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MODERN ARABIC STORIES BALLADS, PROVERBS AND IDIOMS

COLLECTED AND TRANSLITERATED

BY

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PREFACE

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THE greater part of this collection of Arabic Stories, Ballads, and Proverbs, &c., was originally made in Cairo during the years 1885-6, and printed in Arabic at the Būlāq Government Press. It was intended as an 'Arabic Reader' for those who were desirous of becoming acquainted with the Arabic language as spoken in Cairo and the neighbouring districts, and for many years past has been used as the text-book for the local Arabic Examinations for officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of the Army of Occupation in Egypt. The original edition having become exhausted, it was suggested that I should substitute the transliteration, with grammatical notes, which I commenced and had nearly completed when I left Egypt in 1887. This I have now endeavoured to do, trusting that its use, in combination with a literal translation which is also completed, will greatly assist the beginner in the study of the vulgar Arabic current in Egypt.

The system of transliteration is that adopted in the introduction to the author's *Practical Arabic Grammar*, Part I, with such slight modifications as using *d* for *dh*, &c. It has been a difficult task to endeavour to obtain absolute uniformity in expressing the vowel sounds, which are themselves subjected by the natives to wide variations in pronunciation. For instance, the original long terminal vowel sounds are generally pronounced long, but very often this is not the case, and whether one should write *wara* or *warā*, *katabna* or *katabnā*, *ḍarabha* or *ḍarabhā*, appears to be a matter entirely of taste in speaking. I have endeavoured always to represent these as long. Again the conjunction *wa*, 'and,' and other similar words are sometimes written separately and sometimes joined to the succeeding word beginning with a vowel sound,

i. e. *wa idda* and *w'idda*, simply for instructional purposes. I have generally preferred to write *fil* for *fi'l*, *bil* for *bi'l*, *fin* for *fi'n*, &c., as nothing was to be gained by the extra trouble involved in printing.

As for the stories themselves, they consist for the most part of popular fairy tales and stories current in Cairo. They have been chiefly taken from the *Grammatik des arabischen Vulgär-Dialectes von Ägypten* of the late Spitta Bey, and from his *Contes arabes modernes*, and from a small collection of stories in the Arabic dialect by H. Dulac, which appears in the *Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique au Caire*.

The seventeenth story is the 'Third Voyage of Sindibād the Sailor', which has been taken from the Thousand and One Nights, for the sake of the comparison between the vulgar dialect of to-day and the style in which the Thousand and One Nights was written, probably towards the close of the Memlūk rulers of Egypt, prior to the conquest of the country by the Turks, and I am much indebted to the kindness of Mr. Robb of the Egyptian Education Department for his very careful revision of the same.

The Proverbs and Idioms have, by permission, been taken from the very excellent Arabic-English vocabulary compiled by Mr. Socrates Spiro of the Egyptian Ministry of Finance, which should be in the hands of all students of Modern Egyptian, and I trust that the idioms will serve a useful purpose in their present collected form.

A. O. GREEN, COLONEL.

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FAHRSAT EL-KITĀB

EL-GUZ EL-AWWAL

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EL-GUZ EL-AWWAL

HIKĀYĀT B'L-'ARABĪYAH ED-DĀRIGAH

ḤIKĀYĀT BI'L-'ARABIYAH ED-DĀRIGAH

EL-ḤIKĀYAT EL-AWWALAH.

Rāgil¹ wa Naggār. *وَأَمَّا رَاقِلُ وَنَاقِرُ*

Kān rāgil ruziq² biwalad wa firih boh wa kān biddoh yishtiri loh sirir. Fa rāḥ liwāḥid naggār w'idda loh masalan³ riyāl wa qāl⁴ loh i'mil li sirir. Qāl loh en-naggār tieyib nahār el-gum'ah ta'āla⁵ wa khud⁶ es-sirir ya'nī⁷ ba'd tamant⁸ ayyām wa kān yōmhā el-khamīs. Nahār el-gum'ah er-rāgil rāḥ loh wa qāl loh hāt es-sirir. Qāl loh en-naggār lissa mush⁹ khalās. Wa ta'akhkhar en-naggār lamma miḥlī el-walad wa kibir wa tagauwiz¹⁰ w'istaulid¹¹ walad. Qāl li-abūh 'āuz¹² sirir libnī. Qāl loh abūh

¹ *Rāgil*, vulg. for *raqul*.

² *Ruziq*, was granted; passive form of *razaq*, granted, provided for, more especially by God.

³ This is simply an adverbial expression with scarcely any bearing on the meaning of the sentence, but serves to give breathing time to the speaker. Literally, 'for example'.

⁴ Pronounced either *qāl* or *qal*. In these stories it is always rendered as *qāl*.

⁵ *Ta'āla*, come! imperative of *gā*, he came.

⁶ Imperative of *akhad* or *khad*, he took. It is to be remembered that the consonant *dhāl* is sounded like *d* or *z* in Egypt. Vide par. 24 of Col. Green's *Practical Arabic Grammar*, Part I.

⁷ Derived from 'ana, to mean; hence *ya'nī*, it means, that is to say.

⁸ Really *ṭamāniyat*, but in vulgar Arabic pronounced *ṭamant*.

⁹ *Mush* is a shortened form of *mā hūa shē*, it is nothing, and is the vulgar form of expressing negation.

¹⁰ V. Form of *gauwiz*, to allow, permit, marry. Is *reflexive* in meaning. For this and other forms, vide par. 158 et seq. of *Practical Arabic Grammar*, Part I.

¹¹ X. Form of *wilid*, to give birth.

¹² From 'āz, to want, be in need of. Properly this should be written 'āwiz, or 'āyiz; but 'āuz appears to come much nearer to the pronunciation.