THE POT
UPON THE WHEEL

BY
PATIENCE WORTH

DICTATED THROUGH
MRS. JOHN H. CURRAN

EDITED BY
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Introduction.

The name of "Patience Worth" is now well known to the world and it seems sufficient to say it is the self-announced cognomen of the invisible personality who speaks and writes through Mrs. John H. Curran, of St. Louis, Mo. Whatever may be one's attitude towards the phenomenon of automatic writing, the facts in relation to this particular manifestation are now too well established to admit of a reasonable doubt as to their verity. Patience Worth has been writing for six years and more, and during that time she has been visited by hundreds of men and women from all parts of the United States, and some from Canada, England and France, many of them eminent as educators, preachers, lawyers and scientists, none of whom can deny the actuality of the
phenomenon, whatever differences of opinion there may be as to the nature of its source. This is not the place for the discussion of opinions on this matter. The task in hand is the presentation of the facts in relation to the production of the composition here presented.

On the 28th of April, 1919, Patience Worth wrote, among other poems on that evening, the following on "The Potter":

I am a clayster, a moulder of bowls.  
My hands are begrimed by their whirring.

Bits of clay build the master craft  
Which is mine—little atoms of dust—clay.  
Besmearing clay I sit, watching it slip,  
With its glistening, cloying, waxen substance,  
Beneath my hand, becoming perfect. Clay!

From where blown the atoms  
Which construct thee? Grime—  
Yet my fancy playeth. I cannot watch
The stuff and make it my craft
But that I unloose the steed of my soul
Which is pawing for release. I would
Watch him speed with that lash upon
His flesh which is delivered by the
Master's hand. I would let him
Make away across the desert, into
The palm lands where the pools stand
In the sands, reflecting the image
Of the sky—with these to companion
While my hands labour with clay,
And I sit watching the wheel
And communing with the dusts.

Grains of myrrh, dusts of palms,
Mould of lilies, sands from the tombs
Of Kings, mayhap bits of rubies
Which once burned glowing, and were
Pressed by loves now dead.
All of this is within the clay,
And my tears intermingle with them,
Building a bowl upon the wheel.
Whether this picture of the oriental potter, putting his fancy into his bowl, suggested the theme of this book, or whether the theme was already in mind and this but a casual expression, I am unable to say. But two weeks after this was written Mrs. Alex. B. Smith, of Los Angeles, Cal., came to the home of the Curran's to spend a few months in the study of the writings of Patience Worth, attracted by the personality of the invisible poet, and in response to this affectionate interest Patience, shortly after her arrival, said to her: "Ah, but the love-tendin' we shall be at, dame. I say thee shall have a wonderwork o' thine ain." A few days later Mrs. Curran spelled out the strange word "Aesol," and Patience said to Mrs. Smith: "'Tis a whit o' thy wonderwork." Then she showed Mrs. Curran a picture of an old man seated at a rude potter's wheel the axle of which turned within a socket of clay, the wheel being moved by hand. Above it a curious water receptacle fashioned
of skin was suspended from a stick which from time to time the potter touched, spilling a few drops upon the clay pot which he was moulding upon the wheel. His beard was thin and pointed, and his countenance gave the impression of wisdom and kindness. Upon his head was a coarse turban and he wore nothing else but a clout. A naked child stood beside him with wondering eye, seeming to be questioning him. "'Tis the measurein' o' Youth against Age," said Patience, but gave no further information. Some days after this she began the dialogue and continued its dictation with but little diversion to other compositions until it was completed.

The picture of the potter presented to Mrs. Curran needs some explanation. Pictures accompany all the communications of Patience Worth and sometimes, as in this case, without verbal communications. They form a very remarkable feature of this phenomenon. As the letters come into her consciousness the scenes
depicted, the persons speaking or described, or the symbols of poetry, are pictured to her eyes, in miniature but vividly. It is as if she were looking upon a moving picture, a microscopic but distinct panorama of the life presented in all its colors. Yet there is no loss of normal consciousness or of normal vision. One may be looking out of a window and seeing all that is within range of the eye, yet the thought may be upon some distant scene, and that scene be within the mind's eye at the same time as the physical one; or one may be reading a book and seeing, mentally, the scenes and characters suggested in the printed words. Such duality of vision is common enough to every one. But this of Mrs. Curran is different. These pictures are not the product of her thought. They are not suggested by the words coming from her, although she understands the words and comprehends their meaning as they come. It was my first impression that
the pictures were a natural and normal result of the word suggestions. But experience long ago proved them to be impressed upon her vision as the words are impressed upon her consciousness, and by the same power. The pictures are too constant, too vivid, too complete in detail, and include too much that is utterly unknown to Mrs. Curran, to accept them as products of her imagination. For example, it was not known to her, or to anyone about her, although Mrs. Smith is skilled in ceramics, that there ever was such a potter's wheel as that described here until the subject was investigated afterward. There are hundreds of such instances. In this book the chapters are introduced by brief descriptions, written by Mr. Curran, of the scenes thus presented to Mrs. Curran. No words accompanied these introductory scenes. Mrs. Curran simply told what she saw and Mr. Curran gave form to her description.
As had been the case when she began other important work, Patience, shortly after beginning this book, gave this prayer for the accomplishment of her hope and purpose in writing it:

Let not my tongue become heavy
Of time nor light of sympathy.
Make my words wisdom such as
A child may nurture upon. I would
Not walk a path with Wisdom
Upon which no child’s feet disported.

I would make my wisdom strong as an Armor, yet gentle as the eyes of Motherhood. In such accomplishment I shall be a true brother unto all Men, and a child with childhood. He who remembereth that wisdom Is but the mother’s breast, Forgetteth not that he is a babe.

C. S. Y.
Written for and
Lovingly Dedicated to
Mrs. Alexander B. Smith.
THE POT UPON THE WHEEL
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I.

(Scene—An Oriental city at the edge of the desert. Time—Perhaps a thousand years ago, perhaps today. At a corner of an open space within the walls sits a potter, moulding a pot upon a rude wheel. Beside him is a rack holding finished pots, the work of his hands. To him comes a child bearing a brass bowl.)

CHILD: O Khadjas, I have come, I whom thou hast bidden to seek thy side at the dawning, that I hear thee sing. I have come, O Khadjas, bearing the brass bowl for the filling at thy fount. Men whom I have passed upon my way have despised my shadow, and I may not suckle at my mother’s breast the draught of wisdom for which I thirst. Give me the water of thy wisdom. See! Is not the bowl empty before thee?”
Khadjas: "Wisdom is not learning, child. Fools have learning, and wisdom is the tatters that cover the beggar."

Child: "O Khadjas, is this the filling of the bowl? Men have said that Love rode upon the back of a bird bearing a rod of sweet cane and a brace of arrows. Is this true, O Khadjas?"

Khadjas: "Tomorrow the gateway shall swing inward, O child, and the caravans shall sweep within the city's place. Unmindful shall the hand which moves this wheel turn its surface beneath the palm. That, O child, is love; and the caravans have no plunder within their packs which may give the answer like the turning of the wheel."

Child: "Is this wisdom? Show me its waters, O Khadjas."
Khadjas: “Dip thy bowl within the waters, so, letting it come forth filled. Now, child, cast it upon the sands. It is done. Behold the answer! The sands are dry even now. Likewise is wisdom drunk and become dry, yet the herbage beneath the sands have become quickened.”

Child: “Then wisdom may not be drunk but must be cast forth unto the sands. Such is thy word, O Khadjas?”

Khadjas: “Behold thy bowl, O child. It hath thirst upon its lips. It is empty. Again dip within the water and cast. A wise man keepeth his bowl empty.

“The waters of wisdom spurt the stones. The root of its stream is within the heart of man. And thou, O child, hast yet to learn that the gods strike upon stone for entrance when they smite the hearts of men. Aye, and ’tis the water of wisdom which washeth the stone asunder.”
CHILD: "Is this wisdom or confusion, O Khadjas?"

KHADJAS: "Learning is confusion; wisdom is simplicity."

CHILD: "Then with thy wisdom make simple words which may define the thirst which is mine, O Khadjas. How in confusion may I find simplicity?"

KHADJAS: "Behold the pot, O child, turning upon its wheel, unmindful of the caravans or the sands, or that the mighty winds trouble them until the desert shall writhe in its golden fury, and in its labour work out a miracle. It is the pot upon the wheel, turning."

CHILD: "See, O Khadjas, I have drunk the draught. The pot upon the wheel, turning. No part of confusion. Apart from confusion. I would watch thee at the turning. I would watch thy hands at the labour. O
Khadjas, singer, speak on! What is the answer of hate? Among men I have seen the strife and the bitterness. I have beheld the bearing of blades and the gushing forth of blood. What is the answer of hate, O Khadjas?"

Khadjas: "Turn thou, O child, toward the East. Let thy voice rise in the sound of calling. Demand of the gods answering. There; even as I have commanded it is done. Hark! Hearest thou the answer? Watch the pot turning. It hath not a voice for calling nor ears to take in the answering. It turneth upon the wheel."

Child: "But is this wisdom, O Khadjas, or is it that the pot is not flesh. What is the smile which plays thy grim lips? Is it at my folly thou art smiling?"

Khadjas: "Nay, child, the pot is flesh and hath a thirst for wisdom. Behold the drops,
falling, falling. See! they are drunk and the pot becometh more perfect. Yet it is crying not aloud. Hate is not yon in the Eastway, nor yet within the West, nor within the North, nor the South, nor above nor below. It hath no answer. No man who would hear its voice would answer its hideous cry.

"O child, pluck forth a stone and fling it unto the pot. Behold, it is broken into bits by the smiting of hate. Yet in its confusion it lieth upon the wheel, and is still the pot upon the wheel, turning!"

CHILD: "But it is broken, O Khadjas! Thy wisdom may not make it whole. Hate hath shattered it."

KHADJAS: "Behold, O child, the atoms of its being are complete!"

CHILD: "O Khadjas, I have drunk the water of thy wisdom. The answer to hate is the pot upon the wheel, turning. The Master's
hand awaiteth His vessel and the answer is the pot upon the wheel, turning.

"O Khadjas, why is the day dry of wisdom and wet of learning? Why do men make pence of learning and beg wisdom?"

Khadjas: "O child, thy voice hath become old in that utterance! Learning is the counting of jewels; wisdom is the jewels!"

Child: "O Khadjas, thy wisdom is a clear pool. I, a child of the sands, may not read wisdom upon the desert nor upon men, for they that possess wisdom are mute to announce it, while they that have learning chant loudly, displaying their wares.

"Is wisdom a daughter of the stars? Hath she, O Khadjas, turquoise upon her anklets and armlets of silver which ring? Hath she gladness and youth? Is she smiling? Doth she dance unto the music of Folly, ringing her armlets and displaying the turquoise
upon her anklets? Is her hair perfumed of sweet oils and dusted of golden dusts? Is her breast bare and veined of milk? Is she a bearer of men? O Khadjas, how many men have been born of wisdom?"

Khadjas: "Child, she is not laughing. Her feet are bare and bleeding and her hands have been cupped by the turning of her wheel. Her breasts drip, aye, and the cups of all men are pressed unto them. Her raiment is of doubt. While the temple bells ring she is within the retreat of the souls of men, for the temple bells are but a symbol of the calling of men one unto the other, while wisdom calleth not but is born of the union of humility and thirst. Truth is unveiled and belongeth not unto the Caliph's harem.

"This is the speech of a heretic but wisdom is mute. Confide, O child, unto wisdom! Take up the bowl, for tomorrow cometh bearing a tray of opals, and the sun is with-
in them, and wisdom glows within their hearts like fire veiled with camel's milk.

"Tomorrow cometh, and her young neck shall be encircled with a golden chain, and her lips shall utter new words; and wisdom shall be found upon her breast, new-born!

"O child, bring thy bowl unto the side of Khadjas that he shall speak the name of wisdom confidently unto thee. Turn thine eyes unto the coming morning, untroubled with that thou hast learned, for remember that learning is but the clinking cymbals unto wisdom's feet. Unfetter thy tongue with a pack of inquiry. Today hath nothing new, nothing old, but the turning of the pot upon the wheel.

"Return in the young morning, if thou thirsteth, with thy cup. But, if thy wisdom hath aroused, return with a lighted taper."
II.

(Scene—The same. Comes the Child again, bearing a lighted taper.)

CHILD: “O Khadjas, behold me and the lighted taper! I have run with sure legs unto thy side through the young morning. Even as thy tongue foretold, I beheld the morning with her tray of opals, and I knew wisdom within their hearts even though ’twas veiled with camel’s milk. I am assured of the knowledge I have attained. O Khadjas, behold me with my taper lighted with confidence, for I am come unto the knowledge of true wisdom.”

Khadjas: “This is the tongue of youth, O child! Should a man slay his brother, what should thy judgment be?”
CHILD: "O Khadjas, out of the fullness of my wisdom I speak. A man should justly slay his brother should he defile the law. He should be secure in his wisdom and know his brother's failing. He should, with his word of wisdom, adjudge his brother wrong in his wrongdoing. He should make himself no part of such folly as belongs his brother. This is the judgment of wisdom upon this, O Khadjas."

