

GULDASTA-I-URDU

OR

A BOUQUET OF URDU

Translated by

LIEUT.-COLONEL C. A. BOYLE, D.S.O.,
*Secretary to the Board of Examiners,
Army Head Quarters, Simla.*

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AN ALCHEMIST

(from the *Fasana-i-Azad*.)

Well, the Nawab Sahib started off and got into a railway carriage¹. As soon as he sat down, another gentleman entered the same compartment. His get-up was that of a Muslim, but his face and features appeared to be pure European². He was dressed like a gentleman³ and was well perfumed⁴. (His luggage consisted of) two bags and a *sarrah*⁵. He unrolled his bedding, and sat down next to the Nawab, but all without speaking a word to him.

As the train moved out, the Nawab Sahib asked him where he was bound for.

"A few stations on," he replied.

"And what is your name?" asked the Nawab.

"Joseph," he said.

Nawab—"Are you a Christian?"

Joseph—"Yes."

Nawab—"It does not appear so from your attire."⁶

Joseph—"Just so."

Nawab—"Please tell me where you live?"

Joseph—"My house⁸ is in Itawa."⁷

Nawab—"I see, and I suppose you are an artisan⁹ there?"

1. *Darja*: literally, a class. From the story it will be seen that it was a third class compartment full of other passengers.
2. *Walaqat*: either Persian, Kabuli or European.
3. *Sifed-posh*: see note 2 page 19.
4. *Mu'attar*: perfumed (with any scent): *mu'ambar*. perfumed (with ambergris).
5. *Sarrah*: a long necked earthen carafe.
6. Note this meaning of *waza'*.
7. Note this polite term for someone else's house.
8. Note this polite term for one's own house.
9. *Itawe ka kadrigar* is a synonym for an unskilful workman or artisan who pretends to be an expert.

Joseph—"Yes I am, and a great number of men have been made¹ there."

Nawab—"Has anyone been made Qazi of Jaunpore?²"

Joseph—"No one has sufficient ability for it."

Nawab—"In which department are you serving?"

Joseph—"I have a mania for alchemy."

1. Note the other meaning of *bane* here, i. e. "in that city many men have been made fools of."

2. *Jaunpur ka Qazi* is a synonym for a silly ass, and is connected with the following well known story:—

One day a school master, scolding a lazy boy, said, "You are an ass, but despite this fact, I will make a human being out of you!"

A man, driving some donkeys, who happened to be passing, overheard the remark, and straightway went in and begged the master to turn one of his donkeys into a human being. The master, after much persuasion, agreed to do so on payment of 50 rupees. Whereupon he found himself presented with the money and the donkey, which he lost no time in selling for a further fifty rupees.

A year later the donkey owner returned and demanded his share of the bargain. He was told that the donkey had become the *Qazi* of Jaunpur. In great delight he hurried off to Jaunpore to see the *Qazi* who had been his donkey. Not unnaturally, that dignitary asked him his reason for wanting to see him, which annoyed the donkey owner not a little. "See," he said, "you have already forgotten the meaning of my clicks and clucks, have you? Well, here are your rope and whip! Perhaps they will remind you that I paid fifty rupees to have you turned from an ass into a human being!"

The *Qazi*, aghast, gave him two hundred rupees as hush-money, and his one time owner returned home overjoyed, and entertained all his friends.

Thereafter he visited the *Qazi* every six months, in order to draw the hush-money.

Nawab—"What nonsense!¹

Joseph—"That is why I called it a mania."

Nawab—"Everyone, however foolish he may be, has a share in God's providence²; but, in my opinion there is no one more foolish than an alchemist."

Joseph—"Yes, but these are only your personal views."

Nawab—"Thousands of people have been ruined in the pursuit of alchemy, there is always just something³ lacking. Fondness for alchemy is a sort of madness, and I have found thousands of men suffering from the same malady."

The Nawab continued⁴, "Once a *fagir* Mast Shah by name, who claimed to be an expert alchemist, called on a Thakur⁵.

A huge crowd like a flock of sheep⁶ was always to be found collected at his door, and there was none who did not bow before him. Wherefore Mast Shah had wind in the head⁷.

A *Patwari* did him a very good turn. (Wherefore) Mast, on one occasion, went to his house, asked him to burn some cow-dung cakes, and to bring an unused earthen pot. Putting the pot on the fire, he said, "If

1. *Lid haula wa la quawwata illid billah*:—There is no power or strength except in God!—an Arabic exclamation used by Muslims to express disgust, contempt, and to drive away evil spirits.
2. Literally, Master God provides even His ass with boiled rice.
- 3: Literally, it was always short by one flame.
4. The reader must realise that the whole of this long story is told by the Nawab to Joseph in the railway carriage.
5. *Thakur*: see note I page 191.
6. *Bheriya-dhasan*: like a flock of sheep, to sit all squashed up together.
7. Literally, Mast Shah's brain was on the highest heaven.

you want gold, bring some brass, and if silver, then pewter; but it should not exceed two *tolas*. The *Patwari* straightway brought two *tolas* of brass, which Mast Shah put into the pot together with a few drugs and stoked up the fire.

The *Patwari* was delighted with the thought of getting two *tolas* of gold, and the prescription for alchemy as well. Mast Shah was a cunning rogue, and no doubt about it. He could out-juggle¹ a juggler and choosing a moment when the *Patwari* was not looking², he took the brass out of the pot and replaced it with a *tolas* weight of gold, and said to him, "My boy, you sit here, I shall soon be back, but don't stoke up the fire."

Mast Shah, after having made the *Patwari* sit down, and bamboozled him³, cleared off. The *Patwari* waited for him for an hour, and then, on the advice of a friend, opened the pot⁴, took out the brass with the tongs, and beheld, it was (a piece of) glittering gold! He was astounded⁵.

Patwari—"Gold ! Gold !"

The friend—"How marvellous, and where has Mast Shah gone?"

Patwari—"Gold ? Is it really gold?"

The friend—"Why yes!"

Patwari—"Well, go off to Jagan Nath Bakhsh, and tell him exactly how alchemy is effected."

1. A *tolas* is the weight of two piees, and equals 12 *mas*s.
2. Literally, cut the ears of jugglers.
3. Note the expression in Urdu.
4. *Patti parhand*: literally means to teach a child the letters on a slate or blackboard etc.
5. *Handiya* is the diminutive of *hanti*.
6. Note the expression in Urdu.

The friend—"From to-day I believe in Mast Shah."

Patwari—"He is a most marvellous¹ dervish!"

The friend—"There is not a doubt of it!"

The *Patwari* and his friend noised it about the whole of that quarter of the town that in a second Mast Shah, had turned brass into gold. The people hurried in and were amazed² at the sight of the gold. Now the pot, from which the gold had been taken out, was carefully scrutinised by some two hundred people. Some tried to find out what the drugs were, some smell it, and some scratched it to find out what it contained, but all to no avail. No clue was found.

Patwari—"Well, that's real alchemy alright, isn't it?"

A Neighbour—"Yes rather!"

Some fifteen or twenty men went to look for Mast Shah, and each was intensely keen to get hold of him for himself. At last he was found in the hut of a beggar by Thakur Gajraj.

Thakur—"I have been looking for you."

Mast—"Why?"

Thakur—"Come along with me please."

Mast—"No, I won't."

Thakur—(clasping his hands) "Well, I shall insist on taking you with me."

Mast—"Get along with you, and don't worry me!"

Thakur (putting his cap at Mast's feet)—"I am jolly well going to take you!"

Mast—"You have got a down on me!"

1. Note the meaning of *bd-kamdi*.
2. '*ash*' '*ash karnd*': an Indian corruption of the Arabic *ashsh* which means to be delighted.

The beggar (the owner of the hut)—"Whosoever prayeth to God, His he becometh¹."

The Thakur then asked the beggar to be good enough to pray for him, as all he wanted was to remain in the service of Mast Shah all the days of his life, and his sole desire was that Mast should sit at his door.

Mast Shah, in an offended tone asked if he thought he was a door-keeper.

The beggar, doing his best to smooth matters over, said, "Oh no! he does not mean that you should take on the job of a door-keeper. His idea is that his services should be at your disposal."

Mast—"I don't understand (what he is getting at)."

The beggar—"That doesn't matter, just go along with him."

Mast Shah, after a great deal of objection, finally consented. Although he was satisfied that his trick had come off² and that he was going to reap the benefit of it³, he pretended that he did not wish to go as his secret had been divulged. He also pretended that he was not so avaricious as to wish to make himself famous as an expert alchemist.

Good Heavens! Has anyone ever seen the like of such deceit⁴? Wherever Mast Shah went, people pointed to him as the dervish who was skilled in alchemy, and could turn brass into gold and

1. Note this Hindu proverb. *Har* is one of the names of Shiva.
2. Note the expression in Urdu. *Chakma*: a game at cards; cheating; trickery. *Chakma chaknd* means to be successful in cheating or trickery.
3. *Mand-pukhtiyau*: literally, nice dishes cooked by a maid-servant. See also note 4 page 227.
4. Note the very idiomatic Urdu, which expresses a gasp of surprise.

pewter into silver. But little did they guess the plot he was hatching! Thakur Gajraj took Mast Shah off to his house and a crowd² followed them. Hundreds of simpletons were convinced that he was a marvel, and that he was a master of alchemy. In a few days' time, when he had made complete owls of them all, he managed to entrap a money lender. He too had a mania for alchemy, and was rather an ass³. He was a simple minded fellow, and fell straight into the trap⁴.

Mast Shah told him to bring as much jewellery as he could, as it happened to be the day on which fifty tolas of gold could be made out of one tola. The money lender brought ten thousand rupees worth of jewellery. Mast Shah put it all into an unused pot, and put it on the oven. Mast asked him if he would like the prescription. The money lender laughed, and exclaimed, "Good God! How kind you are, to be sure! Why ask⁵?"

Mast—"Right ho—I will let you have it the day after to-morrow."

Money lender—"Thank you very much."

Mast—"But don't make more than six *mashas*⁶ a day, or you will suffer for it."

Money lender—"What, six *mashas* a day?"

Mast—"That's all."

1. Literally, that a flower is about to open.
2. Literally, the creatures of God.
3. Literally, an enemy of intelligence.
4. *Bharrā*: literally, excitement; stimulus.
5. Note the forcible expression in Urdu, which is perhaps the equivalent of 'Show the dog a rabbit!'
6. A *mashā* is the twelfth part of a *tola*. Note that the word *sazā*, which is the object of the verb *bhayoge* is understood.

Money lender—"I have plenty of money and all that, so you see I am not going to learn how to do it merely with the desire¹ of making money. No—God forbid! all I want to do is to acquire the art of alchemy."

Mast—"Very well, the day after to-morrow in the evening."

Money lender—"And when shall I get it?"

Mast—"What, the jewellery? You will get it to-morrow morning, or rather you will get fifty times as much!"

Money lender—placing his cap at Mast's feet, "Excellent! you really are a first class dervish."

Mast—"Well, just look how well you have looked after me!"

Money lender—"I have done nothing for you. I am good for nothing, damn it!"

Mast—"Now, go away to-day, and come back to-morrow evening."

The money lender left the jewellery with him and went away.

When he got home his wife asked him what he had done with the jewellery.

