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THE TEN PRINCES

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DANDIN'S DASHA-KUMARA-CHARITA

THE TEN PRINCES

Translated from the Sanskrit by

ARTHUR W. RYDER

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TO MY LONG-PROVED FRIEND
RUTH N. PETERSSON
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

I

Of the detail of Dandin's life we know nothing. He perhaps flourished in the latter half of the seventh Christian century—certainly not later. He is the author of two works: a treatise on literary composition, called the *Mirror of Poetry;* and the novel whose full title is the *Adventures of the Ten Princes*. If, as tradition affirms, he composed a third work, we know not what it was. He was a skilful poet; an erudite and ingenious lover of literature; the master of a prose style surpassingly beautiful.

This is all that we know. Dandin has been as successful as Homer—more successful than Shakespeare—in baffling the impertinences of the "Who's Who" brand of scholarship. And while a few more details might prove piquant, it is better to know too little than too much. In the case of truly great writers, both understanding and enjoyment are commonly enhanced when we have their works and have lost their lives.

II

The *Mirror of Poetry* is a treatise which attained, and deserves, the position of an authority. It was composed at a favorable moment in classical Sanskrit literature, when masterpieces were recent and the po-

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etic impulse was not yet exhausted. It treats of literary composition both in verse and prose, giving rules of construction in the various forms, but concerning itself chiefly with "ornaments," that is, all figures of speech and other devices which lend dignity and distinction, which transform a piece of writing into true literature.

The *Mirror of Poetry* is itself written in verse, and the author displays his own poetic skill by composing almost all of his illustrative examples.

III

The *Ten Princes* is a prose novel in fourteen chapters. The first chapter relates the birth of Prince Rajavahana and the assembling at his father's court of nine companion lads, princes or aristocrats, all destined in the sequel to royalty. In the second chapter, the ten set forth to conquer the world. But when Rajavahana disappears, the other nine scatter to find him; and each meets with gay adventures, in the course of which he gains a throne and a lady. The central story recounts Rajavahana's experiences; but as his comrades rejoin him, they report their own exploits, so that the book becomes a collection of shorter tales, somewhat slightly framed in the dominating narrative.

The text has reached us in a strange form. For only chapters vi–xiii were composed by Dandin. Chapters i–v and chapter xiv are by other hands. These

two additions are of very different length and character, and should therefore be described separately.

The true work of Dandin ends abruptly with chapter xiii, leaving the adventure of Vishruta incomplete. The fourteenth chapter supplies a somewhat careless completion, then proceeds to a conclusion of the main narrative. This chapter is written in a commonplace style, and some of its statements imply a negligent reading of Dandin's text. It is obviously inferior. Dandin must have been interrupted, perhaps by the strict arrest of death, and a lesser mind adds a lame and impotent Conclusion.

Very different is the case with chapters i–v. This extensive addition has one-third the length of the genuine work of Dandin; its style is exquisite; in ingenuity of design and detail it is hardly unworthy of Dandin himself; it is admirably welded to the main narrative. The fifth chapter in particular, with its harmonious blending of beauty, wit, and invention, fuses fittingly with the work of the master. A painful examination may indeed disclose slight stylistic variations and reveal some trivial inferiority in constructive skill; yet it may be doubted whether these differences would have been detected had the book been presented as a unit. Even as matters stand, some have found it possible to doubt the non-authenticity of the first five chapters. Thus we encounter a most remarkable instance of literary collaboration: a true masterpiece uncompleted, with an anonymous com-

plement hardly its inferior. Let us pay homage to the unknown artist of chapters i–v, who was zealous for art, not for self-exploitation; who stands a silent rebuke—needed, if unheeded—of any age greedy for scholarship and other stultifying self-advertisement.

The necessity of this introductory addition presents a puzzle. While the terminal lacuna may be naturally attributed to the author's death or other imperious interruption, the failure to compose the earlier chapters—which must nevertheless have been fully blocked out in Dandin's mind—remains a mystery. There are no grounds for assuming that they were actually written, and the manuscript lost. It would appear that Dandin began composition with the sixth chapter. Further speculation is profitless, since data are lacking.

