

THE
SONGS OF SIDI HAMMO



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THE SONGS OF SIDI HAMMO

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THE SONGS OF SIDI HAMMO

RENDERED
INTO ENGLISH FOR THE FIRST TIME BY

R. L. N. JOHNSTON

EDITED WITH A PREFACE BY

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THE VERSE RENDERINGS BY

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LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET

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NOTE

THE COVER-DESIGN

OF all the talismans by which Moorish women ward off the perils of the Evil Eye, none is so cherished as the quaint ornament, in silver, which nearly every sister of Fadma wears upon her breast. As its name, *Khoumsa*, implies, its most salient virtue lies in its Five points; that number, in whatever form presented, being the most potent of protective agencies. But, as that great authority, Dr. Edvard Westermarck, has recently pointed out, there is something else. The five knobs, whether jewelled or in silver, are set in the form of a cross; and this symbol has had, from remote antiquity, a special virtue as well as varied occult suggestions. In Moorish folk-beliefs it means the dispersion, to the four corners of the earth, of any malign influence which has been directed against the heart, the centre of life, of the wearer.

THE FRONTISPIECE

This is a black and white reproduction of an illuminated MS. in Arabic writing, made by Mr. Johnston for the Bodleian Library.

PREFACE

WHILE few European scholars know even the name of the old singer who called himself "the lowly master of song," Sidi Hammo has stood to countless thousands of men and women for the greatest of all poets.

He is the acknowledged laureate of the Berbers, the people who trace their descent from the warriors cast out of Palestine by Joshua, the son of Nun. Whether moving along the northern coast of Africa, or driven to the highlands of Barbary by the Arab invasion, the Berbers retained their manners and customs almost intact, and while the influence of Europe has made itself felt throughout the rest of Africa, Berberland remains to-day as it was before Musa's Arabs entered Morocco. The Berbers are unconquered and uncontaminated by western civilization. They have no written

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language. They speak what is commonly called Shilhah, but is better known as Tamazight, literally the "Tongue of the Free," and, happily, every sound in that language can be expressed by Arabic consonants and vowel points.

In days seen faintly through the mists of time that gather so quickly where a country has no written history, one Ali ben Nasr founded a Society of wandering singers, and of these Sidi Hammo is the most famous. His songs have been studied by the people and committed to memory.

They have passed from generation to generation preserving their native purity, and to-day while the singer is little more than the shadow of a name, his songs comprise almost the entire literary wealth of Berberland.

What tradition has to say of Sidi Hammo may be summed up in a few sentences. Some hold he was a man of very dark complexion, that is to say of negro blood on one side, and that he lived in the days of Sidi-Abderrahman-el-'Mjdoub. If this be true he must have flourished in the beginning of the fifteenth

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century or the ninth century of the Hegira. On the other hand Mr. Johnston, the translator, and no mean authority, believes that Sidi Hammo's birth year is of much later date, and that he was born less than one hundred and fifty years ago. Certainly there are many modern notes in his music, but, on the other hand, who shall say they have not been interpolated by later generations? He is famous among the Berbers as a writer of *andama*, i.e. short verses dealing with the rules of life and the traditions of land or people. About thirty-nine poems of this kind are attributed to him. Nearly all begin with the words "God be merciful to you, Sidi Hammo, he the poor one said!"—but these words may have been added after the poet's death.

His poems contain interesting comments upon various towns of Morocco and Tunis, especially the latter, which he praises highly. Strange to say the tradition of the present day Schlus is that Sidi Hammo never left the empire of Morocco, and therefore can never have seen Tunis, so that his utterances are only a repetition

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of other people's impressions. In one of the last of his songs, Sidi Hammo confesses to being a faithful Mussulman. Nearly all the poetry of the Schluh is not in rhyme, but as the learned Dr. Stumme has pointed out is written in Iambic pentameter or Iambic hexameter.

Probably a native of Aouluz on the southern slope of the Atlas Mountains, Sidi Hammo led the strolling life that is so popular even to-day among the beggar minstrels of Morocco and Spain. Many verses suggest that he must have lived after the introduction of tea into North Africa, and this fact seemed to justify the translator's belief, and to upset many existing theories about the date of his birth, although the suggestion of interpolations is always reasonable where songs have been committed to memory for preservation. In all probability he died in the Iskrouzen district among his well-beloved mountains. His shrine (*Zowia*) stands there to-day, and is a well-known place of pilgrimage.

Mr. R. L. N. Johnston, whose literary labours deserve even a larger measure of appreciation

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than has fallen to them, is one of the few Englishmen to whom Arabic and Shilhah present no difficulties. More than twenty years ago he collaborated in the production of the rare "Moorish Lotus Leaves" which one would willingly see reprinted. Recently he has published the lively little volume, entitled "At the Sign of the Palm Tree" and "Morocco, the Land of the Setting Sun." He has lived for many years in the south of Morocco, and has studied the Berber poetry thoroughly. "El Mani" or "The Similes" now presented to the English-speaking world for the first time, were taken from the mouths of the peasants in the Haha and M'tooga provinces, and the Atlas villages, where the memory of "the lowly master of song" is kept ever green. Every verse published here has been verified by at least half a dozen Berber scribes, and no proverb of questionable antecedents has been included. The work has occupied the author rather more than three years, and is original inasmuch as no other man has thought to make a collected edition of the

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poet's work. The original manuscript, prepared and illuminated by Mr. Johnston, has been purchased by the Bodleian.

Save, indeed, for an occasional outburst of conventional piety, there is little of the ascetic about Sidi Hammo. On the other hand, among hundreds of verses, ethical, practical, and amatory which Mr. Johnston has examined, not one has been found containing a phrase which even suggests the licentiousness common to Arab poetry.

To his fervent admirers of to-day, the main charm of his poetry is the wrapping up of an idea in simile. To discover the hidden meaning is to be at once intelligent and sympathetic. With the Berbers the "Master of the Song" is also "Master of Meanings." To give but one instance here—"If you *must* swim, plunge into the green waves rather than the muddy pool." This is a warning to persons about to marry.

In translating these fragments of Sidi Hammo, Mr. Johnston has endeavoured to be literal

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wherever such treatment would not spoil the sense. To an English reader, to refer to the "liver" as the seat of affections would convey no meaning, though both in Arabic and Tamazight the word is used as we use "heart." Hence the latter has been given in rendering *tasa*, literally, liver. But where Sidi Hammo, with an excess of delicacy peculiar to his Berber folk, alludes to his mistress in the masculine gender, Mr. Johnston has allowed the pronouns "he" and "him" to stand, to mark the idiosyncrasy.

Despite his many jeers at the fair sex, it will be noticed that all Sidi Hammo's allusions to Fadma are couched in terms of admiration and devotion. If tradition be accepted, this was the maiden whom he championed in a singing competition with a brutal Drawi negro. This minstrel having slandered the girl, young Sidi Hammo made pilgrimage to the shrine of Moulai Ibrahim in the Atlas Mountains. Having obtained saintly inspiration there, he returned to Aouluz, and most effectually silenced the slanderer in a contest of "mean-

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ings" in presence of the whole tribe. One severe hit at the Drawi has come down to us:—

“Great and Only God! By what law shall the raven devour sweetmeats?”

For Fadma, indeed, nothing is too good. Fadma, tripping like a pigeon down to the spring, there to preen her plumes. Fadma, about whose way earth and sky grow bright. Fadma, a queen uncrowned, for none has seen her face, or heard the “laugh of the little mouth.” Fadma, his first love and, perchance, his last.