"I left it with a dervish," he replied, "and he is going to give me back fifty times as much." As soon as his wife heard this, she beat her head. "Alas! Alas!" she cried, "Now I've lost my jewellery— which *fagīr* was it? One can never trust a dervish!"

And what are you going to do if he runs away with it all? And I expect he has gone off by now. He is not mad—now that he has got hold of ten or twelve thousand rupees worth of jewellery, of course he will run away with it."

1. *Tanna*: avarice.

"He is a very respectable man, poor fellow," said the money-lender, "he wouldn't think of doing such a thing—to-morrow evening, for every piece of your jewellery you will have fifty more!"

Wife—"All I want is my own jewellery back please."

Money lender—"I shall go to see him this evening."

Wife—"You don't expect to find any trace of him then, do you?"

Money lender—"You are so suspicious and he is absolutely above-board and straightforward. He is the most marvellous fellow—there is no doubt about it."

Wife—"Alas! my jewellery has gone for good, and that's the end of it!"

Money lender—"Splendid! And so that's what you say, is it, when he's doing you a good turn, the poor fellow!"

Wife—"Of course he'll rob you; don't think for a minute he is doing us a good turn."

Money lender—"Nothing will induce me to go to-day, but if I do, it will be in the evening."

[The woman saw that the *fagir* had taken her husband in completely, and that nothing would convince him that he was wrong! She got up quietly and sent for her brother, whom she told that he (her husband) had taken Rs 10,000 worth of her jewellery; and now said that Mast would give him back fifty times as much, and nothing would make him see reason? She then asked her brother to post two or

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1. Note the expression in Urdu.

2. *Hat'i mande hain na jith*: literally, he neither admits his defeat nor claims success.

three men surreptitiously near Mast's door so that he would not be able to get away.

Her brother agreed that it was a good idea, but hoped that the *fagir* would not curse him.

"Ten thousand rupees worth of jewellery will be lost," entreated the weeping woman, "for Heaven's sake do something quickly!" Her brother promised to do something about it.

"If I went myself," he said to himself on the way, "or if I took some police with me, or posted a few men on his door, and Mast Shah came to hear of it, and cursed me, I would be ruined; on the other hand, if I don't do anything about it, my sister will lose her jewellery."

Eventually he plucked up courage⁵, and went to see Mast Shah. The door was shut, not a living soul was at home, so he thumped the door, but got no reply. Then he called out, but no one answered³—he shouted—still no reply. For an hour on end he kicked up a row at the door, but with no result. Had anyone been within, he would surely have got a reply; but it seemed that not a living soul was there.

Eventually a woman from inside the house asked what he wanted.

"I want to see Mast Shah," he replied, "that's what I've come for. Open the door—open the door!"

"He doesn't live here any longer," she replied, "he left some days ago, and I don't know where he has gone."

"How funny," he said, "Why he sent for me

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1. *Ta'ayyunnat*: vulgar, *ta'innat* (plural of *ta'ayyun*), appointments or appointment.

2. Literally, hardened the heart.

3. Note the Persian expression.

to-day to bring him some sweets; I wonder where he has gone."

The woman—"Oh! he never asks for anything. There are very few about like him!"

The man—"Now my good woman, just open the door please, and we will have a little talk."

The woman—"My husband is out, so of course I can't open the door for you; if you hadn't been a young man it would have been a different matter—suppose I open the door and my husband comes back—what then? Just think of all the trouble I should get into for nothing.² No, I won't open it!"

The man—"Now my dear, he was here till early this morning wasn't he! Where has he gone now?"

The woman—"Oh well Sir, at times he has been seen in Agra, and then in Calcutta, and now and again in Husainabad—sometimes he is out on the tiles—but what does it matter—he is a *fagiri* and not a man who is tied to the house!"

The man—"What relation are you to him?"

The woman—"No relation at all Sir—all I know is that he is a good *fagiri*."

The man—"Well, I had better be off now, hadn't I?"

The woman—"Oh no, (smiling) I'll get a bed out for you (if you like), and you can rest for a bit!"

The man—"Well, I never did—have it your own way, you will be responsible for the consequences—you

1. *Aise waise thori hi hain*: Note that strong negation is sometimes expressed in Urdu by the use of *thori hi, thore hi* etc. e.g. *Aise mulk men vel thori hi hai*. There is no such thing as a railway in a country like that.
2. Literally, I will be beaten with shoes and slippers free, gratis and for nothing.
3. *Girhast*: a housekeeper.

are not playing the game. How long will a small unripe mango remain hidden under the leaves? It is bound to be sold one day in the *bagaar*. (cf: murder will out)!"

The woman—"Where?"

The man—"In the *bagaar*."

The woman—"Are you a country bumpkin?"

The man—"Bumpkin or no bumpkin, that doesn't matter, but you will get into trouble for this, and don't you forget it."

The unfortunate man then went away to the shop of a mutton seller, and asked the owner of the shop if anybody lived there.² The latter replied that a dervish had been living there for the last few days.

"Is he still here?" he asked.

"I have just seen him," replied the butcher.

The man then told the butcher that his name was Munna Lal and that he was a money lender, and that he wished to meet the *fagiri*.

"Why?" asked the butcher.

"Oh, because I want to get a magic chord³ and a charm out of him," replied the money lender.

The butcher—"Did you shout for anybody at his house, and did you get any answer?"

The money lender—"Yes I did, but I got no reply."

That very evening the money lender himself went to the house, and, on arrival, started to kick up

1. The obscene allusion here is obvious. *Gawdr* is a peasant churl; boor etc, who, as a rule cannot pronounce the letter Z.
2. Note the colloquial contraction of *khadi*, which is used to show familiarity.
3. A knotted chord made of threads, which has been blessed by a *fagiri*, and is worn to avert the evil eye etc.

a tremendous row, shouting, "Open the door, open the door—*Shah ji*; *Shah ji Sahib*, *Aji Shah ji Sahib*! Is there anyone in? Open the door—open it—oh, oh! Won't anyone pay any attention? Good God! What a damned lot of fools they are!"

No one replied or even blew their nose.

The butcher (to the money lender)—"Someone else has been to call before, but of course I don't know what his name was. He too shouted out, but got no reply."

The money lender—"Is anyone in? Open the door—open the door! Have you all been bitten by snakes? Open the door, damn you, or I will break it down—is any one there? Open the door—if there is anyone in, then why the hell don't you answer?"

But the door remained closed—the house was empty—and deadly silence reigned all round. There was not a living soul there—notwithstanding, he went on kicking up a shindy for a long time.

Money lender—"This joke has gone far enough—now, just open the door and be done with it."

The butcher—"What rot! Is there anyone inside to open it? What a fool you are!"

Money lender—"Oh *Shah ji*!"

Narrator²—"But there is no *Shah ji*!"³

Money lender—"Shah Sahib, oh *Shah Sahib*!"

Narrator—"Splendid!"

Money lender—"Now I have grasped it—now I see it all!"

1. *Tum ko* is understood here. *Sāmp kī sāngh jānd*: to be bitten by a snake.
2. Note these asides by the author to help those who are slow in the uptake to appreciate the story.
3. Note the use of these questions which indicate strong negation.

Narrator—"Well, anyway its time you did!¹ Oh, so you have only just realised it have you?"

Money lender—"My dear *Shah ji*, be a good fellow and open the door. If you are anything like a gentleman² you will open the door quickly."

There was no reply; and how could there be, when no one was in?³

He then began to question the neighbours (as to the *Shah*'s whereabouts).

Money lender (to the butcher)—"Well when did he actually leave?"

Butcher—"He was here till yesterday all right, but how the hell am I to know when he went?"

Money lender—"Now was it to-day or yesterday?"

Butcher—"He is as unstable as the waves of the sea, and he goes wherever the waves of his fancy take him—now how the devil am I to know where he is?"

Money lender—"I will summon you all as witnesses."

Butcher—"God save us from that! What sort of witness do you mean?"

Money lender (to a perfume dealer)—"Now my good fellow, do you happen to know in which direction he went? Was he here yesterday?"

Perfume dealer—"Who are you talking about?"

Money lender—"Did anyone put up in this house?"

Perfume dealer—"Yes Sir, one Mast Shah by name, a *fagw*."

1. Note the expression in Urdu.
2. *Bhal mansi*: from *bhalā mānus*, a good man.
3. *To jāwab dē* is understood after *koi ho bhī*. Here *bhī* has the force of 'at all'.

Money lender—"Where is he now?"

Perfume dealer—"He came to my shop last night and bought two *tolas* of otto, I saw him again this morning, but have not seen him since; he may be on his way back now."

Perfume dealer's assistant—"Indeed Sir, he is a wandering ascetic, and so, of course has no fixed abode—he is all over the place, sometimes here, sometimes in Calcutta, sometimes somewhere else."

Money lender—"Do be a good fellow¹ and find out where he is now."

Perfume dealer—"Why?"

Money lender—"I have some business with him."

Perfume dealer—"Oh, do you want a charm, or some piece of cord he has blessed, or is it something else?"

Money lender—"How can I tell you? My good fellow, I am utterly ruined—it is too dreadful."

Perfume dealer—"Dear me, what can have happened? Do tell me."

Money lender—"My friend, what am I to say?" (heaving a deep² sigh) Alas!

Perfume dealer—"I don't understand what you are getting at."

Money lender—"Now tell me, is he to be found? Otherwise I shall have to report the matter to the police station."

Perfume dealer—"Is it a criminal³ offence? How too dreadful! So it has gone as far as that has it—what a shame!"

1. Note the use of *jeen* to show affection.
2. Literally, cold.
3. *Fauj-dāvā*: the office of a magistrate; the criminal court.

The money lender kept it up¹ for hours on end, and screamed and yelled until scores of men gathered round and plied him with questions in their amazement.

A man—"Well, what actually has happened?"

Another—"Has any scoundrel² run away with your money?"

A third—"This (house) was occupied by the *Shah jē*."

A fourth—"He is sure to be inside; but, being a *fagir* he probably has some objection to opening the door. They are so whimsical."

A fifth—"But he says that he has run away with some money."

A sixth—"Hold your tongue, or it will rot!"

A seventh—"The man is an ass³. Why Mast Shah himself can produce lakhs of rupees by means of an insignificant drug—he cares for no one!"

An eighth—"He is going to do him in⁴."

A ninth—"Why are you talking all this blithering rot about his doing him (the *Shah jē*) in. He is not a poor man or a pauper like you—why the man is a millionaire⁵—yes a millionaire—he is not one of the common herd—and then you say that he is going to 'do him in'!"

A tenth—"Well, one must always take care not to fall into the clutches of a *fagir*. And one who gives out that he is an alchemist must be an out and out swindler—that claim in itself is proof enough!"

1. Note this very free translation.
2. *Harfī*: a rival; opponent; adversary; enemy.
3. Literally, he has eaten grass (like a donkey).
4. Note the expression in Urdu.
5. Literally, the lord or possessor of a *lakh*.

Money lender—"That's quite right—bad luck to it—my good fellow I see it all now."

A bystander—"How much was the jewellery worth—how much?"

Money lender—"My dear fellow I have been robbed of everything I possess—what a fool I have been—one or two people even warned me about it, but unfortunately I was slow in the uptake."

The bystander—"When did you actually hand it over to him?"

294 Money lender—"Why, just to-day."

The bystander—"Well then break down the door; what on earth is the good of standing here and looking at it?"

