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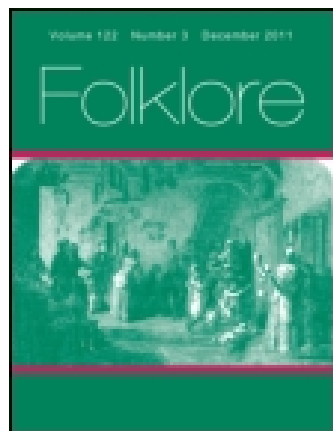
On: 12 May 2015, At: 14:22

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954

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Folklore

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfol20>

Cairene and Upper Egyptian Folk-Lore

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Published online: 01 Feb 2012.

To cite this article: A. H. Sayce (1920) Cairene and Upper Egyptian Folk-Lore, *Folklore*, 31:3, 173-203, DOI: [10.1080/0015587X.1920.9719150](https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1920.9719150)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.1920.9719150>

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Folk-Lore.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE FOLK-LORE SOCIETY.

VOL. XXXI.]

SEPTEMBER, 1920.

[No. III.]

CAIRENE AND UPPER EGYPTIAN FOLK-LORE.

BY A. H. SAYCE.

ON three previous occasions (*Folk-Lore*, vii. 3, xi. 4, xvii. 2) I have communicated to this Society various folk-tales and popular beliefs or superstitions, collected in Egypt, under the name of "Cairene Folk-lore." The name was chosen advisedly. With a few exceptions the stories were told me either in Cairo or by Cairenes, and most of the beliefs and practices I have noted belong to the same neighbourhood. Few of them, it will be noticed, come from Upper Egypt.

The same is the case with most of the other collections of Egyptian folk-lore, or rather folk-tales, which have been hitherto published. Spitta Bey, Yacoub Artin Pasha, and Willmore have alike derived all their stories from Cairenes. The collection made by Legrain at Luxor and Karnak is the only exception to the rule of which I know. Unlike the other collectors he resided in Upper Egypt, and his work at Karnak brought him into intimate contact with

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the natives. I too usually spent the winter in Upper Egypt on board my dahabia, and in this way came to hear some of the stories and be made acquainted with the beliefs and customs of the natives of that part of the country. My servants, however, were Cairenes, and their folk-lore, accordingly, was also Cairene.

But between Cairene and Upper Egyptian folk-lore a broad line must be drawn. The population of Cairo is non-Egyptian; that of Upper Egypt is the purest in Egypt. Cairo was the creation of the Arab conquerors of Egypt, and the centre of the vast settlements of Arab tribes which were intended to garrison and overawe the native population. My servant, for example, from whom the majority of my stories was derived, belonged to a family which still bore the name of *Makkawwi*, "Meccan," their ancestors having originally come from Mecca and having had land given to them at Helwân by one of the early Khalifs.

Cairo, however, is something more than an Arab creation. It has been for many centuries the meeting-place of Mohammedan cosmopolitanism. It is there that the chief university of Mohammedanism, El-Azhar, still carries on its old teaching; in Fatimite days it was the home of oriental art and science, and throughout the middle ages pilgrims and colonists from all parts of the Mohammedan world—China, Persia, Africa or Spain—gathered together there. One result of this mixture of races and traditions was *The Thousand and One Nights*.

The folk-lore of Cairo, therefore, may be coloured by the Egyptian atmosphere, but it is not really Egyptian. It reflects rather the Arab mind, tintured and influenced by Syria and Persia and even China, but with a distinct and characteristic flavour of its own. Many of the Cairene stories have an underlying sarcastic humour which reminds us of the Parisian *gamin*. Take, for instance, the story of the man with two sons, one of whom was a thief and



the other a murderer, who after being sent to school became a lawyer and a doctor ; it might have been invented in Paris or even London. So, again, with the story of the unhappy husband whose ghost came to complain to his sons when they buried his wife in the same tomb as himself. It is not the kind of story we should expect to find in an orthodox Mohammedan country ; still less is it genuinely Egyptian in character.

On the other hand, many of the beliefs and superstitions and popular customs or practices which I have recorded must be regarded as of purely Egyptian origin ; indeed, this can be proved in certain cases, as, for example, that of the '*arâsa* or "bride," the sheaf of corn which embodies the spirit of the harvest. The Arab settlers in Egypt were nomadic ; it was not until after they had mixed with the native agricultural population that they themselves became agriculturists, and when they did so they naturally adopted the customs and superstitions of the *fellaḥīn*. Wherever a custom or belief is attached to the country instead of the city we may consider it to be native Egyptian.

It took many years, in fact, for the Arab intruders to fuse with the native population, and to this day the fusion even in country districts is far from complete. Thus in Helwân the population is still Beduin in type, and it is not long since it was considered a disgrace for a native of the village to marry a "fellaḥ" rather than another villager. It was some centuries before the *fellaḥīn* in the neighbourhood of Cairo ceased to be Christian ; indeed the "Coptic" population of Old Cairo is still considerable ; it was several centuries more before the Coptic language became extinct. Dr. Lansing, the American missionary, who came to Cairo from Damascus about 1850, once told me that shortly after his arrival he paid a visit to the ruins of Memphis and at Bedreshên heard some peasants who were working in the fields sing a song the words of which were not Arabic. Unfortunately he did not write

them down ; but some time later when he had begun the study of Coptic he found that they must have belonged to that language, and accordingly made many efforts through his converts to recover them. But it was then too late ; the generation which had preserved the memory of a song that was no longer intelligible had already passed away.

Religion long kept the two races, Arab and Egyptian, apart, and when eventually the Christian *fellah* in the neighbourhood of Cairo had become Mohammedan, the Mohammedan Arab had become a townsman with a townsman's sense of superiority over the country bumpkin. Hence the humour of the Cairo folk-tales is directed against the *fellah* because he is a *fellah* ignorant of the ways of the city, and for no other reason. The Arab of Cairo, indeed, felt himself the inferior rather than the superior of the city Copt : the financial and civil administration of the state was practically in Coptic hands, and the skilled artizan was almost always a Copt, as he continued to be down to the time when I first knew Cairo, what we call " Arab " art being really the art of Christian Egypt. I know of no Cairene folk-tales which satirize the Copts as such ; Cairene wit is directed against the *fellahin*, the Nubians, the Europeans, and more especially the Turks, but not against the Copts.

The Turk was hated on account of his rapacity, his cruelty, and above all, his stupidity. This is the feature which is chiefly prominent in the stories in which he figures. The sharp-witted Cairene revenged himself upon Turkish tyranny by caricaturing him and inventing stories at his expense. And the stupidity of the Turk is represented, not as the naïve stupidity of the ignorant *fellah*, but as an innate and overwhelming stupidity which no amount of education would cure.

The folk-tales of Upper Egypt are of a different class altogether. There is nothing of the city in them, and

those which I have heard are either attached to the ancient monuments of the country or can be shown to go back to the traditions and beliefs of ancient Egypt. The golden bark of the Sun-god on the sacred lake of Karnak, or the heifer which was believed to ascend from the river once a year at Sharona on the eve of the festival of the Nile-gods are illustrations of the fact. The beliefs and customs of the people equally bear witness to the continuity of habit, and traditions among the inhabitants of the Sa'id. Near Minia the dead are still ferried over the Nile to be buried on its eastern bank as they were five thousand years ago, and in spite of the fulminations of orthodox Mohammedanism or the Coptic Patriarch, food is still offered to them, and the living, whether Mohammedan or Coptic, hold a three days' festival once a year over their graves. The *fellah* may call himself a Christian or a Mohammedan, but at heart he remains a worshipper of Isis and Osiris, or rather of the local deities who were disguised under those names. It will be seen further on that the doctrine of the *Ka* or "Double" still lingers among the descendants of the subjects of Rameses, and the beliefs connected with the *afarit* or "spirits" and the *mezaiyara* or water-witch can be traced to an Old Egyptian source. On the other hand, the belief in the *ghâl* seems to me to be of Arab origin: it belongs to the desert, not to the cultivated soil.