IV

There has been some investigation of the sources which Dandin may have used for the stories which form his book; here and there an analogy has been found in the earlier literature. Yet the total result is rather surprisingly negative, considering the extraordinary wealth of Sanskrit literature in tales of diverse nature. These dismal studies in influences and sources may be securely left in the hands of those who have no love for literature, since the result is always the same. A great author uses what fits his purpose, and in using it, so transforms it as to make it his own.

It is of greater interest to observe the author's attitude toward his gay adventurers. They are plainly not Sunday-school heroes; several have an obvious streak of the picaresque. In particular, the hero of the seventh chapter—the longest and perhaps the most winsome chapter—is an accomplished rascal. Yet he and other rascals win the complete sympathy of the reader by their lack of the meaner vices and virtues. The only exception (if the translator may trust his own feeling) is the hero of chapter viii, whose treachery the author strives to explain by the working of superhuman necessity. The explanation satisfies the mind, not the heart.

The purpose of the book is the amusement of the cultivated reader: there is no moral intention. Most great books—*Hamlet*, or *Oedipus*, or *Shakuntala*—submit to a moral interpretation, however removed they may be from formal sermonizing. Yet there are a precious few which employ the lavish resources of lofty art with no design save the entertainment of the truly cultivated. Among them are the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and the *Ten Princes*.

V

It is baffling business to discuss style in another language, yet the attempt must be made. For the *Ten Princes* is above all else a triumph of literary style. Its incidents would indeed have interest if related in commonplace fashion, but the book becomes great by virtue of its manner.

This manner is difficult. Dandin, like the other Sanskrit novelists, does not employ prose because it is easy; he probably felt it more exacting than poetry. Being a careful student of linguistic and rhetorical device, he commands, to begin with, the resources (necessary, though insufficient) which yield themselves to study. Thus he is fond of permitted, but unusual, forms of grammatical inflection; he has an extensive, exquisitely chosen vocabulary; he is skilful in forming long compounds; he understands the elaboration of a beautifully balanced sentence. This equipment, with full comprehension of the figures of speech, forms the inanimate body which can receive life and charm only from noble art.

One feature of this life-giving art is sententious brevity, to be expected in that literature wherein an author rejoices more in saving the half of a short vowel than in the birth of a son. As a consequence, the book is alive with action, surprising with quick mutation of fortune and change of scene, yet never hurried, finding rich opportunity for lingering description.

Most pervasive, and most indescribable, is the use of assonance. This not infrequently proceeds to full internal rhyme, shading away with faultless taste into imperfect rhyme, alliteration, and other haunting euphonies. The result is one which only the rarest prose shares with lofty poetry—that the phrases gain a meaning beyond their meaning, and sing themselves

for days through any sensitive mind. Such phrases are *kāsi vāsu kva yāsi* or *nagaradēvatēva nagaramōsharōshitā*. These are deliberately chosen as expressions of which the mere literal rendering leaves no impression of profundity or passion. For the former means only: "What is your name? What is your goal, my soul?" and the latter: "like the city's guardian goddess, angered at theft in the city."

But the author's most marvelous feat is the twelfth chapter, which contains no labial sound. In this chapter no word is employed that contains any of the letters *u*, *o*, *p*, *ph*, *b*, *bh*, *m*, or *v*. The translator, lacking character for so splendid an achievement, has adopted the shabby substitute of a somewhat more highfalutin style.

It has been stated that Dandin's manner is difficult, yet some qualification is necessary. His more elaborate passages are continually set off by short, pungent colloquialisms, just as Shakespeare does not scruple to introduce into a melancholy meditation the expressions: "there's the rub" and "to grunt and sweat under a weary life." Dandin, like Shakespeare, desires to employ all the resources of language, the familiar as well as the sophisticated. In this the translator, so far as power permitted, has followed him, not shrinking even from occasional profanity.

A considerable difficulty is occasioned by the proper names. These are, to be sure, easily pronounced and euphonious; but they are numerous, long, and

foreign to the English reader. Furthermore, their literal meaning is not infrequently played upon; yet it seemed only rarely advisable to translate them. Thus one of the peculiar graces of the original becomes an unavoidable embarrassment of the translation.

