, who is called *Ṣayyād Al-Fawāris* (the hunter of the horsemen), was killed by Dhu'āb.'

⁹ Ḥamāsah, p. 457; Kāmil (Eg.) I. 134.

¹⁰ A poet and champion who was contemporary with the Prophet, and died in the Caliphate of Omar, or according to others Othman, on an expedition. There were different accounts of the place and time of his death, which is said to have been caused by a stroke of paralysis. Aghāni XIV. 28.

he had not perished. 'Antarah' son of 'Abs' met his doom at the hands of Asad Al-Rahis. Al-Sulaik son of Sulakah³ was slain by the Banū Ḥanifah. It is idle to repine or to be angry with fate! 'Āmir⁴ son of Ṭufail died of scab, and (10) Zaid of the horses died of fever; only 'Āmir was taken unbelieving, whereas Zaid came on a visit to the Prophet, and swore allegiance to him like a firm confessor. Khālid⁵ son of Ja'far was slain by Ibn Ḍālim in the protection of Al-Nu'mān, so wonderful are time's vicissitudes. How many a brave champion is gone, who fought so well with his opponent! And this is no exhaustive list of those that are gone, but merely a selection.

You know well too that time's hand does not spare the trumpeting brute (15) called Abu 'l-Mazāḥim⁶, with which the kings frighten their enemies, and by whose help they benefit their friends. Albeit he tramples on the ground with four mighty pillars, and distinguishes between friend and foe. He came to battle and was slain by the Thakafite⁷; had he been given a longer span, the ravages of time would still have carried him off. And by the hand of Al-Muhallab there perished another like unto him, who came in search of food. And were any living creature save God given a life as long as that of the stars, escaping from all mischief and hurt, he would still, as Ru'bah⁸ says, 'be kept in store for old age or death.' There escapes not from the claws of time the tawny lion, whose food is not *saḥm*⁹ or *mard*¹⁰, but who tears every day some prey which the robber's arts (20)

¹ This and the following personage are coupled with the last in Aghāni, l.c., as heroes of irresistible prowess.

² 'Abs was a distant ancestor, and the poet is usually called 'Antarah of 'Abs. Various accounts of his death are collected in the Aghāni VII. 152, among them this.

³ Described in the Aghāni XVIII. 134 as the fiercest of the Arabs, the greatest poet, the fastest runner, and the best at finding his way.

⁴ See supra, p. 57, notes 2 and 4.

⁵ Aghāni X. 17, where the story is told at length. Khālid was chief of the Hawāzin, and, having incurred the enmity of the tribes 'Abs and Dhubyan, went to the court of Al-Nu'mān, bringing a present of a horse. Here he met Al-Ḥārith Ibn Ḍālim, survivor of the tribe Yarbū' which had been raided by Khālid years before. A quarrel ensuing led to the murder of Khālid by Al-Ḥārith at the court.

⁶ Name for the elephant.

⁷ The Thakafite referred to is Abu 'Ubaid Ibn Mas'ūd, who killed an elephant at the battle of Qus Al-Nāṭif, Aghāni XXI. 217, Usd Al-ghābah, s.v. His death was bewailed by his fellow-tribesman Abu Miḥjan. Al-Muhallab Ibn Abi Ṣufrah was his contemporary, whose wars with the Khawārij are described at length in the Kāmil of Al-Mubarrad.

⁸ An account of this poet is given in the Aghāni XXI; but the line referred to is not quoted.

⁹ Name of a plant.

¹⁰ A form of the fruit of the arāk.

- cannot ensnare. Nay more, he frightens and keeps the people in their homes; his eyes are like two burning torches, or two camp fires. The ass turns to fly when she scents him; and he alarms a whole caravan, when they know he is near. In some terrible place he feeds two whelps with the maneless lioness that gives them suck. Many a torn victim is in his cave, rendered undistinguishable in shape, whose orphans he overwhelmed by his capture, and whom he ousted from
- (25) the possessions that he had won. He grew weary of hunting beasts, and abandoned them, and became enamoured of human flesh and sought after that. If the morning traveller came too late for him, he would attack the loiterer, and fiercely. A man would make a meal for him; and even the flesh of a couple
- p. 104 would not be overmuch. In the prime of his life he could overcome the black ostrich, and the mountain goat could not protect himself from him. Often at mid-day he would pounce on some secure flock of sheep and take the best of them to his home-keeping mate. Often at eventide he would make a raid upon some lowing ox, and return to his cubs with a wild calf or wild ass that had grown fat, feeding on the sweet-smelling fields. Little thought he of the antelope; that he would leave the poor wolf to chase. And in his old age there passes by him
- (5) a man having in his hands a bow and arrows; and he leaps on one enemy and embraces him, and rips his body open and disembowels it; but the rest of the company shoot at him with axes and spears, and though he thinks it impossible, with their missiles they make him like a porcupine, and when he is dead they at first think he is only asleep, until the truth appears, when they in their spite raise him on their swords; and so his brilliant career is over,—that long career wherein by his violence he earned the name *Kaswar*¹, and by his leaps the name *Miswar*, 'the leaper.' Or else there comes against him some captain with a band of horse, who, finding him crouching on his foreleg, thrusts him through with lances levelled, or cruelly hits him in a fatal spot. Or if he escape the one and the
- (10) other, still his soul is discharged by old age, contented with a scanty living after such splendid fare. Neither do the strokes of fate miss the fair-clad leopard, well-accustomed by long practice to sudden raids. The shepherds fear his onsets, and kind friends hasten to the traces of the wounds that he has inflicted. For him too there is assigned on some of his circuits a keeper of sheep or one who does not keep them; who thrusts a spear into his heart and saves the flock from his onslaught; who takes his skin, once his pride, and covers with it the mount of some runaway coward. Neither does the wolf escape the heel of time, even though he obtain the sheep that he covets, constantly snatching some lamb from

¹ Supposed to be derived from the root *Kasara*, 'to tear.'

the flock, and loosening some of its cords. Chased by the farmer's hounds he escapes them, and seizes the keeper's own lamb and devours it. He protects the (15) cubs of the hyena¹ after she has drunk the intoxicating cup that is not wine but death, treating them as his own, and feeding them with the product of his arts. At times he is starving and miserable, and even when hungry is envied for his fullness. 'Tis supposed that he has been drinking blood, whereas in truth he has had no lack of destitution. And often indeed the flocks perish before him and he (20) has a merry time, and he catches the shepherd asleep and has a feast. Yet are his fasts longer than his feasts; and thirst is co-partner with his vile nature. With such a life howbeit he is satisfied with all its hardships, and why should his miserable nature avoid it? Then one day he sees a lad, who is no fool, alone with a small flock, and this excites his cupidity. Howbeit 'there is many a wound in the arrows of a lad,' so when the wolf makes his attack, our stripling having a bow in his hand, sends one of his arrows into the last place that the wolf would wish, and the wolf's cubs become orphans, and sadly do they miss their shrewd (25) and sagacious father. The hyena too is no stranger to death, whether he die a natural death, or whether there chase him from behind his ears the father of p. 105 some family who makes him their food², so that they avert with his flesh the pangs of hunger when they overtake them. Or some morning, it may be, a savage dog surprises him, and hurries after him furiously, and takes him cunningly, so that neither running nor leaping saves him. Or, a torrent of water comes while the hyena is with his spouse in his lair, and the water carries them both away, and when morning comes he is drowned and voiceless. He might as well have never howled over a carcase; and never battered on the remains (5) of the lion's feast. How merrily used he to run over the stones! And now his skin is made into a mantle! Such are time's vicissitudes! It makes the saturated thirsty; the fox does not escape for all his cunning, neither does the spirit of the dun hyena of the sand-hills. Death too separates the hare from his mate, and cuts him off; neither is the rabbit's mother helped by her prayer 'God make me quick-footed, and stay-at-home, able to outrun the arrow up the hill.' She too is troubled by some snare, and finds herself suddenly in a bag; or else by some early-rising sporting Nimrod, whose heart is madly set upon the chase, who spurs against her on the high ground a fiery hunter, with a ribbon (10) round his neck³, or else sends against her some falcons which break the vertebrae of her back; or else an eagle pounces upon her, and so trouble overtakes her.

¹ There is an allusion to this in a proverb, Maydāni I. 182.

² The flesh of the hyena is lawful for food.

³ The neck of the horse that won in the chase was marked with blood. Mustāṭraf II. 72.

- Or can the decree of God be foiled by the wild ass, over whom day and night pass, keeping him still fresh, by no means decrepit, now braying, now rumbling, with five or eight mates, who trample the ground with no light step, having fed on plants watered by the spring rain, and scrambled for the puddles and *Sumi*?¹
- (15) Off flies their fur, and only their flesh and bones remain, until the meadow plants dry up, when he takes them wherever there is the trace of a stream; and when *Al-Han'ah* or *Al-Dhirā* rises, and they are hastening to a watering-place, the summer heat kindles fiery thirst, and they bethink them of some deep pond, whither at the false dawn they descend. But fate has set some bowman on the watch, with a twanging weapon in his hand, a weapon which says to the victim die! and it dies, a weapon selected by some vagabond of the tribe 'Abs or *Kahlān*; who watched it when it was a growing wand, until it became a magician's
- (20) wand in his hand. Every summer² he would bring it water to shorten the dry period for it; and at last when its growth was complete and it was suitable for the chase, he came one morning and detached it, with no hasty or violent wrench, and set it on a stand in his tent. There he let it imbibe the juice of the bark, and then applied the knife. And when he had shaped it to his satisfaction, he took it to one of the fairs of the Arabs, merely intending to learn its value, not with any idea of selling it to any one to live upon its spoil. There, though offered for it sacks and garments, he flaunted it among the people, and refused to
- (25) come to terms, and was unwilling to return home without it; and though offers were constantly increased, he thought it ruin to part with it, and going off to
- p. 106 a watering-place with it in his hand, sat down to watch for the beasts. At the end of the night the she-asses come trooping, with the warlike champion in front; and now piercing death approaches, and he is shot by one who feeds on wild-beasts' venison, who earns the title *flanker* or *liverer*. Straightway he hits him, and the mistresses abandon the mate who has found his death-blow, and the straight-shooter coming out of his hiding-place takes him to his little children, and makes of his flesh strips and slices, while his skin is despatched to the tanner. Like him does the short-nosed wild bull meet death—the creature who trembles
- (5) if a man sees him, who endures for a long time, during which the hunter can devise nothing against him; and then one day he looks in the direction of the river-bed, and the channels greet him with a flowery carpet, and the high wind inspirits him with his skin free from wounds, till the north wind drive him to take refuge near some far-off lotus, nowhere near the other lotuses, where he

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

² The whole of this description is from *Shammākh* (*Jamharah*, pp. 156, 157).

remains the long night complaining of the cold, the clouds emptying their load of hail upon him : and at morning the hunter comes upon him with his hounds, keen-scented after game, stout, tough fighters, with eyes like grey '*adris*¹ flowers ; (10) with leashes fastened to their necks, a very torment to the quarry. When he sees them, he turns his back to fly, fancying that a fire is raging in the desert. Then, after fleeing far, he rounds in fear and cold, and plunges with the two spears that grow apart from each other in his head ; and the dogs retreat from him and leave him the victory, while the boldest of the pursuers lies prostrate in the dust. And when he feels sure of escape there crosses his path a mounted horseman, from whose arrows he receives a wound in the breast or in the thigh, and who returns bringing with him the wild bull to his hearth after his hunt². Death over- (15) looks neither the absent nor the present, and 'God's is the matter before and after, and that day shall the believers rejoice.' So also with his snubnosed mate, she too has no long term here ; for often her calf falls into the power of some hungry wolf, some savage, wandering, rebellious creature ; he makes the attack while she is in a desert land, heedless ; and then when she returns to give milk to her calf, she finds nothing but blood and bones. Then she abides distraught three or four days, and after that returns to her feasting and watering. This makes her forget her calf, and she is satisfied to let things go their way. Had time overlooked her, she would not have blamed it ; as it was, time afflicted her (20) with adversity, and not she it. Neither is security from the assaults of destiny granted to the gazelle which never is sheltered by wall, but strays at large in the wide and empty plains, that spends not its nights between *shih* and *alā*³, but haunts instead the countries that abound in *gum acacia* and *arāk*, where it is safe from the hunters' nets. God sends it fatness, and mischief is removed from it. There it pleases itself with the *arāk* fruit, ripe and unripe, having taken to itself a lair with a bed, the fruit having stained its mouth cherry-colour, it being red (Adam) and its mate black (Eve), and the two in a Paradise if only they could (25) abide there. Not indeed that they resemble our first parents, though their colours correspond with their names ;—and while they are in this beatific existence, fate p. 107 fouls their clear water, and the snake is sent to them, the snake by which it was decreed that the old Adam should fall ; which finds our fair gazelle astray under the shade of some bush, fearing no mischief ; and the seducer falls upon it with its poisonous fang, and gives it a taste of death, death which separates it from all its friends. It might as well never have tasted young herb or old ; and never

¹ Said to be a plant with a red flower, capable of sustaining moisture in great quantity.

² Compare Abu Dhu'aib, Jamharah, pp. 131, 132.

³ Forms of wormwood.

- (8) snuffed the pleasant Zephyr. Off flies his mate, miserable for loss of him; and then after the lapse of time becomes the mate of another; to be herself in her turn the prey of that destruction which gathers them that come after to them that have gone before. 'The life of this world is but a deceptive ware.'

- Nor are the eyes of misfortune closed to the speckled ostrich, who goes without shoes and sandals, who drinks neither at watering-place nor channel, and is satisfied with colocynth and marjoram. When he is feeding in the *Tannūm*¹, he might seem an Ethiopian (not a Greek) slave. He wears neither bracelet nor earrings, (10) and rarely leaves the *ḥarṭaf*²; he talks to his mate in a husky croak; and the female lays her eggs in haste. She wraps them in her wings so that they sustain no damage, and soaks them in *ṣajil*³ till they are saturated. He is deaf and understands nought that is said; he wears no covering on his head, light or heavy. Lank and blinking, with a head like a pointless arrow, he too has death ready to seize him, whom, though he run in fear, he cannot forestall. Whether it come in a horseman's lance, or some unforeseen wise, such as, when he goes feeding with the females, when they come out at morn or even, and there comes suddenly across the sky a thundercloud, not one that has spent its water. Hastening down the (15) valley to his young who have no warm coat of feathers, a lightning bolt strikes his shoulder, and, seel death crows over him. Nor does the arrow of adversity miss the chamois half white, half black, the chamois who is so shy of mankind, who wanders feeding in the red herbs and the black; never fearing orphanhood for his young; whose drink is the pure water fouled by no staling, water given directly by a bounteous heaven to its reservoir, clear blue water which inspires no fear in him that drinks it, water, the flashing of which delights him that has well drunk— (20) how much more him that is athirst, and whose throat is parched! The chamois then, after staying long on a crag below which is the nest of the falcon, suddenly finds that some prince has exiled from his land a horseman who used to be ever shooting the wild game with his arrows; who is driven by hunger and fright to a mountain-top covered by flaky clouds. And when he has fasted long and feels that his Lord has misguided him, he shoots the chamois, and hits his liver, and rising to relieve his hunger takes his knife and divides him into pieces, and kindles a fire where he is, and after eating a little of his flesh, goes away and leaves him to broil. Likewise the chamois' mate does not fulfil the tale of her years; she (25) goes the way of the old beast who leaves the pure stream; and in the main matter

¹ A black plant.

² Name of a bitter herb; but it may also mean a robe.

³ Liquor ex postica parte struthiocameli tempore incubandi effluens.

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

Nor do the feet of trouble slide off the fiery stallion, that is neither galled nor p. 108
jaded, but is set down among valuable flocks, which kill their time among sand-hills, that from early morning consume the *arāk* and the purslain: the mortal who shoots them might as well have never shot; the enemy are driven off them with lances, and the riders pull tight their reins in order not to approach them. Yet even this stallion decays and becomes decrepit, though he never carried one stick of a saddle. He drinks such a draught of death as makes him forget the bitter herbs, after he has grown secure and ceased to fear rivalry. Else there befalls (5)
him some appointed end other than this, such as fate can always divert itself with. Some nightly guest comes to his master in a year wherein the clouds have played false; bringing in his train riders who have been ever since evening in the saddle, making for this man, hoping to obtain from him a service, whereby they might avert the misery of that year. He, wishing to build up glory for his young ones, glory based on a secure foundation, and thrilled with ambition, makes for his stallion and hamstringing him. The nightly host strikes him with a sword, and one of death's ministers fetches him; and he delivers the fat of his hump to the cooking pot, and the mistress of the house saves up dried strips thereof. His flesh is (10)
set in pans that are filled for the entertainment of the guests. And for one that meets his doom it is the same in whatever way he meets it; he may have guarded against it, but he did not escape it notwithstanding. Neither are the eyelids of death closed against the swift steed, who outruns the wind, who presents ever fresh beauties to the eye, and whose iron hoofs carry gold. Ample of skin, how greedily he seizes on the course! Round his feet are bands of silver; his hoofs (15)
are of emerald and crush the stones. No spots has he, nor whites over his eyes; when he neighs he arouses delight; food is brought him every morning and evening, and he is visited when the barking ceases. Every winter evening milch camels with abundant milk are brought him; and all *Nisār*¹ gives him the palm for racing. Some day his owner is surprised by a foray (the shafts of time cannot be averted): he is wounded in the chest with a spear-point; and he and his master perish with bleeding foreheads. He might as well never have won a race, and never had an evening draught. Neither do God's fore-ordained shafts (20)
make a mistake and pass over the beaked eagle, who drags to his eyrie the creatures of the desert, who makes the top of *Raḡwā*² or else *Tadūm*³ his home; his beak is like an axe; some cold morning when shaking off its wing

¹ = Arabia.

² Mountain near Medinah.

³ Locality unknown.

the hoar-frost, it sees far off a gazelle, and hopes to bring it home to its chick too meagre as yet to move ; so it swoops hoping to get some good, but its chance of booty fails it ; for it strikes against some jagged crag, which breaks its wing where it joins its body ; and it falls, being at the last gasp, on land, whether far from or near water ; and up comes Reynard, Reynard whom it has long oppressed, (25) robbing him of his mate and young ; and he makes its flesh food for his cubs ; thus p. 109 is the time of its end come, and the chicks are left on a high mountain, 'poor things that stretch their wings each morning, when they hear the blowing of the wind, or the croaking of the raven¹.' Thus destiny has dealt with their dam.

For the raven, too, the sword of fate has an edge—the raven that hops about the house, as though his thigh sinews were tied ; the raven clothed by God (5) with the garment of youth, which, when it hears of a palm-tree with ripe dates, travels thitherward, avoiding the fowlers : and when secure it alights in the plain, with eyes so clear that they might be the water in the hollow of a rock. Though secure, it still is prudently cautious ; and though elated, still well-skilled in its trade. Maybe it alights on some camel old and galled, and picks out its eye with its beak, then makes for the flesh on its back. When the time arrives for the parting of the tribe, it croaks, and it is sport to it when the caravan hastens. Many a man (10) has cursed it, and prayed that it might pass its morning in a pool of blood. And so it goes on until it becomes old and is called by the Arabs *Ghudāf*, when by the command of the Eternal it drinks a cup of poison. When its offspring and progeny increase, fate marks for it some lad with a big stone in his hand, who hits it some moment when it heeds not, and when fate is lying in ambush behind it. And then the name 'purbblind,' by which it was called in jest, not in virtue of any natural defect, turns out to be true. So it is wounded, and has to put up with trouble like that of him who has drunk too much wine ; and the sportive boy comes up with it, having a trowel in his hand, and fastens a hempen cord to its leg, tying it up like a beast ; and begins to mock in his mirth, saying to his captive, 'Why do you not croak ?' And thus he continues until the curtain of night (15) is unfolded, when the child returns to his home, and they fasten the raven to a chair ; and the child fearing advantage may have been taken of its sleeping hours comes to it early next morning, not indeed with any intention of letting it loose : and he finds it has breathed its last, and has gone out from prison into liberty.

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

¹ *Supra*, p. 66.

feeding-ground was hard by, and her drinking-place easy of access, so that even (20) a fool could find it. And after each visit to the water she would recite her various measures, like the musician at a drinking-bout, who mounts the platform to play, and drives away the cares of the drinkers by the beauty of her *raml* or *masmūm*¹. Fools think she is weeping, but she complains not of her life, her notes are all pleasure and delight, and no blame attaches to her. And one evening, when, her heart hiding no fear, she is improvising on her branch, fate sets upon her a kite, with sharp talons, no respecter of persons, that tears open her breast, and she finds (25) death very near. And the chick is left an orphan to weep for her evening and night.

Neither does the locust escape from the assaults of fate, the locust whose p. 110 feeding-ground is every portion of the earth that is covered with green; whereon she alights at night with eye like the nail of a cuirass. The departure of the day gladdens her and makes her fly, and it vexes her when she is hit by any rain-laden cloud. She passes her night on a field of some poor man with little of chattels or cattle, around her a flock of locusts, clustering together at the chilly hour; and at that cool time the poor man rises, and brings with him a wallet or a sack, wherein he throws them, well knowing what he is about; and he squeezes them in a stream (5) of water, not as the locust of 'Ayyār² was squeezed, and they become food for his young ones, who have long had no proper diet. Neither can the wiles of fate be eluded by the bee, seeking flower-juice on the mountain top, hard of ascent; whence death would have kept aloof, if it feared any height;—the bee that flits about amid bugloss and dandelion (?), and returns home after midday. In her house she has a store, such as the most liberal could not supply; into a cup of pleasing purity she sets a draught of honey thought to be a medicine. For her destruction some man in rags is appointed, some man not expecting luxurious (10) living; who brings with him pans and staves, and some hungry urchins anxious to earn some food, of the tribe of Hudhail³ son of Mudrikah or of Fahm. With greedy heart he rises early and climbs with the climbers, until his body is raised aloft, and then he falls upon the bees, hanging between hempen ropes, like a poor man bent on getting honey; and sends a cloud of smoke upon them, till they come

¹ Names of melodies.

² The phrase comes in a verse of Masrūh Ibn Adham Al-Na'ami, quoted in T. A. V. 256, &c. According to one explanation, 'Ayyār was a man, and Locust the name of his horse; according to another, a man named 'Ayyār caught a locust which, when he put it into his mouth, escaped through a breach in one of his teeth; according to another, a man caught several locusts, and, as he did not broil them sufficiently, some escaped. See also Maydāni II. 47.

³ Allusion to the story of Ta'abbata Sharran told in Ḥamāsah, p. 36, where the poet, being of the tribe of Fahm, robbed the honey of the Hudhail.

- (15) forth, afflicted, not thirsty; and the bee encounters some small bird, that thinks it good eating.

Neither are the plots of fate to be diverted from the serpent which lodges in a rock, and has the advantage of a distant death; at summer time he issues from his hole, and will not let his neighbour sleep; he fears no trying famine; when hungry he eats the dust; he keeps a store of trouble in his cave; and has on him as it were the cuirass¹ of Kais son of Zuhair. Even when he is in no fear he blows a blast that could fell a tree. And some spring day when he is sunning himself on the top of a mountain, fate milks for it what it has in store, and a shepherd (20) is attracted towards it well skilled at slinging stones. He crushes its head with a flint, and spares the reptiles the trouble of fighting it. Or does the boa's mother enjoy immortality, albeit all her life she is in the shade? She too grows feeble from old age; and yet she had been the great calamity, noted for ill-doing; the thought of her disturbed the snake-charmer's slumbers; trouble passed off her, until she perished of old age, without tasting the vengeance she had incurred. Neither can the bristling scorpion escape, though the period accorded it be long: some child stamps upon it with his sole, and its inborn venom avails it (25) not; albeit, for fear of the harm it may do, the child calls it by some other's name. 'God destroys the wrong-doers.' Neither does 'the mother of Māzin' escape,—I mean not by Māzin the brother of Tamīm or Hawāzin, but the poor p. 111 despised ant, that is of no honour among mankind, that lives in its ant-hill in sand or soil, gathering in the summer food for the year, and fearing not how the hot wind blows; when the time of her end approaches, there is assigned her by fate some winged fowl, or instead she is despatched by the heel of some lad, or some other effective blow. Immortality is not given to any land creature, nor to any (5) creature of the sea, that swims in the waves. Ask of the whale that swallowed Jonah whether it escaped death; or of the fish that dives in the Tigris, covered as it were with a cuirass, that is after a time dragged from the rushing, seething water into the flame of a fiery furnace. Ask of the frog that croaks when the stars appear, like a champion on the battle-field, or like one who warms himself when the weather is cold: and of his mate that stays constantly in the water. Ask of the snake that attacks the pearl-diver, which the Arabs fancy is the guardian of the pearls.

As for the dead man,—God brighten his face!—he has attained his desires,

¹ This cuirass figures in the narrative of the Aghāni XVI. 28. Al-Rabi' Ibn Ziyād offered Kais a price for a cuirass in the latter's possession, and then rode off with it, without having made an agreement.

for they who have obeyed God and his Apostle 'are with those whom God has (10) favoured, prophets, saints, martyrs, pious men,—a right noble company!' If he have left the hill of Damascus, with its plain and its waters, he is drinking among large-eyed Hūris a cup mixed with camphor; if he have been provided for his journey with a winding-sheet, he has now changed it for 'silk': if he have left the company of his brethren, he is now near his Lord in the abode of life. He is removed from the narrow quarters to the abode of eternity and joy. 'Such is the next world, which we shall give unto them that would not exalt themselves nor do (15) harm in this, and the result is to them that fear.' How many a lost sheep did he seek and guide aright! How many a deposit did he guard and faithfully return! How many a promise did he observe and keep! How many a vanity did he abstain from uttering! If Almighty God have removed him from us, He has taken him near Himself, and blessed him; if He have taken him away, He has not left his place without a successor. He saw his son in manhood's prime, and his son's sons a growing family. Nor is there a better heritage than a son known to be pious. Each time he makes mention of God he lightens his father's sins. (20) Not indeed that the dead man, thank God, had any sins to be lightened; but his long array of good acts will be doubled, and his lofty place be raised yet higher. And as for yourself (God lengthen your days!), were it not the custom to administer consolation at times of affliction, I should not have opened my mouth for such a purpose, neither should I have ventured on a word of exhortation, seeing that you know better than I do about the vicissitudes of time, and the ways in which men die. In telling you all this I am like one who 'presents' the people of Yabrīn with a sack of sand,' or one who should get up early to bid the ants lay (25) up stores. May God preserve you, and give you no more pain; inspire you, and not misguide you; bestow on you blessings, and not afflict you with troubles; increase you with honours, and not burden you with weights; bring you near Him, and not reckon with you too severely! May He show you in my lord Abu p. 112 Ṭāhir and his son what Sa'd Al-'Ashīrah² saw in his son—doing the opposite of what was done by Al-Walīd³ son of Mughīrah! For ye have been blest with

¹ Yabrīn was a place on the east of Arabia near Bahrain, famed for its sand-heaps, whence the proverb in the text.

² Sa'd Al-'Ashīrah was the name of a tribe of Madhhij, living in Yemen. Ibn Wakshah, one of their priests, was said to have been an early convert to Islam. (Sprenger, *Das Leben &c. des Muḥammad*, III. 459.) In the anthology called *Laṭā'if Al-Ma'arif* (Bodleian MS.) it is given as the name of one of the Prophet's companions, so called because of the number of his family.

³ A contemporary of the Prophet, mentioned by Ibn Hisham among the Prophet's opponents.

abundant wealth, and sons to behold it; and when the 'Memorial' came to him, he rejected it, and was not thankful; but you (God preserve you!) are a tree that can produce none but good fruit, and a sea wherein none but pearls of the best colour can grow. 'From the tree grows the sucker,' and ¹ 'if a man resemble his (15) father, none can blame him.' I need to excuse myself, and proffer ceaseless excuses, for what delayed my letter until now was the fact that since that lad's death there is left me neither a mind to dictate nor an intelligent copyist. To speak truly, I may be reckoned among the destitute. Abu Du'ād says ²,

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

As for my master Abu 'l-Majd, his occupations, unprofitable as they are, almost deprive him of sleep; and he makes no difference between night and day; his day is like a string that is too short for the occupations that have to be (10) crowded on it; and the bulk thereof are for the benefit of one from whom thanks will never be heard, and from aiding whom no great good is to be gained.

Were it not that you might think my conduct dictated by neglect of duty, I should have bitten a stone, and reckoned silence as gain, since solitude alters the intellect, and diverts the speaker from speaking. Albeit I will not deny that it gives distraction, and causes one not to feel the blow, and so eases the mind. God never make me like one who does honour till he is onerous, and whose (15) excuse is worse than his crime; and God forbid that I should be like the owner of nine-year-old camels who put up with painful years of famine, and then exchanged them for ewes with dugs of unequal lengths. And what use is the patience of the tiro after the trouble has been got over? I have not hastened, so that I could say I had improvised, as the man who hurries can make his improvisation his excuse;—on the contrary, I have failed in my duty and been neglectful, but rely on my lord's generosity. Consolation between strangers should be administered within three days, but between relations during a year. Till the year is out, weeping, in the opinion of Labīd ³, is the law. I indeed might well (20) weep not a year only or a month, but my whole life; and my internal condition is like what an ancient poet says about his camel ⁴,

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

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

¹ Maydāni II. 264.

² Aghāni XVI. 39.

³ See poem XXI in the edition of his poems by Huber.

⁴ Muḥāḍarāt of Rāghib Al-Ispahāni II. 385.

so well what is in your mind that I need not give trouble to your hand. God who is Almighty will protect you, and we all are hoping for you and praying for (25) you. And may the rising sun bring you each morning recruited strength in accordance with your merits.

LETTER XXXI.

P. 113

Congratulation on the birth of a child.

We are delighted with the new arrival, God give him a large share of his name, and the utmost of that after which he is called. I have thought of many good omens connected with his birthday, his being born on a *Friday*, the day of assembly, which is an augury of gathering, and is besides a day of feasting and expenditure—God make him therefore free-handed; it is moreover a day of religious observance; may God therefore graciously bring him whither the pious (5) have attained. His arrival moreover corresponded with the commencement of the ‘days of the old woman’¹, and that is an omen of health and security, for old women are tenderer with infants than girls. A rhymist says,

‘She² dandles her bucket as an old woman dandles a child.’

There is a proverb too, ‘Tender³ as an old woman with an infant;’ then his arrival coincided with the break-up of winter, and the ‘break-up’ (*Fiyyah*, which means the change from cold to heat, or from a forest into the open plain) is considered a good omen. This is illustrated by the tradition of *Kaylah*, who (10) came on a visit to the Prophet, and her daughter *Hudaybā* ‘said to her, ‘Fagyah! (deliverance!) your foot shall not cease to be erect;’ but the tradition is too long to quote. It is fortunate too for one who arrives into this world to meet the spring smiling in his face, bidding him welcome with its roses and its flowers, presenting him with its rich verdure. For March and April are the merriest of the months of the year, and smile when time frowns. The children of the desert exult in them, marvelling how the wilderness decks itself out in green array, and (15) plucking the mushrooms and other fungi that appear. It is a bad sign for the comer into this world to be met by the two white months, shaking their hoarfrost on him, and sighing with their chilly, soaking winds, and grinning out of their icy mouths, whose pearliness is far from beautiful. The time when the

¹ The old name for seven days at the end of winter.

² *Mufaṣṣal*, § 338; author unknown (*Ain*, *Khizānat al-adab* III. 571).

³ Not in the ordinary collections.

⁴ The tradition is quoted in *Al-Iḳd Al-farīd* I. 103.

archer burns his bow, and the shepherd his staff, and the maidservant would wish her head were one of the stones that support the cooking-pot! God be thanked for putting his arrival at the time in which the famine-stricken finds pasture, and in which the young camels ramble about, even those that have pustules in their (20) feet, and in which the flocks eat their fill on all available ground. I ought not indeed to congratulate, being a hair in your body, a pebble in the ground you tread; but joy overcame me and made me indiscreet.

p. 114

LETTER XXXII.

I exhausted a sheet yesterday urging you to let loose a captive whose liberation would be advantageous. I did not ask you to forgive or condone his offence, and this morning his mother has come here in a great state of grief, asserting that in the small hours of the night a robber broke into the house and (5) slaughtered four hens; she is as much overcome by the loss as if they were hens like those which Alexander told the king of Persia about, laying golden eggs. Now an egg-laying hen is to a poor person of more account than a camel that is rich in milk. A goat is to a man who has nothing like 'Ulayyān¹ to Kulaib of Wā'il, and the sheep of Ma'bad's mother² was in her eyes superior to Zabbā³, the camel of Abu Du'ād, which was followed by the tribe, when its fetters were loosed, whatever direction it took. And perhaps the clucking of this hen was (10) sweeter in the ears of this Christian than the playing of Ma'bad and Al-Gharīḍ. As for his mother, doubtless she accounted the eggs her most valuable capital and her most precious store, a thing to salve her eyes with when they pained, things which she collected one by one, and which she sold for lamp-oil; and she would clean them with warm water. Strange that this thief should not also have stolen some flour, so as to take 'both the bread and the dish;' and even if this Christian had committed a crime, his poultry would not deserve to be killed, for some one⁴ says,

(15) 'Punishment falls on the most miserable;'

¹ The story of Kulaib and his stallion Ghulayyan is often told, e. g. Ḥamāsah, p. 421. The spelling of the name with 'Ain for Ghayn is condemned by Maydāni, who however notices that Abu 'l-'Alā spelt it so.

² Ma'bad's mother was a slave, and her masters were sheep-owners, Aghāni I. 21.

³ Aghāni XV. 97. In a disastrous year the tribe of Iyād divided into three companies, one of which followed the direction taken by this camel.

⁴ Imru 'ul-Ḳais, ed. Ahlwardt, p. 120.

and Al-Nu'mān son of Bashīr¹ says,

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

And if the Christian be imprisoned and his poultry slaughtered, then your secretary is likely to lose the price of the poultry, for he is of the same religion as (20) his friend, and an old writer says,

'If 'Ijl² avenge on us the fault of others, we avenge on Taim-allāt the fault p. 115 of the Banu 'Ijl.'

And the proverb says,

'When³ the cattle refuse to drink, it is the bull that is hit.'

Now if the thief has slaughtered the cock he 'has made away with the cattle, stallion, and all;' but if he have forgotten him, then he will be some comfort and consolation to his owners, since they are sure to admire him more than Bashshār⁴ (5) admired his cock, though he says,

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

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

LETTER XXXIII.

p. 116

Addressed to the Kādī.

God forbid that I should make any objection to a sentence, and indeed I am sensible that 'Alī, on whom be peace, took a blanket off his son Al-Ḥasan, thinking it belonged to the treasury, as well as of many other traditions, among them that Shuraiḥ took his son into custody when his son had gone security for another man, and how Usāmah interceded with the Prophet for Al-Makhzūmiyyah, and was refused. Now the bearer of this letter states that he and his (5) son were arrested yesterday, and were confronted with one of the 'two 'Uma-

¹ A poet of the early days of Islam, of whom an account is given in the Aghāni XIV. 119; but the editors of Imru'ul-Qais make him the author (Ahlwardt, p. 121).

² Ḥamāsah, p. 476; Aghāni XVI. 58. Zaid al-khail is said to have been the author.

³ Aghāni XVIII. 138; Jamharat al-amthāl, p. 76.

⁴ The verses occur in Ḥamāsah, p. 823, without an author's name. There are several variations. Cf. Muḥādarāt of Rāghib Al-Ispahāni II. 397.

riyyahs¹, and the one whose presence is most hateful to a Moslem. And in the case of his son the judgement was carried out, and undoubtedly the same thing happened to Abu Sufyān son of Ḥarb, although he was the chieftain of the Kuraish; and his father escaped by 'the skin of his teeth,' being saved by his old age and a bodily ailment. Now of the two 'Umariyyahs that I have mentioned, one is a feminine robe, and the other is presented by the executioner to one who has erred. The poet says,

- (10) 'Let not² a man be deceived by a lengthy 'Umariyyah of full size upon an inconstant woman.'

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

- (15) 'Every day³ I practise my circuit in the marshes, for fear lest Ḥakīm may reproach me.'

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

p. 117

LETTER XXXIV.

- I am always anxiously expecting news of you, as anxiously as the gazelle looks out for its mother, or one that suffers from drought for the lightning that portends rain. And when I get flash after flash, it produces in me fresh elation, and I ask about you as Ḍabbah asked after Su'aid⁴, and Muḥalhil⁵ the Ṭai'ite after
- (5) Zaid; and I expect intelligence of you from every stranger, and seek it from the students, till some one informed me, after the *rimth*⁶ had dried up, and the hot months approached, that you had started for Egypt; then some one else told me at the time when the autumn leaves come out, before the rise of the *Spica*, that he had accompanied you to Baghdad. To-day some one else came bringing with him various sorts of gifts, of which the finest was a letter conveying news of your good health; now the confidence that exists between us renders the sending of guarantees unnecessary, and where friendship both in presence and in absence

¹ In the verse cited below, which is also quoted in the L. A. and T. A., an 'Umariyyah is said to be a dyed garment; it was named after 'Umar Ibn 'Ubaidallah Ibn Ma'mar, Aghāni XIV. 106. Perhaps the other sense is a scourge.

² Quoted in the lexx. with the same explanation.

³ L. A. IV. 223.

⁴ Supra, p. 59.

⁵ Probably the father of 'Zaid of the horses' (Aghāni XVI. 50) is meant; a more famous Muḥalhil was of another tribe.

⁶ A herb on which camels browse.

exists, there is no need to send perfumes. Albeit I reckon it as medicine and scent, (10) and in my eyes it equals musk that is mixed. Its name (*su'd*) is to my mind ominous of happiness, and may God cause your life to run in the happiest way. And this is how the Arabs do in their augury, they change the words and make them signify what they do not really mean. A poet says¹, 'My comrades said "a hoopoe!" I answered that means hope, to come to us morning and evening.' Now *hope* is not really the root of the word *hoopoe*. The two verses rhyming in *ʿād* which you quote are not the two about which I enquired, there is a very great difference between them; mine were with *ridf*, and yours without; mine in (15) *Khafʿ*, and yours in *Tawil*,—as different as the directions of Syria and Yemen. Mine were verses of six feet, and yours of eight. They are quite unlike; then mine were to describe the locust and the jerboa, and yours were to describe the brightness of a woman's teeth. Now God Almighty has decreed that calamities
 If all the countries, as he has decreed that they shall befall all mankind.
 trouble has befallen Damascus, then what country has not suffered?
 written in the sublime book, 'There is no city but God will destroy it
 Day of judgement, or else punish it severely. This is written in the (20)

big; the biggest

of two sorts, the sound and the faded. That which is sound is from
 tity, and that which gets obliterated is from the accursed devil. Now He
 secrets is aware that my affection for you (God preserve your power
 our station in good!) if left to itself suffices, and if compared with any
 other surpasses and outtops it.