I.

"A man had two sons. When they grew up, he saw the sons, one was a thief and the other a murderer. He did not know what to do. A neighbour said to him: 'Send them to school.' So to school they went, and the one became a lawyer and the other a doctor."

II.

"A man of our village (Helwân is meant) had a wife who was very niggardly. If her husband or one of his

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friends asked for anything she said she had not got it. If he asked for a piece of bread or a match she beat him with her broom. So the poor man had to hide his bread under his *galabtya* (upper garment) and eat by stealth. Finally he died. His wife died soon afterwards. Before she died she asked her sons to bury her along with her husband by his side. They did so. The next night the man came to his sons and told them to remove the body. 'I died,' he said, 'in order to escape hell, and now I am in hell again.'"

III.

"There was a man who married a wife of whom he was very fond. But after a while the wife died. Then the man wandered away in order to find a country in which no one died. So he went from place to place, looking for a town where there were no graves. At last he came to a town in the Sudân where there were no graves. So he remained here, in the house of the shêkh. The shêkh made a feast for him, and first offered him a piece of a roasted leg. 'Where is your father?' asked the man. 'This is his leg,' said the shêkh, 'the rest of him is up there,' pointing to a shelf. Then the man learned that when anyone fell ill, he was killed and eaten, and that this was the reason there were no graves. So in the night he ran away back to his own country."

IV.

"There was a man who wanted his mother-in-law to die so that he might inherit her property. She had bad eyes; so he professed to set up as a doctor who could cure disease in the eyes. When his mother-in-law came to consult him, he said it was necessary that she should put certain plasters over her eyes which he would give her. He took some lime (*gfr*) and laid it upon pieces of cloth, and

these he told her to put over the eyes. But when he came to remove them, instead of the eyes being destroyed, he found them cured. For God is more merciful than man."

V.

"A Turk killed a goose and ordered his cook to prepare it for his dinner. While it was being cooked, a judge came along and asked for whom it was being cooked. The cook said: 'For the Turk.' The judge said: 'I wish to eat it; give it to me.' But the cook replied: 'What will the Turk say?' Said the judge: 'Don't trouble: I will see to that.' Presently the Turk came along and demanded the goose. But the cook said: 'While it was being cooked, it came to life again and flew away.' Thereupon the Turk became very angry and wanted to kill the cook. So the cook ran away, with the Turk after him. On the road he met a donkey standing and blocking the way. So he seized the tail of the donkey in order to pull him out of the road, and he pulled so hard that the tail came off in his hand. The owner of the donkey wanted to catch and kill him, and joined the Turk in pursuit. So he ran on till he came to a mosque which he entered, and seeing no other means of escape ran up the minaret to the top and then flung himself over. Under the minaret three blind beggars were sitting. The cook fell on the head of one of them and killed him. So the two other beggars joined in the pursuit, and the cook ran on till he tumbled over Professor (Ma'allim) Mankarios the Copt and accidentally put out his eye. By this time all his pursuers had come up with him; they seized him and brought him before the judge. First of all the owner of the donkey brought his complaint. The judge looked at his book and said: 'The cook must restore the donkey's tail; therefore let the owner give him the donkey until the tail is grown again. And now for my fee.' So the man gave the judge his fee, but preferred to keep the donkey. Next one of the blind men demanded

justice. So the judge looked again into his book, and said: 'According to the divine law (*sheri*) it is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Therefore one of the blind men must mount the minaret and jump down on the cook who must sit below. And now for my fee.' The fee was paid, but the blind men refused to ascend the minaret. Next came Professor Mankarios. 'Come here; you can read,' said the judge, 'and see what the divine law says. It is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, is it not?' 'Yes,' said the Professor. 'Then,' said the judge, 'since one eye of a true believer is equal to the two eyes of a Christian, the cook must first pull out your second eye, and then you will pull out the cook's eye. And now for my fee.' The Copt paid the fee and went away. Lastly came the Turk. The judge looked at his book and said: 'It is written in the Qoran that God the Almighty can raise the dead to life; why then should you deny that He can have given life to the goose?' So the Turk after paying his fee had to go away without his goose."¹

VI

“ There was a judge who had a little son, of whom he was very fond. He would never eat unless his son ate with him. When the boy was asleep he used to awake him in order that they might eat together. When the judge went to the court he took ladies with him; they sat with him in the court, and he would ask them what sentence he ought to pronounce. His wife heard of this, and one day when he came to his house and wanted to eat he told her to bring the boy. She said: 'He is asleep.' He replied: 'Go and wake him.' She said: 'If you wake him I will throw him into the cistern (*kanîfa*).' He went and waked him; thereupon his wife took a brick (*tâba*) and threw it into the cistern. The judge thought it was

* ¹ Told me by Takla Bey.

the boy and ran out into the street crying that she had killed his son. He ran to the house of her father and said: 'I will put her in prison, I will have her put to death.' Then his father-in-law went back with him to his house. There he saw his son, awake and well and playing. He said: 'What does this mean?' His wife replied: 'You were mad (*ganānu*) and so you were treated as a fool (*qalālu*).' "

VII.

"There was a peasant from Upper Egypt who came to Cairo to sell his chickens. He sold many and received plenty of money. But he was afraid the people might steal it from him before the rest of his business was finished. So he went to the judge and said to him: 'Will you take this money and keep it for me until I have finished all my business?' The judge replied: 'Very good.' So he left the money with him until all his business was finished. Then he went to the judge and asked him for his money. 'Get away from here!' cried the judge; 'you pig! what have I to do with the money of a *fellah* like you?' And he was driven away from the judge's house. Then a woman saw him crying and lamenting and beating his hands. So she asked what was the matter. He told her that the judge had taken his money. 'What will you give me,' said the woman, 'if I get it for you?' 'On my oath, I will kiss your hand,' said he. Then she went to the judge with a negress and a box which was locked up. And she said to him: 'I am going on pilgrimage to the Hijaz and am afraid to leave my things in my house. So I have packed my jewels in this box and wish you to take care of it for me. No one can open it, for I have the key.' The judge said to her: 'Very good. I too have some money which I wish to be safe. Will you pack it up also in the box?' 'Certainly; give it to me.' So he gave her the money of the *fellah*, which she gave to the negress

to pack up in the box. But there was nothing in the box except a few worthless clothes. The negress gave the money to the *fellah*, who began to dance for joy. The negress also danced because her mistress had overreached the judge. When the judge saw them dancing, he began to dance too. And the woman asked him: 'The *fellah* dances because he has his money, and the negress because she has given it to him; but why do you dance?' 'Because you have had a laugh at me,' he answered."

VIII.