To quote Mr. Johnston, “The flowery phrases of the East are as foreign to Berber nature as they are to the curt simplicity of the Shilhah language. Sidi Hammo suggests, rather than describes. A single line photographs the salient points of a picture of which every Shilh can fill in the details. His similes are drawn from Nature in her most sublime moods, and from the familiar every-day life of the folk among whom he worked and wandered. Nothing that belongs to his people and their surroundings

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is strange to him. He has endured the stifling drought of the long, long summer, which turns the "happy realm" of Sunset Land into a desert; he has revelled in the brief but glorious spring, the "Day of Herbage" wherein he tastes, in anticipation, the joys of the celestial garden. He has enjoyed the rosy splendours of sunrise spreading over snow-clad Atlas, and the humming of the bees is music in his ear. The smell of the earth after winter deluge, the perfumed shade of the almond groves, the notes of cuckoo, and blackbird, and nightingale, the flashing beauty of the bee-eater, the magic hues of the rainbow—the "bride of the rain"—the lowing of the kine, and the uncanny yelp of the jackal are all as familiar to him as they are to every peasant farmer in Berberland."

To understand the veneration in which the great poet of the Atlas is held, we must pause to remember that the golden age of poets has passed from the modern western world. Time was when the place of the poet in the court of civilized rulers was second to no man's. The

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poet had as much honour as the successful warrior. In days when Europe was scarcely civilized the singer was respected. Do we not preserve the Lark Song of Bernart de Ventadorn, and the nightingale song of the lover of the Lady of Fayel? Where have we, in our own language, aught more beautiful than John of Fornsete's "Sumer is icumen in"? The Meistersinger of Germany, the Trouvères of Provence, the Magyars of old time, from whose ranks Elek Elek stands out so boldly—one and all testify to the power of song among a simple people. If we would turn from west to east, and it seems reasonable to do so in this place, the great Chinese Empire supplies many instances of the esteem in which poets and poetry were held. One must suffice me here.

In the time of the Emperor Ming-huang, who lived about 700 A.D., and founded the *Peking Gazette* and the famous Han Lin College, Li Tae Po became known to connoisseurs for his exquisite verses. One of the Ministers of State, Ho-tchi-tchang, spoke of his works to the

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Emperor, admitting at the time that the poet suffered from the vice of excessive drinking. The Emperor read some of the verses and was so deeply moved by them that he summoned the poet to Court, gave him a post among his literary men, and apartments in the garden palace of Theng-hiang-ting. Not content with these high marks of favour the Emperor is said to have acted on occasion as the poet's amanuensis. Some of the women of the Royal Household remonstrated with their royal master, to whom he replied that when the acts of Ming-huang were forgotten, the verses he had copied for Li Tae Po would be as fresh as the dew of morning.

“Though he speaks of himself as ‘clerk to the hamlet,’” says Mr. Johnston, “it is highly improbable that Sidi Hammo ever read a book, save some necessary portions of the Koran. Among the highlanders of the great range a little learning goes a long way, and the man who can decipher the chapter of the day easily passes for a sage. Thanks to this lack of book-learning, Sidi Hammo's plagiarism, if it exist, is of the unconscious

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kind; and, despite the introduction of Arabic words to describe ideas and things adopted by the Berbers as the result of the Saracenic immigration, the original text of his songs and parables, now for the first time set down in writing, furnishes the student of comparative philology with a fairly trustworthy guide to the purest form of the Shilhah tongue. Divested of the Arabic phrases necessarily used in speaking of the imported religious tenets of Islam, as of the luxuries introduced by the Arabs, the native dialect of the Atlas Mountains, and their spurs, is broad enough and forcible enough for the wants of the simple, albeit highly imaginative, folk to whose forefathers Sidi Hammo sang. To the Arabs, indeed, it is indebted for both a heaven and a hell, as well as for the vocabulary of blessing and cursing, for guns and gunpowder, and other modern means of destroying life. But in speaking of all the nature amid which he lives the Atlas highlander need borrow nothing from a foreign tongue. He can appeal to the shrine of the

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stars, and can hear the voices of the Unknown in the winds which roll down from the snow-capped height of Adraer Nderen, or the whispering breeze which sways the palm leaves and rustles among the oleanders. Long ages before Islam offered its explanation of djinns and afrits for the mysteries that lie beyond the limits of our intelligence, the caves of Imin Takkandoot were sought by pilgrims from every clan of Berberland, eager to propitiate the "Unseen ones who see us," the shadowy denizens of the great under-world of which these sombre caverns are the portal. To-day, as in the forgotten pagan days of yore, the procession of pilgrims comes and goes as regularly as the seasons. The petition to the unnamed spirit forces may be granted, or it may fail, for they themselves are subject to the iron rule of an unrevealed Destiny. Yet for ever will it be,

"As one looks to the bough, though of fruit it be bare,
So we scan the Unknown for what hope may be there."

As I have pointed out already the authorities are not in agreement about the date of Sidi

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Hammo's life, but life in the country of the Atlas Mountains has changed so little from the time of the earliest date suggested (by Dr. Stumme), down to the present day, that we can recreate from the evidence of the pages before us the life that the singer led. Morocco is a country of poor men, but the *rais* who sings the songs of other men, and the *Nadhim* who sings his own, are ever sure of a welcome at every season of the year. In Berberland he will find the national dish of barley meal called *ibrin* piled high in his honour just as the couscousoo awaited him in the more northern country. He passes from village to village carrying the news which is silver, and song which is gold. His wants are few, and all the world is before him. So I have seen the wandering guitarreros of Andalusia carrying their song from one hamlet to another and finding a welcome everywhere. Sidi Hammo is a poet of Nature, and to the wild highlanders of the Atlas his song must have had a charm of which even Mr. Johnston's translation can give us no more than a faint and far-off

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echo. Which of us knows the secret of the country where mountain and river are haunted by *djinnoon*? How can we hope to understand life in which fatalism is the dominant force? "Luck, and luck alone, will grant the heart's desire," sings Sidi Hammo, on behalf of a world that has no doubt about the matter.

The scenes amid which Sidi Hammo passed a life that seems to have been blameless and serene are easy to recall, particularly easy to those of us who have lived in Morocco and responded to its fascination. Even to-day, in the heart of the country, you may see the scribe and singer, the gifted one who can write the name of Allah, followed by an admiring group of villagers and husbandmen, as he moves in leisurely fashion by the side of some wealthy farmer or governor to the shady grove or garden beyond the village wall. A carpet is spread upon the ground under an ample fig or almond tree, the headman and his honoured guest seat themselves, and, when the lesser lights of the village have gathered round within earshot, one negro

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slave arranges the little brazier and the copper kettle, while another brings the brass tray with its shining glasses. Tea is the proper prelude to the songs. Somewhere to the right or left one sees the mighty Atlas with its crown of perennial snow dominating the scene, but here the beauty is of a softer kind. The orchard is a place of poplars and almond trees, of pomegranates whose scarlet flowers burn 'mid the deep green leaves. Nightingales are singing, perchance the cuckoo is calling, the scent of the wild thyme is everywhere. Far off among the lower hills the shepherd boys, playing upon their awada reeds, imitate the bird songs they love so well. Tea ended the singer starts his songs, such songs as Mr. Johnston has collected here, and there is a profound appreciative silence among the listeners. Evening falls, and the eternal pageant of sunset is renewed on the mountain side, but the singer holds his own until from out of the gathering dusk the Mueddin calls to Prayer.

S. L. BENSUSAN.

Inner Temple,
Nov. 1906.

SIDI HAMMO

SECTION I

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

WHILE all Berber students of Sidi Hammo regard the whole of his work as a veiled tribute to Womanhood, it is in his verses addressed directly to Fadma that the great secret is more nearly revealed. Although there is every reason to believe that Fadma really lived, and was the object of the poet's passionate devotion, it appears no less certain that in her he materializes the ancient Berber belief in a female creator, a veritable Earth Queen—for the notion of a heaven beyond the visible sky would seem to have formed no part of that philosophy. In the tongue of the Berber, the sun—the most potent generative force in existence—is feminine. Ayor, the moon, is her son, and mankind are, in a

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sense, truly, the children, but far more emphatically the thralls of the universal mother, the supreme mistress of joy and suffering, the all-pervading dispenser of pleasure and of pain.