Further discussion of style would tend to little profit. The author of the *Mirror of Poetry* had at disposal all the resources of literary refinement. In the employment of those resources, we may say of him, as he of one of his own characters: "He made masterpieces his model, and undertook what was feasible yet ideal."

ARTHUR W. RYDER

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May everlasting joy be thine,
Conferred by Vishnu's foot divine,

Which, when it trod the devils flat,
Became the staff of this and that:

The staff around which is unfurled
The sunshade of the living world;

The flagstaff for the silken gleam
Of sacred Ganges' deathless stream;

The mast of earth's far-driven ship,
Round which the stars (as axis) dip;

The lotus stalk of Brahma's shrine;
The fulcrumed staff of life divine.

CHAPTER I

THE PRINCES ARE BORN

There was once a metropolis called Blossom City, the very diadem of Magadha land, and a touchstone testing all proud cities; for it made credible the high magnificence of the sea in its wealth of gems and other such objects ever displayed in its countless commodities.

In this city lived a king named Rajahansa. His stout, uplifted arm seemed like Mount Mandara churning the sea—his sea the whole hostile host, wherein billows of sturdy soldiers figured the crested waves; horses and elephants the fearful sharks. He was wrapt in the perfume of a glory so pervasive that it plugged the chinks of the horizon—a glory that formed the theme of eager song for throngs of dear and dainty companions of gods absorbed in sauntering through groves in the city courts of heaven's king—a glory with as white a figure as autumn moonlight or jasmine blossom, as camphor, hoarfrost, or pearl, as lotus stalk or swan or celestial elephant, as water, milk, God Shiva's laughter, Mount Kailasa, or *kasha* grass. He was blest with a bridegroom's bliss in being wedded to the earth, who wears for girdle the tide of ocean set with gems as massive and magnificent as heaven's peak. Through fees for endless sacrifices he

gave protection to throngs of Brahmans abounding in the high discipline of the sciences. He ever emulated the sun in a radiance that tortured his foes. And the winsomeness of his unblemished beauty was own brother to the charm of haughty Love.

This king had a wise and lovely queen named Vasumati, the central jewel in the chaplet of dainty ladies. She made it seem that charming woman had been frightened into blamelessness when fierce-eyed Shiva reduced the love-god's life to ashes. For her mass of hair was black as clustered bees; and her face, a mine for love's quarrying and a moon of light, left lotuses forlorn. Her eyes were like two paired and flashing fishes figured on Love's banner. Her sigh was a breeze from Malabar, a soldier to lay all soldiers low; and her red lip was a flower, yet a sword to pierce the hearts of lovelorn loiterers. Her supple, comely neck was a conch of victory; her breasts seemed two well-filled bowls, or a pair of sheldrake birds; her arms were perilous as bowstrings, yet in unrivaled softness like two clinging lotus stalks. Her navel seemed a lovely lotus bud just ready to flower, or an eddy in Ganges' stream. Her generous hips, true chariots of conquest, postponed the ambitions of meditative saints. Her perfect thighs, twin columns of victory, seemed plantain stems to stem ascetic progress. Her feet were lilies, an antidote for heat. And all her remaining members seemed flowers, and weapons, too.

Such was Vasumati, lapped in a wealth of end-

less delight like the earth. And with the earth, she brought happiness to the king of Magadha, as he dwelt in Blossom City, more lovely than the heavenly city.

Now the king had three ancestral counselors, supremely loyal, and of an intelligence so profound that they had doubts about sharing in enterprises under consideration by the adviser of the gods. Their names were Dharmapala, Padmodbhava, and Sitavarman.

The sons of Sitavarman were Sumati and Satyavarman. The sons of Dharmapala were Sumantra, Sumitra, and Kamapala. The sons of Padmodbhava were Sushruta and Ratnodbhava.