"There was a judge who had a daughter. Many suitors wanted to marry her, but he refused them all, for he was afraid that they ate unclean meat (*ḥarām*). There was a robber, and when he heard of it he said: 'I will marry her.' They asked him: 'How?' He answered: 'You will see.' After five or six days he went one night to the house of the judge as he was sitting down to eat. The judge asked him to eat. He said: 'Never! the food is all unclean.' The judge said: 'How so?' He answered: 'Because it has been bought: no one knows whence it comes.' The judge said: 'This is the man for my daughter'; and accordingly they were married. After some time the robber said to the judge: 'Your daughter is west, but I must be east.' The judge replied: 'Very good.' So the robber went away, leaving his wife behind. He went to his village; there he stole a goat and a sheep and made a feast on the dyke.¹ After a time his wife went to seek him and found him living on the dyke and eating his food there. She asked him why he did not live in a house? He answered: 'Because I do not wish to eat anything that is unclean.'² So she lived with her

¹ The *gisr* or dyke which protects fields and villages from the inundation, borders the canals and forms the high-road from one part of the country to the other. The robber was thus a "highwayman."

² A play on the words *ḥarām*, "unclean," and *ḥarāmī*, "robber."

husband on the dyke. When the judge came to visit his daughter he asked where he should eat. 'Here on the dyke,' said the robber. 'But where is the food?' 'I will get it presently,' he said. So he walked along the road and stole a young female buffalo, and brought it back and cooked it. The judge said: 'I cannot eat this: it is unclean; its mother is calling for it.' 'No,' said the robber (*ḥarāmī*), 'it is clean, for I did not buy it but stole it.' (So he knew that it was not *ḥarām* in any way.) 'Here is half of it for your uncle's wife.' Thereupon the judge took the half and asked no more questions—as it was for his uncle's wife."

IX.

"A Nubian cook came to Cairo and offered his services. 'Can you cook?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'everything.' So he took the meat and the chicken and the spinach and the tomatoes and the egg-plant and cooked them all together in the same dish. When the waiter brought it to the master of the house he thought it was soup. Then he asked for the next course. But there was nothing. So the cook was called, and the master said: 'Is it not a disgrace that you should send all this food to me in this way?' 'Wallah!' said the Nubian, 'Hasan Kāshif (the ruler of Nubia before its conquest by Mohammed Ali) never ate anything like this!'"

X.

A man had a donkey with which he went to town. He walked by the side of it, and on the way met another man. 'Peace be to you!' said he. 'Peace be to you!' replied the other. Then they began to talk. Presently he asked the other: 'What is your name?' 'Ez-Zûr (Necessity),' he answered. 'What is yours?' 'El-Haqq (Right),' he replied. After a little Ez-Zûr asked if he might ride on the donkey a short distance as he was tired.

So he mounted the donkey. When they came near the town El-Haqq asked him to dismount. 'Please let me go a little further,' he replied. El-Haqq consented. Then they came to the town and El-Haqq claimed his donkey. 'It is mine,' said Ez-Zûr. El-Haqq appealed to the people, but when they heard 'El-Haqq mâshi' ('El-Haqq is walking,' but literally 'it is right that he is walking') they thought the donkey must belong to Ez-Zûr. So El-Haqq lost his donkey."

XI.

"There was a man who had a son. He wanted a cradle for him; so he went to the carpenter and asked him to make a cradle, giving him a *rîyal* (4s.) in advance. As the cradle was not brought to him he went again to the carpenter, who said: 'It is not finished yet; give me a little more time.' Still the cradle did not come, and though he paid many visits to the carpenter it remained unfinished. The son ceased to be an infant and grew up and became a man. He married and had a son of his own. So his father said: 'Go to such and such a carpenter and get the cradle which I ordered to be made twenty years ago.' The son went to the carpenter and asked him for the cradle. But the carpenter said: 'I cannot bear to be hurried: take back your money.'"

XII.

"There was a Coptic priest in Bahgûra who visited a parishioner and was offered 'araki. He said: 'I will take a little, but no more.' As they talked, he sipped it. Then the parishioner asked him to drink a little more to the health of his wife. This he drank. Then a little more was poured out in the name of the son-in-law. So this went on until the priest was drunk and had to be lifted on to his donkey. As he went home he fell off the donkey into a

fountain of water. While he lay there the donkey drank its fill. When it left off drinking he said: 'Drink again to the health of my wife.' But the donkey would not do so. 'Drink to my son-in-law!' But the donkey still refused. Finally he cried: 'My donkey is a cleverer fellow than I am?'¹

XIII.^a

"There was an agriculturist; he had one boy; when the boy became big a serpent bit him and he died. When he was dead his father had no other (son). As he had

¹ Told me by Takla Bey.

^a Kan fi wâhid râgil mezâri'; kan 'andû wâhid weled; el-weled lamma gi kebtr akalû ta'abân umât; lamma mâ, abû ma'ndûsh rhêro; 'alashân ma'ndûsh rhêro 'auz yemauwwit et-ta'bân; 'amillo wâhid tûba min hadîd; umishi fil gebel; kullima yilqa wâhid ta'bân yemawwitu; wehûwa mashi laqa wâhid shêkh. Qallo es-shêkh: "rah fên?" qallo: "mashi amawwit kul et-ta'bân"; qallo: "alashanê?" qallo: "alashan mawwat ibni"; qallo: "enta meskin" qallo: "ta'âla wayai." Mishu wayâ ba'd lamma wassalu 'andê wâhid marhâra. Lamma wassalu 'm-marhâra, es-shêkh nadah 'al' et-ta'bân. Lamma gi (e)t-ta'bân, qallo: "enta shiribt em-moya min el-bahr?" Qallo: "aiwa, shiribt etnên noba." Qallo: "erga' matrak." Et-ta'bân riga' fil-matrah betâ'o. Fatu em-marhâra umishu lehad wâhid marhâra tâni. Es-shêkh nadah 'ala et-ta'bân ellî fil-marhâra. Et-ta'bân gih. Es-shêkh qallo: "enta shiribt em-moya min el-bahr?" Qallo: "aiwa, ana shiribt wahida marra." Qallo: "erga' fil-matrah betâ'tak." Lamma et-ta'bân riga' fil-matrah betâ'o, fatu umishu lehad marhâra talt; lamma wassalu 'and em-marhâra es-shêkh nadah 'ala wâhid ta'bân; yîgi wâhid ta'bân kebtr biziya. Es-shêkh sa'al et-ta'bân; qallo: "enta shiribt em-moya beta' el-bahr?" Et-ta'bân qallo: "fih bahr? fi moya?" Qallo: "aiwa, fi bahr, fi moya." Qallo: "ana ma'raftish fi bahr, fi moya." Es-shêkh qal le-râgil: "iqla' el-hudûm min el-hadîd"; qallo: "hatto fil-ar'd, huma wel-'asâya." Er-râgil qala' el-hudûm min (el)-hadîd wehattuhum fil-ard. Es-shêkh qallo: "dilwaqti teshûf." Es-shêkh qal let-ta'bân: "azantak tunfukh fil-hadîd." Lamma et-ta'bân nefakh fil-hadîd, el-hadîd baqa nar hamra. Istanna lamma yîgi berd; misiku 'l-hadîd, laqû torôb. Es-shêkh qallo: "ya meskin, terûh fên bil-hadîd beta'k? shûf, wâhid ta'bân khalaq el-hadîd kullo torôb; izakan kunt enta waya el-hadîd, kunt tibqa torôb; ahsan terawwah betak."