I shall not syncopate my affection for you as the first order of *Munsariḥ* is (5)
 syncopated, nor contract it as the fourth foot of the *Tawil* is contracted, nor elide
 it like a trochee, nor make it like a shifting syllable, affected by aphaeresis and
 chronic complaints. On the contrary, I shall preserve it from alteration as the
 rhyming syllable is preserved from alteration of vowel or consonant; and I shall
 maintain its purity and truth. The relations between us shall not require to be
 kept fresh by interchange of presents, for our love is in a well-guarded place,
 secure against time's ravages. I was told that you went to Egypt, yet did not (10)
 stay there long, only the length of time it takes a bird to sip a drop of water; but

¹ The play on the word in the Arabic is different; the verse is by Abu Ḥayyāh Al-Numairi, and is cited in *Zahr al-Ādāb* II. 77 with other curious lines.

that since then you have made for 'Irāk. And I beg to offer you the sweetest salutations with the fragrance of ambergris or of musk.

p. 119

LETTER XXXVI.

Answer to a letter from ABU 'L-HASAN MUHAMMAD son of SINĀN about Kaḫlah wa-Dimnah, and a suggestion from the Sultan that the proverbs contained in that book should be put together in an abridgement.

- I felt at the receipt of your letter many forms of pleasure, one from receiving it, and another from hearing it read out, and a third, greater than either, from
- (8) receiving the news of your good health; and much I marvelled at its language, which was not in rhyme like that of the dark ages¹, nor in prose like that of the vulgar of our own day, but strung together in verse like pearls of the sea, and fragrant as the garden zephyrs in the morning; and the longing of my heart's core for the writer is like that of the pupil of the wakeful eye for sleep; the sun and moon are witness that I speak true; and I repeat my request, and whisper my entreaty, and save your patience by writing so rarely; and have only delayed my answer to this date, because I was unable to do what I am in duty bound to
- (10) do: for God Almighty says², 'When ye are greeted, then give a better greeting, or return it;' now I can give no better greeting than yours, and God says³, 'God will not demand of any soul more than it can do.' Do not ascribe my answer to hypocrisy; had I in my youth been able to do what you ask me⁴, I should have been compelled to resign such tasks when my locks became white; and perhaps his majesty supposes that I still possess the strength and the endurance which he is accustomed to associate with me; but that is not so; my years have mounted, and my frame has become feeble, my steps have become short, and my temper soured; and the mill⁵ that never did more than buzz has now grown idle. The
- (15) grinding of that mill I used to confine to myself, and make it serve for me only, in the days when it was not damaged; but now time has dealt hardly with it, and nought remains but for it to quit its habitation, and for its place to become desolate. And all its utility is gone and ended; and if the rest of its sisters like it depart, my pronunciation will be spoiled, and I shall say *shin* where I ought to say

¹ Rhymed prose was the form of speech in which the oracles of the pre-Mohammedan *kāhins* or sorcerers were delivered. The phrase is Mohammed's, *Jāhiz*, *Tibyan* I. 112.

² Koran IV. 88.

³ Koran II. 286.

⁴ Perhaps the meaning is rather 'had I been hypocritical' &c.

⁵ This seems to refer to the loss of a tooth.

sin, and no one will understand what I say: if I say '*asal*' is the walk of the wolf, p. 120 the hearer will think I said '*ashal*', a word which does not, I think, occur in the language. This 'mill' and its fellows in their successive departures are like the verse recited by Abu Zaid Sa'īd son of Aus¹, 'Mistress of the howdah, turn it back to whence it started; do not move off, or else all the tribe will want to depart too.'

Now if some day any composition of mine reach you, and you find all the *sins* (5) written *shins*, you will know the reason, and that the hearer misunderstood me, and wrote down what he heard. Now such a difference of reading does actually occur in a verse quoted in the *Reformed Discourse*, 'Is this a mess of camel with chest-disease, or small-pocked sheep, small-boned, of poor flesh with no hair on its skin?' where the word *kasham* (flesh) occurs in some copies, but *kasam* (distribution) in others. Clearly this is an alteration occasioned by the falling out of the teeth of the reciter.

Your letter may be regarded as one of the Sultan's blessings, but as for (10) Kallāh wa-Dimnah, I have no copy of the book, my knowledge of it is very imperfect, and I cannot remember that I ever went through it with any one. When your valuable letter was brought me I asked for it, and some one brought me a bad copy, and I requested him to read me some of it; and I felt like one who has 'to make bricks without straw²;' and let not the noble Sultan suppose that I am to be treated in accordance with what occurred in the case of the 'letter of the horse and the mule³;'—his favour put it into my mind and brought it into my mouth, and made my tongue utter it,—undoubtedly I must obey commands, for (15) obedience to the Sultan is an obligation binding upon all, and especially on persons like myself, for many reasons, the lightest of which is expressed in the verse of Al-A'shā⁴,

'When a man's guide in his travels is the lance-head, he had best obey the chieftain.'

If I find strength to do it—and strength is far from me—then it will be a case of a miser playing at the arrow game, or a shot without an archer⁵. Now this is the time of the *melongena* and the grape, both of which are bad for the brain; (20) the *melongena* is said to undo in a month the work of the *anacardia* in an age; and as for the grape, you probably know the two verses rhyming in *ḡad*, written

¹ This verse is not apparently in the *Nawādir*; the second half is quoted by Maydāni II. 202.

² Maydāni II. 18. The proverb literally means 'seizing with nothing to catch hold of.'

³ Name of one of Abu 'l-'Alā's compositions, which, being in the style of books of fables, might make it likely that the author was familiar with the classical fable-book.

⁴ *Christian Arabic Poets*, I. 387.

⁵ Maydāni I. 245.

- by the Sheikh Abu Ṭarīḡ, about the sour grape; God preserve the author of those two lines! when you addressed me in the way you did I endeavoured to find some allegorical interpretation for the epithet *ajall* (most glorious) applied to me; I thought that possibly you might be comparing me to *jaḥīl* or 'thatch,' owing to my feebleness; or that the adjective might be derived from the verb *jalla* in the
- (25) sense of 'to be too small,' used of girls too young for child-bearing; or from *jalla*,
 p. 121 to put on an apron, used of slave-girls, as in the verse, 'By Allah, I know not when I put on my apron whether it be made of a beast's skin or of a man's.' I am of course aware that none of these is really the sense you intended the word to suggest, but you used it in accordance with your good opinion, whereas my glosses
- (5) are based on the real truth; and each of us has both done and spoken rightly, and your conduct will lead to a permanent recompense, and gratitude which will go far towards-being eternal, albeit man is not eternal. A poet says, 'When you reach your country, talk of this; for speech gives both death and eternity,' &c.

p. 122

LETTER XXXVII.

- Your letters come successively, showing that affection is not feigned; and your heart testifies that I too have for you an affection which the trailing blasts cannot obliterate, and the darkness of night cannot hide. And may He who gave us acquaintance and affection add thereunto of His good pleasure a new meeting. Three of your letters have reached me, which I regard as the three stars of the
- (5) Ram,—I prefer this simile to the three legs of the potstand. Kings are like seas—their pearls are not found on the shore—it requires trouble and coaxing to get at them. Hideous as may be the longest night of winter, still there comes after it the commencement of the dawn; and time is long and ever new, and if it affect any of our princes at all, its effects by God's grace will only be like those of the spring showers, for your clouds give no false show. And your family name is
- (10) Bārīḡ¹, and that is a good omen, suggesting a cloud bringing copious rain; and events will find in you one who is accustomed to 'drink out of hollows'; and the trials that visit you will find you prepared. And I send a salutation, &c.

p. 123

LETTER XXXVIII.

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

¹ S. Z. II. 98 is addressed to Abu Tamīm Al-Barḡi.

² Maydāni I. 307. It refers to one who knows his way about, but the origin of the proverb is rather obscure. Cf. *supra*, p. 28, n. 8.

your fortune may produce a pearl of rare price, and that the buds of your times may open into the sweetest flower. I had been awaiting intelligence from you as the traveller who has lagged behind the caravan asks where his comrades are gone, or the pasture-hunter enquires where the rain has fallen. Were you to appear (5) before the Sultan, you would find him more faithful than the *kaḥā*, and better at pedigrees than Al-Bakrī¹; no doors enclose him, and neither servants nor masters are shut out by the chamberlain. Had you not intended to bid adieu to the Pleiads, and to pay a visit to the rainy South, and been sitting gazing at Canopus with the gaze of a neighbour, not of a stranger, it would have been prudent for you to remain at his court. However, you have made up your mind, and God help you to carry out your plans, and clothe you in the fairest robe of overwhelm- (10) ing bliss. I offer you greetings such as she that suffers from drought bestows on the far-off pastures, and your friends here all think of you as the sufferer in Samāwah² thinks of her days in Tabālah; and they praise you as the ruined praise their better days.

LETTER XXXIX.

p. 124

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

¹ Al-Bakrī the genealoger is mentioned by Ibn Kṭalbah, p. 181.

² A place in the desert. Tabālah was proverbial for its abundant vegetation; the Samāwah of Kalb is mentioned as a typical wilderness in S. Z. I. 86.

LETTER XL.

*Part of a letter to the distinguished Sheikh ABU 'L-ḤASAN son of SINĀN*¹.

- The populace, dear friend, have been wagging their tongues with the rumour that you were bent on a visit to the 'Mother of Mercy',² on getting a draught of the stinted water, and a glance at the conquering town³. And, though they said nothing, they secretly disapproved of your resolution, for there are times and times for the performance of religious duties, and each pilgrimage has its appointed season. He who owes a fast must not discharge his obligation during
- (5) either of the feasts, and it is also unlawful to commence prayer at either of the chilly times of day, I mean sunrise and sunset. Now your going on pilgrimage this year is as unlawful as fasting during the feast of the end of Ramaḍān, or the use of perfume by one who has entered on the pilgrim's state. Is there such a thing in the records of the Prophet's followers or of their successors as that a man should have left the battle-field in order to visit God's house? Now we had a fancy that the Sultan would not permit your starting on a journey this year, and that he would make his preventing you a cumulative benefit.
- (10) For you are one of the guardians of the Moslems, one who whets his sword and makes strong his cuirass, and repairs any walls or pinnacles that are insecure; and were it not that the people of Haleb were occupied with their own concerns, they would have been careful to dissuade you from your plan before it became fixed, and to say how much they will miss you before you were parted and gone. For whom have your subjects got to guard their bricks and mortar, and to provide rations of dates and water to keep them alive? And on whose opinion shall we rely in making choice of well-woven coats of mail—coats that resemble the skins
- (15) of leopards? Who shall act as your deputy in the choice of a serpent-like spear, whose bite is followed by death without delay? Or when cuirasses have to be repaired, to serve with arrows as the most powerful assurance of safety—cuirasses that look as though they had been stolen from the sea-monsters? Or the inmates of the quiver, whose notches and wings must be scrutinized, and whose rods and points should be examined by his orders?

Now in these days there has come an announcement that the Sultan has refused you leave, and this is a matter about which *prima facie* I know not what to

p. 126 say; the ancient house ever since the days of Adam has been visited by pilgrims, nor has there ever been any fear of transference or alteration, nor has any one changed

¹ Compare Letter XX.

² Meccah.

³ Medinah.

the ancient custom. And in Ḥaleb (which God guard!) there are plenty of garments fit for spoil, and accoutrements which are desirable possessions, and the object of rivalry: and all this will at once come to an end by the conclusion of the truce and the return of the Roman arbiter to his throne at Byzantium. And if you would remove your people with you, then the Ḥijāz is a secluded (5) region which is not liable to the dangers to which we are exposed: but if you think of travelling by yourself without your friends, what is the use of that? Let not that happen which the proverb¹ expresses, 'He wrangled till he won.' And if one child were to ask another in the dead of night in a discussion, 'Who is rewarded for staying at home many times what he would be rewarded for going on either pilgrimage?' and the second lad answered, 'Mohammed son of Saʿīd,' his arrow would have fallen near the mark; for your protection of your subjects is a greater duty than either pilgrimage. And your son Abu 'l-Kāsim is young, and (10) it is surely unlawful to desert him; since he is not able to bear up with ill-fortune. And you must know that the Sultan would not think lightly of such an occasion, and I fear that he may be concerned with the needs of his journey, and require provision, in which case orders will be given to bring you back from your pilgrimage.

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

LETTER XLI.

p. 127

If your letters were to come as continuously as rain and as successively as respiration I should always be better pleased with the latter rain than with the former, and like each fresh one better than the last. You never write except with some kind intention, and never suggest any but prudent courses either openly or secretly. I know not what I am to say of the happiness which has been granted me in my relations with you, concealing my faults, and hiding the flaws which (5) have spoiled me. And after this I do not see why pearl earrings should not be got ready for a cat, or gold girdles be cast for an ape. People might assert that the

¹ Maydāni II. 127; the word meaning 'won' might also be rendered 'went on pilgrimage,' and hence the proverb is very happily cited. It is not however certain what the proverb originally meant, although the authorities assert that it is to be used of people who are obstinate.

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

- Abu . . . came here laden with gratitude to you, in loads that a camel could
- (15) not endure, nor a cloud drive; which in fact would be too much for any but the steeds of song, that know no chains and complain not however hard the burden. And had you not already done your utmost for him, and realized the utmost aims of his soul, and given him more than a friend could demand, I should ask you to do him yet more favours and to let fall upon him the curtain of beneficence. However, you have left no room for a request, nor any opportunity for the proudest aspiration to disport itself. And he has composed in your honour
- (20) a poem ending in *r*, in which his two talents natural and acquired have helped each other. And I offer you greeting, &c.

p. 128

LETTER XLII.

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

'Khidāsh has so many gazelles to aim at, that he does not know at which to shoot¹.'

- (5) And the remedy for importunacy is what Bashshār says,

'There is nothing for an importunate man like a refusal².'

Accept from me greetings which, if they were a day, would be the day of 'Arafah³; and if they were a month, would be the month of Ramaḍān.

¹ Verse quoted Aghāni XI. 74 and Ṭabari III. 158.

² Aghāni III. 37.

³ See the description of this in Mr. Keane's *Six Months in the Hijāz*.

VARIOUS READINGS, CORRIGENDA, AND APPENDIX.

L=Leyden MS. (Cod. 1049 Warn.)

B = Beirut edition¹.

[illegible]

¹ Readings of B that are certainly erroneous are not noticed.

20. طلة B [طل 3 107] تناءت B rightly [نتات 24] استمرار read [استمراد 20]
 وليست read [وليت 23] تسوى read [لسوى 22 109] فغدت read [فعدت 5]
 رزئت read [رزئت 8] الشاب read [الشباب 6 112] ارءاء read [رءاء 20 110]
 B, I.A. يشرد بى [يشردنى 15 116] اطلاقه read [اخلاقه 8 110] عذ B [مثل 22]
 الطباء read [القباء 3 128] يسمع read [يسمع 3 120] رطيبا read [وطيبا 10 117]

P. 38, n. 9. The proverb is *عربة عربة ابنة اقعدى وقوى*, Freytag, *Proverbia Arabum*, II. p. 12, no. 34. Maydāni's gloss on this proverb is also very meagre: if Abu 'l-'Alā really refers to it here, he would seem to have made the maidservant the person who *deals* the blow.

P. 72, n. 8. For other verses ascribed to the Jinn, see Ibn 'Arabi, *Muhāḍarāt* II, 97, 8.

P. 80, n. 4. The metrical peculiarity of this line is discussed in *Ḥamāsah*, p. 448, where the same terms are used.

P. 121, n. 7. Perhaps Muhallab is written by mistake for Bahrām-Jūr, whose slaughter of an elephant is described by Ibn Ḳutaibah, p. 224.

P. 131. In Ṣafadi's list the following works are mentioned, which Dhahabi omits:

معجز احمد (Commentary on Mutanabbi)

رسالة العصفريين
رسالة الغفران
رسالة الملائكة

Included in Dhahabi's
ديوان الرسائل

تصميم الارى

تفسير الهمة والردف

تفسير شواهد الجهرة (ثلاثة اجزاء ولم يتم)

مجد الانصار فى القوافى

دعاء ساعة

الظل الطاهرى

ضوء السقط

دعاء الايام السبعة

رسالة على لسان ملك الموت

ظهير العهد نحو ظلم السور

عظمت السور

الرسالة الخطية

مثنى النظم

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o	p 1	rr	1r 16	oi	rr 6
1	10	rr	26	1.	rr 1
v	p 7	rr	1r 9	11	11
^	10	ro	17	1r	20
9	18	rt	1r 13	1r	ro 7
1.	o 2	rv	1o 5	1r	18
11	11	ra	15	1o	1r 3
1r	20	ri	24	11	14
1r	1 3	r.	11 7	1v	rv 9
1r	13	ri	17	1a	ra 10
1o	21	rr	26	11	ri 1
11	v 5	rr	1v 8	v.	11
1v	15	rr	15	vi	19
1a	26	ro	18	vr	r. 4
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r.	17	rv	1a 8	vr	16
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ri	1r 6	oa	21	ao	ri 2

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AA	VO 25	IV	VI 12	IV	20
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IV	VO 5	IV	VV 9	IV	18
IV	VA 1	IV	22	IV	IV 4
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IV	19	IV	VI 7	IV	IV 8
IV	IV 9	IV	21	IV	20
IV	20	IV	AV 8	IV	IV 3
IV	IV 7	IV	21	IV	11
IV	17	IV	AI 11	IV	23
IV	IV 2	IV	25	IV	IV 6
IV	14	IV	AV 12	IV	17
IV	IV 5	IV	25	IV	22
IV	14	IV	AV 14	IV	IV 7
IV	IV 6	IV	24	IV	14
IV	13	IV	AV 11	IV	21
IV	IV 6	IV	20	IV	IV 7
IV	IV 1	IV	AV 5	IV	18
IV	15	IV	15	IV	IV 3
IV	26	IV	24	IV	12
IV	IV 13	IV	AV 7	IV	22
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IV	IV 9	IV	24	IV	14
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IV	IV 9	IV	21	IV	IV 7
IV	21	IV	AV 9	IV	13
IV	IV 9	IV	AV 3	IV	21
IV	23	IV	14	IV	IV 2
IV	VI 14	IV	IV 4	IV	11
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Arch. A. 24) has a brief notice of him:

'He became a Moslem in Syria, served some princes, and entered Egypt, where he served Al-Jarjarā'i; after whose death he became Vizier to Al-Mustanṣir. He was killed in 440.' This is taken from Ibn Al-Athīr, anno 440 ad fin., who states that he was originally a Jew, and had served Muntakhab al-daulah at an early period of his career. Now Muntakhab al-daulah, when governor of Ba'albek, had cultivated friendly relations with 'Aziz al-daulah, and indeed had received his title from the latter. (Appendix to the *History of Damascus*.) It would seem clear that the Ṣadaḳah Ibn Yūsuf of p. 65 is the same person; but it is hard to determine on whose side the error lies.

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فهرست ما يوجد فى رسائل ابى العلاء من اسماء الرجال والنساء والقبائل والحيوانات

وقد علم بنجيم على اسم من استشهد بشعره

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ابو عبادة الوليد	٦٨ 9, 14, ٦٦ 24, 26, ٥٧ 17	عم
بذوة ٦٣ 13	٨٩ 16, ٧٨ 5	آدم عم ١٢٦ 1, ٩٣ 14, ٨ 4

• ترجمة أبى العلاء المعرّى للذهبي •

قال ولا اعلم ما يعوزه بعد ذلك فقد روى عنه ابو القاسم التنوخي وهو من
اقرانه والخطيب ابو زكريا التبريزي احد الاعلام والامام ابو المكارم عبد الوارث
ابن محمد الابهري والفقهاء ابو تمام غالب بن عيسى الانصاري والخليل بن
عبد الجبار الغزويني وابو طاهر محمد بن احمد بن ابى العقر

الانباري وغير واحد ومرض ثلثة ايام ومات في

الرابع ليلة جمعة من اوائل ربيع

الاول من السنة (٤٤٩) وقد رثاه

تلميذه ابوالحسن

على بن همام

اربع كراريس قلت انما مقداره ثمان ورقات فكانه يعنى باكراسة زوجين من الورق قال وكتاب حماسه الراح في ذم الخمر نحو عشرة كراريس مواعظ خمس عشرة كراسة كتاب فقه الواعظ كتاب الحلى والحلى عشرون كراسة كتاب سجع الحمايم ثلثون كراسة كتاب جامع الاوزان والقوافي نحو ستين كراسة كتاب غريب ما في هذا الكتاب نحو عشرين كراسة كتاب سقط الزند فيه أكثر من ثلثة الاف بيت فنظم في أول العمر كتاب رسالة الصاهل والساجح يتكلم فيه على لسان فرس وبغل اربعون كراسة كتاب القائف على معنى كليله ودمنة نحو ستين كراسة كتاب منار القائف في تفسير ما فيه من اللغة والغريب نحو عشر كراريس كتاب السجع السلطاني في مخاطبات الملوك والوزراء نحو ثمانين كراسة كتاب سجع الفقيه ثلثون كراسة كتاب سجع المضطرب رسالة المعونة ١٠ كتاب ذكرى حبيب تفسير شعر ابي تمام نحو ستين كراسة كتاب عبث الوليد يتصل بشعر المحتري كتاب الرياش اربعون كراسة كتاب تعليق الخلس كتاب اسعاف الصديق كتاب قاضي الحق كتاب للمقيم النافع في النحو نحو خمس كراريس كتاب المختصر الفتحي كتاب الالامع العزيزي في شرح شعر المتنبي نحو مائة وعشرين كراسة كتاب في الزهد يعرف بكتاب استغفر واستغفر منظوم ١٥ فيه نحو عشرة الاف بيت كتاب ديوان الرسائل مقداره ثمانمائة كراسة كتاب خادم الرسائل كتاب مناقب علي رضي الله عنه كتاب العصفورين كتاب السجعات العشر كتاب عون الجمل كتاب شرف السيف نحو عشرين كراسة كتاب شرح بعض سيبويه نحو خمسين كراسة كتاب الامالي نحو مائة كراسة قال فذلك خمسة وخمسون مصنفًا في نحو اربعة الاف ومائة وعشرين كراسة ثم قال القفطي وأكثر ٢٠ كتب ابي العلاء عدمت وانما وجد منها ما خرج عن المعرة قبل هجم الكفار عليها وقتل اهلها فقد اتيت قبره بسنة خمس وستمائة فاذا هو في ساحة بين دور اهل عليه باب فدخلت فاذا القبر لا احتفال به ورأيت على القبر خباري يابسة والموضع على غاية ما يكون من الشعث والاهمال قلت فقد رأيت انا قبره بعد مائة سنة من رؤية القفطي فرأيت نحوًا مما حكى وقد ذكره بعض الفضلاء انه وقف على المجلد الاول بعد المائة من كتاب الايك والغصون

القدم سمعان من هذا كلامه فصبرت ساعة ثم سلّمت عليه فردّ فقال متى
اتمت فقلت الساعة ثم قلت يا سيدي ارى في وجهك اثر غيظ فقال لا يا
ابا الفتح بل انشدت شيئاً من كلام المخلوق وتلّوت شيئاً من كلام الخالق فلحقني
ما ترى فتحققت صحة دينه وقوة يقينه وبالاسناد الى السلفي سمعت ابا زكريّا
التبريزي اللغوي يقول افضل من رأيته ممّن قرأت عليه ابو العلاء وسمعت
ابا لمكارم بابهر وكان من افراد الزمان ثقة مالكي المذهب قال لما توفي ابو
العلاء اجتمع على قبره ثمانون شاعراً وختم في اسبوع واحد عند القبر مائتا
ختمه وده قال السلفي هذا القدر الذي يمكن ايراده هنا على وجه الاختصار
مدحا وقدمها وتقريظاً ودماً ففي الجملة فكان من اهل الفضل الوافر . والادب الباهر .
١٠ والمعرفة بالنسب . وابام العرب . قرأ القرآن بروايات . وسمع الحديث بالشام على
ثقات . وله في التوحيد واثبات النبوة وما يحض على الزهد واحياء طرق الفتوة
والمرّة شعر كثير . والمشكل منه فله على زعمه تفسير . قال القفطي (في) ذكر اسماء
الكتب التي صنّفها قال ابو العلاء لزمت مسكني منذ سنة اربعمائة واجتهدت
ان اتوفّي على تسبيح الله وتحميده الا ان اضطرّ الى غير ذلك فاملت اشياء تولّي
١٥ نسخها الشيخ ابو الحسن عليّ بن عبد الله بن ابي هاشم احسن الله توفيقه
الزمني بذلك حقوقاً جمّة لانه افنى زمنه ولم يأخذ عمّا صنع ثمنا وهي على
ضروب مختلفة فمنها ما هو في الزهد والعظات والتمجيد فمن ذلك كتاب
الفصول والغايات وهو موضوع على حروف المعجم ومقداره مائة كراسة ومنها كتاب
انشئ في ذكر غريب هذا الكتاب لقبه السادن نحو عشرين كراسة وكتاب اقليد
٢٠ الغايات في اللغة عشر كراريس وكتاب الايلك والغصون وهو الف ومائتا كراسة
وكتاب مختلف الفصول نحو اربعمائة كراسة وكتاب تاج الحرة في عظات النساء
نحو اربعمائة كراسة وكتاب الخطب نحو اربعين كراسة وكتاب يسميه خطب
الحيل عشر كراريس وكتاب خطبة الفصيح نحو خمس عشرة كراسة وكتاب يُعرف
برسيل الراموز نحو ثلاثين كراسة وكتاب لزوم ما لا يلزم نحو مائة وعشرين كراسة
٢٥ وكتاب زجر النابح اربعون كراسة وكتاب بحر الزجر مقداره عشر كراريس وكتاب راحة
اللزوم في شرح كتاب لزوم ما لا يلزم نحو مائة كراسة وكتاب ملقى السبيل مقداره

♦ ترجمة ابي العلاء المعرّي للذهبي ♦

ما أكل لا تنبته الأرض شفقة بزعمه على الحيوانات حتى نسب إلى التبرّم وآث
يرى رأى البراهمة في اثبات الصانع وإنكار الرسل وتحرّيم للحيوانات وإبذائها
حتى للحيات والعقارب فغى شعره ما يدلّ على غير هذا المذهب وإن كان لا
يستقرّ به قرار ولا يبقى على قانون واحد بل يجري مع القافية إذا حصلت كما
تجئ لا كما يجب فانشدني ابو المكارم الاسديّ رئيس ابهر قال انشدنا ابو
العلاء لنفسه

اقرّوا بالاله واثبتوه ♦ وقالوا لا نبئ ولا كتاب
ووطء بناتنا حلّ مباح ♦ رويدكم فقد بطل العتاب
تمادوا في الضلال فلم يتوبوا ♦ ولو سمعوا صليل السيف تابوا

وبه قال وانشدني ابو تمام غالب بن عيسى الأنصاري بمكة انشدنا ابو العلاء ١٠
المعرّي لنفسه

اكتنى من الايام ستون حجة ♦ وما امسكت كفاي فنى عنان
ولا كان لى دار ولا ربع منزل ♦ وما مسنى من ذاك روع جنان
تذكرت ائى هالك وابن هالك ♦ فهانت على الأرض والثقلان

الى ان قال السلفى ومّا يدلّ على صحّة عقيدته ما سمعت للطبيب حامد بن ١٥
بختيار النميرى بالسمرسانية مدينة بالخابور قال سمعت القاضي ابا المهذب عبد
المنعم بن احمد السروجي (يقول) سمعت اخى القاضي ابا الفتح يقول دخلت على
ابى العلاء التتويحى بالمعرة ذات يوم فى وقت خلوه بغير علم منه وكنت اتردّد
اليه واقرا عليه فسمعتة وهو ينشد من قبله

٢٠ كم غودرت غادة كعاب ♦ وعُمرت اتمها العجوز
احرزها الوالدان حرزاً ♦ والقبر حرز لها حرز
يجوز ان تبطل المنايا ♦ ولخلد فى الدهر لا يجوز

ثم تاوه مرّات وتلا إن فى ذلك لآية لمن خاف عذاب الآخرة ذلك يوم يجموع
لّه الناس وذلك يوم مشهود وما تؤخّره إلا لأجل معدود يوم يأتى لا تكلم
نفس إلا بإذنه فمنهم شقي وسعيد ثم صاح وبكا بكاء شديدا وطرح وجهه ٢٥
على الأرض زمانا ثم رفع راسه ومسح وجهه فقال سبحان من تكلم بهذا فى

- وله اذا مات ابنها صرخت بجهل ♦ وما ذا تستفيد من الصراخ
ستتبعه كفاه العطف ليست ♦ بهل او كُثْم على التراخي
- وله لا تجلسن حُرّة مؤثقة ♦ مع ابن زوج لها ولا ختن
فذاك خير لها واسلم للا- ♦ نسان ان الفتى من الفتى
- ♦ وله منك الصدود ومنى بالصدود رَمَا ♦ من ذا عليّ بهنا في هوال قَمَا
بي منك ما لوغدا بالشمس ما طلعت ♦ من الكآبة او بالبرق ما ومَمَا
جرّبت دهرى واهليّه فما تركت ♦ لى التجارب فى ود امرئ غَرَمَا
اذا الفتى ذمّ عيشا فى شببته ♦ فما يقول اذا عصر الشباب مَمَا
وقد تعرّضت عن كل بمشبهه ♦ فما وجدت لآيام الصبا عَوَمَا
- ١٠ وله صفراء لون التبر مثلى جليلة ♦ على نوب الايام والعيشة الفنك
تركك ابتساماً دائماً وتجلدا ♦ وصبراً على ما نالها وهى فى الملك
ولو نطقت يوماً لقاتلظنكم ♦ تخالون انى من حذار الردى ابكى
فلا تحسبوا دمعى لوجد وجدته ♦ فقد تدمع العينان من كثرة الفكك
- انشدنا ابو الحسين ببعلبك انا جعفر انا السلفى انا ابو المكارم عبد الوارث
١٥ ابن محمد الاسدى رئيس ابهر انشدنا ابو العلاء بن سليمان لنفسه قطعة ليس
لاحد مثلها
- رغبت الى الدنيا زمانا فلم تَجُذ ♦ بغير عناء والحياء بلاغ
والقى ابنه الناس [؟] الكريم وبنته ♦ لدى فعندى راحة ففراغ
وزاد فساد الناس فى كل بلدة ♦ احاديث مين تفتري وتصاغ
- ٢٠ ومن شرما اسرحت فى الصبح والدمى [؟ والدجا] ♦ كميت لها بالشاربين مراغ
ولما مات اوصى ان يكتب على قبره
- هذا جناة ابي عليّ وما جنيت على احد
الفلاسفة يقولون ايجاد الولد واخراجه الى هذا العالم جنابة عليه لانه يعرض
الى الموائد والآفات والذى يظهر ان الرجل مات متحيراً لم يحتم بدين من الاديان
٢٥ نسال الله تعّ ان يحفظ علنيا ايماننا بكرمه انبأتنا فاطمة بنت علي انا فرقد
ابن ظافر انا ابو طاهر بن سلفة قال من عجيب رأى ابي العلاء تركه تناول كل

♦ ترجمة أبي العلاء المعرّي للذهبي ♦

ومنه وانما حمل التنوارة قارئها ♦ كسب الفوائد لاجب الثلاوات
 وهل اتيحت نساء الروم عن عرض ♦ للعرب الا باحكام النبوات
 انبأنا ام العرب فاطمة بنت ابي القاسم انا فرقد الكنانى سنة ثمان وستمائة
 انا السلفى سمعت ابا زكريا التبريزي قال لما قرأت على ابي العلاء بالمعرة قوله
 يدٌ بخمس ميء من عسجد فديت ♦ ما بالها قطعت في ربع دينار
 تناقض ما لنا الا السكوت له ♦ وان نعوذ بمولانا من النار
 سالت عن معناه فقال هذا مثل قول الفقهاء عبارة لا يعقل معناها قلت لو اراد
 ذلك لقال تعبد ما لنا الا السكوت له ولما اعترض على الله بالبيت الثانى قال
 السلفى ان قال هذا الشعر معتقداً معناه فالنار ماواه وليس له في الاسلام
 نصيب هذا الى ما يحكى عنه في كتاب الفصول والغايات وكانه معارضة منه ١٠
 للسرور والايات فقل له اين هذا من القران فقال لم تصقله المحارب اربعمائة
 سنة الى ان قال السلفى اخبرنا الخليل ابن عبد الجبار بقزوين وكان ثقة ما ابو
 العلاء التلوخي بالمعرة ما ابو الفتح محمد بن الحسين ما خيشمة فذكر حديثا .
 وقال غرس النعمة وحدثنى الوزير ابو نصر بن جهير ما ابو نصر المنازى
 الشاعر قال اجتمعت بابى العلاء فقلت له ما هذا الذى يروى عنه ويحكى ١٥
 قال حسدونى وكذبوا على فقلت على ما ذا حسدوك فقد تركت لهم الدنيا
 والاخرة فقال والاخرة قلت اى والله قال غرس النعمة واذكر عند ورود الخبر بموته
 فقد تذاكرنا الحادة ومعنا غلام يُعرف بابى غالب بن نهان من اهل الخير والفق
 فلما كان من الغد حكى لنا قال رأيت في منامى الباحة شيخا صريحا وعلى
 عاتقه افعيان متدلّيتان الى فخذه وكل منهما يدفع فمه الى وجهه فيقطع ٢٠
 منه لحما يزرده وهو يستغيث فقد هالنى (فسألت) من هذا فقيل لى هذا
 المعرّي الملقب ولابى العلاء

اتى عيسى فبطل شرع موسى ♦ وجاء محمد بصلاة خمسي
 وقالوا لا نبى بعد هذا ♦ فصل القوم بين غدي وامسي
 ومهما عشت في دنياك هنى ♦ فما تخليك من قمر وشمس
 اذا قلت المحال رفعت صوتي ♦ وان قلت الصحيح اطلت همسي ٢٥

• ترجمة ابي العلاء المعرّي للذهبي •

ايلام للميوان ويظهر الصوم دائما قال ونحن نذكر طرفا مما بلغنا من شعرة
لتعلم حجة ما يحكى عنه من الحادة فمنه

• صرف الزمان مفترق الالفين • فاحكم الاهى بين ذاك وبينى
أنهيت عن قتل النفوس تعيدا • وبعتت انت لقبضها ملكين
• وزعمت ان لها معادا ثانيا • ما كان اغناها عن الحالين
ومنه قران المشتري زحلاً يربحى • لايقاط النواظر من كراما
تقتى الناس جيلا بعد جيل • وخلفت النجوم كما تراها
تقدم صاحب التورية موسى • واوقع بالحسار من اقتراها
فقال رجاله وحى اثناء • فقال الاخرون بل افتراها
وما حجتى الى احجار بيت • كؤوس الخمر تشرب فى ذراها
اذا رجع للحكيم الى حجاء • تهاون بالشرائع واردها

ومنه فيما انشدنا ابو على بن الخلال انا جعفر انا السلفى انشدنا ابو زكريا
التبريزى وعبد الوارث بن محمد الاسدى لقيته بابهرا قال انشدنا ابو العلاء
المعرّي بالمعرة لنفسه قال

١٥ • فحكنا وكان الفحل منا سفاهة • وحق لسكان البسيطة ان يبكوا
تخططنا الايام حتى كائننا • زجاج ولكن لا يعاد له سبه
ومنه هفت الحنيفة والنصارى ما اهدت • وبهود حارت والمجوس مضلة
اثنان اهل الارض ذو عقل بلا • دين وآخر دين لا عقل له
ومنه قلت لنا خالق قديم • صدقتم هكنا نقول
زعمتموه بلا زمان • ولا مكان الا فقولوا
٢٠ • هذا كلام له خبيء • معناه ليست لكم عقول

ومنه دين وكفر وانباة تنال وفر • قان يُنص وتورا وانجيل
فى كل جيل اباطيل يدان بها • فهل تفرد يوما بالهدى جيل
قال النووى نعم ابو القاسم الهادى وامته • فزاد الله ذلاً يا دجيمجيل
٢٥ • ومنه قوله فلا تحسب مقال الرسل حقاً • ولكن قول زور سطره
وكان الناس فى عيش رغيد • فجأوا بالمحال فكدره

منه ببغداد سقط الزند وعاد الى المعرّة سنة اربعمائة فقد قصده الطلبة من النواحي ويقال عنه انه كان يحفظ ما يمرّ بسمعه فقد سمع الحديث بالمعرّة عاليا من يحيى بن مسعر التنوخي عن ابن عروبة اللراني ولزم منزله وسمى نفسه رهن المحبسين للزوم منزله وذهاب بصره واخذ في التصنيف فكان يعمل تصانيفه على الطلبة ومكث بصفا واربعين سنة لا يأكل اللحم ولا يرى ايلام الحيوان . مطلقاً على شريعة الفلاسفة وقال الشعر وهو ابن احدى عشرة سنة قال ابو الحسين علي بن يوسف القفطي قرأت على ظهركتاب عتيق ان صالح بن مرداس صاحب حلب خرج الى المعرّة فقد عمى عليه اهلها فنازلها وشرع في حمارها ورمائها بالمجانيق فلما احسّ اهلها بالغلب سعوا الى ابي العلاء بن سليمان وسألوه ان يخرج ويشفع فيهم فخرج ومعه قائد يقوده فأكرمه صالح ١٠ واحترمه ثم قال لك حاجة قال الامير اطال الله بقاءه كالسيف القاطع لان مَسَّه وخشن حذّه وكالنهجار المبالغ [؟] قاطظ وسطه وطاب برده خذ العفو ومر بالعرف واعرض عن الجاهلين فقال له صالح قد وهبتها لك ثم قال له انشدنا شيئاً من شعرك لنرويه فانشده يديها ابياتاً فيه فترجل صالح وذكر ان ابا العلاء كان له مغارة ينزل اليها ويأكل فيها ويقول العمى عورة والواجب استتار في كل ١٥ احواله فنزل مرة وأكل دبساً فنقط على صدره منه ولم يشعر فلما جلس للاقراء قال له بعض الطلبة يا سيدي أكلت دبساً فاسرع بيده الى صدره يمسه فقال نعم لعن الله النهم فاستحسنوا سرعة فهمه وكان يعتذر الى من يرجل اليه من الطلبة فانه كان ليس له سعة واهل اليسار بالمعرّة يُعرفون بالتخل وكان يتأوّه عن ذلك وذكر الباخريزي ابا العلاء فقال ضرير ما له في الادب ضرير ومكفوف ٢٠٠ في قميص الفضل ملفوف . ومحجوب خصمه الالدّ محجوج . قد طال في ظل الاسلام أناؤه . ولكن ربما رشح بالألحاد إناؤه . وإنما تحدثت اللسان بأسانه لكتابه الذي زعموا انه عارض به القرآن وعثونه بالفصول والغايات في محاذاة السور والآيات قال القفطي وذكرت ما ساقه غرس النعمة محمد بن هلال بن المحسن فيه فقال كان له شعر كثير وادب غزير ويرمى بالألحاد في شعره واشعاره دالة على ٢٥ ما يزن به ولم يكن يأكل لحماً ولا بيضاً ولا لبناً بل يقتصر على النبات ويحرم