This survival of an ancient cult finds expression in various forms, notably in the respect, often amounting to absolute dread, in which woman is held. It is unnecessary to remind readers that this position is rarely occupied by a woman in the Arab social scheme. That very acute observer, Gerhard Rohlffs, tells us:—

“In many Berber tribes it is not the son who inherits, but the son of the sister, or the son of the eldest daughter. In other Berber tribes women have the right to reign. South of Morocco I found among the Berbers that the Sauya Karsas, a religious order, and court of jurisdiction for the region of the river Gehr, was not administered by its nominal chief, Sidi Mohammed ben Ali, but by a woman named Lalla (lady) Diehleda, who was really the chief of the sect. In all matters of importance the Berber woman has her say, and there is no country in

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the world wherein men defer so much to the opinions and wishes of their wives."

Indeed, to the Berber, every woman is a possible enchantress, possessed of occult power to punish as well as to reward. Every married woman becomes, in the Shilhah vernacular, *tanghart*, the feminine form of *amghar*, *sheikh*. The sheikh being the person of highest consideration in the clan, and the official representative of kingly rule, the inference is obvious. It should be remarked at the same time, that the wife, the completed woman, draws her sway from an unseen, mystic source. Of earth's great hive, she is the sacred queen bee. She inherits the occult traditions of countless generations of her sex, and, wielding some portion of the original motive power, she is the living symbol of the Earth Queen—Agalidt'n Dounit—whereof the material heroine,

"Fair Fadma, queen of woman and of man,"

is, to the poet, the most dazzling human reflection.

As is pointed out elsewhere, the original diction

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of Sidi Hammo is distinguished by a certain subtlety which is peculiarly fascinating to the Berber mind. Its character is essentially elusive, and calculated of set purpose to veil the mysteries from the eyes of the uninitiated. He not only means all he says, but a vast deal more. Of one thing, we may rest assured. In Fadma, he has symbolized everything that stands for the glory of existence, the eternal, throbbing joy of life, of love, beauty, music, faith, sanctity, motherhood; all that is dearest to the higher soul of man. Every line proves, too, how deeply philosophy and metaphysics enter into the Berber life; elements which have combined, acting upon a highly imaginative nature, to give so marked a tone of mysticism to this wonderful people's life creed: a cult which he has summed up in the words,

“What is sweeter than heaven now? What is deeper than Hell?

‘I love thee,’ or, ‘I love thee not.’ ”

It is in this light that we must read Sidi Hammo. Herein lies his great secret. Fadma

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is the beauteous emblem of purest, noblest womanhood. She represents the eternal mystery of existence, of creation, of the Unknown. She is the object of a cult old as the everlasting hills. It is a worship far too sacred to be defined, or even spoken save in parable. None but the initiated may be allowed to approach the Holy of Holies.

AL MANI

THE PARABLES OF SIDI HAMMO

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate!

May he extend His grace to our Lord Mohammed, to his disciples, and to the composer, Sidi Hammo, upon whom rest the mercy of Allah.

SECTION I

IN PRAISE OF FADMA

WHEN folks have eaten, some remnants are left. The life in which I am plunged is one of memories. The glorious moments have fled into the realm of the vanished past. The lords of parables and poesy are no more. Song itself is dead.

To endure is the only remedy. Like unto silk, which cannot chafe the skin, is the power to endure. This I say, well knowing that ere long the wild flowers will sprout above my head.

For every ill the physicians boast a cure. But for the greatest of all evils—for desire, and love, and death—what drug shall avail?

The sick man longs for grapes, and the lord of the vineyard denies him so much as a bunch.

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He craves honey, but having stocked no hive he must go hungry. I beg of the gardener a bloom, one would suffice me. Says he, "Go your way, fool. If I gave to all who pass, I should have none to give." At every door whereat I ask an alms, they tell me, "*The Lord will relieve you.* We are weary of you beggars."

Though one be amid the chills of the tomb, in the very desolation of Hell, can he picture it?

Would that my heart had a window. Then you might see the flame of my desire. Could I but attain my heart's goal, the world might perish! Must we not all die?

What sin have I wrought, that unless I speak her name I feel my heart breaking? Fadma! Will the lady of the shrine chide the worshipper? Why, then, raise so fair a structure? Yet, as she were some mighty ruler of whom I begged a dole, she vouchsafes me not even a word.

Who, pray, is he who denies the pangs of love? May he be athirst, and far from the well. Enamoured be he of the gilded fish, darting ever downward in the gloomy water. Or of the

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locust, as, spurning the earth she mocks him
from the clouds.

O learned scribe, reciting the daily portion,¹
tell me, I pray, the cure for one who has bought
a garden and lost it.

Hast thou betrayed me, runnel? or has the
spring itself been cut off? I dreamed thy
waters were rising, and, hastening to the well,
found it dry.

Aweary of the chase, I built my hut hard by
a pool. And hither thirst, all conquering thirst,
brings down every shy gazelle to drink. Tell me
your names, ye Pigeons! Is not one Aysha?
One, perchance, Rakeya? Mirim? Or Mamass?

Thrice welcome be the messenger who said,
"I have seen her." While she spoke my heart
had eyes, and I beheld my love.

By your glittering shrine, ye stars, I conjure
ye let not my face grow wearisome to Fadma,
mine own.

Like to the dove when she flutters down to

¹ The prayers from the Koran.

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the stream, so comes Fadma, drawing in her
little feet, and preening her dainty plumes.
Dear to me is she, dearer than the feast of
almonds to the dwellers in Ait Ounain. Fadma,
my girl gazelle.

SECTION II
EARTHLY WISDOM

NOTE

WHILE recognizing the practical side of the Sidi Hammo philosophy, which comes out so vigorously in his shrewd, often cynical comments on the every-day business of life, it would be an error to imagine that, even here, he is oblivious of Fadma, the embodiment of all that is feminine. Read superficially, his caustic maxims admirably reflect the experiences of the more thoughtful of his people, and, by so doing, have become household words wherever Shilhah is spoken. But beyond and beneath this stands the ever-present image of the Earth Queen, in one or other of her manifold forms. All things in the heavens and on earth remind him of his great theme. As a worthy object of the chase, Woman becomes a wild sheep, a panther, or a lion. In her less

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desirable manifestations he likens her to so mean a thing as a jackal. And, when she, the game, is transformed into the huntress, he apostrophises her as the lordly falcon, to whom he yields his very heart blood. Then again, in the staunch and indefinable friendship of his steed, he finds an echo of something still more true, still more dear.

EARTHLY WISDOM

MAY he who shows thee boundless wealth, teach thee as vast content.

A mighty counsellor is gold. None can withstand his eloquence, and the man you pay must speak for you. Yet is a little wisdom better; for though the broken man may borrow money, understanding is not to be lent.

O maiden! O money! What will not man do to clasp you? And what a charm will riches paint on the homeliest cheek!

Who counts the pauper's days? He went on a journey, and none cares to tell us "he has returned."

As waters will not join, save in the stream; as we see even gazelles at variance, so, when the greed of gold cometh, no true friendship can live.

The eagles swore, in the seventh heaven, a bond of brotherhood. On touching earth, they

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parted company. Such is the cursed greed of gold, which cuts off the rivers from the poor.

Think not that he to whom you have given naught will follow you. Be sure that he who handles scales must eat.¹ Aye, he will chip pieces daily from the stones (weights). The cobbler weights his hide with blood from the shambles; have we not all seen him do it? The old matting, exposed for sale on market-day, is made to look like new by copious drenching in the village pool.

¹ Rob.