no other (son) he wished to kill the serpent. One made for him a brick of iron, and he went into the desert. Whenever he found a serpent he killed it; so he walked along and met a shêkh. The shêkh said to him: 'Where are you going?' He replied: 'I am walking and killing all the serpents.' He asked: 'Why?' He answered: 'Because it has killed my son.' (The shêkh) said to him: 'Poor fellow!' He said: 'Come with me.' They walked together until they came to a cave. When they reached the cave the shêkh called to the serpent. When the serpent came he said to it: 'Have you drunk of the water of the Nile?' He answered: 'Yes, I have drunk twice.' He said to it: 'Return to your place.' The serpent returned to its place. They left the cave and walked to another cave. The shêkh called to the serpent which was in the cave. The serpent came. The shêkh said to it: 'Have you drunk the water of the Nile?' He replied: 'Yes, I have drunk once.' He said to it: 'Return to your place.' When the serpent had returned to its place they passed on and came to a third cave. When they reached the cave the shêkh called to a serpent; there comes a serpent monstrously big. The shêkh asked the serpent saying: 'Have you drunk the water of the Nile?' The serpent answered: 'Is there a Nile, is there water?' He said to it: 'Yes, there is a Nile, there is water.' He replied: 'I did not know there is a Nile or water.' The shêkh said to the man: 'Strip off the covering of the iron'; he added: 'Put it on the ground, it and the bar.' The man took off the covering of (the) iron and put both on the ground. The shêkh said to him: 'Now you will see.' The shêkh said to the serpent: 'You can blow upon the iron.' When the snake blew upon the iron the iron became a red fire. They waited till it becomes cold; they took the iron (and) found (only) dust. The shêkh said to him: 'Poor fellow, where will you go with your iron? See, a single serpent has made the iron nothing but dust;

if you had been with the iron you (too) would have become dust; you had better go home."

My informant evidently forgot that at the beginning of the story he described "the bar" of iron as a "brick."

XIV.¹

"There was a merchant who had two sons; one of them, the elder, married his cousin (uncle's daughter); the younger of them married a white (Turkish) slave. After a little while their father divided the property, half of it being

¹ Kan fi wāhid rāgil tāgir, mukhallifetnēn weled; wāhid minhum el-keblir mitgawwiz bint 'ammu; el-zerhaiyer minhum mitgawwiz gāra bēda. Ba'de shwoyya min el-lyyām abūhum qassam el-māl, nusso fil-bēt wenuusso fil-lokal. Lamma māt abūhum el-zerhaiyer akhad el-okala wel-keblir akhad el-bēt. El-zerhaiyer 'amal et-tāgir sē abū; el-keblir dār yiskar wehāshshash lamma rahet el-fulūs betā'o. Rigi' 'al-bēt; yebf'o. Lamma akhū el-zerhaiyer shāf el-dallāl yebf'ha el-bēt ishterāh bemiyet mahbūb, ukatab el-bēt 'alashan bint 'ammu. Lamma akhū 'arif el-bēt beism merāto hobb yebf'o. Iliya qalet: "la! ibn 'ammi ishterā 'alashan! shūf enta el-fulūs betā'k; waddētha lēn tiakar wehāshshash lamma dā'eta el-fulūs." Akhū el-zerhaiyer yigt kōl yōm fil-bēt; yis'al izakan 'auzin hāga. Wāhid yōm akhū el-keblir gi min barra 'alēha; "dilwaqti ana ta'bt, ya bint ammi!" Qaletlu; "tayyib! min ta'b tāb Allah 'alēh!" Huwa gi za'lān; mandūsh fulūs, mandūsh hudām, gi'ān, mandūsh hāga. Qal: "ahsan atla, fil-gebel wamūt; wāhid dab' yakulni lagha nimda min ed-dunya"; wehuwa mashi fil-gebel; laqa wāhid sebil; fi wāhida segara. Qa'd taht es-segara, ufi gēbo wāhid rarhif. Talla' er-rarhif min gēbo wa'ād akal. Ba'd ma 'kal ushirib bass be'ayno; laqa arba'fn fidāwi gayyln; talla' fōq es-segara. Lamma dakhalu le-marhāra qa'dum arba'fn. Ba'de shwoyya lamma tili'u min el-marhāra 'addahum arba'fn. Nizil min es-segara urah fil-marhāra; fattah el-marhāra, laqaha melyāna min el-fulūs, min el-fodda, umin el-dahab. 'Alla el-galabiya betā'o urabat ekmām el-galabiya umalaha min ed-dahab; shalha umishi 'ala bēto. Lamma wassel el-bēt khabat el-bāb; lamma khabat el-bāb merāto qalet: "Min?" Huwa qaleha: "Ana! iptahj qawam." Iliya qalet: "Dē di? Khabar ē el-lēla? enta gayib ē wayak?" Bādēn hiya nizilet fatahetlu, utili'u 'ala foq. Nazzal el-galabiya min 'ala raso; qalleha: khodi; ishter! lona lahma uferākḥ wehamām uqamḥ." Qaletlo: "min ēn gibt el-fulūs?" Qaleha: "gibtu min ed-dunya." Sabah fi-subḥ, akhad wāhid muktaf, weakhad rhada, umishi rah taht es-segara; 'ad ithrada ushirib lamma el-fidāwiya gām; lamma

the house and half the shop. When the father died the younger took the shop and the elder took the house. The younger became a merchant like his father; the elder went about drinking and smoking hashish until

khasshshu fil-marhâra 'addahum arba'in ulamma tili'u 'adduhum arba'in. Huwa nizil min es-segara urah fattah el-marhâra, dakhhal guwa, mala 'm-muktaf min ed-dahab ushâlu. Lamma tili' min el-marhâra qafalha zê ma kan, umishi 'al-bêt. Khabat el-bâb; merâto qalet: "Mfn?" qalleha: "Ana!" Qaletlo "Hâder!" Nizilet bil-'agl, fatahetlo. Lamma fatahetlo tili'u 'ala fôq. Nazzal el-muktaf uqa'd. Qallaha: "Nit'asha." Gabetlo lahma, okhdar, wahamâm. B'ad ma it'asha urhasal idên qalleha: "Maffsh hina, wâhid kêla." Qaletlo: "lâ!" Qaletlo: "nerûh bêt akhûk; negib el-kêla min henak." Qalleha: "Tayyib." Lamma rahet bêt akhû khabatet el-bâb; qaletluhum: "ana 'auza el-kêla 'alashan nikayyil shwoyet qamh." Er-râgil qalleha: "Tayyib." Qalleha: "akhuya gi?" Qaletlo: "aiwa." Huwa qal limrâto "iddil'ha el-kêla, weddil'ha shwoyet akl 'alashanhum." Iddêthum wâhida sultanfya melyâna min et-tablîkh u etnên rarhîf 'êsh. Lamma gât tiddil'ha el-kêla dahnet el-kêla bil-'asal 'alashan teshûf yekayyilu ê. Akhadet el-kêla werahet fil-bêt. Lamma kailu el-fulûs, el-fulûs lizqa fil qa'r el-kêla. Lamma waddet el-kêla marat akhû shafet el-kêla, laqet el-fulus lazqa fil-kêla. Qalet legôzha: "shûf, di mûsh rhalla; di fulûs!" Qalleha: "ezê?" Qaletlo: "ana hottet 'asal fil-kêla 'alashan ashûf huma yekayyilu ê; laqet 'ashera gine lezqin fil-kêla: lazim terûh 'and akhûk; teshûf huwa gab el-fulûs min ên; lazim tegib zêo." Sabah fls-subh bedri; rah 'and akhû; qallu: "neharek sayyid!" Qa'd lamma shiribu qahwa sawa; ba'd ma shiribu el-qahwa sa'al qallu: "Ya khûya, enta gibt el-fulûs min ên?" Qallu: "Tayyib; dilwaqtî awarrîlak." Qallu: "Rûh, khad muqtaf uta'ala." Lamma gi khadû ba'dehum wetili'u fil-gebel. Lamma wassalu 'and es-segara qa'adu. Ba'de shwoyya el-fidawfya gûm; lamma shafuhum tili'u fôq es-segara; wehuma dakhelln em-marhâra; 'adduhum arba'in; lamma tili'u 'adduhum arba'in. Ba'dma rahû ba'd nizilu min es-segara, werahû fattahû em-marhâra, u dakhalu guwa u malu kûl wâhid em-muqtaf betâ'o. Lamma malau em-maqatîf shâlû uqafalu em-marhâra zê ma kan, utannu mashîn lamma wassalu 'ala el-bêt. Lamma wassalu el-bêt el-kebîr qal lakhû: "Yakhûya, biziyâda 'alêna; matroghshi tâni noba." Qallu: "tayyib!" Lamma rawwah el-bet 'mrâto qaletlo: "lazim terûh tegib telâta noba zê akhûk." Qalleha: "Tayyib!" Lamma sabah fls-subh sahî bedri ketîr khad em-muqtaf utanna mâshi wâhido lamma gi 'and es-segara; lamma shâf el-fidawfya gayyîn tili' fôq es-segara, wehuma dakhalu em-marhâra, we 'adduhum arba'in; we huma tila'in, we 'adduhum arba'in. Ba'd ma mishu

