Adolphe Danziger De Castro

Selected Poems

Adolphe De Castro Danziger

November 6, 1859 [Dobrzyń nad Wisłą, Poland] –
March 4, 1959 [Los Angeles, California]

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

In the Garden of Abdullah and Other Poems. Los Angeles: Western Authors Publishing Association, 1916.
Hybrid Prince of Egypt. Los Angeles: Western Authors Association, 1950.

In The Garden Of Abdullah

In the Garden of Abdullah
(Sheikh and wisest of his people),
In the center of the Garden,
'Twixt a maze of thorny hedges.
Stood a tree on which there ripen'd
Yearly but a single Peri,
Lucent like the stime of Iris,
And transporting by its fragrance.

Of the Peri passed a legend
(Sacred as the Prophet's symbol).
That the seed came from the Peri
Blest and planted by the Prophet;
That if eaten with devotion
Healed the body of affliction,
Gave the mind the vastest knowledge,
And the soul its full perfection.

Yearly when the Peri ripened.
By the Sheikh away was taken
And with prayer and genuflexion.
Burned as offering to the Prophet,
Till the time when Meli Rahvah,
Sheikh Abdullah's growing daughter,
Reach the age of maiden glory.
She should eat the wonder Peri

Grown was Abdullah's daughter; !
Only child was Meli Rahvah,
And was sweeter than the houris j
In the Eden of the Prophet.]
She was destined for the Sultan, :
When Abdulah had accomplished
His deferred and sacred journey
To the holy town of Meccah.

And to guard his double treasure
Sheikh Abdullah chose two watchmen ;
From among his many servants;
One, a giant who was sightless, 1
And a dwarfling, who was legless, :
So that e'en if by their senses
They were tempted them to pleasure, .?
Ne'er could find their satisfaction.

To his mind there came the story, l
How the soul was called to answer
For transgressions while indwelling 'j
Mankind's earthly mortal body, 1
And the soul spake thus to Allah:
' Was not I in Thee begotten, i
Allah's essence, pure and holy
Can to evil yield the spirit?

Is the eagle part of carion,
Though it be on carion feeding;
Is the Prophet as the camel,
Though it bear the sacred burden?
Were it not the bod3^'s cravings,
Carion that for carion lusteth,
I would never feel temptation,
For the spirit never sinneth.'

Then did Allah call the body
To his dreadful throne of Justice,
And the craven clay, appearing,
Raised his sightless eyes to Allah ;
Trembled when the voice accused him
Of his lust and deeds of evil.
Evil words that evil doubled
On the path of degradation.

And to Allah spake the body,
Fearful yet himself defending,

‘ Clay was I of thy creation.
Unendowed for good or evil,
Till the flesh, by spirit quicken ‘d.
Found in life its full direction:
I was helpless and was guided,
Blind Vv^as I, the soul but led me.

‘Twas for this that Sheikh Abdullah,
Having gleaned a sacred lesson,
Teaching that concerted action
Lies in union of the senses,
That he chose the halfling watchmen.
Wise, indeed, was Sheikh Abdullah,
For the action held a problem
Scarcely able of solution.

High upon a lofty scaffold,
Overlooking all the garden,
Sheikh Abdullah placed the dwarfling,
And beneath, with mighty trumpet,
Was the blinded giant Arab.
Spake Abdullah to the dwarfling:
“At intrusion, tell the blindman.
Let him signal to the guardsmen”.

Having put his house in order,
And his camel being ready
For his pilgrimage to Meccah,
Sheikh Abdullah kissed his daughter,
Prayed the Prophet to protect her
From the wily unbelievers.
Who despised the Prophet’s Chosen,
Yet adored their lovely daughters.

When Abdullah had departed,
Meli Rahvah, then reclining
On a divan in the garden,
Gazed with tense and secret longing

Through the rose-vine shaded arbor,
At the roadway to the village,
Where the hero of her fancy,
Riding past, was wont to tarry.