ترجمة ابي العلاء المعرّي للذهبي

احمد بن عبد الله بن سليمان بن محمد بن سليمان بن احمد بن سليمان
ابن داود بن المطهر بن زياد بن ربيعة ابو العلاء التنوخي المعرّي اللغوي الشاعر
المشهور صاحب التصانيف المشهورة والزندقة الماثورة له رسالة الغفران في مجلدة
• قد احتوت على مزدكة واستخفاف ففيها ادب كثير وله رسالة الملائكة ورسالة
الطير على ذلك الانموذج وله كتاب سقط الزند في شعرة وهو مشهور وله من
النظم لزوم ما لا يلزم في مجلد ابداع فيه وكان عجبا من الذكاء المفرط والاطلاع
الباهر على اللغة وشواهدهما ولد سنة ثلاث وستين وثلاثمائة وجدر في السنة
الثالثة من عمره فعمى منه فكان يقول لا اعرف من الالوان الا الاحمر فاني
١٠ البست في الجدرقي ثوبا مصبوغا بالعصفر لا اعقل غير ذلك اخذ العربية عن
اهل بلده كبنى كوثر واصحاب ابن خالويه ثم رحل الى طرابلس وكانت بها
خزائن كتب موقوفة فاجتاز باللاذقية ونزل ديراً كان به راهب له علم باقاول
الفلاسفة فسمع ابو العلاء كلامه فحصل له به شكوك ولم يكن عنده ما يرفع
به ذلك فحصل له بعض الحلال واودع من ذلك بعض شعرة فمنهم من يقول
١٥ ارعوى وقاب واستغفر وممن قرا عليه ابو العلاء اللغة جماعة فقرأ بالمعرّة على
والده وبحلب على محمد بن عبد الله بن سعد النحوي وغيره وكان قانعاً
بالسير له وقف يحصل له منه في العام نحو ثلثين ديناراً قدّر منها لمن يخدمه
النصف وكان آكله العدس وحلاوته التين ولباسه القطن وفراشه لبد وحصيرة
بورية وكانت له نفس قوية لا يحمل منه احد والا لو تكسّب بالشعر والمديح
٢٠ لكان ينال بذلك دنيا ورياسة واتفق انه عورس في الوقف المذكور من جهة
امير حلب فسافر الى بغداد متظلماً منه في سنة تسع وتسعين وثلاثمائة فسمعوا

٤٢

ومن كلامه

كانت كتبي اليه كبحر الاري يكون في الدهر مرة والان قد صارت كسوانح
الغريان وبوارح الظباء

تكاثر النجباء على خدش ♦ فما يدري خدش ما يصيد

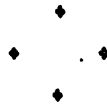
ومن ألح فداؤه ما قال بشار

وليس للملجف مثل الرد

وعليه سلام لو كان يوما لكان يوم عرفة او شهرا لكان فاتحاً اعنى شهر رمضان

والسلام وحسبي الله وحده

هذا ما وجد من مكاتباته الى اصدقائه



ومن كلامه

لو اتصلت كتب مولاى كاتصال الامطار وتوالت توالى الانفاس لكنت
بوليها . اسرمتى بوسميها . والى مستأنفها . اشوق متى الى سالفها . وما
يكتب الا فى بر . ولا يحث على غير المصلحة فى الجهر واليسر . وما ادرى ما
اقول فى السعادة التى قد رزقتها عنده حتى غطت معائيبى وسترت الأيكة التى
اصرت بى فما انكر بعدما ان تعدّ تَطَفَّات الدَّر لَام الادراس . وان تصاغ مناطق
الذهب للزُّبَّاح . وان يدعى المدعون ان ريش ابن انقد سهام صائبة او قنوات
يَزْنِيَّة وانا على شكرى له واعتداده باياديه لا ادع نصيحتة اذا رفعنى فوق
حقى اغرى اللسن بذمى ولو بعد حين ولو فُتَّت الحجارة لم يوجد فيها ما له
١. قيمة ولو تفتق ذاك البرعوم لظهرت منه زهرة غير حسنة فى المنظر ولا طيبة
فى المتئسم . وقد علم الله ان زندي ليس بوار . وان اليد عطلت من السيوار . 206
وبلغنى من اشغاله ما يسرنى له فى عُقباه . ويوجب تخفيفى عنه بترك المكاتبه
فى دُنْيَاه . ولا ريب فى التقاء الضمائر على الموّدة وتصافح الخواطر فى كل يوم
بل فى كل ساعة وقد ورد ابو فلان مُوقِراً من شكره ما لا تطيقه الابل ولا تسيقه
١٥ السمائب ولا تنهض به الا رطائب القريض التى شرفت عن العقال . ولم
تشتك لمكان الاثقال . ولو لا انه قد استفرغ معه الجهد وبلغ به اقصى آمال
النفس واعطاه غاية امانى الصديق لسالت ان يزيده من المكارم ويسبل عليه اسجاف
التفضل ولكنه لم يترك للسؤال موضعا ولا للامنية الاشارة متصفا . وقد كان عمل
قصيدة على الرأ تعاونت عليها فضيلته الغريزة المهدّبه . والبراعة
٢٠ المكتسبه . وانا اهدى اليه سلام الرائد المجدب على الروضة
العازية والشيخ الهرم على ايام الشبيبة

فلا ادري ما اقول فيه للبيت العتيق منذ عهد آدم يُزار ويُحجّ ما خيف عليه
انتقال ولا تحوّل ولا غيرة عن العهد مغير وحلب حرسها الله قد صار فيها رباط
يُغتتم وجهاز يُرغب فيه ويُتنافس ولن يلبث ان يزول بانعقاد الهدنة وعودة
لجامع كلمة الروم الى كرسية من بزنتيه وان كان مولاي الشيخ ادام الله عزه
204 يخرج بالاهل ادام الله ميانتهم فالحجاز مكان معتزل لا يلحق به ما نحن فيه .
وان كان يظعن بنفسه دون اودائه فما الفائدة في ذلك أما يعلم ان لاهل البلد
أنساً بروية شحفة واستماع قوله وما ينبغي ان يكون كما قيل في المثل لَحّ فَحجّ
ولو قال وليد لوليد في ليل داج . وهو محادث محاجّ . من يؤجر في مقامه
في الديار . اضعاف اجره في حج واعتمار . فقال الوليد الاخر محمد بن سعيد .
لوقع سهمه غير بعيد . وحماية الذمار اولى من حج واعتمار . ومولاي ابو
القسم ولده صغير السن فكيف يستحل ابخاشه . وهو لم يربط من الزمن
جاشه . ويجب ان يعلم ان السلطان اعز الله نصره لا يغفل مثل هذه الخلة
واخاف ان يهتم بمصالح السفر فتلزمه في ذلك مؤنة ثم يؤمر برده من الطريق
وان كان غرضه في الرحلة الخلاص من شغل هو فيه فلن يتعذر وهو قاطن لم
يُنْهي نجيبا . ولا مارس من الاسفار عجيبا . واخبار العامة الى هذه الغاية في 10
205 ذكر مسيرة ترهّياً كأنها سحابة المصيف والله يجعل الخير له
قريباً في كل حال . من حلول في الوطن وارتحال .
وانا اخض حفرته بسلام ينوب عن الوسمي
الهاكر . ويطيب عرّفه للناكر

٢٤٠

ومن كلامه الى الشيخ الفاضل ابي الحسن بن سنان

قد كانت العامة اطال الله بقاءه سيدى ارسلت ذوات العذبات متحدثة بانك قد عزم على زيارة ام رُحْم وورد المصنونة والمرور بالجائبة قَارَمُوا ضامرين على كراهة واداء الغروض له اوقات . ولكل حج منىقات . فمن كان عليه صوم ام يجز قضاؤه في العيدين . ويكره ابتداء الصلوة في التبردين . اعنى عند الشروق والغروب وسفر مولاى الى الحج فى هذه السنة حرام بَسَل كما حرم صوم عيد الفطر . وحُظِر على المحرم تسميح يعطر . وهل سمع فى اخبار الصحابة او التابعين ان رجلا خرج من مصافة العدو يريد بيت الله الحرام وقد كانت القلوب احسّت بان السلطان اعز الله ملكه لا يُسمع بسفره فى هذا العام . ويجعل منعه من ذلك ١٠ زافيا من الانعام . وهو ادام الله تمكينه امين من امناء المسلمين يُرْهَف 203 الشوكة ويستجيد الامة ويحس ما وهى من سور او شرفات ولو لا ان عامة حلب حرسها الله مشغول بالمعائش لما اغفلت شكية عزيمة قبل ان تستحكم وذكر الوحشة له دون ان يفارق ويرتحل ومن لحياطة الرعية بمداميك الجدر . واجراء السعد لحفظها والغدر . وعلى من يعتمد فى تخبير السوايح ذوات الزرد . ١٥ المشبهة بفصالات الابرد . واتى الناس ينوب عنه فى اعتيام صاحب طرفين كانه ايم . اذا نكر جاهت المنية ولا ريم . وريم جواشئ تكون مع الاتصية للسلامة اوكد حجة . كأنما تُستلب من حيطان اللجة . وخبايا وفاض يُتفقد افواقها واجنحتها . ويُتعهد باوامره سراها واغترتها . وقد ورد البشير فى هذه الايام بان السلطان اعز الله نصره تقدم بالمنع وهذا امر إلا ان يكون له باطن خلاف الظاهر

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ومن كلامه

كتبت مستهل عاذل لا زال معذولا في المكارم . محسوداً على تجتنب الدنيا
والمحارم . وعزله الله سعادة الشهور ما بين غورها الى مُحاقها . وبركة الايام ما
بين غروب شمسها واشراقها . ويمن الليالى من طلوع شفقها . الى تجلى
غسقها . وما كنت اظن ان السماك يطلع الا وهو قد اغار حبل العزيمة وقطع
خَيْط الفرات وبرد غليل النفس من مشاهدة حران وانكفاً عائداً الى السيف
وما ينبغي ان يلوح قلب العقرب الا وهو فى جوار النوفل حُصَّاراً او السيد
عزيز الدولة اعز الله نصره فمن كان متمسكاً . وجب ان يجاور بحراً او ملكاً .
لا سيما اذا كان الملك اديباً . والمتصعلك نافذا ارباباً . وهو ادام الله عزه قد
حلب الدهر اشطرة . واوقد غصا السفر وقطرة . وان ناق الرزق ١٠
فسوف يتسع فورا العام المجدب عام خصيب . والوادي
الاشيب مكان رحيب . وانا اهدى له سلاما
لو رُئى لكان انيقا . ولو تصوع
لحسب مسكاً فنيقا

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ومن كلامه

ورد كتاب سيدى الذى يُؤمّل لهلاله ان يُبدر . ولتقبه ان يستمحر . ولحار
زَمَنه ان يفضّ عن انفس جوهر . ولأَيَمه وقته ان تبوّج عن اطيب زَهر .
وكنّت اتوكف اخباره سؤال المخلف عن الرفقة بمكان الصحاب . والرائد عن
• مواقع الصحاب . ولو مثل بين يدى السلطان لراى منه اصدق من الكُدرى .
وانسب من المرء البكرى . ومثله لا يجاف دونه باب . ولا يهتجب عنه
الحشم ولا الارباب . ولولا انه قد اضمر هجران الثريا . ولجئب الى الجنوب ذات
الربّاء . واحبأت ينظر الى سهيل نظر قريب . لا نظر لامع غريب . لكان الرأى
مقامه بتلك الحفرة ولكنه قد ازمع امرأ والله يعينه على مراسة .

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ويشمله من اليُمن السابغ ياسنى لباسه . وانا اهدى
اليه سلام المحلل على الروضة العازية والجماعة
يذكرونه ذكر المجدبة بالسماوة ايامها
فى ارض نُباله ويشنون عليه ثناء
المعدوم على ازمان السعة

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ومن كلامه

كُتِبَتْ عِنْدِي تَتْرَى . دَالَّةٌ عَلَى أَنَّ مَوَدَّتَهُ لَيْسَتْ مِمَّا يُفْتَرَى . وَقَلْبُهُ يَشْهَدُ
لِي بِشَوْقٍ لَا تَحْمُوهُ أَذْيَالُ الرُّوَامِسِ . وَلَا يَسْتَتِرُ بِاللَّيْلِ الدَّامِسِ . وَالَّذِي وَهَبَ
مَعْرِفَةَ وَمَوَدَّةً . يَضِيفُ إِلَيْهَا بِمَشِيئَتِهِ مَشَاهِدَةً مُسْتَجِدَّةً . وَصَلَتْ لَهُ ثَلَاثَةٌ
كُتِبَ هِيَ لَدَيَّ كَأَشْرَاطِ النُّجُومِ لَا أَقُولُ كَأَنِّي الْيَتَرَجُلُ . وَالْمَلُوكُ مِثْلُ الْبَحَارِ لَا
يُوجَدُ لَوْلَاهَا عَلَى السَّيْفِ وَأَنَّمَا يُوَصِّلُ إِلَيْهِ بِمَعَانَاةٍ وَمَسَانَاةٍ وَأَن كَانَ لَيْلُ
الْيَتِيمِ ذَا قَبْحٍ . فَانْ وِرَاءَهُ تَبَاشِيرُ الصَّبْحِ . وَالْدَهْرُ طَوِيلٌ مُؤْتَنِفٌ . وَأَن أَثَرُ شَيْءٍ
لِبَعْضِ الرُّؤَسَاءِ فَلَن تَكُونَ آثَارُهُ بِقُدْرَةِ اللَّهِ الْارْبِيعَةِ رَوْضِيَّةٍ لَّانْ
بَارَقَتْهُ لَيْسَتْ بِالْكَاذِبَةِ وَنَسَبُهُ فِي بَارِقٍ فَذَلِكَ فَالٌّ

- ١٠ بِسَحَابٍ رَوِيَّ وَخَطُوبٍ الدَّهْرُ تَرْدُ مِنْهُ عَلَى
شَرَّابٍ بِأَنْفَعٍ . يَفِدُ عَلَيْهِ لِحْطَبُ
مَنْ بَعْدَ تَوَقُّعٍ . وَأَنَا أَخَصُّ
بِسَلَامٍ لِرُؤُوسَى لَأَنَارٍ . وَلَوْ
طُرِحَ فِي مَفْصَلَةٍ
١٥ لَمَّا حَارَ

قولهم جَلَّتْ التَّهَاجُتُ عن الولد أى صَغُرَتْ ومنها ان يكون الاجل مما تجلّه الأمة
وهو أشبه الوجوه قال الراجز

والله ما ادرى وان كنت أجُلُّ ♦ امن بعير جلتى ام من رَجُل

وانا اعلم انه ما اراد بها الا غير هذا ولكنه قال بالظن الحسن وقلت باليقين ١٩٩
• الثابت وكلانا ان شاء الله محمود في ما صنع ولغظ واشغاله مودبة الى اجر دائم
وشكر يجرى مجرى الخلود ان كان المرء ليس بخالد قال الشاعر

فاذا وصلتكم ارضكم فتحدثوا ♦ ومن الحديث متآلف وخلود

وانا اهدى الى موالى الشيوخ السادة آل سنان صرّ الله الايام بدوام عزهم سلاما
مرتبا على ترتيب الاسنان يطرد أطراد القناة ويكون مثله
كمثل الماء يفاض على اصل الشجرة فيعظم جناها ١٠
وينال اعلامها كما ينال ادناها وحسبى الله

مشى الذئب ظن انى اقول العشل بالشين المعجمة ولا اعلم ان فى كلامهم
هذه الكلمة وانما هذه الرحى واثرابها فى التتابع الى الرحلة كما انشد ابو زيد
سعيد بن اوس

يا ربة العير رُؤيه لوجهته • لا تظعننى فتَهيجى لى للظعن

فان وقع يوما من الدهر اليه شى مما املية فوجد فيه السينات شينات ه
فليعلم ان ذلك لما ذكرت وان الذى كتب سمع ولم يفهم وهذا البيت فى
اصلاح المنطق يُنشد على وجهين

طبيع كُحاز او طبيخ أُميهة • صغير العظام سَيِّى القسم املط

وينشد القسم والقسم افتري هذا من تغيير لحق الناقل بسقوط فيه وكتابه معدود
من بركات السلطان اعز الله نصره فاما كتاب كليله ودمنة فليس له نسخة ١٠
هندي ولا تمكن به علمى وما اذكر انى استكملته سماعا قط ولما ورد كتابه
المعظم الذى سالت من جاءنى منه بنسخة ردية وكلفت ان يقرأها على فكنت
فى ذلك كما قيل فى المثل عاط . بغير انواط . ولا يظن السلطان خلد الله
ملكه ان امرى يقاس على ما اتفق فى رسالة الصامل والشاجع فان اقباله القاما
١٩٨ بخلدى ونفتها فى فمى . ونطق بها على لسانى . ولا بد من تكلفى استماع ١٥
الوامر لان طاعة السلطان اعز الله نصره فرض على كل احد لا سيما على مثلى
لاشياء كثيرة ايسرها قول الاعشى

اذا كان هادى الفتى فى البلا • د صدر القناة اطاع الاميرا

وان وُفقت والتوفيق منى بعيد فانما ذلك ميسر من أبرام . ورمية من غير
رام . وهذا زمان الأنب والعتب وهما يفسدان الذهن اما المغد فقال بعضهم ٢٠
انه يفسد فى شهر . ما اصلحه البلاذرى دهر . واما العنب فهو يعرف
البيتين الصاديين اللذين قىلا المشيخ ابنى طرق آيد الله فى العنب للماضى
وحرس الله قائل البيتين ولما خاطبني بتلك المخاطبة تأولت لها معنى غير
ظاهر اللفظ وجعلت للاجل اذا وُصفت به وجوها منها ان اكون مشبها بالجليل
وهو الثمام اى انى ضعيف مثله ومنها ان يكون الاجل فى معنى الاصغر من ٢٥

ومن كلامه جوابا لابي الحسن محمد بن سنان لما جاءه
كتابه في امر كليله ومنه وما تقدم به السلطان اعز الله
نصره من اختصار امثاله

قد سررت بورود كتابه انواع سرور . فسروا لوروده واخر لاستماعه وثالثا غمر
هذين وهو خبر سلامته وعجبت من الفاظه التي ليست مسجوعة سجع الجاهلية
ولا منشورة نشر كلام العامة بل هي منظومة نظم اللؤلؤ البحري . متفوعة تفويع ١٩٦
نسيم الروض السحري . واما شوق اسود القلب اليه فشوق اسود العين الساهرة
الى كراهه شهد بذلك الازهران واني لأحلى المسالة وأخفى الدعوة واخفف بترك
المكاتبة وانما اشرت الاجابة الى هذا الحين عجزا عما يحق علي قال الله سبحانه
١٠. واذا حُيْتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا باحسن منها او ردوها ولا اقدر على احسن منها
وقال جل اسمه لا يكلف الله نفسا الا وسعها ولا ينسبني في هذا القول الى
النفاق فلو كنت من اهله في الشبهة لوجب علي تركه عند اخلاص اللجة
واحسبه ادام الله قدرته بحسني على ما يعهد من القوة والصبر ولست كذلك
الان غلّت السيوف ومغف الجسم وتقارب الخطر وساء الخلق وعطلت رحي كانت
١٥. لي لم تكن تبجع ولكن تهمس كنت اقصر طعننها على نفسي واتقوى به
دون غيري ولم يكن لها ضمان . ولكن فجع بها الزمان . ولم يبق الا ان
يخلو مكانها العامر . فيصبح كانه المحل الدامر . فاما المنفعة بها فقد انقضت
وانقرضت وان تشبه بها في الظعن اخواتها صار لفظي من اجل ذلك مَشِينا . ١٩٧
وجعلتُ سمين الكلمة شينا . فلم يفهم عني سامع ما اقول فاذا قلت العسل

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ومن كلامه

المودة مودتان مودة وافيه . ومودة عافيه . فالوافيه من الله سبحانه
 ١٩٥ والعافيه من الشيطان لعنه الله وقد علم عالم الخفيات ان مودتي له ادام الله
 عزه ورفع في الخير درجته اذا انفردت بنفسها كفت . واذا قرنت بغيرها زادت
 عليه ونفخت . ولست اطوى وناده طي الغرب الاول من المنسرح ولا اقبعه
 قبض عروض الطويل ولا اقطعه قطع الوند ولا اجعله كالسبب المضطرب يقع
 به الزحاف والعلّة اللازمة ولكنني اصونه من التغير كما صين الروقي عن إتواء
 وإكفاء . وادوم على الاخلاص والصفاء . والذي بيني وبينه لا يفتقر الى تجديد
 بهدية اذ كان في موضع محروس . قد امن مثله من الدروس .
 ١٠ وعُرِفْتُ انه سار الى مصر وكان مقامة فيها غير متماد .
 كحسو الطائر جرعا من الشماد . ثم عاد
 حاقاً حمّ العراق وانا اخمه بسلام
 ذكي . عنبري في الارج
 او مسكتي

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ومن كلامه

لم ازل اتشوّف الى اخباره تشوّف الطلى الى الظبية . والمجدب الى برق
 القبيّة . فاذا بِلِلْتُ بوميض بعد وميض . حباني بسرو قريض . واسال عنه
 سوال قبة بسعيد . والطائي مهلهل عن زيد . واتوكف انباءه عند المتغربين .
 واطلبها تلقاه المتأدبين . حتى حدثني فلان وذلك بعدما ذوى نبت الحاجر .
 وكرب شهرا ناجر . انه سار الى مصر ثم حدثني فلان ازمان تزيّل الشجر قبل ان
 يطلع راحم النجوم انه صحبه الى بغداد وفي هذا اليوم جاءني فلان ومعه انواع
 من تحفة اجلها كتابه بخبر سلامته وما بيننا من الجميل المعتمد كان
 يغنيه عن انفاذ العمد . والموتة على القرب والبعد . لا يفتقر معها الى اهداء
 ١٠ السعد . على اننى قد عدته دواة وطيباً . وعدل عندي المسك قطيّباً . ١٩٤
 وتفاءلت باسمه للسعادة . والله يُجرب على اجمل عادة . وكذلك تفعل العرب
 في العيافة يغيرون الحرب ويحملونه على غير ما هو منه قال الشاعر
 وقال صحابي مُذْمُذٌ فوق بانة • فقلت مُدَى يغدو لنا ويروح
 والهدى ليس من لفظ الهدهد واما البيتان الصاديان فليس هما البيتين
 ١٥ اللذين سالت عنهما وبينهما بون بعيد مُرْدَفان ومُجَرَّدان والاول من الخفيف
 والطويل الثاني . وليس المشمُ اخا اليماني . ثُمانيّ وسُداسيّ . ما احدهما
 للاخرسى . وهذان في صفة جندب وجريّاه . وذانك في صفة ريق الشنباة .
 وان الله سبحانه حكم بقاء الخطوب على كل البلاد . كما حكم به على العباد .
 فان وقع خطبٌ بدمشق . فاقى بلد لم يَشَق . وفي الكتاب الاشرف وإن من
 قرية الا نحن مهلكوها قبل يوم القيامة او معذبوها عذابا
 ٢٠ شديداً كان ذلك في الكتاب مسطوراً

س

ومن كلامه رقعة كتبها الى القاضي

اغوذ بالله ان اعرض في حكم وقد علمت ان عليا عليه السلام اخذ قطيفة
عن ولده الحسن عليه السلام ظن انها من بيت المال الى غير ذلك من الاخبار
منها ان شريحا كفل ابنه برجل فحبسه وقد شفع أسامة الى رسول الله صلى
الله عليه وسلم في المخزومية فردّه وحامل هذه الرقعة ذكر انه أخذ هو وابنه •
بالامس واحضرت لهما احدى العمريتين وهي ابغضهما حضوراً الى المرء المسلم
فاما ابنه فنغذ فيه القضا ولا غرو لذلك قد جرى مثله على ابي سفيان بن حرب
وهو شيخ قريش واما ابوه فافلت بجرعة الذقن وانما نجاه كبر سنه وعلة في
جسمه والعمرتان اللتان ذكرت احديهما مشطة من مشط النساء والاخرى
يحضرها المتعاقب لمن زاعج قال الشاعر

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الا لا يغرن امرأ عمرية • على غملج تمت وطال قوامها

^{١٩٣} وهو يشتكى للحكيم وقد كانت قريش قبل الاسلام نصبت رجلا يقال له حكيم
من بنى سليم يؤدب الناس بالحرم ويأخذ على ايدي السفهاء وفيه يقول
القائل

١٥

اطوف بالباطح كل يوم • مخافة ان يشردني حكيم

ولولا ان هذا الحكيم بالالف واللام لجاز ان يدعى اهل التناسخ انه حكيم

إذا عركت عجل بنا ذئب غيرنا ♦ عرکنا بتیم اللات ذنب بنی عجل
والمثل السائر

كالثور يُقرب لما غالت البقر

فإن كان اللص قد ذبح الديله فقد ذهب بالابل ولحلها وإن كان اغفله ففيه
• لاصحابه سلوة وعزاء لأنهم به اعجب من بشار بديك حيث قال

ماذا يورقني والنوم يعجبنى ♦ من موت ذى رعشان ساكن دارى
كأن حماسةً فى راسه نبتت ♦ من آخر الصيف قد همت باثمار ١٩٢
وان تاخر اخلاقه جاز ان يُسرق الدقيق وغيره فإن رأى ان ينظر فى امره فعل
ان شاء الله تعالى

٣٣

ومن كلامه

قد نفذت رقعتي بالامس اليه اطال الله بقاءه احسنه فيها على اطلاق محبوبس
في اطلاقه صلاح وما سالت ان يصفح عن جنايته ولا يتجاوز عن ذنبه وفي هذه
السيرة جاءت امه محروبة كشيبة تزعم ان طملا دخل عليها في البهمة فذبح
لها ولابنها اربعا من امات الكيك وهي متلجعة لذلك كانتها من الدجاج الذي
زعم الاسكندر لملك فارس انه كان يبيض بيض الذهب والدجاجة اذا اسمحت
بذوات الخرقى فهي عند الفقير اكرم من الناقة الغزيرة والجدى عند المعدم مثل
عليان عند كليب وائل وشاة ام معبد لديها خير من زباء ناقة ابي دواد التي
كانت اذا حل عقالها تبعها الى ابن اتجهت ولعل اصوات هذا الدجاج كان في
اذن هذا النصراني احسن من غناء معبد والغريض فاما امه فلا شك انها ١٠
تعدّ البيض من اكبر عذّة وانفس ذخيرة تصمد به عينها اذا اشتكت وتجمع
منه الغاردة بعد الغاردة فتبتاع به دمناء للمصباح او تنزل الدرن بالماء الحميم
والعجب لغاوة هذا اللص كيف لم يصف الى الدجاج شيئا من الفقيه ليكون
قد جمع بين الحبرة والحبرة ولو كان هذا النصراني جنى جناية لما وجب على
دجاجة ذبح ولكن القائل قال ١٥
وبالاشقين ما كان العقاب

وقال النعمان بن بشير

صبت عليه ولم تنصب من كتب • ان الشقاء على الاثمين مصوب

واذا كان النصراني يحسن فتذبح دجاجة فما بعد في القياس ان يغرم كاتبه
ادام الله عزه ثمن الدجاج لانه من اهل ملة صاحبه وقد قال الاول ٢٠

ومن انشائه كهنة بمولود

قد سُرَّت الجماعة بالمولود القادم اجزل الله حفظه من اسمه واعطاء الغاية مما
كنى به وتفاءلت له عربوا من الفأل منها انه قدم يوم الجمعة فدل ذلك على
اجتماع الشمل وهو يوم عيد ونفقة فبسط الله يده بالنفقات والجمعة ذات
• نسك ودين والله يبلغه مبالغ اهل التقوى بكرمه وكان وروده في مقابلة ايام
العجوز وذلك فال بالسلامة واليمن لان العُجْز ارقى بالولد من الشواث قال الراجز
قَهَيَّ تُنْزَى دَلَوْهَا تَنْزِيًا ♦ كما تنزى شهلة صبيًا

- وقالوا ارقى من عجوز بمصبي واتفق مجيئه عند إفصاء الشتاء وهم يتيمينون 189
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ابنتها لُحْدَيَّاهُ الْقَصِيَّةُ لا يزال كعبك عاليا في حديث فيه طول • ومن سعادة
القادم الى هذه الدار ان يستقبله الربيع ضاحكا في وجهه محييا له بورد
وزهر مهديا اليه رقا روضة لان آذار واخاء القتيان من شهور السنة • والمتسمان
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١٥ حُفْر برود • ويجتنون ما سنع من بنات اوبراو المغرود • ويكفى القادم الى
الدنيا من البوس ان يلقاه الاشهبان ينفسان عليه الصروب • ويتنفسان
بالريح الهليل • ويكلعان عن جمود • تغراشتب ولكنه غير محمود • حين
يصطلي الرامى قوسه والرامي تَعَنَزَتْ وتود الأمة ان راسها احدى الاثفيتين فالحمد
له الذي جعل قدمه في زمان تجد به المجذبة مرعى • وتستن فيماله حتى القرعى •
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رَأَى فِي وَلَدِهِ سَعْدُ الْعَشِيرَةِ . فَاعْلَمْ ضِدَّ مَا فَعَلَهُ الْوَلِيدُ بِنَ الْمَغِيرَةِ . لِأَنَّهُ أَوْلَى
مَالًا مَمْدُودًا . وَبَنِينَ شَهِيدًا . فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْهُ التَّذْكَرَةُ انْكَرَ . فَمَا شَكَرَ . وَهُوَ أَدَامَ
اللَّهُ عِزَّهُ شَجَرَةً لَا تُثْجِرُ إِلَّا طَيْبًا . وَبَحْرًا لَا يَنْبِتُ إِلَّا دُرًّا مُسْتَغْفِرًا . وَمَنْ الْعِصَّةُ
يَنْبِتُ الشَّكِيرَ . وَمَنْ أَشْبَهَ أَبَاهُ فَلَا ظِلْمَ وَلَا نَكِيرَ . وَأَنَا مُعْتَبَرٌ . فَلَا أَزَالُ اعْتَذِرُ .
وَأَنَا آخِرُ كِتَابِي إِلَى هَذِهِ الْغَايَةِ أَنَّهُ لَمْ يَبْقَ لِي بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الشَّبَابِ لُبٌّ مِثْلِي .
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وَلَوْ لَا أَنْ يَظُنَّ أَدَامَ اللَّهُ عِزَّهُ أَنَّ التَّقْصِيرَ عَنِ الْمَفْتَرِضِ قَدْ بَلَغَ إِلَى هَذِهِ الْحَالِ
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وَأَنَا إِسْأَلُ سَيِّدِي أَدَامَ اللَّهُ عِزَّهُ أَلَّا يَصْرِفَ قَلَمَهُ فِي أَجَابَتِي عَنْ هَذِهِ الرِّسَالَةِ لِأَنِّي
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فرخاما . ولحاما القدر ما لحاما .

فُرْتَحَانِي يَنْفَاعَانِ فِي الْفَجْرِ كُلَّمَا ♦ احسَّ دوق الريح او صوت ناعب

- ولم يُفَلِّ غَرْبُ الاقدار . عن غراب حَجَلٍ فِي الدار . يُحَسِّبُ فِي اباضي نساء .
٥ قد اكتسى الشبيبة والله كساء . اذا سمع بنخل مُرْطَب . سافر اليه غير
مُخْطَب . وينزل اذا امن بالقيعة . وكان عينه من الصفاء ماله الوقيعه . فهو
حزير مع الامن اُرْب . مسرور بالمكسب تَرَب . وربما سقط على عَوْدٍ عَمِيذ . قد
أُلْفِيَ فِي الهجير الويد . فاخلس عينه بالمنقار . ثم اعتمد ما بين الفقار .
اذا حان تفرق للمي فانه ناعب . فتجد الرحلة وهو لاعب . فكم دعا عليه
١٠ داع . ان يغتدى من دم في رِداغ . حتى اذا است ودعَى غدافا . سُقِيَ بامر¹⁸¹
الصد مدافا . لما كثر ولده واليه . فذّر له غلام بيده فيهر . فرماه وهو آمن .
والقدر من ورائه كامن . فُسِّمَ الاغور بحقيقه . وكان يُدعى بذلك على طريق
الهز لا الخليقة . وصير فعاني امرا . كآته سُقِيَ خمرا . فابتدره الوليد العابت .
ولديه للتعق نابت . فجعل في رجله خيط اَبى . كآته جعل عُذْوَةً فِي الرِّبَى .
١٥ واقبل جذلاً يلعب . يقول لاسيره الا تنعب . فلم يزل ذلك دينه . حتى نُشِر
من الليل سيدينه . فآب ذلك الطفل امله فشذوا وثاقه الى سرير . وخشي غيرة
الغريز . ثم غدا عليه في تباشير الصبح . وانما بكر لينزل به غير النجج .
فوجهه قاني النعب . قد خرج من الحرج الى الرعب . وما تُهمل اقدار الله
حمامه . كانت تفرج من الايكة سمامه . فعودها اخضر نصير . والزمن لها لا
٢٠ يغير . المرتع منها دان . والمشرّب قريب الملتمس لا يشق طلبه على الهدان .
فهى في غب الرجع . تسجع افانين السجع . كانها قينة شرب . ركبت العود
ليسوى الصرب . فهى تصرف عنهم مُمُوماً . وتجد رَمَلاً او مزموما . فيظننها
لجاهل ياكيه . وليت لحيشة شاكية . وانما ذلك طرب وجذل . ما غري بها¹⁸²
العذل . فبينما هى ذات عشية لا يضر قلبها اوجالا . تصدح فوق عُصْنِهَا
٢٥ ارتجالا . اتبع لها من الصقور . شاكى المخالب ليس بوقور . فعزق منها
حَيْرُوماً . ولات الداهية ازوما . وترك الجوزل مُوتوما . يبكيها أضلاً وعمماً .

وما زلت اقدم النوب . عن قرم مُصَقَّب . ليس بلهيد ولا مُثَقَّب . ودع
 فى اذواد كرائم . صومن الزمن ما بين مراتم . يبكرن لاراك وقزم . وراميهن
 من البشر كمن لم يَرم . تذاذ الاعداء عنهن باسنة . ويُتسلك دونهن بالاعتة .
 قنيتى ذلك المقرم فعار ثُلُبا . وما حمل من كُور جُلُبا . وشرب من الاجل ما
 انساء مُرارا . بعد ما غنيتى ولا يحذر يرارا . او لقيه دون ذلك اجل متاح .
 ما قنيتى بمثل الزمن يرتاح . نزل برية صيف طارق . فى عام كذب فيه
 البارق . ومعه ركب مدجلون . اموا ذلك الرجل وهم يرجون . ان يعترفوا لديه
 عُرفا . يصرفون به من تلك السنة صرفا . فاراد ان يبنى مجدا لصغار . يُففيه
 الى بُعد مُغار . فراجع نفسه النفاس . ثم نهض الى القرم فكاس . صرته
 ١٧٩ المطروق بصارم . فاخترمت احدى الخوارم . فجعل سديفه رهنا للقدر . وخبأت
 منه لويّة ذات الخدر . وصير تحفه فى جفان . ثُملاً لكرامة الصيفان . وسواه
 على من صادف مصرعه فى اى طريق لقيه . قد توقاه فما وقّيه . وما توسنت
 اجفان المنية عن جواد يعبوب . ينسرح مع الريح الهبوب . يقابل الناظر
 بحسن جديد . ويحمل الذهب بالحديد . ففضاض الالهاب . ينتهب الطلق
 اى انتهاب . له هجول من يقته . وحافر من الزبرجد ما نُزّه عن كسر القته .
 ١٥ ما خُلِقَ نطيجا ولا مُقرباً . ومتى سهل هاج طربا . كان يُؤثر بقبوق وصبح .
 ويُفتقد عند هذه النُجوح . تقصر عليه فى المشتى اياضى غزار . وتعرفه بالسبق
 نزار . صُبِحَ بغارة مالكة . والدمر لا تُدفع مهالكة . فطعن فى النحر بخِرص .
 قردى ورده دامى الشيرص . فكأنته ما سبق . ولا اغتبقى . وما تغلط اقدار الله
 السابقة بالتجاوز عن شغواء طلب . لعواسل المهمة الى الكركر جلوب . تؤهل
 ٢٠ بها رضى او تدوم . وكان خطمها قدوم . فغدت يوما فى قِرة . تنفض عن
 ١٨٥ جناحها صريب السبرة . فرأت على الشحط غزالا . فارادت ان تصرب به على
 المُقعد مُزالا . فحانت تأمل ذرّك خير . فدحض عنها الظفر بالمثير . ومزت
 على رَيد ناب . فاعنت جناحها باخئاب . فسقطت وهى برمى . فى الارض
 النزقة او الغمقى . فاقبل عليها ثعالة وطالما ازمقت نفسه . واثكلته ولده ٢٥

الصفتين . فبينما هما في عيش صفو . كثر عليهما القدر انيق العفو . فُبِعَت
اليهما الحية . وبها لآدم صلى الله عليه قُيِّمَت القِيَّة . فالفقت الغرير مغتزا .
في ظل ايكلة لم يتق شرا . فاصابته المغوية بناب سميم . واذاقتة حماما افردة
من كل حميم . فكأته لم يرتع بارضا ولا جديما . ولا تنسم صبا رميما .
فعدت صاحبة لفقدة شاحبه . ثم طال الامد فعدت لغيره صاحبه . ولا بد
لنفسها من تلاف . يلحق الخلف بالسلف . وما للحياة الدنيا الا متاع الغرور .
وما رقدت عيون الحوادث عن ارتد مغل . غنى عن الحذاء والنعل . لا يشرب
في شريعة ولا قرو . يجتري بالشرى والمرو . كأته اذا رتع في التقوم . عبد من
للجشة لا من الروم . ليس بمسور ولا منطف . ولا يزال في قرطف . يخاطب
١٠ إله بالنقنقة والجرار . ويوضع بيده على غرار . ويلحقهن ريشه فلا ياذن .
ويسقيهن زاجلا حتى يروئن . اصم لا يسمع قليلا . ما يحمل راسه من الكسوة
خفيها ولا ثقيلا . ميق لتاح . كأن راسه جتاح . لا بد له من حتف يوقه .
١٧٧ يفر من خشيته ولا يسبقه . اما بسنان فارس . او نازلة من الدهارس . من
ذلك انه كان يتبع مرعى . في نعائم بوايد ميرا . فأنس عارضا همهما . لا
١٥ يكون مثله جهاما . فبادر بوقد اطفالا . ما لبس من الريش جفالا .
فاصابت منكبه صاعقه . فاذا المنية به ناعقه . وما حيض سهم الحدثن عن
اعصم ابي اغفار . كان من الانس شديد النفار . يرود في قان وعتم . ولا يخاف
على ولده من اليتيم . ويرد خيرا ليس بطرق . جادت للمداهن به ام البرق .
فهو ازرق شديد الصفاء . ليس على الواردة به من خفاء . يروق عين الرقان
٢٠ بترقرق . فما بال الظمان صاحب التحرق . لما طال مكثه في نيق . يكون
دونه وكر السودنيق . اطرد ملك اسوارا . ما زال يصرع بسهامه صوارا . فالجاء
فقرو فزع . الى سامية عليها القزع . فلما اتصل فيها طواه . وعلم ان ربه قد
اغواه . رمى الغار فاصاب كبده . ونهض لينزل وده . فاخذ المدي فبصعه .
واوقد ناره موضعه . فاكل من بصيعة قليلا . وانصرف وتركه مليلا . وكذلك
٢٥ المغفرة . لا تكمل عندها الفرة . سلكت مسلك مسن حل عن الزليل .
فاستويا في الامر للليل . والغفر معهما ليس بناج . سوف يهلك بقدر شاج .