KHADJAS: "O child, behold thy taper; it is gone out! With the zeal of thy folly thou hast extinguished wisdom. Where is thy cup and thy humility? Behold the pot upon the wheel, turning. While thy learning led thee upon the highways, wisdom remained the pot upon the wheel, turning."

CHILD: "Then am I confused, O Khadjas. I who so lately would have drunk truth have supped folly. Behold my lamp is gone out and I am consumed of a keener thirst."
Where is my bowl? I have left it as an empty vessel and have naught within which to catch wisdom. Behold, the taper is no more and naught but wisdom may relight it. Let me speed with swift legs that I bring forth the bowl, empty. Detain me not with thy words, O Khadjas; I would flee forth!"

Khadjas: "Before the new flame of thy taper bow, O child. Behold in thy returning humility it hath sprung forth anew, the new flame of wisdom.

"The pot is upon the wheel. Return with no conviction but with the question of a child. Already art thou upon the way. Such is the pathway of youth. While wisdom maketh her confident word, folly pipes and youth would dance.

"Today but brought new fears and old doubts. Make haste. Bring forth thy bowl for the filling. Unto the side of Khadjas return in faith."
(Child runs swiftly homeward, returning with a larger bowl.)

CHILD: “Behold me, O Khadjas! I, who so lately left thy side, return, making sure that I may be armored against folly, for behold that I bring forth a bowl that is once and once again so large as first I proffered. I am consumed of thirst and wisdom is a dry draught. Is the taper burning? Why are thy lips so interchangeful of sorrow and smiling? Seven-fold have I withstood the folly of the path, neither turning to the right nor to the left, bearing with confidence the new bowl for the new draught, thy wisdom, O Khadjas!”

KHADJAS: “Lo, before thy folly wisdom hath forsaken thee! Is the bowl thou didst proffer yesterday filled?”

CHILD: “Nay, it is no longer a useful vessel. Have I not drunk from its lips? Behold, I proffer a newer fashioned cup, for my thirst is monstrous.”
Khadjas: "Make ready thy cup then, that thou shalt dip. The hand of Khadjas proffereth thee the water which is wisdom.

"Thy cup is o'er its filling, yet this is the water of Yesterday and Yesterday's waters may not be drunk from Today's bowl. The sands of Eternity thirst for the waters of Yesterday. So be it. Look! upon the sands I have cast it and it is already dry. Go forth and bring thy cup filled of the waters of Today."

Child: "But, Khadjas, where is the well?"

Khadjas: "Each man, O child, seeketh his well of wisdom. Make thee forth, and at the eve's coming I shall await thee confidently, turning the wheel and creating a new pot."

Child: "Thou, O Khadjas, did bid me to return with no conviction but with the question of a child. What, O Khadjas, is the thing which swings the gate of the city?"
What is the thing which setteth hunger within man's breast? What is the thing that lieth between the stones of the city walls and is the foundation of the temple and of the huts?"

**Khadjas:** "Unto thy word, O child, I would reply: watch with mindful eye the pot upon the wheel, and the potter's hands, each finger flattened with the service of creation, each sinew strengthened with the desire of power; for the foundation of the pot is within the potter's spirit, and the whirring of the wheel is weaving his fancy.

"This is the stuff of the temple's foundation. This is the stuff between the stones of the city's walls. It is the thing which rides upon the back of a bird with a rod of sweet cane and a brace of arrows. It is LOVE. It swingeth the city gates and ringeth the temple's bells. It condemns not, nor fellows with folly, though folly followeth it."
Child: "O Khadjas, I am filled with thy wisdom. I shall go forth with my great bowl and fill it with the blue water of the sky! I shall let a star lie upon its breast and rim the bowl with the circlet moon! Yea, I shall set my bowl upon the pedestal of the sun! O Khadjas, I shall find the well of wisdom and with the bowl of my spirit shall dip it dry! I shall come before thee and make thee acknowledge that Youth hath a foreshortened pathway unto wisdom. Oh, lay not a hand of restraint upon me, O Khadjas; I am overcome with confidence!"

Khadjas: "Yea, child, but thy bowl is empty!"

Child (Wonderingly confused): "Which way, O Khadjas, to the well of wisdom?"

Khadjas: "Let thy confidence lead thee, child."

Child: "But, O Khadjas, I have but met her, and thee I have known since my great eyes
beheld the bat upon the moon. The sun is hot. Thinkest thou the water shall be low within the well?"

Khadijas: "Be upon thy path, O child. Today is an open script, and thou hast read the hours with no filling of their wisdom. When the evening hath come return with thy bowl."
III.

(The child departs slowly. In the late evening he returns wearily, bearing the cup. The moon shows him Khadjas and he approaches swiftly, crying.)

"O Khadjas! O Khadjas! O Khadjas! Woe is me, for the men of Earth have beset me, and I in my confusion have but tarried to return the stones they cast. But behold, the night found me with no wisdom and no water of the well, for my bowl is filled with stones! My throat cries out with thirst and the wisdom that was mine hath forsaken me. There is no pathway marked upon the streetways where wisdom hath trod for I have sought her footprints and have found but sand. The winds of the four ways have descended upon me and blinded mine eyes with the desert wastes. I see nothing but the blackness of the night, and I am
weary of the searching for the water. O Khadjas, take my bowl and lend me but one sup!"

Khadjas: "O child, sit beside the wheel. Clasp thy legs about the rod. Lay thy hands upon the cool clay and press thy lips against the sweating curves. The moon shall draw up from the well of night new wisdom that is cool."

Child: "O Khadjas, my hands have ceased to throb. Mine eyes have lifted unto the skies. I see the moon rising, but my bowl is empty of the sky's blue and the stars, and the moon's circlet is not upon its lips. . . . Behold! Yon is a young star!"

Khadjas: "Nay, child, it is the taper of thy lamp, burning."

Child: "Seven caravans have come within the walls, O Khadjas, each man among them a noble, each camel hung in glittering array,
and the packs are scented of spices, and the wisdom they bring is overpowering. They tell of far lands, of the interchanging of moneys, of the lands of other gods and kings. They have spoken that thy wisdom is but the musing of the aged. What is the answer?"

(Silence, broken but by the whirring of the wheel.)

CHILD: "Is silence a rebuke, O Khadjas, or is it an acknowledgment? Seven caravans are many and the men of seven caravans are many many. Their wisdom is not to be despised since it hath bought goods. And thine, O Khadjas, leaveth thy feet naked and thy hands scarred. What is thy answer?"

KHADJAS: "Seven caravans, and the wisdom of the men of seven caravans! Their packs are scented of spices and each man is a noble! Look thou, child; is not the cheek of the pot round?"
Child: "This is no answer, O Khadjas! I have come unto wisdom which I bring forth unto thee who declare thyself wise. What is thy answer?"

Khadjas: "Seven drops and seven whirrs."

Child: "Thou art jesting, O Khadjas! Make me an answer!"

Khadjas: "Seven turns upon the wheel and seven tears dropped upon it. Child, behold the pot upon the wheel. O child, thy heart is the pot upon the wheel. The clay is cool. The water droppeth cunningly over it."

Child: "O Khadjas, let me lay my hand upon it. It itcheth for contact."

Khadjas: "But the caravans are passing, child."

Child: "Yea, O Khadjas, but the clay is cool and the water drops!"
IV.

(The Child again returns. Some days later.)

**Child**: “Seven times, O Khadjas, have the city’s gates swung inward. Seven times I have stood beside thy wheel drinking in the wonders of thy wisdom. Neither thy words nor the wisdom they contain make the dealing of the day clear unto mine eyes, for behold, unto me the city is like a grain of sand bathed with the dusts, for it lieth beneath the bath of iniquities and cunning and dishonorable dealing helplessly like unto the grain of sand.

“What manner of wisdom hath man for such, O Khadjas? When I rest beside thy wheel watching the pot I am not confused, but when I with sure legs stride forth to become a part of the city’s day, I become as a
bit of foam upon the surface of the sea and am tortured before its strength. Men have no ear for my wisdom and even though its waters are sweet and my lips thirst for its draught, they laugh at my cup in derision and set about the interchanging of wares, saying: 'Gods are not within mouthing, neither the wisdom of gods. Behold, is not this the stuff for gods?' and they hold up before my gaze the market's wares and fall into wordy discourse. They are consumed with the desire of greed and hunger not for wisdom. O Khadjas, their day is not thy day, yet I am one among them and must live the hours of their day and deal thy wisdom! It may not be, O Khadjas, for thy wisdom is confusion unto them and their day is confusion unto thee.'

Khadjas: "O child, thy words are not of wise men. Remember thou that all men who word are not wording wisdom nor yet learning."
Behold, the babes about the market place each is consumed with some play. Their prattle is but the soughing of the winds and meaneth less. Yet, unto them, play is the rooting of wisdom. The men that thou hast listed unto are but babes prattling. Their eyes see naught but the gaud of the wares, and their mouths speak naught but of the worth of them, for worthless possessions may not become worth save that the possessor assure himself and all men of their worth, repeating with sure tongue the false value until it becometh well-sounding unto his ear and unto them that list.

"Behold the pot upon the wheel! It neither becometh a part of such nor rebuketh the action. Men may despise it, laying their hands upon its clay in light touch. Of this the pot hath no part. Men may even make loud announcement of its little value. Of this it hath no part; for within its clay is
imbibed the thought, the will, of the potter, and it cries aloud: 'I am a pot,' even before its shape hath become perfect."

CHILD: "Where, O Khadjas, are the prayers of wisdom? Wise men pray, though thou art mute."

KHADJAS: "O child, prayer is but the water of the soul dripping upon the clay and may not become a perfect thing, a vessel of office, without labour. What potter, O child, would fling forth from him on the instant a pot complete? This would not be labour, and labour is the loving unto creation. Love may not be bartered for, O child; aye, love is the price of labour.

"Thou hast brought the wisdom of men unto me and the despisal of the wisdom I have dealt out unto thee. What is thy answer unto this?"

CHILD: "O Khadjas, I am mute before such wisdom! It is as though my spirit were the
blue sky and a dove had been loosed unto it. I would follow its flight but the barb of the men slay it and it falleth dead at my feet. Thy voice, O Khadjas, is but one voice and the voices of men are many. I am lonely, so I tarry to listen, for there, in the market’s place, is companionship.”

**Khadjas:** “No man, O child, is lonely who hath the rod of truth within his hand. There is but one Voice, and mine is but the echo of it. Goest thou unto the market’s place thou shalt find thyself far o’er lonely among men who clank the pence of folly.”

**Child:** “O Khadjas, I am through with thy wisdom. I shall fling it forth as a stone of hate. I shall shatter the pot upon the wheel and fare forth unto the city’s place.”

**Khadjas:** “Begone, O child, but tarry until the hand of the potter lendeth thee a bit of clay, for rememberest thou not that the men of the city’s way beset thee with stones?”
CHILD: "But I am wise, O Khadjas, over the day that let me become a part of their confusion. I shall now become their brother, no longer contesting their wisdoms but lending an ear."

KHADJAS: "O child, unto thy hand Khadjas delivereth a bit of clay. Treasure it as a treasure of the Rajah, and do the city's men beset thee, fling thou not the stone but a bit of clay. No man is so undone as he who is befouled of the clay of Truth, which clings. No stone is so sharp."

CHILD: "It shall be as thou hast willed, O Khadjas, but I shall return with the clay when the moon shall come whitely up from the phantom land of night. O Khadjas, she is the seer with the veil of wisdom. Silence, Khadjas, silence! It shall be silence I shall present unto the men of the city's place."

KHADJAS: "Depart, O child. Wisdom is perched upon thy shoulder as an owl upon a
shrunken branch. Before thy convictions the wisdom of Khadjas shivers and whines.”

(In the evening the Child returns.)

Child: “O Khadjas, through the evening I have come, bearing the spoils of my labour. Behold, I did beset the day with my bit of clay, and men laughed at the casting. With the last whit of the substance did I bring down a prey in the form of a dove.”

Khadjas: “This is not folly, O child, for the clay that hath intermingled with men hath clung unto their raiment. The prey that fell was a dove? So is the symbol of the earth. The dove shall fall before the stone of love; even so the eagle shall soar, seeking in the heights the feed of the lowly. Yea, but his hunger shall call him unto earth.”

Child: “But, O Khadjas, I have come upon men who have poured the wine from the
skins into cups and drunk and declared that wisdom sprung unto them from the grape. Indeed, their words were wise and sparkling as the wine which glowed as the heart of the harvest moon. He who listeth unto their word becometh convinced of its weight, for their tongues are like lightning and their wisdom heavy as thunder.

“Answer with thy wisdom, Khadjas, which is like the water from a hot well and hath little power for the quenching of thirst.”