his money was gone. He returned to the house; he sells it. When his younger brother saw the auctioneer selling the house he bought it for a hundred mahbubs, but the house was inscribed in his cousin's name. When

nizil min es-segara werah fattah em-marhâra; rah kabash, mala em-muqtaf min ed-dahab: memsikshi bimsawwiya zê akhû. Ba'd ma shal em-muqtaf uqafal el-bâb zê ma kan; ba'd ma huwa rah rig'u el-fedawiya, laqu ed-dahab rayyih minhum. Qalu: "Yulâd! fi nâs ya'rifu em-matrah betâ'na; lazim wâhid minna yistanna hina; yeshûf min ya'rif em-matrah betâ'na." Es-shêkh betâ'hum qalluhum: "ana astanna." Qalulu: "Tayyib! enta tistanna wihna nisrah." Lamma tâni sabah fis-subh akhad em-muqtaf bedri utanna mashi 'al-gebel. Lamma wassal lihâd es-segara qa'd. Lamma gûm el-fedawiya ma'adduhumsh ze el-'âda. Ba'd ma tili'u min el-marhâra huwa akhad el-muqtaf uba'dên rah fil-marhâra. Lamma dakhâl el-fidâwi rah miskû. Qallo: "Enta tigi tisraq el-fulûs betâ'na?" uqata'o hettet hetta. Lamma rig'u el-fidâwiya, qalulu: "Malqetshi ellî ya'rif em-matrah betâ'na?" Qalluhum: "Aho fil-muqtaf hettet hetta." Akhû fil-marhrib rah sa'al 'alêh fil-bêt: qalûlu: "magash!" Fil-'asha rah sa'al 'alêh: qalûlu: "magash!" Akhû 'araf el-fidawiya mawwatû. Sabah fis-subh bedri, tanna mashi il' el-gebel. Lamma wassal lihâd es-segara qa'd. Lamma shafhum min bo'd tili' fôq es-segara. Lamma dakhalu em-marhâra 'adduhum arba'in, lamma tili'u 'adduhum arba'in. Lamma rahû ba'id nizil min es-segara urah fattah em-marhâra. Dakhâl guwa, laqa akhû bil-muqtaf: shâlu uqafal em-marhâra zê ma kan, ukhad akhû utannu mashi il' el-bêt. Lamma dakhâl fil-bêt qal limrâto ûmrat akhû: "mahaddish yeza'q." Rah gab wâhib mezayin shater, es-shêkh betâ' em-mezâyênin; iddâlu 'ashera mahbûb, uqallo yekhayyat kul wahida hetta betâ'o. Lamma khayyeto sabahu fis-subh; qalu: "dâ mât." Ba'd ma dafanû huwa qa'd fil-ôkala we'amal et-tâgir bidal akhu, umitgawwiz 'mrat akhû ukhallahum letnên 'âdin waya ba'd.—Yirga' kalâmna fil-fidawiya.

Lamma gûm wedakhalu fil-marhâyir malaqush em-muqtaf wala er-râgil: qalu: "lazim fi nâs 'illî 'arifin em-matrah betâ'na; lazim nenzil fil-bilâd wenisa'al 'alashan na'rif min misik er-râgil." Es-shêkh betâ'hum qalluhum: "ruhû entum min hina weana anzil min hina; lamma nizil fi beled bender dâr webuss min hina umin hina, lamma laqa wâhid mezayyin nadîf." Rah dakhâl fil-dôkkan betâ' 'm-mezayyin; em-mezayyin sa'alu, qallu: "terid tesullah?" qallo: "aiwa." Shal el-'amma min 'ala raso wehalaq raso. Ba'de ma khallas 'auz yesullah-lu daqnu: er-râgil darab em-mezayyin wâhid kaff; em-mezayyin qallo "âlashanê?" qallo: "aiwa, di wâhid yôm wedi wâhid yôm." Qallo: "tayyib." Hat ido fi gêbu widdâlo mît mahbûb. Lamma rig'u kulluhum ila em-marhâra sa'alû; qalûlu: "malqetshi ellî misik

his elder brother knew that the house was in the name of his wife he desired to sell it. She said: 'No, my cousin has bought it for me; look after your own money; you have taken it where you drink and smoke hashish until it all disappears.' His brother, the younger, goes every day to the house: he asks if they want anything.