١٧٤ فجلس للوحوش السريعة . فلما كان في اخر الليل وردت الاتن جَمَّة العَيْن
وامامها كُدْرٌ عَذَم . قُرْب منه الخُف الهَذَام . فرماه مُطْعَمٌ وَشِيقُ الاوَابِد . فوصف
بقارض او كابد . فعند ذلك مرعه . فبعدت الحلائل عن اليف صادف مصرعه .
ونهب الى ذومَصْدَق . نقله الى العيال التَرْدَق . فلحمه رشيق وصفيق . ولها به
الى القارظ حميل وزفيف . ونظيره في لقاء المنية ذِيَال اخنس . يراع ان رآه
الانس . غبر زماناً طويلاً . لا يجد فيه الصائد حويلاً . فلما رعى مصاب
الاشراط . وحيته القريان بزهر غاط . وزعل في يوم راح . سليم الام من الجراح .
فالجأت الشمال الى سدر قاصيه . ليست للسدر بمناميه . وبات ليلة يشكو
الصد . والشحْب قد نفست عليه البرد . صتحة القانص بأكلب . مدركات
للوحش طَلَب . شديداً العِرَاك والمرس . كان عيونها نَوَار العُقُرس . في ١٠
اعناقها العذب . والطرائد بها تُعَذَّب . فلما عاينها انصرف موليا . يظن في
القفرة شهاباً مؤلياً . فلما امعن في الطرد . كرفى خوف وصرد . فطعن بمطردين .
١٧٥ نَبَتَا في راسه منفردين . فتفرقن عنه وله الظفر . واجراؤها على الطريدة معقر .
فلما ايقن بالسلامة عارضه اسوار فارسي . هو بسهامه سَجِير او نَيْسَى . فعاد
معه ذب الرياد . الى المُقْتَاد من بعد الزيادة . وليس الحين بغافل . عن الطالع ١٥
ولا عن الأقل . والله الامر من قبل ومن بعد ويومئذ يفرح المؤمنون . وكذلك
عرسه الخنساء . لا يدوم لها في الدهر نساء . وربما سلط على فريرها طاو . من
السيراح الماردة خبيث غاو . فصادفها في ارض فلاة . وهى في بعض الغفلات .
ثم اقبلت كى ترضعه . فما وجدت الا دمه واكرعه . فلبثت ثلثاً او اربعاً .
ثم راجعت رِيّاً وشبعاً . فانساها ذكر فريرها . ورصيت باستمرار فريرها . لو غفل ٢٠
عنها الزمن لما ذمته . ولكنه رماها بالغير وما رمته . ولم ينسج من سطوات
الافدار . طيبي لا يستتر بجدار . يرود في مبيع خلاه . ولا يبيت بين شيع
والاه . وانما يذمّن بلاداً ذات سمر وراك قد امن فيها اخذ الاشراك . يجية من
الله الفائل . وقد نثات عنه الغوائل . فهو يتفكّه في كبات وبرير . قد اتخذ
١٧٦ كناسا بسرير . فالمرّد قد غير فاه . مثل ما لميت الشفاء . فهو آدم وحواء . في ٢٥
جنة لو دام لهما الثواء . وليسا لابوى البشر مثلين . وان وافقا اسميهما في

حتف الأنف . او صاده من وراء معلق الشئف . ابو عيال جعله قرامم .
 فدفعوا به السغب لما عرامم . او صبحه كلب صار . فاحضر خلفه اشد الإحضار .
 فاخذة اخذ أريب . ما سليم بشد ولا تقرب . او جاء سبيل متدافع . وتعاله
 في وجاره شافع . فحمله السيل وعرسه . فاصبح غريقاً فقد جرسه . كانه ما صبح^{١٧٢}
 سروراً بنجيلة . ولا اصاب من اسد فصول الأكلة . وكم أشر في مزو . ثم نقل
 اهابه الى فرو . وكذلك تعاقب الايام . تبدل الرتان بحيام . فما وآل سمس
 بالنكره . ولا حشاشة صبغ القف الغثراء . والحز . فرق بينه وبين اليكرشة
 حمام يحنزه . فما نفع ام الحزن دعوها إذ تقول اللهم اجعلني حذمة لذمة .
 اسبق الطالع في الاكمة . منيت بغاري جباله . فاذا بها في البالة . او مترف
 ١ . بكر لاه . قلبه بالقنص مولع سا . فاسد عليها بالقرود . كل صريم للصيد مقلد .
 او ارسل عليها صقورا . تترك قراها مفقورا . او انقضت عليها اللقوة . فلحققت
 البائسة شقوة . وهل يعتصم من قضاء الله عالج وحشي . مرت به غداة وعشي .
 وهو ارن ليس بحجيل . يخلط شحيحة بالسجيل . له جدائد ثمان او خمس . ما
 وطوها بالجدد همس . رعين بقلا وسمياً . واطردن صلالاً وسوياً . وطار عنهن
 ١٥ العقائق . ونقيت منهن الحقائق . حتى اذا ببس عميم روض . تتبع بها اثر
 كل نوض . فلما طلعت الهنعة او الذراع . وهن الى المورد سراع . او قد ناجر من^{١٧٣}
 الغلل جمرأ . وذكر مورداً غمرا . فوردن وقد طلع ذنب السرحان . وكلاها
 بالقدر حان . في يده صفراء ترنموت . كانها تقول للرمي مت وثبك فيموت .
 تخيرها طمل عيسى . او آخر من كهلان سنيسى . تردد اليها وهي حظوة نابته .
 ٢٠ والحظوة له فيها نابته . ينقل اليها في القيقظ الماء . ليقتصر عليها الاطماء . حتى
 اذا كمل عودها وتم . وصلح للطريدة عمد وهم . غدا عليها فاقتصبها . ما
 اغجلها بالخرق ولا اغتصبها . وجعلها فوق عريش في الجاه . ومظعها في ذلك
 مياه اللحاء . ثم وضع عليها المبراة . حتى اذا اعجبت البراة . حصر بها بعض
 مواسم العرب وغرسة ان يعرف قيمتها . لا ان يبيعها من ياكل وقيمتها . فأعطى
 ٢٥ بها اديم وبرود . وهو بها في الناس يرود . فابي ان يصيق . وكرة ان يخفق .
 فزيد لما خوطب على ذلك . فظن بيعها من المهالك . وانصرف بها الى شريعة .

بكيل . كان في رُبانِ عمره يهلك به الظليم الاصم . ولا يعتصم منه الاعصم .
 وكم هجر الى ثلثة آمنه . فاخذ خيارها لعرس داجنه . وكم فتك بخائر عند
 عشي . وآب الى عياله يشبوب وحشي . او عليج آقر . ورعى الروض الاذفر .
 والظبي عنده حقيير . انما يقتنص ذواله الفقير . فاجتاز به وهو ريبال . رجل
 ١7٥ في ايديه القسي والنبال . فوثب الى مارد فاعتنقه . وفري جسده ومزقه . فرمته
 تلك الصحابة بمعايل وقطاع . وهو يظن انه ليس بمستطاع . فجعلوه بسهامهم
 كابن انقد . فمات وعندهم انه قد رقد . حتى اذا بان امره اخذوه بسيوفهم
 من الخنق . وفارق عيشه ذا الانق . وطالما اقتسر وقيل قسور . وساور ومن
 صفاته المسور . او نهذ له امير في خيل . فوجده جائماً على الغيل . فطعن
 برماح مشرعة . ورعى من البقي بمصرعة . او نجا من ذلك . واولئك فلفظ ١٨٠
 نفسه من الهرم . ورعى باللفاء من الرزق بعد الصيد الاكرم . ولا يشوى حدنان
 الدهر حسن الديباجة من النمرور . عود نفسه طول دُهور . فالرعيان من طروقه
 تُراع . والابرار الى اثار كلومه سراع . اتيح له في بعض التطواف . وان
 للضائفة او غير متواف . فاثبت بقلبه آله . وكفى هجومه الثلثة . واخذ اهابه
 بعد عز . ففقي به مركب جبان مُرز . وما ابو جعدة من الدهر بناج . وان ١٨٥
 ١7١ بلغ امله من الرجاج . ما زال يختلس من الفزير قريراً . وينقض من الغمروس
 مريراً . وتطرده حوامي السيد فيفوتها . ويظفر باكولة للمافظ فيفوتها . ويحافظ
 على اولاد ام عمرو . بعد ان تشرب من المنية مُسكرًا ليس بخمر . فيضيف
 عياله الى عياله . ويغزو اطفالها بما جمع من آحتياله . يشقى تارة لانه ضائع .
 ويغبط بذى بطنه وهو جائع . يحسب انه ولغ دماً . ولعله ما عدم عدماً ٢٠٠
 وربما ضاعت له الغنم فنجيم . واصاب غفلة من رب الشاه فطعيم . وسغبه أكثر
 من شبعة . وظموة مقرون بطبعة . الا انه رمى تلك العيشة على شقاتها . ومن
 لنفسه البائسة باتقاتها . قرأى غلاماً غير سفيه . قد انفرد بغنيمة فطمع
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 شتات غمر . ووثب على الملك المهمل ذو الشناتر . فلبس اثواب الخاتر . فلما
 خان وغدر . وركب من الجهل السدر . قتله الملك ذو نواس . فما وجد ليكلمة
 ٢٠ من أواس . وولى بعده قاتله . ومن سلم كان القدر خاتله . وانما يخذل اله
 قديم . نزل امرة بالجندل وكأنه السديم . وكان ذو نواس مارداً . على دين
 ١٥٩ اصحاب السبت حاردا . فحفر الاخدود . وامرغ الحدود . وامر بتحريق اناس .
 دانوا بالانجيل وجعلوه كالنبراس . فعمد ذو ثعلبان للكبشة حتى ابان ما
 كان من امر الحميرى . لملك من حام قيصرى . فجهز اليهم خميسا . او قد لهم
 ٢٥ من القتل حميسا . وانهزم ذو النواس حتى جاء البحر بفرسه . فدخل فيه

لولده حسن . ورجت منه الاحسان . هل لك في ان تقتل اباك . ونجعله ملكا يكره شباك . فلم يجنبهم الى قتل ابيه . واتقى ان يسفك دمًا لاقربيه . فالتوا على اسعد فقتلوه . اما جاهره بالمنية واما ختلوه . ثم طلبوا جبراً قائماً . فرجعوا الى حسان لانماً . فعقدوا له التاج . فلما شمل امره الفجاج . لم يترك احدا ممن شرك في قتل ابيه . الا قصد وقوده بشر نخييه . وكانت حمير اخذت عليه موثقا . الا ينزل في طلب الثار رققاً . وحسان هذا فيما قيل وطئ جديس الوطء الثقيل حتى تركها حديثا . واصلها الثابت جثيثا . وذلك ان طسما اخوتها . اشدت عليهم كخوتها . وكان لهم ملك محروس . ثم هدى اليه من قبل عشيرتها العروس . فنهضت جديس الى طسم . فحسنت ادواهم كل للمسم . وقتلت جبارهم . فاستعدت طسم حسان فابارهم . وكانت اليمامة يومئذ تدعى جواً . فلقيت من سخط الملك نواً . وكانت فيها امرأة اسمها اليمامة وهي الزرقاة . لبصرها على ما بعد اللقاء . فطلعت يوما في مشرف . 156 ومن قضاء رينا كل المستطرف . فقالت لقد جاءكم جدير . او سار اليكم الشجر . فقالوا ما ترين فقالت ارى رجلاً يريد لكثيف أكلاً . او يخسف بالشجر 15 نعل . وكان حسان امرجيشه ان يقطع كل رجل منهم شجرة . فيحملها بين يديه جئة محتجرة . حاول بذلك التلبيس . حتى يبلغ كيده من جديس . فكذبوا اليمامة بما اخبرت . فصبتهم الكتائب فهبرت . وسويت جوا اليمامة باسم المرأة وكرهت حسان الاقيال . وبدا لها منه زبال . فاختلعت الى اخيه عمرو . فسألته من قتله افظع امر . فاجابهم الى ان يقتل اخاه . فأبأت لنفسه شراً . 16 وسخاه . وكان في حمير رجل يعرف بذى رعين . قد جرب كل اثر وعين . فزجر عمراً عن قتل اخيه . والله العالم بما نخيه . فابى عمرو غير مصا . والله مصرف القضا . فقتل عمرو حسان . وحب العاجلة يغر الانسان . ففقد عمرو نومه . ليلته الكاملة ويومه . وكانت حمير تزعم في ذلك الزمن ان من قتل اخاه . منع نومه وان توحاه . فشكا عمرو ما لقي من السهاد . فانباه بعض الشهداء . انه 157 لا يقدر على النوم . حتى يلتهم غفراء القوم . الذين يقتل حسان امروه . اورده الماتم فما اصدروه . فامر الملك مناديا ان يعلن ان الملك يريد ان يعهد

رجع ملكه . لما احتُير وُحان مُلكه . فغبرت مدة سليمان حتى اذا نُعى ولا امان يُقطّاه الصادق ولا الكاذب . ولا ترد شيئاً المعاذب . لبثت بلقيس بعده يسيراً . ثم أُجِدت الى الآخرة مسيراً . فسبحان الله القدير كل الناس بآئد . فابن العائد . ثم ملك ياسر بن عمرو بن يعفر ولم يله لاحد فيه من مزعم . دعوه ياسر النعم . لانه رد الملك بعد ما انتقل . فانعم بذلك واثقل . وكان قد خرج عن ايديهم . ويُقَد من يؤذيهم . وصار الى سليمان عليه السلام وغزا المغرب ياسر . واجتمعت اليه المناسر . فنهد بجيش كالرمل . حتى بلغ وادي الرمل . فبعث جيشاً فهلك . ما سلك احد حيث سلك . وامر بصنم من نحاس . فكتب عليه ذو نحاس . من حمير بالخط المسند . لا مذهب ورائي لاحد . ونصب ذلك الصنم آية . ليكون للظاعن غايه . ثم اصاب الزمن ياسراً . فصادف سنانه ١٠ كاسراً . وكذلك فعل رننا بالامم غير منموم ثم ملك بعده شَجر يَرْعَش بن ابريقس عاش ما عاش . وشكا الارتعاش . ونهض في جيش يَلْب . فوطى العراق ١٥٤ وطاة المُنجِب . واعتزم في غزو الصين فقال اغد . فاجتاز بمدينة السُغد . فافتتحها ونسبت اليه . والله العالم بما لديه . وهى سمرقند واصلها بالشين . فنقلت في ما ذُكر الى الصين . ولم يُغني عنه ذلك قبلاً . اذ لقي من الموت ١٥ وبالا . فملك بعده ابنه الاقرن . وكل ما في الدنيا دن . فلما نزل به امر الله ترك ما بناه ورفع . لو نفع غيره الملك نفعه . ثم قام ولد الاقرن تُبَع . وكل الاقيال له تَبَع . دَوَّع الافاق وغزاها . واذلّ للجبابرة وخزاها . وهو له دليل . قام بصغاره الدليل . لبث عشرين سنة غير غاز . ثم بلغه عن الثرثرة بها وهو على السوء مُجَاز . فظعن اليهم على طريق الانبار . فواقع بهم عن غير ٢٠ اعتبار . ثم رجع الى بلاده . والصين بعد ذلك من اعتماده . فغزاه غزوة ثم رجع . وترك بالتَّبَت بعض من جمع . فيقال انهم يعرفون بذلك الى اليوم . يخلف بها قوم بعد قوم . ثم حصرته هند الاحامس . ولا بدّ لِإنسي من رامس . ثم قام ولده اسعد . فدان له الأدنى والابعد . ذلك ابو كَرِب . كم رَأَس من فقير تَرِب . واتبع آسان ابيه . وسلك طرقه الى محاربيته . وهو تَبَع الاوسط . ثقل ٢٥ على حمير وقسط . فكهرمت زمانه لما طال . وجَنَف عليهم واستطال . فقالت .

مهلكا . والله الدائم بلا تغيير . وخالق البشر بلطف وتيسير . وما فخر الأوجه ¹⁵¹
الله العزيز ولم يذكر أصحاب السيّر ملكاً . من ولد جَمَيْر حتى مضت خمسة
عشرابا . افنت في الملك ازمانا وجعلها . ما غزت بلاد غيرها . واكتفت باليمن
وميرها . فمات المائت وعاش العائش . وقام للثالث من بعدُ الرائش . فغزا
• من جاور من الاعداء . وارثدى من المكارم احسن رداء . وسقى الرائش لانه سقى
الآل . وأقاة المال . فراش به سگان اليمن . وذلك في شبيبة الزمن . ثم دعاه
له داع . فاذا مملكته كالسراب للتحّاق . وفي عمر الرائش ملك لقمن صاحب
الفسور . بعد ما شرب من الحيلة آخر السور . وانما اصطفى الله لنفسه البقاء .
وحكم الآ وقاه . ثم قام بعد الرائش ولده ابرهه . فمضت عليه البرهه . فما
١٠ رفع لقومه من شنار . ونهى في حيوته ذا المنار . وانما دعى بذلك لانه كان اذا
غزا العدو نصب على طريقه منارا . حتى اذا رام محاربا . امين من الحيلة جيئته .
حتى اذا فنى عيشه . خرج من الملك سليبا . وسكن من الارض قلبها . فنسيه
الاحياء . واقترب عنه الاحياء . بعد ما سُرّوا بجيائه . وملكوا المُرد من سبائه ¹⁵²
وما للحياة الدنيا الا متاع الغرور فتعالى الله قادرا . ما تركه وافيا ولا غادرا . الا
١٥ جرحه كوس المنية . وان عمر في بلوغ الامنية . ثم قام بعد ابرهه ولده ابريقس
غزا المغرب فابتر . ونقل من الشام البربر . فاسكنهم . بحيث هم . فكانوا بقية
من قتل يوشع بن نون . بالرملة وبلادها يسكنون . وبنى افريقية وبه
سُميت . ونفذت سهامه اذ رُميت . ثم نزلت به شعوب . فرماحه لا تلتئم له
كعوب . لقي من الدهر حدثا . فسكن باذن الله جدنا . ان الله من ورائهم
٢٠ محيط . ثم قام بعده اخوه العبد بن ابرهه . سقى النسناس . فلما قديم كثر بهم
الناس . لان خلقهم مغير . بذلك نطقت السيّر . فلذلك دعى ذا الازعار . ثم
ارتحل عن ملكه مستعار . بعد ما اصابه الفالج . وحلّجه من القدر خالجه . فاصبح
حديثا مسموعا . وكم حشر من الاجناد جموعا . فاذا الملك وجنده همود . قد
لقى ما لاقتة نمود . فلا اله الا الله يُفنى الامم وهو باق . ولا تقدر عبيدة على
٢٥ الاباق . ثم قام بعد ذي الازعار هدد بن شرحبيل بن عمرو بن الرائش فما لبث
الا قليلا حتى هُذ . فقصر ملكه وما مُدّ . وهو والد بلقيس فيما ذُكر ثم واليها ¹⁵³

١٤٩ كاصحاب قنار . الا ان المتقلب متباين . ذاك الفائز وهذا الخائن . وصاحب النار
الموقدة التي برز منها سليماً . وما وجد حرّاً اليماً . الا ان الخائف جمع بينه
وبين نمروذ . فنعوذ بالله الواحد من عشار النوب والعود . واخر الظلّة شريف
كريم . في الرّيم اصطيح فما يريم . والذي رأى النور فحسبه نارا . اسرى فكشف
عن بنى اسرائيل شنارا . وكره الموت ومقته . فلم يعدّ اجلاً وقته . من لا يخطئ
ولا يفل . يكبر عن الدنيا ويجل . وقارئ زبور مكرم . في عصر شبابه والهم .
شاكل به اصوات الطير . ايثارا للترشد والخير . وسليمان الذي قرنت له النبوة
بالملة . ما انقذه ذلك من الهلكة . ومن اتقى له ردة الشمس . وجب فتوى في
رأس . وابن مريم عبدة قوم . وانتظر لقدمه يوم . الا انه فارق أمه . وما زال
من بعض الامم ان تلتّمه . ومحمد صلى الله عليه وسلم جاهد في طاعة ربه . ١٠٠
وانتصر لاشياع الله وحزبه . ثم سكن في يشرب حفيراً . وكان اكرم القوم
غيراً . فهنا حال الانبياء السعداء . فما طلق بالاشقياء البعداء . وكذلك
الملوك . تاتيهم للمقدار ألوك . اما من تملك من العرب . فما اعتصم بايغال
١٥٠ في الهرب . سبأ بن يشجب . أسبل دونه للحجب . وهو أول من سقى فيما
قيل . فسمى بذلك وزيد الثقيل . هُمز ولم يكن بالهمز حقيقاً . مثل قولهم ١٥
حلّت سويقاً . واجتاز بالحرم وهو غاز . فما وجّد به من مُناز . فرأى قطينة في
شدة حمّيش . من قبل النصر بن كنانة ابي قريش . فسألهم ما بال مقامكم في
ارض شديدة المَرَس . لكم بها احسن عَرَس . فقالوا ان لهذا الحرم خالقاً يرزق
اهله . ولا يضيع احد عَيْلق حبله . فسبحان الله العظيم رازق حَرَم وحِل . وصاحي
الهجرة واخي الظلّ . فلمضى بصقر الملك ما قالوا . وعلم انهم لن يُنالوا . ٢٠٠
فاحتجب ثلاثاً ينظر في احوال الملكوت . فقال الثالثة عن طول سكوت . لا ارى
شيئاً في الفلك اعظم نورا من ام شَمْلَة فاجمع لها سجوداً . وامر بذلك اتباعاً
وجنوداً . وانما فعل ما فعل تقرباً الى الله العظيم الذي لا يعرف له نِدّ . ولا
ينهى بعناده نِدّ . فلما ازمع ان يرد حياض المنون رفع الى كهلان ميّجتاً
إحرازاً . والى حمير حساماً جُرازاً . فقال من حضر من اهل المملكة قفى لحميره ٢٠٠
بملكه وإماره . ولكهلان بسياسة الوزارة . فغبر حمير ملكاً . حتى قدر له الصمد

- ان غدر ريب الايام بشيخنا الفاضل ابي بكر . فكم للمنايا من فته ومكر .
 انما نعمة قوم سَقَّة ♦ وحيوة المرء ثوب مستعار
 وكلنا في الدار الفانية طليق اسير . لا يفتأ من السَّير وان اوهم انه لا يسير .
 ان محلاً وان مرتحلاً ♦ وان في السفر اذ مضوا مَهَلًا ١٤٧
 استأثر الله بالوفاء وبالعَدل وولى الملامة الرجال ♦
 ولو كانت الدنيا يَرْسًا لَطَلَّعَتْ . ولكنها اَمَّ املقت . يحبها ولدها على العقوق .
 وتصدم عن ادراك الحقوق . ما لنا ولك اَمَّ ذفر . ما يقنعك هلاك الولد . اعيتني
 بأشْر . فكيف بذُرْدُر . سَوَّيْنِي غانية . فكيف بك عَجُوزًا فانية . وفيها
 ما اصابك الهَرَم . ولا البرم . وانما ذلك لابنائك الذين شربوا من إناثك . اما
 ١٠ شمسك فطالعة غاربة . واما اجبالك فبالجران صاربة . واما نبتك فيعود في كل
 عام . رزقا للبشر وللانعام . لا يسلم عليك الملك ولا الصعلوك ما فعل عُروة الصعاليك .
 وابن جبلة المليح . ولو كان للزن . مما يُوزَن . ثم وزن اسفى بثبير . لرجح
 به رجحان المُقَرَّم على الثَّبير . فطفقت انظر الى من ضم القتَّيان . من كل
 اليَفْتَيان . فاجدهم اصحوا رِمًا . كما صار العَقْد اشأ وحُمًا . توفي آدم صلى الله
 ١٥ عليه وسلم بعد ما رأى الجنة وسكنها . وسالت الملائكة عن اسرار الاسماء فاعلنها ١٤٨
 وخرج الى الدنيا فشقى . ولقى من عنائها ما لقي . وفقد هابيل فهيل . وحسب
 انه من الوجد خيل . فكان موته صلى الله عليه نذيرًا لكل مولود . ألا وَتَجَّ الى
 الخلود . وقُبض نوح صلى الله عليه . زجر عبدة نُسْر . واحكم سفينة بالدشْر .
 فنجا فيه من الغرق . وحمل آدم بعد خصف الورق . في الواح سَيَّرَن . خوفًا
 ٢٠ على اوصاله اللواتي قُيِّرَن . خشية ان يحوثرهن الماء . حين تهبَّجست به
 السماء . ولم يغلد عليه السلام وقد اتاه النبا من فوق . ودعا فيما روى للقمرية
 فحللت بالطوق . وبعده منفر عاد مُحْتَرَّت له بامر الله الرِّيح . فاصاب قومه عذاب
 غيره السريح . لحق به غير هِثْر . ما لحق آل عِثْر . فعدل بينهما داعي الهلكة
 الا ان هذا طريق زَكَيَّا . وذلك قُبض عاصيا شكِّيَّا . نسي ما غتته الجرادتان .
 ٢٥ ومُنَى بعارض غير الهتان . وكَيَّى من بعد ذلك خُلقت له الناقة مع السَّقْب .
 وجرى في التَّسَلَّ جرى الفرس ذى العَقْب . فنزل به امر دار . جعله في الفكر

٣٠.

وكتب يعزى بعض اصدقائه وهو خاله ابو القسم بن
سبيكة باخيه ابي بكر وكان توفي بدمشق رحمه الله

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم سيدى ادام الله عزه حسام يمان . لا يخلق بتقادم
الزمان . ونجم عال . نزه عن سوء الافعال . ورائع كلما زادت قدماً . ازدادت
حسناً وتنسماً . وهل تفرى للشمس اديم . او تقصها ان نورها قديم . وهل
سلبت لليقب رهوة مكانه . او صهوة ركانه . ولو كانت كتفى الى حصرته حسبما
اعتقده لاوردت كل ساعة اليها كتابا . وخبراً عنى منتابا . ووصفت شوقا اجده .
لا تزال الذكرى تُنجد . ورب سؤال حفى . يُخبر عن اشتياق حفى . والله يحفظ
١٤٦ علينا رضاء . ويثبت على ما سراً وحزن مما قضا . والقدر غالب ابى . فالعياذ
بالله ان نقول كما قال المحاربى .

١٠
اهتز عرش الله ذى الجلال ♦ لموت خالى يوم مات خالى
ولكن إنا لله وإنا اليه راجعون كل من عليها فان وانما ابن آدم شبح منقول .
فرحم الله ابا خراش حيث يقول .
الم تعلمى ان قد تفرق قبلنا ♦ خليلاً صفاء ماله وعقيل
والرجل دائب فى الامل يراخيه . قد أعير كل شى حتى اخيه . قال الاول ١٥
كل شى حتى اخيه متاع ♦ ويقدر تفرق واجتماع
ايها المزين الفاقد . ان ميت غيرك كانه راقد . لا يرد للجزع فتيل . ولا يحصى
الأسف من غدا بسيف المنية قتيل .
ما ذا يغير ابنتى رُبّع عويلهما ♦ لا يرقدان ولا بوسى لمن رقدنا

ومن كلامه في جملة رقعة

قال المصنف

أطرب ما أطرب ثم آوى ♦ الى بيت قعيدته لكأج

وبعث ولي سيدنا الشيخ اطال الله بقاءه صغر من صناع وكأج . وانما قدمت
♦ ذلك اعتذاراً من التقصير وانا اسبح في تفعله اين حللت واهل الشام يهجرون
من اهل العراق مجرى الهجين من العرب وشاء المصر من الظباء الراتعات والثمار
تفصل الشمار كفصل الناس على الناس وفي كتاب الله تعالى ومما رزقناهم
ينفقون وقال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لو دُعِيتُ الى مرامٍ لاجبْتُ والمرام
زائدة تكون بين يُلْفَى الشاة وقال قاتل العرب اشبه امرؤ بعض بئرة ولو اهديت
١٠ اليه الافق بشرقاه . والربيع الزاهر برقاه . لكان عندي اني قد قمرت وفي هذا ١٤٥
البلد فستق ردى يسمى غيظ الجيران ومعنى هذا الكلام انه اذا كسرطن جيران
السوء انه ملآن فحسدوا عليه وهم لا يعلمون انه فارغ وقد
وجهت شيئا منه ليعبت به اتباعه ولو لا علمي
بشرف اخلاقه وكرم نفسه لم اجسر على
ذلك وما اولاه بان يجريني على
العادة في التفقل ان
شاء الله

لشعراء بلده الذين هم اخوانه وبنوا عمه فهم ان شاء الله تع بالعكس مما
قال الاسدي

لعمرك اني لو اخاصم حيّة • الى تلقى ما انصفتني تلقى
ولحمد لله الذي جعلكم مد ما قاله المتلمس

- احارث انا لو تساط دماؤنا • تزايلن حتى لا يمت دم دما
وقد عجبت من سداده ادام الله عزه فيما اشار به وحسن تسوره على المعالي
٢٤٤ ولكن اعط القوس بارئها . الان صار الرمية الى التزعة وانما قلت ذلك لان
بعض الشعراء لا يكون له تصرف في منشور الكلام وقد روي ان الهجري كان
لا يقدر على كتب رقعة فيجعل المنظوم عوصا من المنشور .
والله المشكور . سبحانه على ما خوله من نظم
ونشروكلاهما للدر نسيب . بكاد
يسمع لمائه قسيب

ورأى الشيخ خير من مشهد الغلام وليست صناعة مكسب يُغشى قوتها . ولا عروساً تُخطب فيخاف موتها . من كان ثقة برا فهو العدل المقبول . وإذا كان ادام الله عزه مؤثراً لاصدقائه الكون في هذه المنزلة ولم لا يباشرها بنفسه ويُلقى عليها الفائز من قِداحه فقد ذكر صاحب كتاب الورقة جماعة من الشعراء . كانت القصاة تقبل شهاداتهم منهم السيد للميمري على انه كان في ذلك ١٤٢ الزمان ينسب الى مذهب الكيسانية وكانت القلوب منه نافرة ولن تفلو الامصار من قوم هذه سجيتهم وقد كان ممن ادركنا زمانه ابو عبد الله النمرى المصرى مقبول الشهادة عند القاضى بالبصرة وكان من شعرائها واذا كان ادام الله عزه على هذه الحال من النصيحة لعامة المسلمين فما قوله لاهل صناعته ١٠ . كاتى به آسفاً لمقتل حُجرا بى امرئ القيس الى اليوم تعصباً للكندى وكم يودّ انه يغرم للمساكين ولا يكون للثرث المشكرى جاء بالبيت الذى فيه ماء السماء فى القصيدة المرفوعة وبكم ديناراً كان يفتدى اقواء النابغة وانكار اهل المدينة عليه ذلك وكم مائة كان يبذل فى اشتراء قديمين حسنتين لابي عبادة فيقال انه كانت قدماء قدمى طاروس وكم حجة كان يجمع الى الكعبة ١٥ . يسال الله سبحانه ان يزيد الفرزدق بن غالب عقداً فى قامته فانه كان قصيراً وما الذى كان يبذل فى ان يبقى على اعشى قيس شفاً من بصره يهتدى به وكانى به مغموماً لعور ابن احمر والشماع والراعى النيمري واذا كان دابه مع الذين يخالفونه فى الدين والعصر فما باله مع اهل دمه وانما هو لهم أم ١٤٣ افرشت فانامت وكانى بالرجل منهم واقفا بين يدي السلطان اعز الله نصره ٢٠ . وهو ادام الله عزه يرجف قلبه خوفاً عليه من الزلل والخطأ ومن اولى منه بالبر والله يبلغه اطول اعمار الشعراء فى صحّة كصحة الوحشى الأبد . وتصر كبصر الغراب . وسمع كسمع الفرس ويعيذه فى ذلك مما يلحق ذوى السن فانهم ربما صاروا يكسرون الابيات ولا يشعرون وقد شاهدت منهم رجلاً تلك سبيله وهو يعرف للحكاية عن البحتري وانه كسر فى قوله

٢٥ ولما ذا تتبع النفس شيئاً • جعل الله الفردوس منه جزاء

واذا كانت نيته للغربة من اهل العصر على هذه الصفة فاحسن بها

وصار جسده للأرض الملتهمة مثل الطعام . وانا وللماعة نبعت الى سيدى
الشيخ مع راكب الطريق . ونسيم الريح الخريق . والعقيق المومض . والخيال
المتعرض . سلاما تارج رجال الرفقة اذا استودعته . وتبتهج
قلوب النفر ان الاذان منهم سمعته .

وحسبى الله وحده

وكتب الى رجل جوابا عن رقعة كتبها اليه فى حال
عدل من عدول القاضى ترك الشهادة واستعفى منها

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم فيما ذكره سيدى الشيخ ادام الله عزه تذكرة لمن
كان له قلب او القى السمع وهو شهيد ولكن ليس لقلب خدش اذنان . وقد
افصح . من نصح . وكيف بغلام اعيانى ابوه ♦ شئشينة اعرفها من أخزم ♦ ١٠
١٤١ قد كان ابو هذا الرجل رحمه الله ترك الشهادة فى اخر عمره . والسعيد من
وعظ بغيره . وقد حَبَرْتُ ما عند هذا الرجل فكان كالطبيب ترك يَلَّة والعَيْرُ
أوتى لدمة شَبَّ عمرو عن الطوق

ان الغصون اذا قومتها اعتدلت ♦ ولن تلين اذا قومتها الخشب
وقد حمل ثقل الشهادة اربعين سنة فلو كانت قميصاً لتمزق . او عصفوا من ١٥
اعفاء الجسد لأخلت . وانما الامر بقوابله . ولن يعدم المسلمون اركيا بَرَّة وهم
بحمد الله كثير فى هذه البلدة والشهادة فرض على الكفاية فاما الاصاغر
وتعريضهم لهذه المشقة فاهل القتل اولى به وولَّ حَارَها . من تولى قَارَها .

ينظر بعيني سودنيق . يترك النعامة يتيمة الرال . ويتكبر عن نقال
الاجرال . وتلمح فارسه عيون الاعداء . كالنجم بالافق بدا لاهتده . لا تُشرع
له أسنة الرماح . ولا يدرك بسوى الطرف اللماح . فان عداه ذلك فجهازه
على مَذَرَج شتاج . بمثله بُلغ قمه اللماح . قُوِيل بين العير والفرس . وأغير
ه خلقه اغارة المرس . بنظيرة تطوى الارض النطيه . وترام الطيه . شاهده على ذلك
قول ابن الرقيات

خلعوا ارسن الجياد وساروا ♦ قارنيها بشاحجات البغال

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وقول ابن مقبل

يسرو جَمِيرَ أبوال بغال به ♦ أتى تسَدَّيت وَهناً ذلك البيتَا

١٠ وقول الاسدي

فقد جاوزن من غُمدان ارما ♦ لابوال بغال بها وقيع

ومثل هذا كثير وقد يجوز ان يقتنع من له صيت في السماء . بان يركب
قصير الاطمه . وكَم كَثير . وُصل اليه بالغير . وكَم رَاكب حمار . افضل من
رَاكب جواد غير (ذى) ائتمار . قال الله جل اسمه وانظر الى حمارك ولنجعلك
١٥ آية للناس ولا باس ان يسلب الله الرجل حلة الاغنيا . فيلبس بتفضل الله
حلل الانبياء . فيستعين على السفر بمطية طلحية . ليست بالملولة ولا
الملحية . اذا حل في المنزل اغنته عن الملاء . بغنائها عن ماء وكلاء . وهى
في التلف . قربة الخلف . حبذا تلك مطية قال الله عز وجل وما تلك بميمينك
يا موسى . قال هى عصا اتوكأ عليها واهش بها على غنمى ولى فيها مآرب
٢٠ اخرى . وانما حمدت الغربة وذكرت بعد ذلك مشقة السفر لان المكارم قُرنت
بالجهد . ولخطبان جعل سلما الى الشهد . وقد قال الاول

لا تحسب المجد تمرا انت آكله ♦ لن تدرك المجد حتى تلحق الصبر

قد اطلمت اطال الله بقاء سيدى الشيخ ومن اطال . خالف الابطال . وهذا ١٤٥
وان اختصر . واقتصر . انما اجبتة بنثير دون منظوم لاني منذ سنوات . اعرضت
٢٥ عن تلك الهنوات . واما صديقنا ابو حمزة رحمه الله فقد نقله الله جل اسمه
من دار الشقاء . الى دار النعيم والبقاء . وقد رؤى جدته عاما بعد عام .

