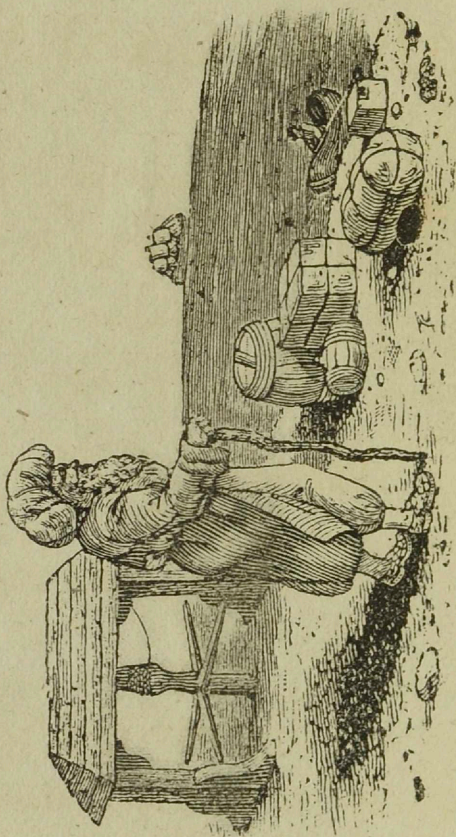


THE
HISTORY
OF
Abou Casem,
AND HIS
SLIPPERS.



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THE HISTORY
OF
ABOU CASEM,

AND

His two remarkable

S L I P P E R S ;

To which is added,

T H E H I S T O R Y O F T H E

Master Cat ;

OR,

P U S S I N B O O T S .



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THE HISTORY

OF

ABOU CASSEM,

AND

THE TWO PRINCIPLES

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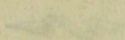
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ABOU CASEM.



IN Bagdad, a city in the East, lived an old merchant, named Abou Casem, well known for his immense riches, but more so by wanting every principle that does honour to human nature. His slovenliness was the country talk; and what he wore as apology for clothes, were only rags and pieces. His turban was of coarse cloth, and so very dirty that the colour of it could no longer be distinguished; but the slippers which he wore most deserved the attention of the curious; and many articles of less curiosity are deposited in the collections of parties whom the world have thought proper to call connoisseurs, than were the slippers of Abou Casem. The soles were guarded with large nails, and the upper-leathers were all patch-work; the famous ship of Argos did not consist of so many pieces; and during the ten

years they had been slippers, the most able cobblers in Bagdad had exhausted their art in preventing a total separation of the parts: so that they were at last become so heavy, that they passed into a proverb, and when any thing ponderous was to be expressed, Casem's slippers were always the objects of comparison. This merchant walking in the public market of the city, a considerable quantity of crystal was offered him, and, he knowing it to be an advantageous bargain, a few days after, hearing that a bankrupt perfumer had nothing left to sell but some rose water, he took the advantage of the poor man's misfortunes, and purchased it for half the value. These lucky incidents put him into good humour, and he thought it expedient to go into the bath, which he had not frequented for a considerable time. While he was undressing himself, one of his particular friends told him that his slippers were the ridicule of the whole city, and that he ought to provide himself with others.---“ I have been long talking about it, (answered

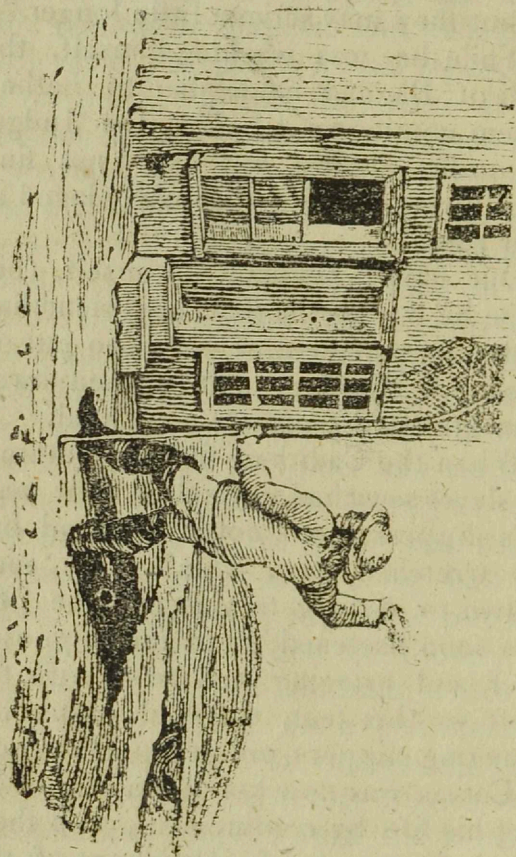
Casem) however, they are not so decayed, but they may serve a little longer."