er-râgil!" Qalluhum: "ba'dên!" Sabeḥu fīs-subḥ tâni yôm; huma sarahu wehuwa akhad mît maḥbûb fī gēbo, wenizil fīl-beled. Lamma raḥ 'and em-mezayyin, em-mezayyin qallo: "aḥlan wesahlan!" ugablu qahwa. Ba'dma shirib el qahwa qallu: "terid tesullah daqnak?" Qallu: "aiwa." Ba'd ma sullah daqnu iddâlu mît maḥbûb, uqallu: "Ê akhi? maḥsh wâhid gab wâhid 'andukum mekassar hettet-hetta?" Qallu: "aiwa! fī wâhid 'andina, tâgir betâ' zêt, gab akhû kida." Qallu: "taiyyib; 'amal ma'rûf we warrîni." Qallu: "taiyyib! emshi wayâya." Fidilum mashîn lamma wassalu 'and el-ôkala. Qallu: "di yistanna fīl-wish." Qallo: "taiyyib." Er-râgil raḥ gab etnên ballâsi melyân' min zêt min el-kuwayyis, uraḥ fīl-ôkala; laqâ qa'id; qallu: "es-salâm 'alêkum!" Qallo: "'alêkum es-salâm!" Qallo: "Ez-zêt, el-kuwayyis, beyiswa kam 'andukum?" Qallu: "yiswa arba'in qersh, wez-zêt et-tâni yiswa telatîn." Qallu: "la, di zet kuwayyis." Lamma shaf ez-zet, inbasset wakhadu; waddâ fī bêtô we'amal rhada weakal, huwa wel-fidâwi. Ba'de makal rikib weriga' il' el-marhâra; qallu rufaḡato in laqa ellî 'arif em-matraḥ . . . lakin 'auz ahottukum fīl-balâlîs." Qalûlu: "taiyyib." . . . ukûl wâhid yakhod es-silâḥ betâ'o wayâh, welamma armis le-kûl wâhid lazim tekunu saḥîn 'alashân temawwatû, wenakhod el-fulûs betâ'na." Qalulu: "taiyyib." Hat kûl wâhid fī wâhid ballas uyeḡammelhum 'al' el-gimâl, utannu mashi il' el-beled. Lamma wassal il' el-ôkala qal: "es-salâm 'alêkum!" Qallu: "'alêkum es-salâm!" Qallu: "enta gibte zêt?" Qallu: "aiwa." Qallu: "taiyyib; yallah, waddi fīl-bêt." Lamma wadduhum fīl-bêt wedakhkhalhum guwa 'amillu 'asha 'azîm. Ba'd ma yit'ashu er-râgil nâm. Lamma dakhhal guwa sāhib el-bêt, mrâtô qaletlo: "ya ibn ammi, lazim neshûf fī Ê fīl-balâlîs; yimkin er-rigâla el-fedawîya ellî kont tekallim 'alêhum, yimkin huma." Qalleha: "taiyyib, ya bint ammi!" Misiku 'asâya-hadîd weyidrobû el-ba'âsi; er-râgil el' fīl-balâsi yekallim: "ana saḥî!" Misiku, yemawwatu. Lamma mawwathum kûluhum qaletlo: "er-râgil ellî barra naim?" Qalleha: "aiwa." Qaletlo: "ruḡ mawwatû rākhar!" Ba'd ma mawwathum kûluhum ḡammelhum 'ala el-gimâl uraḡ ramahum fīl-baḡr. Ba'd ma ramahum akhad el-gimâl werah shal em-mâl min em-marhâra.

(I represent *ghain* by *rh* rather than *gh*, since it approximates in sound more to *rh* than to *gh* in Cairene Arabic.)

One day the elder brother came to his wife from abroad : ' Now I am tired, O my cousin ! ' She replied : ' Well, as to the tiredness, God forgive it ! ' He became vexed ; he had no money, no clothes, was hungry, had nothing. He said : ' I had better go into the desert and die ; a hyena will eat me until I vanish from the world.' So he walks in the desert : he found a fountain where was a tree. He sat down under the tree and in his pocket was a loaf of bread. He took the loaf from his pocket and began to eat. After he had eaten and drunk he looked with his eye ; it came across forty brigands coming along ; he climbed up the tree. When they entered the cave forty sat down. Presently when they had left the cave he counted forty of them. He descended from the tree and went to the cave ; he examined the cave ; he found it full of money, of silver and of gold. He lifted up his *galabiya* (outer garment) and tied the sleeves of the *galabiya* together and filled it with the gold ; he carried it away and went towards his house. When he reached the house he knocked at the door ; when he knocked at the door his wife said : ' Who is it ? ' He replied : ' I ! open at once.' She said : ' What is this ? what is the matter to-night ? what are you bringing with you ? ' Then she came down and opened (the door) for him, and they went upstairs. He took down the *galabiya* from the top of his head ; he said to her : ' Take (this) ; buy for us some meat and chickens and corn.' She said to him : ' Where have you got the money from ? ' He answered : ' I have got it from the world.' He arose in the morning, took a basket and took (food for) lunch and walked to under the tree. He went on eating the lunch and drinking until the brigands came. When they had entered the cave he counted forty of them and when they came out he counted forty of them. He descended from the tree and went to examine the cave ; he went inside, filled the basket with the gold and carried it away. When he left the cave he shut it up as before,

and walked to the house. He knocked at the door; his wife said: 'Who is it?' He replied: 'I!' She answered: 'All right!' She came down hastily (and) opened (the door) for him. When she had opened it for him they went upstairs. He laid down the basket and sat down. He said to her: 'Let us have dinner.' She brought him meat, vegetables and pigeons. When he had dined and washed the hands he said to her: 'There is not even a small measure here' (the *kēla* holds only the twelfth part of an ardeb). She replied: 'No!' She said to him: 'I will go to your brother's house; we will get the measure from there.' He answered: 'Very good.' When she went to his brother's house she knocked at the door; she said to them: 'I want the measure because we are measuring a little wheat.' The man replied: 'All right.' He said to her: 'Is my brother come?' She answered: 'Yes.' He said to his wife: 'Give her the measure and give her a little food for their sakes.' She gave them a bason full of cooked food and two loaves of bread. When she had gone and given her the measure she smeared the measure with honey in order to discover what they are measuring. (The other woman) took the measure and went home. When they measured the money, the money stuck to the bottom of the measure. When she brought back the measure his brother's wife looked at the measure; she found the money sticking to the measure. She said to her husband: 'See, this is not corn; it's money!' He replied: 'How so?' She answered: 'I put honey in the measure in order to see what they are measuring; I have found ten pounds sticking to the measure. You must go to your brother and see where he has got the money from; you must get some like him.' He rose in the morning early; he went to his brother. He said to him: 'Good morning!' He sat down while they drank coffee together; when they had drunk the coffee he asked, saying: 'My brother, where have you got the money from?' He replied:

'Well, now I will show you.' He (further) said to him : 'Go, take a basket, and come.' When he was come they took it together and went into the desert. When they were arrived at the tree they sat down. After a little the brigands came ; when they saw them they climbed up the tree, and the brigands entered the cave. They counted forty of them ; when they came out they counted forty of them. After they (the brigands) had departed some distance they descended from the tree and proceeded to examine the cave, and entered within it and each of them filled his basket. When they had filled the baskets they carried it away and closed the cave as before and continued walking until they arrived home. When they reached the house the elder said to his brother : 'My brother, there is more than enough for us ; don't go again.' He replied : 'Very good.' When he went home his wife said to him : 'You must go and get (the money) three times like your brother.' He replied : 'Very well.' When he rose in the morning, waking very early, he took the basket and continued walking alone until he came to the tree ; when he saw the brigands coming he climbed up the tree, and they entered the cave and he counted forty of them, and on coming out he counted forty of them. After they were departed he descended from the tree and went to examine the cave ; he went grasping (the money) ; he filled the basket with the gold ; he did not take (it) in moderation like his brother. After he had carried away the basket and closed the door (of the cave) as before, after he was gone, the brigands returned ; they found the gold gone from them. They said : 'Boys, there are people who know our place ; one of us must remain here and see who it is that knows our place.' Their shêkh said to them : 'I will remain.' They answered : 'Good ! you shall remain and we will go after our business.' When (the younger brother) rose again in the morning he took the basket early and proceeded to walk to the desert. When he got as far as the tree he sat

down. When the brigands came he did not count them as usual. After they had left the cave he took the basket and then went into the cave. When he entered the brigand ran and caught him. He said to him: 'Do you come to steal our money?' and he cut him into pieces. When the brigands were returned they said to him: 'Have you caught the fellow who knows our place.' He replied: 'Here are the pieces in the basket!' His brother in the evening went and asked after him at the house; they replied: 'He is not come back!' At supper-time he went to ask after him (again); they replied: 'He is not come back!' His brother then knew that the brigands had killed him. He rose in the morning early, and proceeded to walk to the desert. When he got as far as the tree he sat down. When he saw them from afar he climbed up the tree. When they had entered the cave he counted forty of them, when they came out he counted forty of them. When they had gone to a distance he came down from the tree and went to examine the cave. He entered inside it; he found his brother with the basket. He carried it away and closed the cave as before, and took his brother and proceeded to walk to the house. When he entered the house he said to his wife and the wife of his brother: 'Let no one utter cries of grief.' He went and got a clever barber, the shêkh of the barbers; he gave him ten mahbubs and told him to sew together each of the pieces of the body. When he had sewed it they rose in the morning and said: 'This fellow is dead.' After they had buried him he (the elder brother) sat in the shop and acted as merchant in the place of his brother, and married his brother's wife and the two lived in the usual way with one another. Our story returns to the brigands.