- حتى ترد مآه اسداما . تحفره الصُّبُع وبميل انهلما . متى ذاقه المائح تفل .
والشعاع قد غرب او طقل . او لطفة آجنه . ممتنها الديم شاجنه . يجتمع لديها
الاسراب . وانها لبئس الشراب . انها لكما قال اخو بني ثُمير
وماء تصبح القلصات منه ♦ كخمر بُراق قد فرط الاجونا
الثرث دفينه واطرت عنه ♦ اوالف قد تبوأن للمصونا
بسفرة راكب وموصلات ♦ جمعت الرث منها والميننا
137 او يكون رحله ادام الله عزه على وجناه خادج . تبندر كالصعل الهادج . لا
ترهب هجوم الكلال . ولا تعاب في الظهائر بملال .
كنتم الرغاء اذا هجرت . وكانت بقية ذوق كُثم
كانها مارية مؤشيه . ابرزتها للرعى العشيّه . ومعها طليّ مُعقّر . في روض
كان رياه المسك الاذفر . فاتيح له العائل من السراحين . فارثقب غفلة تعرض
لها اى حين . فلما شغلها اينق مرعى . تجتلب فيقه به تشكر صرعا . ذكرت
الولد ذكر والذ . وان واحدها فى احدى المتاله . فكثرت تلتمس شقيق النفس .
فوجدته قد صار اثرا مثل امس . لم تلف الا راسا واكارع . وإهابا بقى من
السيد الشارع . فايهاها عنى القطامى بقوله
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كان قتود رحلى حين فمت ♦ حوالب غرزا ومعى جياعا
على وحشية خلجت خلوجاً ♦ وكان لها على طفل فصاعا
فكثرت عند فيمتتها اليه ♦ فالفت عند مريضه السباعا
لعين به فلم يتركن إلا ♦ إهاباً قد تمزق او كراعما
138 او يكون على طرف اعوجى . ما هو لعناره بالنجى . كان جسمه من عسجد .
وحوافره من الزبرجد . تحسب عُزته كوكب ليل . وجراره الى السيل . لا يُفقر
من ركب الى هاب وهب . بل يحتمد بشد ملهّب . بسامى المُلجم بعنق
جنعى . وببارى الشمال بحسب غير دعى . فكلما عرض ربرب او أجل . فله من
ذلك الفرس ججل . فهو زاد للركب غريض . قوتهم عليه فى البيداء فريض .
وهو لعلج العانة عدوّ . يروعه به الغدوّ . كانه اجدل هوى من نيق . او ٢٥

تكرج مرة في عذب وثارة في ماج . وتبيت على غير لماج . وتلجج القطاة الكثرية
بمغرداتها . وتجري من الدأب على عاداتها . وكأنها للعيس امام . وعليها ١٣٥
من النصب والأين زمام .

فهن معترسات والمضى ومضى ♦ والريح ساكنة والظل معتدل
يتبعن سامية العينين تحسبها ♦ مجنونة او ترى ما لا ترى الايل
اذا صار الظل جَوْرَبًا او نَعْلًا . فانت المطى النواجى وجيفاً ومَعْلًا .
جاءت تسامى في الرعيل الاول ♦ والظل عن اخفافها لم يفعل
فهي لا تُتعب سائقًا . ولا تخاف من الكلال عائقًا .

اذا المطى اتعبت سَوَاتِنها ♦ وركبت اخفافها اعناقها
١. ولقد كانت هي ومواحبها كالأطام . وبحرما بالعنق طام . فلم تنزل تجف بالنهار
والليل . حتى هي كقلوص ابني سَهِيل .

كان لها برجل القوم بؤًا ♦ وما إن يطبها الا اللغوب
تسال بعينها العيس . أكله غِذَاء الرعيس . بل كن على السفر مؤيدات .
فنناهن لِحْدَ مقيدات .

١٥ قَتَدَها للجُهد ولم تقَيِّد ♦ فهي سوام كالقنا المستند
كانت تقيد ان تمر بمنزل ♦ فلان مار لها الكلال قيودا

وهو ادام الله عزه في ذلك اذا التفت راي وحشية نوارا . او ذِيَالاً يالف حيوارا . ١٣٦
او اريد له ودیعة بالأدحی . یُعَدُّ الحنظل معونة على الحی . وينظر الى الحرياء
ماتلا على العود . وهو ظاهر على ظهر قعود . يسمع اغاني البنادب . ويعجب
٢. لابی جخادب . والظبا مثل الاحراج . كلهن لظلال السمر راج . فكانها دَوِيَّة
غيلان لما قال

كأن ادمانها والشمس راكدة ♦ وَدَعَّ بارجائها فدَ ومنظوم
يضحى بها الارقش للَبُونِ القَرَأَ غَرِيْدًا ♦ كأنه رَجُلُ الاوتار مخطوم
من الطنابير يزمرى صوته قَبِيل ♦ في لحنه عن لغات العرب تعجيم
٢٥ مُعَرَّوْرِيَا رَمَضِ الرضراض يركمه ♦ والشمس حَيَّرِي لها في الجَوْدِ تدويم
كان رجليه رجلا مُقْطِفٍ عَجِل ♦ اذا تجاوب من بُرْدِيه ترنيم

يُصْبِحْنَ بَعْدَ الطَّلُوقِ التَّجَرِيدِ ♦ شَوَائِيًا لِلْسَائِقِ الْغَيْرِيدِ
إِذَا حُدُونَاهَا بِهَيْدٍ هَيْدٍ ♦ صَفْحُنَ لِلْأَزْزَارِ بِالْحُدُودِ
وَفَتْحَةٍ مِثْلَ النَّشَاوِي غَيْدٍ ♦ قَدْ اسْتَحَلُّوا قِسْمَةَ السُّجُودِ
وَالْمَسْحِ بِالْأَيْدِي عَلَى الصَّعِيدِ

٥ فَعَهْدِي بِهِ تَعْجِبُهُ هَذِهِ الْأَرْجُوزَةُ وَهُوَ يَنْشُدُ مِنْهَا الْأَبْيَاتِ
قَدْ هَزَيْتُ اخْتِ بَنِي لَبِيدٍ ♦ وَعَجِبْتَ مِنِّي وَمِنْ مَسْعُودٍ
رَأْتُ غُلَاقِي سَقَرٍ بَعِيدٍ ♦ يَذْرَعَانِ اللَّيْلَ ذَا السُّدُودِ
مِثْلَ أَذْرَاعِ الْيَلَمَقِ الْجَدِيدِ

وَإِذَا كَانَ الْأَمْرُ كَذَلِكَ كَانَ رَحْلُهُ عَلَى حَرْفِ فَامِرٍ . لَا تَعْهَدُ سِوَى الْفُدَاةِ مِنْ سَامِرٍ .
تَسْتَنُ فِي السَّرَابِ كَالنُّونِ . وَتَنْظُرُ بَعَيْنِي مَجْنُونٍ . مَا ذَرَّتْ قَطَ عَلَى قَيْمِيلٍ ١٠٠
وَلَا أَبَسَ الْعَبْدَانِ بِهَا لِلْحَلْبِ فِي السَّحَرِ وَلَا الْأَصِيلِ . بَلْ هِيَ كَمَا قَالَ الْأَعَشَى
مِنْ سَرَاةِ الْهَيْجَانِ مَلَبْهَا الْعُدَى وَرَعَى لَحْمِي وَطُولَ الْيَمَالِ
١٣٤ كَانَهَا وَالزَّيْدُ عَامٍ . فَحَلَّ شَرْدَ مِنَ النِّعَامِ . تَنْتَجِ زِفْرَاهَا بِقَطِيرَانٍ . وَلَا تَضْرِبُ
لِللَّانَاخَةِ بِحِجْرَانٍ . كَانَهَا مِنْ غَيْرِ الْمَيْنِ . عَلِجَ قَرِجَ عَامَا أَوْ عَامِينَ . رَقَعَ فِي
رَوْضٍ بَعْدَ رَوْضٍ . وَهَبَطَ الْقِرَارُ فِي زَاوِي النَّوْضِ . فَهُوَ حَادِي سَبْعٍ أَوْ ثَمَانٍ ١٥٠
أَخَذَرِي النَّسَبِ فَمَا الْبَلَدُ فَيَمَانٍ . وَهُوَ آدَامُ اللَّهِ عِزَّةً فِي كُورِهَا يَتَرَنَّمُ بِقَوْلِ
الشَّمَاخِ

كَأَنَّ قُتُودِي فَوْقَ جَاوِيٍّ مَطَرْدٍ ♦ مِنْ لُحْقَبٍ لَاحَتَهُ لِلْخَذَابِ الْقَوَارِزُ
طَوَى ظِلْمَاهَا فِي بَيْضَةِ الصَّيْفِ بَعْدَمَا ♦ جَرَى فِي عَنَانِ الشَّعْرَيْنِ الْأَمَاعِزُ
وَضَلَّتْ بِأَبْلِيٍّ كَأَنَّ عُيُونَهَا ♦ إِلَى الشَّمْسِ هَلْ تَدْنُو رُكْبِي نَوَاكِرُ ٢٠
مُسْتَبْتَةً قَبْلَ الْبَطُونِ كَانَهَا ♦ رَمَاعٍ نَحَاها وَجْهَةَ الرِّيحِ رَاكِرُ
قَدْ حَلَبَهَا الْهَجِيرُ مِنْ زِفْرَاهَا . فَمَا اخْلَافَهَا فَلَا يَدْرِكُ صَرَاهَا . هِيَهَاتَ
هِيَهَاتَ لِمَا تَوَعَّدُونَ . فَقَاتِلِ اللَّهَ مَعْقِلَ بْنِ ضَرَارٍ حَيْثُ يَقُولُ

كَانَ زُرَاعِيهَا زُرَاعًا مُدِيلَةً ♦ بُعِيدَ السِّبَابِ حَاوَلْتُ أَنْ تَعْنُرَا
كَانَ بِذِفْرَاهَا مَنَادِيلٌ فَارَقَتْ ♦ أَكْفَ رِجَالٍ يَعْمُرُونَ الصَّنَوْبِلَ ٢٥
وَمَرَّتْ عَلَى مَاءِ الْعُدْبِ وَعَيْنُهَا ♦ كَوَثَبَ الصَّفَا جَلَسَتْهَا قَدْ تَغَوَّرَا

ابقى للوالت ما ابقين من نمر ♦ اسباب سيف قديم اثره باد
تظل تحفر عنه ان صريت به ♦ بعد الفراعين واليمتين والهادي
وفي كتابه ادام الله عزه شكوى رَعْنَةٍ وما اعرف سبباً يُؤدى الى ذلك الا ان يكون
الافراط فى درس العلم فقد قال الشاعر
ارعشتنى الحمر من ادمانها ♦ ولقد اُرعشت من غير كِبَر
وهو ان شاه الله يعيش اكلُ الاعمار . من غير تمار . لا يفترله فى الادب نية .
ولا تَنَقَّصَ منه نية . بل يكون فى ذلك مثل ابي ليلى نابغة بنى جعدة فانه
الذى يقول

فمن يك سائلاً عنى فانى ♦ من الغتيان فى زمن الحنان
مضت مائة لعام وَلِدْتُ فيه ♦ وعشر بعد ذلك واثنان ١٠
وقد ابقت صروف الدهر منى ♦ كما ابقت من السيف اليمانى
وسمعت ذم الغربة فى كتابه او عَرَضَ بذمها وَلِمَ فعل ذلك ادام الله عزه الا يرى
الرجل ان يستن بسنة موسى صلى الله عليه لما قيل فيه ولما توجه تلقاء مدين
قال عسى ربي ان يهدين سواء السبيل انسى دخوله الى المساجد فى اوقات
١٥ الصلوات . وافصاه الى المدائن من بعد الفلوات . اما يذكر وقد مرّ به فى
كتاب المجاز لابي عبيدة قول الراجز

يا حبذا القمر والليل الساج ♦ وطرق مثل مُلأ النَّسَاج
فطرب لهذا البيت حتى شوق الحاضرين الى ركوب السفر . والتعريس على
العقر . والغربة . بها تُحلُّ الأرب . وطالما اُضحى الغريب . وهو من ادراك الغرض
٢٠ قريب . وكيف به اذا اُضاف الى بلوغه محابته مشاهدته اهل الادب فى الامصار
المختلفة . ومناظرته المتحققين بالعلم فى المسائل المتنفة . وكيف به اذا سامر
الفرقد . وبات بليلة ابن انقد . الا يشتاقي الى تحامل اللهيذ . وحاد يهتف
بهيذ . وراء قلائص كقلائص النجم . لا تسأم عيونها من السجم . اخفاها ١٣
بلقدم راعفه . ونسائسها بالذميل مساعفه . كانما تنظر الى الوهوش من
٢٥ ثماد . وتحصل رجالها على جماد . فهى كما قال غيلان بن عُقبة

ما انت بالحكم الترقى حكومت • ولا الاميل ولا ذى الراى والجلد
ولا فى قول طارق بن ديس

ويستخرج اليربوع من نافقائه • ومن بيته ذى الشيخة اليتمتع
لان بعض الناس لا يرى هذه الرواية شيئا ومن زعم انها صحيحة فانما يحملها
على الضرورة اللهم الا ان يزعم ادم الله عزه ان هذا جار مجرى قول النحويين فى •
الدُّلُّ اذا كان على مثال فُعِلَ لان سيمويه لم يذكر هذا المثال فى الامثلة الثلاثية
وهو اسم مشهور فزعم المحتجون فى ذلك ان قولهم لهذه الدويبة الدُّلُّ كان
130 فى الاصل فعلا كانه دُؤِّلَ من قولهم دأل الماشى ذألنا وهذا مكان مدول فيه ثم سعى
به وهو فُعِلَ فدخلت عليه الالف واللام لما وضع اسماً للجنس وهذا يشبه قولهم
طرزة من خرز النساء البينجلب وكانها سميت بقولهم ينجلب وهو ينفعل من ١٠
جلبتُ كانها تجلب بها زوجها الى ما تريد قالت امرأة من العرب

اخذته بالينجلب • فلم يَرِمَ ولم يغب • ولم يزل عند الطنب
وهذا قليل من كلامهم وانا اجيب سيدى الشيخ الى هذا التاويل ولا اترك
للعتب سُلماً الى تفصده • ولا للتقول سبيلاً على مَنته • وكيف وقد غلا فى وصفى •
واعطاني ما لا يستحقه موضعى • اليس قد بلغه فى الحديث المروى عن عمر بن ١٥
الخطاب رضى انه خرج ليلة يمشى وبده على كتف ابن عباس رضى فقال انشدنى
لاشعر شعرائكم قال له ابن عباس ومن هو قال الذى لا يعاقل بين البيتتين
ولا يتبع حوشى الكلام ولا يمدح الرجل الا بما فيه يعنى زهير بن ابى سلمى
131 فسيدي الشيخ قد اخذ بخلتين من هذه الثلاث لم يعاقل بين البيتتين ولا
اتبع حوشى الكلام وقد مدحنى بما ليس فى ولكنه فى ذلك على مذهب الخطباء •
والشعراء وزعم صاحب المنطق فى كتابه الثانى من الكتب الاربعة ان الكذب
ليس بقبيح فى مناعة الشعر والخطابة ولذلك استجازت العرب ان تقول فتفرط
وتسرف فى الشئ فتُفَرِّقُ قال الشاعر فى وصف السيف
ترى ضرباته ابدا خطايا • الى ان يستبين له قتيلا

فهي تكرات وعلى اخواتها ليست كذلك وما عنيت حروف الخفض وحدها بل ١٢٨
جميع حروف المعاني اليس قد روى بيت ابي زُبَيْد
ليت شعري وابن منى ليت ♦ ان لَوّاً وان لَيْتاً عناء

وقال النابغة

• الا يا ليتني والمرء ميت ♦ وما تغني من اللدنان ليت

وقال النجر

علقت لَوّاً تكرره ♦ ان لَوّاً ذاك اعيانا

ولعله ادام الله عزه يتأول ان الالف واللام دخلت عليها كما دخلت على العمرو
في قول ابي النجم

١٠ خلّص ام العمرو من اسيرها

وكما دخلت على الأوبر في قول القائل

ولقد جنيتك أكمؤاً وعساقلاً ♦ ولقد نهيتك عن بنات الأوبر

وكما قال الاخر

وجدنا اليزيد بن الوليد مباركاً ♦ شديداً باعباء الخلافة كامله

١٥ وانما الكلام ام عمرو ويزيد بن الوليد وابن اوبر لضرب من الكمأة كما انشد
ابو حاتم عن الأصمعي

ومن جنى الارض ما تاتي الرقأ به ♦ من ابن أوبر والمغرود والفيقعه

ولكن هذه مواضع ضرورات وزعموا ان الشاعر قال اليزيد بن الوليد مباركاً

فاجترأ على مجيئ الالف واللام في يزيد لما جاءه تا في الوليد فكان المعروف ١٢٩

٢٠ ثباتهما فيه وان كان ادام الله عزه تأول اني مكنتي بعلأ الذي هو فعل ماض
فهو في التعرية من التعريف بالالف واللام مثل الاول اليس قد سمع قول
القلائع

انا القلائع بن القلائع بن جلا ♦ ابو حنّائير اقود جملاً

وقال سُهَيْم بن وَثِيل الرّياحي

٢٥ انا ابن جلا وطلّاع الثنايا ♦ متى اصبح العمامة تعرفوني

وليس في قول الفرزدق حجة لدخول الالف واللام على الافعال حيث قال

كأُثِّتُ الى ان ينبت الظِّلُّ بعد ما ♦ تقاصر حتى كاد في الارض يُمَسَّحُ
لو كنت اطول الاسماء وهو المصدر الذي فعله على ستة احرف مثل احرنجام
واستخراج يحذف منى لكل منف من هذا القصر حرف لم يبق منى شئ او
كان ارفع منازل ان ابقى على حرفين الاول متحرك والثاني ساكن وذلك اقصر
الاصوات الذي لا يمكن النطق باقل منه وكنت اصير سببا مضطربا فيدركنى
القبض والكف والقصر ويجترى على الشعراء فاحذف في الموضع الذي يتأتى
فيه حتى لى متعارف بين الناس كما قال ابو دؤاد

اكل امرئ تحسبين أمراً ♦ ونار تحترق بالليل نارا

والفقد المستاصل اروح من الحيوة في هذه المنزلة ولو كنت السباعى الذى فى
الكامل ثم قُصِرَتْ هذا القصر لكانت جديراً ان اصير الحرف الذى يكون به ١٠
الضرب السابع من الكامل مُذالاً ولو كنت سباعى الرَّمْل ثم صنع بى ذلك
لكانت البقية منى تسبيغا فى الرابع فاما خماسى البسيط فلو كُنْتُه ثم مُنِعَ
بى مثل هذا لذهبت البتة فلم يبق منى ما يكون ذيلاً للثالث وهبنى اسما ١٢٧
خماسيا قُيِّرَتْ ترخيماً أولاً ثم ترخيماً ثانياً على القياس لا على السماع ثم
ثالثاً فى رأى الاخفش والقرّاء دون غيرهما من اهل العلم ثم يجب ان يُكْفَ ١٥
عنه بعد ذلك ولا يحذف منه شئ فى كل المذاهب اللهم ان يتأول فى المذهب
الذى حكاه ابو عبيدة عن العرب من ان بعضهم يقول ألاّ تا فيقول بعضهم
بلى فا يريد ألاّ تذهب وبلى فاذهب وعلى هذا يحمل قول الراجز
قد وعدتنى ام عمرو ان تا ♦ تذهن راسى وتُفْلِيئِنى وا

٢٠ وتمسح القنفاء حتى تثنّتا

ولعل سيدى الشيخ ادم الله عزه ظن انى مكنتى بعلّى التى هى حرف خفض
من قوله عُلَى زَيْدٌ مَالٌ ولو كنت كذلك لوجب ان يقال ابو عُلَى بغير الف
ولام لان هذه الحروف اذا اخرجت من ابوابها صارت متعرفة تعريف الاعلام
مثل زيد وعمرو وهى ضد حروف المعجم لان تلك فى بابها بغير الف ولام فاذا
اخرجت منه لحقتها علامة التعريف فقليل الباء والتاء والتاء فاذا عدمت ذلك ٢٥

إذا أعرجين قلت صاحب قويم ♦ في الدوامثال السفين العويم
وكما انشد سيبويه لامرئ القيس
فاليوم اشرب غير مستحقب ♦ وإنما من الله ولا واغل
ولا بنى الاسم غير بنيته اعني الاسماء الشائعة فاما اسمي فقد سبق فيه ما
♦ سبق وانما عنيت مثل ما قال بعضهم
كان فاما عبقّر بارد ♦ او ربح موض مسه ترشأش رقه
وانما هو على قول بعض الناس عبقّر على مثال جعفر واما عبقّر على هذه
الهيئة فبناه مستنكر لم يذكره سيبويه في الابنية فمن هجر هذه الضرورات
كلها وغيرها مما لو ذكرته لطلال به الكتاب كالتقديم والتاخير والفرق بين
١٠ المضاف والمضاف اليه كما قال الفرزدق
وما من بلاء غير كل عشية ♦ وكل صباح زائر غير عائد
وكما قال سديف
فكيف ولم اذا سُميت يوما ♦ تكن للناس يدركك المراء
١٢٥ اراد فكيف ولم تكن يدركك المراء اذا سُميت للناس وكما انشد ابو عبيدة
فاصبحت بعد خط بهجتها ♦ كان خطاً رُسومها قلماً
فكيف استجاز ان يقصر كنية صديقه اما السمة فغيرها واما الكنية فقصرها
فانا لله وانا اليه راجعون هذا امر من امر الله ليس هو من ضعف الشاعر ولا
وهن القائل ولكنه من سوء الحظ لمن خوطب والاتفاق الردي لمن سُمي وذكر
ولا يقل سيدى الشيخ ادام الله عزه قد قصرت الشعراء قديمها ومولدها واولها
٢٠ السالف واخرها وفصحها الطبعي ومتكلفتها فانه لو كان استعمل ضرورة غير
تلك لقبلت حجتة ولكنه الغي الضرورات باسرها ورفض العيوب فلم يستعملها
وانما تغوّثت من ذلك لاني قصير الهمة قصير اليد مقصور النظر اى مكفوف
مقصور في البيت اى لازم له فكانى محبوس فيه فما كفانى ذلك مع قصر
الجسم حتى يضاف اليه قصر الاسم لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله العلي العظيم لو كنت
٢٥ اطول من ظل الرمح لصرت اقصر من سالفة الذباب قد كدت امصح في الارض
كما تمصح الظلال مثل ما قال القائل

وقد تفقدت موضعاً آخر في منظومة ادم الله عزه وليس ذلك على سبيل الانتقاد .
بل على منهاج المذاكرة الصادرة عن حسن اعتقاد . قد برأ النظم من الضرورات
الصدرية والعجزية والمشوية ولم يحذف التنوين كما قال القائل

كفاني ما حثيث ابو فراس ♦ ومثل ابي فراس كفى وزاد

ولا حذف اليا في غير موضع الحذف كما قال الاعشى
123 واخو الغوان متى يشأ يصرمه ♦ ويصرن اعداء بعيد ودا
وكما قال خفاف

كفواح ريش حمامة نجدية ♦ ومسحت باليتنين عصف الائم

ولا رحم في غير النداء كما قال القائل

اودي ابن جلهم عبدا يصرمته ♦ ان ابن جلهم امسى حية الوادي

وقال زمير

خذوا حقكم يا آل عكرمة واذكروا ♦ اواصرنا والرحم بالغيب تذكر

وقال الآخر

ان ابن حارث ان اشتق لرؤيته ♦ او امتدحه فان الناس قد علموا

15 ولا حذف من الاسم ما يخل به كما قال ليبيد

درس المنا بمتالع فابان

يريد المنازل وكما قال علقمة

كان ابريقهم طيبى براية ♦ متطق قصب الرياح مفعوم

ابيض ابرزة للبيج راقبه ♦ مقلد بسبا الكتان مفعوم

20 يريد بسبائب الكتان وكما انشد ابن الاعرابي

اناس تنال الماء قبل شفاههم ♦ لهم واردات الغفر شتم الارانب

اراد الغصروف ولا عوض من الصحيح حرفا معتلا كما قال الراجز

ومنهل ليست له حوازي ♦ ولصفادي حية نقانق

124 اراد الصفادع وكما قال الآخر

25 لها اشارير من لحم تنقره ♦ من الشعالى ووخر من اراينها

اراد الارانب والشعالب ولا سكن في غير موضع التسكين كما قال الآخر

وقال عمرو بن حسان الشيباني

١٢١
الا يا ام عمرو لا تلومي ♦ اذا اجتمع الندامي والمدام
أنى بكزين نالهما سواف ♦ تاؤة طُلُتسى ما إن تنام
وهل أحيا هدلت ابا قبيس ♦ عمود المُلْك والنعم الرُكّام
بنتى بالغمر أكبد مكفهرًا ♦ تغرد فى جوانبه الحمام
وانما يريد بابى قبيس ابا قابوس وزعمت الرواة انه كان لصفية ابنة عبد
المطلب ولدان الزبير والسائب وكان السائب يعقها فقالت فيه
يشتمنى السائب من خلف الجُدُر ♦ لكن ابو الطامر زتار ابر
مبذر لاله بَرَّ غُفُر

١٠ فالزبير ترخيم الزتار فى التصغير فردته الى اصله ولا ندفع ان الشعراء قد
سموا الرجل باسم ابيه على سبيل الضرورة اليس قد قال الراجز
صبحن من كاظمة ليمن الحرب ♦ يحملن عباس بن عبد المطلب
وقال اوس بن حَجَر

فهل لكم فيها التى فأتنى ♦ بصير بما اعيا النيطاسى حذيمًا
١٥ يريد ابن حذيم وقال ذو الرمة وذكر يوم الكلاب الثانى
عشية فر الحارثيان بعدما ♦ قفى نعبه فى مُلتقى الخيل هَوْبَر
وانما يريد ابن هَوْبَر يدلك على ذلك قول عمر بن لُجاء
ونحن ضرينا بالكلاب ابن هَوْبَر ♦ وجمع بنى الديان حتى تبددا
١٢٢ وانا اتسامح له ادام الله عزه بهذه واعدها زينا . لا شينا . اذ كانت قذاة فى
٢٠ بخر مزبد . بل اثر سجود فى جبهة متعبّد . وله ان يقول انه تشبث بالكُنية
فاستغنى بها عن الاسم فاما انا فحفظت اسمه وكنيته ونسبه ولم انس ايامه ولا
مذاكرته وقد جعلت جواب كتابه نائبا مناب الاجتماع معه فلا ينكر على الاسهاب
فى المحاوراة والاكتار من المفاوضة وما عبت على اهل البصرة قلة التفاتهم الى الاوطان
وانما وصفتهم بقوة القلوب والاكباد لان العرب تصف نفوسها بذلك اليس قد
٢٥ بلغه قول قتادة بن مسلمة المنفى
يُبكى علينا ولا نبكى على احد ♦ لنحن اغلظ أكبادا من الابل

وقد كتب تحتة الا اهل البصرة فاذا كانت تلك سميتهم مع اهلهم واطنانهم فكيف بالذين عرفوهم من اخوانهم والدليل على ما قلت انه ادام الله عزه لم يثبت اسمي جعلني محمدا واسمي احمد فان احتج بان هذين الاسمين سواء لقوله تعالى محمد رسول الله والذين معه اشداء على الكفار ويقولوا في موضع اخر برسول ياتي من بعدى اسمه احمد فان ذلك انما كان للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم خاصة لانه قال اسمي في السماء احمد وفي الارض محمد فان قال قائل ان العرب قد يكون للرجل منهم الاسمان والثلاثة واحتج بقول دريد بن الصمة

تنادوا فقالوا اريد الخيل فارساً ♦ فقلت اعبد الله ذلكم الروي

وقال فيها

١٠

فان تُنسنا الايام والعصر تعلموا ♦ بنى قارب انا غصاف بمعبّد
فان ذلك لا يخلو من احد امرين اما ان يكون للرجل اسمان ولست كذلك
واما ان يكون الشاعر غير اسمه ضرورة ولو كان غير اسمي في النظم دون النشر
لكان عذره في ذلك منبسطة لان الشعراء للآلة يغيرون الاسماء قال لَطَيْئَةُ

٢٠

وما رضيت لهم حتى رفدتهم ♦ من وابل رط بسطام باصرام
فيه الرماح وفيه كل سابغة ♦ قضاء محكمة من نسج سلام
اراد سليمان عليه السلام وهذا تغيير على غير قياس لا يسلك به مسلك غيره
من قولهم عالية وعُلَيَّة وفاطمة وُطَيْمَة في القصيدة الواحدة يعنون امرأة بعينها
ولا مجرى قولهم ابو قابوس وابو قبيس للنعمان بن المنذر وزّار والزبير يعنون
الزبير بن العوام لان هذا ترخيم التصغير وهو قياس مطرد قال القطامي
امست عُلَيَّة يرتاح الفؤاد لها ♦ وللرواسم فيها دونها عمل
وقال فيها

ألمحة من سنا برق رأى بصرى ♦ ام وجه عالية اختالت به الكلال

وقال المرقش

افاطم لو ان النساء ببلدة ♦ وانت باخرى لا تبعتك هائماً
واني لاستحيى فطيمة جائعاً ♦ خميصا واستحيى فطيمة طاعماً

٢٥

الضرب الثاني من الطويل فاذا كان بالف التأسيس فجائز ان يطرأ عليه سنادان احدهما حرفي والاخر حركي فالحمد لله الذي كفاه شرهما ووقاه معرتهما اما الحرفي فهو الذي دخل فيه ابو عبادة واما الحركي فهو الذي عوذ به غيلان شعرة من الغوائل في القصيدة الكافية واما ما نظمه من اول الوافر فانه اردفه بالالف فخلص بذلك مثل ما خلس غيره من المردفات باليا والواو من الالفات واما الكامل فانه استعمل ضربه الاول والثاني فجاء به مجردا لا يلحقه من السناد الا فن جاء به الوليد فقد خرج من غمرته كما خرج قذح ابن مقيل . جاء بغنيمة للمهتبل . واما الضرب الثاني منه فقد علم ان الردف له لازم الا شذوفاً رويت عن امرئ القيس بركائه من السناد اشد من ١٠ بركة غير اذ كان غيره قد يستعمل تارة مردفاً وتارة مجرداً وهذا لا يستعمل ١١٨

الا بردف وان كان ادام الله عزه يقول الشعر بقياس العروض فكيف تفرع هذه الاوزان التي هي سليمة قويمية ولم يجز عليه ما جرى على رزين العروسي لما مدح الحسن بن سهل بقصيدته الكافية التي اولها
قربوا جمالهم للرحيل غدوة احبته الاقربوك

١٥ وقد شاهدنا بعض من يقول الشعر بالعروض ربما ركب وزن قصيدة المرقش وعنده ان غرائز الناس اليوم لا تنفر من مثل ذلك واحسبه جميل الله به قد جمع بين طبع كالبحر الخفم . وعلم اكتسبه جم . ودلني كتابه على انه يحسبني قد اضعفت وده . وتناسيت في طول الزمن عهده . اني اذا لمن الظالمين عرفني بنفسه انه من اهل البصرة وقد صرح معي انه من اهل البصرة الساكنة ٢٠ في خلده . وتلك اجل من البصرة بلدة . وهل البصرة الا حجارة بيض . يطوها انس وربيض . اليس قد روى قول ذي الرمة

اذا ساقيانا افرغا في ازانة ♦ على قلص بالمقفرات جيام

تداعين باسم الشيب في متثلّم ♦ جوانبه من بصرة وسلام

واهل البصرة سلمهم الله ينسبون الى قلة اللتين ليست قد مرت به هذه ١١٩
٢٥ الحكاية وهي انه وجد على حجر مكتوب

ما من غريب وان ابدي تجلده ♦ الا سيذكر عند العيلة الوطن

لم تدع ذا السيفين الانجدة ♦ بك اوجبت لك ان تُقلد آخرًا
وقد دخل فيما هو اشنع من هذا اليس هو الذى يقول
لا تُلهقن الى الاساءة اختها ♦ شر الإساءة ان تُسى معاودا
وارفع يديك الى السماحة مُفْجِلا ♦ ان العلى فى القوم للاعلى يدا
شروى ابي العقر الذى مدت له ♦ شيبان فى الحسنات ابعدها مَدًا
ويُسْرَنى ان ليس يكمل شيمة ♦ من معشر من ليس يكرم والدًا ١١٦
فظن ابو عبادة ان الالف التى فى الكلمة المنفردة من اختها وليست الثانية
من المتعلات بالصمير او من المضمات نفوسها تصلح ان تكون تاسيسًا فتجى
مع والد وماعد وذلك مُجْمَع على رفضه عند من تقدم وغيره لا يجعلون الالف
المنفصلة تاسيسًا اليس قد قال العجاج

ما هاج احزاننا وشجوا قد شجا

ثم قال

فهن يعكفن به اذا حجا

وقال عنتره

الشامى عرضى ولم اشتمهما ♦ والنازئان اذا لم القهما دمي ١٥
والقصيدة ليست بمؤسّسة وانما تضعف بعض الغرائز فى غير المؤسس فتجى
بالتاسيس او فيما بُنى عليه فتجى بما هو خال منه وقد تأملت ما نظمه
فوجدته من ثلاثة اوزان اما ما بناء على الطويل من ذلك فعلى الضرب الاول
والضرب الثانى فما بناء على الاول فلا يتسلط عليه السناد لانه بالردف الذى
لا يشركه غيره من الازداف وانما يقع السناد فى المردف الذى يشركه غيره بما ٢٥
خلا من الردف وفيما كان بواو او ياء كما قال الزّبيدي
لصلصلة اللجام براس طَرْف ♦ احبّ اليّ من ان تنكحيني

١١٧ ثم قال

تقول طعينتى لما رآته ♦ شريجاً بين مبيّ وجون
تراه كالشغام يعلّ مسكاً ♦ يسره الغاليات اذا قلّينى ٢٥
فاما الذى أُرْدَف بالالف فلم تساند فيه العرب ولا غيرهم من اهل الغريزة واما

بالزاي معجمة وأما النابغة فان الرواية في شعره مختلفة وقد رُويت له قصيدة
على الماء وليست في أكثر الروايات أولها
عفا منزلي سعدى بدمع وذى حُسى ♦ من الدهر يوما مستهل ورائح
ويقول فيها

• لعل المَدَى إيديهم فتذابحوا

وهذا سناد في رأى الاخفش والدليل على انه عيب قلته ولما ترك هذه العيوب
الفاحشة فكيف ترك اشياء هينة لم يعيها العلماء . ولا تجتبتها القدماء . منها
ثباته على كسرة الاشباع لم يخلط بها الضمة وذلك مباح عند الجماعة وانما
الفتحة مع المركبين الاخرين هي التي وقع فيها الاختلاف أليس قد قال النابغة
١٠ في العينية

يردن الا سترهن تدافع

وقال في اللامية

وترك ورهط الاعجمين وكابُل

وقال ابو ذؤيب

١٥ اساءلت رسم الدار ام لم تُسائِل . ♦ عن السكن ام عن عهده بالاوليل 115
وقال فيها

فان وصلت جبل الصفاء فدم لها ♦ وان صرته فانصرف عن تجامل
ويروى تجامل وقال صخر الغي

لعمري ابي عمرو لقد ساقه المنا ♦ الى قَدَر يُوزَى له بالاهاميب
٢٠ فلم يرها الفرخان بعد مساتها ♦ ولم يهدوا في عُشها من تجاوب
وهذا كثير في اشعار الفصحاء واشنع منه قول ذى الرمة

اما استحلبت عينيك الا محلة ♦ بجمهور حزوي او بجرعاء مالِك

ثم قال

وقد غاب عنهن الغيور واشرقت ♦ لنا الشمس في اليوم القصير المبارك
٢٥ وهؤلاء يعنزون في مثل هذا فما بال ابي عبادة يقول في قصيدته التي اولها
لله عصر سوية ما انصرا وقال فيها

افبعد مقتل مالك بن زمير ♦ نرجو النساء عواقب الاطهار
وقد جاء بمثل ذلك غيره من الفصحاء انشد ابو عُبَيْدَة
حنّت نوار ولا تهنتى حنّت ♦ وبدا الذى كانت نوار آجتيت
لما رات ماء السلا مشروباً ♦ والقرت يُعصر بالأكف ارتت

واما ما اختاره من روى . ليس بغوى . فانه اعتم الدال حرفاً تخيّر طرفة .
لكلمته المنفردة . والنابعة لوصف المتجرده . والباه التى خلصت من الرخاوة
ومعف البناء . الى الشدة وتمكن الاثناء . ارسلها الفم فحرّرها . وكان الهدهد
شغف بها لما كرّرها . والميم التى خفت عند القائلين . وزيدت فى اسماء
المفعولين والفاعلين . اما الفاعل فاذا كان الفعل من ذوات الاربعة فما
١١٣ فوقها . واما المفعول وان كانت من ذوات الثلاثة فانه يحمل أوقها . والنون
التى هى قينة الحروف . ونسبها علامة للمصروف . ثم انه لم يُقَيّد حوافر
الكلم اذ كان التقييد . ينقص به التأييد . ولكنه وصل وادف . وأسس ورفع
الشّدَف . ولست احمده على مجانبه اقواء وكفاء . ولا اعدّ ذلك فى الغريزة من
الوفاء . لانه من عرف حروف المعجم . من شعراء العرب والعجم . وجب عليه
ان يهجر ذلك فكيف لم يُوطى كما اوطأ قديم ومحدث . ومن شأنه اذا نطق
١٥ وأبل ودث . وكيف برئ من السناد . للجائز على امرئ القيس وزباد . اما
الكندى فانشد له الرواة

اذا قلت هذا صاحب قد رصيته ♦ وقّرت به العَيْنان بُدِّلْتُ آخراً
كذلك جدى لا اصاحب صاحباً ♦ من الناس الا خاننى وتغيّراً