Khadjas: “So this is the day’s dealing, O child. Thou hast come upon men who drink their wisdom from out cups, cups of confusion which set up the function of folly. The labour bringeth forth a brat child, and men have called it wisdom but it hath the skin of an ass! And its utterance is but a bray; thus is its weight announced!”
CHILD: "Why is this, O Khadjas, that thy words make the day unfellowable? What seemed the import of life becometh as a phantom. The words of men which I have striven to hold, fall unto dust within my hands, for they may not look unto thine eyes—those peace-writ eyes which gaze over the desert sands with no fear within them—and declare their unbelief in thee. What is thy answer unto this thing which thou presentest unto man?"

KHADJAS: "He, O child, whose faith is his feet and his hands, needs not fear for his heart nor his spirit."

CHILD: "Thy tongue, O Khadjas, is of myrrh and sweet oils, but the dust of the day is aloes. The draught of the waters of day embitters the cup of all men. I am displeased with the wisdom thou pressest upon me. Thy tongue uttereth blasphemy and I am intolerant with the gentle wisdom which is thine."
Behold, I would make mine armor strong with a wisdom of steel and my blade's point would I make keen upon the tongue of wisdom.

"O Khadjas, I am as a dismayed child before the darkness of the task seeking wisdom!"

Khadjas: "O child, thy tongue is bathed in folly. Let the waters of its wisdom flow freely and leave thy throat dry. Then thou shalt know the thirst which is true."

Child: "I know not, O Khadjas, the thing thou wouldst that I possess. Lo, I have listed unto thy discourses and become confused and out of my confusion conviction springeth not up but is dried beneath the sun of doubt. The words of men are as stones upon my flesh and they enter unto the abode of my spirit, marking it with wrath. Yea, my spirit writhes beneath their words"
of dissension and I have not the strength to hurl back their wreaking of wrath upon me.

“My folly, then, is it in the weakness of my legs? Or in the unsteadiness of my hands? Or is it upon the tip of my tongue or in the pit of my heart? Wherein, O Khadjas, is my shortcoming?

“I despise thy word, O Khadjas, for it is like unto the sun of high noon; it neither giveth thee cool nor rest, but beateth down relentlessly. Thou, with thy tongue of wisdom, turning the wheel beneath thy palm, knowest not the affairs of men. There are men who sit idly, clothed of rich stuff, whose tongues slip like silks over a lady’s hand. And their wisdom is cunning. It hath the casket of truth about it, but within its pit gleameth the eyes of a green demon.”

Khadjas: “O child, then thy wisdom is become a child of thy flesh, if thou knowest this thing.”
Child: "But, O Khadjas, how may I, who so lately came from the Midnight Land, whose sunless days and moonless nights tell naught and whose silence is unbroken until a babe wails, know which of ye be offering truth?"

Khadjas: "He who decketh within the labour of the hands of other men, hath no labour to present. Judge a man, O child, by his labour."

Child: "What then! thou wouldst that I judge an ass's man (an ass driver) by his labour?"

Khadjas: "Yea, even so, O child. He who followeth truly the tracking of an ass, may indeed find wisdom."

Child: "Then, O Khadjas, thou hast naught to offer unto me but the pot upon the wheel?"

Khadjas: "Nay, O child; neither hath the great God more! Upon the wheel of the
universe, behold He fashioneth out the pots.”

Child: “Then, O Khadjas, shall I go forth armored with thy simple wisdom which covereth not my naked body. With a bare breast shall I make myself a part of the day. I shall leave my legs uncovered and my feet bare. I shall go forth unto the earth’s day with no implement of labour save the brass bowl, letting the hours place within my hand the rod of creation and following the import.

“Seven tides (years) shall I remain apart from thee. Seven seas and seven deserts shall I traverse. And the days of my travail shall I record upon white skins of young lambs, bringing the scripts unto thy side.

“And thou, O Khadjas, shalt take within thy hut the lamp of my wisdom, keeping its wick trimmed, while I go forth with my bowl for the refilling, unto the earth.”
V.

(Years have passed. A caravan appears, winding its way like a giant snake across the golden desert sands, to halt at the city's gate. The camel men check their beasts with hands and raucous cries and then stand silent waiting the master's word. Their clothes are of silks and fine cloths of many colors, the camels' trappings glitter with gems and bright wrappings and their packs are heavy with chests studded with jewels and gold. From the lead camel dismounts a youth in turban and silken robes, with sash of many colors from which gleams blades with jewelled hilts. The Gateman appears and the youth approaches.)

Youth: "O Keeper of the gate, ope its arch that I may come within! I who have traversed the seven seas and the seven desert ways; I who so confidently left the city of wisdom to seek a newer wine, return triumphant! Behold, yon is my caravan! Within it basketh bronze idols of the men of seven lands. Behold, I have brought forth the gods of seven peoples, each speaking in a new tongue.
"O thou keeper of the gate, behold! My camels each is packed of riches past the prince's wealth. Behold the lead is packed with emeralds and each is flashing in its dark abode, begging for the sun. Behold, the follow is packed with pearls and they lie damp one upon the other, softly, softly pressing one the other's cheek; and the white sides gleam like the sea beneath the morning sky, and they have been washed by the tears of kings and have lain upon the breast of the sea's nurture. Behold then, the follow. It is packed with rubies and they wickedly gleam, flashing their fires in challenge!

"Behold then the follow. There within its pack gleameth turquoise, veined of copper and glinted of the white which flasheth beside the copper's trail. Behold then the follow, for within its pack is stored the opals of all lands. Red they gleam like the cheeks of a veiled daughter. Yea, the moon-white
with fires of eternity within them striving to leap forth. Yea, and green, green as the sea with the sun upon its waves and the foam sprayed o’er. Yea, and blue as the morning sky with the sun pale, hid behind the cloud. Yea, and black, black as midnight, when the tiger’s eyes glow!

“Yea, the stores of the Rajah show no such wealth as this, my caravan. Yet, O behold, thou Keeper of the gate, I am returned with my brass bowl empty, though I have captured the gods of seven peoples! Their tongues are still and I have beheld not their works but the faith of their people. Such is not the God I seek.

“O Keeper of the gate, cast the gateway inward that I pass. I would seek at the fount of Khadjas, Khadjas who sits yon, turning his wheel.”

(The gates swing inward. The youth hastens toward Khadjas. The caravan files in, filling the streets to their full and trailing far without the gate. The villagers stand
in awed wonder at the sight and the strange wording of the two.)

**Youth**: "Yea-ho, Khadjas! It is I, the child. I have returned even as I did promise and behold my caravan! Within it the gods of seven peoples. Yea, each silent! O Khadjas, I have failed in the quest of wisdom, even though with the cloth of wisdom that thou didst lend unto my hand I did wipe dry the face of Earth. Yea, where there was confusion there is more confusion, and where there was false wisdom, behold, the men who peddled of its wares stopped to question, but I had not the answer. Ah, but Khadjas, I, the child, make announcement before thee, that I have found a new well at which to drink. Behold, it is the lips of the daughter of Aesol! O Khadjas, the water of such wisdom is running as a stream of fire. Its hot breath consumeth, yet its dews steep thee in honey. It maketh a man's words become winged things. Yea, it leapeth about thee like
the waters of the young spring, then cooling thee unto the swooning.

"Speak, O Khadjas! O Khadjas, cease thy turning! Stop thy hand! I am come to confess my new wisdom. Speak my name! I would hear it."

Khadjas: "O Child, call loudly unto the Eastway, 'Fool!' and hark."

Youth: "But, O Khadjas, I would seek thy mercy. I would not be despised for a fool. I would make thee acclaim me wise. If this is not wisdom I have found, what callest thou this?"

Khadjas: "O child, Wisdom hath but knocked at thy door and this is her hand."

Youth: "But the doorway is flung wide, O Khadjas, and I await her."

Khadjas: "Yea, O child, wait—her!"

Youth: "But she is wisdom! Thou hast confessed it."
Khadjas: "Nay, nay. I have but listed to your acclaim."

Youth: "But O Khadjas, when the doorway shall let wisdom in, how shall I know?"

Khadjas: "Behold, O child, thy lead camel shall go yon, and its follow and its follow and its follow, or thine eyes shall be dazzled upon the hand of wisdom. The daughter of Aesol shall recline upon thy breast, laughing, and—Khadjas shutteth up his eye's wording—where then shall wisdom be? For the daughter of Aesol shall despise not the camels nor their packs, nor shall she ask for a draught from thy bowl. It is thou, O child, who art thirsted, aye, and drunk! "Which water, O child, this at the hand of Khadjas, or this at the lips of the daughter of Aesol?"

Youth: "Mirth o'ercometh me, O Khadjas. I have kept record, upon the white skins, of
the days. Each is writ of valour, of unconquerable feats. Yea, I have been above my brother, yet have I thirsted. The man that I am crieth out in pride and the man within me sighs, for he is a beggar beside the roadway as the caravan passeth. Not one ruby may I lay within his hand, nor an opal or yet a pearl or yet an emerald or yet a turquoise. Nay, I may not even weep within his empty bowl.

"He will not stop his whining though I pour unto my packs the wealth of the universe. Yet shall I conquer! With mine own wisdom have I tortured the day. Aye, and Khadjas, how mayst thou know this new well, thou whose lips have shrunk and whose arms ne'er held a woman? Is this mirth or rebuking, O Khadjas, thy laughter?"

Khadjas: "Neither, O child. It is but the musing of age. Khadjas hath pressed that
grape, and the wine is old. But old wine is for Youth!"

Youth: "Yea, yea, look thou, O Khadjas, here is a goblet. I shall hold it upon high. 'Tis a shell from the shore of one of the seven seas. Yea, and the ages have painted its lips, and it is awaiting the kiss of such wine as I shall pour within it. Look ye, I decry thy wine, for the wine that I shall drink shall flow from between rubies and be created of pearls. Yea, and the neck of the urn shall be of the skin of a lily which hath lain beneath the sun, turning gold, and its arms shall be ebony, her locks, O Khadjas, and as I drink I shall forget wisdom within her embrace. What is thy answer to this?"

Khadjas: "Call 'Fool!' O child, unto the East-way!"

Youth: "Thy tongue is like unto a lash, O Khadjas, and I sear beneath it. Create, O
Khadjas, upon thy wheel, a pot like unto that which I am.

Khadjas: "It shall be, O child. Behold, I lift with care this which I have fashioned out unto perfection, and behold take up new clay which is dry. Behold, the water is gone and I fashion unto no cause, for I may not make unto a cunning pattern with dry clay."

Youth: "Then thou wouldst say that I possess not the water of wisdom, O Khadjas? Yet shall I show thee, for I shall recline upon a camel, clasping the daughter of Aesol and watch men in their folly making wisdom. I shall deter not their steps, neither tell them that I have failed. Then shall they smile upon me, acclaiming me wise. For, O Khadjas, what riches lie in silence! Even thou in thy wisdom will acknowledge this since thy greatest trick is silence. This much have I learned, O Khadjas."
Khadjas: "Yea, child, but the cup of silence loseth its bottom and man trieth in vain to drink from such a cup."

Youth: "Look, look, O Khadjas, upon my caravan! Look! I have the gods of seven peoples, they and their wisdom."

Khadjas: "Yea, child, but that is naught, for they, like unto thee, present silence unto the day."

Youth: "But thy God is silent, O Khadjas."

Khadjas: "Nay, nay, O child. He is running upon the legs of men and I Hear Him in the drop of water upon the clay, yea, and feel His hand upon mine as I turn the wheel. He is neither mournful nor folly-like. He is companionable."

Youth: "Yet thou seest no man as companion and find little, O Khadjas, in common with men."
Khadjas: "Yea, child, yea. 'Tis far o'er the communing with men to commune with God."

Youth: "Stop thy hand, O Khadjas. I am weary of thy moulding. I would behold thy finished bowls. Are these perfect?"

Khadjas: "Nay, nay, child. Behold them awaiting the fires. Yea, like unto thee. Thou shalt enter the flaming oven upon the lips of the daughter of Aesol!"

Youth: "O Khadjas, I, the child, laugh at thy weary wisdom! Tomorrow! Oh, tomorrow is golden. Her banners ride forth upon charging steeds and the knockings of strange music shall delight her people. Thou hast no part, O Khadjas, in tomorrow.

"Look upon my caravan. I shall return again when the tides have become a twain, and behold my caravan shall reach where thine eyes may not see, and I shall ride unto
the gate of the city with the daughter of Aesol upon the lead camel, laughing, and thou shalt warm thy stricken soul upon her lips."

**Khadjas:** "Tomorrow. Tomorrow, O child, is yet a mute babe and she shall be born unto all men separately."

**Youth:** "What is tomorrow, O Khadjas, what is tomorrow? In my wisdom I have not the answer, yet in my confidence I utter it."

**Khadjas:** "Tomorrow, O child, is but another dropping of the great God's tears. Within its crystal purity it reflects man."

**Youth:** "Behold, O Khadjas, thou hast not denied me one sup of wisdom! The bowl hath water upon its thirsty lips. But Yesterday!—what is Yesterday? Thy lips smile and wisdom seemeth pleasurable. Utter."