Some of them advised him to get someone to climb over the wall and to open the door.

"How long," they asked, "are you going to stand here blubbing?"

The money lender by this time was utterly distraught.²

Eventually one of them scaled the wall, dropped down the other side and opened the door. Some fifty rushed in with a cheer. "Where is he?" they yelled, "Where is he? Hullo, there's no sign of him—there isn't a soul here—the place is absolutely deserted!"

The money lender—"Look for him—do just look for him—he must be somewhere about."

The people—"Where are we to look?"

The money lender—"How ghastly, my friends, alas, I am utterly ruined."

The people—"What a dreadful trick he has

1. Note the expression.
2. Note the expression.

played, to be sure—and has run away with the jewellery and all!"

The money lender—"He has done for me!"

The people—"Come along, let's have another look for him, we may find him—it is quite likely that he is hiding somewhere or—"

The money lender—"Won't he come back again?"

The people—"Well, if he does he must be madder than even you are! (laughter)

The money lender—"Alas! I have lost my money and am called a fool into the bargain!"

The Narrator—"Firstly the loss of one's property, and in addition to that, the tearing of one's neighbours²."

The money lender (sitting down)—"I am absolutely undone and ruined³."

The people—"Was it jewellery or cash?"

The money lender—"He has done for me; cheated me and cleared off."

The people—"Now Sir, what was it—jewellery, cash or notes?"

A baker—"No Sir, I'm sure it was cash⁴."

A barber—"No, it was not cash but jewellery."

An oilman—"What on earth happened—did some thief come along—who was it that took the stuff?"

A Brahman—"It was no ordinary thief, but an expert—why he made an astrological calculation⁵ before he came!"

1. Note the force of the repetition of words.
2. A Persian saying which is commonly used in Urdu.
3. Note the expression.
4. Note that *magd* is an adjective and *magdi* is the noun.
5. *Bicharnd*: to ponder; deliberate; calculate.

A Shaikh—"How much was the jewellery worth? Was it a large sum of some three or four thousands?"

The Brahman—"He (the money lender) says that it was worth ten thousand rupees, but I don't know how much it really was. But from all the fuss he has been making it seems that it must have been a large sum and ten thousand rupees is a large amount to be sure."

A barber—"He has been fleeced¹."

The oilman—"Hunt for him in every nook and corner² he may be hidden somewhere."

The baker—"Yes, it is not much of a house, and

1. Literally, he shaved him, and took his hair.

2. Note in this conversation that each of the spectators gives a jocular reply suitable to his own profession etc.:

Thus the Brahman refers to an astronomical calculation; the barber uses the words "has been shaved"; the baker proposes to stuff him in the oven; and the oil man quotes the proverb "Now just look at the oil and its stream", which has the force of 'to look into a matter carefully'. For, before buying oil, one must see it is clean, and this can be effected by pouring some out of the tin and looking at the stream. In this connection there is a story to the effect that once upon a time there was a prince who had four great friends, a soldier, a manlavi, a camel driver and an oil man. When he came to the throne, he appointed them all wazirs. In due course his country was threatened with invasion by the king of a foreign country. In his alarm he asked his wazirs' advice. The soldier said that it was too good a chance to be missed, that he should collect his forces and fight the enemy. The manlavi protested against the spilling of innocent blood, and said that it didn't matter if he lost his country, as the enemy would lose their faith and become infidels, if they took it. The camel driver advised him to wait and see on which side the camel lay down (which side the cat would jump) whilst the oil man agreed with the views of the latter and said, "look at the oil and its stream."

when we do find him¹, I'll stuff him into the oven."

The Brahman—"Report the matter to the police station straightway so that they may take steps immediately, otherwise he will escape again and get clean away²."

The money lender—"Yes rather! then there may be some chance of finding him."

(A police Jemadar with two constables³ appeared on the scene).

The Jemadar—"Was the jewellery yours, or whose was it?"

The money lender—"Yes (it was mine)."

The Jemadar—"How much of it was there, and was it silver or gold?"

The money lender—"No Sir, it was pewter and brass."

The people—"Well, I never did! he is a very rich man and the jewellery was all gold and nothing but gold."

The Jemadar—"Then why has he given us all this trouble? And if he is a rich man, why is he blubbing⁴ for a handful of jewellery? If it has gone, well let it go (and be damned to it)!"

The money lender—"It was a large sum."

The Jemadar—"Well, what of it?"

The Jemadar searched every hall, room, and closet, and went on the roof to find him. Then the entrance hall was searched, but all to no avail, there was no trace of Mast Shah.

1. Note the force *nd* here, which means, "you just wait and see!" etc.

2. Literally, will bring news from far off stages.

3. *Bary andáz*: see note 3 page 169.

4. Note the inflected past participle *roe*, which is used to show impending action.

The money lender (wringing his hands)—“Well, now I shall take arsenic and kill myself.”

The Jemadar—“No, please don't—you just wait and see, we'll find him alright—it will be splendid if he is found; and if he isn't, well it can't be helped—what more we can do? Don't be an ass and take arsenic!”

The money lender—“I'll bet you won't find him!”

The Jemadar (taking him aside)—“Now come on tell me the truth, how much money was it?”

The money lender—“It wasn't money, it was jewellery.”

The Jemadar—“How much was there?”

The money lender—“It was worth ten thousand; it may be a bit more than that, but certainly not less.”

The Jemadar—“Tell me exactly, otherwise what is the good of all this?”

The money lender—“Oh what filthy bad luck I do have—what possible advantage should I get out of telling lies?”

The Jemadar—“Why is a rich man like you blubbing over a paltry ten thousand rupees?”

The money lender—“Well I never—that's a good one—so it's a mere flea-bite is it?”

The Jemadar—“And you an educated man into the bargain!”

The money lender—“Now are you going to do anything about this or are you merely going on talking bosh?”

The Jemadar—“What shall I do about it?”

1. The past tense of *chakna* used with the root of another verb may indicate a strong future negation.

The money lender—“Oh, post some men at the (various) entrances (to the city) and search the city for him.”

The Jemadar—“First of all let me make an enquiry!”

The money lender—“But this is the enquiry, isn't it?”

The Jemadar—“Call the butcher!”

The butcher—“Here I am!”

The Jemadar—“Now what do you know about the *fagir* who has been living in this house? Now mind that you tell me the truth and nothing but the truth.”

The butcher—“What on earth should I know about Mast Shah?”

The Jemadar—“Now go on my boy.”

The butcher—“Well, all I know is that he went away owing me the price of seven seers of meat, and be damned to him, at any rate he won't enjoy it for long.”

The people burst out laughing at this.

The Jemadar—“So he has robbed you as well, has he?”

The butcher—“If ever I come across him I will throw him on the ground and cut his throat!” But first we must find him and there is very little chance of that!”

The Jemadar then asked the people of the quarter who had gone to see Mast Shah.

“Had there been one or two visitors,” they replied, “we might have given you a description of them; had there been ten we might have named

1. Note the plural noun *tehgigdt* is used in Urdu as sing. fem.
2. *Pachhāyrd*: to throw an animal for slaughtering.

them, but how can we give you any description of them when hundreds of people visited the place from morn till eve. From daybreak people frequented the house; Tom, Dick and Harry, they all turned up, and good God! what the devil of a crowd there was, to be sure!"

"There was no nationality or profession," said another, which was not represented at his house. Some went there to learn alchemy, others to be blessed with a son, whilst others went merely to pay their respects to the holy man. These people are just like a flock of sheep. The hubbub went on all day long."

The Jemadar—"By God, he was a blackguard alright and no mistake!"

A man—"Don't say such a wicked thing—God forbid! He is a very good man as I alone know."

Another—"I tell you that this money lender is simply going to do him in. It is out of the question for a *fاجر* like Mast Shah to steal jewellery."

A third—"I quite agree."

A fourth—"Verily the people of this world are like dogs—I have put the very best *fajirs* to the test, and have found nothing but deceit in them!"

The Jemadar—"Yes, I too know that very well."

The money lender—"Now everyone is at liberty to say what he likes."

The Jemadar—"My good fellow, I can't believe that ten thousand is right."

The money lender—"Well I'm off to the Inspector—What sort of enquiry can a poor fool like you make?"

Note the force of repetition of words.

The Jemadar—"Alright, get along with you."

The money lender—"Now I call all of you people to witness that this man is only quarrelling with me and bullying me."

The Jemadar—"What a damned fool he is, isn't he!"

The money lender—"Keep a civil tongue in your head, won't you."

The Jemadar—"Very well, just dictate to me exactly what you have lost."

The money lender—"Ten thousand rupees worth of jewellery."

The Jemadar (noted down), "Jewellery to the value of ten thousand rupees has been lost. (The money lender first put the value of the jewellery at four thousand, then at eight hundred, and finally at ten thousand rupees)." This last was added by the Jemadar.

The Jemadar—"What are the details of the jewellery?"

The money lender—"It consisted of various articles."

The Jemadar—(The petitioner was questioned as to the details of the property, to which he replied that he could not recollect them. Afterwards he was asked how he came to know the value of them, and he said that he would make the Government pay him ten thousand rupees for them).

This sentence was also added by the Jemadar in his (the money lender's) statement.

The money lender—"It is getting late, and men must be sent to the various entrances (of the city) or he will never be found."

The Jemadar—"Well my dear sir!—If there is a special law issued for you, that is another matter, otherwise I shall act in accordance with my own departmental routine."

The money lender—"Oh well, have it your own way."

The Jemadar—"I am sure that you *have* lost some of your jewellery, for you are so deadly pale²; but not ten thousand rupees worth—two or three hundred is more like it."

A *Shaiikh*—"Oh no! would a wealthy man like him be so broken-hearted³ and crushed⁴ for a paltry two or three hundred rupees? It must have been a large sum."

The Jemadar—"Good Sir! These people simply worship wealth; if they lose a pice out of their pocket⁵, they won't touch any food."

The money lender—"I have not only been swindled out of my money but have become the laughing stock of my neighbours⁶."

The Jemadar—"Yes, and you richly deserved it⁷."

The money lender—"It is too ghastly!"

The *Shaiikh*—"Lala Sahib—you have made a mistake alright, and no mistake about it; but God it is who solves all difficulties⁸."

1. Literally, kind to the slave; from Persian *banda*, a slave, and *nawakhatan*, to be kind to.
2. Literally, deadliness is overshadowing your face.
3. Literally, having a shrunken heart.
4. Literally, withered.
5. *Tūt*: literally, a cotton pod.
6. See note 2 page 265.
7. Note the signification of *ba-jā* (in place).
8. *Masabbih ul asbab*: literally, the causer of causes.

The money lender—"Don't call it a mistake my Reverend Sir—I have made a damned fool of myself!"

The Jemadar—"And so it seems."

The money lender—"Ten thousand rupees is a large sum after all—Good God! isn't it?"

Two or three bystanders advised him (the money lender) to go to see the Inspector and to tell him all about it. "The Jemadar is a fat-head¹," they said, "and we have fallen into his clutches before now. May God save any good gentleman from him! He is not wicked; but when wisdom was being distributed (in the *darbar* of God) he was absent—and that's all that is wrong."

The Jemadar and the money lender, followed² by a large crowd arrived at the police station. The Inspector asked why there was such a crowd and if there had been an accident³.

The Jemadar—"Here is a banker."