فان زعم ادام الله عزه ان كثيراً من الرواة لم يرو هذا البيت وان للخليل كان
٢٠ يميز مثل هذا فالجواب ان غير للخليل من العلماء يكره ذلك واجتنابه افضل
فى مذهب للخليل ولولا انى عدلت عن تشبيه المُطلقات من كلامه الا
١١٤ بالمُطلقات من كلام غيره لكان امرؤ القيس قد ساند على راي للخليل فى
كلمته التى على الرء

لا وابيله ابنة العامرى ♦ لا يدعى القوم انى أَيْر
٢٥ لانه يرى اختلاف التوجيه سنادا وذكر ابن دريد فى الجمهرة ان ذلك يسمى الاجابة

يعتريهما الشعراء فيضرمون للجزء السالم والمعصوب كما قال بعض الجاهلية
بعد ان بُعث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
لست بمسلم ما دمت حياً ♦ ولا قولى بقول المسلمين
وقال مُدْبِئَة

III

♦ انى من قُصاعة من يكذما ♦ أكذو وهى منى فى امان
واما للفرم فى المعقول فليس تركه بفصيلة اذ كانا مهجورين فى الجاهلية والاسلام
وحاله ادام الله عزه فى ترك الخزل والوقص لما ركب اول الكامل وثانيه كحاله
فى رفض المعقول والمنقوص على ان هذين فى الكامل اكثر فى شعر العرب من
ذينك فى الوافر اليس قد قال الراعى
١٠. ولا اتيت ابا حُتَيْب راغباً ♦ ابغى الهدى فيزيدنى تصليلاً
وقال تَابِطُ شَرّاً

حيث التقت قَهْمٌ وَتَكَرَّرَ كُلُّهَا ♦ والدَمْ يجرى بينهم كالجدول
وهذا البيت من قصيدته المشهورة التى على الكامل وأولها
يا نار سُتِّتْ فارْتَفَعَتْ لَصَوْتُهَا ♦ بالجزع من افياد او من موعِلِ
١٥. وانما قلت ذلك لثلاث يُظَنُّ البيت الذى فيه الزحاف من تآم الرجزان الكامل
الاول والثانى اذا أُصْمِرَتْ اجزأؤهما كُلُّها اشبها اول الرجز وثانيه وعلمه بذلك
محيط وقد يجئ للخزل والوقص فى مررب الكامل القصيرة اكثر من مجيئه فى الاولين
كقول عنترَة

يا دار مَآوِيَّةَ بالسَّهْبِ ♦ بُنِيَتْ على خطب من الخطب
٢٠. بنيت على سعد السعد ولم ♦ تبين على الدبران والقلب
وكقول امرى القيس

III

تَنَكَّرْتُ ليلى عن الوصل ♦ ونات ورت معاقد الخبل
ومع هذا كله فليس لتأركهما تلك المزية لان الغالب على الشعر القديم
والمحدث ترك هذه الانواع من اللذف ولكن التوفيق من عند الله سبحانه ولما
٢٥. امتطى هذا الوزن وَفَّقَ لكثير من الخير كما حُرِّمَ قيس بن زهير لما جاء ببيته
مرقداً ذكر القسم بن سلام انه يُسمى مُقْعِداً وهو قول

وكان المختار يُكنى أبا اسحق فانشد سعيد بن مسعدة تزياء بالتخفيف على انه منقوص وهو على ذلك يميز ان يكون الشاعر قد همز فرة ترى الى اصلها كما قال الآخر

ومن يَحْيَى في الايام يَرَى ويسمع

• والبيت الاخر الذي جاء فيه النقص هو للمغيرة بن حَبْناء

كَأَنَّ سَمَاحِي الْغُرَقَى فِيهَا • مَلَا حَفَّ شَبَّهَا وَرَسَّ مَذُوف

فالمعروف الغرقى كما قال اوس بن حجر

فَمَنْ لَكَ بِاللَّيْطِ الَّذِي تَحْتَ قَشْرِهَا • كِغْرِقَى بِيضَ كَتَّةِ الْقَيْضِ مِنْ عَلِي

فإن حُيِّل بيت المغيرة على هذا فهو منقوص وقد يجوز ان تزداد فيه ياء للضرورة

كما زبدت في التوابيل والسواعيد قال التغلبي

١٠ وَسَوَاعِيدُ يُخْتَلَيْنِ اخْتِلَاءً • كَالْمَغَالِي يَطِيرْنَ كُلِّ مَطِيرِ

واذا توخيت قول الحق لم يكن لسيدى جَمَل الله به كبير فصيحة في اجتنابه

هذين النوعين من الزحاف كما لم يُحمد على تركهما عمرو بن كلثوم في قوله

الَا هُمِّي بِتَحْنِيكِ فاصبحينا

١٥ ولا النابغة في قوله

اتاركة تدلّلها قَطَايِمِ

ولا ابو ذؤيب في قوله

جَمَالِكِ اِيهَا الْقَلْبُ الْقَرِيبِ

ولا ذو الرمة في قوله

٢٠ احادية دموعك دارُ مَيِّ • وهاتجة مبايتك الرسوم

ولا غيرهم من المتقدمين والمحدثين وانما قلت ذلك ليعلم اني لم أناجيه

بخطاب صدر عن صدر مريض • كما جرت العادة بذلك من العامة لقالة

القرىض • وقد قال صلى الله عليه وسلم ما انا من دَيِّ ولا دَدٍّ مني وقال ابن احمر

ولا تقولن زهو ما تخبرنا • لم يترك الشيب لى زهوا ولا العَوَرُ

٢٥ الزهو ههنا الكذب ولكن الفصيحة انه لم يأت بالصنفين من الخرم اللذين

والآخر في الوافر

ان تله طَيِّقَةً كانت لثاماً

وكيف لم يتفق له ما اتفق لغيره من الشنوذ في عروض الطويل اليس قد
روا قول النابغة

♦ جزى الله عبسا عبس آل بغيضي ♦ جزاء الكلاب العاوييات وقد نعل

وانشد ابو زيد لعبد قيس بن خُفّاف المُرْجَمِي

اذا ما اتصلت قلت يالِ تميم ♦ وابن تميم من محلة أهونا

وقال عامر بن جوين

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الطعان مند تلکم المتحملة ♦ لتعزن قلبي خُلَّتِي المتخللة

الم تركم بالجزع من مَلِكات ♦ وكم بالمعبيد من هجان مؤتلة

ولما عمداً الله عزه لبناء الوافر والكامل حاد به كرم السوس عن شناعة الوافر

بَعْقِلِ او نَقْص . وثرأ الكامل من الخزل والوقْص . على ان العقل مفقود في شعر

العرب زعم سعيد بن مسعدة انه لم يسمعه وقد جاء بيت لزهير وبعضهم يرويه

لابنه كعب ويجوز ان يكون معقولاً وهو قوله

١٥ وكَفَى عن اذى الجيران نفسي ♦ وحفظى الوُدَّ للأخ المدانى

فهذا ان روى بتخفيف الخاء من الاخ فهو معقول وقد زعم ابن الكلبي ان من

العرب من يقول اخ بالتشديد فيجوز ان يكون قائل البيت بناء على هذه

اللغة واذا كان مشدداً فلا عقل فيه واما النقص فقليل كقلة العقل الا انه قد

جاء بيتان بحملان عليه ولهما وجه غيرهما يروى لسراقة البارقي وبعضهم

٢٠ يرويه لعبيد الله بن قيس الرُقَيَات وذلك ان المختار بن ابي عبيد أُسْرَ قائل البيت

وكان الشاعر قد عرف تمويه المختار وكذبه فحدث في العسكر انه رأى قوماً على 109

خيل بُلِّقَ يقاتلون مع اصحاب المختار وذكر انهم هم الذين اسروه وانه لم يروهم

بعد ذلك يومهم الناس انهم من الملائكة فنفق ذلك على المختار واعجبه فامر

باطلاقه فلما لحق بالمؤمن قال

٢٥ الا ابلغ ابا اسحق انى ♦ رايت البلى دهماً مُصْمَتات

ارى عينى ما لم تَرَيَا ♦ كلانا عارف بالشرهات

١٥٦ وقول حاتم الطائي

إذا رحلا لم يجدا بيّت ليلة ♦ ولم يلبسا الا بجادا وخيعلا

وانشد ابن الاعرابي

فإن ابا اريد حسان اصعدت ♦ له فلفر بالجو وهو مقيم

وهبه اجتنب الكف ولم تبعثه اليه الشيعة المركبة كما اجتنبه كثير من المتقدمين فلم يوجد في اشعارهم فكيف سلم من القبض الذي هو للكف معاقب . ان ذلك ليس ثاقب . قلما تسلم قصيدة جاهلية بُيّت على الطويل من ان يستعمل فيها قبض السباعي اما امرؤ القيس فكثير الاستعمال له واما النابغة وزهير واعشى قيس فيستعملون ذلك دون استعمال الملك الميليل

قال النابغة

حسان الوجوه طيّب حُجَرَاتِهِم ♦ يُحَيِّقُونَ بالريحان يوم السبايب

وقال فيها

ترامن خلف القوم زوراً عيونها ♦ جلوس الشيوع في مسوك الأرناب

وقال الاعشى

إيذك لم تسمع وصاة محمد ♦ رسول الألي حين اوصى وأشهدا

وقال زمير

سعى بعدهم قوم لكي يدركوهم ♦ فلم يبلغوا ولم يلاموا ولم يألوا

وقد استعمل القبض جماعة من المحدثين كقول ابن اوس

كسك من الانوار ابيض ناصع ♦ واحمر ساطع واصفر فاتع

وقال الوليد

رايت العراق بأكرتني واقسمت ♦ على صروف الدهر أن اتشأما

وكيف سلم من الخرم الذي اصطلح عليه السالف والمثالف اليس قد علم ان احمد ابن الحسين كان شديد التفقد لما ينطق به من الكلام يُغَيِّرُ الكلمة بعد ان تُروى عنه ويفتر من الضرورة وان جذبه اليه الوزن وقد خرم ابو الطيب في موضعين احدهما في الطويل حيث قال

لا يحزن الله الامير واننى ♦ سأخذ من حالته بنصيب

اطلع عليها وحدثنا صديقه ابو القسم المبارك بن عبد العزيز رحمه الله عن ابي عبد الله بن خالويه عن ابن دريد حديثا معناه ما اذكرة وهوان ابا بكر بن دريد ذكر لاصحابه انه رأى فيما يرى النائم ان قائلاً يقول لم لا تقول في الخمر شيئاً فقال وهل ترك ابو نواس مقالا فقال له انت اشعر منه حيث تقول

♦ وحمراء قبل المزج صفراء بعده ♦ انت بين ثوبى نرجس وشقائق حكت وجنة المعشوق مرفا فسلطوا ♦ عليها مزاجا فاكتست لون عاشق

فقال له ابو بكر من انت فقال انا شيطانك رساله عن اسمه فقال ابو زاجية وخبره انه يسكن بالموصل وقد روى ان الجن تطول اعمارهم حتى ان الواحد منهم يكون قد لقي نوحا ويلقى النبی صلى الله عليه وسلم فان كان الشاعر منهم ١٠ ينتقل من رجل الى رجل فيجوز ان يكون قد انتقل اليه ايام الله عزه صاحب النابغة او الكندي . فما ذلك ببديع ولا بدى . وقد مر في اسفاره بالموصل واغلب ظنى ان ابا زاجية علق به . ورغب في صحبته . لانه ذكره بصاحبه الازدي ولا مريه في انه قد اسلم ولولا ذلك لم يرغب في استصحاب رجل من اهل التفسير ١٥ لكتاب الله جل سلطانه عالم بلغة الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم متظاهرا بالصيانة وحسن المذهب مذ كان في المهد . الى ان هم برُمّيج ابي سعد .

اوليس قد جاء عن النبی صلى الله عليه وسلم ان الانسان لا يخلو من شيطان موكل به قيل ولا انت يا رسول الله قال ولا انا ولكنى اعنت عليه فاسلم وكيف لا يُسلم صاحبه ايام الله عزه وقد املئ في تفسير سورة الاخلاص كتابا نسخته عند ابي بكر المؤدب ايام الله سلامته وانا اقسّم الامور في كيفية نظامه للاوزان ٢٠ ايعرض افانين القريض . على ضرور الاعارض . ام يقولها بغريزة . غير مؤثبة النحيز . فان كان يبنى البيت كما بناء اهل الجاهلية بطباع . لا يعرف مكان توجيهه يُذكر ولا اشباع . فكيف نافي اليق . ولم يكف السباعي . وقد كفته فحول الشعراء اليس أكثر الرواة ينشد قول امرئ القيس على الكف

الا زرت يوم لكّ منهن صالح ♦ ولا سيما يوم بدارة جُلجل

٢٥ وقوله

الا انما الدقر ليال واعمر ♦ وليس على شى قويم بمستمر

خَلَدَهُ مَاهُولٌ بِالْقِرَانِ فَلَا يَسْلُكُهُ عَفْرِيتٌ فِي صَدْرِهِ . وَالْمَلَأَتْكَ لَا تَنْطِقُ بِمِثْلِ
شَعْرِهِ . وَلَا نَعْلَمُ أَحَدًا رَوَى شَعْرًا عَنْ الْمَلَأَتْكَ فَمَا لَئِنْ فَقَدَ وَرْدَ عَنْهَا مَا
يَعْلَمُهُ مِنْهُ أَنْ كَثِيرًا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْحَدِيثِ رَوَوْا أَنَّ لَئِنْ نَاحَتْ عَلَى عَمْرِ بْنِ
الْحَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فَقَالَتْ

قَصِمْتَ أُمُورًا ثُمَّ خَلَّفْتَ بَعْدَهَا • بَوَائِجُ فِي أَكْمَامِهَا لَمْ تُفْتَقِ
فَزَعَمُوا أَنَّ هَذِهِ الْإِبْيَاتَ سَمِعْتَ قَبْلَ قَتْلِ عَمْرِوهُ فِي الْحَمَاسَةِ مَنْسُوبَةً إِلَى
الشَّمَاخِ وَقَدْ ذَكَرَ رِوَايَةَ أَصْحَابِ الْحَدِيثِ ابْنُ قُتَيْبَةَ فِي كِتَابِهِ الْمَوْضُوعِ لِغَرِيبِ
حَدِيثِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَالْحِكَايَةِ وَرَوَى أَصْحَابُ السَّيَرِ أَنَّ سَعْدَ بْنَ
عَبَادَةَ مَالَ إِلَى سُبَاطَةِ قَوْمٍ فَبَالَ ثُمَّ مَالَ مَيْتًا وَأَنَّ لَئِنْ قَالَتْ

١٠ قَتَلْنَا سَيِّدَ الْبَزْرِ • ج سَعْدُ بْنُ مُعَاوِيَةَ
رَمَيْنَاهُ بِسَهْمَيْنِ • فَلَمْ تُخْطِئْ فَوَادَةً

فِي أَشْيَاءٍ لِهَذَا لَا تُحْمَى وَلَهُ آدَامُ اللَّهِ عِزَّهُ أَنْ يَحْتَجَّ بِقَوْلِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ
وَسَلَّمَ لِحَسَانِ بْنِ ثَابِتٍ لَمَّا أَمَرَهُ بِاجَابَةِ شَعْرَاءِ قُرَيْشٍ رُوحَ الْقُدُسِ مَعَهُ فَلَمَّ دَعَا
أَنَّ يَقُولَ حَسَانُ وَمَنْ جَرَى مَجْرَاهُ مِنْ قَالَةِ الْحَقِّ تُعِينُهُمُ الْمَلَأَتْكَ عَلَى ذَلِكَ اللَّهُ
سَيِّدِي الشَّيْخُ لَقَدْ نَثَرَ . فَمَا عَشَرَ . وَشَعَرَ . فَكَانَ فِكْرُهُ كَاللَّهَبِ لَمَّا اسْتَعَرَّ . ١٥
وَلَوْ رَجَزَ . لَمَّا عَجَزَ . إِذَا لَقِيلَ هُوَ هَمِيَانٌ . أَوْ الزَّفِيَانُ . لَقَدْ أَهْدَى إِلَى رِيَاءٍ
أَرْجَاهُ . لَا تَزَالُ الْإِلْبَابُ بِرُبُوعِهَا مَعْرِجُهُ . مِنْ طَوِيلِ قَرَعِ بَوِزْنِهِ . وَكَامِلِ كَمَلِ
فِي حُسْنِهِ . وَوَاوَرِ . يُجْعَلُ تَعَلَّةُ الْمَسَافِرِ . كَمَا قَالَ الْأَوَّلُ

بِهَا تُنْقَضُ الْأَخْلَاسُ وَالِدَيْكَ نَائِمٌ • وَتُعْقَدُ أَنْسَاعُ الْمُطَى وَتُطْلَقُ
وَلَا يَنْكُرُ آدَامُ اللَّهِ عِزَّهُ مَا ذَكَرْتَهُ مِنْ أَمْرِ لَئِنْ فَقَدْ عَلِمَ أَنَّ مَشْهُورًا عِنْدَ الْعَرَبِ ٢٠
أَنَّ لِكُلِّ شَاعِرٍ شَيْطَانًا يَقُولُ الشَّعْرَ عَلَى لِسَانِهِ وَلَا شَكَّ أَنَّ قَدْ رَوَى قَوْلَ الرَّاجِزِ
أَنِّي وَإِنْ كُنْتُ صَغِيرَ السِّنِّ • وَكَانَ فِي الْعَيْنِ نَجْوَى عَنِّي
فَإِنَّ شَيْطَانِي أَمِيرُ لَئِنْ • يَذْهَبُ بِي فِي الشَّعْرِ كُلِّ فَنٍ

وَقَدْ زَادَ ادِّعَاؤُهُمْ لِذَلِكَ حَتَّى سَمَوْا الشَّيَاطِينَ بِأَسْمَاءٍ يَعْرِفُونَهَا بَيْنَهُمْ قَالَ الْأَعَشَى
دَعَوْتُ خَلِيلِي مَسْخَلًا وَدَعَا لَهُ • جِهَنَّمَ بَعْدًا لِلْغَوَى الْمُذْنَمِ ٢٥

١٥٤ فَزَعَمُوا أَنَّ مَسْخَلًا شَيْطَانُ الْأَعَشَى وَقَدْ رَوَوْا أَخْبَارًا فِي ذَلِكَ كَثِيرَةً لَا شَكَّ أَنَّ قَدْ

ولجئها كأمس الدابر . ليعلم الكاشف عن الحقيقة ان الاجوبة ثلاثة مكنى
ومصرح وثالث لا يقدر عليه الادميون وان المعترسين على القالة ثلاثة ^{١٥١}
مُرشد ومتسوّق ومُعْنِت وان الشعراء ثلاثة مصيب ومخطئ
ومضطر وان الضرورات ثلاثة مقيسة ومسموعة
وشاذة عن القياس والسمع •

وكتب من جواب عن كتاب رجل يعرف بابي الحسين
احمد بن عثمان النكتي البصري

الطرب مُؤْتَاب . والخيال مُنْتَاب . والشوق في الصدر واقع . وان اصحت
الديار بلاقع . ما هذا التّزور الطارق . الذي ومض كانه بارق . يذكر اما خاليه .
كانت بالادب خاليه .

أني اهديت لتسليم على دمن • بالغمر غير من الاعمر الأول
فمرحبا بكتاب الشيخ اطال الله بقاءه ما ائتلف متحرك وساكن . واختلفت
الازمنة والاماكن . على انه كما قال الله جل اسمه واذكر بعد أمة انا انبئكم
بشأويله فارسلون لقد بهر بتثمير وتظيم . فسبحان ربه العظيم . يزيد في
١٥ الخلق ما يشاء ان الله على كل شئ قدير أسيدى الشيخ جرير فهو انسب
الناس . ام الفرزدق فالسلام عليه ان كان ابا فراس . لقد هاجت لى الفاظه
ما هاجت لخطباءه . لمحمد . والصّهباء . لابي زبيد . فليت شعري من يقول ^{١٥٢}
المنظوم في خاطره اجتنى مرّ . ام ملك بالعبادة تفرّد . قد حرت في ذلك

وكتب في جملة الجواب الذى ذكر السؤال عنه عُرَام

للمد لله رب العالمين . صلى الله على محمد وعترته الطيبين . لله درك
ابا السابغ من القداح انفعها لهم . واغناها عن ذى كرم . لك مثل الخير .
لا مثل عدوّي ونَجِير . من غدا يفرغ حال . فقد بُعد عهدي بالنفصال . الم
يبلغك ادام الله عزك انى دفعت الادب الى جانب كُليب . وعقدته باذن .
الضَّبَب . فاخذ وادى العُصْلين . واقتسم بين مُنْصِلين . وفارقت فراق الوكري
الزان . والبكرى اخت هزّان .

١٠٠ محياك وُدّ من هداك لغتية ♦ وشعث باعلى ذى طوالة مُجَد
تيممنا من بعد ما نام طالع الـ ♦ كلاب واخفى ناره كل مُوقِد

لو سألت اطال الله بقاءك عن هذه الاشياء احد الشرع . لو جدت سقطا فى ١٠
المرخ . والكلام عليها غُبر قد جهد وحلّف طالما افن . وقد ملّت بنت الانور
ومليخ الحوار . وقبيح بالمذكية ان تقاس بالمهار . ولغير تلك الغاية مُتِرت
بنوة وجرت القطيب . ومن النجابه . ترك الاجابه . لان الكلمة اذا لم تكن
صوابا . كانت السكته لها جوابا . فان أجبت فمكره اخوك لا بطل وانا اذا
كمن ركب ظهر وهم . فلقى غاديا من سَهْم . فسأله عن الطائف ونياطل ١٥
الحمر . وابن بُجْرَة وهبيب بن عمرو . ورب كلمة تقول دعنى والله المستعان على
ما تصفون . المعترض بهذه المقالة محترق بنار الحسد . وللأسد مسهب . والمسهب
كهاطب الليل . وهاطب الليل غير آمن اخذ الأمل . وأخذها نجى المنية .

وقريض الشعر عن القواف . وشوقى الى حمرته للبليلة شوق حمامة . اسرت 98
 باليمامة . صيدت في يوم دجن . فوقع من القفص في سجن . الى اوطانها
 التجديده . غير المفتكة ولا المفدية . فارقت الاخذان فما رجعت . فكلما لمع
 صبح سبغت . والى الله الكريم ارجب في تسهيل الهجرة الى فنائنه السعيد على
 • امون مقلات . كان عينها بعض القلات . مجفرة الاصلاع . كانها عقاب ملاع .
 او اخرى طليت بالقار من غير داء . ولم تخط على وجه البيداء . لا تحفل بفقد
 مرعى . ولا تعرف خمسا ولا ربعا . وكيف تفرق من الاطماء . وانما تخد في
 الماء . وأعلم سيدى القاضى اننى اوده ودا افتراض . غير محدود المدة وهو كالفراض .
 اثبت عليه ثبات المومن على الايمان . واتشرف به تشرف سلك بجمان . وفى
 ١٠ . هذا اليوم وهو يوم كنا ورد وليه الشيخ ابو سعيد الخوارزمى سلمه الله قاصداً
 بيت الله الحرام بلغه الله مآربه . وكفاه شر الزمن ونوائبه . فخبّرني من سلامة سيدى
 القاضى جمل الله الدنيا ببقاته ما يبتهج به كل مسلم . عالم فى الأرض
 ومتعلم . ورايته مثقلاً من ابياديه . ما له غير صفة من فكر ولا بديه .
 وعرفنى ان كتابه كان معه حلاًه بنان سيدى القاضى ورصعة وان البادية ظفرت 99
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 فرائد لفظه لؤلؤا منصوداً . ام نفحتهم من تلقائه رائحة ذكية .
 عنبرية او مسكية . فتوهموه تمثال طيب . مُثَل
 من الهندى القطيب . لو عرفوه . لاجلوه
 وشرفوه . ولو كانت الفصاحة
 فيهم باقية . لجعلوا
 عليه جنة وافية

خلاف ذلك فاذا بياضها سواد رائع . والنعمة جفاء في الجسد زائع . والمور زرق متباين . والقيد وقص شائن . واذا هي سفيهة رواد . لا يشعف بودها الفؤاد . والمثل السائر ان تسمع بالمعدي خير من ان تراه . ولست ارضى طهرة مولاي الشيخ بتحمة نصيب لانه رضى بعشر تحيات في الصباح . وعشر عند الرواح . ووليته يحمل الى حضرته للجليلة تحية شاكر طروب . تصل •

شروق الشمس بالغروب . وتكثر مع طلوع الشفق . الى

حين تمزق ثياب الغسق . كلما اجتازت

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بالصعيد الاعفر . جعلته

كالهندي الافر

وكتب الى القاضي ابي الطيب طاهر بن عبد الله بن طاهر .
ومقامة ببغداد ولم يكمل الكتاب فيوصل اليه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم كتابي اطال الله بقاء سيدي القاضي شافى العتي •
وخليفة الشافعي . ما جاز خيار مجلس . ووجب حجر على مفلس . وادام الله
تمكينه ما لهجت النحاة بعمره وزيد . وسلك التصغير برويد . من المستقر
في البلدة المضافة الى النعمن . لتسع خلون من شهر رمضان . جعل الله ١٥
شهوره بالاقبال مشهورة . والارض بدوام ايامه مشرقة مطهرة . وخبري في
الاثناف . لقب للجزء السالم من الزحاف . ولساني بشكرة كثير للمركة في
كل اوان . كانه الكامل من الاوزان . والحمد لله ما افتقر الى عقد بيع . ونشأ
لاسد شيع . وصلى الله على محمد وعترته حتى يستغنى فرض الحج عن الطواف .

فذلك لينتهى الى حفرة السيد عزيز الدولة اعز الله نصره انى تخلفت عن خدمته
بمرض . منع اداء المفترض . وان الذكر ليطير . للرجل وغيره للطير . كم من
شجرة شاكة ظلها ليس برحب . ونمرها غير عذب . اسمها السمرة وكنيتها ام
غيلان تذكر في افاق البلاد وغيرها من اشجار . الثمار . ان ذكر . نُكِر .
والإرماه . لا توجهه للشئ الاسماء . رب اسود كربة الرائحة يستقى كافوراً او عنبراً .
وتبيع الصورة من البشر يدعى هلالاً او قمرأ . وكيف يتادى العلم الى وانا رجل
هرير . وكفى من شر سماعه . ونشأت في بلد لا عالم فيه . وانما تشبث
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المبطلين . حسب الارض . ان تعنو بحلة وحمض . وعادة السحاب المرتفع في
السماء . ان ياتي برئ الظماء . والدُّجَّة . بُلِّغَت الى الجُلجَّة . لهي على فوات
هذه المنزلة ومن للورقاء . بكوكب للفرقاء . والرائد عند الغرقد . ان يغشى مجاور
الغرقد . من لا يصلح لمجالسة النظراء . فكيف ينتدب للقاء السادات الكبراء .
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ميت من قبر . ولو كنت بارئاً من هذه العلة لحشيت ان اصح . فافتضح .
لانى ما اُنيغت . اذ وُصِفَت . والسيد عزيز الدولة ليس كغيره من الملوك
والسادات . لانه يوصف بفارس من جهات . فهو فارس للأقران من فارس
الاسد . فارس على الجواد العتد . فارس من فراسة الاعمى . سالم من الحطل
والعمى . والانسان يستحيى من نظيره . فكيف من سيد العصر واميره . يا
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وزان . تزين المجلس ولا تُزَّان . هوراء غيداء . فلما كان الهداء . وجدت على

باشوق الى العيشة النضرة . متى الى تلك النضرة . ولكن منع الزمن ما هو صانع . واعترض دون الخير المانع . حال الغمص . دون القصص . والجريش . دون القريض . المورد نمير ازرق . ولكن المدنف بالشراب يشرق .

لما رأى لبْدُ النسر تطايرت ♦ رفع القوادم كالفقير الاعزل

إنهض لبد . هيهات مدك الأبد . ولما كان اليوم الذي ورد فيه كتابه المشتمل ٥ من حسن الظن بوليته على ما لا يستوجب عكفت على الغربان مبشرات . مثلثات للنعيب ومعقرات . لو انس الى ابن داية لم أخله ان رغب في الحلق من حجل . في الرجل . او تقليد . يقع بالجيد . ولصتحت جناحه مسكاً وعبراً . ولكسوته وشيا وجبرا . على انه يختال من لون الشبيبة . في اجمل 93 سبيبة . يا غراب . لغيرك بعدها التراب . ان قفى الله نهذت لك ما تؤثر من الطعام . اناؤه على في كل يوم لا في كل عام . كان كتابه الشريف قسيمة من الطيب . تصوع بالاناب القطيب . فكأثما طرقتني منه روضة نجدية . سقتها الانواء الاسدية . فعود ثراها . وارجت رباها . وابدى بهارها للابصار . كدنانير ضربت قصار . وازدانت من الشقيق . بمشبه العقيق . ولعب فيها الماء . فهي ارض وكانها سماء . لها من النجم نجوم . ومن ظل الشجر دمع ١٥ مسجوم . وقد سالت من ورد اليه ان يونسني بتركه لدى كي استمتع في ناجر . بمشاكل خبيّة الحاجر . ولاكون جليس الروضة ان لم ير لها منظرا مبهجا . ساف منها عرفا متارجا . وان العامة عهدتني في صدر العمر استعصب شيئا من اساطير الاولين فقالت عالم . وللناطق بذلك هو الظالم . وراتني مضطرا الى القناعة فقالت زاهد . وانا في طلب الدنيا جامد . وزاد ٢٠ تقول القوم على حتى خشيت ان اكون احد الجهال الذين ورد فيهم الحديث الماثور 94 ان الله لا يقبض العلم انتزاعاً ينتزعه من صدور الناس ولكن يقبض العلم بمرور العلماء حتى اذا لم يبق عالم اتخذ الناس روضة جهلا فسيّلوا فافتوا بغير علم فهملوا واهملوا . فغدوت حلس ربع . كالبيت بعد ثلاث او سبع . وحدثت علة كنى عنها في المستمع . وعاقبت عن المصور في الجمع . وفي الكتاب الكريم يا ٢٥ ايها الذين آمنوا اذا نودي للصلاة من يوم الجمعة فاسعوا الى ذكر الله وانما ذكرت

ومن كلامه فصل كتبه الى ابي نصر صدقة بن يوسف
الغلاحي لما استدعاه الى حضرة الامير عزيز الدولة دام عزه

لو اهديت الى حضرة سيدى الربيع يُزهى باحسن زهرة . والبحر يتباهى
بالنفيس من جوهرة . لكان عندي انى قد قصرت . واختصرت . فكيف بى
٥ . ولا اقدر ان اهدى زهرة . ولا انتزع صدقة للجوهرة . والرائد لا يكذب امله .
فاما العبد اذا كذب سيده فبُعد . ولا سعد . والذاهل من لم يذكر امسه .
والجاهل من لا يعرف نفسه . ولنفسى الخائنة اقول اعيتنى بأشْر . فكيف
بدردر . اعيت رياضة الهرم . واعتماد الماء من الجمر المصطرم . ان كذبت . فعن
الخير اغذبت . ما اعتزلت . حتى جددت وهزلت . فوجدتنى لا اصلح لجد
١٠ . ولا هزل . فعندها رُغيت بالازل . ما حمامة ذات طوق . يضرب بها المثل فى
الشوق . كانت فى وكر مصون . بين الشجر والغصون . تالف من ابناء جنسها
ريداً . فمتراسلان تغريداً . مسكنها نعبان الاراك . تامن به غوائل الاشراك .
وتمر فى بكرتها بالبيت الحرام . لا تفرق لمكان صائد ولا رام . فقرها القدر . اذ
لم ينفع الخذر . فخرجت من الارض المحترمة . فاصبحت وهى جد مغرمة . صاها
١٥ . وليد فى الليل . ما حفظ لها من آل . واودعها سجننا للطير . ومنعها من كل
مير . فاذا رأت من خصاص القفص بواكر الحمام . طلّت تمارس جُرع الحمام .
تسال بطورها اخاها . ما فعل بعدها فرخاها . فيقول اصبحا ضائعين . قد
سترهما الورق عن كل عين .

فرئغان ينصاعان فى الفجر كلما • احسا دوق الريح او صوت ناعب

لو كان قلعة حاتما فى الجود لامسك . او عمرًا فى الشجاعة ملل مما فتك . وقد
كنت رجوت ان يتفق لى عصاة كالعصاة من غسان . التى غير فيها قول حسان .
لله در عصاة نادمتهم • يوما بجلى فى الطراز الاول
ومن فعل مع الشيخ جمىلا فبنفسه بدا . وحققا المفترض عليه آدى . وانا
اهدى اليه سلاما بصله ابلج . ويتفرع
متارجه . وحسبى الله

ومن كلامه الى بعض الشعراء

لا اعدم الله الشعراء ارشاده . ولا الملوك انشاده . فطالما غذيت من الادب
مو باخلاف . وحدوت فى اثار قواف . فلو كان للقريض ولد لكننته . ولو سكن
بيت الشعر احد لسكنته . وشوقى اليك شوق الاعرابية الى الثمام . والحمامة .
الى الهديل المفتقد من الحمام . وقد بلغتني ابياتك والذى بينى وبينك لا
يمرض فيفتقر الى تمرىض . ولا يخاف انقراض فيجدد بنظام القريض . واحسبك
ان استطعت فما تحضر القيامة الا بابيات حسان . تقترب بها الى خزنة الجنان .
وقد حدثنى الثقة انه رغبى فى السك . وغدوت بحبل الثقة شديد
التمسك . واصبحت كما قال اعشى بكر

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فان اخاك الذى تعلمين • ليالىنا اذ نحل الجفارا
تبدل بعد الصبي حكمة • وقتعه الشيب منه خمرا

وسيدى فلان لو قدر ان يجعل هذه الدراهم فى وردك من عنده لجعلها . او ان
يبدلها دنائير لبدلها . وانا احصاك بسلام يلقاك بانوار
مضيه . ونحية روضيه . واستودعك الله

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ومن كلامه جواب لابي منصور محمد بن سختكين

ما شغلني عن الشيخ ذمول . بل خلدي بتذكرو مأمول . واذا كانت الصنائع
موتلفه . لم يصرها ان تكون الديار مختلفة . وما زال شوقي اليه كهلاً في القوة
طفلاً في النماء والزيادة . والى الله الكريم ارجب في هبة ألفه لا فرقة بعدها
• تعجز الابام ان تكدرها او تقطعها . وفهمت ما ذكره من امر المكاري والله ينتقم
من كل مكار شيرير . ولو بلغت هذه الدعوة مكاري جرير . اعني قوله • ثباري
الخنسي المكاري • يريد الظل وغمني ما تجشمة من ركوب البحر كانه لم يقرأ
في نواذر ابن الاعرابي قول يحيى بن طالب الخنفي

اذا رحلت نحو اليمامة رفقة • دعاك الهوى واهتاج قلبك للذكر
لشربك بالانقاء رنقا وصافيا • أكف واعلى من ركوبك للبحر

ودمشق عروس الشام المومونة . وواسطة عقدها المرمونة . وارجو ان يكون قد
انساء جامعها جامع المدينة وسلا مأواها عن ماء دجلة وقد كنت عرفت ان
من رحل عن بغداد لم يجد منها عوضا . وان وجد محلا مرموا . لان غابر⁸⁹
العلم بها غريضي . وصحيح الادب في سواها مريض . والشام اكثر أرفاقاً .
١٥ واقل نفاقاً .

