

TALES FROM THE EASTERN-LAND

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Tales from the eastern-land by A. L. Grimm

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A. L. GRIMM

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EASTERN-LAND**



TALES
FROM THE EASTERN-LAND,

BY A. L. GRIMM.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY H. V.

Illustrated with Four Pictures by

J. B. SONDERLAND.

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THE MERCHANT OF BALSORA.

CHAPTER I.

MANY hundreds of years ago, about the time when the far-famed Caliph Harun al Raschid reigned over Bagdad, there dwelt in the city of Balsora a very celebrated merchant named Jussuf. His father had bequeathed him considerable wealth, and a splendid mansion for his residence, which for its extent and magnificent architecture was by no means inferior to the most stately palaces in the city, whilst it far surpassed them all in beauty of situation.

This merchant was proprietor of the largest sale-rooms in the grand bazaar, wherein he kept an immense stock of the most costly merchandize, which he procured from far distant countries, either by means of his ships, or on the backs of camels, of which he had a great number.

The visitor would behold among his stores the rarest productions of nature ranged side by side with the most elaborate works of art; there were the richest tissues and finest brocades, curiously wrought vessels in gold and silver, and valuable trinkets

and jewelry sparkling with precious gems, all arranged in the most tasteful manner, in order to tempt the purchaser.

It was therefore no wonder, in so large and rich a city, that Jussuf received great patronage ; indeed it was the usual custom with all those who studied the fashions of the place to resort to him, knowing that he could supply them with the best goods of all kinds. Thus his business continued to increase daily ; and as a natural result, his wealth also increased ; but his cares were multiplied in the same proportion, for it was no easy task to superintend the vast number of men that he was obliged to employ ; and what with seeing to the lading and unlading of his ships, and the continual arrival and departure of the caravans, both his mind and body were actively employed from morning till night.

In this way he continued for some years entirely absorbed in his business, forgetting all care of his health, until he found that the strength and energy which he had hitherto possessed, gradually began to decline ; and this, at length, suggested to him the necessity of devoting some portion of his time to recreation. It fortunately happened, at this very juncture, that a favourable opportunity offered for the purchase of a beautiful estate in the country, exactly suited to his taste. It was situated in an extensive and luxuriant plain a few miles up the river, where the fishing was excellent, and where the surrounding country offered plenty of sport ; having beside all these advantages, the great recommendation of being very cheap, he, without hesitation, at once concluded the purchase. He had the old country-house pulled down, and employed a skilful architect to erect on its site, which was on a gentle eminence, a larger and much more commodious mansion, surrounded by an extensive pleasure garden laid out in