He was not a bearded Cahdi,
Nor a chieftain of the Desert,
Who in bondage held her fancy
And her eyes to cloud with passion.
He was Bogdan, Knight of Poland,
Who had fought the Desert Arabs
And the fiercer Saraceans,
At the tombstone of the Master.

He was mounted like a Titan,
On a mighty coal-black Arab;
Eyes he had that matched the ocean
Deeply blue and all-defiant,
And his hair was long and wavy.
Seeming as if spun of amber,
Which the sunlight showed in dancing.
Mischief-making, wonder ringlets.

Meli Eahvah gazed with longing,
Through the iron-grated arbor.
There were peasants with their donkeys,
Women tattled with their neighbors;
Children shouted at the Mufti,
And a Dervish, too, was passing,
But the lover she expected
Did not come to still her longing.

And anon a voice was speaking,
Speaking softly at the arbor;
"I have donned this Dervish garment
That I may, with none to hinder.
Worship thus thy matchless beauty.
"Come with me," the voice implored her

Meli Rahvah's body trembled.
And her eyes with pleasure glinted.

Seeming calmly she responded:
"Gladly would I do thy bidding.
But the portals and the garden
Both, are fended from intrusion.
E'en within are watchmen stationed.
Two are they, and though but hafiings—
One is blind, the other legless—
Yet combined may halt intruders."

"Speak, maiden," cried the Templar,
"And my sword shall give thee freedom,
Though an army of the Sultan
Barred the entrance to the garden.
Love lends courage to a craven,
How much more to Templar Bogdan,
Fighting for his Meli Rahvah;
But command, my sword is ready. "

"Nay, my lord," said Meli Rahvah,
"Though I love thee well and truly,
Yet disdain I forceful measures.
Gently treated love is yielding;
wit may win where passion faileth.
Solve the problem of Abdullah,
And the halflings take the Peri,
Thou shalt come and freely take me."

Far beyond the reach of hearing,
On the scaffold lay the dwarfling,
Eyes enraptured at the vision
Of the Iris-color 'd Peri,
And beneath him sat the giant,
Chest extended, nostrils flying.
Ravished by the wafted fragrance
From the ripening, luscious Peri.

Thither hied him Templar Bogdan,
Treading lightly as a spirit;
And anon he heard the voices
Of the haflings in the garden,
Speaking of the sacred Peri.
And the olden holy legend
That the Peri youth eternal
And perfection gave to creatures.

"Eat the Peri", said the Templar
In a whisper, like an Angel,
Giving mortals Allah's message.
"Eat the fruit that ripens yonder,
And ye be as perfect creatures.
Thou, the sightless, shall be seeing;
Thou, the legless, shall be walking.
Both combined, shall thus be perfect

"Great is Allah and Mohammed
Is his Prophet," cried the dwarfling,
" 'Tis the spirit of the Prophet
Telling us to eat the Peri".
But the blinded giant answered:
"Were it certain our salvation.
Never could we reach the fruit tree;
I am blind and thou art legless.

Said the Templar, "When the sightless
Bear the seeing, there is union".
Then the halfiings cried with gladness.
Cried with gladness in the mazes;
Sought and found the sacred Peri,
While the eager Templar Bogdan
Vaulted lightly o'er the paling
To the gentle Meli Rahvah.

With amazement Meli Eahvah

Saw the halflings take the Peri,
And as Bogdan now was kneeling
At her feet with love and laughter,
Meli Rahvah bent and kissed him.
"Thou hast taught me, love may conquer
E'en the wit of Sheikh Abdullah,"
Sweetly smiling, said the maiden.

Warm were yet her tender kisses
On the lips of Templar Bogdan,
When before them stood Abdullah,
With his features wrath distorted,
That his daughter gave caresses
To a Christian unbeliever.
Laden with the curse of Allah
And disdained by all the Faithful.

And the Knight was soon surrounded
By a ring of glinting weapons
In the hands of vengeful Arabs,
Glad to shed the blood of Christians.
Quickly flashed the sword of Ragdan,
To defend his Meli Eahvah;
But the maiden, with a gesture,
Bade her lover sheathe his weapon.