"When they had come and entered the cave they found neither the basket nor the man; they said: 'There must be people who are acquainted with our place; we must

go into the villages and put questions in order to know who has taken the man.' Their shêkh replied: 'Do you go this way and I will go down another way; when we go down into a town go round and look about here and there until one has found a clean barber.' (One of the brigands) went and entered the barber's shop; the barber asked him, saying: 'Do you want a shave?' He replied: 'Yes.' (The barber) took the turban from his head and shaved his head. After he had finished he wanted to shave his beard; the man struck the barber a blow; the barber said: 'Why?' He answered: 'Yes, this for one day and the other (the beard) for another day.' He replied: 'Very well.' (The brigand, put his hand into his pocket and gave him a hundred mahbubs. When they had all returned to the cave they asked him, saying: 'Have you found the fellow who took the man?' He replied: 'Wait awhile!' They rose in the morning next day; they went off on their business and he took a hundred mahbubs in his pocket and went down into the village. When he came to the barber's the barber said to him: 'How do you do?' and brought him coffee. After he had drunk the coffee he said to him: 'Do you wish your beard to be shaved?' He replied: 'Yes.' After he had shaved his beard (the brigand) gave him a hundred mahbubs and said to him: 'What, my brother? Has no one brought to you one who has been cut to pieces?' He replied: 'Yes, there is one here, an oil-merchant, who brought his brother in that condition.' He said to him: 'Good! please show him to me.' He replied: 'Good! come with me.' They continued walking until they arrived at the shop. He said to him: 'The fellow is standing in front of you.' He replied: 'Good!' The man went and got two jars full of the finest oil and went into the shop; he found the owner sitting; he said to him: 'Peace be to you!' He replied: 'To you be peace!' He said to him: 'The best oil, how much is it with you?' He replied: 'The price

is forty piastres, but the other oil is worth only thirty.' He said to him : ' No, this oil is first-class ! ' When he saw the oil, he was pleased and took it ; he carried it into his house and prepared lunch and ate, he and the brigand. After he had eaten (the brigand) rode back to the cave ; his companions asked him if he had found the fellow who knows (their) place. [He replied : ' Yes.' The shêkh said to them : ' We must go down into the village and have our revenge on the thief], but I want to put you into the jars.' They said to him : ' Good.' [So he put them into the jars and ordered that] ' each should take his weapon with him, and when I give the signal ¹ to each you must be awake in order to kill the man, and we will recover our money.' They said to him : ' All right ! ' He put each of them into a jar and loaded them on the camels, and proceeded to go to the village. When he reached the shop he said : ' Peace be to you ! ' (The shopman) replied : ' To you be peace ! ' He added : ' Have you brought some oil ? ' He said to him : ' Yes.' He replied : ' Good ! go and carry it into the house.' When he had carried them into the house and had introduced them into it, he made for him a sumptuous dinner. After they had dined the brigand slept. When the owner of the house came in to the women's apartment his wife said to him : ' My cousin, we must see what is in the jars : perhaps the brigands about whom you were talking, perhaps it is they.' He said to her : ' All right, my cousin ! ' They took an iron rod and struck the jar ; the man who was in the jar cries out : ' I am awake ! ' They seized him, they killed him. When all of them were killed the woman said to him : ' Is the man who is outside asleep ? ' He answered : ' Yes.' She said to him : ' Go and kill him also ! ' After he had killed them all he loaded

¹ This must be the general sense of the verb, a derivative from which is *ramâs*, a word used by the Nile sailors to denote a raft on which pottery used to be floated and rowed down the Nile from the village of Ballas. It has no connection with the verb *ramash*, " to wink."

them on the camels and went and threw them into the Nile. After he had thrown them he took the camels and went and carried away the treasure from the cave."

It will be observed that the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves has been tacked on to the story of the two brothers. Or does the version recounted to me represent an earlier form of that in the *Arabian Nights*? Unfortunately the narrator forgot the crucial point of the story, where the brigand chief would have first promised to bring some more "first-class" oil to the merchant and then have told his companions to provide forty *ballasis* or jars—so called from their being made at Ballas—inside which they were to be concealed.

CUSTOMS AND BELIEFS.

The Cairenes say :

" Shâmi shûmi ;	" A Syrian is unlucky ;
Masri ħarâmi ;	an Egyptian a thief ;
Kilâb er-Rûmi ;	dogs are the Greeks ;
Iskanderi kilâb el- ħawâmi."	Alexandrians are dogs of the rover."

Children say on a festival :

" Yôm el-waqfa	" Eve of the festival
Nitbakh shaqfa ;	we will cook a potsherd ;
Yôm el-'îd	the day of the feast
Min bakht sa'îd."	is happy in luck."

Said of the shîĥ or "wormwood" (*Artemisia maritima*) which is used for putting into clothes and rugs in order to keep insects away :

" Esh-shîĥ	" Wormwood
fil-bêt malîĥ."	is salt in the house."

The shîĥ is believed in Upper Egypt to keep serpents out of a house.

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When the new moon is first seen they say :

" <u>H</u> ill hilâlak,	" Loosen thy crescent,
Shahṛ mubârak !	blessed month !
Khêrak 'alêna !	Thy blessing be on us,
Shararak taḥt riglêna !	" thine evil under our feet ! "

Children call mushrooms " crows' bread."

The marching order of troops was imitated from that of the wild geese of 'Iraq (Babylonia) who also always appoint a sentinel to keep watch at night.

" When Adam was created he did not know what the time was and therefore when he ought to say his prayers. Accordingly he asked God to let him know the time. So God made the cock in order that it might crow " (*yiddan* ; from the same verb come *mueddin*, " the summoner to prayer," and *mâdna*, " minaret," from whence the call to prayer is made).

" When Adam was on the mountain God showed him bread in the plain below. Instead of waiting till the bread should come to him Adam ran after it ; hence it has been necessary ever since to run after bread, grinding the corn and kneading the flour until it is made."

" Joseph saw himself in a glass looking young and beautiful, and said : ' If I were a Mamlûk my price would be so high that no one could buy me.' Hence it was that God allowed him to be sold as a slave."

On the eve of the Lesser Feast (Bairam) after Ramadan and on that of the Greater Feast meat is bought for " the supper of the dead " (" 'asha el-mayyitîn "), though eaten by the purchasers, and on the eve of the Greater Feast bread and dates also are taken to the tombs and left there, after which the offerers return home and kill a sheep, the rich giving food to the poor. I gather that though this custom has been observed until recently in the villages round about Cairo it was unknown in Cairo itself.