The Inspector (dead drunk)⁴—"A banker ran away with my wife nine times⁵!"

The Jemadar—"Mast Shah, has taken him in and cheated him."

The Inspector—"What, Mast Shah, the protector of this world the wise and most venerable!"

The Jemadar—"Excellent! Well Sir, now all you

1. Note the expression in Urdu.
2. Note *pachāson*, in fifties, and *piche piche*, coming along behind.
3. *Wāridd*: Note this words, which is the feminine plural of *wārīd*, but is used in the singular sense in Urdu.
4. *Nashe men chtr*: see note 1 page 4.
5. *Sāhukār bārā zar-i-mā naw bār*. The Inspector now becomes maudlin and poetical.

have to do is to complain to the Inspector; and allow me to bid you goodbye¹.

The Inspector—"What the hell does he want? Is he going to plead—is it personal greed—or some dutiful deed—from some debt to be freed? What is it?"

The Jemadar—"He's tight! What a farce it all is to be sure²!"

The money lender—"My hat—now I won't complain to anyone."

The Inspector—"Bring some water—water—water, come along!"

The money lender—"I'm off now. I'm just going to send a few men on patrol through the whole of the city, and will post two or three at the various entrances."

The Jemadar—"No—don't—complain to the Inspector."

The Inspector—"Bring some water—(having drunk some water) thank Heavens for that!" Whereupon he poured some water over his head.

301 A constable—"Sir, please lie down for a little."

Another constable—"Please lie down indoors—the Superintendent may be coming to-day."

A constable—"Yes, that's quite right; the Superintendent is coming to-day, and here are you in this condition!"

The Jemadar—"How dreadful³!"

The Inspector—"Rot—he's not coming⁴."

1. Note the idiom.
2. *Rang* gives the idea of sport and amusement, and also of being flushed with wine. *Tarang*: literally, a caprice; excitement; desire etc.
3. See note 1 page 240.
4. Note the expression in Urdu.

The Jemadar—"Yes, he is."

The Inspector—"But look here¹ to-day is Thursday."

The Jemadar—"Yes Sir, you are quite right! Here this money lender has something to say to you."

The Inspector—"Will you just deal with him for the time being please—I am just going to have a snooze."

"The Inspector is not feeling quite himself just at present," said the money lender, "and if you will let me, I will take some steps myself." Saying which, he left the police station. Throughout the whole city it had been noised abroad that Mast Shah had run away with some stuff he had looted, and that he was a wolf in sheep's clothing².

Some said that he was a crook³, and some who were credulous and had faith in him, insisted that the money lender was going to do him down, and that what he said was wrong. They were dead certain that he was libelling Mast Shah.

Lala Har Parshad was the most firmly convinced of any of them, and later on fell out⁴ with some of them about it.

Mannu—"It was lucky that I too was not had for a mug, for he asked me for some jewellery as well."

1. Note the force of *to*.
2. *Rangd stigdar*: literally, a coloured jackal.
3. *Bane sudh*: there are two possible readings of the latter word—*sudh*, which means straight; right; all square, and *sikh* which means a saint; a holy man. In either case the expression means, one who pretends to be straight forward.
4. Note the use of the verb *parwad* here which is used to effect emphasis, and shows that the action was spontaneous.

Lala Har Parshad—"Get along with you and don't talk rot!"

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Mannu—"Oh, I'm not telling lies."

The *Lala*—"You are talking rot, why the *Shah ji* himself can produce crores of rupees."

A *Khan Sahib*—"Well if not crores he took away thousands." (shouts of laughter).

"It is simply your suspicious natures," said the *Lala*, "and you should not be so suspicious—It is most unreasonable to abuse a dervish without very good cause."

The money lender—"Ho—dervish you call him do you? So you won't call him a fraud and cheat—what sort of dervish is he pray? A fine saint he is to be sure—and you go about calling him a dervish! "Are those who abscond¹ with ten thousand rupees called saints?"

The *Khan*—"But you Sir, are an extraordinarily simple sort of fool for a money lender, that you should have been taken in by such a clumsy trick."

The money lender—"It was just my luck."

The *Khan*—"Ten thousand rupees was a large sum for you to have handed over all at once."

A man then came up and related that he had come in from one of the entrances to the city, and that he had seen a *fagir* seated under a tamarind tree near by, talking to three or four men in a very low tone of voice.

"They were asking him," he said, "to distribute half the jewellery among them, but he would not agree to this. All the time I was listening to the conversation without them knowing it. Had I known² that

1. *Lambd honai*: to run away.

2. Note the idiomatic use of the aorist for the past conditional.

the holy man was a master thief¹, I would have rounded him up² but how was I to know that? And then if I had not arrested him I should have changed my name *Zahur Bakhsh*³ to something else."

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The money lender—"Oh, what bad luck!"

Zahur Bakhsh—"I am very sorry (for having made a mess of it)."

The money lender—"How tall was he?"

Zahur—"How tall? He was of medium height."

The money lender—"And his eyes?"

Zahur—"Blue."

The money lender—"And his hair?"

Zahur—"Brown, just like English people have."

The money lender—"That's the man right enough—what was he wearing?"

Zahur—"He had a sandal coloured *tabband* (round his loins) and a staff in his hand."

The money lender—"Come along and tell them all about it in the police station."

Zahur—"No, Sir! Why I'll curse anyone who even goes there with you. (For one thing) who is there to give any evidence? Who is there to wrangle with the pleaders—there are hundreds of complications and I for one am not going to run about all over the place for a fortnight or more!"

The money lender—"What!"

Zahur—"Well, *aweruei*⁴."

1. Literally, the uncle of thieves.

2. Literally, I would have measured his neck; *i. e.* I would have done for him.

3. *Zahur Bakhsh*: literally, manifestation-giving.

4. Note the use of this unimportant Persian expression, which is the equivalent of, "Well, I must be off now," and is used here by way of a joke.

The money lender—"What a joke it all is!"

The people reasoned with him. "My good man!" they said, "Are you afraid of going to the police station? Here is a man who has lost ten thousand rupees, and you haven't the least sympathy for him."

Four constables, taking the money lender and Zahur Bakhsh with them, went to the entrance to the city, and proceeded in the direction of the tamarind tree, where they found nothing but desolation. They asked where exactly it was they had been sitting, and Zahur Bakhsh showed them. They wrung their hands in despair.

One of the constables said that he would find out what had happened to them.

They went along to a hemp seller's shop at the corner of the road and enquired.

The constable—"Has any *fugir* been here?"

The hemp seller—"I don't know Sir."

The constable—"How long have you been sitting here?"

The hemp seller—"Sir, I have been keeping this shop for some years past."

The constable—"Well my good fellow, what are you afraid of?"

The hemp seller—"Yes, I really am afraid."

The constable—"You are a perfect idiot; you are in no way concerned in it; all you have to do is to tell me all you know about it."

The hemp seller—"Save me! and don't let me be dragged into Court."

The constable—"Well then just tell me all about it."

The hemp seller—"Some two hours ago he came

1. Note the expression in Urdu.

to my shop, sat down and asked for some hemp. I gave him some very thick and well pulverized hemp concoction, in which there was some *dudhiga*¹, some pepper-corns, and some clean sugar of Shahganj.

"He drank it up and said, 'My boy² you are a good fellow'.

He then gave me a cowrie shell, and laughed when I took it."

The constable—"Was there anyone with him?"

The hemp seller—"Yes, there were three others."

The constable—"Did they all drink too?"

The hemp seller—"Yes, they all did."

The constable—"Well, and what happened then?"

There was a workman sitting in the hemp seller's shop, who told them that Mast Shah, after drinking the stuff had gone over to the sweet shop opposite, and that one of his companions had lain down on a *charpai*, but that he didn't know what had happened to them or where they had gone after that.

The constable asked the sweetmeat seller about it, but, as soon as the latter saw the constable, he lost his head completely³, and started by denying that he had any knowledge of the matter at all⁴.

The constable—(sternly) "Speak up or⁵ I will take you off to the lock up! and you will come to your senses⁶ in the police station all right."

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1. *Dudhiga*: *bhang* mixed with milk.

2. Note that *bachcha* in the vocative case is not inflected, which is a mark of familiarity.

3. Literally, his hands and feet swelled up.

4. *Jante wante*: note the meaningless appositive *wante*, which has the effect of intensifying the verb.

5. *To* is understood after *nahn*.

6. Literally, you will come to know the rate of flour and pulse.

The sweetmeat seller—"Well, I don't know all the people who come to my shop, nor is it my business to recognize them."

The money lender—"Then what are you afraid of?"

The sweetmeat seller—"Please tell me what it is that you want out of me."

Meanwhile the hemp seller came up. He reasoned with the sweetmeat seller so that eventually the latter said, "There were four of them, and after drinking the hemp they got hungry, and they came over to my shop and had some sweets—one of them was a sort of dervish¹ and there were three others.

Between them they ate one and a half seers of *laddus*², three *subals*³ and some *baryā*⁴. One of them lay down, and after a while they all went away, and God alone knows where they went."

The constable—"How much did they pay you?"

The sweetmeat seller—"They paid me two rupees."

The constable—"Do you know where they went?"

The sweetmeat seller—"Of course I don't. How should I know where they have gone?"

A clerk in the P. W. D.⁵ who was employed in that part of the world said that they had been talking

1. Note that *shāh* when followed by *jī* or *sāhib* means a dervish.
2. *Laddū*: a kind of sweetmeat shaped like a ball.
3. *Subāl*: wheat flour kneaded with water and made into very thin cakes fried in *ghī* or oil.
4. *Baryā*: a sweetmeat made of sugar and milk.
5. *Sezā*: Department; *ta'mīnāt* is the plural of *ta'mīn*, a building.

among themselves and had proposed to go to Shah Fasih's cemetery¹, and that was probably where they had gone. The constables and the money lender went off to Shah Fasih's cemetery.

The money lender—"Now we shall see whether we will find him or, (otherwise) there will be a fruitless end to all our endeavours². Up to now we have gone on getting information, but now it seems that it is unlikely we shall get any more. It is really getting very difficult. Of course it would be simply splendid if they were all found in Shah Fasih's cemetery."

A constable knew the way, so the four constables, the money lender, Zahur Baksh, and two or three other idlers³ set out for Shah Fasih's cemetery, all talking (about the matter). On the way they were met by the money lender's brother, brother-in-law, son, and some friends. They were in a carriage, from which they alighted, and started a conversation with the money lender.

The money lender—"I'm in terrible trouble to-day alright!"

One of the friends—"I am astonished at you! What ever induced you to do such a thing? If I had been in your place I would have killed the

1. *Takya*, literally means a pillow, place of repose etc. and hence a monastery, cemetery which are often sanctuaries for criminals.
2. Literally, we remain licking the lemon (with) the salt. Note that the word for lemon is *nībū* and *nīmū* is the vulgar pronunciation of it. *Nīm* is the Hindi word for salt.
3. Note the misprint for *be-fāre* which means thoughtless people.

fagir, and have got something out of him into the bargain!"

The money lender—"What is done is done, and that's the end of it."

The friend—"You are obsessed with this craze for alchemy, and this will be a jolly good cure for it. If, despite the loss of this ten thousand rupees, you lose your passion for alchemy, I think that you will have come out of it well. You found an instructor, who took ten thousand rupees of your money, but he gave you a lesson which you won't forget!"

