

**NOUREDDIN, OR THE
TALISMAN OF FUTURITY,
AN EASTERN TALE**

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Noureddin, or The Talisman of Futurity, an Eastern Tale by Catharine I. Finch

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CATHARINE I. FINCH

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NOUREDDIN;

OR,

THE TALISMAN OF FUTURITY.

NOUREDDIN,

OR

THE TALISMAN OF FUTURITY.

In Eastern Tale.

BY CATHARINE I. FINCH.

Yet ah ! why should they know their fate,
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies ;

No more ; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.

GRAY.

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SMITH, ELDER AND CO., CORNHILL,
BOOKSELLERS TO THEIR MAJESTIES.

1836.

73.



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PREFACE.

SOME apology may perhaps be deemed necessary in offering to the public a tale which can *not* be true. Truth, or the semblance of truth, is now deemed essential in works of fiction; the reign of the Arabian Nights is over, and allegory has long ceased to interest, except in the classic works of Addison, and his contemporaries. Aware of the prejudice against impossibilities, and participating in it strongly myself, I would gladly have avoided any collision with spirits and

talismans, had I been able, without their aid, to give Nouredin the knowledge he desires. But how could fore-knowledge be possessed by him in the natural order of things? He might, indeed, have dreamed that he possessed it, and the convenient sentence, "he awoke, and behold it was a dream," might have ended the story, and reconciled the difficulty. But I own myself to be weary of dreams which no one ever did, or could dream; and, therefore, in balancing the two equal impossibilities of dreaming a volume, or receiving a talisman, I gave the preference to the latter.

The rest of the story, it is hoped, will be thought natural; unless it be objected that Nouredin is too learned, and Fatima too good for their country. But how little is even now known of the domestic habits and manners of the Turks. Scarcely any two

travellers agree in their accounts of the leading features of their character. One will depict them as devoid of every good quality, another as possessing them all ; one declares the women to be slaves, another reverses the picture, and represents them as domestic tyrants, the supreme and uncontrolled mistresses of their supposed lords. If such be the contradictory accounts conveyed to us of modern Turkey, who shall say what was the state of society there three centuries ago ? History tells us, indeed, of the renown of Soleyman the Magnificent, whose fleets and armies were the terror of Christendom, and who was the liberal patron of learning, even when he found it amongst those whom his religion taught him to despise as Infidels. Of the manners of the people, however, we know little ; but when such was the taste of the court, it is scarcely to be supposed that

some portion of the spirit of research, and of the chivalrous character of the age did not descend to the humbler classes of society. I have ventured to suppose it was so; and if I be mistaken, I must request the indulgence of the reader for the error.