On Shemm en-Nesîm, the great national festival of Egypt which has come down from Pharaonic days, the boys club

together and take a felucca in which they pass the day on the river. Each brings some flowers as a symbol of spring, which they tie in a bunch to the bow of the boat.

The Saturday before Shemm en-Nesîm is called Sebet en-Nûr ("Saturday of Light") when eggs painted various colours are eaten. The boys say: "If you don't eat an egg, your eye will swell." The eve of Shemm en-Nesîm corresponds to the Christian Easter Eve.

The Copts believe that ostrich eggs are hung up in their churches to remind them that as the eggs are hung on high, so should their souls be lifted up towards God. Originally, they say, they were hung up as symbols of the resurrection.

"The Mohammedans were called to Egypt by the Copts who were oppressed by the Greeks. When the Greeks eat, the Copts had to sit supporting the food-tray on the top of their heads, and the Greeks after the meal wiped their fingers on the beards of the Copts. Hence the towel which the Coptic priests still wear over their right shoulders, and which they used in order to prevent their beards from being defiled."

In Cairo they say :

"Qibti Asyûti, Muslim Nemrussi, Yahûdi Morhébi,—el-merkeb tirhraq," "A Copt of Asyut, a Mohammedan from Nemrûs, a Jew from Western Africa—and the vessel will sink." Nemrûs is the crockery quarter of the Cairo bazaars whose inhabitants are considered particularly sly and untrustworthy.

In Alexandria the paviors are Sicilians mixed with a few natives who have intermarried with them and adopted the Sicilian language and European clothes. They live as a separate community in the Place de la Baie, without religion and *having their wives in common*. Hence the children have no special parents. When Alexandria was bombarded in 1882 they defended themselves successfully from the mob.

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In Upper Egypt the women believe that yeast is spoiled if the sun "sees" it or a cat smells it.

In Upper Egypt the full moon is called "el-gâr el-hanni," "the kindly neighbour."

In Upper Egypt it is believed that if salt is exposed to the air a lizard will walk over it and spoil it.

The natives of the First Cataract eat all kinds of fish except the *qarmût*, which they will not touch. The *qarmût* is one of the Siluridae with dorsal and posterior fins and resembles a "cat-fish."

In Upper Egypt if a child dies before it is three or four years of age it is said that "its *garîna* has taken it." In the Sahidic dialects of Upper Egypt *garîna*, which is the Arabic *qarîna*, "a female colleague," has the sense of "a double," or more literally, "likeness"; hence the belief must be a survival of the old Egyptian belief in the *ka* or "double." Compare what I have said on this subject in *Folk-Lore*, xvii. 2 (June, 1906), p. 200. At Cairo in the time of the Arabi troubles, when the statues of Ibrahim Pasha and of the four lions at the two ends of the Bridge were taken down and sent to the Bulaq Museum, a hole was first made in the breast of each of them in order to "let out the spirit," that is, the *ka* of ancient Egypt.

In Upper Egypt to each person, and more especially to twins, his or her "garîna" is attached. To protect oneself from the *garîna*, who might otherwise carry one off from this world, charms, wrapped up in leather, are employed, which must be written by boys under twelve years of age.

In Nubia, and until recently also in Upper Egypt, after a marriage the bride and bridegroom go to the Nile, fill their mouths with water and squirt it in one another's faces. The one who is hit first will be the most fortunate in life. The idea goes back to the days when the Nile was a divinity.

In Upper Egypt phalli are still hung up to protect the melons and sugar-cane.

Throughout the country, and more especially in the neighbourhood of Cairo, at the time of harvest, the last sheaf, called *el-'arûsa*, "the bride," is carried to the village separately in a sort of procession with shouts of joy. Its name carries us back to Pharaonic times and "the bride of the Nile." A precisely similar custom is still observed at Charlton in Oxfordshire, where the image of "Our Lady" is dressed up in flowers and after being paraded through the village placed on the rood-screen of the church.

In remote villages in Egypt the fellahin on New Year's day still go in procession with Abu Nerûs or "Father Christmas," who wears a long beard and rides a donkey, demanding imaginary taxes and debts at the houses on the way.

Near Asyut is a monastery with land dedicated to S. George. A man once stole the carrots growing in it, but after eating he found that his stomach was distended and that the carrots lay in it in a heap. Nothing alleviated his pains till he asked pardon of S. George. The Saint told him that if the lessee of the land forgave him he would do the same; the lessee consented and the man was cured.

In Southern Egypt the shifts of the workers at the shadûf are timed by a sun-dial made of a stick or reed with three notches, upon which the shadow of the sun falls when it is fixed to the shadûf. In Central Egypt a jar filled with water is used; when all the water has dripped out of the jar through a small hole the man's shift is ended. Further north, in the neighbourhood of Cairo, the land is (or was) divided into small basins; when one of these was filled with water the man's shift was terminated.

Among the Copts of the Delta, if a child were ill, the mother, however rich, would put on a beggar's dress and go out begging, the money so received being devoted to the cure of the child. The same custom is described by Ohnefalsch-Richter (*Griechische Sitten und Gebräuche auf Cypern*, p. 326) as in use in Cyprus: if a child cannot

walk the mother puts him into a basket and begs for food which is supposed to strengthen him.

The hyaena is fond of water-melons ; but he first taps them with his paws to see whether they are ripe or not.

If the children take after the mother, the father loves the mother ; if they take after the father, it is the mother who loves the father.

In 1906 when my dahabia was leaving the village of Gharb Assuan, north of Assuan, with a Nubian captain and crew, the captain's mother threw water with her hands several times over the side of the boat, saying each time : " Mâ Salâma kullokum ! " (" Good luck, all of you ! ").

My Cairene servant, Mustafa Ali, told me that his father was once returning home after dark from his daughter's house on the north side of Helwân to his own house on the south side of the village, when he found the lane blocked by a man who straddled across it from wall to wall. He drew out his knife and threatened to cut the man's foot off if it were not withdrawn. Thereupon it was withdrawn, but only for two foot-breadths ; so he knew that the man was an *afrî* (spirit). But being an upright man he squeezed through between the foot and the wall without fear and therefore without injury.

One of my sailors (Mohammed Raḍab from Gharb Assuan) lost the sight of his right eye about five years before he told me the story (in 1905) in the following way. He saw a large serpent and struck it with his mattock, cutting it in two. As he did so, the snake blew poison into his eye ; for the next two or three days it wept continuously and then became blind.

Mr. G. D. Hornblower has informed me that he found an acacia in a village near the Pyramids full of iron nails, and was told that they were driven into it in order to propitiate the *sukkân es-sont*, " the inhabitants of the acacia." Also that an *okht* or " daughter " accompanies every person

from birth to death and survives after death. Here we have the North Egyptian equivalent of the South Egyptian *garina*, the *ka* of ancient Egypt.

Mr. Hornblower also informed me that he was told by a native that 'Ali possessed a sword called Zul-fiqar ("Of the neck-bone") which, when he was dying, he ordered one of his captains to throw into the sea. Thrice did the man return, saying he had done so, but when 'Ali asked him what had followed he had nothing to relate. Then 'Ali upbraiding him bade him fling it before it was too late. On this occasion he did so, and as it fell into the sea a voice cried: "All is well." How did the story of Excalibar migrate to an Egyptian village? I should surmise that it has been introduced by some English tourist who travelled in the country after the publication of Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*.

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