The money lender—"Now I have not only lost my money, but have become the laughing stock of my neighbours as well."

The friend—"That is quite correct."

The money lender then told them that the cut-pits were believed to be in Shah Fasih's cemetery.

They told him to get into the carriage and bring the constables along with him, and they would follow in a cab. The money lender got in with two of the constables and the other two sat on the box.

In a short while the carriage with the *Lala Sahib* arrived at the cemetery. They looked all over the place, but not a living soul was to be seen except in one corner where a group of men was sitting gambling.

A constable—"Here! One of you fellows come here!"

A negro—"Hullo, what's the matter with you?"

A constable—"Come here, and don't talk so much?"

1. *Ainsh lete* : would have twisted.
2. *Lald* : a term of respect for up-country Hindu bankers and other local notables of that community.
3. Literally, don't make speeches.

The negro—"What do you say?"

The money lender—"Come along."

Another constable caught hold of the negro by the arm and dragged him along, and a third arrested two of the others.

"Has any *fagir* been here?" he asked, "if you tell the truth," he added, "we will let you go, otherwise you will be had up for gambling!"

The negro—"How on earth can I tell you anything unless you ask me something?"

The constable—"Has any *fagir* been here recently?"

The negro—"There may have been for all I know."

The constable—"Won't you tell?"

The negro—"We were all busy gambling, so how could we see him?"

The constable—"All right, now ask these other two."

One of them—"I know nothing about it whatsoever Sir."

The other—"I haven't seen anything like a *fagir* here."

The constable—"Oh! You haven't seen them, haven't you!—Take them off to the police station!"

One of them—"Right ho! go along."

The other—"Right ho! let's get a move on. I have no objection², but..."

The constable—"But what? What do you mean by 'but'?"

Thereupon the man made a clean breast of it all.

1. Literally, you will be put under arrest for the crime of gambling.
2. Note the idiom in Urdu.

"A *fagir* has just been here," he said, "and there were three other men with him. On arrival here they smoked some *charas*¹ and chewed some small pieces of sugar cane. Then they sat down, smoked a *hugga*, (joined in our game, at which) they lost a stake of eight rupees. After a while one of them came back and won six rupees, so when he left he was actually two rupees to the bad."

The constable asked in which direction they had gone.

He replied that he did not know, but that he had heard him say that he was off to Tikait Ganj, to which his companions had agreed and suggested that they should spend the night there.

The constable—"Now, do you happen to know any of the three?" "No!" replied the man.

"Why don't you ask me? I will tell you all right," said the other.

The constables, the money lender, Zahur Bakhsh and a few other idlers were on the point of leaving for Tikait Ganj when the money lender's relatives² drove up. They asked if any clue had been found, and the money lender asked them to be kind enough not to ask him about it.

"We went to the entrance of the city," he said, "but we didn't find a soul there. Then we were told that we would find them in Shah Fash's cemetery, but here the people say that he has gone to Tikait Ganj; so now we are going there. I seem to be hopelessly involved in this matter: but what is to be

done—one has to pay for one's own mistakes—one suffers for one's mistakes—as one sows so must he reap!'" And so, leaving the carriage and the servants for them, they (the relatives) went home, and in a short while the Lala Sahib reached Tikait Ganj.

A constable (addressing a peasant)—"Has any *fagir* been here lately?"

The money lender—"Yes, and dressed in clothes dyed with sandal wood?"

The peasant—"No Sir, I haven't seen one."

The constable (addressing a woman)—"Look here, my good woman, has any *fagir* passed by here?"

The woman gave no reply.

The constable went on and asked a tailor² to tell him whether any *fagir* had passed by recently. The tailor replied that he had not seen anyone and that it was his job to sew, and not to watch people.

The money lender—"It will be very difficult to find any clue here for no one will give us any information."

The constable—"Well, go on looking; I'll track him down all right. Our trouble won't be all for nothing."

The money lender—"Our visit here has proved quite useless, but how were we to know that beforehand?"

The constable went on a few paces and saw two men sitting at the door of a house, one of whom was smoking a *hugga* and the other sewing. He went

1. *Charas*: the resinous exudation of the flowers of hemp collected with the dew and prepared for use as an intoxicating drug.
2. The plural of '*aziz*'. Literally, dear ones.

1. An old fashioned Persian proverb.
2. The word *Khalifa*, which literally means successor, is used in India for a tailor, Muslim barber, the assistants of a wrestling arena, who are professional wrestlers.

up to them and said, "A dervish has just this minute been here—he is a criminal. An informer reported it¹ and mentioned your names, and said that you had hidden him somewhere, so you too are implicated in the crime. Now mind you don't move from here."

Tahawwar Khan (another constable)—"Come along, all of you!"

Then he asked the man who was smoking the *hugga* what his name was, and he replied that it was Shiva Bakhsh."

The constable—"What is your profession? Now mind you tell the truth."

Shiva Bakhsh—"I am a *patwari*, which is my hereditary profession."

The constable—"Do women or men live in this house?"

Shiva—"Men."

The constable—"Open the door and I will search the house—open it this minute—you yourself are the culprit."

Shiva—"The door is shut, and my servant has gone to get some milk."

The constable—"Open it yourself then!"

Shiva—"It is difficult to open, you had better wait for a little!"

The money lender—"It seems you are an accomplice."

Shiva—"I too am in Government employ Sir, I know² no dervish or anyone of their ilk, and as I

1. Note the corruption of the English word, and the country dialect, exemplified by the use of *ne* with *bohād*.

2. Note the rustic dialect. *Kā jānat nahin=ko jānte nahin*; and the force of the meaningless appositive *vādhivē*.

know nothing¹ whatever of the matter, what is the good of talking about it?"

The constable—"Well, we can go on talking like this till tomorrow, but first let me know where you have hidden the *Shah ji*."

Shiva—"If I have hidden him anywhere, may I lose the sight of both my eyes?"

The constable—"Very well then, just find out where he is."

The man who had been sitting down and listening all the time, looked at the constable closely and said, "Well, my friend, why do you ask all this—what are you after?"

The constable said that he had some business with him, and if he told him where he was he would be rewarded.

"Good," he said, "I don't earn anything out of sewing, so now I shall join the C. I. D!"

The constable, Zahur Bakhsh, the money lender, and the others went along with the tailor, who first went towards a pond which he walked round, and then climbed over a mound. Nearby was an old and tumble-down mosque, where he took them and told them that that was where they would find the man.

The constable hunted all over the place, and called out, "Come here, come here!"

Another constable—"Have you found him—have you found him?"

The money lender—"Where is he—where is he? Get a lamp someone, will you please!"

The constable—"Here, my boy, there are some clothes here!"

1. *Wagfiyat* is vulgar for *wāgfīyat*.

2. Literally, may both my eyes burst!

The money lender—"Bring 'em out!"
 Another constable—"Are there only clothes? Are you sure there isn't a man as well—look carefully!"
 A third—"There is no sign of any human-being here, but here are the clothes alright."
 Zahur—"They have got away—alas!—they have got away!"

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A loafer—"Well, they've vanished sure enough."
 Zahur—"Now there isn't a chance of getting any trace of them!"

A constable—"Don't say such a thing—why I've caught criminals who have been 'wanted' for years! Is it possible for me to fail?"

Zahur—"Certainly not—it is due to the prestige of the Government!"

Lighting the lamp, Zahur Bakhsh and two other constables searched the whole place, and discovered two earthen pipes, two *tawas*², two *chataraks*³ of musk scented tobacco, one *tahband*, one cap, two sheets, one big *lathi*⁴, and six annas in coppers. From this they deduced that the culprits had been sitting there smoking, and that as soon as they saw the police they cleared off. But what passed comprehension was how they had got away so quickly—and where they had gone.

Zahur—"By God! That was a hot piece of detective work, but now it has become very difficult."

A constable—"Yes, for we can't find out where they have gone."

1. Note the idiomatic use of the verb *chukrud*.
2. *Tawd*: as shard on which the tobacco is placed in a *chitani*.
3. *Adh pao*: the eighth part of a seer—four ounces.
4. *Lath*: a club; cudgel.

Another constable—"But they are bound to be caught: they won't run very far."

The money lender—"Now look here, if he is caught and my jewellery found, it will be simply excellent—a grand slam¹ as one might say."

Zahur—"How much will you let me have out of it?"

The money lender—"Two hundred rupees."

Zahur—"Well, I hope to God he will be found—God grant we may hear some news of him this very moment—then I'll have a jolly good time²."

The constables looked all over the place, and they noticed a hut, and all went off towards it, whispering among themselves.

The money lender—"They would never hide here: they are no novices³ (in the art of robbing)!"

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Zahur—"Good gracious no—they must all be master thieves."

A constable—"Of course they won't be hidden here, but may be we'll find some clue—or discover something which will be useful for identification, in the same way as we found the big *lathi* and the sheets."

The money lender—"Let one man go in front, but with the big *lathi* in his hand—he should not go empty handed."

A constable—"I will go—give me the *lathi*—now just you watch!"

1. *Pau bairah*: the ace in cards, and the twelve in dice; it is used figuratively for good luck.
2. *Gul-chahare urband* = *alalle talalle kannad*. See note 4 page 166.
3. Literally, raw, unripe.

Another—"Take your shoes off, so that there will be no creaking!"

The constable—"Right ho, I'll take them off this minute!"

Taking the *latih*, the constable went up to the hut, and explored it carefully—another constable also went quietly up, and in a low tone of voice asked him if there was anyone there.

The first answered that he didn't know, and told him to wait a bit. Then the *Lala Sahib* and *Zahur Baksh* both went towards the hut, and paused a while in thought. Then they surrounded the hut, and he (the money lender) shouted out, "Come out—come out or I will kill you!"

A voice was heard from inside the hut, "Who is there, my friend? Why do you worry poor folk like us? What wrong have I done to you?"

A constable—"Who are you?"

The *fاجر*—"I am a dervish." (A *fاجر* came out of the hut).

The constable—"Oh! so you are a beggar, are you?"

Zahur—"You are a dervish—a miracle-monger aren't you?"

The *fاجر*—"What! I live by begging."

The constable—"How do you beg?"

The *fاجر*—"I go out in the evening and do my rounds."

The constable—"What do you call out when begging?"

1. Note the idiomatic use of the past tense to express an immediate future.

2. Note that a past habitual tense formed by *karind* is treated as intransitive.

The *fاجر*—"If you wish, favour the beggar with something as a gift to God, and He will reward you for it. Oh my Master! Oh my Lord! fill up my bowl!"

The money lender—"Oh, so he lives here?"

The constable—"Do you know this beggar?"

The money lender—"Why, every evening he gets food from my house!"

The beggar—"Where is your house Sir?"

The money lender—"The big house in Kanari Tola, inside the gate near *Chhatta*."

The beggar—"Yes Sir, the house where *Hulas Bari* is employed; isn't it? I know the place."

The money lender—"Yes, that's it—that's it."

The constable—"Well, dervish, now tell me has anyone been here recently?"

The beggar—"Yes Sir."

Zahur—"Who was it?"

The beggar—"He was a *fاجر* called *Mastan Shah*, who is very fond of alchemy, and there were two or three other scallywags with him."

The money lender—"How long did they stay?"

The beggar—"I really don't know Sir."

The money lender—"What were they doing?"

