THE next point I propose to consider is the position of womanhood in The Nights, so curiously at variance with the stock ideas concerning the Moslem home and domestic policy still prevalent, not only in England, but throughout Europe. Many readers of these volumes have remarked to me with much astonishment that they find the female characters more remarkable for decision, action and manliness than the male; and are wonderstruck by their masterful attitude and by the supreme influence they exercise upon public and private life.

I have glanced at the subject of the sex in Al-Islam to such an extent throughout my notes that little remains here to be added. Women, all the world over, are what men make them; and the main charm of Amazonian fiction is to see how they live and move and have their being without any masculine guidance. But it is the old ever-new fable

"Who drew the Lion vanquished? 'Twas a man!"

The books of the Ancients, written in that stage of civilisation when the sexes are at civil war, make women even more than in real life the creatures of their masters: hence from the dawn of literature to the present day the sex has been the subject of disappointed abuse and eulogy almost as unmerited. Ecclesiastes, perhaps the strangest specimen of an "inspired volume" the world has yet produced, boldly declares "One (upright) man among a thousand I have found; but a woman among all have I not found" (vol. vii. 28), thus confirming the pessimism of Petronius:--

Femina nulla bona est, et si bona contigit ulla
Nescio quo fato res mala facta bona est.

In the Psalms again (xxx. 15) we have the old sneer at the three insatiables, Hell, Earth and the Parts feminine (or vulva); and Rabbinical learning has embroidered these and other texts, producing a truly hideous caricature. A Hadis attributed to Mohammed runs, "They (women) lack wits and faith. When Eve was created Satan rejoiced saying:--Thou art half of my host, the trustee of my secret and my shaft wherewith I shoot and miss not!" Another tells us, "I stood at the gate of Heaven, and lo! most of its inmates were poor, and I stood at the gate of Hell, and lo! most of its inmates were women." {NOTE: "Kitāb al-'Unwān fī Makā'id al-Niswān" = The Book of the Beginnings on the Wiles of Womankind (Lane i. 38).} "Take care of the glass-phials!" cried the Prophet to a camel-guide singing with a sweet voice. Yet the Meccan Apostle made, as has been seen, his own household produce two perfections. The blatant popular voice follows with such "dictes" as, "Women are made of nectar and poison"; "Women have long hair and short wits" and so forth. Nor are the Hindus behindhand. Woman has fickleness implanted in her by Nature like the flashings of lightning (Kathá s.s. i. 147); she is valueless as a straw to the heroic mind (169); she is hard as adamant in sin and soft as flour in fear (170) and, like the fly, she quits camphor to settle on compost (ii. i7). "What dependence is there in the crowing of a hen?" (women's
opinions) says the Hindi proverb; also "A virgin with grey hairs!" (i.e. a monster) and, "Wherever wendeth a fairy face a devil wendeth with her." The same superficial view of holding woman to be lesser (and very inferior) man is taken generally by the classics; and Euripides distinguished himself by misogyny, although he drew the beautiful character of Alcestis. Simonides, more merciful than Ecclesiastes, after naming his swine-women, dog-women, cat-women, etc., ends the decade with the admirable bee-woman, thus making ten per cent. honest. In mediaeval or Germanic Europe the doctrine of the Virgin mother gave the sex a status unknown to the Ancients except in Egypt, where Isis was the help-mate and completion of Osiris, in modern parlance "The Woman clothed with the Sun." The kindly and courtly Palmerin of England, in whose pages "gentlemen may find their choice of sweet inventions and gentlewomen be satisfied with courtly expectations," suddenly blurs out, "But in truth women are never satisfied by reason, being governed by accident or appetite" (chapt. xlix).