While he was washing himself, the Cadi of Bagdad came also to bathe; Casem coming out before the Judge, put on his clothes, but could not find his slippers, a new pair being placed in their room.

Our Miser persuaded himself, (because he wished it) that his friend had made him a present of them, so put on these fine slippers; and walked away from the Bath perfectly contented.

When the Cadi had finished bathing, his slaves searched in vain for their master's slippers; none could be found but the wretched pair, which were soon known to belong to Casem; the officers soon hastened after the supposed thief, and bringing him back with the theft on his feet, the Cadi, after exchanging slippers, ordered him to prison.

Casem was now horribly afraid of losing his life by confinement, and there was but one way of getting out of this trouble. Casem was known to be as



rich as he was avaricious, and he did not get clear of this difficulty for a trifle.

On his return home, the discontented Casem, in the greatest indignation flung his slippers into the Tygris, which ran under his window : some few days afterwards, they were dragged out by a fisherman, but the nails they were studded with had torn the meshes of the net exceedingly. The fisherman, horribly exasperated against Casem and his slippers, determined to toss them into his house through a window he had left open, and being thrown with great violence, reached the jar which contained the rose water, and broke it to pieces.

Figure to yourself, reader, the consternation of Casem, at the sight of such devastation ! “ Cursed slippers,” cried he, turning his beard, “ am I thus to endure distress and misery through you ? oh that I had taken the advice of my friends, I should then long ago have left them off, and thereby have avoided the disgrace of your pitiful appearance, and the great loss that has followed ; however, you shall cause me no further mis-

chief!" so saying, he took a spade, and dug a hole in his garden, and buried them.

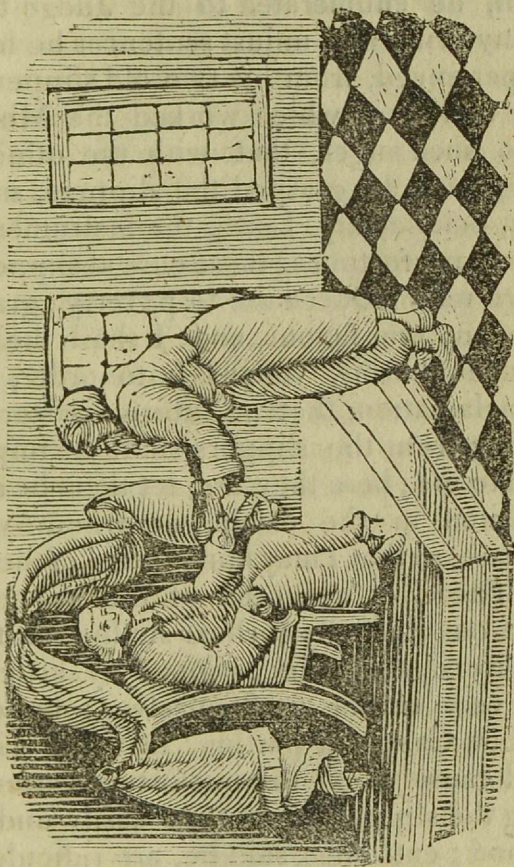
Now one of his neighbours, who had long owed him a spite, perceiving him busy in moving the ground, ran to inform the governor that he was sure Casem had discovered hidden treasures in his garden. Nothing more was necessary to rouse the mind of the commandant, and being great in authority he had a variety of ways to display it, at the expense of those poor wretches he was born to govern. In vain did our Miser protest that he had found no treasure; that he only meant to bury his slippers: the governor had flattered himself with hopes of gain, and the afflicted Casem could only preserve his liberty at the expense of large sums of money. In a fit of distraction, he heartily wished he had never seen the slippers, and in order effectually to get rid of them, he flung them into an aqueduct at a distance from the city, persuading himself he should never hear any more of them; but his troubles were not to end here,

for the slippers soon got to the mouth of the pipe, and stopped the current of water. The keepers of the fountain hastened to repair the damage, and finding Casem's slippers, complained to the governor, declaring that he had occasioned the mischief.

On this the unfortunate owner of the poor slippers was again ordered to prison, and condemned to a higher penalty than either of the former ones; and the governor who had punished the offence under the pretence of holding nothing that belonged to another, readily returned him his curious slippers; and Casem, to free himself from what had caused so many disasters, resolved to burn them; but as they had been thoroughly soaked in water, he exposed them to the rays of the sun upon the terrace of the house.