The beggar—"They sat on the platform Sir in this mosque, and smoked a *hugga*; then they took some opium, peeled some sugar cane, chewed it, talked for a while, and took some lighted firewood off me, for which they gave me two pice—beyond this, I know nothing."

The constable—"What were they talking about?"

The beggar—"Something about some gold, and

1. *Paimānā*: big thick sugar cane.

The constable—"What do you call out when begging?"

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they were discussing the value of some gold bangles. One maintained that they were worth five hundred rupees, while the other estimated four hundred."

The money lender—"Oh, what cruel bad luck!"

Zahur—"The've got away all right."

The money lender—"It's maddening, isn't it."

Zahur—"If only we had arrived a wee bit earlier, we should have caught them!"

The beggar—"Have they committed any theft Sir?"

The money lender—"Theft you call it? why they have looted everything I've got and ruined me"

The beggar—"What was the stuff (they got away with)? probably the very same gold bangles they were talking about."

The money lender put this cap at the beggar's feet and said, "I adjure you by the food which you have been getting for years and years from my house to tell me truly where have they gone."

"May I lose the sight of both my eyes," said the beggar, "if I know anything else about them and why should I hide it? But near here lives the wife of a labourer, whose house is a haunt for blackguards like them, if you ask her you may find out something about them."

Zahur—"What—that same labourer's wife who quarrelled with Mammu Khan?"

The beggar—"Oh no Sir; she has been living here for the last six months."

The money lender, constables, and Zahur Bakhsh, taking the beggar with them, repaired to the house of the labourer's wife where they soon arrived. "Now

1. Note the idiomatic use of the aorist for the past condition.

I must leave you," said the beggar, "for if she comes to know that I directed you here she will most certainly set my hut on fire tomorrow."

Zahur—"All right, you go away."

The money lender—"Open the door, open it."

Zahur—"Shout!"

The money lender—"Open the door, open! Is anybody in?"

The labourer's wife—"Who is it—who are you?"

The money lender—"It is I."

The labourer's wife—"Hasn't 'I' got a name, or is it simply 'I'?" Tell me your name."

The money lender—"Nur Khan."

The labourer's wife—"Where have you come from and whom do you wish to see?"

The money lender—"Well, Mast Shah sent for me to come here, and it has only been by continually asking the way and with the greatest difficulty that I have found my way here."

The labourer's wife—"He has just this minute gone, you will probably find him on the platform at the mosque, will you come in and shall I open the door?"

The money lender—"Yes rather! and you'll give me a *hugga* of sorts² to smoke won't you."

The labourer's wife—"Wait a minute, I'm just coming."

The money lender was delighted, the constables pleased, and Zahur Bakhsh overjoyed that at last they had found a clue, and that Mast Shah could no longer escape. The labourer's wife went and washed her

1. Note the expression in Urdu. *Phunknd* literally means to blow.

2. Note the force of the senseless appositive *wingga*.

face, rolled up some betel nut¹, which she ate, changed her clothes, opened the door and said that he wasn't there.

She then invited them to smoke a *hugga*, and said that she would tell them where he had gone to. As soon as the door was opened, the money lender rushed in, and she was dumbfounded at the sight of him.

Hemistich—"Were you to cut her, there would be no blood in her body (through fear)."

The labourer's wife—"Well, who are you?"

The money lender—"One of God's creatures."

317 The labourer's wife—"What business have you here?"

The money lender—"Oh, I've just come along for fun, let's have a *hugga* to smoke."

The labourer's wife—"Are you a Muslim?"

The money lender was at a loss² how to reply to this, so held his peace.

"That's enough, now out you go"³, said the labourer's wife, "or I shall call out. You're a nice sort of fellow, you are, coming into other people's houses on such a pretence! Why have you come in here pray?"

The money lender—"Mast Shah sent for me, that's why I've come."

The labourer's wife—"And who is Mast Shah, pray? I've never heard of him."

Meanwhile the constable and Zahur Baksh rushed in, at which she was utterly confounded, for

1. *Gilawri*: a betel-leaf prepared and folded ready for chewing.
2. *Sitti bitti bhakand*: to lose one's wits, senses etc.
3. Note the expression in Urdu.

she realized how difficult it would be for her to escape "I've been had for a mug," she thought, "How dreadful!"

Wringing her hands, she said, "You people have taken me in completely, but I don't mind."

A constable—"Tell me, where is Mast Shah?"

The labourer's wife—"Who? Which Shah?"

Another—"Mast Shah."

The labourer's wife—"Search me and I'll tell you!"

A third (constable)—"Now listen to what I say; just chuck playing the ass, and tell us at once where he is."

The labourer's wife—"I've never even heard his name."

Zahur—"Oh! You've just told us to go to the mosque, that he had just been here and had gone on to the mosque, and now you are spinning all these yarns!"

The labourer's wife—"Do you want to kill me?"

Zahur—"If you tell us, you will be let off, otherwise you will get fourteen years."

The labourer's wife—"Pooh! You will have to change your face before you can do that!"

A constable—"She is very rude."

The labourer's wife—"What do you mean by that? Have I stolen anything of your's?"

The constable—"Take her along!"

The labourer's wife—"Begone! get out my house, but mind you, if even so much as a single

1. *Mash banwand*: literally, to make (for) oneself a good face; hence, to fit or qualify oneself for. Note also *Zari*, a form *Zari* used by women.

cowrite shall is lost out of my house, I shall sue you for it and get compensation."

"Look here," said the money lender, "you'll get nothing out of all this talk—d'you see? Do you want me to let you off? Of course I won't let you off—all you have to do is to let us know where he has gone to, and that will be the end of it."

The labourer's wife—"I don't know."

The money lender—"Then why did you admit that you did before?"

The labourer's wife—"Now you get out of my house, and wait outside for a bit, and I'll come along with you."

"Listen to me," said a constable, "let us search her house. What can she do except make a noise, and no one will hear her from here. If she complains about us, we will contradict her by saying that she is talking rot and is trumping up this charge against us: that she is telling a tissue of lies and is inventing this calumny about us."

The constables began to search her house, and the woman raised an hullabaloo², but all to no purpose.

Zahur Bakhsh, whilst searching, cried out, "What is this—what is this, my good fellow?"

He looked at it and found that it was gold.

The money lender—"Let me see—let me see! So it's gold is it?"

Zahur—"Yes Sir, just look at it."

A constable—"Where did you get this from? Are you so rich³ that gold is to be found in your house?"

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1. Note that *turn* is left out after *Chakho koi ham*.

2. *Chapardi* is a meaningless apposition.

3. Note the use of *naqiyat* here.

The labourer's wife flared up and called all of them shocking names. "Splendid! that's a good idea to be sure—so in your opinion I have no position¹ at all. A piece of gold was lying there, and you get hold of it and start to threaten me about it: I absolutely refuse to be browbeaten. Now don't you dare touch anything else or I'll show you what I really can be—damn it all!"

The constable lost his temper and kicked her—"You carrion," he cried, "far from being ashamed of yourself, you go on babbling and concocting this tissue of lies—get out with you!"

The labourer's wife was silent, for she realized that if she talked any more, it would be the worse for her.

The money lender declared that it was a piece of (one of his) bangles. "Confound it!" he said, "you see they have divided up (the stuff) between them, and this piece has become her share."

The constable asked if it were his property. "Yes it is," said the money lender, "it belongs to my unfortunate self—it is all too dreadful and ghastly to think of—but it can't be helped, and I shall consider myself jolly lucky, and shall be extremely grateful if I get anything back."

Zahur—"Come on, tell us all about it, my good woman. You have got nothing to do with it. Just think it over. Only Mast Shah is implicated, not you—tell us all you know about it and you will be set at liberty straightway."

A constable—"All you need tell us is where they have all gone."

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1. *Haisiyat*: capacity; ability; means; resources.

2. Literally, some other women may give into these threats.

The labourer's wife—"Very well, take an oath."

The constable asked what about.

"That you will give me back my piece of gold," said the labourer's wife.

The constable, telling them to bring it and give it to the woman, said,—“Here is your gold, keep it—is that all you want? Now will you tell us? Come on, speak up.”

The labourer's wife—"Very well, come along here in the corner and I will tell you, but only one man must go to find out about it."

The constable—"What do you mean? You will have to go with us to show us the way."

The labourer's wife—"Very well, now listen!"

The constable—"Speak up!"

The labourer's wife—"At the place where the dolls are beaten¹ there lives an old woman, go to her house, and tell her that Mast Shah has sent for you; that your name is Abid Ali, and that he is your brother-in-law. Then she will open the door for you."

Zahur—"I don't believe a word of it—it is all a pack of lies!"

The labourer's wife—"Well I can do no more—I have told you the truth²—go and see for yourselves—it is quite easy³—it is only a few yards away."

Three constables and the money lender went, while Zahur Bakhsh and one constable remained in the hut. The labourer's wife kept the (piece of) gold, saying, "They are bound to be caught now!" The little party reached the cross-roads, and arrived at the place where the dolls were beaten, but there remained the problem of how to find the old women's

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house. A woman carrying some water came along, 321 and a constable asked her which house belonged to the old woman.

Instead of answering, she asked whether, by the word '*Burhi*' he meant an old woman, or a woman called 'Burhan'.

"No," said the constable, "Not her, the old woman."

The woman smiled and said, "She is not old, she is young, but her name is 'Burhi'—that house over there belongs to her."

The constable went up to the door, and called out, "Open the door—open it I say, at once!"

Someone from the inside asked who it was.

The constable—"I have come to see Mast Shah;"

then addressing the money lender, he asked what the name was they had been given, as he had forgotten it for the moment.

The money lender—"It was quite a good name."

Another constable—"Hamid Ali!"

The money lender—"No—Abid Ali—Abid Ali—that's good I've remembered it!"

(Again somebody asked who was at the door).

"Abid Ali," said the money lender.

"And why have you come?"

"I've come to see Mast-Shah."

"Who sent for you?"

"Mast Shah."

"How do you know him?"

"He is my brother-in-law."

A woman came to the door and told them that he had been there but had left. "D'you know anything about it?" she asked, "Have you heard any good news?"

The money lender—"Yes of course I have—how

1. See note 5 page 185.

2. Note the expression in Urdu.

3. Note the expression in Urdu.

could I have failed to hear it."

"The woman—" "What do you know?"

"The matter of the jewellery; that's what he sent for me about."

322 The woman—"Yes, he has made a big haul."

"The money lender—" "Well, open the door—how long are you going to keep me waiting out here?"

The woman opened the door whereupon much to the woman's consternation, the money lender and all the constables rushed headlong in.¹

"Now tell us," said one of the constables, "where Mast Shah has hidden himself."

"He certainly has been here, and there were two or three other men with him," replied the woman, "but now he has gone to the railway station in disguise."

"This woman seems to be quite straight-forward and simple," said the money lender, "but that labourer's wife was very crafty and cunning—she didn't blab for hours—she was a bad hat if you like—but this miserable creature has squealed straight off!" (Then to the woman), "Now tell me the truth, where Mast Shah really is. Has he gone to the railway station or somewhere else?"

A constable—"If she tells the truth, well and good; otherwise she will suffer for it, and no doubt about it; all we've got to say is that Mast Shah was seen in her house by two men, and we will make them give evidence (to that effect), and she will be convicted."

"The woman—" "I keep telling you that he has gone to the railway station; what else am I to say?"