NOTE.—In his occasional jeers at the fair sex, Sidi Hammo compares them repeatedly with the jackal, the would-be smart humbug of Moorish fable. When bringing in the *oudad*, the wild sheep of the Atlas spurs, for purposes of a simile, he alludes to this animal's habit of throwing itself on its powerful horns, from crag to crag, in descending the mountain side.

When the bard is in more amatory mood, woman becomes a dainty pigeon, a gazelle, a fragrant fig tree, a holy shrine, a "little brother," or an untamed colt; for his similes are quite untrammelled by considerations of gender. The Shillah tongue lends itself to this word-play.

SECTION III
REFLECTIONS

NOTE

THESE utterances belong mainly to the second and central phase of the minstrel's life pilgrimage. Deeply as his memory is revered by the Shluh, it does not appear that any effort has been made by them to reconstruct one single poem from the scattered materials bequeathed to the present generation. We have to remember that, in all probability, Sidi Hammo never set down a line of his songs and parables on paper. The idea of so doing would hardly enter his mind, in a land where but one man in five hundred can read. How the verses were perpetuated has been described elsewhere. They were chanted by him before the peasantry of the mountains and plains among whom he fared, to be remembered by them as embodi-

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ments of the wit and wisdom of the ages, and they were destined to become, not only an expression of the passions and the every-day philosophy of his people, but a revelation of some of the occult traditions of the race.

REFLECTIONS

OUR RULERS

THERE'S a great bull in the North¹ threshing corn grown in Soos. What are Kaid and their sheikhs but Infidels? As for the palace, it is a pool where rank waters collect; a pool from which none but those leeches (sheikhs and kaid) can drink.

In heaven, as well we know, there is neither Kaid nor Kadi, neither sheikh nor saint, but only the ONE who is All in All.

FRIENDSHIP

The real orphan is he who has no friend.

With brethren you shall reach the mountain springs; aye, draw water from the peak as from a plain.

¹ The Sultan who gathers tribute so far away as the southern provinces of Sus. The parable is to denounce unjust rulers who thrive in the high places of Morocco.

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Two friends suffice; more are too many. If one fail you, try to trust the other.

Who takes churls for friends must bear their sins.

To test your friend, confide to him your treasure, taking care that he eat you not. If he be true, give him your all, for he is your own.

Once did I curse my tongue, when in a darkling hour, I craved a kindness of a seeming friend, whose apt excuses proved his cooling love.

What Rumi¹ is more cruel than Time, which steels our hearts against the trust once placed in friendship? Have I a friend? Must I henceforth take my way alone?

The pity of it! To learn your silver is but brass. That he who stood for all else on the earth—the one star in all the care-dimmed sky—

¹ Christian. To Sidi Hammo a Rumi was a wild and savage creature from unknown lands who lived for the greater part of his life upon the water. It is fair to add that the Rumi or Christian is very similarly regarded in Morocco to-day by all who have suffered from "peaceful penetration" and other European benefits.

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should choose that hour, when I lay face to face with death, to give the stab that all but sent me to the dust. A gallant blow! To stab a dying man. My vengeance is that you forget it not.

WAR

With here and there a whisper, a hint, a name, Satan came among the peaceful reapers.

Whereby true men are dying!

May he who first fanned the fire feed it with his body!

SECLUSION FOR MAIDENS

Be wise, O jackal; stir not out by day. If you must go out, await the face of night. And, be sure, all you meet are greyhounds, trained solely on your account.

INDISCREET WIVES

Bismillah! Here's ink, a writing board, a pen. Let me set down the names of your foes. They are the stragglers who betray the wealth of

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the hive, while the true workers keep house on the cliff edge.

NEVERMORE

We hear the long-drawn sigh, but what it says is known alone to him who utters it. To him, tending the departing friend, the story all comes back—just ere its last, last word. There, lave the lips, that nevermore shall chide or gladden thee. Ah, nevermore!

LUCK

The luck that is on earth we know, and as for what may be above, may the Lord send it down!

Who will buy thee, O colt, led proudly through the auction? Only he whom luck decrees to be thy master.

One scans the bough of the fig tree though it bear no fruit. So do we peer into the Unknown for what luck may be there.

The chance once lost! Think not, O beloved, to turn back the waters of the rill to the thirsty lands above.

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A STOLEN KISS

As drowning wretches grasp at straws,
The starving man becomes a thief.
Ah lady! for your lips' relief
An anchorite would break the laws.¹

TO A DISDAINFUL DAMSEL

Were there but one mill in all the world, who
would grind corn? With but one brick, which
of us should build his house? With one poor
pair of oxen mankind must starve. Were there
but one well, how many must die of thirst?

Only one *oudad*² to be hunted? What traps
we would dig! Nonsense! The forest is so
full of game, the trouble is which to choose.

Stretch skyward, Atlas, till thou'rt weary.
Across thy brow there comes a road. So much
for pride!

¹ As drowning wretches clutch at a straw, the starving
man must needs become a thief.

One half the hunger your sweet lips have caused me
would force an anchorite to pick and steal.

² The wild sheep of the Atlas Spurs.

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Though possessed of wings, despise not the earth. When tired of the clouds where will you rest?

O lord of the flaunting saddle! The cloth is doubtless new, but will it not grow old? And this same saddle, little brother, holds but one. Rather than mount pillion I will give up riding.

A JEER AT WOMAN

The jackal has never been to school, nor learned to recite a text. But he has a memory, rarely forgets, and guesses the rest.

MARRIAGE

O youth, bent on marriage, if you value peace seek a decent pedigree. See first the mother, then the maid.

Beauty begets beauty. The mule is no father to the horse.

The fool would straightway pound the new barley, never asking who planted it, whether in rain, or in wind.

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What greater gift is there for man than woman? What placid joy is in the after supper chat!

None but the best is worthy of marriage. Failing to win that, take your weapon, fill your thoughts with the chase. Rather, far rather, wed a poor maid than a wealthy widow. First love, like the freshest honey, is beyond price.

Never will I buy a steed from auction. Shall I marry other than a maid? Allah forbid!

Of the unknown mountain let the hunter beware. Who tells thee what lion may not be there to devour thee? Were your treasure as vast as the Atlas, there be women who would swallow it.

When she and her mother join forces, may Allah help you.

When the stream is in spate,¹ the jinn (devil) plays more mischief than the waters.

Bitter as the seed of oleander, scorching the entrails, are women of strange countries.

¹ Tears, it would seem, are meant here.

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Though the almond tree on the brink of the precipice should blossom, prepare no feast.¹ When the day comes to beat the branches you will gather no fruit.

PARTING

More hateful than the stranger is the road which takes my love from me.

SILENCE

'Tis harder to keep silence than to speak.
What peril lurks within a secret shared ?

I should keep silence till my heart grew cold,
Cold as the love another brings.

Who weighs the songs a poet sings ?
Your scales were made for gold.²

¹ The blossoming of almond trees is celebrated in some parts of Morocco.

² I should keep silence, until my heart grows cold as others' love. Who weighs mere words of mine? *Your* scales were made for gold.

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LIFE AND DEATH

What but death makes life worthless? However large your share in this world, death will rob you of all.

OPPORTUNITY

Where art thou, Bee-eater? The swarm is passing. The breeze has blown up every straggler.

THE NEGLECTED WIFE

The lady of the white, white grapes must die,
While yet the keeper of the spring parades
The vineyard, heedless that her beauty fades,
Since all the channels of his heart run dry.¹

POVERTY

While my neighbours are ploughing with bullocks of the best, I have to yoke a poor old cow.

The pauper, though he lives, is dead.

¹ Dead lies the mistress of the white grapes, for lack of water. The keeper of the spring parades the vineyards.

SECTION IV
LOST LOVE

NOTE

REMINISCENCES of past friendships, and of warmer attachments, form a very considerable part of Sidi Hammo's utterances, and some day, perhaps, it may be, they will help us to trace the story of his material life more accurately than we have been able to do hitherto. But even from the fragments already gathered, it is comparatively easy to follow the course of his inner existence, the development of his soul history.