But Fortune had not yet exhausted all her frolicksome tricks upon Casem; one more was in reserve, for soon after, the slippers were placed on the terrace to dry, a neighbour's dog mistaking them for something that was toothsome, leaped from his master's window, and seizing

one of the slippers in his mouth, dropt it into the street, upon the head of a lady of fashion, which caused a violent illness. This event put the whole city in an uproar, every former injury they had occasioned was now brought forward, and one and all united in vilifying the poor Miser and his slippers. The lady's husband soon brought a complaint before the Cadi, and Casem was sentenced either to perpetual imprisonment or to pay a fine which deprived him of more than half his riches; a short time was given him to resolve, and he embraced the latter, but with the utmost dejection departed the court. No words can describe, or imagination conceive the Miser's grief; he went home, threw himself on the bed, and continued there for three days, reviling the cruelty of his hard fate; no sustenance would he receive, and his family now concluded that a short time would entirely prevent him and his slippers from being any further trouble to the State. At last he rose from his bed, trembling and weak, and with much difficulty reached the Ca-



di's house, and having obtained admission, he enumerated to the Judge the many cruel and unjust sentences he had experienced, from his two old slippers; the recital of which worked the Miser into such anger, that with the utmost vengeance he grasped the slippers, saying, behold, my Lord, the instruments of my misfortunes! these cursed slippers have now reduced me to poverty; grant me but one favour, and I shall die in peace; that is, vouchsafe to order, by proclamation, that no future disaster arising from the slippers shall be imputed to me; here they are, let them be deposited in the castle, or where you please, so that I may fairly be rid of them.

The Cadi accepted of the slippers, but could hardly forbear smiling at the many distresses occasioned by articles so very trifling in themselves: he told Abou Casem at parting, that the original cause of all the misfortunes attending the slippers were now easily understood; extremes, said he, are ridiculous and unjustifiable; those slippers would have been perfectly in character when

worn by the pitiable object that solicits support from house to house ; but when a man, whom I believe was once esteemed the richest in the city, debases himself so as to become the proprietor of such filthy articles, I do not wonder at the many misfortunes attending him.

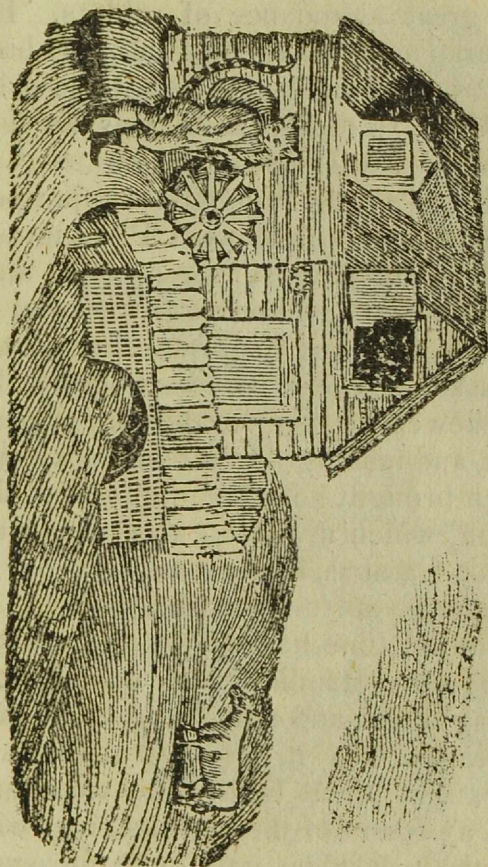
Casem retired, and although the Cadi's remarks were perfectly just, the poor Miser, benefited but little by it, for his mind was in the utmost agitation for the loss of his darling riches, could I, said he, have foreseen the havoc which my fortune has sustained by these unlucky slippers, they should have been destroyed long ago.



PUSS IN BOOTS.

THERE was a Miller, who left to the three sons he had, his Mill, his Cow, and his Cat. The partition was soon made. They would have eaten up all the poor patrimony. The eldest had the Mill, the second the Cow, and the youngest the Cat. The poor fellow was quite comfortless at having so poor a lot. My brothers, said he, may get their living handsomely enough, by joining their stocks together; but, when I have eaten my Cat, and made me a muff of her skin, I must then die with hunger.

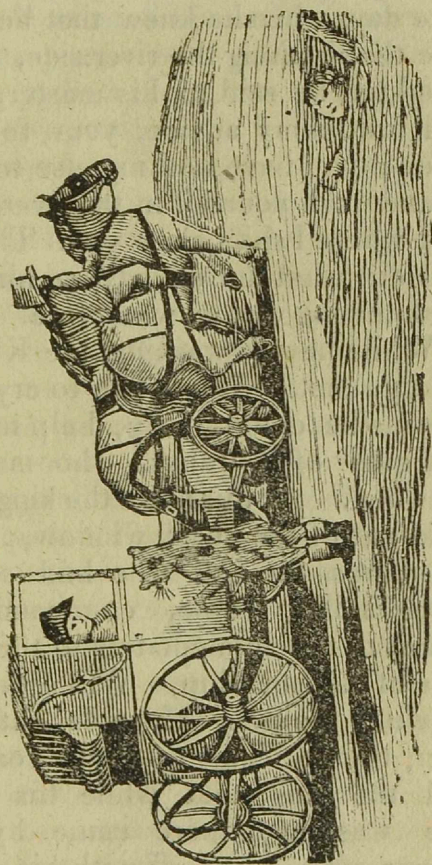
The Cat said to him, do not thus afflict yourself, master, give me a bag, and get a pair of boots made for me, and you shall see that you have not so bad a portion as you imagine. Though the cat's master did not build very much upon what he said, yet, when the Cat had what he asked for, he booted himself, and putting the bag about his neck, he held the strings of it in his two fore paws,



