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The Devil from the Well

Once on a time a man was married for the second time after his first wife had died. He had a son from the first wife. There is a saying: "A thief can stop stealing, a prostitute can reform, but a vicious person can never change." The second wife he wed was such a vicious person. No matter what the poor man did, he could not cope with this woman. He once said to his son, "What can we do, son? We have suffered much at the hands of this woman. What shall we do?"

The father and the son talked much of this and they decided to take ^{P. 191} a trip to Mecca together after selling all their property at any price they could get. "We shall put the money in our pocket and go, and hope that we shall, in this way, get rid of her. We can stay in that land and thus escape her." They sold all they could, put the money in their pockets, and the father and the son set out for Mecca.

The woman said, "I cannot stay here. I shall go with you." So all three set out. As she was a vicious woman, anything could be expected of her. On the way, they reached a well and tried to get water, on the desert, but they could not get any.

The son said, "I cannot go down and get water from this well."

The father said, "I cannot go down it, either."

The woman said, "Tie me on a rope and lower me down the well and I shall get water." They lowered her down the well and when pulling her up,

they cut the rope and she fell lingirt down the well. The father and son left her there and went away. They reached Mecca [Hejaz] and did so in order to get rid of her.

On the way back, they stopped at the same well. They said, "This woman had some money. Let us lower a hook into the well, pull up her body, and get the money she had in her pocket." When the father and the son started pulling the rope, the rope would not come up. They pulled and pulled, and finally a devil came out of the well. He came out and said, "God bless you! As you have pulled me out of this well, you may wish anything of me."

"What was in the well?" they asked.

"When I was down there, a witch came down and I had a terrible time in her hands. You saved me from her, so wish anything of me

"We wish your good health."

"But make a wish."

"No, we merely wish your good health. If you wish to do anything for us, do it of yourself [i.e., perform a trick]."

"All right. I can make the padişah's daughter sick, and the padişah will announce that he who can heal the daughter will receive much money. Then you will keep quiet. When he announces for the second time that for him who can cure his daughter there will be a territory as a present, again keep quiet. But when he announces that he will give his daughter to whoever cures her, then you [pointing to the father] come to see me, but when you enter the palace through the door, I shall come out the chimney, after having cured the girl for you. You can claim you did it. But if you dare to try to cure a second patient, I shall kill you so beware!"

The man said, "All right," and the father and the son returned to

their village. The padişah announced that his daughter was ill epileptic fits. "I shall give much money to anyone who can cure her," he said. Although many hocas and hacıs came to try, no one could cure her.

Then he announced, "I shall give a piece of territory to anyone who can cure my daughter." But no one could cure her

Finally, he announced, "I shall give my daughter to the man who can cure her."

Then the man went to the palace. He went to the room of the sick daughter of the padişah. The devil sat by her bedside, but as soon as the man entered the room, the devil went out by way of the chimney. daughter of the padişah became well. They were married.

A few days later, the daughter of the first vezier became ill. The vezier went to the padişah and said, "Your majesty, your son-in-law cured your daughter. My daughter is now ill with the same sickness. Have him cure my daughter as well."

The padişah saw his son-in-law and said, "Go and cure the vezier's daughter, too."

Although he remembered the devil's warning not to cure anyone else or he would take his life, nevertheless, he could not disobey the padişah. He went to the room of the vezier's daughter, opened the door, and saw the devil sitting there

"Did I not tell you not to come again?" said the devil.

"Sir, I did not come to treat her."

"Why did you come?" the devil asked.

"I heard that that witch woman had come from the well and reached this place, and I came to tell you she is looking for you."

When the devil heard this, he got out of the palace hastily. The

sick daughter of the vezier got well, and the devil was thus gotten rid of.

(When I am telling a tale, I enjoy it immensely if a big crowd listens to me without disturbance, and I tell it much better if an audience behaves so. It is really sweet to tell a tale under such circumstances.)