**Khadjas:** "O child, Yesterday is dried in the dust of the desert and hath become gold of
its dusts. Yet its waters are beneath the sands, and the camel sinks his pad upon its cool. Yesterday is the water of the earth at which all men drink. Tomorrow is born unto all men separately, but upon becoming Yesterday it is a common thing."

**Youth:** "Then thy wisdom is a common thing, O Khadjas?"

**Khadjas:** "O child, all wisdom is a common thing, and men seeking treasures overlook it."

**Youth:** "Adieu, O Khadjas, adieu. Still, though the bowl hath one sup I would fill it with mine own labour. Tomorrow thou shalt look upon the gateway before it opeth and thou shalt say: 'The child hath become a man. Of wisdom he hath. Naught shall decry it'."

**Khadjas:** "Nay, O child, I shall say: 'The child hath become a man. Of wisdom he hath naught and no man may decry it'."
Youth: "O Khadjas, thou art confusion! I, the child, tell thee that the caravan shall ride forth upon the turquoise sky of Morning who wear eth pinned upon her bosom a rose brilliant; and it shall pass the sea's shore where the sea lieth upon the breast of the sand, panting in its embrace; and its locks shall be hung of pearls and seaweed and coral and little glistening shells; and the waters shall breathe new wisdom and the packs of the child shall become heavier. And when the night cometh with her western sky spread with pea-fowl's eyes and purple clouds whose lips are rose, and the green of the young field seemeth to clasp the sun's neck, and the sun blusheth and hideth his head, then shall I have reached the side of the daughter of Aesol and found—wisdom!"

Khadjas: "Behold, O child, while thou hast worded I have made perfect a bowl!"
THE POT UPON THE WHEEL

Youth: “But, O Khadjas, are not my words rich as the Orient?”

Khadjas: “Yea, O child, and as inflamed as leprosy. Such words are not the raiment of wisdom.”

Youth: “But wouldst thou not robe thy wisdom in gorgeous stuffs?”

Khadjas: “Nay, for I would have the beggar know her. Wisdom is not consorted with kings, O child, nor may a king wed her!”

Youth: “Yet I say, O Khadjas, that tomorrow thou shalt sorrow that thou didst not recognize within the raiment which I presented thee the wisdom which is mine.”

Khadjas: “Tomorrow, O child, there is more clay and more water.”

Youth: “But thy pots, O Khadjas, set in their squat folly upon the narrow shelves of thy being and become nothing but pots, while I,
who despise the wheel, become a man among men."

Khadjas: "Yet, O child, not less a pot whose office is to contain! Be thou fashioned with a narrow throat 'tis thy agony!"

Youth: "I am confused by thy tongue's lash, O Khadjas. It is cutting as the sands in the winds."

Khadjas: "Yea, thou hast spoken well. Thou art confused at the tongue's lash. For that reason thy wisdom hath no edge. He who would war wisdom should fling not sand. Sand is but confusing to the fool—and I have but cast sand!"

Youth: "Enough, O Khadjas, I shall go forth. Why, oh why, have I thirsted to return to thee, thou hunched beggar with the wheel between thy crossed legs and thyorny hands cunningly slipping o'er the clay!"
Is thy wisdom magic? Has thy wisdom bewitched me? What is this thirst?"

Khadjas: "It is the thirst of the clay for the water."
VI.

(Other years have passed. Pale stars gaze down from a dull grey sky upon a desert, somber and limitless. Amid the deathy silence, across the wastes, winds a caravan, all in black—men, clothing, trappings, all black as the wings of the vultures which slowly circle high after the slipping camels as they make their way toward the desert city. Over all is sifted the grey dust-sand of the paths, turning the black to ashes. As the giant caravan turns its head up to the gate of the city and pauses before it, the packs show clearer and on the lead camel is seen bound a babe, swathed in many windings of black and showing the sunken eyes and cheeks of death to which days and sun-smite have given a ghastly hue. Behind the lead camel comes another with a black and closed habah. Before the gate comes now the Youth with anxious eyes and bowed head. The Night hears his voice in silence.)

YOUTH: "Behold, O thou city's gateway! Behold, o'er the sands which are as ash beneath the leaden sky, beside the dark shadows and leading a caravan draped in sable, behold me, the child no longer, returned! Returned unto thy arch, O gateway, calling alms! alms! alms!"
“List, O thou mute fellow, list! Behold the camels slipping their tread toward thee, each bowed beneath his pack. And the trappings are black as the midnight, and there is no mark upon them, for he who hath writ them with a symbol of his rank no longer is among men declaiming himself.

“O City, thy lips are mute. Yea, but the morning shall open them, for the gateman shall swing ope the gateway and I may proceed unto the man among thy men who possesseth the treasure of Kings. He is naked and his feet are bared, and his hands are cupped by the laying upon the clay. Oh, I, the child, have returned, grown old in so short a season! Behold, the lips of the daughter of Aesol held wisdom which I drank, and the flower of that wisdom hath withered and died. Oh, the lips of the daughter of Aesol are heavy and will not utter words. Sorrow hath laid her hand upon them and their scar-
let flashing hath paled as the sun beneath the clouds' kiss.

"O list, ye empty skies! I have cried out unto thee for wisdom, and been answered by the cry of vultures, which follow with evil wings the caravan to devour the flower of my wisdom.

"Behold me, O thou pale stars! Behold me, no longer a child, but distraught of my agony that I shall lead forth the caravan unto the feet of Khadjas offering him their goods for the sup of wisdom for which I thirst. Oh, I am a desert beneath the sun of sorrow and the fire of my agony destroyeth the herbage of my heart! The seven gods of the seven lands laugh, or stare stonily forth unto the ash-covered night. Would that I were a magian who possessed an urn of silver. I would be even so silent as the night with her urn of silver upon her shoulder, pouring the soothing fount of her prayerful breath unto the parched earth.
"I would place within the urn my prayers and go forth unto Eternity calling my God, with my hands grown into talons from the flights of the eagle's-heights of sorrow! Now would I swoop down like him from the heights and bathe in some cool pool.

"Ope, thou mute lips of the city! Ope, ope! See! Already upon the eastern sky the ashen cheek of morning hath become paled as a yellow rose. Bestir thee, O men! I, the child, the little child with an empty bowl, return calling open! open! open! In the name of mercy, open! Alms! alms! alms!

"Hasten thy hands, O thou gatesman. Fling it open. Proceed, O thou my caravan! Go forth, kneeling before Khadjas.

"Khadjas! Khadjas! Behold the child, returning! Look up from thy moulding. Behold him; he is no longer a youth but become aged with a stern wisdom. Behold,
before thee kneeleth his caravan! Each camel shall pay obeisance and become thine —each camel and its pack shall become thy goods. Behold, O Khadjas, yon is the daughter of Aesol. I have brought her forth that thou mightst look unto her wisdom, but behold, her wisdom is mute; her lips are locked with a golden key and her eyes weep rubies, each a drop of her heart’s blood.

“Behold, did I not speak that when I should return my caravan would reach beyond the city’s way and well into the desert? Even so it is. The gods of the seven tongues and seven peoples are mute while I list, O Khadjas, for thy wisdom.

“Behold, into my caravan hath been set a score of white camels, each with a necklet of gold and draped of sable. These, even upon stepping, dispense the scent of spice and myrrh, and the airs about them bear heavy dreams. All of this is thine, O Khad-
jas, canst thou unmask the day that hath hidden from me. Take thou the caravan and its pack, oh, thou mute wise man, but behold this, the fore which leadeth. Oh, his pack is light, his tread is heavy and his eyes drip thick tears, for his burden is the jewel of the crown of the daughter of Aesol!

"It was a pale opal, burning as the yellow sun, and the night hath lain upon it, and it is now but a yellowed leaf of the lotus, writhing beneath the hot tears of our sorrow.

"Where is thy wisdom, O Khadjas, before this thing? The heavy-winged bee lingers about the dying lotus but the vulture swoopeth down upon the child of wisdom, yet thou wouldst declare a God!

"O Khadjas, did I not say that I would show thee a foreshortened pathway unto wisdom? I found it upon the lips of the daughter of Aesol. Yea, and drank from its
well and behold, the wisdom flowered and I listened unto new music and new words of wise import no man had e’er listened unto. But they have stopped, and I stand before thee asking alms! alms! alms!

“The caravan is thine. No longer the jewels delight me since I may not hang them about the neck of my beloved, the pale opal. Thy hands are idle, O Khadjas. What is this? Is thy heart at last turned and wouldst thou partake of the goods and discourse wisely unto this hungered breast? I am no longer a child, but aged. Speak, with thy tongue, aged wisdom.”

Khadjas: “O child! O child! O child!”

Youth: “O Khadjas, is thy word rebuking?”

Khadjas: “O child, thou hast returned with thy colored toys, and they are broken. For the bubble blown on thy dreams hath been pricked. Speak in command. Bid that thy
caravan withdraw. Thy goods shall be of no price unto Khadjas. Bid that the fore-camel come forth and kneel. There is the price of wisdom Khadjas would demand—the pale opal, the withering lotus leaf.”

Youth: “O Khadjas, thou speakest unto a child! I am aged and my days I have spent for the purchase of the opal. Thinkest thou then that I shall deliver it up? Nay, the caravan and its packs are thine, but the pale opal!—nay, Khadjas, nay!”

Khadjas: “Then depart! Look yon, the vulture circles, writing death upon the sky.”

Youth: “Stop them, O Khadjas! Stop them! Bring them down with a barb of thy wisdom. I have watched them as the lotus leaf hath seared. Oh, behold! Look! There is naught now but the seared petal. Wouldst thou deny me this?”
Khadjas: "Depart! Depart, O child, for thy faith is weak. The price that Khadjas would demand is the pale opal. Give it unto his hands. He hath given freely unto thee with no return. Whither wouldst thou go with thy gem? On across the desert way, watching the petal become ash, departing, departing, departing from thee each hour, leaving thee but more agony to behold it? Give it unto the hand of Khadjas, for the day is come and it foretelleth of a noon whose fire shall lick the heavens, becoming winds that shall sear all things. And look, yon is the vulture!"

Youth: "O Khadjas, Khadjas, canst thou? It is not mine. Yon is the daughter of Aesol and her breast is cold for the touch of the opal's fire."

Khadjas: "O child, child, child! The daughter of Aesol would ne'er deny the hand of Khadjas."
Youth: "What, what shalt thou do with this jewel, O Khadjas, do I deliver it?"

Khadjas: "Ask me not, O child; deliver it."

Youth: "Behold me, O Khadjas, behold me! My hands are as empty boats upon a storm-cast sea. Behold me, O Khadjas, behold me! It is alms, alms, alms! In the name of mercy deny me not alms!"

Khadjas: "Deliver up the pale opal and I shall cast thee wisdom. It may be bitter but it shall be wisdom."

Youth: "But, O Khadjas, knowest thou not unto thee the young flower of my wisdom is naught, and unto me, O Khadjas, thy wisdom holdeth no thing so precious? Take the caravan, or even—the daughter of Aesol!"

Khadjas: "Nay, the pale opal. O child, remember, remember the morning when thou didst fare forth with thy bowl to fill it up
with the stars and let the circlet moon rest upon its rim and thou didst return with stones. And thou hast tortured the days with thirsting and bought of the days with thy pence of wisdom, returning unto me with thy caravan of empty stuffs. No thing thou possesseth may speak. Dumbly they gaze up unto thy agony. No part of thy caravan maketh thee homage save the camels which bear thee. Call unto the Eastway, 'Fool!' O child!'

Youth: "O Khadjas, Khadjas, despise me not! I am thirsted. I have offered thee the caravan for a sup!"

Khadjas: "O child, lift up thine eyes unto Khadjas, and inquire, proffering thy bowl with the pale opal upon its lips."

Youth: "Behold, O Khadjas, I come. The cup that I offer is a yellow lotus, decaying. Yet, yet—Oh, take it! Take my hand, O
Khadjas; I feel the years leaving me as the fronds drop from the palms.”

Khadjas: “O child, O child, O child! Thy wisdom is beauteous. Khadjas drinketh from the withering lotus and is revived. Behold, beneath the frost-touch of the moon, in a cool retreat where the stone retains the drops and the herbage gathers, shall Khadjas lay the pale opal, and seal the spot with clay he hath made with his own hands, wet with his tears.”

Youth: “But, O Khadjas, which way shall the child seek?”

Khadjas: “Behold, O child, about thy neck is hung the golden opal, and the lips of the daughter of Aesol shall open, for the thing that is done shall unlock them. Yon, O child, is the East gate and yon the West. Either way thou mayst make thy path, but goest thou unto the East thou shalt go but with
one camel and the daughter of Aesol. Goest thou unto the West, thy caravan shall follow thee. Whither, O child?"

Youth: "O Khadjas, I would look upon thy labour. Make me a bowl like unto me."

Khadjas: "It shall be as thou hast wished, O child. Behold, Khadjas taketh up a bowl already dried and shaketh the water upon it but it will not yield. Consider, O child, consider this.

"Depart. Hearest thou not the whispering voices of the earth? There is a new day and thou hast bought one tongue for one god. The seven gods have been mute but thou hast heard the voice of a God. Canst thou hear, O child, the word He called?"