تلقى بكل بلاد ان حللت بها • اهلا باهل وجيرانا بجيران
واما ما ذكره من تشاغله بالنصح فهو كما قال الاعشى
وكاس شربت على لذة • واخرى تداويت منها بها

٨٧ السماك طلع . الى ان يبدؤ سعد بُلْع . ويبقيين بعد ذلك الى طلوع الفرج
المقدم . وأكلهن جلف النسم . لا آكلهن ابداً . ولا آمر بأكلهن احداً . قد
افصحيت بالامر ونصحت . ولو قبل سيدى الشيخ ابو الحسن نصح المشفق لم
يطل به عن زيارة حلب انقطاع . ولكن لا راي لمن لا يطاع . وانا وفلان وفلان
نهدي الى حفرة الشيخ للليل والده عهد الله للجماعة ببقائه سلام
• ذى الرمة على مئ . وللمادة على سئى . ونسالهما
الاسعاف بمناجاة . تشتعل على ما يعرض
من الحاجات . ان شاء الله
وحسبى الله وحده

١٠ وكتب الى ابي القسم المغربي جوابا عن فصل كتبه اليه

كلما هم خبري بالهمود . واشرفت نارى على الخمود . نعشنى الله بسلام
يرد من حفرة بجعل اثرى كالروضة الحزنية . والبارقة المزنية . ولو كنت عن
نفسى راضيا لشرفت بها بزيارة حفرة ولكنى عنها غير راض . وما اقربنى الى
انقراض . وانما انا قصيص التمراد . ومتخلف المراد . قد عُددت
١٥ فى اناس قيل فيهم تلك امة قد خلت لها ما كسبت
ولكم ما كسبتم ولا تسألون عما كانوا
يعملون . وان نعمت او شقيت . فدعائى
يتصل بحفرة ما بقيت

لا يُجبر. وانما تُمد النُصرة بلا قهر. في حمرة اميرنا ابي نصر. فان وصلت
المكاتبة اليه. وقع تعويلنا في النُجج عليه. وقد رزقت هذه البلدة من
سيدى الشيخ ابي الحسن اسبغ الله النعمة به حظ يشرب من النبی. والارض 85
المقفرة من الاعرابى. ولا عجب لحوادث الايام اليس ربنا بحكم الشرع. اسكن
نبيه في واد غير ذى زرع. وقد راينا الرجل ذا القدر النبیه يكون عنده كرائم
النساء فمختار عليهن امية ذات بجماد. ملكها عن بعض الاسجاد. وقد
نشاهد المرء جده لابية ازهر علوى. وجده لامة اسود غوى. ولجل هذه العلة
ولد عنتره كالفُذاف. وجاءت ندبةً بخُفاف. ولولا القاضى ابرو جعفر. لكان
مثله بقدم هذه الناحية مثل النسر. الذى هو من ملوك الطير وعظمائها
١. تتصل من اوصاله رائحة المسك يهبط على نبيله. جِدَّ وَبيله. وهذه
جمل من صفة المعرة هي ضد ما قال الله عز وجل مثل الجنة التى وعد المتقون
فيها انها من ماء غير آسن الآية اسمها طَيْرَة. وعند الله ترجى الخيرة.
المورد بها محتبس. وظاهر ترابها في الصيف يَبَس. ليس لها ماء جار. ولا
تغرس بها غرائب الاشجار. واذا ابرز لاهلها ذبح. يؤكل به لديهم الريح.
١٥ تحسبه صُبعٌ بخيطر. فكانما يرمى به هلال الفطر. وقد يجيئها وقت يكون 86
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الريسل فكانما وقف برغوان. يستوهبه ماء للحيوان. فان سبقه مياه العجر
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٢. المخزب. لو نزلها ابن حنزاب لما قدر على الخنزب. نابت طاب مجاجه.
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سبائك التبر. واما الصائح فاذا طُلب لعليل. عدم كعدم الخليل. وترائك
المنقصات. كنفائس الدر المعترضات. بلى والخالق حميد عندنا في الشتاء
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٢٥ فظللن بالعفر متواريات. نشان في ظل ورياض. وزدن على بنات قيصر في
نقاء البياض. كانهن في المنظر نهود. وذواتهن خضر لا سود. يظهرن اذا

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وكتب الى ابي الحسن على بن عبد المنعم بن سنان
جواباً عن كتابه في امر ابي الحسن محمد بن سعيد
ابن سنان

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم شوقى الى مولاي الشيخ مناسب طول الدهر . لا
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المولية في طيب الريا . ووصل كتابه الذي هو سجل المسرة . وان ضمن ما
لا يؤثر اهل المعرة . فنثيث عنبراً هندياً . ونوراً مطر نجيدياً . فغم بالنشر
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برجل قد تمرس . وتفرس . بلهاد كافر عنيد . وتفقه وتقرأ لجهاد شيطان
مرید . فقد جمع حرب الجن الى حرب الانس . والله يظفرو بكل جنس . وليس
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جل اسمه وما دعاه الكافرين الا فى ضلال خلّثنى اميس لنعامه . واطلب على
الهبة مسير العامة . فاما القاضى ابو جعفر . فهو بالعظة مخير . غير انه

الله الكريم ارجب في اجتماع شمل كاجتماع الفراقد . ليس من يُسر له
بفاقد . ولو لم يكن للزمن على قيد . ما حجزني عنه السير الرويد . ولكن
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• وكتبى كانت فيما سلف الى مدينة السلام كاوالف التمراد . بكرن للإبراد .
بعضهن في إثر بعض . يطلبن رزق ربهن في الارض . فلم يُقرأ لهن جواب .
كانما خططن الصواب . فهن كأطبي الناصفة حُبلن . وباغيات الرشد خبلن .
اما انا فعلى الجهد . ولا معتبة ان وقع في زهد . وقد كنت نظمت الى سيدى
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١٠ حرفان وحركة وقافيتها مطلقه . فالصلة بروبها معلقه . فما ادري اولعها والع .
ام سدت عليها المطالع . والله المستعان على ما تصفون

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١٥ جعلها كعتيرة . الأذفر . واذا قارب التفل فكأنما
عُطر . والروض الظامى فكأنما مُطر . وان كلفنى
بعض الحاج . فانا باوامرة شديد
الابتهاج . وحسبى الله وحده

وكتب الى ابي منصور خازن دار العلم ببغداد

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لقد طربت من اللوعة لا من الجدَل . حتى قال اخو
العدَل . امن جهل ام حلم . طربك الى دار العلم .

فوالله ما ادري اذا ما ذكرتها ♦ اثنتين صليت الفحى ام ثمانيا

فاطال الله بقاء سيدى الشيخ ما سرح بنهار فرى . واسرى فى الظلام سرى .
8١ شوقى اليه ادم الله عزه والى الجماعة شوق حماسة مطوقة . كانت تتشوق
وليست بمشوقة . بل لها فى مكة محل عال . لا تصل اليه ايدى الجهال .
فلما حل لها القدر بقضاء مبرم . ابرزها من ارض الحرم . فمنيته بوليد
عارم . لا يحفل بتوقى المحارم . فاعنت جناحها بفهر . فشغلها عن الولد واليه
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الفجر . ويزيد وجدها عند الهجر . اذا رأت طائر الهواه متمرفا . كاد قلبها
يطير اسفا . ما جرى لها الفراق فى فكر . حتى خلجتها التوب من الوكر .

لها فرخان قد تركا بفقر ♦ فوكرهما تمزقه الرياح

اذا سمعا هبوب الريح نفا ♦ وقد اودى بها القدر المخاض

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هممت ان اجي بنائب عنها في اخراج سعد للحمّام وسدر . وايقاد النار
ومراعاة القدر . لما كنت احذث عنها من انحاء الظهر . وما وسماها به مر
الدهر . لا قوة لها في الجسم . تعجز عن تادية كلمة او اسم . وقد علم ادام الله
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داره خادمتين . وحسبه بشرف هاتين . فاما انا بحمد الله فلست بمريض
١٠ فلعلهنّ اوتين شيئا من علم الغيوب . فاخبرن عن المرض في نعوذ بالله منه
ومن جميع الموفيات . فيما سلف وغبر من الآفات . وقد اعتللت عللاً
كثيرة . لم تكن للخدام لديّ اثيرة . غير هذه العلة فاني خدمت فيها خدمة
لو خدمها الصافر بازيا لحلف انه لا يقتنص فرفوراً . او الظبي السرحان لما روع
ابدا يعفوراً . وهذا العارض بالعافية فان . ولو شئت لاكلت لحم العثرفان .
١٥ ولكن امسك عنه امساك من يوتر صحة ساعة بله عام . على قفاه وطرم
الطعام . ولا يسمح لسانى بتسميتها عله . ولا اعد افاقتى منها بله . انما هو 8٥
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في اليوم الرابع . وكان التوفيق في اطلاق الجون المحتبس ولو بعد السابع .
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٢٠ الاخبار الطيبة بما هو له مجانس . وانا اهدى الى حفرته اجلها
الله والى جميع اصدقائه وخدامه سلاما اطيب من الزهر
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ولحقت ابا العلاء علة فظهرت ان خروجها اليه وانه
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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ما شوقى الى سيدى اطال الله بقاءه بناقص عن .
شوق شارف من الابل . نشات بواد مترقيل . اخضر ذوائب السلم . تامن
سائمته من الحلم . فلما صارت مخلقة عام او عامين . وعدت المفارقة من
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١٠ فوق . كانت سكينه هذه الجانية تمهن لمعتز بالمعة . فتصيب التافه من
الاجرة . ويحيى وقت الثمرة . فتجنى عنقود العنب من السمرة . فخلجت منها
معتذر . ومن مامنه يوئى المنذر . فلها فى ان ترجع غرض . ثم لا تحفل بمن
حل مرض . ولن اخلبها ان شاه الله من بر . والله العالم بكل سر . وسوف
يتقدم اليها من جرت عادته بكلامها ان تشتغل عن الفصول بالردن . فانه
اصح للعمل والبدن . وحيوته الكريمة على لو ان بى حتى زيد الخيل . او غدة
عامرين الطفيل . لما رايت ان استصرخ بالشوات من ذوات البرين . فكيف
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 بقدمه والهدية المنقولة عنى الى حضرة سيدي اجلها الله
 والجماعة دامت لها الحراسة ببقائه سلام يشرق
 زكيه . ويتصوع تصوع المسك ذكيه . كلما
 ابدى الافق شمساً . وخلف
 يوم امسا . وحسبى
 الله ونعم المعين

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وكتب الى خاله ابي القسم على بن محمد بن سبيكة
جوابا عن كتابه في امر الشيخ ابي الحسن محمد بن سعيد
ابن سنان اعزه الله

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم شوقي الى سيدى اطال الله بقاءه ان انشأت
اصفه . فما انصفه . اذ كنت اختصر . واقتصر . فاطلم شوقي في الاختصار . ٥
ولا يصل الى الانتصار . واذا كان الامر كذلك فمن العدل المطلوب . ان أكتفى
بضمائر القلوب . لانها تخبر . واحسن عبارة تعبر . والله المرغوب اليه في
هبة اجتماع للبرير يريح من تفرق للجسد بار . ويغنى المتلهف عن توكف
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مجمدة . ولم تزل للخير جذ متعمدة . وفهمته فشكرت الله تع على سلامة
للوباء الكريمة . الموفية في كل صريمة . فاما فلان فعلمى ان سيدى
بمودته غير مرتاب . مغنيا له عن تنحر كتاب . وانا رجل حسن من العامة
رزقه . فوضعه موضعا لا يستحقه . واظن سيدى ابا فلان اصغى الى اقوالهم ١٥
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الا ودقة فلما وضعها فى كف التاجر ففها عن هناة غير معجبة . ليست
باللؤلؤة ولا بالمخشبة . وسوف يجد منى ان شاء الله من يُلْسِنه ولا يلسنه .

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 رَسَلَه فهلك نوح . فالحمائم عليه تنوح . يسمعك بالفناء . اصناف الغناء .
 ويظهر فى الغصون . خبىّ الوجد المصون . ان سلك طريقة الغريض . ترك
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 ما ذرفن . لا ادرى والامراذب . اغناه ذلك ام ندب . كل خطبه كخطيب .
 فى الغصن الرطيب . قد التثمت بقار . فى المنقار . ووطئت فى الدم .
 بالقدم . واضرم ناره الغواد . فالقلادة حُمّم والثوب رماذ . بل اسف ورقاء . لاح
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 لا مُرّة ولا مُرممه . فلما بصرت بسهيل . ذكرها ايام اهيل . عهدتهم فى
 بلاد القرقط . كلهم بها ليس بقطّ . فضاق بغرامها الجيد . فهى تهتف وتجيد .
 تخفف بخروج الاصوات . ما تجده من كرب الاموات . طئت الآ مفاص . من
 عنك الاقفاص . فهى تودّ ان الله مسخها زرقاء نهار مترنمه . او ورقاء ليل مهينمه .
 ١٥ لتغوز بالخلاص . من بعض الخصاص . ومستقرى معرة النعمن . والفتنة عندنا
 صماء . طعان بالمران ورماء . انما يحى الصيف . وقد سلّ السيف . ولو
 قدرت لم اقدح الابرخ . ولا سكنت بلدا غير الكرخ . ولكن ينصو معقول . 75
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وغلمانة سلاما يونس موحش الامرات . ويتصل من الشام الى

الصراة . اذا مرّ بموقدى نار غصوبة حسبوا غضاها

قُطرا . لتركة الهواء عطيراً

المصوفة . لا العماد عند اهل الكوفة . وانما حملني ان اخضع بها دون سائر
من عرفت ان اسمه ادام الله عزه كاسم نبي بالشفاعة حقيق . والكنية كنية
الصديق . والصابوني . هجاؤه صاب ونى . صاب من صوب المطر . والونى اللؤلؤ
فى شعر ابن حجر . والفيت يحمد وانما انبت زهرا . فكيف اذا امطر جوهراً .
ومنزلة درب السدرة تلك فى الارض سدرة لهى . اذ فى السماء سدرة
المنتهى . بمرقعة الزقّاتين . لميح يح يكاد زيتها يضى
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الشرقا . وادام عزّه الى ان يصبح ارباب . وهو باز فى الجواو غراب . كم اكتب فلا
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يا حبّنا جبل الريان من جبل • وحبّنا ساكن الريان من كانا
وحبّنا نفحات من يمانية • تاتيك من قبل الرّيان احيانا
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غير عمرو رجلاً . واسفى لفراق سيدى الشيخ ادام الله عزه اسف ساقى حرّ .
ساق الطرب الى الحرّ . توارى بالوريقه . من حرّ الوديقه . كانه قينة وراء
ستر . او كبير حجب من الهتر . فى عنقه طوق . كرب يفصمه الشوق . لو

على جناح سفر وظهر طريق والثغبة بعد الثغبة تنزح المزايدة . والودعة الى 71
 الودعة قلادة . للراحلة وليس من اهديت له الدرة فقبلها بمعذور في ترك
 وفاء المخشبة اذا استقرضها . وانا اهدى اليك والى والدك ادام
 الله عزكما سلاما لو رُئي لمع . ولو نسّم لتفوع . يبتدا
 به كالتكبير . وان كان مجيئه في
 الاخير . وحسبى الله وحده

وكتب من معرة النعمن الى ابي بكر محمد بن احمد
 الصابوني البغدادي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لاله السماء . من اول نفس الى اخر ذمائه .
 ١٠ وصلى الله على الكوكب الطالع بعد الفترة . والعترة الموفية على كل عترة . وسلم
 الله الشيخ سلامة ثلاثي الحيم . من حذف يقع للترخيم . واطال الله بقاءه حتى
 يصير العنبر خضم . عنبراً بالنار يهتضم . وشوقي اليه والى الجماعة الذين عرفتهم
 بمدينة السلام كالنسيم لا يجمد . ونار فارس ليست تحمد . وفقرى الى لقائه
 ولقائهم فقر الذي املق الى الصلة . وبيت الشعر الى قافية متصلة . جمع
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 غائضا . لحسبوه زائداً فائضا . وقد عرضت الى الشيخ حاجة جعلتها فيها عماد

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وكتب الى أبى طاهر وقد بلغه انه قد عزم على المسير الى
القسطاظ على غير طريق معرة النعمن

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم شوقى اليك وقر الله حفظك من المراجعة . تربية مواضى
الساعات . كثرته الظوار طفلاً مقبلاً . وشخت الصرم سقطاً مشتعلأ . فما ظنك
بجمرات . القين فى يابس غفأ او سمرات . انهن لذوات التهاب . لا تدرك
صفته بالاسهاب . والله تعالى يطفى جمرة اللوعة . ويكشف غمرة الهموم . باجتماع
70 ومجاورة يغنيان بالالفة عن المزاورة . فعسى الاوقات . ان يعدن باذن الله وهن
متالفات . فقد مضى الزمن وهن كذُر . والايام لما علمت غدر . ولا رزئة مع
بقائك . ورجاء الزلفة بلقائك . وكان كتابك اطمعنا فى عيش خفُض . ودنو
بعض من بعض . ثم ابت الايام الا نقض المزة . وتعرضا للثيرة . قرنك الله ١٠
بالخيرة والسعد . فيما سلف ومن بعد . وعرضت فى رقعتك ان طريقك على
غير معرة النعمن . فنعشت وجدا مُنهِجاً . وبغشت مسرورا بالمكتاتبة مبتهجا .
وقد نُهى عن وصال الصوم . وانما هو صلة يوم بيوم . فكيف بصلة غيبة
بغيبه . تقرن صديقا بالخيبه . ورايك العالى فى المام بالمعرة من غير
فوات . للاحياء متعهدا والاموات . وقد علم الله جل اسمه ان منزلى من امطارك ١٥
خيل . وانك على متفصل . وعندى من مبارك جديد ما لبس . وقديم لم يهَم
ان يندرس . ولو ادعيت المروة لزعمت انى تعلمتها من آل سبيكة كثرهم الله
ولكن الدعوى تفتقر الى بينة والبينة غائبة والسكوت اجمل . اذا كان الامر
يحتمل . وغناؤك فى الحاجة يعدل ههبة عسجد . وغضبة من الزبرجد . وانت

الله سيدي من الذين اذا انفقوا لم يسرفوا ولم يقتروا وكان بين ذلك قواما .
ان ما فعل سرف . ولو انه من بحر يغترف . لو كان قليلا او وسطا . لكان
العذر في قبوله منبسطا . فاما هذه القيمة التي هي بغية للمهاجر . وبغاية
للتاجر . فاخذا اغتنام لا يحسن . ولا تنطلق بردها اللسان . وقد علم كل
عُمر . ان تهامة كثيرة السمُر . وان مروته تغلب حاله . وتجشمة السفر وارحاله .
وانما يُتجمل عند الغريب . لا القريب . ولصاحب الود البدى . دون صاحب
الود الابدى . وقد كان نفذ كتاب جماعتنا نقسم فيه بحجرات . لسن على
الكذب معرجات . انا هذه الطريقى لا نرزأ ماله . وان هذا الغضب جماله . وبادرنا
بالكتاب عند وروده حلب خيفة مما صنع . فما اقصر ولا امتع . ونفذ الكتاب 69
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فقد وجبت الكفارات . ايماننا على الخنث موفرات .

وانا اهدى الى سيدي والى مولاي الشيخ

والده شرفنا الله ببقائه سلاما

يسطع بنور معرّسه

ويتفزع بمسكه

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القمريه . بغالب اذا حُمل شوقي المتصل الى سيدى الشيخ وقى . وبقي . ما
عُمر فى السهول ربع . ونبت فى الجبال الراسية نبع . وكيف لا يفسطرم شوق
ولدته القرابه . وارضعتها بلبانها الموده . وربته الايدى المتتابعه . نسخ الله
ظماى من لقائه . وعصم للجماعة ببقائه . فهو نجم ساريها . وثمان مقيمها .
ومصيب الغرض من سهامها . والله نسال اجتماعاً لا يفرق عليه من
شئت . وليس حبله بمنبت . وانا من جذلى بسلامته دامت لى فيه متواصل
الشكر . امزج عتابا بشكر . قد كان يجب اطال الله بقاء سيدى اذا لم تكن
البادية اختطف . ولا السراق فى بغداد تحيقت . وكان الله جل اسمه قد من
بريح مكتسب . لم يكن فى الظنة بمحتسب . ان يقتصر من بر الجماعة على
ما سالت من الحاجة المونية المعنوية التى آدته وكلفت . ما لم تكن نفسه
الشريفة احيها الله اليفته . فالان جاءت الحاجة ميسرة . والهدية مضاعفة
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كالنخلة الكريمة تاكل رطبها واليابس . وتتخذ خوصها ملابس . ولو لا التمسك
بطاعته وللشية من المام سخطه لوجب ان نقبل التمر . ونعصى فى الملابس
الامر . فنكون كقوم قال لهم ابن الزبير اكلتم تمرى . وعصيتم امرى . جعل

قدومه حلب قدوم الصالح برام . والناسك بيت الله الحرام . وثالثا ليس ببهل
 لى ولجماعة الأهل جمع الله بيننا جمعا مرضيا . لا يكون بمنه منقصيا . فشوقنا
 اليه شوق العامل الى الأجر . وقلق المندس الى مياه الفجر . فاما الحاجة التي
 انعم بحملها فوددت انها على خطرها عندي ونفاستها في نفسي فداء لنسج
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 بُجير بن عمرو . بوء من غير رب . بالشسع من نعل كَلَيْب . وكونه في
 هذا السفر . الهجنا بالسؤال عن بنى جعفر . كانهم الأوداء . وانهم للاعداء .
 سوال المجدب عن الغيث ابن مسقطه . وكشف الغراب عن حب يلتقطه . ولم
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 جعل الرزينة فى المكتسب . دون النسب . وفيما تغنيه النفقة . لا فيما تعظم
 عليه الشفقة . وانا اهنته ووالده بالسلامة سهمى به الفائز . وحظى فيه للفظ
 المجاوز . وقد سبق اقرارى بالثفيل . فغنيت عن اعادة القيل . وقد كلفت
 معرفة قوم كالاطمار . فى غير خلوقتهم اتيار . وان طريقا من طرقه . لتوازن
 ١٥ بنهب العراق وورقه . وعلمى بمروته علم اليمنى بالحبير . ولا ينبئك مثل
 خبير . وهذه طريق لا تحتل التجل . وبقي للعارفة من ان تكمل . تعريفى
 من غير نقيمة . ما وزن فى القيمة . لبادر بانفاذه فلو حضرت
 لم ابلغ ما بلغه . ولا سؤغت من قضاء المأربة ما
 سؤغه . وانا اهدى اليه والى والده سلاما لا يُغرض .
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 فهو وان اسودت برده . آثر عندنا
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 مودته

وكتب الى ابي طاهر بن سبيكة وكان قدم من العراق
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بذلك مترادفة وما عرفت قبلها بشرى تُحسب مثلها لا اقول بشرى الملك .
بالسلامة من المهلك . ولا التبر . ادرك يسار المترب . ولكن بشرى قوم
شربوا ماء الحيوان . وبشروا بالرحمة والرضوان . وتعثوا من التراب العقيم .
الى نعيم فى الجنة مقيم . فالنفوس الى خالقها وهلة . والانامل مرفوعة
مبتهلة . على من بسط يده اليه طاعنا . ألا يتبع ابدا طاعنا . ولا يريح
ما بقى مالا . ولا تسعد يمينه شمالا . اشقاء الله ولا سقاء وعمره . ولا ملا .
من اللبن عُقْمَره . ان قرب من حُلّة فاقصته . وان ركب مطية فوقصته .
مسحة الواحد نسب كُذِّبه . لا يامن من حد المديّة . ولا يزال حيوته محتفرا .
ليدمى بذلك يدا وظفرا . وغودر فى المحتمل كهاز قصيص . لا يقدر على النهضة
ولا القنيص . لا ينقع ما عاش بشراب . وأولع به فتیان الاعراب . وجعل افقر
الى الماء من النون . واسكن بالجُدّاء الظنون . ليغبر صاديا مروعا . لا يملك
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منها السيّ . ومنها الرّيق . وانما يلام الرجل على سوء العمل . لا على
فوات الامل . والى القدير نرغب ان يُخلف . ما تلف . وان يجعلنا له فداء .
عودا بالنية واُنداء . وكانت المسرة بهذه الموهبة ثلاثة اصناف منها لوالده اذ
كان أنسه به انس الغصن بثمرة . والافق بقمرة . وثانيا له فى نفسه اذ كان ٢٠

صقلت . ولا في الشامخ توقلت . والكريم المبرز كجواد بعيد الشاو . كلف
 شاؤا بعد شاو . فجاء محمود الآثار . منزها عن كل عثار . دالا على اليمن
 بغرة زاهره . ودائرة سمامة ظاهره . ولن اقول من غاب . ريش سهمه اللغاب .
 ولا اقرأ لكتاب ابي سعيد . اولئك ينادون من مكان بعيد . بل انا من
 التثقيب حيز . مشفق من ذلك معتذر . وانما سألت ان يستسعد برأيه لقله
 نظرائه وهو عندي اجل . والكتاب ايسر واقل . من ان يكلف خطوات .
 ولو كن كدبيب القطوات . وانا اسال الشيخ الاديب الفاضل ان يسعفني
 بكتاب منه يشتمل على اسطر . كان فيه ربح القطر . يفمن
 طيب خبر . هو اذكي من العنبر . واوامر منه
 ونواي . ما انا ان امتثلتها بواه .

واستودعه الله وديعة

فنين . عند

ثقة امين

١١

وكتب الى ابي عمرو الاسترأباني في امر شرح السيرافي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم سلام كالعتيرة الهندية . والروضة النجدية . يتصل
 بسحاب غمر . الى الشيخ الفاضل ابي عمرو . اطال الله بقاءه ما سكنت
 الف . وافتقر الى جواب حليف . وقرنه الله بسعد دان . كما تقارن الفرقان .
 لا يرهب منهما فراق . ما تبع الشروق اشراق . فشوقى اليه لو تذرّى جبلاه
 اتعبه . او سلك في وادٍ لرقبه . جمع الله بيننا في دار مقام . سالمة من
 الانتقام . وورد كتابه فابهمجنى ابتهاج الطائر المحتبس بالتسريح . والاسير
 62 المصعد بفكك مريح . وسُررت بخبر سلامته سرور الدارين احدهما بئسكة .
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 ثمرا . وقد اثنيت وشكرت . وفي املال الصديق ابتكرت . اوغلت كل
 الايغال . وقطعت عزمهم الاشغال . اذ كانت عند طلاب العلم بمدينة السلام
 كشجر العري . لا يسقط ورقة . والماء الصرى . لا يؤمن شره . لا سيما من
 جمع نور الآداب . من كل هفب وعذاب . كان ايسر من عنائه في ذلك قذف
 الشرح في سنيح . حتى يُعشِب خد سُريح . فهو فيما روى نُظ . ما اشعر
 وجهه قط . كفاني الله وله اللباء . ان يُبدل من الشين الباء . فيصير الشرح . ١٥
 من الشقاء البرج . على الاصدقاء اهو المصدر من قوله تع الم نشرح لك
 صدرك ام من قوله عز سلطانه فمن يرد الله ان يهديه يشرح صدره للاسلام
 انما هو افانين كلام اصبح وهو مجموع . المقيس فيه والمسموع . لا يخلد
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كانت الخطوط مختلفة . والابواب مؤتلفة . فلا باس يغنى عن لبس السرق .
 ثوب جُمع من شتى خِرَق . ما عدا خطَّ على بن عيسى فانه رجل اتكل على
 ما في صدره . فتهارون باحكام سطره . وانما رجوت ببركته ان يتفق اناس كما
 قال الله تعالى وشروه بثمن بخس دراهم معدودة وكانوا فيه من الزاهدين .
 • فاما انا فلا اقول عسى ان ينفعنا او نتخذة ولدا . واما ما ذكره من فساد
 الناس فاحلف ما حَلِم اديم . وان ذلك لداء قديم . التَّجَرَّ بنت النمر .
 والقتادة اخت السمرة . وهو ادام الله تاييده من الملامة . في احسن لامة .
 فلا يبعثه تعذر الحاجة . على اللجاجة . اهو الكتاب المكنون . الذي لا يمسه ⁶¹
 الا المطهرون . انما هو اباطيل لياه . وتعليل في ايام الليوة . وما للحياة الدنيا
 الا متاع الغرور . فاما سيدى الشيخ ابو عمرو فان اسمه وافق آية . بلغت
 بفالها النهاية . وهى قوله جل اسمه كشجرة طيبة اصلها ثابت
 وفرعها فى السماء وانا وللجماعة نهدي الى سيدى
 الشيخ والى جميع اصدقائه سلاما تارج
 الكتب بحمله . وتُرَوِّض المجدبة
 من سبله . وحسبى الله



١٠

وكتب الى ابي طاهر المشرف بن سبيكة وهو ببغدان يذكر
له امر شرح السيرافى وما جرى فيه من التعب

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المحله . الى السحابة المنسحله . وانتفاعى بقرنه انتفاع الارض الريفه . بالامواه
الغريفة . وتشوقى لآخباره تشوق راعى انعام . اجدب فى عام بعد عام . لبارق
يمان . هو له مرتقب ممان . واسفى لفقده اسف وحشيّة . رادت بالعشيه .
فخالفها السرحان الى طلاً راد فحار فهى تطوف حول اويل . وترى صبرها ليس
بجميل . وتذكرى لآوقاته تذكر الفطيم ثدى الوالده . والمقسم بالملح لبنى خالده .
وانتظارى لقدمه انتظار تاجر مكة وفد الاعاجم . ورب الماشية ظهور النبت ١٠
الناجم . وفزعى الى نجدته فزع القرى . الى سيف دان . والقرى . الى سيف
ليس بددان . واعتذارى من التشقىل عليه اعتذار الورقاء من الغدر . وابى
جهل من حُصور بدر . وثقتى بمكارمه ثقة راكب الماء بالعامه . وللمارث بالنعامة .
وشكرى على اباديه حبيس ليس بمحتش . يتجدد مع النقش . وفى هذا اليوم
وهو يوم كنا وصل كتابه فسرت به سرور الظمان ورد نيمراً . والساهر صادف ١٥
6٥ سميراً . وكان ما ضينه من ذكر سلامته بشرى لها تخف الاحلام . خفة القاتل
ولا يلام . يا بشرى هذا غلام . والله يمتن باجتماع . ليس بعده من ازواج .
وفهمت ما ذكره من امر النسخة المحملة وهو ادام الله عزه الكريم المتكرم . وانا
المثقل المبرم . جرى فى التفقل على الرسم . وللمحت للماح الوشم . فاما الشرح
ان سمع القدر . والا فهو هدر . وقد كنت قلت فى بعض كتبى الى سيدى ان ٢٠

لم يسعف الزمن باقامتى فيه ولجامل مغالب القدر فلهيت عما استأثر به الزمان
والله يجعلهم احلاس الاوطان لا احلاس الخيل والركاب . ويسبغ عليهم النعمة
سبوغ القمر الطلقة على الظبي الغرير . ويحسن جزاء البغداديين فلقد صفوني
بما لا استحق . وشهدوا لى بالفصيلة على غير علم . وعرضوا على اموالهم
عرض اللد . فصادفوني غير جذل بالصفات . ولا هش الى
معروف الاقوام . ورحلت وهم لرحيلي كارهون .
وحسبى الله وعليه يتوكل المتوكلون

وكتب رقعة الى بعض العلوية

تلاد ليس بطريف . مودة سيدى الشريف . اذ وُدّ العلوق . ود مالوق .
١٠. وتبئتة سأل عنى بكرم الطبع . فصادف دروساً من الربيع . وقد كنت 58
عرفته بالعراق ما عزمت عليه من انفراد . يعجز عن المراد . ووجدت الوالدة
رحمها الله قد سبق بها القدر . الى المدر . فانت النية . بالمنية . فانطويت على
ياس . ومجانبة للناس . وقدمت اخا انفاض . الى امور انا بها غير راض . من
جذب عالم . اتصل فى عام بعد عام . الى غير ذلك مما الله المنهض به وقد
١٥. بعثت شيئا من النفقة . نفسى من قلته كل المشقة . والسفر عود فى مغمضة .
يعبت بكل عضة . ولكن اشبه امرأ بعض بز . وجاءتك الناكز بدون الرقى .
واعطتك الجاذب بعض غبوق . يا قطام اهلا بقطاك . خذى من
جذع ما اعطاك . وانا اساله بسط العذر وايناسى
بقبول ما انفذته متفضلا

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وكتب الى اهل معرفة النعمن مقدمة من بغداد ولم يصل اليهم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم هذا كتاب الى السكن المقيم بالمعرة شملهم الله
56 بالسعادة من احمد بن عبد الله بن سليمان خص به من عرفه وداناه سلم الله
للمعرة ولا اسلمها . ولم شعثها ولا آلمها . اما الان فهذه مناجاتي اياهم منصرفي
عن العراق مجتمع اهل الجدل وموطن بقية السلف بعد ان قضيت للعداثة
فانقضت . وودعت الشبيبة فمضت . وحلبت الدهر اشطرة . وجررت خيرة
وشرة . فوجدت اوفق ما اصنعه في ايام الحياة عزلة تجعلني من اناس كبار
الاروى من سائح النعام . وما الوت نصيحة لنفسي . ولا قصرت في اجتذاب
المنفعة الى حيزي . فاجمعت على ذلك واستخبرت الله فيه بعد جلأته على
نفر يوثق بخصائلهم . فكلهم رآه حزما . وعدّه اذا تمّ رُشدا . وهو امر سري ١٠
عليه بليل . قضى ببقه . وخبّت به النعامة . ليس بنتيج الساعة . ولا
ربيب الشهر والسنة . ولكنه غذيّ الحقب المتقادمة . وسليل الفكر الطويل .
وبادرت اعلامهم ذلك مخافة ان يتفصل منهم متفصل بالنهوض الى المنزل الجارية
عادتي بسكناء ليلقاني فيه فيتعذر ذلك عليه فأكون قد جمعت بين سمجين
سوء الادب وسوء القطيعة . ورب ملوم لا ذنب له . والمثل السائر خل امرأ وما ١٥
57 اختار . وما سمحت القرون بالاياب حتى وعدتها اشياء ثلاثة ثمّ كذبته فنيق
النجوم . وانقضابا من العالم كانقضاب القائبة من القرب . وثباتا في البلد ان
حال اهله من خوف الروم . فان ابي من يشفق عليّ او يظهر الشفق الا النفرة
مع السواد كانت نفرة الاعفر او الادماء . واحلف ما سافرت استكثر من النشب .
ولا اتكثر بلقاء الرجال . ولكن آثرت الإقامة بدار العلم . فشاهدت انفس مكان ٢٠

وردت مياها ملحة فكرهتها ♦ فسقيا لأهل الأولين ومائيا
كلما شجعت النواعب قلت خيرا ابتها الطير لا علم لك بما كان ولا علم
لك بما يكون . وراك وراك فغيري من تهيبين . طالما نزل نازلك على النبيلة
فهاض جناحة الوليد

من مبلغ عمرو بن لؤ ♦ ي حيث كان من الاقاوم
لا يمنعه من بغاه ♦ للغير تعقاد التمام
فلقد غدوت وكنت لا ♦ اغدو على واق وحاتم
فاذا الاشائم كالاياء ♦ من والايامن كالاشائم
وكذلك لا خير ولا ♦ شر على احد بدائم 55

ولما نزلنا بالحسنية تساوى حامل المال . وحامل الرمال . وقل بلاء الغادي ابن
قال . والرائح ابن عرس وبات . فلم نزل كذلك حتى بلغنا آمد ثم عادت السبيل
الى غوائلها . وسدكت الرفاق بمخاوفها

فما بلغتنا الا جريفا ♦ بلا نقي العظام ولا سنام
ولما فاتني المقام بحيث اخترت اجمعت على انفراد يجعلني كالظبي في الكناس .
ويقطع ما بيني وبين الناس . الا من وصلني الله به وصل الفراع باليد . والليلة
بالغد . وانا احمل الى مولاي ادام الله عزه والى مولاي ابي طاهر
عفدني الله ببقاته سلاماً له نصرته الاله . وصفاء
الماء . وعذوبة الاري . وتتابع القطر .
وخلود النجوم . وارج العرار .
وتألق الوميض . ٢٠

والسلام

سائقه . ولا السمجة قانية . وامروني لرغبتهم في مقبي منهم بامور تنهى عنها
القناعة . وتكف دونها العادة . وما ابعد نفاذ من جبال الصريب . واشد
اختلاف الغائر والمنجدين

شتان ما يومى على كورها • ويوم حيان اخى جابر
على حين ان ذكيت وابيض مفرقى • اسام الذى اعميت اذ انا امرد •
اماوى ما يغنى الشراء عن الفتى • اذا حشرجت يوماً وماق بها الصدر
53 والله بحسن جزاءهم ان كان ما فعلوه حفاظاً فهومنة عظيمة . وان كان
نفاقاً فهو عشرة جميلة . وانصرف وما وجهى فى سقاء غير سرب . ما ارق
منه قطرة فى طلب ادب . ولا مال . ومنذ فارقت العشرين من العمر ما
حدت نفسى باجتهاد علم من عراقى ولا شأم . من يهد الله فهو المهتدى .
ومن يصل فلن تجد له ولياً مرشداً . والذى اقدمنى تلك البلاد مكان دار
الكتب بها

ولست وان احببت من يسكن الغضا • باول راج حاجة لا ينالها
شرفاً لذلك المنزل منزلاً وللساكنين به نفراً . ولما دجلة واديا ومشربا .
وانى بتهيامى بعزة بعد ما • تخليت من حمل الهوى وتخلت
15 لكالمبتغى ظل الغمامة كلما • تيموا منها للمقبل امسحت
وكنت اذا خبرت رجلاً بمسيرى بانث فيه كآبة وبدت عليه كبرة فكتمت ذلك
عنهم كتمان المرأة فرثها بالغيب . ما فى جسدها من سوء وعيب . فلما
علق حرباء البين تنفبت . ووقف صرد الغراق موقفه . كنت واياهم كابي
54 قابوس وبنى رواح • قال لهم خيرا وائنى عليهم • ووتعهم وداع الالتقاء • وسرت
عن بغداد بست بقين من شهر رمضان سيرا تنحط ابله . وتثبط نسوة . وتوقع
الغرق سفنه . يوم الماشى الرجيل فيه انه بعض الركب ولو كانوا ركبان الجذوع .
وانه انتعل ولو باديم الوجه واللبين واصطجع ولو على القصد والشبهان . عند
الصباح يحمد القوم السرى . الغمرات ثم يشجلين . ومررت بطرف الشهباء
لانى سلكت طريق الموصل وميافارقين . وفيها امواه كامواه الطشرة والعذيب
٢٥ فسبحان الله القديم

جبلًا . ولا حملتني سفينته . ولا ذلت لي مطية . إلا بمنّ الله سبحانه ومنّة
 سيدى وعنايته وجاهه وإياديه أكبر من الشكر . وأوسع من احاطة الذكر . وقد
 علمت انه يعمل ذلك معى لا يريد جزاء ولا شكورا . ولكن لما كان السكوت 5١
 غباوة عند الجماعة . والشكر اذية لمسدى الصنعة . كان احتمال ملامة واحدة
 • ايسر من احتمال ملاوم كثيرة . وأما سيدى ابو طاهر فقد حملنى من الانعام
 اوقالا لا أمل النهوض بجزء منه وما ورت برى عن كلاله . ولا اخذ تفقدى من
 دار غربة . شنيئة من اخزم . وثشتشة من اخشن . انما تقيل اياه والشكير
 نابت من العفة . والبرم من السلم . ومن اشبه اياه فما ظلم . ما زالت
 كتبه تطرق اصدقاء محافظة على المكارم . ومراعاة لامر غير لازم . حتى
 ١٠ جعلهم التي كعرف الفرس . او قوى المرس . وكلما عرضوا قضاء حاجة اعرضت
 عن تكليف المشقة . لاني اعتقد حكمة زهير في قوله

ومن لا يزل يستحمل الناس نفسه • ولا يُعفها يوما من الذل يسأم
 ولو علمت اني ارجع على قرواي لم اتوجه لهذه الجهة . ولكن البلاء موكل
 بالمنطق . والخيرة مغيبة . وللطوب مثل دول النوفل يفتح بعضه عن مثل نبات 5٢
 ١٥ القمق . وبعضه عن ذوات النسق . لا يدري الرجل بم يولع قمره . ولا الى اى
 اجمة يسوقه جده . ولو كنت اعلم الغيب لاستكثرت من الخير وما مسنى
 السو . وُجد في لوح

يا ايها المصمرهما لا تهمل • انك ان تقدر لك الحمى تحم^١
 ورعاية الله شاملة لمن عرفته ببغداد فلقد افردوني بحسن المعاملة واثنوا على في
 ٢٠ الغيبة . واكرموني دون النظراء والطبقة ولما آنسوا تشميري للرحيل واحسوا
 بتأهبي للظعن اظهروا كسوف بال . وقالوا من جميل كل مقال . وتلفعوا من
 الاسف ببرد تشيب . وذرفت عيون اشياخ شيب . فلا اله الا الله اتى نابتة
 ليست لها راعية . لا تخلو فاغية من سائفة . ولا تعدم لفرقاء ثلة . ولا التفال

^١ بقيته ولو علوت شامق من العلم • كيف تزيك وقد جف القلم • وخط
 ايام الصباح والسقم

وقد كنت كاتبته كتابا من الرقة اشرح له فيه ما حملني على النزول فان كان وصل فهو الغرض . وان تخلف فالاعادة لمعناه جرض . ولكل مقام مقال . ولكل اوان ثمره . وفي كل واد سمره . وجدت بغداد كجناح الاخيل . حسن وليس فيه ما حمل .