Sheikh Abdullah saw the gesture,
Saw the f?esture and expression,
And the flame of ang-er hisrher
Rose asrainst his daue-hter's lover;
And, to feed his indignation.
Came the steward of the household,
Shoutiner that the fruit was stolen,
Stolen by the halfling watchmen.

Consternation seized Abdullah,
Then in thought he bided silent.
While his features slowly softened.

And he murfured, “Great is Allah;
Humbled am I in my wisdom;
Safe I thought my house and garden.
Yet my daughter loves a Christian,
And the halflings stole the Peri”.

Said the maiden to her father:
“Matchless was thy choice of watchmen,
Seeming safety in their weakness;
Helples one without the other;
Yet a mortal so inspired them,
That they reached the sacred Peri,
And a wit that could effect it,
Is divine and hath my worship “.

Sheikh Abdullah’s pride was kindled
At the words of Meli Rahvah.
“Truly hast thou spoken, daughter;
One is clay without the eyesight,
Sight is sateless for enjoyment,
And the problem I propounded
Needed Allah for solution—
Yet it seems a mortal solved it”.

“ May it please thee, “ spake Sir Bogdan,
‘*It was I who solved the problem.
Gently urged by Meli Rahvah,
For whose love I braved thine anger,
And the grandeur of thy wisdom;
Joining what thy wit divided,
I but told the blinded giant
Take the dwarfling on his shoulder.

“Thus in union of their senses,
One in action, found fulfillment
In their longing for the Peri,
Symbol of the body’s craving—
Yet the passions are eternal,

As eternal as the spirit;
And the spirit seeks the substance.
As the substance needs the spirit.

"And when hearts are thus united
In the love the Lord created.
Let nor wit nor law divide them,
Lest there be a world of halflings,
Ever pining and desiring,
And no gentle hand to help them.
E'en as yonder hapless watchmen
Thou didst set to guard the Peri.

"Man is halfling without friendship.
To sustain his waning courage;
Joy is halfling without sorrow,
Finely fibred to enhance it,
Grief is e'er a double burden
If unshared by friend's affection,
And the soul but dwells in darkness
When it lacks love's hallowed sweetness.

"Thou wilt say that I, a Christian,
Dared to love thy gentle daughter;
And I answer, we were halflings,
Till united by a spirit,
Knowing neither creed nor station,
But the simple law of nature,
Which the fancy of the Prophet
Once had called the Tree of Knowledge'

Spake Abdullar to the Arabs:
" Down your arms and yield obeisance
To this noble man of wisdom.
If himself he name a Christian,
I respect him as a Moslem,
Whom the Prophet, too, would honor".
Then to Bogdan spake Abdullah,

Bowing as before the Sultan:

"Lord, I long thy love suspected
For my daughter Meli Ralivah,
And her own forbidden secret
Was to me revealed and open;
'Twas against religious usage;
Yet I loved my daughter dearly,
And I planned to show her error,
Yielding to a Christian's passions.

"But thy words have shown thy greatness.
And my daughter, Meli Kahvah,
Wisely chose her mundane master-
Master, since he saw the symbol
Of the Peri and the halflings.
Now, that love and truth united
Two of alien creed and races,
Take ye, too, Abdullah's blessing."

The Yiddish Poet

How resonant the wonder measures flow,
Despite the crudeness of the homeless tongue ^
In which is cast the rare and lofty song, j
Wherein thy people's joys and sorrows glow. I
But who reflects what soil lets roses blow,
What pow'r endows the mighty eagle's wings, ;
Or how the lark is mienеd, but how he sings
'Tis scent and flight and song that grace bestow.

Do timid creatures analyze their fears?
In joy, who frays the tissue of his smile ? ',
Do weeping hearts think what composes tears ?
So I reck not nor probe thy Jargon 's style
I know but that thy songs my heart beguile, -
And this alone thy work to me endears.