Youth: "Nay, thy words are sealed pits."

Khadjas: "Then child, behold thy heart. The word He spake hath torn it asunder. Ponder upon it. This mighty God bent down from
on high and called thy name. The weight of His word hath split thy heart. But thou shalt carry it as a pack—remember it! Behold the Eastway and the Westway. Whither? Thy camels are restless and the curtains about the daughter of Aesol move. Oh whither, child, whither?"

**Youth**: "Khadjas, like unto the child I have delivered up the yellow opal. But the day that awaiteth is not a child's day. I have supped the sup, O Khadjas. The lotus which is dead shall wither and become dust about the pool's edge. It is well. Though thy wisdom hath a barb, mine agony hath departed in the giving. I hear the voice of the daughter of Aesol and her words woo. Her heart hath awakened from its sleeping. Harken! I have made the call unto the camel men. Behold the sun is sinking. I shall ride forth into its red light, for the hand of morning beckons. O Khadjas, thy wisdom
is for the child, and I am becoming aged in the new hours.

**Khadjas**: “O child, O child, O child! Thou shalt return calling alms! alms! alms! in the name of mercy, alms!”

“Lo, he hath gone. O child, Khadjas holdeth thy talisman, the pale opal, but it is a thing which is no more; for only beneath the hand of imagination may the pot be turned into being. Thy pledge is within its ash! Thou shalt return crying alms! alms! alms! in the name of mercy, alms!”

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(The black-clad caravan winds its way into the setting sun. The Youth rides with the daughter of Aesol, striving in her presence to forget the bitter wisdom of the potter.)

**Youth**: “Oh, my beloved, the daughter of Aesol, behold the morning is come, and we ride Westward before the sun. Already are the hands of the camel men removing the
sable. I would weave a new raiment of yellow, saffron, marked of gold and the feather of the peafowl. I would stain them deep and mark them heavy of the metal of burnished copper.

"Lo, I would adorn thee in purple with a necklace of green opals. Aye, and a circlet of turquoise within thy night-black locks. I would offer thee the wine of the jasmine honey from a cup of jade. I will make thy slaves of saffron skins, loined with cloths of green; and they shall pay obeisance before thee, O my beloved, as thou awaitest awakening.

"Behold, if thou hast given up the pale opal, then shalt thy beloved bring forth the treasures of the earth and lay before thee! Speak! Utter unto flesh thy dearest wish!"

Daughter of Aesol: "I am languorous, oh my beloved, and the scent of the sands hath sickened me. I would repine apart in some
jasmine-hung bower. I would keep my breast warm for it is stricken cold.

"But harken unto the daughter of Aesol. Make ye Westward, for the gates of the cities shall fall open before thee, and thy hand shall conquer hosts. In that we have been called upon to deliver up the keystone of the arch unto the land of our spirits, thou shalt then make conquest upon the earth, causing men to make the cup full of their own blood, the blood of men!

"See, thy beloved would offer not her arms, but this, the blade; keen, aye, and whose tongue mingleth with the wise man's flesh or the fool's, little caring!

"Oh, my beloved, the god of wisdom hath not eyes within his eye's pits nor tongue within his jaws, but his belly is, and is ever hungered. Wisdom may not be drunk from bowls, O my beloved, nor may it be tortured out from clay beneath the potter's hand.
Wisdom is found in the throats that crush beneath thy hands, within the bellow of rage from him whom thou hast dealt a blow of felling. It is found in the cunning thou weavest to cloak thy day.

"Begone! The daughter of Aesol would deny thee her lips. Bring unto her feet seven score and seven slaves, and thine enemies—not dead but tortured; each with his throat slit, oozing forth his blood! I would laugh a new fury upon them! I would dance before thee within a robe of saffron emblazoned with their blood. Oh, I would deck me in evil rubies, lustfully gleaming!

"Oh, my beloved, thy love hath become new in this thing which is upon her. Behold her as a leopard, crouched, licking her jaws and panting! Ride Westward, into the cave of the Day, pitlike, beyond the sun's seeking dark. But tomorrow cometh and thou shalt
go forth with the blade and the kiss of the daughter of Aesol upon its edge!

"Answer me, O my love! Make no word, but crush the flesh which is mine within thy embrace, and swear with heavy lips upon mine!"

**Youth**: "I am drunk, drunk upon thy words, and new furies arise within my breast. Within the purple depths of thy night-dark eyes I have beheld a star and it is the star of fury. It is the symbol of wars and blood. Already I feel my hands upon the throats of mine enemies, and the power with which I shall crush them!

"Give me thy lips, O my beloved, and we go forth. Who is he who stands at the desert's edge weeping and calling Alms, alms, alms? But a phantom!

"Oh my beloved, behold, the West way is open before us!"
VII.

(Again the years sweep their rounds, but still is Khadjas sitting, turning the pot upon his wheel. The day arises as of old and the path shows a running child approaching the bin of Khadjas.)

CHILD: “O Khadjas, Khadjas! Without the city’s gateway hath ridden a caravan which reacheth as a girdle about the earth! And he who is upon the lead camel laughs, laughs down at the lepers and sees no man. He hath spat even upon them who offered service. What is thy wisdom of such a man?”

KHADJAS: “There is no wisdom. The well hath gone dry. He hath a caravan which girdles the earth, yet not one drop may he buy. Khadjas laugheth for there is still water for the mouldings, yea, and pots crying out to be.”
Child: "This man, O Khadjas, hath called thee to come forth unto his side for he would laugh at thy wisdom."

Khadjas: "The jest shall be denied him. Khadjas knoweth no pathway unto him."

Child: "What is thy answer, O Khadjas?"

Khadjas: "This: the jest lies at the end of the path unto here, and I have said not who shall laugh, but the throat of Khadjas tickleth!"

Child: "He hath bid that I haste in returning unto him."

Khadjas: "Then haste thy legs, for the words of Khadjas are slow."

Child: "Look thou! he is overcome by his haste; for the camels wind their way hither. Behold his raiment; it glittereth as the desert at the early morn when the sun maketh it to leap forth in glistening."
(Camels with gorgeous trappings crowd their way toward the place. Scores on scores, led by screaming camel men file in to fill each space within the gates leaving more scores in vast confusion without. Gold studded packs and trappings show riches beyond the fairest dreams. Slaves in troops, black and yellow, stand beneath their keeper's lash bowed and dumb. At their lead comes one in silks, white and scarlet, with haughty bearing, striding with scornful mien toward the bin of Khadjas.)

Warrior: "O Khadjas, behold me whom thou despisest. For I am returned, bearing thee the goods which my wisdom hath bought. Look upon the flesh of slaves which no man may measure, and the camels, each sagged beneath its pack, and the daughter of Aesol, more beauteous than the night in her jewels and with her lips veiled with a silver scarf.

"Behold them that I have conquered, each bowed beneath the yoke of servitude. I have crushed the day as a vatman crusheth the grape, and behold its wine! It is red of blood and danceth in fearing. I may reach forth my hand and all men beneath me shrink as though a lash had fallen. What
power is this if it be not wisdom? Speak! the answer is not within a pot!"

Khadjas: "Nay, the answer would ne'er fill it."

Warrior: "What then is this power?"

Khadjas: "The power of folly; for, O child, know this: no man hath power like a fool, for he knoweth not its beginning nor its end."

Warrior: "O Khadjas, behold thy hands. They have become but the talons of a bird. They shake in their laboring and the clay shows their marring. The pots are awry and still thou chatterest wisdom!"

Khadjas: "This is thy folly, child. The shaking of the hand of Khadjas but creates new patterns upon the clay. And the crooked pots are the best from which to drink wisdom for the crooked day. They who thirst see not the cup."
Warrior: "Come, Khadjas, yon is a camel and here is a golden chain. Rest thy hands. Let thy wisdom play; it is weary of labour."

Khadjas: "Nay child, nay; Khadjas would not be enslaved upon a golden chain nor let his wisdom know that its labour was finished."

Warrior: "Give me a sup, O Khadjas. From traversing the sands my thirst crieth out. Present unto my hands a bowl of thine own fashioning; and water, not of wisdom but water of yon well."

Khadjas: "Descend, O child, descend upon the stones whereupon thou once didst tread. Khadjas may not arise to deliver water unto thy hand, though he would kneel to give thee wisdom."

Warrior: "But, O Khadjas, I may call forth slaves to lay upon thee the lash which shall
nimble thy feet. What! thou wouldst loose the cackle of thy laughter!"

**Khadjas:** "Yea, child, for the lash of thy wisdom is so thin that Khadjas would but feel it as the smite of a straw. What bringest thee, O child, unto the side of Khadjas? Thy wisdom ne'er did lead thee forth, for she knoweth full well the jest was upon thee.

"Behold, Khadjas shall mould a new pot and in his wisdom make words of prophecy.

"Behold, Khadjas seeth thee and thy caravans following thee, girdling the earth, and behold, thy camels become stricken of thirst and fall like flies before the simoon. But thou shalt recline within the arms of the daughter of Aesol, and thy goods shall be taken up upon a pillar of sand and crushed beneath its gold, leaving thee naught. And thou shalt seek, seek through the desert's way, for an oasis, bidding thy wisdom show thee."
“And behold, thou shalt see Khadjas at the wheel, and the water dripping upon the clay, and thou shalt fling forth the daughter of Aesol, watching the vultures feast upon her breasts and weave garlands of her hair. And the adornments thou hast bestowed upon her shall clink, clink, clink, thirstily.

“And Khadjas hath laid the pale opal beside the well. And thou shalt thirst and the sands shall choke thee and thou shalt seek Khadjas at the wheel, and the well. Oh, with thy wisdom, child, thou mayst not pluck up the well and take it forth upon the backs of thy camels! The wisdom of Khadjas is even so.

“What, O child, save pebbles hast thou found upon the West way?"

Warrior: “Behold it, O Khadjas. Callest thou such a caravan pebbles?”
Khadjas: "I have beheld babes playing with colored bits, and their argument was as thine.

"Behold this, the palm of Khadjas, thick as the hide of goat. Purchase such! That thirst which hath brought thee unto the side of Khadjas shall beckon thee ever through thy days of conquest.

"O child, thou hast asked Khadjas, in thy youth, how looks wisdom. She is wan of waiting. She kneels beside thy dead self weeping. Her cheek is ashen and nothing save thy kiss may bring its color surging."
VIII.

(The warrior has long departed from the side of Khadjjas. But the beckoning of the withered lotus never ceases. Many lines of pots have been called into being by the hand of the potter, to be sought by the people for their use. Time again brings a caravan to the city gates. The camels are without useless trappings. The goods are many and rich, but no adornment shows on beast or man. It is the caravan of a merchant and speaks of cold bartering. Such is the mien of him who approaches with officious accents.)

TRADESMAN: “Thou fellower of swine, open up the gateway! Make haste thy hands, for he who would enter is neither thy fellow nor the fellow of any man within thy walls. Behold, the camels are barren save of their packs, and the camel men walk silent beside them; for I, the child no longer, have found men not my brothers. I have unwound their cunning weaving, and lo, know their trick.
“Ope the gate! I would go unto Khadjas and make my despisal of his wisdom. Make way that the caravan pass and make the name of Khadjas upon my lips soundful!

“Khadjas! Khadjas! The cunning of thy wisdom I have unwound as a child unwinds a ball of silken cord, and I have found no God upon its end but thine. Thou hast uttered prophecy and thy prophecy hath become fruitful, fruitful. But the caravan remaineth. Yea, but the camels no longer sag beneath the weight of men; for no man is so exalted in the day which is mine that I would raise him up even unto a camel’s height.

“I have found, O Khadjas, that thy words of God are empty. The brass bowl hath become worn and bended from dipping within a dry well. While thou wouldst sing of this God which is merciful, behold, the work of
His wrath descends upon me. Where is the well of thy wisdom? I have thirsted long.”

Khadjas: “O child, child, thou returnest! Didst thou not say that the well of wisdom was upon the lips of the daughter of Aesol? Where is she, that thou mayest recline upon her bosom and laugh upon men at the seeking of their wisdom? Speak! In this wisdom thou hast found is there no water to quench thy thirst?”

Tradesman: “O Khadjas, Khadjas, I, the child no longer, declare my despisal of all mankind. The daughter of Aesol was as a leprous wind which blew across the herbage, blighting it. Her kisses became sores that ate, and her arms were white cobras, yellowed of age, and the venom of their embrace was a thing that crushed me. Her lips were as a cavernous ope which roared hungrily of emptiness. The wisdom that I
drank from the daughter of Aesol may be drunk from the prints of swine's hoofs.

"O Khadjas, I declare my folly and I acclaim thine! Within thy wisdom there is no answer for the thing I have found. How mayest thou, a fellower of pots, understand?"

Khadjas: "O child, thy folly is indeed great. Knowest thou not that woman is the cunning pot, fashioned out by the tenderest touch of the Potter? The daughter of Aesol is but the mask of thy folly. Speak! how did she defile thy wisdom?"