1. *Dhams parind*: literally, to sink in.

They conferred together, and agreed that they had been put to a lot of trouble—

"First we went from the house to the police station," they said "then to the entrance to the city, thence to Shah Fash's cemetery, and from there to Tikait Ganj, and then to the labourer's wife, then on here, and now we've got to go to the railway station—Good God, how too unthinkable! What a confounded nuisance it all is!"

"Well, we must go on," said the money lender, "and I'll reward you all!"

A constable—"If the jewellery is found then, of course, we will be rewarded and well rewarded at that; but if it isn't found, what then?"

Another constable—"It is sure to be found now, we shall pick up a clue at the railway station."

A third—"I hope to God that we shall get a clue and a handsome reward from the Lala Ji into the bargain."

They all agreed to go to the railway station and sent for the head constable of the Tikait Ganj police station, telling him to take the woman into custody as some stolen goods had been found in her house. The head constable ordered her to come along with him to the police station, and asked where her father was: She replied that he must be coming back. Meanwhile he arrived and when he heard all about it, burst into tears. The house was handed over to him; and the constables, the money lender, Zahur Baksh and the rest of them took a cab and went to the railway station. As they arrived the train left!

The money lender, frantic with excitement, cried

1. See note 1 page 240.

2. Note the very free translation.

out to them to stop the train, "Stop it!" he yelled, "There is a dacoit in it—Oh! for the love of God stop it—just a moment!"

A railway policeman—"Oh! it won't stop by your orders!"

Another—"She won't stop now, pass along please and mind your own business!"

The money lender told the whole story to the Station Master, who heard him in silence, and then asked whether the jewellery (really) was worth ten thousand rupees. A few Englishmen, Indian Christians², and Babus gathered round, and poked fun at the Lala, saying, "Why, he was an alchemist, its too easy for him to make fifty out of ten, isn't it!"

The Station Master—"Give me a description of him, and I will send a wire about him."

The money lender gave the description, and a telegram was sent ordering a search (for Mast Shah) to be made in the train, and his immediate arrest (when found).

(At last) the money lender went back home, looking rather foolish³. In that quarter of the town it was noised abroad that the Lala had come back, and that they had tracked down the thief. The people collected in groups and he (the money lender) had to repeat⁴ the story in detail to every new comer.

Mast Shah had acquired such a reputation⁵ that half the town believed in his miraculous powers and his knowledge of alchemy; but since they had come

1. Note the expression in Urdu.
2. *Kārdān*: in Bengal, a clerk; in the Punjab and northern India, a native Christian.
3. Note the idiom in Urdu.
4. Note the use of the rhetorical present tense for the past.
5. Literally, had impressed such a colour.

to hear of this case, most of them thought alchemy mere fraud and make-believe.

As elderly¹ man in the railway carriage took the opportunity to make a very good speech (about alchemy).

He (the Nawab) was still telling the story² when a constable jumped up and arrested the man to whom the Nawab had been talking³, and just then the train stopped at a station.

The passengers⁴, astonished and at a loss⁵, cried, "Good God! For what offence has this unfortunate man been arrested, pray? He has been listening quietly to the story of the alchemist, and all of a sudden this constable comes down on him like a ton of bricks!"

They all shouted and argued with the constable. One of them—"Let him go—Let him go, damn you!"

Another—"Let him go sir! Anyhow, to start with, let us know what crime the unfortunate has committed. You can't possibly arrest a man for nothing—Let him go—who the hell are you?"

A third—"Well, at any rate let his hand alone, he can't run away."

A fourth—"You've been misled, my good fellow! He's not the thief!"

A fifth—"Well, my boy, first let us know why he has been arrested?"

1. *Mu'ammār*: aged, from *'ammār*.
2. Note the very free translation.
3. *Hām-kālm*: literally, conversing together.
4. Literally, the people of the compartment.
5. *Shāsh-dār*: a point of the board at the game of *nard* (which is played with dice) from which one cannot extricate oneself; hence, confounded; at one's wits end.

This isn't Simla! you know, where you can arrest any gentleman you like!"

A sixth—"You aren't drunk, are you?"

"You gentlemen do not know this fellow," said the constable. Then he asked the man his name, and was told that it was Kamaluddin. "Splendid," replied the constable smiling, "Kamaluddin probably lives somewhere else; your name is Mast Shah!"

The fellow tried his best to get his hand free and to escape but all to no avail; the constable held on to him like grim death? Just then, hearing all the noise, the Station Master appeared. He was a fat pot-bellied Bengali Babu, wearing a long *dhoti*, the uniform cap of a Station Master, and very stiff English boots, and came shuffling along.

The Station Master—"Well, why you are making noise?" what is that row⁵?

The head porter—"Why are you making all this disturbance?"

The constable—"This is a criminal. I have checked him with his descriptive roll, and having studied him for the last four stations, am satisfied that he is the very man we're after.

"I didn't speak to him, but kept him under observation lest he should run away. When the train arrived here, and I knew that it would wait for half

1. Simla is proverbial for injustice especially amongst women.
2. *Chapar ghathh karnā*: to arrest, overcome etc. Bazaar slang, from *chapar*, the noise made by dogs eating; and *ghathh*, the noise of swallowing. Therefore to chew and swallow the offender.
3. *Tond*: a pot-belly.
4. Note the expression in Urdu.
5. Note the station-master's pidgin Urdu, spoken with a Bengali accent.

an hour, I straightway caught hold of his hands. Here is his descriptive which you can now check."

The Station Master compared it and said, "Oh! it is blasted bad you doing such dishonest act!"

Mast Shah—"Good God, they will do for me—we have been at logger-heads (for some time) and he has arrested me merely to get me implicated (in this case)."

"Well Sir, you can invent as many stories as you like, it will be a mere waste of breath," said the bystanders.

The passengers were astounded, (and said), "Good God—what an extraordinary coincidence that the Nawab Sahib was telling this story, and hadn't even finished it when Mast Shah himself got in."

The Station Master remarked to the Nawab Sahib that he always travelled first class, and asked him why he was travelling third. The Nawab showed him his ticket and said, "Yes, and I am really travelling first this time as well, but I got out at one of the stations, and the train started, and I was left behind, so I hurriedly scrambled into this carriage, but now I'm going to get out and change.

"A most extraordinary thing has happened—I started telling this story several stations back, and what is so amusing is that I have been telling it to Mast Shah himself!"

The Station Master laughed heartily, and the people who were seated in the compartment also roared with laughter.

One of them said, "It is what one calls a lucky coincidence."

Mast Shah, on hearing the words 'lucky coincidence,' said to himself, "It may be a 'lucky coincidence

1. Another example of Bengali Urdu.

for them, but they ought to call it the nemesis of my evil deeds!"

"What makes me laugh," said another gentleman, "is that the story was told to his own noble self."

"But Sir," said the third, "he turned pale several times while listening to the story."

Several of the passengers confirmed this.

"I had great difficulty in recognising him," said the constable, "and compared his features with the descriptive roll for a long time, and wondered whether I should arrest him or not, lest I should make a mistake and he should turn out to be someone else and I should eat mud—though I have gone into the foot police it doesn't make me any the less respectable!"

Mast Shah who was a very cunning⁴ and experienced blackguard⁵, and had robbed thousands of people in his time, was smiling and talking with complete *sang froid*, as though he had no knowledge of the crime whatsoever.

Mast—"By God—this makes me laugh. God alone knows why I have been arrested twice this month already—once on board a boat I was arrested when they mistook me for Mast Shah; and here again! Although I swear that I have got nothing to do with

1. *Shahmat-i-a'mul*: literally, the bad fortune resulting from evil deeds. Hence, evil days; hard times.
2. *Khud ba-daulat*: this was originally a royal title.
3. A Note the force of the repetition of the verb.
4. *Nigdiriya*: Literally, one who extracts precious metals from dross and ashes; hence, quick-witted etc.
5. *Gung-i-bāvan āida*: literally, a wolf which has become accustomed to rain; hence an experienced man (always in a bad sense).

that damned Mast Shah; and that I am Kamaluddin, no one believes it.

"The whole thing is that that cursed Mast Shah is my double; anyhow I can't take on the Government, nevertheless in a few days time I shall be off, twisting my moustachios (in triumph)."

The Nawab—"What's that really so?"

Mast—"You will soon find out."

N—"You are the man all right!"

M—"Quite right!"

N—"Well tell me what you have done with the ten thousand (rupees)?"

M—"Why on earth should I tell you?"

N—"Sirrah! you are very cunning, aren't you?"

M—"Yes rather."

N—"You'll teach me how to effect alchemy, won't you?"

M—"Yes, but first of all you must bring along some jewellery."

N—"I don't think!"

A passenger—"You're the limit, and you'll get such a damned good hiding¹ that you'll never forget it; just fancy daring to ask him to bring some jewellery first!"

M—"Thanks be to God that I have to listen to such stuff to-day! There is no help for it, whatever one does, one cannot escape from what is written in one's fate²."

N—(Addressing a passenger) "What's the good of all this talk?"

M—"Let them go on Sir."

1. Note that *jūt* is understood after *be-bhāo*, priceless.
2. *Karam*: fate. *Chakurdi*: cleverness; skill. Note this Hindi proverb.

N—"No, certainly not!"

Just then an oetroi peon put in appearance and smiled when he saw Mast Shah. The Nawab asked him what he was smiling at.

"Oh nothing Sir," he replied, "This sportsman¹ has cheated me as well, but now he is in disgrace;" (addressing Mast Shah). "Reverend brother—salam!"

"May you live long," replied Mast Shah smiling, "I haven't seen you for a long time, where have you been all this time?"

N—"And how did he cheat you?"

The peon—"Don't ask, my dear Sir. Anyhow this sportsman has been apprehended to-day at last. On the day when he came to me he was wearing coloured clothes, with a rosary in his hand, and there were about a dozen of the town's folk with him. He came along to me, sat down and talked and talked², and in the course of the conversation made away with some stuff on which oetroi duty was due, (and with such skill) that even my angels³ had no idea of it. The other day a man came along and told me all about it."

N—"Do you know where he lives?"

The peon—"No Sir."

The Station Master—"Is this *chappassi* telling truth, or all lies⁴?"

M—"Yes, Babu Sahib, it's all quite true!"
At this all the bystanders burst out laughing, but his self-composure was admirable.

N—"He is a complete master of his trade."

Station Master—"He is damned scoundrel!"

M—"Thanks be to God—Thanks be to God!"

The peon—"You know he's a great—what d'you call it, and pretends he is godly²."

A passenger—"One can see the wickedness in his eyes³."

The constable—"The money lender has given out that he will give the person who finds him a reward of five hundred rupees."

N—"Well, what more do you want?"

M—"Yes and now the money's yours."

A passenger—"Yes, and all thanks to you," (at this they all laughed).

The Station Master—"Just keep an eye on him."

N—"He won't run away."

The constable—"How can he? and if he does, I'll give him such a time that he'll never forget it."

"It is all thanks to you," said Mast Shah to the Nawab, "that I have been entrapped to-day; had you not started on that long story, no such misfortune would have overwhelmed me, but if you'll give me your address, I'll write to you (about myself) to-morrow. But that Mast Shah (he's a nice one he is!)—he made away with the stuff himself and what a prime fool he has made of me⁴!"

