

Prophet. The Prince would then ask whence he came, and he would reply that he came from Paradise! and that it was exactly such as Mahommet had described it in the Law. This of course gave the others who stood by, and who had not been admitted, the greatest desire to enter therein.

So when the Old Man would have any Prince slain, he would say to such a youth: "Go thou and slay So and So; and when thou returnest my Angels shall bear thee into Paradise. And shouldst thou die, nathless even so will I send my Angels to carry thee back into Paradise." So he caused them to believe; and thus there was no order of his that they would not affront any peril to execute, for the great desire they had to get back into that Paradise of his. And in this manner the Old One got his people to murder any one whom he desired to get rid of. Thus, too, the great dread that he inspired all Princes withal, made them become his tributaries in order that he might abide at peace and amity with them.¹

I should also tell you that the Old Man had certain others under him, who copied his proceedings and acted exactly in the same manner. One of these was sent into the territory of Damascus, and the other into Curdistan.²

NOTE 1.—Romantic as this story is, it seems to be precisely the same that was current over all the East. It is given by Odoric at length, more briefly by a Chinese author, and again from an Arabic source by Hammer in the *Mines de l'Orient*.

The following is the Chinese account as rendered by Rémusat: "The soldiers of this country (Mulahi) are veritable brigands. When they see a lusty youth, they tempt him with the hope of gain, and bring him to such a point that he will be ready to kill his father or his elder brother with his own hand. After he is enlisted, they intoxicate him, and carry him in that state into a secluded retreat, where he is charmed with delicious music and beautiful women. All his desires are satisfied for several days, and then (in sleep) he is transported back to his original position. When he awakes, they ask what he has seen. He is then informed that if he will become an Assassin, he will be rewarded with the same felicity. And with the texts and prayers that they teach him they heat him to such a pitch that whatever commission be given him he will brave death without regret in order to execute it."