and went into the warren, where there were great abundance of rabbits. He put bran and sow-thistles into his bag, and stretched himself at length, as if he had been dead. Scarce was he laid down, but he had what he wanted, as a rash and foolish young rabbit jumped into his bag, and Monsieur Puss, immediately pulling close the strings, took and killed him without pity. Proud of his prey, he went with it to the palace, and asked to speak with his majesty: he was shewed up stairs to the king's apartment, and making a low reverence, said, I have brought you, sire, a rabbit of the warren, which my noble lord the Marquis of Carabas, has commanded me to present to your majesty from him.

Another time he went and hid himself among some standing corn, holding still his bag open; and when a brace of partridges run into it, he drew the strings and caught them both. He went and made a present of them to the king, who took the partridges with great pleasure, and ordered him some money to drink.

The Cat continued thus to carry to



his majesty, game of his master's taking. One day, when he knew that he was to take the air along the river:side, with his daughter, he said to his master, if you will follow my advice, your fortune is made ; you have nothing else to do but go and wash yourself in the river, in that part where I shall shew you. The Marquis did what the cat advised him, without knowing why or wherefore.

While he was washing, the King passed by, and the Cat began to cry out, as loud as he could, help, help my Lord Marquis of Carabas, who is almost drowned. At this noise the king put his head out of the coach window, and finding it was the Cat who had so often brought him game, commanded his guards to run immediately to the assistance of his Lordship, While they were drawing the poor Marquis out of the river, the Cat came up to the coach, and told the king, that while his master was washing, there came by some rogues, who went off with his clothes. The king immediately ordered the officers of his wardrobe to run and fetch

one of his best suits for the Lord Marquis, and caressed him after a very extraordinary manner; and as the fine clothes he had given him extremely set off his good mien, the king's daughter fell in love with him to distraction. The king would have him come into his coach, and take part of the airing. The Cat, quite overjoyed, marched on before, and meeting with some countrymen, who were mowing a meadow, he said to them, good people, if you do not tell the king, that the meadow you are mowing belongs to my Lord Marquis of Carabas, you shall be chopt as small as herbs for the pot. The king did not fail of asking the mowers to whom the meadow belonged; to my Lord Marquis of Carabas, answered they altogether. You see, sir, said the marquis, this is a meadow which never fails to yield a plentiful harvest every year.

The master-cat, who went still on before, met with some reapers, and said to them in like manner. The king, who passed by a moment after, would needs know to whom all that corn which he

then saw, did belong ; to my Lord Marquis of Carabas, replied the reapers ; and the king was very well pleased with it. Mr. Puss at last arrived at a stately castle, the master of which was an Ogre, and all the lands which the king had travelled over were his. The Cat had enquired who this Ogre was, and what he did, and when he knew, he asked to speak with him, saying, I cannot pass so near this castle, but I must pay him my respects. The Ogre received him in a friendly manner. I have been assured, said Puss, that you can change yourself into all kinds of creatures at pleasure. This is true, said the Ogre, and immediately he became a Lion. Puss was terrified at the sight, and instantly got into the gutter, but with much trouble and danger, because of his dress. A little while after, when the Ogre had resumed his natural shape, he came to him, and said, I have heard, but can hardly believe it, that you can take the shape of the smallest animals. Disbelieve it ? cried the Ogre, you shall see that presently, and at the same time be-

came a mouse. Puss perceiving this, fell upon him and ate him up.

Meanwhile the king passing by, puss ran over the draw:bridge, and said to the king, your majesty is welcome to the seat of my Lord Marquis of Carabas. What! Marquis, said the King, and does this castle belong to you? Let us go into it, if you please. The Marquis gave his hand to the princess, and followed the king, who went up first. They passed a hall, where was a capital collation which the Ogre had prepared for his friends. The king was perfectly charmed with the qualities of his lordship, as was his daughter, and seeing the vast estate he possessed, said to him, after drinking five or six glasses, it will be owing to yourself only, my Lord Marquis, if you are not my son-in-law. The Marquis making several low bows, accepted the offer, and forthwith that same day married the princess.

Thus Puss became a great Lord, and never after ran in search of rats and mice, but only for diversion.

FINIS.