The Nights, as might be expected from the emotional East, exaggerate these views. Women are mostly "Sectaries of the god Wünsch"; beings of impulse, blown about by every gust of passion; stable only in instability; constant only in inconstancy. The false ascetic, the perfidious and murderous crone and the old hag-procurers who pimps like Umm Kulsum, {NOTE: This person was one of the Amsál or Exampla of the Arabs. For her first thirty years she whored; during the next three decades she pimped for friend and foe; and, during the last third of her life, when bed-ridden by age and infirmities, she had a buck-goat and a nanny tied up in her room and solaced herself by contemplating their amorous conflicts;} for mere pleasure, in the luxury of sin, are drawn with an experienced and loving hand. Yet not the less do we meet with examples of the dutiful daughter, the model lover matronly in her affection, the devoted wife, the perfect mother, the saintly devotee, the learned preacher, Univira the chaste widow and the self-sacrificing heroic woman. If we find (vol. iii. 216) the sex described as:--

An offal cast by kites where'er they list,

and the studied insults of vol. iii. 318, we also come upon an admirable sketch of conjugal happiness (vol. vii. ? 43); and, to mention no other, Shahryar's attestation to Shahrazad's excellence in the last charming pages of The Nights.

{NOTE: And modern Moslem feeling, upon the subject has apparently undergone a change. Ashraf Khan, the Afghan poet, sings,

Since I, the parted one, have come the secrets of the world to ken,
Women in hosts therein I find, but few (and very few) of men.

And the Osmanli proverb is, "Of ten men nine are women!"}

It is the same with the Katha whose praise and dispraise are equally enthusiastic; e.g., "Women of good family are guarded by their own virtue, the sole efficient chamberlain; but the Lord himself can hardly guard the unchaste. Who can stem a furious stream and a frantic woman?" (i. 328). "Excessive love in woman is your only hero for daring" (i. 339). "Thus fair ones, naturally feeble, bring about a series of evil actions which engender discernment and aversion to the world; but here and there you will find a virtuous woman who adorneth a glorious house as the streak of the moon arrayeth the breadth of the Heavens" (i. 346). "So you see, King, honourable matrons are devoted to their husbands and 'tis not the case that women are always bad" (ii. 624). And there is true wisdom in that even balance of feminine qualities advocated by our Hindu-Hindi class-book the Toti-námeh or Parrot volume. The perfect woman has seven requisites. She must not always be merry (1) nor sad (2); she must not always be talking (3) nor silently musing (4); she must not always be adorning herself (5) nor neglecting her person (6); and, (7) at all times she must be moderate and self-possessed.
The legal status of womankind in Al-Islam is exceptionally high, a fact of which Europe has often been assured, although the truth has not even yet penetrated into the popular brain. Nearly a century ago one Mirza Abu Talib Khan, an Amildar or revenue collector, after living two years in London, wrote an "apology" for, or rather a vindication of, his countrywomen which is still worth reading and quoting. \{NOTE: His Persian paper "On the Vindication of the Liberties of the Asiatic Women" was translated and printed in the Asiatic Annual Register for 1801 (pp. 100-107); it is quoted by Dr. Jon. Scott (Introd. vol. i. p. xxxiv. et seq.) and by a host of writers. He also wrote a book of Travels translated by Prof. Charles Stewart in 1810 and re-issued (3 vols. 8vo.) in 1814.\} Nations are but superficial judges of one another: where customs differ they often remark only the salient distinctive points which, when examined, prove to be of minor importance. Europeans seeing and hearing that women in the East are "cloistered" as the Grecian matron was wont ἐνδόν μένειν and οἶκουρεῖν; that wives may not walk out with their husbands and cannot accompany them to "balls and parties"; moreover, that they are always liable, like the ancient Hebrew, to the mortification of the "sister, wife," have most ignorantly determined that they are mere serviles and that their lives are not worth living. Indeed, a learned lady, Miss Martineau, once visiting a Harem went into ecstasies of pity and sorrow because the poor things knew nothing of-say trigonometry and the use of the globes. Sonnini thought otherwise, and my experience, like that of all old dwellers in the East, is directly opposed to this conclusion.