Tradesman: "O Khadjas, I upon the back of the camel, beheld the yellow sun streaking the ashen sky with gold and enchain ing the silver stars upon the golden chain; and the languorous night remained upon the horizon at the West way. And I, upon the bosom of the daughter of Aesol, bespoke its beauty while she besought me to forget the sky and
look upon her lips. Lo, she took up my day as a wetted cloth and wrung it dry.

“And the sun became a disc of brass, and the stars rust-bit holes within the silver bowl of the sky, letting the empty light through. And the moon at night seemed a mocking thing, the opening the God had left to convince man of the emptiness of eternity. Thy wisdom, O Khadjas, hath a cunning task, far o'er the moulding of a pot of fresh clay. Behold me, broken, yet complete in mine atoms. Assemble me!”

Khadjas: “O child, thou hast but drunk from the bitter waters all men sup. There is no potion which seareth the soul and drunkens wisdom as doth the amours of flesh. Thou hast drunk not from the lips of the cool bowl but upon the fever of flesh.

“O beloved, now doth Khadjas speak thy name ‘beloved,’ for sympathy hath become a part of his wisdom. Thou hast be-
come as pebbles beneath the smiting and shall lie as such beneath the brook of wisdom, becoming cool and cleansed. Thou shalt become assembled, O child, beneath the Potter's hands, but the waters of the brook shall wear thy pebbles smooth and crush thee unto dust, thence unto clay. And the hand of the Potter shall be busied and He shall not mould until He hath wept upon the clay. And the clay shall be mute, containing all the agonies thou hast taken in, and the empty days shall have left thee at the breaking. And the empty symbols of the empty gods also. And the Potter shall weep, and behold, in His tears shall be born a new creation and thou shalt become anew beneath His hand.

"But the clay thou wert shall have become dust not in vain, for from out its crumbling shall the dream of the Potter leap, and each atom shall lend of its agony that
it become a part of the torturous creation of this dream. And the wheel shall turn, and the sun of eternity shall encompass the pot, and it shall have no shadow upon it.”

**Tradesman:** “Oh, this is confusion, Khadjas. I have found men full of words and empty of wisdom, but thy wisdom is emptier than theirs and thy words more confusion. Make me some simple symbol of wisdom. I weary of the deserts of day. Men lie like wolves upon their bellies, panting and lustful-hungry, that they beset me. And it hath become a trick that I may hide my cunning from their eyes and retain even my goods. How may a man feed a wolf wisdom when he seeketh bone?”

**Khadjas:** “O child! O child! Thou art still playing about the market’s ways with colored toys while thy hand hath moulded no thing which containeth thy soul. Never, O
child, mayest thou know thy soul until thou hast created its symbol before thine eyes.”

**Tradesman:** "Behold then, O Khadjas, thy soul is but a hideous, twisted bowl."

**Khadjas:** "Yea, yea, yea, O child, but men drink and are sustained from them!"

**Tradesman:** "There is no thing in thy argument, no pith, O Khadjas! Thy words seem, but are not."

**Khadjas:** "But words mould not, O child. Behold the pots. What thing in thy caravan hast thou that thy hands have tortured out?"

**Tradesman:** "Naught, O Khadjas, save a necklet which I carved of gold for the neck of the daughter of Aesol."

**Khadjas:** "O child! O child! O child! A trinket in which to deck thy vanity! Such labour is but babe's play. Is there no thing
which hath caused thee tears? Thou stand-est silent. Khadjas hath hope."

**Tradesman:** "Yea, there is cloth, a cloth, which I hung with opals, to cover the withering lotus. It hath my tears upon its border and I have wept my heart's bleeding upon its folds. With my hands I wove the cloth, lamenting in each shadow as we passed the scorched day of the desert. This is a labour, O Khadjas? Speak!"

**Khadjas:** "Nay, for the cloth was but a robe of rich stuffs in which to clothe thyself."

**Tradesman:** "Then, O Khadjas, it is useless. I might not weep within the desert sand and mould a bowl!"

**Khadjas:** "Nay, but thou mayst take up the clay of the day and let the caravan sweep through the west gate while thou awaitest the morning for the beginning of the moulding of thy soul."
TRADESMAN: "Thou wouldst have the child who hath become aged in his wisdom begin the day, the new morrow, sitting cross-legged beside a wheel, letting his caravan go whitherward, while his hands, unaccustomed to labour, begin their task? O Khadjas, the God thou pratest of is silent. I have listened for His voice and have never heard it."

KHADJAS: "Hark! O child, is the stirring within the fig tree the breath of the desert, or is it tomorrow already beginning to unfold?

"If thou dost thirst, go forth unto yon well and behold there the lotus upon its lips, and the honey bee lingereth within its heart; and the vultures are yon, yon. This is the thirst, O child, which hath consumed thee. Thou hast denied the voice of God, but thou hast drunk it from out the lips of the withered lotus and acknowledged it not. And lo, it was mute, and thou didst possess but the
withered lotus and the voice was gone. Yet its echo hath enticed thee here!"

Tradesman: "O Khadjas, thy voice is as the sound of wood knocking upon wood. There is no music of truth in thy words. The thirst which is upon me is no new thing. I have drunk from the cups of men and their gods—or the things they call their gods—and behold, still is my tongue as dry as the desert and my throat filled with dust. Even thy wisdom drieth upon such a heated fire as my throat.

"And thou hast no new wisdom? Behold the thing thou offerest is the same thou didst deal upon the first morning I sought thy side. What is thy answer, O Khadjas? Is thy wisdom then ended and dost thou know no new thing?"

Khadjas: "O child, wisdom is not a toy turned out beneath the hand of a fool each
morrow. Nay, the men of today play with the wisdom the first man played upon. Aye, and it is the same, though more smooth-worn and more companionable. Look thou! there is no new wisdom in the making of a pot. Nay; each potter turneth his wheel at his hand’s touch, either swift or slow, and the pot upon the wheel may be beauteous or of coarse stuff; it mattereth not, either. It be a pot, and hath a bottom on which to stand, and sides, and containeth that which man pours into it. There is no new wisdom in the pot.”

Tradesman: “But this God, this cunning God, of whom thou pratest; hath He no new thing?”

Khadjas: “O child, this is the cry of the babe each morning. It is not thy cunning prompts this, ’tis thy folly, child. Unto thy listening ear thy knowledge is wisdom, and new, but
the souls of thy ancients have writhed o'er thy question.

"Thou hast traversed the earth, taking up the stores of the land and acclaiming them thine, while thy pathways are decaying and thy wisdoms are riping like figs before the sun. But thou art not hungered for the sweets of figs. Nay, thou wouldst drink strong wines such as make Youth full-prided and sure of his wisdom though unsure of his legs!

"Nay child, wisdom is not new. It is the coin the great God lended unto men, and its face hath not changed nor hath its substance worn. It remaineth always the same, and it purchaseth now as then, and then as now.

"Thou hast let thy thirst for goods make thy wisdom lean and thy folly fat. Thou hast hung thy limbs with cloth and left thy breast bare. Then is it meet that thou shouldst come for new wisdom when thou
hast ne'er used that which Khadjas delivered unto thee?

"Speak! Tell unto the ear of Khadjas the thing thou hast learned of the day sufficient to cease thy hunger. Is thy spirit become reconciled unto its abode of flesh?"

Tradesman: "O Khadjas, I am no longer a part of the great game, Day. The take and give no longer beckoneth. What matter it that my caravan hath sevenfold multiplied? For lo, I may but see yon and know its end. There is no word among men but begging or whining—the whine of humility beneath the lash, and the begging of them that would take from thee.

"O Khadjas, I found among men no man such as thy spirit singeth of. Thou hast spoken true-tuned word, and I listened and went forth assured of finding among men brothers who spoke profoundly, resounding the depths of their souls, and I expected con-
fidently that man would listen unto my dealing of wisdom in pleasurable silence. But alas! O Khadjas, men are fools; they have no part with the men thou didst sing of.”

Khadjas: “O child, the lips of Khadjas smile, for who may clink coins and bart while he exchangeth garments with a man’s soul? The spirit hath no goods, O child, save its wisdom, and these goods may not be purchased save by understanding.”

Tradesman: “This is wisely put, O Khadjas! I, the child, then, have forgotten this and thou wouldst rebuke. I have come forth before thine eyes and listened unto thy wisdom, displaying my goods and offering not the coin of understanding. I am weary of this office, this attainment, this exaltation. I am weary of the armors which I perforce must wear. I would make me naked, O Khadjas, and as a child who wears naught
but a loin cloth, I would make forth with the bowl in my hand and crying my thirst. I shall call the caravan forth and announce my going forth from the city. I shall sit upon the fore camel and seek the thing with more humility."

Khadjas: "O child, he who seeketh wisdom doth not ride."

Tradesman: "Then I shall follow the caravan."

Khadjas: "O child, the caravan leadeth unto the market ways, not unto the well of wisdom, for the water they seek is the water which stops the camel's thirst."

Tradesman: "How wouldst thou, O Khadjas, that I should make my way?"

Khadjas: "I have no answer, O child. Within the pot there is no desire but to become a pot; and it becometh the thing."
Tradesman: "Behold, O Khadjas, I shall bid thee farewell and go forth with confidence anew. The trade winds shall follow the course, and I, the child, shall not follow them. I would go unto the well's side where the pale opal lies, but the camels rise and already the sounds of the camel men bespeak the time that we shall proceed.

"Thy wisdom bespeaks a God, O Khadjas, but I may not take this thing in."

Khadjas: "O child, the gates of the city open four ways. Wouldst that thou mightest let thy camels make these ways their paths, and watch thy wisdom become broken up; then thou mightest behold the cloth of wisdom which hangs upon the loom of folly."

Tradesman: "Thy words are confusion, O Khadjas, and thine aged whining becometh hateful. There is within thy wisdom no cunning. And wisdom which must withstand the day needeth cunning."
Khadjas: "Cunning, O child, is not a part of wisdom. It is the cord which some fools tie about it and in confidence believe they have captured wisdom. Cunning is the power beneath the fingers' tips, helplessly lying, and man setteth it either at wrong-doing or at creation."

(The Tradesman mounts his camel and rides into the sands.)

Khadjas: "Lo, he hath gone. The pot turneth slowly. And what clay! what clay!"
IX.

(Many years have passed, and beneath the sun's fierce rays, over the pitiless sands, slips wearily a lone camel and its rider. The far horizon shows at last the city's dreary walls and a spot of green. The calm, tired eyes of the rider light up with a meagre pleasure at the sight and the voice begins a murmur.)

PILGRIM: "Where is the caravan which wended its way forth from out these sands? Upon the four ways, indeed, it hath scattered. The sands of the simoon have descended with its wrath upon the crawling thing and behold, where is its substance? "So this is the might of the God of Khadjas. Even as he foretold, it hath come to pass. Yea, but the simoon was the wickedness of man and the deceit of commerce. That which wisdom brought together, folly dispersed—or was it folly which assembled and wisdom which dispersed?  

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"I, the child, shall seek Khadjas, that it be made known unto him that it hath come even as he foretold. Surely such a man who may utter prophecy is one to whom to harken. Khadjas, the potter, and the pot upon the wheel!

"Where is the child who listened unto his simple prating in wonderment? Behold, he hath grown old and become intermingled with the day, and the day hath forsaken him, and he is once more the child, listening to the prating of simple words, sure in his youthful confidence of the quenching of his thirst.

"Yet where in the universe is there such simplicity? The day is confounded before its complications. To make words with men; to utter thy opinions with the pith of pride within them, yet secretly quaking before their bottomlessness; to be met by men who openly announce their honesty while their
hands play deceit to their tongues; to become enslaved of amour and to array thy words in fine linen and purple while thy beloved listeneth knowing not they are naked; to set apart and see thy wisdoms, like famine-stricken babes, pleading for nurture; to stand before the obeisance of men and see thy soul grovel; to listen to the words of wise men with hearts of simplicity and mercy's streams upon their eyes, and laugh within thee at their foolish play, doubting with surety, yet doubting doubt; to feel thy import and be crushed by a Thing, a Thing of awesome strength which maketh thy spirit whine; to be afraid to acknowledge this Thing lest thou shouldst announce it as a certainty; to make the wheels of wisdom draw the chariot of folly that thou mightest let thy hands rest from labour; to possess hands like these and to have beheld the hands of Khadjas; this is irony!
"To have held the treasure of thy lust and seen it decay; to have become possessed of the knowledge that thou hast drunk filth from a filthy urn and become drunk, believing that the ribald awakening is the birth of wisdom; to have awakened and found the rotten flesh within thy embrace, and the lolling lips pressed unto thine, stopping thy utterance; to have had laid within thy hand the crown gem of the temple's idol, and to have idly played with its beauty as one turns a pebble o'er and casts it awhither; to have lost the gem and to have known then its worth, and the pang of emptiness; to watch thy caravan move slow, and to know that its packs are filled of atoms of thy soul, and that thou art empty; to traverse the seven seas and the seven desert ways; to have encircled the horizon's cup, pressing thy lips to its edge, if thou wouldst, to sup; to find no sup, and to return to the potter and the pot!"
“'A man's thirst must fit his throat. If the pot's throat be narrowed, 'tis its agony!''