Of these Satyavarman was pious; and having perceived the hollowness of one life after another, he wandered, a passionate pilgrim. Kamapala was naughty, so disregarded the counsel of father and elder brother and roamed the earth, a connoisseur of gay dogs, actors, and purchasable females. Ratnodbhava had a talent for trade and sailed the sea. The other sons of counselors, when their fathers became permanent guests in the heavenly city, lived without change.

Now it chanced that the lord of Magadha went forth to war. His shafts were sharpened by skimming the skulls of princes in countless battles delivered with skilful use of weapons effective and diverse. His foe was the monarch of Malwa, overweening Manasara, a glutton for conflict renewed. The jangling roll

of the royal drums found fun in downing the egotistical bellow of the ocean, so that the whole herd of elephants in heaven was shaken in a passion of fear at that fierce hearing. He led an army with all four service branches, bending beneath its weight the weight of earth, afflicting the mighty head of the earth-supporting serpent king. Filled with battle-lust and mighty rage the monarch marched.

And the king of Malwa, with a numerous host of elephants, took his determination like conflict incarnate and came forth again to face him.

Thereupon the two joined battle in a veil of dust that faded confusedly into the sky. It rose from the earth, powdered by wheel and hoof, and its base was bathed in ichor-streams that flowed from the temples of thronging elephants. It seemed a tent with curtains formed by bevies of heavenly nymphs come to select new lovers. Meanwhile, every chink in the horizon was deafened by the din of drums, drowning all other sounds in heaven. There, knife to knife and hand to hand, the two armies slaughtered and were slaughtered. In that battle the king of Malwa saw his whole army waste away and himself captured alive. But the king of Magadha mercifully reinstated him in his kingdom.

Yet our king, though the unrivaled lord of the sea-girdled earth, was childless, and ceaselessly besought Vishnu, sole source of life in all the world. Presently his queen, beholding a happy vision toward the dawning, heard the words: "Pluck, together with the king, the fruit of the vine of your desire." Straightway she conceived, and her lover's longing flowered. The king in turn, more blest than God Indra, summoned the circle of friendly monarchs and celebrated the ceremony of the parting of the queen's hair in a fashion befitting his blessings and his longings.

One day, surrounded by worthy friends, counselors, and chaplains, the virtuous king was sitting on the lion-throne when a doorkeeper, with dutiful hands upon his brow, spoke with fit deference: "Your Majesty, there waits at the door a holy monk desirous of an interview and deserving of due honor from Your Majesty." Permission being granted, the ascetic was introduced.

Now the king, seeing him approach, readily recognized a spy disguised, dismissed all menials (though retaining his counselors) and, as the fellow bowed, said with a quizzical smile: "Well, holy sir, you roam the land in wise disguise. Tell us what you have learned in this spot or in that."

So the artist in expression, humbly bowing, said:

"Your Majesty, I bent my head to Your Majesty's command, assumed this blameless garb, penetrated the capital of the lord of Malwa, and lived there in complete secrecy, not returning without full intelligence of that king's doings. Haughty Manasara, having suffered defeat at your hands in that struggle that checked his army's march to old age, was sunk in

shame and lost to pity. He propitiated God Shiva, Kali's undying lover, who dwells in Mahakala, won his favor by mighty penances, and received from him a fearful club that kills infallibly one brave enemy. Puffed with the pride of imagined invincibility, he prepares to assail you. Further decision rests with Your Majesty."

Pondering this report and perceiving the purpose of the foe, his ministers respectfully besought the king: "Your Majesty, a fighting foe draws near, befriended by a god whom there is no resisting. At this time a fight would be untimely. We should beat a quick retreat to a fortress." But for all their pleading the king, a true king in high-pitched pride, disdained their counsel as inadmissible and fixed his thought on resistance.

Then presumptuous Manasara, with full equipment and bearing Shiva's mighty mace, led his pugnacious vanguard unhindered into Magadha. At news of this the ministers prevailed on Magadha's lordly king, sorely against his will, to deposit the royal ladies in a spot in the Vindhya forest inaccessible to enemies and to guard them with the bulk of the army.