I have noted (Night cmlxii.) that Mohammed, in the fifth year of his reign,

\{NOTE: The beginning of which I date from the Hijrah, lit. = the separation, popularly "The Flight." Stating the case broadly, it has become the practice of modern writers to look upon Mohammed as an honest enthusiast at Meccah and an unscrupulous despot at Al-Medinah, a view which appears to me eminently unsound and unfair. In a private station the Meccan Prophet was famed as a good citizen, teste his title Al-Amin = The Trusty. But when driven from his home by the pagan faction, he became de facto as de jure a king; nay, a royal pontiff; and the preacher was merged in the Conqueror of his foes and the Commander of the Faithful. His rule, like that of all Eastern rulers, was stained with blood; but, assuming as true all the crimes and cruelties with which Christians charge him and which Moslems confess, they were mere blots upon a glorious and enthusiastic life, ending in a most exemplary death, compared with the tissue of horrors and havoc which the Law and the Prophets attribute to Moses, to Joshua, to Samuel and to the patriarchs and prophets by express command of Jehovah.\}

after his ill-advised and scandalous marriage \{NOTE: It was not, however, incestuous: the scandal came from its ignoring the Arab "pundonor.”\} with his foster-daughter Zaynab, established the Hijāb or veiling of women. It was probably an exaggeration of local usage: a modified separation of the sexes, which extended and still extends even to the Badawi, must long have been customary in Arabian cities, and its object was to deliver the sexes from temptation, as the Koran says (xxxii. 32), "purer will this (practice) be for your hearts and their hearts."

\{NOTE: The "opportunism" of Mohammed has been made a matter of obloquy by many who have not reflected and discovered that time-serving is the very essence of "Revelation." Says the Rev. W. Smith ("Pentateuch," chap. xiii.), "As the journey (Exodus) proceeds, so laws originate from the accidents of the way," and he applies this to successive decrees (Numbers xxxvi. 32-36; xxxvii. 8-11 and xxxvii. 1-9), holding it indirect internal evidence of Mosaic authorship (?). Another tone, however, is used in the case of Al-Islam. "And now, that he might not stand in awe of his wives any longer, down comes a revelation," says Ockley in his bluff and homely style, which admits such phrases as, "the impostor has the impudence to say." But why, in common honesty, refuse to the Koran the concessions freely made to the Torah? It is a mere petitio principii to argue that the latter is "inspired" while the former is not; moreover, although we may be called upon to believe things beyond Reason, it is hardly fair to require our belief in things contrary to Reason.\}
The women, who delight in restrictions which tend to their honour, accepted it willingly and still affect it; they do not desire a liberty or rather a licence which they have learned to regard as inconsistent with their time-honoured notions of feminine decorum and delicacy, and they would think very meanly of a husband who permitted them to be exposed, like hetairæ, to the public gaze. {NOTE: This is noticed in my wife's volume on The Inner Life of Syria, chap. xii. vol. i. 155.} As Zubayr Pasha, exiled to Gibraltar for another's treason, said to my friend, Colonel Buckle, after visiting quarters evidently laid out by a jealous husband, "We Arabs think that when a man has a precious jewel, 'tis wiser to lock it up in a box than to leave it about for anyone to take." The Eastern adopts the instinctive, the Western prefers the rational method. The former jealously guards his treasure, surrounds it with all precautions, fends off from it all risks and if the treasure go astray, kills it. The latter, after placing it en evidence upon an eminence in ball dress with back and bosom bared to the gaze of society, a bundle of charms exposed to every possible seduction, allows it to take its own way, and if it be misled, he kills or tries to kill the misleader. It is a fiery trial; and the few who safely pass through it may claim a higher standpoint in the moral world than those who have never been sorely tried. But the crucial question is whether Christian Europe has done wisely in offering such temptations.

The second and main objection to Moslem custom is the marriage-system which begins with a girl being wedded to a man whom she knows only by hearsay. This was the habit of our forbears not many generations ago, and it still prevails amongst noble houses in Southern Europe, where a lengthened study of it leaves me doubtful whether the "love-marriage," as it is called, or wedlock with an utter stranger, evidently the two extremes, is likely to prove the happier. The "sister-wife" is or would be a sore trial to monogamic races like those of Northern Europe, where Caia, all but the equal of Caius in most points mental and physical and superior in some, not unfrequently proves herself the "man of the family," the "only man in the boat." But in the East, where the sex is far more delicate, where a girl is brought up in polygamy, where religious reasons separate her from her husband, during pregnancy and lactation, for three successive years; and where often enough like the Mormon damsel she would hesitate to "nigger it with a one-wife-man," the case assumes a very different aspect and the load, if burden it be, falls comparatively light. Lastly, the "patriarchal household" is mostly confined to the grandee and the richard, whilst Holy Law and public opinion, neither of which can openly be disregarded, assign command of the household to the equal or first wife and jealously guard the rights and privileges of the others.