"Now even I cannot believe a word you say," said the Nawab Sahib, "you really are the limit, either

1. Note the signification of *Sahib tumhdare* which is used as an

expletive. Here, however, it may have some reference to Mast Shah's European attire.

2. Note the force of *waten*, which is a meaningless appositive.

3. *Khain* is slang after *jawishka*. According to the Muslim belief everyone has two angels, one standing at each shoulder, who write down their good and bad deeds.

4. Another example of Bengali Urdu.

1. Another example of Bengali Urdu.

2. Note the expression in Urdu, and note the misprint for *gano*.

3. Literally, wickedness is raining from his eyes.

4. Note the Urdu idiom.

laughing, and smiling, or invoking God's name, and so on and so forth—you are always acting a part. The sum total of all this goes to prove quite clearly you are that Mast Shah, and no one else."

331 Just then the Inspector of Police came up, and the constable in accordance with the departmental rules saluted him and said, "Sir, I have arrested a criminal!"

The Inspector—"What sort of criminal?"

The constable—"One who has been 'wanted' for some time."

The Inspector—"Oho, has he—and where is he now?"

Mast—(pointing to the Nawab) "Here he is, Sir, just here!"

(At this everyone burst out laughing.)

The constable—"This is he, Sir."

The Inspector—"What is your name?"

M—"Kamaluddin, and my *nom de plume* in poetry is Kamal."

The Inspector—"So you're a poet as well are you?"

M—"Yes, I should think I am!"

The Inspector—"Whose pupil are you?"

M—"Oh, the Holy Ghost¹ taught me!"

The Inspector—"Now then just tell me all about it, and where you² were arrested."

M—"In this train Sir, just this very minute."

The Inspector—"And what was the crime?"

1. *Rūh ul quds*, : the holy spirit who inspired all the prophets, and whom the Muhammadans refer to as the angel Gabriel.

2. Note the ambiguity without the personal pronoun *z. e.* where was he arrested, or where were you arrested?

M—"Sir, He took ten thousand rupees worth of jewellery off a money lender, and promised him that he would turn it into fifty thousand, as owing to his skill in alchemy, he would be able to give back five times as much. The money lender was a bit of an ass, and fell into the trap; and he¹ (Mast Shah) got away with it."

"Now just you listen to me, Adjutant," whispered Mast Shah into the Inspector's ear, "I am Mast Shah, Mastan Shah, or Gudar Shah, and I swear by God that if you do not save me, I shall let the whole world know all about the bribe you took in the Talsi Das case; and when I get out of gaol I will kill you. I've given you warning about this beforehand, so that you won't have any opportunity of complaining (that you knew nothing about it) afterwards."

The Inspector—"Are you trying to pull my leg?² Are you trying to bluff me? Now look here, if you get off, I'll chuck my job. Get out of it, you blighter!"

M—"Very well, but be careful, you've used bad language."

The Inspector—"Yes, and you'll be beaten as well!"

M—"For God's sake, do hold your mug³!"

The Inspector—"Hold your tongue, you rotter!"

The constable—"Don't say anything to him here Sir, let him go to the police station, and we'll take

1. *Harrah* is used here ironically.

2. *Shahid*, a martyr has also the meaning of imposter: fraud and hence cunning, so the literal meaning of this sentence is, so you try your jokes on with even cunning people like me. Note also the meaning of *ham se wye ho*.

3. *Chonch*: a beak.

our revenge of him¹ there, and give him such a damned good hiding that he won't be likely to forget it²."

The Inspector—"Right ho!"

M—"Well, we shall see."

Two constables took Mast Shah off to the police station. The Inspector had given them instructions to shut him up in a cell that evening, and to give him such a beating that he would never forget it, but that there should not be any wound, or mark, nor was any blood to be spilt.

"Yes you see," said one of the constables, "I will half kill you; you were going to make gold, but instead of that I am going to make an example³ of you."

Mast Shah smiled (and said) you are going to beat me aren't you? well, it doesn't matter. To-day you will flog me, but in ten days time I will repay you with interest."

The constable—"Very well, come along then."

M—"But I am coming along."

Another constable—"Do you want to be beaten on the road now?"

M—(smiling) "Thanks very much!"

The Inspector—"He is very thick-skinned isn't he!"

M—"Alright, you see, you will soon find out who is thick-skinned and who is not."

Mast Shah, in the custody of the constables, arrived at the Police Station; and the constable informed the Sub-Inspector that the *fagirs* who had cheated the money lender and absconded with jewellery worth fully ten thousand rupees, had been caught.

1. Literally, will take out all his deficiencies.
2. *i. e.* will remember the milk he drank on his sixth day ceremony and how helpless he was then.
3. Note the idiom in Urdu.

The Inspector was delighted, and asked where he was.

"Here he is," said the constable, "and the worthy has assumed the role of Mast Shah."

The Sub-Inspector—"Oho, so this is the gentlemen, is it?"

M—"Yes Sir."

The Sub-Inspector—"So you are Mast Shah, are you?"

M—"Yes, Sir."

The Sub-Inspector—"You made a good haul, didn't you?"

M—"Yes, Sir."

The Sub-Inspector—"He has a great sense of humour, we shall have to find some other method of dealing with him; kicks are what he wants."

The constable—"He shouted at the Inspector Sahib."

The Sub-Inspector—"Oh really! You're as hot headed as all that, are you—now you just see how I will deal with¹ you; you'll lose all your bombast straightway—now tell me what your name is—hurry up."

M—"Ask the constables, buck up!"

The Sub-Inspector (losing his temper)—"You are absolutely daft."

M—"You certainly seem to be so."

The constable—"Shut up, or you'll be beaten!"

The Sub-Inspector—"Don't say anything to him, leave him alone, I'll bring him to his senses in a way that he will never forget all the days of his life. Now just keep quiet."

M—"Sure."

- 1 *Chachá bandkar chhornd*: literally, to treat with the respect due to an uncle; but it is used in the sense of to bring to book with a vengeance.

The Sub-Inspector—"Tell me your name."

M—"The constable knows my name."

The Sub-Inspector—"Well, what is his name?"

M—"Tell him! I gave you my name alright, didn't I? Well tell him what it is—you haven't forgotten it?"

The Sub-Inspector—"You give us all this trouble, and yet you won't make a clean breast of it, and tell us what your name is—you are a damned low class scoundrel!"

M—"Your very appearance proclaims it."

The constable—"He stated that his name was Jamaluddin."

The Sub-Inspector—"Is your name Jamaluddin? Don't worry me any more."

M—"Jamaluddin must be somebody else—I am not even acquainted with him!"

The Sub-Inspector—"Then, my good man, why don't you tell me what your name is?"

M—"Then change the letter *j* to *k* so that it may become my name."

The Sub-Inspector—"What—now he's talking Persian—what was the name he said? Now tell us straight out what your name is, or you will be very severely dealt with."

The constable—"Sir, You will never get anything out of him like this—he gave me the devil of a lot of worry there (at the Station)."

The Sub-Inspector—"You rotter—have you got any name, or you devil! are you nameless?"

M—"That's a good one—the devil and unknown²! Well, one must admit that you are even more notorious than the devil himself."

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1. Note the expression in Urdu.

2. *Gumnam*: unknown to fame; anonymous.

The Sub-Inspector—"You rotter—if you don't tell me your name, I swear by God, that I will tie you up and give you such a flogging that you will not be likely to forget it all the days of your life."

M—"Now the constable stated that my name was Jamaluddin, didn't he; and I said that if you changed the letter *j* into *k* you would get my name."

The Sub-Inspector—"Kamaluddin?"

M—"That's it—here, give me your hand—now wasn't that a good riddle?"

Just then the Inspector turned up, and exclaimed, "Now you scoundrel, say whether you are in my power or I in yours—you were throwing your weight about a lot (at the Station), so why don't you speak now?" Then addressing the Sub-Inspector, he said, "He made a tremendous fuss¹, and refused to listen to reason. He came up and whispered in my ear, 'Now look you here, whether I am Mast Shah, or Mastan Shah, if you don't let me go, I will kill you for sure, and don't you forget the bribe you took in the Tulsi Das case!'"

The Sub-Inspector—"Yes, and here too he has been throwing his weight about² and using bad language³ as well—besides he wouldn't let me know what his name was, but instead asked me some conundrum or riddle, and I got bored stiff, and tired of it all. I was just going to have him flogged, but he escaped that (by telling me his name). However, you will see that he will be beaten, before he leaves this place; he can't control his tongue, and I can't control my temper much longer."

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1. Not the expression in Urdu, which is generally used in the sense of to kick up a hullabaloo.

2. Literally, he has been playing the *Nadir Shah*.

3. *Aandi bairandi sunandi*: to abuse; call bad names.

The Inspector—"It's just the same with me."

M—"Is that so? By God d'you really mean it?"

The Inspector—"He's a bit of a wag, isn't he?"

The Sub-Inspector—"You will soon see that he will lose all his sense of humour."

A constable—"Shall I take him away to the cell and knock him about a bit?"

M—(getting up) "Come along."

A constable—"Come along."

Another constable—"Well, what swank! Come along, and you'll get such a beating that you will never forget it. Remember, we are twenty to one!"

The Nawab Sahib got into the train, and although he had nothing to do with the case, he asked the Station Master to let him know how it all turned out.

THE STORY OF A CRUEL AMIR, MASIH-UL-MULK.

(From the *Bandi-an-Na'sh* ¹ by *Shams-ul-Ulama*

Maulawi Nazir Ahmad Sahib.)

Among the ancestors of the well known Nawab Badal Beg Khan, who lives at Lal Kuan², there was one, Nawab Masih-ul-Mulk.

1. *Bandi an na'sh*: the constellation of the Great Bear. *Na'sh* literally means a hier with the corpse. The three stars which go before the hier are called the *Bandi* (daughters), and each individual star is called *ibn na'sh*. Poets consider these stars to be very beautiful and compare them to beautiful woman.
2. *Lal Kuan*: The red well: The name of a quarter in Delhi.

Although this latter was only a royal physician, he had acquired such influence¹ over the king, that all the affairs of State were left in his hands. When he had so much authority, it behoved him to try to keep on the right side of the royal dependents, to look after the poor, and to administer justice to the oppressed, but instead, he was so high handed and imperious² that in a very short time he succeeded in making everyone thoroughly discontented and complaints about him were raised on every hand. There was hardly a soul who had not some complaint about him or who bore him no grudge³.

Hundreds of men who had served the king faithfully for ten generation or so, and were whole-hearted loyalists, were discharged for no rhyme or reason. With the exception of the Masih-ul-Mulk's own nominees⁴ there was not a soul whose pay was not, to some extent reduced. Whereas formerly salaries had been paid up to six months in arrears, in the time of⁵ the Hakim this extended to years; and, even then salaries were so curtailed that those entitled to ten rupees were given only six, and those to whom six were due received⁶ but four. Endowments made to widows, orphans, and cripples were confiscated without further ado. Complaints about all these matters were submitted to the king; but whenever he demanded an explanation, Masih-ul-

1. Note the expression in Urdu.
2. Note the expression in Urdu.
3. Note the expression in Urdu.
4. *Awardan*: from the Persian *awaradan*: to bring.
5. Note the expression in Urdu.
6. *Kist ko palle parna*. *Palla* literally means a balance, so this expression means to fall to the lot of.