(And the rider drew near the city's gates, and still he spoke unto his soul.)

“And the city's gates are open, for it is noon. And there is no arising or coming forth, for what is one man upon a camel!

“The gatesman sleeps, and youth prattles about the well. Even as I, the child, leaned near the side of Khadjas, behold there is another!

“Awake, O Khadjas! What! dost thou sleep? Then indeed is wisdom allowed respite. Awake! See! I, the child, descend. Thine eyes are slow, O Khadjas. Behold me. I am before thee!"

Khadjas (blinded by age): "Who—who—who hath spoken? Ah! Where is the lead camel and its follow and its follow and its follow?"
Pilgrim: "Upon the four ways, O Khadjas. But who is this who leans at thy side in supplicant attitude, proffering a bowl?"

Khadjas: "Oh, the lips of Khadjas smile. O child, this is another—a child who thirsteth. Deliver him sup. He asketh what is wisdom? He hath brought forth word that men within the market's way laugh at the words of Khadjas. Speak confidently unto his listening. What is wisdom?"

Pilgrim to Child: "O, child, wisdom is not learning. Be not confused—O Khadjas, thou dost laugh, but it taketh not laughter to learn this! I am come forth with the cloth of learning torn into tatters and I am naked. I have not goods nor yet exalted station, yet, O Khadjas, I have learned the answer unto this: 'How doth the face of wisdom look? Is she beauteous?' O Khadjas, thy words are true! She hath walked within the shadow of the camel o'er the desert, in voice-
less smiling, awaiting my recognition. And her face! O Khadjas, I, the child, remember how I dreamed she was more beauteous than the daughter of Aesol; that she was a maiden. But ah, Khadjas, I have learned! I have learned! I have learned! She is a child. She knoweth not amour, save that which bends in service.

"O Khadjas, each morning she climbs the hillock of day, smilingly confident, and how few, O Khadjas, know her footfall! She is not one who intrudes, for she leaveth man's folly in privacy. She is naked, O Khadjas, for she hath no knowledge of shame. All men are her brothers, and she is companionable with the day. This, O Khadjas, is the thing which misleads men, for men show her face, not as the child's but frowning and writ soberly. O Khadjas, I, the child, rode forth in search of wisdom, when lo, she walked
within the city's place and followed me thence."

**Khadjas:** "Behold, O child, the youth who listeneth unto thy words. He itcheth upon his footsoles to be forth in quest of wisdom. Speak! Look, he already stretcheth his body and maketh ready."

**Pilgrim:** "O child, tarry! Search the shadows within the walls before thou makest on."

**Khadjas:** "Nay, let him seek the well. It is meet, for rememberest thou not that words of delay are as lashes upon youth? There is no pith in the word of age unto youth. It is for the aged to eat of dried figs. Youth would drink them honey-ripe. Let him be on. Delay not his progress with thy touch. Already hast thou laid thy arm about him in fearful consideration, forgetting the joy which was thine upon that day far gone."
Pilgrim: "But, O Khadjas, how mayest thou in thy deep wisdom watch, with no feeling of consternation, youth's folly? Thou knowest the way and its length, and even in thy wisdom's fullness thou didst not bespeak me to tarry; and, seeing my return undone, hast thou no pity for his hapful way?"

Khadjas: "O child, flattery is food for self. Thou hast yet to learn that all men's return be not as thine. Wisdom casteth forth youth with hope. Khadjas hath listened through the days, awaiting thy return with confident hoping, in the faith that thou wouldst return with words that wore the raiment of truth, and that we might sit before the turning wheel in contemplation of the wonder and in full understanding. Thou wouldst not heed the words of Khadjas, denying him. So, how may he lay thy hand within the Potter's so that thou mayest feel His creating?"
Pilgrim: "But, O Khadjas, thy words mean little. What is there within thy word which assures me it is truth?"

Khadjas: "Truth, O child, is so simple a thing that men pass it. It is the unadorned foundation of all utterance. To adorn is to confuse. Truth is just, without self. He who dealeth justice tempereth it not with self or it be not justice. Truth is right, and arrived at by but one gateway, and this gateway is not through the mouths of men. Truth is elemental, born alike unto all men, and the adornments hide her face."

Pilgrim: "Yet thou hast not spoken how I may know Truth."

Khadjas: "Rememberest thou, child, the desert moon and her threading silver? Thou mightest reach forth and pluck the threads, yet they are not, save within the ether. Thou sayest: ' 'Tis the moon's ray.' So is truth the
golden orb unto all men, and we of earth receive but the *threading of her light*.

"Behold yon blind beggar. He followeth confidently a light within. Truth quickeneth the heart and maketh the breast to swell. It is the *conceiving of love*, but leaveth thee, when once she hath entered, peaceful and confident. Truth is the undoer of the unbeliever, for she is the foundation even of unbelief! O child, let men drink their cups; for truth is the dust's atoms within all water."

Pilgrim: "O Khadjas, I am confused."

Khadjas: "There is no confusion in justice."

Pilgrim: "But men deal justice unalike."

Khadjas: "Yea, she is a slave. Justice lies beneath the lash of adornment—argument. Whilst thou speakest, justice is waiting."
Pilgrim: "What is justice, O Khadjas; that thou shouldest see me stand before thee begging when I would understand and am confused?"

Khadjas: "O child, Khadjas maketh no argument. He hath spoken no word of supplication that thou shouldst believe. Behold, even as thou hast stood, he hath turned forth a pot. This is the answer. Just labour is the undoer of unbelief, for a man must believe in his labour. And his labour is truth, and that labour which hath not truth within it be not truth.

"The pot upon the wheel, O child, and the potter labouring. This is the answer. Words are not looms nor clay. Weariness is the robe of surety."

Pilgrim: "This is simple, O Khadjas. What is the labour man should be at? Wouldst thou that all men mould forth pots?"
Khadjas: "This is folly, child. What mattereth it the labour a man doeth, doeth he it in faithful service? Labour is the turning of the field of his soul, and desire is the seeding. Right desire is met by answering."

Pilgrim: "O Khadjas, before thee I stand, I who have traversed the seven seas and the seven desert ways and girdled the earth with my caravans, and I am mute, for no word of mine liveth. I have but taken from the day and added no thing. Behold, I cast a purse unto yonder beggar. Is this the dealing of right?"

Khadjas: "What didst thou purchase with the purse?"

Pilgrim: "No thing. I expect not but cast freely."

Khadjas: "O child, child, child! Even as a child thou didst not this thing, for a coin was a coin unto thee then!"
PILGRIM: “What may I claim of such a man, O Khadjas? I cast the coin that he may sup, and forget it.”

KHADJAS: “There is no truth in this dealing, O child, for truth is a stern bartsman.”

PILGRIM: “I cannot understand thee, O Khadjas. Wouldst thou that I buy his rags?”

KHADJAS: “Nay, child. Hast thou touched his blind eyes? Hast thou followed with him the tedious paths? Hast thou known hunger such as his? The coins have not power to succor, for he shall follow the dark way clinking them, to be undone by the tradesmen who play upon his shortcomings. Behold his face. Doth the coin bring light unto it? Speak! Call him ‘brother’ and look upon it. Oh brother, brother, come hither! The bowl of Khadjas is running with cool water. List, hearest thou the dripping of its drops?”
“Look thou, O child, is this the empty face which proceeds unto us? Behold, age, childhood, manhood and blindness—brothers! Let blindness lead us. Seal thine eyes and follow the light within.

“O child, dismantle thy adornments. Remember thou that men in their flattery of self complicate truth, but men find her naked.”

Pilgrim: “Khadjas, I cannot believe thy words. Somewhere within the out-paths surely there is a thing which I may lay hands upon and know as certainty. My spirit may not be satisfied when the man is not.”

Khadjas: “Man may not lay his hands upon truth, O child. Labour is her flesh and man createth it beneath his hands. Deal simple words and labour faithfully. Thus thou becomest no part of confusion.

“Behold, the youth is going forth from the city’s gateway. He will return. What shall
thy answer be? Thou hast attained the respect of youth through age; betrayest thou the trust?"

Pilgrim: "O Khadjas, stop him! The earth shall confuse him and the day bespread her splendors making him forget. Stop him, O Khadjas, stop him!

"I would speak and make known to him the pitfalls. I would forewarn him of amour and its destruction. I would bespeak him of man's deceit. I would make him know that cunning is the lash of commerce. I would say there is no man who is faithful save that his faith be bought. I would make him know the emptiness of the thing for which he hopes."

Khadjas: "So, thou hast unlearned this much! What hast thou to offer in the stead of the day's dealing? What wouldst thou leave him?"
Pilgrim: "What! wouldst thou let him go?"

Khadjas: "Nay, nay, O child. Hope speeds his legs and he may but slay her."

Pilgrim: "Speak, O Khadjas, hast thou, even in thy age, hope?"

Khadjas: "Yea, yea."

Pilgrim: "Utter it."

Khadjas: "Behold my hands, shaking, yet the pots go on, and the wheel turns. My hope? Yea, when he, the youth, returns, he shall find the wheel turning and a pot upon it!"

Pilgrim: "But there are scores and seven fold, and scores and seven fold of thy pots, O Khadjas. Behold them upon the racks. He may drink from any of these."

Khadjas: "Nay, nay, I would fashion one for his thirst."
Pilgrim: "Thou art an aged mouther, O Khadjas, and thy words are torturous. Behold, I bid thee look upon me, for I go forth from the city's place unfilled, and thou hast dealt unto me these years yet I cannot understand thy words and they fill me not."

Khadjas: "Begone, O child, and when thou thirsteth, remember, thou shalt find a bowl beside the well, and its lips shall be laid of pale opal."

Pilgrim: "Where is the potter, O Khadjas, who is turning the wheel of fate?"

Khadjas: "He is not, O child. Man creates the clay and the potter sits with his head lifted among the stars and the sun is the pot upon his wheel. Man runs in fearing, looking upward with startled eyes, and, stumbling upon the stones, cries out: 'It is Fate!' Wait, O child. Khadjas taketh up a new
clay and his hands shake. The clay is marred, yet he beginneth a new pot!”

Pilgrim: “But there are tears upon thy cheeks, O Khadjas. What, what is the meaning of tears upon the cheek of wisdom?”

Khadjas: “O child, wisdom is weeping. Hers is a gentle smile which is born from out tears. No despised brother suffereth such neglect as doth she, for even men who accept her despise her, announcing it in their own lauds of self. Man is the slave of wisdom, but she is o'er gentle and men demand her services in slavedom, causing wisdom to labour while they announce their pride in her possession. But wisdom flees from out their labour and leaveth it bottomless. She is a jealous maid and demands her lover's love. Yea, even as the daughter of Aesol, she will play thee false for false.”
Pilgrim: “Meanest thou, O Khadjas, that I, the child, played the daughter of Aesol false?”

Khadjas: “O child, the caravan was not the gift thou shouldst have offered, nor the casket of thy spirit, which is flesh. Nay; thou didst deck the daughter of Aesol within the symbols of flesh and she became flesh, having nurtured upon such food.

“Yea, and the fruit of flesh may not become perfect, having not a root within spirit. Aye—and the lips of Khadjas speak unto thee now bitter wisdom—the young lotus, the pale opal, was the child of thy spirit and the spirit of the daughter of Aesol, but flesh laid its hands upon its slender throat and left it undone.

“This thing was right and meet, for it was wisdom that the flesh die and the spirit be sustained; yea, wisdom o’er the death of the spirit and the sustainment of the flesh.”
THE POT UPON THE WHEEL

Pilgrim: "This is blasphemy, O Khadjas. This is setting thy wisdom up before the face of the great Power. I, the child, decry thy folly, for thou speakest not out from the living of my day."

Khadjas: "Look, O child! Behold the pots of Khadjas. Among them thou shalt find broken vessels and them of ungainly fashioning. Such pots have suffered beneath his touch, for his eyes became dim with wisdom and his hands laboured unled. The weeping was o'er thee, O child."

Pilgrim: "O Khadjas, Khadjas, Khadjas! Let me press my lips upon such vessels. That thou shouldst labour on through thy weeping o'er me! O Khadjas, Khadjas, Khadjas! I am indeed the child! Answer with thy wisdom; how didst thou labour though thou wert undone?"
Khadjas: "O child, Khadjas would guard thee from the unforgivable sin, that of emptying one hour of its labour! There is no agony, O child, like emptiness."

Pilgrim: "O Khadjas, Khadjas, I, the child, stand before thee after the long tide of days, and the caravans, and the seven seas and the seven desert ways, and the daughter of Aesol, and the pale opal, and the pride of office—I, the child, stand before thee with the small brass bowl, and it is empty!

"O Khadjas, Wisdom hath not a sup for such a son, but look! I, the child, kneel, proffering the bowl. Speak endearingly unto her and bespeak that she shall weep but one tear within it. Nay, nay, it is o'er much that I ask! Behold, I hold it beneath thine eyes, O Khadjas. Mine eyes are downcast; I cannot behold thy face, O Khadjas, for it is written in agony."
Khadjas: "O child, child, lift up thine eyes. Behold, the eyes of Khadjas have become pools of light and his lips smile and thy bowl—look upon it! The crystal water bathes thy very hand! What shalt thou do with this water?"