Mirza Abu Talib "the Persian Prince"{NOTE: Mirzá preceding the name means Mister and following it Prince. Addison's "Vision of Mirza" (Spectator, No. 159) is therefore "The Vision of Mister."} offers six reasons why "the liberty of the Asiatic women appears less than that of the Europeans," ending with,

I'll fondly place on either eye
The man that can to this reply.

He then lays down eight points in which the Moslem wife has greatly the advantage over her Christian sisterhood; and we may take his first as a specimen. Custom, not contrary to law, invests the Mohammedan mother with despotic government of the homestead, slaves, servants and children, especially the latter: she alone directs their early education, their choice of faith, their marriage and their establishment in life; and in case of divorce she takes the daughters, the sons going to the sire. She has also liberty to leave her home, not only for one or two nights, but for a week or a fortnight, without consulting her husband; and whilst she visits a strange household, the master and all males above fifteen are forbidden the Harem. But the main point in favour of the Moslem wife is her being a "legal sharer": inheritance is secured to her by Koranic law; she must be dowered by the bridegroom to legalise marriage and all she gains is secured to her; whereas in England a "Married Woman's Property Act" was completed only in 1882 after many centuries of the grossest abuses.
Lastly, Moslems and Easterns in general study and intelligently study the art and mystery of satisfying the physical woman. In my Foreword I have noticed among barbarians the system of "making men," and women. The course of instruction lasts from a few days to a year and the period of puberty is fitted by magical rites and often by some form of mutilation. It is described by Waitz, Réclus and Schoolcraft, Péchuel-Loecksa, Collins, Dawson, Thomas, Brough Smyth, Reverends Bulmer and Taplin, Wood, A. W. Howitt, C. Z. Mabas (Mem. de la Soc. Anthrop. Allemande, 1882, p. 265) and by Professor Mantegazza (chapt. i.) for whom see infra.] that is, of teaching lads first arrived at puberty the nice conduct of the instrumentum paratum plantandis civibus: a branch of the knowledge-tree which our modern education grossly neglects, thereby entailing untold miseries upon individuals, families and generations. The mock virtue, the most immodest modesty of England and of the United States in the xixth century, pronounces the subject foul and fulsome: "Society" sickens at all details; and hence it is said abroad that the English have the finest women in Europe and least know how to use them. Throughout the East such studies are aided by a long series of volumes, many of them written by learned physiologists, by men of social standing and by religious dignitaries high in office. The Egyptians especially delight in aphrodisiac literature treating, as the Turks say, de la partie au-dessous de la taille; and from fifteen hundred to two thousand copies of a new work, usually lithographed in cheap form, readily sell off. The pudibund Lane makes allusion to and quotes (A. N. i. 216) one of the most outspoken, a 4to of 464 pages, called the Halbat al-Kumayt or "Race-Course of the Bay Horse," a poetical and horsey term for grapewine. Attributed by D'Herbelot to the Kazi Shams al-Din Mohammed, it is wholly upon the subject of wassail and women till the last few pages, when his reverence exclaims:--"This much, O reader, I have recounted, the better thou mayst know what to avoid," and so forth, ending with condemning all he had praised. \{NOTE: Similarly certain Australian tribes act scenes of rape and pederasty saying to the young, If you do this you will be killed.\} Even the divine and historian Jalál al-Dín al-Siyuti is credited with having written, though the authorship is much disputed, a work entitled, "Kitáb al-Ízáh fi 'ilm al-Nikáh = The Book of Exposition in the Science of Coition: my copy, a lithograph of 33 pages, undated, but evidently Cairene, begins with exclaiming "Alhamdolillah--Laud to the Lord who adorned the virginal bosom with breasts and who made the thighs of women anvils for the spear-handles of men!" To the same amiable theologian are also ascribed the "Kitáb Nawázir al-Ayk fi al-Nayk = Green Splendours of the Copse in Copulation, an abstract of the "Kitáb al-Wisháh fí fawáid al-Nikáh = Book of the Zone on Coition-boon. Of the abundance of pornographic literature we may judge from a list of the following seven works given in the second page of the "Kitáb Rujú'a al-Shaykh ila Sabáh fi 'l-Kuwwat al-Báh" \{NOTE: "Báh," is the popular term for the amatory appetite: hence such works are called Kutub al-Báh, lit. = Books of Lust.\} = Book of Age-rejuvenescence in the power of Concupiscence: it is the work of Ahmad bin Sulayman, surnamed Ibn Kamál Pasha.