Like most of us he has been fascinated by the attractions of the less perfect members of the "ear-ringed tribe." There is nothing of boasting in his naive confessions. And, delightfully human, he reveals a manly tenderness in his recollections of many of the "gazelles" who have thrown the glamour of their kindness over his early pilgrimages amid the hills and dales of

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life. This is his first phase. Later we find him, not entirely soured, but less enthusiastic, more reasonable, philosophic, and occasionally cynical. Then comes the gradual revelation that there is something better than all he has known or dreamed. What it is he hardly knows, but day by day the growing light is focussing upon one object; one material, physical emblem of the unseen, throbbing secret of existence. In a word, Fadma.

In the palpitating glow of this new life doubts and bitterness melt away, and become part of the dead and gone night. And, with the revelation unfolding itself before him, comes the desire to attain, to absorb and be absorbed in the spirit of the universe. This is the phase of Struggle. His lost loves are but the prelude to the unheard music which is raising his being to higher planes, may-be to the highest of all. The visible symbol of the eternal Earth Queen is Fadma. In attaining her he wins possession of the noblest human symbol of her immortal and all-pervading antitype.

LOST LOVE

To hell with earth if Love no longer
Stay to seal the lips that wrong her !
The years have leaped away from us,
For ever and for aye from us
Are gone the palpitating hours
When to the bard were born immortal flowers ;
Gone with the old heroic themes ;
Fled with youth down the twilight streams.
Gold is all in all to-day,
Who bids for fame with gold must pay.¹

Perish the love that endures not till death !
That day we met ! What high hope was ours ?
Hers and mine. Mine and hers. She was mine,
and I was hers. We and our hope were one.

¹ To hell with earth if Love be no longer of it !
The days have leaped from us. Gone for ever the
palpitating hours when poetry lived. Gone, with
nobility ; vanished, with youth. Gold is all in all. Who
dare bid for greatness save with money ?

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O my beloved, there was none, none, none
like thee!

Then came the treachery. Yet was there
none like thee.

She—she who betrayed me—gave me the
vow, as I gave it. Falsehood should never, ah,
never, come between us.

Where is she who murmured, “If you suffer,
none but I shall tend you”? Sick am I, unto
death, and she comes not near me.

With whom hold converse now? Naught is
left but lack of trust. Were there but one who
could eat, wipe his mouth, and let the words die!

Better, far better, speak your speech to the
trees of the forest, and keep company with the
glens and streams, for living man is faithless.
Is there, perchance, one in heaven who can hold
a secret?

Abide in the wilds a season, seeking the
comrade worthy of your heart. Finding none,
sink to earth.¹

Die.

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My heart, O mother mine, is not the camel's.
He, when he breaks his knees, throws off his
load and—sleeps.

Go, little sister, Go ! and I will pray
That Allah smooth the road before your feet :
That you may reck not of the heart you slay :
That, on the morn of Resurrection Day,
Before the Lord of Mercy we may meet.¹

¹ Take your way, little sister. Allah give you blissful ease, for I cannot call you to account. May-be before the Lord of Mercy we shall meet.

SECTION V
FRAGMENTS

NOTHING to say? Then tell the truth.

The beard may be large, and the wit small.

Lock up your cupboard that none other may open it. Though it hold butter and honey, you will sleep in peace.

Patience, beloved. Not yet would I open the spring. Wait only until I have planted for thee trees of henna and vines.

When the pool rises, distant pastures get the water. Far from its roots is the shade of the palm.

Freely have we fed from thee, O platter!
Why lament over thy breakage?

Keep only your heart free. The Lord will look after all else. Love's only course is to endure.

Small though it be, steel is king of iron.

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Does one strike light for the blind? Take him by the hand. For, in darkness, the hand¹ is the safety of the brow.

Will glass bear handling? Will paper endure water? Nor will the noble suffer a churlish neighbour.

Allah! The torch vows safety to the gun-powder!

Once penniless, who blushes to swear himself a pauper? Your creditors will grow sick of hearing the oath.

Happy the man of whom little is spoken. The jackal² and I have borne much slander.

The dreamer may babble, forgetting his promise to pay. Then cries he, "What injustice! I paid."

As for me I have neither forgiven nor forgotten. The seasons, not the days, will show.

"O Master," said the water-mill—

"Go home to bed and sleep thy fill!

¹ An allusion to the number five, a protective charm against the evil eye.

² Some member of the "Ear-ringed Tribe."

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All that ye take a year to grind
Within a month I leave behind.
All that ye grind within a moon
I finish by the fall of noon.”¹

I met a hunter. “Whither bound?” I ask.
“Under yon cliff,” says he, “is a young oudad,
which I must have.”

Heaven help the widow with two little
children! Whichever she carries, the other
cries, and the stepfather curses. Though it be
no larger than an egg, one’s love is one’s wealth.
Hoard it and spend it at pleasure.

She is grinding wheat, and feeding me on
barley.

* * * * *

NOTE.—Here, too, as in his reflections, we get
an insight into the second phase of Sidi Hammo’s
life education. He has already lived and loved,
and learned something; he may be practical,
philosophical, cynical, but the great aim and

¹ Said the water-mill to the master of the house,
“Sleep in peace. All you can grind in a year, I will do
in a month. All you grind in a moon, I will do in a
day.”

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end of life, the very essence of soul existence, is yet to be revealed. Meanwhile he is able to offer his fellow Berbers very sound counsel about mundane affairs, always in the parabolical form. Patience, or rather endurance, is among the higher virtues, is perhaps the highest. Treachery is the most detestable of crimes. Half the baseness of mankind is due to the greed of gold, *Dmaa*—a word, curiously enough, of Arabic, not Berber origin, and consequently representing an imported curse. Yet even here, all unconsciously, he is becoming enthralled by the sublime image of the great Earth Queen, mirrored in the fair, pure form and features of Fadma.

SECTION VI

AT THE SHRINE OF FADMA

AFTER a long absence from home, the minstrel sets his face southwards. He is the pilgrim, and Fadma is the shrine of his devotion. He beguiles the road's monotony with reminiscences and anticipation. Dalliance with the "ear-ringed tribe" has not satisfied the higher longing for ideal love, and all his hopes are centred on Fadma, the maiden whom he championed as a mere lad, many years ago. She is now the star beloved of heaven, set near the moon, far from the "lower constellations of baleful omen." As for the past, and for his kindly remembrance of the dainty mistresses of the curling forelocks—"Let the cloud mingle with its shadow, the breeze be lost in the rain; and may the stream bear away the dead leaves."

That his devotion was finally rewarded may be gathered from the tone of the last few verses.

THE SONGS OF SIDI HAMMO

He doubts if even the physicians of Rome
(Europe) have a cure for love, and dares F'adma
to cure his passion.

“What e'er it be, I'll take it, sweet, from
thee.”

AT THE SHRINE OF FADMA

LORD HAMAD, son of Moussa ¹ (*a*) fight for us!
From the moment I set foot on my pilgrimage,
fight for me, even as the eagle battles for his
young upon the heights. Though he depart, the
dread of him fills the mountain side.

And thou, proud falcon, lord of the flashing
eye, be near me in the chase.

Be mine the shelter of yon sacred shrine, the
snowy cloud to shield me from the sun.

Ye winds, who know not fear, bear my heart's
ove to the fair mistress of Menaisla's groves.
How far, alas, is that cooling spring! Save I
mount on wings, how shall I attain to thee?
Scorched by sirocco, I yet seem to clasp the
brimming goblet, drinking deep of sparkling
water.

Near to the moon is set the star I love, the
star beloved of heaven. For see, how high
above the baleful constellation is her place.

