

covered with gilding and exquisite painting. And there were runnels too, flowing freely with wine and milk and honey and water; and numbers of ladies and of the most beautiful damsels in the world, who could play on all manner of instruments, and sung most sweetly, and danced in a manner that it was charming to behold. For the Old Man desired to make his people believe that this was actually Paradise. So he had fashioned it after the description that Mahomet gave of his Paradise, to wit, that it should be a beautiful garden running with conduits of wine and milk and honey and water, and full of lovely women for the delectation of all its inmates. And sure enough the Saracens of those parts believed that it *was* Paradise!

Now no man was allowed to enter the Garden save those whom he intended to be his ASHISHIN. There was a Fortress at the entrance to the Garden, strong enough to resist all the world, and there was no other way to get in. He kept at his Court a number of the youths of the country, from 12 to 20 years of age, such as had a taste for soldiering, and to these he used to tell tales about Paradise, just as Mahomet had been wont to do, and they believed in him just as the Saracens believe in Mahomet. Then he would introduce them into his garden, some four, or six, or ten at a time, having first made them drink a certain potion which cast them into a deep sleep, and then causing them to be lifted and carried in. So when they awoke, they found themselves in the Garden.<sup>1</sup>

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NOTE 1. ← Says the venerable Sire de Joinville: "*Le Vieil de la Montaigne ne croit pas en Mahomet, ainçois croit en la Loi de Haali, qui fu Oncle Mahomet.*" This is a crude statement, no doubt, but it has a germ of truth. Adherents of the family of 'Ali as the true successors of the Prophet existed from the tragical day of the death of Husain, and among these, probably owing to the secrecy with which they were compelled to hold their allegiance, there was always a tendency to all manner of