2. Kitáb al-'Ars wa al-'Aráis (Book of the Bridal and the Brides) by Al-Jáhiz.


6. Kitáb Barján (Yarján?) wa Janáhib (? ?) \{NOTE: I can make nothing of this title nor can those whom I have consulted: my only explanation is that they may be fanciful names proper.\}

{NOTE: Amongst the Greeks we find erotic specialists (1) Aristides of the Libri Milesii; (2) Asyntana, the follower of Helen who wrote on androgynisation; (3) Cyrene, the artist of amatory Tabella or ex-votos offered to Priapus; (4) Elephantis, the poetess who wrote on Varia concubitus genera; (5) Eireneus, whose Sacra Historia, preserved in a fragment of Q. Eunius, was collected by Hieronymus Columna; (6) Hemitheon of the Sybaritic books; (7) Musaeus, the lyrist; (8) Niko, the Samian girl; (9) Philanis, the poetess of Amatory Pleasures, in Athen. viii. 13, attributed to Polycrates the Sophist; (10) Protagoras, Amatory Conversations; (11) Sofades, the Mantineaon who, says Suidas, wrote the poem "Cinadica"; (12) Sphodrias the Cynic, his Art of Love; and (13) Trepisides, Amatory Pleasures. Amongst the Romans we have Aedituus, Annianus (in Ausonius), Anser, Bassus Eubius, Helvius Cinna, Laevius (of Io and the Erotopægnion), Memmius, Cicero (to Cereilla), Pliny the Younger, Sabelus (de modo coeundi); Sisenna, the pathetic Poet and translator of Milesian Fables and Sulphitia, the modest erotist. For these see the Dictionnaire Érotique of Blondeau pp. ix. and x. (Paris, Liseux, 1885).

To these I may add the Lizzat al-Nisá (Pleasures of Women), a text-book in Arabic, Persian and Hindostani: it is a translation and a very poor attempt, omitting much from, and adding naught to, the famous Sanskrit work Ananga-Ranga (Stage of the Bodiless One i.e. Cupido) or Hindu Art of Love (Ars Amoris Indica). {NOTE: It has been translated from the Sanskrit and annotated by A.F.F. and B.F.R. Reprint: Cosmopoli: mdccclxxgv.: for the Kama Shastra Society, London and Benares, and for private circulation only. The first print has been exhausted and a reprint will presently appear.} I have copies of it in Sanskrit and Maráthi, Guzrati and Hindostani: the latter is an unpagged 8vo of pp. 66, including eight pages of most grotesque illustrations showing the various Ásan (the Figure Veneris or positions of copulation), which seem to be the triumphs of contortionists. These pamphlets lithographed in Bombay are broad cast over the land.

{NOTE: The local press has often proposed to abate this nuisance of erotic publication which is most debasing to public morals already perverted enough. But the "Empire of Opinion" cares very little for such matters and, in the matter of the "native press," generally seeks to seek only a quiet life. In England if erotic literature were not forbidden by law, few would care to sell or to buy it, and only the legal pains and penalties keep up the phenomenally high prices.}

It must not be supposed that such literature is purely and simply aphrodisiacal. The learned Sprenger, a physician as well as an Arabist, says (Al-Mas'udi p. 384) of a tractate by the celebrated Rhazes in the Leyden Library, "The number of curious observations, the correct and practical ideas and the novelty of the notions of Eastern nations on these subjects, which are contained in this book, render it one of the most important productions of the medical literature of the Arabs." I can conscientiously recommend to the Anthropologist a study of the "Kutub al-Báh."