- ٥ ان العراق لاهلى لم يكن وطننا ♦ والباب دون ابي غسان مسدود
فانتم القنود على عيرانة أجود ♦ مهرتة مخطتها غرسها العيد
كم دون مية من مستعمل قذف ♦ ومن فلاة بها تستودع العيس
حنت الى نخلة القصوى فقلت لها ♦ بسل حرام الا تلك الدهاريس
أمى شامية اذ لا عراق لنا ♦ قوما نودهم اذ قومنا شوس
١٠ فان يك في كيل اليمامة عسرة ♦ فما كيل ميفارقين باعسرا
لنفسى اقول اعيتنى بأشُر . فكيف بدرر . وعصيتنى من شُب . الى دُب .
ليس بعثك فادرجى . هذا احق منزل بترك . الصيف ميعت اللبن . الربيع
اغفلت الكماء . وعلى المفازة ارقت السقاء . عودى الى مباركك . للحقل الشر
باهلك . فمن اناس ما انت . ليس النيق بمواطن الظليم . ولا الهجل بمربع الغفر
١٥ لكل اناس من معدّ عبارة ♦ عروض اليها يلجأون وجانب
٥٥ وكنت ظننت ان الايام تسمح لى بالاقامة هناك فاذا الصارية احجأ بعراقها . والامة
ابخل بصريتها . والعبد اشع بكراعه . والغراب امن بتمرتة . ووجدت العلم
ببغداد أكثر من الحمى عند جمرة العقبة . وارخص من الصيغاني بالجابرة .
وامكن من الماء بخضاره . واقرب من الجريدة باليمامة . ولكن على كل خير
مانع . ودون كل درة خرساء موحية . او خفساء طامية .
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- اذا لم تستطع امرا فذره ♦ وجاوزه الى ما تستطيع
يكفيك ما بلغه المحل . ان عجز ظل عن شخصك فلا يعجزن عن عمرو منله .
فلما زينت الصروس للحالب . ونزت العنود تحت الركب . ومنعت القلوع النازع .
ولم تُعمّ القلوت شاكى الاربز . وغشى القول وجه المشتار . وخيب رائدا سحاب .
وكذب شائما برق . واخلف رويغيا مظنه . عادت ليعثرها ليس . وذكر وجاره
٢٥ نعاله . وطرب لركنته ابن دايه . وما هبطت في طريقى واديا . ولا فرعت

أُقتل بها صبرا . على انى والله قد اعلمتها انى مرثعل . وان عزمى على ذلك جاذ 47
مزعم فأدّنت فيه واحسبها طلتته مذقة الشارب . ووميض الخالب . ولكل اجل كتاب .
وحزنى لفقدما كنعيم اهل الجنة كلما نفذ جُدّد . وشرحه امال سامع وافناه
زمان . والله يجعلها وايى فداى مولى من كل رزية . ويصيرة المخصوص عنى
بالعزّة . ورب سامع خبرى . لم يسمع عنى . والمعاذر مكاذب . غير ان الرائد
لا يكذب اهله . فان قال ادم الله عزه يأبى للحقين العثرة . واذا سمعت بسرى القين
فاعلم انه مصبح . وفى النوى يكذبه الصادق . فوالذى اخرج للذئع من الجريمة .
والنار من الوثيمة . ما نكبت حلب فى الابداء والانكفاء الا كما تُنكب خريدة
المحار . لما دونها من احوال البحار . وانا كما علم ادم الله تاييده وحشى الغريزة
١. انسى الولادة . وكل ازب نفور

عوى الذئب فاستانست بالذئب اذ عوى • وصوت انسان فكدت اطيّر
يرى الوحشة الانس الانيس ويهتدى • بحيث اهدت ام النجوم الشوايك
يوذ بجذع الانف لو ان ظهرها • من الناس اعزى من سرّة اديم
لو وردت حلب لتعينت على حقوق ان قصيتها نصبت . وان تخلفت عنها 48
١٥ عوتبت وقصبت . ومن لم يهبط نعمان الاراك . لم يُعتب عليه فى اهداء
المسواك . ويطلب من راكب هجر القرص . ومن مسافر البحرين الحُساس . وشوقى
الى مشاهدته شوق اليقن الى الشباب . والشارف الى السقاب . لو اوسقته
الحمائل اصغفها عن الذميل . او طوّقته الحماثم لاغصها بالهديل . كيف تزيد
للمامة الخطباء . على المامة للخطباء . الرياش افضل من الريش المنكر . والمنزل
٢. اشرف من الوكر . وطوق الذهب . خير من طوق الغيصب . واين الشارف .
من اللبيب العارف . ليس ام الفصيل . من ذوات التحصيل . انما هى حنين
بعده سلو . واشتغال لب ثم خلو . واسقى على فائت قرية كاسف وحشية ترب
طلا . فى مفاصيف وفلا . اتخذت بيتا كالخدر . فى ظل الفاردة من الصدر . ثم
هكعت فى الهجير فدرج الطفل . وهو لابی جعدة نصيب وكفل . فلما قصت
٢٥ الرقاد . نظرت فاذا بقية اجلاد . فهى بين ولّة . وعلّة . والله سبحانه يسهّل
اجتماعا يكون به شملنا كنجوم ذات العرش . لا ترهب فرقة ولا نقص ارش . 49

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وكتب الى خاله ابي القسم على بن سبيكة عند طلوعه
من العراق ووجد امه قد توفيت ولم يعلم قبل مقدمه
بذلك

كتابي اطال الله بقاء سيدى ما طلع صبير . ورسا ثبير . من معزة النعمان
ولكل نبا مستقر . وردتها بعد سامة . ورود كعب بن مامة . فانا لله وانا
اليه راجعون وله الحمد ممزوجا به الدمع . مستگا له من الوجد السمع .
وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وعترته صلوة يثقل بها لسانى حزنا . وترجع فى
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الا يا ليتنى والمرء ميت ♦ وما تغنى من اللذنان ليت
يا ليت عمرا وليت صلة سفة ♦ لم يغز فهما ولم يحلل بواديهما
لوآن صدور الامر يبدون للفتى ♦ كاعقابه لم تلفة يتندّم
رحمك الله من ساكنة رمس . اصبحت حياتك كامس .
فان ينقطع منك الرجاء فانه ♦ سيبقى عليك الحزن ما بقى الدهر
لا أمل بعدما خيرا . ولا ازيد فى المحن الا ايماسا وسيراً .
صلى الاله عليك من مفقودة ♦ اذ لا يلائمك المكان البلقع
أتى حللت وكنت جدّ فروقة ♦ بلدا يمر به الشجاع فيغزع
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ويرجع النعمن الى الحيرة . ويبعث نبى من مكة . لولم تكن الاجال ذبّرا . لوجب ان

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 ١٠ وقلت الشيخ ايده الله فى سيف خُصارة وجوار
 النوفل وهى تدرك عنده العقوبتين . وترد اذى
 الأشهبين . شيبان واخيه . وصفوان
 ولياليه . فاعطاني فلان
 امانى الرقوب .
 ومواعيد
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فصل من كتاب الى رجل قيل ان الاسد اكله بعد ان غدر به المكارى واسم المكارى موسى

ولم ازل طائش الفكر لما قيل جُهل على اى صرعيه وقع . ولم يدر اين يقع .
وقيل سقط العشاء به على سرحان فقلت دُهد الرين . سعد القين . ولُع .
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عجبيين عجب من موسى وعجب من حسين . طانّ الخبير . وزاجر شماليّ
الطير . فاما موسى فجرى على عادة المكارين . وذوات البُرين . وركب لهم
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ولم أكن كعاقر الرمل أمطر فلا اروض . وكحفير الميت اعوض ولا اعوض . لا اقل
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وليّه فلزم الانخفاض . وفاء . فاخذ اللفاء . وسيدى ابو فلان فرقد حندسى . وكركب
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وبشريين فى كلمه . اقتصرت على الكتاب الى احدهما دون الاخر وانا
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رسا العَلَم . واورق السَلَم . ان شا الله تعالى

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 وصلوته على خيرته المنتخبين . وشوقى الى حضرته السعيدة كرجيى اذا عُتِقَ .
 جاد . وراوى اتركلمما قدّم ساد . شوق لا تحسنه باكية هديل . ولا نامية الى
 جديل . وكان كتابه اذا ورد كطائر بشاره . وقع . وماء سراره . فوجى فنقع .
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 القرح . كالامة تفخر بحدج ربتها . والمعزبة بنعم اهل بيتها . وقد علمت ان
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 متشكرا . ثم ثنيت باسترفاد المعونة مذكرا . اذ كان ادام الله عزه لا يشير لسانه
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واليفى واد . تنصرنا الغمامة الواحدة . وتغنى لنا اللمعة الفاردة . بل نزيد
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 حسب اللسان . تقرىظ المنعم . والجنان . مقة المتفضل المكرم . ولست ادع
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 وبشورته كل وقت يسألون . سوال المجذب بالكلأ . والمستوحش
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وتلك عُرى انعقدت . واسباب توكدت . لما كانت عناية سيدى ايدة الله منه
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المرار . وهل جرى على غريب شاكلة او سارفى دارس محجة انما اتبع طريقا
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واوفاك مثن ما اسديت . وجزاك معترف الذى اوليت . وقد بت اهل ابى
فلان الدعاء فى كل ربيع . ورجوه رجاء الربيع .

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ليرغب كاواد القطا راث خلفها • على عاجزات النهض حمر حواصله
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وكتب الى بعض اولياء السلطان يشفع في صديق له كان
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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم كتابي اطال الله بقاء سيدى الاستاذ مالكا خزانم
الامور . واطياً اعناق الدهور . عن حال تُشكر . ونعمة لا تُنكر . انا معهما
• بالتقصير عن واجباته مقر . ولشرف اخلاقه مظهر ومسر . والحمد لله رب
العالمين . وصلوته على صفوته المنتخبين . واحلف بالقسم العازم . والنذر
اللازم . ما ذات طوق لا تنزع . وبرد من الربيع ليست تخلعه . جاد الوسمى
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الغادية . لا يزال يهيجنى بها باكر مع الشارق . وآتب اياك الطارق . جعلها
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الابلق العقوق . واستدل بمعرفته استدلال شائم البروق . ولو كتمتها نم بها

الوسم . منعه القراع . من الامراع . يا بوس . بنى سدوس . العدو حازب .
والكلأ عازب . يا خصب بنى عبد المدان . عان في الحرث ومان في السعدان .
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وغير . انا منهما بين الليلة المرعية . واللقوح الربعية . هذا عام . وتلك مال
وطعام . والقليل . سلم الى الليل . كالمصلي يريغ الضوء . باسباغ الوضوء .
والتكفير . بادامة التعفير . وقاصد بيت الله يغسل اللوب . بطول الشحوب .
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ومصرف الامور . نظر فلم ير اشرف من الشمس يدا . فسجد لها تعبدا .
وغير ملوم سيدنا لو اعرض عن شقائق النعمن الربعية . ومدايح اليربوعية .
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لاجلهم بنى المنذر . وهم الى حفرة السنية رجلا سائل . وقائل . اما
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الملك من اجل الربوع . وقد يولع الهجرس . بان تجرس . في البلد الجرد .
٢٠ قدام اسد ورد . واني جُبرّت ان تلك الرسالة الاولى عُرضت
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اليوم تقع . وهي بمقصد سيدنا
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قل اثير . والاسماء كثير . مثل يعقوب مثل خود كثيرة اللقي ضاعفته على
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١٥ فليت شعري ما يطلب اقبس ذهب . ام قبس لهب . بل يتشرف بالاخلاق
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الأشأ . فقالت للكثير ما شأ . تسمعه غير مفهوم . لا بالرمز ولا بالمزوم .
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 الشركتين . قبل البطين . والرشاء . بعد العشاء . فحككت صوت الماء في الحرير .
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 هيئات يا باكية اصحيت . فصدحت . وامسييت . فتناسيت . لا همام
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نسخة رسالته المعروفة برسالة الاغريض الى ابي القسم
المعري لما انفذ اليه مختصر اصلاح المنطق الذي ألفه وفيها
وصف المختصر والثناء بفضله والتنبيه على كثرة فوائده

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الاغريض . حللت الربوة . وجللت عن الهبوة . اقول لك ما قال اخو نمير .
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زَكَا لَكَ مَالِحٌ وَخَلَاكَ ذَمٌّ • وَصَبَحَكَ الْإِيْمَانُ وَالسُّعُودُ
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والمبتدا . نظير الفعل في انها لا تنخفض ابدا . فقد جعلنى ان حضرت

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 • ويحكم بالجلسام . على الاجسام . والعناية . بجارم الجنابة . تمنع الرواجب . من
 البت بالحكم الواجب . واتبع قولى لما مضى . واشيعة اذا انقضى . بأن اقول
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 فمنيت بالخاصب . والعذاب الواصب . ليل الخرص . انعم من ليل المتخصر .
 ونهار الكاذب . ابأس من نهار العاذب . وغنائى فى تقريظه عن المين . ومساواة
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 بالزجاج . وان ادبى لينظر الى ادبه نظر جرياء العنوق . الى
 ١٥ جرياء العيوق . واين الماء . من السماء . وموقع السيل .
 من مطلع سهيل . والنعائم الشاردة . من
 ٢٠ النعائم الصادرة والواردة . وتالله اساجل
 بشمدى بحرة . ولن يهلك
 امرؤ عرف قدره .
 والسلام

١٩ اخذ بالفصل . وحكم بالقضاء الفصل . ونصحت له نصح الهدمد لسليمان .
 وشيئت ما اذكر من نبلة بالايمن . اصف وكل وصفى صحيح . واحلف وحلفى
 تسبيح . حتى استجھلنى الذى لا يعلم . وتكلم فى تفليلى من تكلم . لا تى
 ما اقتنعت بتفصيله على الاحداث . دون سگان الاجداث . ولا غلبته على
 الغابر . دون الكابر . ولكن وجبت الشخير . ورجبت الطرف الاخير . وليس
 النصر . بقدوم العصر . ولا التجويد . بذهاب ابد الابد . الروق بعد التوجيه .
 واخدر اقدم من الوجيه . وان كانت السير . بغير غير . والخبر . فاقداً
 للمحبر . فالحة بعد للية . والفيه تالى الكهيه . وما جعد احد فحاه . ولا
 وحى مخلوق مثل ما وحاه . ولكن للمهج . بالفارط لهج . والاحاده . عن
 العاده . تخلط المور . بالتامور . وتباشر ظلام اللوب . بظلام القلوب . وقد
 انكر من اعظم العزى واللات . ما جاء به محمد صلى الله عليه من الآيات .
 فلم افتأ والله شهيد اصبح الاتى . بالشفق . وادبغ الاديم . بالسديم . حتى
 اصبح البافع . النافع . والهيم . المدرهم . ومن بينهما من زارف فى السن .
 ٢٠ وكهل مقسطن . احد رجلين اما عالم . فهو من اهل الجهل سالم . واما
 بليد . اهتدى بالتقليد . وهو ادام الله قدرته الفرع الذى نبع من اصل زاك . ١٥
 فسمى الى السماك . وحفظ التوم . قبل ان يلفظ بالمكتوم . لم يزل صب
 الآفن . لقب الصافن . واهواء الرادس . لإرواء القادس . حتى التأمت اللامه .
 من الزرد . وتآلفت الغمامه . من القرد . ولقد هممت باسترفاد حضرة البهية
 من بدائع ما يفصل المال . ويكون الجمال . فعدانى عن ذلك اعظامى له
 واستحقارى نفسى وارعوت بى الهيبة الى ارامى وكفى وابى الله ان يكون . ٢٠
 التفقل الا من قبله فوعد التشريف بما سنع من المنثور والمنظوم فللقلوب
 الى وعده هيام الطاميه . الى النطفة الطاميه . ولا تزال تقتفيناه اقتفاء
 المدنف العافيه . والبيت القافيه . ومن للعفر . بالذفر . والقفى . بالمام
 السفر . واقدمت على خدمة حضرة بالمكاتبة لانهى اليها ما انا عليه لا
 تكثر برصف المنطق عنده . وهل ابلغ ان ادعى فى تاليف القول عبده . وقد ٢٥
 تقبل ملوة الامى . ويسمع دعاه الاعجمى . ونقده ادام الله تاييده يكبر عن

براح . فعارضته اعلم بالمعارضة . وأرنية اربنته اقدر على المناقضة . حسب التربة .
 نطفة تشفى الكربة . والناقمة . علبة عند الافاقه . وللمجمه . النياية عن السحابة
 المتجمه . وذكره عبده بما يشبه مننه صنيعه يضيى عنها باع الشكر . وأبعث^{١٧}
 وهى منى على ذكر . غرست السرور فى سريرتى وعلمت النفاسة نفسى . وخلدت
 الغبطة فى خلدى الى ان امسى . خبى الرامس . ونجى هند الاجامس . هصب . حتى
 بعد ما نصب . وبغش . نسيى وقد نس فانتعش . وعزنى الريحى . المشتقة
 من الرياح العربى . فملات الصدر . وامرئى بمجازرة القدر . لان الجنوب . تهيج
 تقع للجبوب . والشمال . تحرك ساكن الرمال . حتى عاتبت الصمير . والتفت الى
 السر للخمير . فقلت السمة . فى القسمة . ازين من الاشر . للبشر . وطالما
 ١٠ عصف . النسيم فقصف . ولن اكون كالغبار . ثار . من الملاطس . فزار . المعاطس .
 اسكران . انا ام هكران . ان كنت انتشيت فالثل . يقوى الامل . او اغفيت
 فالوسن . يرى لللم الحسن . هنا مع احاطة اليقين ان الغدنة . لا تشد منها
 الودمة . وان المرق . لا يستحق كسوة السرق . وان البديع . لا يملأ من رسل الصديع .
 تزيد المرارة . بسقى المرارة . وري المثير . لا يخلع عليه لون الشير . ومن انا
 ١٥ حتى يصفنى بالنقال . ويزن بى الثقال . البرير . يسود فم الغرير . واتى بالنور
 للنوار . وصوار الطيب للصور . هل ادبى فى ادبه الا كالقطرة . فى المطرة .
 والنحلة . عند النحلة . وانما صاحب الدرهمين غنى عند صاحب الدرهم . والافطس
 اشم فى تعيل الاكشم . فاما شداد بن عاد . وعافر الجياد . فالبدى . توهمهما
 الشراء اليدى . عند جالب العصد . وبائع الحصد . فصاق ذرعى فى جزاء ما تطول
 ٢٠ به صيق ذرع النملة . باتخاذ الشملة . والحنانة . بثقب الجمانة . فليته ادام
 الله عزه اطلع من عبده على كنين الاعتقاد . وجنين السواد . فيعلم ان الروح .
 وجوانح الصلوع . مفعمة له بالاعظام . مترعة بحمته اتراع الجام . لا لآه جعل
 حماتى كثير . وخلط عثيرى بالعبير . ولا لان سيدنا الرئيس الاجل والده
 ادام الله سلطانه سبق . من الافصال بما ربق . وقدم . منه ما كان نشره السدم .
 ٢٥ ولكن لما اوتى اقاليد الحوار . ونطق بفرد حصار . وعلمت انه فى صاغية الادب .
 كتبع فى طاغية العرب . لهجت بحبه لهج السوق . بحب المليك الروقة . اذا

الثغب . بالغيب . ويفنى الشمع . يخفيات اللمع . وهم في هذا المقع كاسنان
المسارح . ونواجز القمر القوارح . تنكبهم الفوائد تنكيب السهم العائر . والركب
لجائز • بناحية اما العدو فنازل • مطيف بها في مثل دائرة المهر • يحول فيها
لجريض . دون القريض . وللخار . دون أداء الاعتذار . فقد ادمى الحُق . وطاء الحُق .
15 ونهب الحارب . بذى الغارب . وانما هو رقى ثم اقتسار . وليس بعد السلب الا
الاسار . فهم يتوقون كفة الحابل . ويتوقعون رشق النابل . على ان القارب . اخو
الشارب . والهبع . طريد الرُقع . ما اقرب طسما من جديس . وادنى البازل
من السديس . لا يزالون يمارسون جابه . ثنى النجابه . نفى الدَبر . للوير .
والسبع . لابن الصبع . ويبين الزلل . فيهم من خوف الثلل . كما بان
للقلج . من وراء الفلج . فقليل العلم منهم يُستطرف . ويُستغرب ولا يكاد
يُعرف . كالشنوف . على الانوف . والحقاب . في وسط العقاب . والودع . في
عنى الصدع . والغور . بين اهل الكفور . لان سالمهم هامة اليوم او غد . وان
لم يكن ما خاف فكأن قد . ولو رحلوا . قبل ان يوحلوا . وتوكلوا . على الله
في المسير قبل ان يوكلوا . لنفع الفرار . الفرار . واستراح الفقار . الى وضع الاوقار .
وكم مصابة الدَرع . لابس الدرع . والبَر . الهَر . وان كان دون كسب العتاد .
16 ممارسة خراط القتاد . فقتد المائع . اوطأ من العتد ذى القالع . والمرقد . جانب
على ابن انقد . وانما يشدو بالترنم شاديبهم . ويغدو في اولى الدعوى غاديبهم .
بين اناس يقظة اقدمهم اقصر من لحظته . وسنته اطول من سنته . وحلية
الدواة . لديه احلى الادوات . وحسن البراعة . احسن البراعة . فاذا جاء بعضهم
بسمار . ومارى بتفصيله ممار . فقد سجد السفساف . لاساف . وأهدى الهنم .
2٠ للمنم . والسُرفه . تتخذ لمنفعتها الغرفة . وربما عنت القرارة . بالعرارة . وجعل
لحمار . على وجه الحمار . وليس الصريع . بالمرعى المريع . على ان التفكير .
قبل التبكير . والحطبة . ثم الحُطبة . فاما بحفرة سيدنا بقى . ووقى . حتى يلب
الهجر . الى نياها الفجر . ولوب صلوة العصر . من القصر . فما يسعهم غير الاستماع .
والتسليم بعد الاجماع . فان ذكر له ادام الله تاييده . ان حافر القليب . انبط ٢٥
لحفص الحليب . وان الرسل . حلب القسل . وان نجلا من راح . ظهر في هجل

بكتاب حكمة يوفده . وعهد بصيرة بعهد . والمشتري والزهرة وان نأيا . يبلغان
الحاج من توليا . في زعم النجمين . وبعض الفلاسفة المتقدمين . نعوذ
بالله من هذه المقالة . ونستكفي الايغال في طرق الجهالة . ولكن المثل مضروب .
والخلق مدبر مريبوب . وان ضرب اوراق البتية . بمصر . واستخف من الاشغال
ه السنية . كل اصر . فمزالفنا باذن الله مما يرعاه . ومزارعها احدا ما يكلؤة ويتولا . 13
فالسار الفرد عندهم يشتمل بولايته على الاقطار المتناثية . وينتظم بها اقاليم
عد المتساوية . وكل خالص السام . وقديم سمى الحسام . واخى حشاشة من
اللب يستنجد . وفراشة من التمييز يسترفدها . مذ سمع ريق اقسامه .
واجتلى بالتدبر روني حسامة . كالسرطان في انقطاع الصوت النابس . وزهل
1. في المزاج القارس . فعيهم اطول من رداء العروس . ووعيمهم ابكا من در الحروس .
فليتهم كذوات الاصوات المنتصف . والناطقين باسل منحرفة . فان العجمة .
لاسهل من البكمة . وللبسة . اقل ضررا من الحرس . وتمنى الفاتت . كحماولة
احياء المائت . ومن يجعل الربوة روبة . والسبت عروبة . وشائع اداء الفرائض
قبل دخول الاوقات . والاحرام بعد مجاوزة الميقات . وان كان ما اختلس منهم
15 لا قيمة . له في النقيمة . ولا اشارة . اليه من اهل الشارة . فارتياح اللاقطه .
بساقطة النقد . كارتياح الماشطة . بواسطة العقد . ولا يزئن أم السجدة .
مقتها حسن البهجة . لكن تحنو عليها طول الحيرة . وتحزن لفقدما عند 14
الممات . وجور نحر الافيل . اذا لم يستقل بعبء الفيل . وهدم سخيقات
الدور . اذا فرعتها منيفات القصور . وكسر المرماة . لقصرها عن القناة . ودفن
2. الناب . اذا لم تلحق بالشواب . ولو لا ذلك لوجب ترك النغم . الا ما كان كلا
ونغم . يخبر به عن الارادة . ويمنع قليلة من الزيادة . ولحرم اجلالا لما قال
سجع الكلمتين . وتقفيه البيتين . وقد كانت المتحمسة في جاهليتها . وسدنة
الانثان على اوليتها . لا تتخذ بيتا مرتعا . اجلالا للكعبة وتورعا . وهل طالب
ذلك سواه الا كمفنى الشبيبة . في نسج السبيبة . ومضيق الشرخ . في التماس
25 البرم والمرخ . والشحم . لا يقطع الوح . والنشم . لا يحسب من الرشم . وكلهم
غيره ينفق من راس مال نزر . ولا يحكم على مدة بالجزر . لكن ينقد

الومد . وابت اللقاب . التغير بمر الاحقاب . فنعدت الرسوم . وخلدت
 الوسم . ولولا جفاء التربة والاحجار . عن التخلق باخلاق الجار . لاصبحت
 ساحتها للتادب مختارة . والفصاحة من عند اهلها ممتازة . فقد قيل ان
 اصل الطيب عند عبدة الابداد . ان آدم صلى الله عليه هبط في تلك البلاد .
 ١١ ولكن ابي للحمود . قبول الطبع المحمود . ونذرت الكابية في الهمود . والانيس
 باجتذاب الخليقة اخلق . وحواسهم بطلاب الفصيلة اولى واليق . فلولا تنبهوا
 وقد نُبِّهوا . وشبهوا البرى اذ تشبهوا . وما هم ابن دابة . بصيد الجدايه .
 فكيف يلتقط القار . بالمنقار . ويستتر القرواح . بالجنح . ام كيف يُمدّ
 الطراف من النسع . ويُقَدَّ النجاد من الشسع . هذا ما لا يكون . ولا تسبق
 اليه الظنون . والظلم البين . ولخطب الذئ ليس بهين . تكليف القطب
 النابت . مدانة القطب الثابت . والزمان نسر الحافر . مرام النسر الطائر . واذا
 غلا المرحل . من عدو الارجل . وخلا الفقير . بالوقير . فانما ذاك اتفاق .
 لا احقاق . وغايه . ليس وراءها نهاية . وقد ضم المسان ومهارة ميدان القياس .
 وشمل الخشاش وجوارحه جو المراس . فسبق الغدوى . واقتنص القمرى . وان
 قيل فلان اديب . وفلان اريب . فان وفاق الاسماء . لا يمنع الفراق عند
 الرماه . العراة . سمية الجرادة . والدُّباب . سمى طرف القرصاب . وقد تدعى
 الثمامة . جليمة . وبعض الهامة . قبيلة . وليس كل مثوب مبشرا . ولا كل
 ١٢ متثائب مؤشرا . اعرض شاؤ لا يتعلق بنصيه . وعن امب لا يتعب فى
 طلبه . وانما يحكم بثمر الجبار . لمن اصلحه فى وقت الإبتار . وبصيد ظليم
 المقاء . من زهد فى ظليم السقاء . نام والله اللاغب . وادلج الراغب .
 ٢٠

تسالنى ام وهيب جملا ♦ يمشى رويدا ويكون الاول

فاصبحت من ليلى الغداة كناظر ♦ مع الصبح فى اعقاب نجم مغرب

وليس حسن الظاهر للمتظاهر . ولا البهار بالباهر . ومن الزور . ادعاء المشاء
 للترور . وان جُعت الرياض . فى الانواض . واعتَمَّ العقيق . بالشقيق . فان الابارق .
 لم تبسط بالنمارق . والقرى . لم يفرش بالعبقري . ونحن على شحط المعان . واعتراض
 ٢٥ السهوب دوننا والرعان . لا نعدم من قبله تثقيب المائل . والارشاد الى المنار المائل .

• رسائل ابي العلاء المعري • (١)

الساهم السامد . لا يلفظ بذكرها لفظ للحامد العامد . وانما هو في الرحيل
 عنها كجسم ذي روح . نقل من الغرقى الى اللوح . وهى بعده كقسيمة .
 الوسيمة . ذهب عطرها . وبقي قشرها . وانما شرفت على من سواها . وطالت
 عن البلاد دون ما والاها . لاقامت بها في تلك الايام . وانامت عن اهلها
 • نواظر ازام . فعرفت عند ذلك به . ونالت خيرها من حسبه . كما تنال كل
 دار يحلها . وانما المنازل التى ينزلها . كالشهب الشامية اليمانية . الموفية
 على العشرين بثمانية . نزل بها الزبدقان فتشهرت . ونسبت العرب اليها
 كل سخابة امطرت . وكم في اديم الفراء . من شبح مفئية زمراء . اجتنبها
 في السير فحملت . ولم ينسب اليها قطر سخابة هملت . وراى عبده ان
 ١٠ حرية اللانم . على المتأدب للانم . اتخذ اثاره عاش حاسده بالخلق الشكس .
 وللد المنعكس . مشامد للادب محصورة . ومحائل بالذاكرة معمورة . كما
 يتخذ تقى الخلف . مواطى زكى السلف . مواقف يتخيرها لطهارتها .
 ومساجد يتديرها لاثارتها . وانما فصل الطور بالكليم . والمقام بابرهم . ولو
 سمونا بمجاورته . قبل محاورته . سمو اليعرى . بمجوار النبى . ولعل المعرة
 ١٥ قد نظرت اصح النظر . وفكرت في ما لا يتنقض من الفكر . فعلمت انه
 عقد لا يصلح لمقلدها . وسوار يرتفع لجلالته عن يدها . وتاج لا يطيق
 حمله مفرقتها . وجوثة بشرق بذورها مشرقها . وهو ادام الله تاييده مثل ما ٢٥
 نقل من المحار . الى مفرق الملك الجبار . ومغانية الاولى كالشجرة . بعد اجتناء
 الثمرة . والصدفة بغير جوهرة . والكنانة الخالية من السهام . والعنانة الجالية
 ٢٠ فى الجهام . ولم يخف علينا ان الغيث من الدجون . فى مثل السجون . وان
 موضع الزهرة . اعلى من العبرة . وان القمر . لم يخلق للسمر . وليس
 للمستعير ان يحسب العارية هبة . ولا يظن ردها الى المعير مثلبة . لكن
 شرع للمعلوك . العارية من الملوك . وقد افادت هذه البقعة الصيت البعيد .
 وانقادت لها ازمة الجدد السعيد . ليالى آمنتها المكارم عليه . واستودعتها
 ٢٥ البراعة حجة اصغرية . فظعن وارجه مقيم . وارحل وللثناء تخميم . فهى
 كشمري ربيع سميها مع الشهور . فى اوائل الدهور . فصارتا بعد الحمد . الى

كان في زكاه الهمة مغرسة . وباجتال الحكمة منذ نشأ تمرسه . حتى علا
منها سراة المنبر . وركب طالبة اصول السخبر . وقد كان في من معنى قوم
جعلوا الرسائل . كالوسائل . وتزينا بالسجع . تزين المحول بالرجع . ما رقا
7 في درجته . ولا وضعوا قدما على محجته . لكنهم تعانوا . فما تبانوا .
وتناصلوا . فلم يتفاضلوا . ولو طمعوا في الوصول . الى مثل هذه الفصول . لاختاروا
الركب . على الركب . ورفضوا اعتساف السبيل . وارتعاه الويل . ليدركوا
بطلبهم ما ادرك من غير رجعة . واغترفه من بدية العدة . وكلهم لو شاهده
يرمى بان يدعى السكيت في حلقة سيدنا فيها سابق الرهان . ويتمنى ان
يكون زجاء في قناة هو منها موضع السنان . ولما وردت مع عبده موسى تلك
الفرائب المونسة . والقلائد المنفسة . كانت بمنزلة الايات التسع التي القاها ١٠
الرحمن . على ابن عمران . ابطلت كيد الشعار . وعصفت بهشيم الاشعار .
وورد في الواح عصوان الميمية والواوية فوجد في وطنه اشباح اوزان .
تتحيل . وانقاه اذهان . تتهيل . فلقى موسى عصاه فاذا هي تلقف ما
يافكون ما خبر عبده حتى اختبر . ولا عبر الا بعد ما اعتبر . شامدنا
فيما سمعناه المعنى القصير . في الوزن القصير . كصورة كسرى في كاس ١٥
المشروب . وتمثال قيصر في الابريز المشروب . لم يزر به فيق الدار . وقصر
8 الجدار . ان تغزل . فحنين العود . او تجزل . فهدير العود . وان كان ادام الله
شرف الدنيا به استصغر . من ذلك الذي استكثرناه . واستنزر . من ابد
الذي استغمرناه . فالسرب يعجب من وقوف الاجدل . على شرفات المجدل .
وهو غير حافل بما اتي . ولا معتقد انه استعلى . وان كان في وانية . ادابنا . ٢٠
بقية ارقال . ولائية . افهامنا . خفية صقال . فسوف تفتفع وهو ادام الله عزه
ذريعة الانتفاع . ونفى بما اهدى اليه من الشعاع . اضاءة الصفر . بما
قابل من النيرات الزهر . وقد يرى خيال الجوزاء . على رفعتها . في اضاءة
المعزاء . مع ضعتها . ويورق العود . ببركة السعود . وتفيض الرقة . عن
نوه الجبهة . ولو تفرق بمقال . جامد . وهم باختيال . هامد . لنشرت المعرة ٢٥
صحف الافتخار . وسحبت ذيل العظمة والاستكبار . عجبا ان فكرة بالمحظها حظ

• رسائل ابى العلاء المعرّى • (١)

قبروا . ام . جُزوا الغُرفة بما صبروا . فهم يلقون فيها تحية وسلاما وان نالوا
بمئة اوصاف الانقياء الابرار . فقد نزلت بهم حَلَّة من خلال الاشقياء الكفار . وذلك
انهم باسد البلاغة افترسوا . وباسبابها عُقدت السنتهم عن الجواب فخرسوا .
فكانما قيل لهم هذا يوم لا ينطقون . ولا يؤذن لهم فيعتنون . وانما غرقوا في
لج التبانة . فصمتوا . وسمعوا صواعق الابانة . فحفتوا . فقللم كاتبهم عُود
النابت . وجواب بليغهم حيرة الساكت . على انهم قد راموا تصريف الخطاب 5
فصُرفوا فعرفوا مكان فصله فاعترفوا . وتراكوه من مبارك العلوج . فلمحوه في
مارك البزج . واستنهضتهم الهمم الى مداناته فعجزوا . ووعدوا هواجسهم التبلد
فانجزوا . ولن توجد اثار . النوق . في اوكار . الانوق . فهم يتاملون وميفه
الآلق . ويحمدون الاله الخالق . على ما منحه سيدهم من الاقتدار . بدقيق
الافكار . على اعادة اليم كالغدير المسمى بالغدر . والحاق السها بالقمر ليلة البدر .
ولم يزل الماشى العانم . اسرع من راكب الرازم . فكيف بمن امتطى به عزمه
كئيد الريح . وحكم له سعده بالسعى النجيم . وخصة بارئه تقدست اسماءه
بطبع راض معاب الاغراض حتى ذللها . وابس بوحوش اللغات فاقلها .
١٥ فصار حزن كلام العرب اذا نطق به سهلا . وركيكه ان ايده بصنعتة قويا
جزلا . فمثله كمثل جارسة الكحلاء . تسمح بالمسائب الملاء . تطعم القرب . 6
وتجود بالقرّب . وتجنّى مُرّ الانوار . فيعود شهدا عند الاشتيار . وكالهواء في
منهب لا اعتقده . وقول سواى من يسدده . يجتذب اجزاء البخار . فيسقى من
تحتة عذب الامطار . ومن لنا بان اللفظ المشوف . يُمقل عليه التمثيل على
٢٠ الحروف . فتكلف البابنا اقتضاب العسير . وركوب ما ليس بيسير . فعساها
تَبَلّ بفقره زاهره . او تظهر باستخراج لولة فاخرة . على انه من العناء سوال
البرم . ورياسة الهرم . وهيهاث بغدت محال . الفقر . الطالع . عن منزل .
الفقر . الظالع . واعجز البارق . يد السارق . وجلّت الشמוש . عن سكنى
الرموس . ولو اجتهد الحُرز مدى عمره ما اشبه فغيبه زئير الاسد . ولن
٢٥ يصير سوط باطل في القوة كالسد . وهو رزق لأمه . ما رزق كلامه . لينال
خلود الزمان . وتعطيه الحوادث اوكد امان . اولى الناس . باضاعة النبراس . اذ

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المروق • او يوح عند الشروق • ولم يزل لوليته الى جنبه يجنب العانية • الى ١٥
عيش الغانية • وانصاه الاعلال • الى افساء الإبلال • ولو ان شوقه الى حضرته
4 لليلة تمثّل • فمثل • وتجتسم • حتى يتوسم • لملأ ذات الطول والعرض • وشغل
ما بين السماء والارض • ولم يكتف حتى يكلف لخطوة • ان تسع سهوة •
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هذه رسائل ابي العلا احمد بن عبد الله بن سليمان
التنوخى الضرير رهن المحبسين واشياء جمعت من كلامه ولم
تكن المراسلة بينه وبين الناس كثيرة وادما انفق ذلك فى
بعض الاحيان فمن ذلك رسالته الى ابي القسم الحسين
ابن على المغربى المعروفة بريح المنيع

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

ان كان للاداب اطال الله بقاء سيدنا نسيم يتفوع . وللذكاء نار تشرق
وتلمع . فقد قفمتنا على بُعد الدار ارج ابدى . ومحا الليل عنا ذكاؤه بتلهبه .
وخول الاسماع شغوا غير ذاهبه . واطلع فى سويداوات القلوب كواكب ليست
١٠ بغاربه . وذلك انا معشراهل هذه البلدة وهب لنا شرف عظيم . وألقى الينا
كتاب كريم . صدر عن حصرة السيد الخبر . ومالك اعنة النظم والنثر . قراءته

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