¹ See page 72, Notes on "Fadma, the Shrine."

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Speed on, O year, speed on. Perchance, more
kind,
The next will bring its tale of happier days ;
For something whispers, " If with constant mind
Thou seek thine own, though Time or Fate
delays,
Most sure thou art to find." ¹

Now may the mercy of the Lord rest upon
Sidi Hammo, the lowly singer of the song.

* * * * *

" Clerk to the hamlets!" How proudly I
paraded my writing-board.

Then comes a day when song and sadness
make me their own, and little does book-lore
avail me with the ear-ringed folk,² who flout my
learning and scribeship with many a dainty gibe.
Shall I return to the groves of Wijjan and
Mallan, where first I saw those witching beauties,
as they reposed like artless fawns upon their

¹ Speed on, O year, speed on. Perchance the next will
bring a happier day ; for something whispers, " If thou
seek thine own with constant heart, most sure thou art
to find."

² Women.

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forest couches of musk, the air filled with dreams of joy? Allah; a sight worth camel loads of gold.

When the caravan grows weary, let it rest.

When those we love grow cold, to leave were best.

Before the glamour die

Come! let us say good-bye.¹

The shepherd lies a-dying. Who will wail for him, save the glen wherein he tended his flock?

In very soul and body am I sick of one who will neither say, "I love you" nor "I hate you." Must I bear water from the plain to the mountain top, and bring it down again? My heart was seeking hers, while she was thinking of others, and gave me never a thought. I deemed her falcon;² I yearned to feed her on my very heart's life blood; but, lo! she is a kite!

¹ When the caravan grows weary, let it rest. When friends grow cold, 'twere best to leave them. Say fare well while yet some charm remains.

² Note (*b*).

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Dead love were better buried. Pile earth upon it, lest, Allah forbid, it come to life again.

Let the cloud with her shadow mingle,
The wind be lost in the rain,
The wreckage rot on the shingle,
And dead trees drift to the main.¹

* * * * *

Weigh words rather than gold, for there is none without alloy.

Am I asking the camel to give me noble horsemanship? Do I seek a dry place in the ocean? Will the rosy bloom of oleander yield me sweetness? Am I craving a word from the dead?

O for some secluded spot, though it be upon the streamless uplands, there to guide my yoke. I speak, little brother, a parable, for any land, well tilled, will give its crop.

How great thy beauty, Orange; yet, the

¹ Cloud, mingle with thy shadow, even as the winter breeze is swallowed up in rain. And let the fallen trees be swept unto the great sea.

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smallness of it! By what law, Allah! shall a raven¹ gorge on so dainty sweet a fruit as this?

He, a barn door fowl, is fain to fly to heaven.
'Tis not indeed for lack of feathers that he fails:
the Lord would have none of him.

The would-be Kadi first should learn to read,
unless the laughter of the scribes is pleasing to
his ear.

The rat asked heaven for wings. The carrion
crow would be a falcon, to feed on hearts.

Because he is black, gunpowder is aping
antimony, thinking to stain my lady's eye-lash.

The bald head dreams he is plaiting a curly
lock, and hanging a golden charm therefrom.

May the Angel of Death stay his hand from
me until I have paid this slanderer's barley twice
over, in wheat! May he who wounded Fadma
live to herd with outcast pedlars! May they be
his only associates. With them let him bear
his pack from town to town in living death,
until he perish!

When the open hand is but scratched, we

Note (c).

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needs must weep. As for the miser's, let it
break, or wither!

* * * * *

The thing desired is like a son. Be he one-
eyed or a cripple, can one forget him?

Beauty is more beloved by Allah than by
man. Beauty, brothers, is a shrine built by
Allah. Let the fool dream of joys of paradise,
who has never mounted a colt, or learned a
woman's love. With your steed for a friend,
and a faithful love, you know heaven ere you
sink to earth.

Though she be clothed in rags, and veiled with
a mat of rushes, think you my heart will let her
pass unknown? Grant me a day, ye winds!
Ransack the heavens, while I scour earth in
search of my lost darling.

Step by step the foot paces the trackless forest.
By slow degrees the young swarm fills the hedge.

O Hamad, son of Mohammad, hail to thee,
proud master of the limewashed house, wherein
my Fadma dwells. A bright and tempered blade
of Rome,¹ in such a paltry sheath!

¹Note (*it*).

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Who would not be the fast flying bird, free at will to sip from yonder crystal fountain between the ramparts? Help me for once, O Earth Spirit, to build my *dweerit* there.¹ Give me but room to rest; food I will forego.

Now though all earth be turned to gunpowder, and all the sky rain hail, where *she* is, there am I.

* * * * *

Has the sun ceased to shine? She veils her face, that cheek of silken smoothness never made to fret, and turning from me on this selfsame spot where once I drank of love, she murmurs, "To-day . . . impossible. It may not be."

To-day! The very day of battle, she would turn and flee. Has she forgotten the rosy blush, and all that it confessed? Forgotten the unbound hair that rested on my shoulder?

Is it death you wish me? That were lesser torture than your disdain. Must cruelty for ever cling to loveliness? Nought that I do for Fadma wins the one short word I crave. For her dear sake I have been scribe, minstrel, saint, a very

¹Note (e).

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anchorite, in turns and at the same time. Yet still she flouts my worship of her every tress.

Alas for my labour in the chase, if I am to bring back nought but torn foot-gear, bruised arms and weary feet.

Of a truth, O mother mine, a very jackal, and no hunter am I. If I meet the goatherds, their cry is, "Strike the Jew jackal!" If I meet the schoolboys, "Strike the jackal Jew!"

My lot is that of the orphan, who is washing his hand for dinner, when a stronger thrusts him aside, poor lad.

Or of the schoolboy, far from his home. The feast is here, and it brings me nothing but tears.

Will I forgive him who opened yonder window? Never! Nor him who laid the foundation, and set the beam.

Hide your hurt. Make no plaint, that none but yourself may know that you suffer.

This say I, well knowing I have no wit left but to rave.

* * * * *

Ye streams, that baffle me in every hunt!

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Why give your shelter to the gazelles? What snares that I can lay near such a shrine will avail me? One trap alone remains; the hunter must take sanctuary too.

The cloud rolls slowly through the heavens, the bees are on the wing. The marksman scans his weapon and tests its work. And yonder Rumi may steer his bark for the distant shores.

The jackal wearies of howling; the scribe grows tired of his pen. And even the oudad has ceased to plunge down the mountain side.¹

In a dream, O mother mine, I saw a saddled colt. From his arched neck there hung a charm, by a silken cord. He lacked but a master.

“Welcome to him,” she cried, “whom the road has brought to our door.” I paused, yet this was the place I sought. “Thrice welcome, minstrel. This poor house of mine was raised for you alone, that in it all I have may be yours.”

¹ Fadma is less coy.

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The tea-tray's chasings glitter; yet the fair disc, unworked, on which the teapot stands among her servitors, the crystal glasses, sure this simplicity surpasses ornament.

I pray you, mistress of the tray, once more! This amber fluid soothes my fever as your kindness cheers my soul. And you, ye rippling runnels, bringing the cool waters of the rill to these grateful vines; of you I vow that, whatever your price, you were cheaply bought.

* * * * *

The stream is in spate, for every joy and pride that Fadma bathes her feet therein.

Come, Aysha, glittering dagger!¹ Hard must be the heart that you cannot cleave. And you, fair Eejah, like the perfumed breath of incense, filling the house with fragrance.

Of all the blooms that grow in your garden I ask but one, yon white, white rose.² Shall I for ever worship with mine eyes, and never clasp it to my heart?

¹ Note (*f*).

² Note (*g*).

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Is there no mercy outside heaven? Shall
I not find grace in those queenly features?

To match thy plumes, my snow-white dove,
I reared a palace of delight—

A marble palace gleaming bright.