Pilgrim: "O Khadjas, Khadjas! I shall let it become a part with clay and make forth bowls. Behold, behold my girdle! I shall dismantle myself of it and cast it unto the pathway. Behold, behold the cloak which covers me! I have made me apart from it. Behold, behold my one camel! I have given it the word of going and it goeth forth riderless. And my purse is gone and with it the desire for its filling.

"It groweth late, O Khadjas, and behold me naked save for a loincloth—once more the child beside thee. And the sleep of age is creeping o'er thee, the hand of weariness. Shalt thou return upon the morrow, and
shall I speed forth unto thee from out the city, calling for a sup?

"O Khadjas, Khadjas, thou art tarrying within the tabernacle and the sacrificial fire is dim. Demand of me the price of thy wisdom!

"I have learned that the greatest wisdom hath no answer for the 'why.' We, O Khadjas, are pilgrims within the caravan of death and each camel is packed of 'whys,' and the mart we seek is the answer!

"I have learned this, O Khadjas, not from thy words but from their spirit. Demand of me the full price. My heart? It is thine."

Khadjas: "Nay, nay, O child, thy heart may not labour. Give me thy hands; for their labor distills the spirit of God."

Pilgrim: "O Khadjas, they are thine. Teach them the cunning of thy fingers' tips."
Khadjas: "O child, the eyes of Khadjas have not beheld the day since the coming of the young lotus. Faith hath led his hand, and Desire his spirit. Tomorrow cometh, thou sayest. Yet tomorrow meaneth naught but the warmth of the sun upon the cheek of Khadjas. O child, lay thy hand upon the wheel. It is love-worn smooth, and the clay hath stained it. Even in the dark Khadjas knoweth how the sun findeth it each morning, or the shadows; and the color of the clay beneath either dealing.

"Thinkest thou that Khadjas might deny the sun a new vessel to fill, or the shadow? Tomorrow cometh, O child, and Khadjas biddeth thee to come unto his side, letting thy words be of inquiry, for understanding is thine. Tomorrow and thou shalt seek the spot and behold, Khadjas shall deliver unto thee his bequest."
"Tomorrow cometh. A new tomorrow, thou hast promised it, and Khadjas in his faith knoweth it. Tomorrow cometh, seeking the wheel of Khadjas. Come, and Khadjas shall deliver unto thee his wisdom in full."
X.

(The desert sands lie dark beneath a purple sky. The changeless stars look down upon a silent earth dimly lighting the form of one who stands naked save for a loincloth, his face toward the East. Patiently, scarce moving, with eager face he watches for the coming sun. At last the dry lips open and with arms flung high he speaks.)

Watcher: O, Night! Make thy departure swift. For I, the child, traverse thy dark in faith of morning. I would watch the coming of the sun. Behold, the caravan hath moved on and the one camel followed with the last 'why.' I, the child, with thy cool kiss upon my naked flesh, enjoy simplicity; no longer a part of confusion but apart from confusion. Even my labour shall be a simple thing. I shall not adorn it save with the zeal of my love, and its tracery shall be upon all things that come beneath my hands.
"Even the crust with which I shall stay my flesh shall be touched in awe, for understanding is a mystery. It satisfies, yet leaveth hunger. It is life with its promised answer.

"Behold the brass bowl, that beloved vessel which is naught but the symbol of my spirit. The paths of earth have have ceased to beckon me, for I know their wisdoms are empty and that he who traverses them carries his brass bowl, and it is filled or empty before the going. And he who is full thirsteth not and he who is empty knoweth not the thirst.

"Man's spirit hides beneath the cloak of flesh and few bespeak the 'morrow' in recognition. O, Night! I, the child, have learned that while men interchange goods their spirits stand aloof, speechless; yet let the hand of destruction fall upon a brother and the spirits stand forth, speaking one unto the other. Sorrow is the common call; yea, the
knocking at the door of spirit. This is true, for who would eat fruit and pray?

"O, Night, lift thy mantle that I, grown old, yet a child, behold youth upon the quest and apply understanding! It is late, late, and the imprint is not within the hand of youth. What pity that its labour shall be short.

"Life is but a chain of incidents bestrung upon faith, and he who hath not faith hath but an ill assortment of atoms.

"Yon the sun cometh, bringing to youth day, and to age the counting off of labour. Yon the sun cometh, and already within the city's walls he hath announced the morning and his light hath lain upon the wheel of Khadjas. Behold the city's wall and its mute gateway. O, the city's spirit is a creation of the spirit of all her men. Thereby is she fallen or sustained. Her faith is mute but everlasting, and men
weave upon its loom their destinies and thereby taint or embellish the spirit of her.

"O ope, thou mute gateway! Let me pass. I would seek the side of Khadjas. O gate-man, haste thy fingers. Set the gate open. Behold, youth is coming unto thee for wisdom, sweeping through the gateway to come within the city's spirit. Bestir! Bestir thee!

"O, yon speedeth a long-limbed youth who beareth a bowl of brass. Await thou, O, youth! Whither goest?"

Youth: "O, stop thy inquiry. I am on the path unto the side of Khadjas—Khadjas, the gentle dealer of words; Khadjas, the soother; Khadjas, the seer; Khadjas, the promiser; Khadjas, the fulfiller of the promises; for his wisdom is as the string upon the bow. It speedeth the arrow and is strong to bear the bending. Yea, yea, hast thou not heard of Khadjas—Khadjas, the teacher, the
singer; he who moulds pots; he whose hands are shaken; he whose eyes are sealed; he, the well of wisdom?

"I go unto the side of Khadjas. Look thou, all the night's hours I have burnished my bowl that it be fit for his wisdom. I go to the side of Khadjas, for know thee, man, at high noon I go forth from the city's gate to encounter the day. Thinkest thou that I might go without a fresh sup? For this is to sustain me through the days. I shall thirst and see no water save that within my bowl. What is thy word?"

Watcher: "O child, let me seek the side of Khadjas with thee. I would kneel before the ceremony of his deliverance unto thee."

Child: "O man, where is the water of thy wisdom?"

Watcher: "Behold, behold the bowl which is mine. With the sweat of false labour I did
make its bottom pierced through and it would not hold. But O child, O child, it was not o'er late, for look thou, through the night I laboured and mended the spots with my faith."

CHILD: "Look thou, O man! Yon is the wheel of Khadjas, standing in the sun. Where is Khadjas? What is the morning without the murmur of his voice? Behold, the spot is empty! And the pots stand, mute evidence of his labour, each speaking, from its ample throat, his love.

"Look thou! the cup is filled and new clay wetted upon the wheel! Oh, where is wisdom! Is the voice of Khadjas dumb? Is his labour finished? Shall men thirst and there be no bowls? Oh, where is wisdom and what is wisdom?"

WATCHER: "Wisdom is not learning, O child. Be not confused. It is the pot upon the wheel, turning."
Child: "But it turneth not! The hand of Khadjas is gone."

Watcher: "But the clay awaiteth and the water is dripping."

Child: "How may I know wisdom? Is she laughing? Hath she turquoise upon her ankles? Is her breast yellow as the sands, and her locks, do they glisten? Oh, tell me, how doth wisdom appear?"

Watcher: "Touch the wheel. I would hear its turning. Lo, is not the sound grateful? Wisdom, O child, is naked of feet. She is beside thee, walking as thy shadow; hid beneath flesh yet a covenant unto it."

Child: "And what is the answer of wisdom, O man? Speak."

Watcher: "The pot upon the wheel, turning. Go forth, O youth, with thy bowl in confidence. Be not dismayed, for thou hast
pledged thy faith within the well of wisdom. Go forth, and shouldst thou pass upon the way a caravan which is leaderless, let it make its way westward; for he who hath driven it forth hath forgotten it.

"Go forth, O child, and dost thou pass one camel, let it upon its way, for its pack is confusion. Seal thy lips from whys, for they are the undoers of men. Fools utter whys as cunning, and wise men are silent.

"Oh thou blind beggar, what seekest thou?"

Beggar: "Water! Water! O Khadjas, water!"

Watcher: "Come forth, O brother, unto the side of the well and speak thee. Where is Khadjas?"

Beggar: "How mayest thou utter this? Know-est thou not that he is at the wheel, though he was found at the threshold of the out-gate of the city, with the morning sun upon
his lips and his face upturned Eastward? And, his hands clasped a perfect bowl!"

Watcher: "O Khadjas! O Khadjas! O Khadjas! This then is the morrow, and thy labour goeth on. Give me thy hands; for they distill the spirit of God. Oh, the clay throbs and my hands lie in cloying touch upon it. It will not free itself from my touch. The pot upon the wheel, turning.

"Behold, O, child, its curve, which is born beneath love. Is it not fair to look upon?"

(A child approaches, running.)

Child: "O thou who speakest; behold, a caravan hath come within the city's walls, and upon the camels nobles ride who seek a brother, one who was wed unto the daughter of Aesol. What is the answer I shall bear back?"

Watcher: "Go forth, O child, and tell them he hath ridden forth upon his caravan westward, never to return."
CHILD: "What is thy authority, O man?"

WATCHER: "He was my brother and departed from me.

"Wouldst thou go forth, O youth, and follow the caravan? Behold, they go the West way in search of him who was lost."

YOUTH: "I would go Eastward, for I would meet the days."

WATCHER: "Begone, O youth, but e'er thou goest let the hand of Khadjas deliver unto thee a bit of clay, for he who toucheth it knoweth the magic of creation. Remember, O child, and keep the atom wet with thy faith."

YOUTH: "Behold, O man, yon cometh a youth who hath not a bowl and he crieth out in thirst. What shalt thou deal unto him?"

WATCHER: "O child, take up the brass bowl of my youth and deliver it unto the hand
of him, for I no longer need the bowl which is mine for I shall create a new bowl each morrow."

Youth: "The hour hath come when it is mid-day, and I go forth, O man. What is thy bidding?"

Watcher: "Make haste Eastward. I shall await thee confidently."

(And the youth speeds away, leaving the watcher at the wheel.)

Watcher: "Oh, I would not look upon the face of Khadjas, nor see him when his hands are idle, for he hath said: 'I would not that my wisdom know when its labour is finished.'

'Behold, O Khadjas, they have gone; the youth unto the East way, which will joy thee, and the thirsted one lingereth not but shall return with the morrow with his thirst. And the beggar is no longer crying out, for I know him as brother, I, who sit with my naked feet about the wheel and the clay upon
my fingers. Behold, I have made a perfect pot and it joineth these, becoming a part of them upon the same rack, and my hand itcheth for new clay. Oh indeed this is joy, the purchasing of palms such as thine, O Khadjas.”
XI.

(The wings of Time have sped over many seasons. The sun has sought the West way and the heavy moon arises from the sea of sand to show again the wheel of Khadjas. Intent upon a pot sits one grown old and thin. With deft but shaking hands he turns the wheel, touching the clay with loving touch, as soft as the light which plays upon the wheel and makes the old eyes lift unto the moon's placid face. With familiar accents he speaks.)

Ancient: "Yon is the moon, already come, and my labour but begun. Is the sun jealous of the day, departing in fury when Night woos?

"The moon, with the light of wisdom upon her countenance; that placid smile which is soothing.

"O Khadjas, Khadjas! I, too, have traversed the aging days. Already have my hands begun their shaking, and youth despiseth my wisdom. There is a morrow coming
which shall find me beside the gateway with my face turned upward toward the Eastern sun, and clay within my hands; for the wheel shall await the hand of youth and there shall be clay made ready for his labour.

"And when that morrow hath come and gone, and the city hath spoken of my going; behold, in the silver dawn of Eternity the Wheel shall turn, and upon it shall stand a Pot which shall reflect the universe upon its curves.

"And the sun of the New Day shall illume it from within, and it shall glow even as a rainbow, while upon its surface mankind writes the day. And thou, Khadjas, shalt sit beside me, the child, watching the wheel turn.

"And lo, the Potter shall sit beside the Wheel, gazing forth across Eternity, while thou, O Khadjas, a child, and the child thou lovest, shall lean beside Him, listening unto
His wisdom and watching the Pot upon the Wheel, turning!"

(And as a vision, vast and full of portent, appeared a wheel of velvet black spread across a limitless sky, as of eternity; and upon it, standing in more than Kingly beauty, a Pot, whose lines of graceful splendor reached into the hovering stars, within whose light its outline showed. And from within the Pot there glowed a radiance of pearly iridescence, lighting its glistening surface on which showed the procession of Life, myriad in detail, spreading in endless paths as the Wheel turned in stately majesty.

(And lo, beside the wheel there grew a Shape, towering upward in mystic grandeur, now dim in monstrous outline but at last showing clear the wonderful hands, pleading the wheel into motion, and above, a Head, bended in sweet intent and placid loving, down to two figures leaning with upturned faces that drank in answering love—Khadjas and the child!)

THE END.
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