

ABOU'L ALA MAHARI

SOURAH THE FIRST

And the caravan of Abou'l Ala murmuring softly like a water spring
 Was quietly walking in the slumb'ring fields and its tinkling bells did sweetly ring;
 With an equal pace measuring its way, Mahari's Car'van rocked side to side,
 And the tinkling voice did sweetly flow and did inundate the fields calm and wide.
 Baghdad was sleeping with the bright dreams of the paradise in lax daintiness,
 And in gulistans bulbul was singing his tearful gazels with the love sweetness;
 The shower-springs were gurgling their songs with happy laughter and diamond sight,
 And scent and kisses were incensed round from the Khalifas' palaces of light.
 And the car'van too of jewel-stars, on their heav'nly path were going their round,
 The entire heaven like a pianoforte of splendid stars sang with a sweet sound.
 With carnations' scent the breeze did murmur the narrative of "Thousand and one nights",
 Palm trees and cypress, in their slumber sweet were rocking themselves under the star-lights.

And the caravan, rocking side to side, was going forward, with no look behind,
 The unknown road called Abou'l Ala with a thousand charms caressing his mind.
 — "You always walk on, my dear caravan, you walk on until the end of my time";
 In depth of his heart was speaking thus Abou-Mahari, the poet sublime.
 "You go to lone sites, to sacred, virgin, emerald-green sites, far and far away,
 Soar towards the sun and let my heart burn in the sun's bosom, and there let it stay.
 Ah, goodbye to you I do not bid now my mother's cradle and my father's tomb;
 My soul forever is cross with you my childhood memories and ancestral home,
 Too much did I love my own companions and all men who were far away or near,
 With venomous hate my heart does boil now, for like a snake bit me who was so dear;
 I am hating now what I loved before, whatever I've seen in the human soul,
 Filth and vanity, abomination I have seen only in hearts of men all,
 But above all do I hate the falsehood, thousand and first sin that human soul taints
 The falsehood that does adorn men's face with a halo and make them look as saints.
 O, thou human tongue, that with celestial scent and bright colours and with silk-cover
 Dost hide th'Inferno of the human soul, O, hast thou uttered a true word ever?

My proud caravan, go on you and plunge in the desert wild, lone and fiery,
 And lodge there beneath the copperish rocks and near the wild beasts, thither do hurry
 To pick up your tent; there near the serpents' and scorpions' nests let me pick my tent,
 Ten thousand times I do feel safer there than with my own kind with their smiles feint.
 Than near a friend, ah, on whose bosom I was resting my head with love; than beside

A friend that covers with gauze the Abyss of perdition lies its nature to hide.
 So long as the sun continues to burn the sandy beds of deserts of Sinai,
 And the yellow piles of that desert sand do whirl like the waves of the sea and sigh.—
 I do not desire to salute a man, and neither do I wish to share his food,
 I will take my food with the beasts of prey, salute hyena and take its salute.
 And let the wild beasts to pieces tear me and let the tempests over me to crack,
 You my caravan, until my days' end, you go on and on and do not turn back —"
 And for the last time Abou Mahari turned to look back — Baghdad was slumb'ring,
 With disgust he turned his wrinkled forehead and to camel's neck with his arms did cling,
 Caressed it with love, with ardent kisses Mahari kiss'd the camels both eyes clear,
 And from his lashes hang down uncontroll'd two burning drops of crystalline tear.
 Murmuring softly in the slumbered plains, the caravan, as if beating the time,
 Was going forward into the desert, to a virgin land, an uncertain clime.

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