Here will I pledge the Queen of Love

From goblets like herself, all white.¹

Ah, Fadma, with the glow of honey in a
porcelain vase; such rich ware as belongs to
none but sheikhs.

Come, Fadma, Beauty's self, by yon sacred
dome I conjure you! Is there, amid the boasted
drugs of foreign physicians, a cure for those who
love? If there be, whatever it be, may it be
mine, so it be swift!

And may the mercy of the Lord rest on Sidi Hammo,
The lowly singer of the song.

¹ To match thy snow-white plumes, dear dove, have I
prepared for thee a marble home. Here will I drink
with thee from goblets like thyself, all white.

“AT THE SHRINE OF FADMA!”

NOTES

(a) “Lord Hamad, son of Moussa.” The patron saint of the great province of Soos, to whose ghostly protection the pilgrim naturally appeals.

After a prolonged absence from the home of Fadma, which tradition tells us was in Aouluz, the minstrel sets his face southward, and, hope alternating with fear, resolves to leave no stone unturned to regain the affection which may have cooled since last he beheld the fair “earthly image of the moon.” He beguiles the way with reminiscences, making no secret of certain evanescent attachments formed, during his wanderings among the “ear-ringed folk,” for some of whom he retains a kindly recollection. True, the platter is broken, but what dainty dishes he ate from it!

(b) “I deemed her falcon.” And as the

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falconers delight to give the heart of the quarry to their birds, was prepared to let her feed on mine. She, a mere kite, fit only to prey on the farmyard fowls!

(c) "By what law shall a raven, &c." Here he recalls his denunciation of the black Drawi minstrel who had slandered Fadma in a singing contest.

(d) "A tempered blade of Rome." Rarely indeed has the Berber poet a good word for anything "Roman." But the excellence of European steel cannot be gainsaid. He knows the *Rumi*, too, as a doctor, and as a skilful mariner. These admissions made, *Rumi* and its feminine form *taromit*, are the synonym for "foreign," "objectionable," "cruel." In the "Harvest Day," he says, "Deceitful world! *Taromit!*"—the most bitter epithet in the vocabulary.

(c) "Dweerit." Literally a small house, or an upper storey, secluded from the main building. To possess such a nook for the entertainment of special guests is the ambition of every peasant farmer in Berberland.

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(f) "Come, Aysha, glittering dagger!" The family consists of Hamad and his three sisters, Aysha, Eejah, and Fadma. Their minstrel guest has a compliment for each; and it is obvious, from his being once more at home with them, that the course of true love is at last running smoothly.

(g) "White rose." To be "white"—*oumlil*—is to be beautiful, lucky, everything that is best in woman. And her choicest surroundings should be white.

"To match thy snow-white plumes, dear love, have I prepared for thee a marble home. Here will I drink with thee from goblets, like thyself, all white."

SECTION VII
"HARVEST DAY"

NOTES

TRADITION has it that these lines were composed by Sidi Hammo in immediate anticipation of death. They have certainly been preserved with far more care as to the original sequence of the verses than is the case with any other of his utterances; and, indeed, they are here transcribed almost word for word as the author heard them chanted by strolling minstrels during a recent festival.

At whatever stage of his wanderings these few verses were given to his people, they seem to form part of a longer, and as yet undiscovered, poem. Short and fragmentary as they are, we find in them a fairly concise summary of Sidi Hammo's life creed. The glorious but ephemeral past, the doubtful harvest of the future, and the

. THE SONGS OF SIDI HAMMO

ineffable secret of the eternal present: What sweeter heaven now? What deeper hell? "I love thee," or, "I love thee not."

The great day of harvest has come, and with it the apotheosis of Fadma. This is the third, and last phase of the pilgrimage.

HARVEST DAY

Now may the Lord arise! The span allowed is past. Keen are the sickles; harvest day is upon us.

It seems but yesterday we were throwing the seed into the new-turned furrows. Would that the world had endured for some who knew it then!

Where is the dead Karoun? He who bequeathed five score rooms of treasure. Where Suleiman, to whom the Lord was very gracious? In his open hand he held the people of the earth, ruling them as Viceroy of the Most High; rising to kingship of the world, speaking with men and beasts, conversing even with the winds.

Then, parted from his words, and from his all, we see him enter gloomy earth. To us he is no more.

Where art thou, great Apostle of Allah; mounted on fiery Borak of the rattling rein?

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Where, too, is Fadma, earthly image of the moon ?

May Allah stand with us here, while we follow those of old time who swept down life's swift stream. Deceitful life ! At thy best I liken thee unto a flower of March.

Though sky were silver, though earth were strewn with golden ingots, from here to far Demnat,¹ yet could I never repay the grace of One.

In this world give us love, the next lacks nothing.

Great is the theme ; and could I write my words upon the heavens they were too small. The tale would never end.

We sin, perhaps, more than our fathers did. I charge ye, sons of Adam, have done with false swearing. If swear ye must, be it of what you can speak truly. As for me, "I've seen," and "have not seen," are equally wearisome.

Why listen, ear, to every whispered word designed by your enemies to disturb your peace ?

¹ A city on the far side of the Atlas Mountains.

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Vast as creation is the speech that might be.
Yet may it be spoken in words no longer than
the *ashrat* ¹ of a rosary. When all is done; the
harvest gathered in; what has made our weal
and our woe? What sweeter heaven here?
What more bitter hell? Surely, "I love thee,"
and "I love thee not."

And may the mercy of the Lord rest upon
Sidi Hammo, the lowly. Here his song hath
end.

(Verse alternative.)

I.

Now may the Lord arise! for summer's span
is past;
Keen is the mower's scythe; 'tis harvest time at
last.

2.

Was it yesterday—our spring, with the seed
o'er the furrows flung?
O that the world stood still for all that then
were young!

¹ Ten extra beads carried by the very pious.

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3.

Where? Where is dead Karoun? of the five
score rooms of gold
Where Solomon the King, by Allah's grace
made bold?

4.

The nations crawled in the palm of the Regent
of God most High,
He spake with the tongue of beasts; he
answered the night wind's cry.

5.

Then, parted from all his words; from all his
glory and fame,
Behold him enter the gloom! To us he is
nought but a name.

6.

Where art thou Prophet and Priest? on Borak
flaming afar,
Him of the rattling rein and speed of a trailing
star.

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7.

Where art thou ¹ sister and twin of the splendid
Queen of the Night ?
May Allah bide with us here as we follow the
life-stream's flight,

8.

And the dead that swept down the stream. Ah,
life, I liken thee best
To a flower that is born in March, that the sun
for an hour caressed.

9.

Though sky were silver, and gold the world to
Demnat's wall
I can never repay the grace of the One beloved
beyond all.

10.

Give us love in this world, O Lord. The next
is a happy dream ;
If I traced Love's name in the skies too far my
finger would gleam.

* * * * *

¹ Fadma.

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11.

We are sinners worse than our sires. I charge
you ye sons of man,
If swear ye must, swear true: speak only of
what ye can.

12.

For me—"I have seen," "I have not" are tales:
I would have them cease.
Why listen, O ear, to the word that the enemy
brings to peace?

13.

Creation-vast maybe is the tongue the future
needs
Yet spoken in words as small as the Ashrat on
thy beads.

14.

When the last of the crop lies low, when the
harvest is garnered in,
What held us for weal or woe? What stirred
us to prayer or to sin?

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15.

What sweeter heaven was here? What bitterer
hell our lot?

Than the soft "I love thee dear!" Than the
dread "I love thee not!"

APPENDIX
TO
THE STUDENT OF SHILHAH
THE DICTION OF SIDI HAMMO

APPENDIX

THE DICTION OF SIDI HAMMO

“ALL that is not Arabic in the kingdom of Morocco,” says Dr. Latham, “all that is not Arabic in the French provinces of Algeria, and all that is not Arabic in Tunis, Tripoli, and Fezzan, is Berber. . . . The extinct language of the Canary Isles was Berber; and, finally, the language of the Sahara is Berber.”¹

Perhaps the least known to European students of all the existing branches of the Berber tongue is that spoken by some two millions of Shluh of southern Morocco, whose possession of three hundred miles of the great Atlas range, and its spurs to north and south, has at once guaranteed their practical independence and preserved their language. This offshoot, indeed, of the ancient

¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, Ninth Edition; Vol. I., p. 261.

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tongue, which we assume to be of Hamitic origin, would seem to-day to be the sole link—save for their common faith—between our Moorish Shluh and their cousins of the Algerian Kabyles and the Touaregs. Distance, lack of communication, and non-community of interests have drawn a deep gulf, dividing perhaps for ever these descendants of the invincible Goetulians of Sallust, while of their own not inglorious history they themselves have treasured up hardly so much as a tradition.

All the records of the early Greek and Roman explorers point to the Berber tribes as being the aboriginal occupants of Morocco. To philology, perchance, will belong some day the distinction of tracing back their lineage to the land of Canaan, whence, according to an old time legend, quoted by Procopius, they were driven out by “that robber Joshua, the son of Nun.” In due time they had to yield no small portion of the soil to all-conquering Rome, the north-western provinces becoming Mauretania Tingitana. How far Latin predominance extended

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south is a moot point. Shella, near Rabat, destined to become centuries later the burial-place of the Beni Merin dynasty, is undoubtedly the Roman Sala Urbs. It has been suggested that the now ruined town of Tit, a few miles south of Mazagan, was built in honour of the Emperor Titus, and Pliny tells us how the commercial traveller of his day supplied the upholsterers of the eternal city with wood of the *arar*¹ tree, which was so valued by the ladies of Rome that the little tables made from it were studded with precious gems. Certain it would seem to be that Roman Christianity penetrated to the very Atlas itself, and a Moorish historian (the author of Roudh el Kartis) tells us that whole tribes of Christians were found in the country by Moulai Idris, the founder of the first Moslem dynasty (A.D. 788).

In face of the flood of Arab immigration, and the victorious hosts of Islam, the Berbers of the plains had to choose between the unknown

¹ *Callitris quadrivalvis*: see Hooker's "Morocco and the Great Atlas," page 99.

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Koran and Suppression. One tribe after another embraced the faith of Mohammed, a submission which did not interfere with their gradual withdrawal to the mountains of Riff and Atlas, and to Scos el Aksa, their only places of refuge from the rapacity of the now predominant power. There they have remained ever since, save when, for one brief century, their great leader Mohammed ben Abdallah, his brilliant lieutenant, Abd-el-Moumen, and their successors turned the tables on the decaying dynasty of the Morabtin, invaded and occupied all southern and northern Morocco, restored Islam to its original purity, and, summoning the faithful from every corner of the sultanate with the magic cry of Holy War, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, to establish for a second time Moorish Supremacy in Spain. During the palmy days of this, the Unitarian (Mouahadoun) dynasty, the military power of Morocco rose to its zenith. Fez became renowned all over Europe for its masters of science, and the best of Moorish art dates from this short but glorious period. Witness the

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stately towers of the Giralda of Seville and the Kutoubeya of Marraksh, and many other monuments bequeathed to us by Abd-el-Moumen's grandson, the renowned hero of Alarcos, Yacoub-el-Mansour. Of this, and of all else touching his people's past, the modern Berber knows nothing. His own language has no written characters. One man in five hundred may be able to read and write Arabic, to be accordingly respected with no little awe as a *taleb*, or scribe. This learned individual's erudition is complete if he can decipher the best-known passages of the Koran—which he has by rote—and with great labour compose a remarkably short letter on very stereotyped lines. Happily for the student of Shilhah, the language has this affinity to the Semitic tongues that all its sounds can be expressed by Arabic letters.

In examining the original manuscript from which most of the songs and parables have been translated, the student of Shilhah will find some difficulty in approximating Sidi Hammo's rugged lines to any measure known to European prosody.

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They are, seemingly, as untrammelled by method as the trill of the nightingale or the notes of the *awada* reed, on which the peasant lads of Haha are wont to mimic the songs of the blackbird and the thrush. They are sung, or chanted rather, to airs which will accommodate irregular pentameters, the redundant syllables being slurred as in the refrain,

Arham | Arbbi | Sidi Hammo, | isinna | Igallin,
and in the typical lines,

Imut | bab nwadil, | igan | umlil, | urdifil
Aman. | Akhammas | ara-okan | istara | jnannat.

This couplet, indeed, not only gives a very good idea of Sidi Hammo's practice of rhyming inside the line, but may in other respects be taken as a fair specimen of Tamazight versification. It contains four words of Arabic, though why the foreign phrase for death was used—*imut*, instead of the Shilhah *ingha*—is inexplicable, save on the ground that the person who caused the death was an Arab.

Here is a first, literal, bald translation of the lines :—

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“ Dead (is the) master of the grapes, the white ones, for lack of water. The *Akhammas* is parading the vineyards.”

The *Akhammas* is the official whose duty it is to open and close, at regular intervals, the runnels which convey water from the spring to the vineyards and orchards. In guerdon of this service he receives, as his title implies, a fifth of the produce of the plantation.

Note another characteristic of Sidi Hammo ; his trick of concealing—or making a pretence of concealing—the sex of his subject. He speaks of the “master” of the white grapes, when every one of his hearers knows that he means the mistress.

Obviously enough to a Berber audience, he is here lamenting the fate of a lady neglected by her spouse. Thus, where nearly every line contains a word or a phrase which has some special associations for the folk to whom it is chanted, a severely literal translation must wholly fail to convey the wrapped-up meaning of the verse. The idea might be rendered thus:—

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“ For lack of water, on her earthy bed
 The mistress of the white, white grapes lies dead.
 The faithless keeper of the spring meanwhile,
 Parades the vineyards with a lordly smile.”

Much as one is tempted to prolong this brief examination of the original text, the following list of some of the everyday words of Sidi Hammo—as of his descendants—will suffice to show how utterly unlike they are, with rare exceptions, to their Arabic and Hebrew equivalents.

ENGLISH	SHILHAH	REMARKS
Sun	Tafookt	Feminine of a lost word “afook”
Moon	Ayor	Masculine. Suggestive of Hebrew “ayar”
Heaven	Iginna	Arabic, “jinna”
Hell	Arwas	An unlucky mountain in the Algerian Atlas
Earth	Akal	Also “Dunit” from Arabic
Star	Taytart	Plu. “itran”

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ENGLISH	SHILHAI	REMARKS
King	Agalid	
Castle	Agadir	? Hebrew, "geder," a wall
Satan	Anwash	A master liar. For any stronger term the Arabic Iblis must be borrowed
God	Arbi, Alláh	Pure Arabic
Mountain	Adrar	
River	Asif	Strange how many nature words begin with the "alif" or letter "A"
Wind	Adoo	
Rain	Anzar	
Water	Aman	
Horse	Agmar	Feminine, <i>tagmart</i>
Bull	Afoonas	Feminine, <i>tafoonast</i>
Sheikh	Amghar	
Woman	Tamghart	NOTE.—Feminine of <i>amghar</i> , <i>Sheikh</i> , indicating the respect in which woman is held by the Berbers
House	Tigmmi	

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ENGLISH	SHILHAH	REMARKS
Room	Ahánoo	Possibly derived from Arabic "hanoot," shop
Well	Anoo	
Spring	Tanoot	Feminine or diminutive of <i>anoo</i>
Man	Regaz	
Boy	Yafrookh	Feminine, <i>tafrookht</i>
Money	Ikáriden	
Slave		
Eat	Ish	
Drink	Soo	
Sleep	Igin	
Road	Agháras	

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