But Rajahansa, with a picked and plucky force, darted forth to arrest the furious foe. Then in the clash of two heroic hatreds, awakening wonder in curious gods drawn by the spectacle, though the lord of Magadha rivaled the lord of heaven in a battle-skill graced by the handling of weapons sturdy and diverse,

yet the ruler of Malwa, intently bent on victory, was beforehand in hurling upon him the club of Shiva's giving. This club, though chipped by a flight of sharp opposing shafts, killed the driver—lest Shiva's command be unfulfilled— and stretched the king senseless on the chariot floor. Then the horses, unhurt but unguided, carried the chariot by lucky chance into the wood where the women had taken refuge. Meanwhile, the king of Malwa, embracing victory, overran the rich realm of Magadha and occupied Blossom City.

Now when the ministers, worn by many wounds, yet by lucky chance not dead, regained a painful consciousness in the cool breeze of dawn, they sought everywhere but did not find the king, so returned in deep depression to the queen. And Vasumati, learning from them the destruction of the whole army and the disappearance of the king, in dreadful distress, sunk in a sea of misery, determined to follow her belovèd in death.

Yet she was dissuaded by counselors and chaplains, who said with sententious concinnity: "Beautiful queen, the death of earth's delight is not yet ascertained. Furthermore, you hold in pledge the delicate life of a lovely prince-to-be, who, the astrologers predict, shall rule all earth and crush proud foes. Hence you may not die today." She said no more, but faded fast.

However, at dead of night, when her servants' eyes

were smoothed by slumber, unable to cross her lonely sorrow's shoreless sea, she crept cautiously from the camp without an atom of noise to a neighboring fig tree near which the royal coursers, grown weary and impotent in their burdened and bewildered flight, had come to a stop. To a branch of this tree—it seemed to her Death's signature—she fastened one-half her upper garment, to serve as Death's instrument, then in moribund beauty lamented with a tear-choked sweetness that made the cuckoo's coo seem tasteless: "O my king, Love's brother in beauty, in my birth-to-be be again my belovèd."

Hereupon the king, who had swooned from copious loss of blood but had recovered beneath cool, streaming moonbeams, distinguished the very voice of his queen and gently called her name with lavish words of love. She darted to him, her lotus-face blossoming with the quick joy of her heart. She drank him in with fasting eyes that did not wink. She called the chaplains and the counselors with a loud, piercing cry, showing him to them. Then the counselors bowed till their brows touched their feet, praised the power of Providence, and said: "Your Majesty, the horses, when the driver perished, swiftly brought the chariot into the wood." And their ruler related how his soldiers had been slain in battle, how he himself had been smitten by the club pitilessly hurled by the king of Malwa who rejoiced in Shiva's favor, how he had

swooned, had been brought to the wood, and how the breeze of dawn had restored him.

Then all the counselors, with festive deference, brought him to the camp at a propitious moment and extracted every splinter. Whereupon the king's lotus-face blossomed and his wounds were quickly healed.

Nevertheless, since his manly effort had been frustrated by hostile fate, the lord of Magadha was sunk in gloom, growing more and more morose until, with the consent of the counselors, Vasumati consoled him with her gentle voice and her wisdom: "O King, among all kings of earth you are most glorious and most eminent, yet you hide today in the depths of the Vindhya forest. Thus fortune seems a glittering water bubble, a lightning flash that gleams and goes. Perceive how all things hang from fate. Nay, in olden days uncounted lords of earth who rivaled great Indra in lordliness—I name but Harishchandra and Rama—felt the full turn of the screw of pain while fate pulled the cord, yet lived long to rule their realms thereafter. So shall it be with you. Ponder for a time the working of fate, and dispel your gloom."

Then, with all his soldiers, Rajahansa paid a visit to a hermit named Vamadeva, pious, even radiant in piety, hoping thus for the fulfilment of his longing. He bowed before the hermit, received a hospitable greeting, spoke as propriety prescribed, dwelt a little in the restful hermitage. At last Rajahansa, longing

for that kingdom of the lunar line which he adorned, spoke well-weighed words: "Holy sir, through fate's great power Manasara has vanquished me and enjoys the realm that should be mine to cherish. Hence I have come to a self-subduing saint, in the thought that I too may sternly subdue the senses, thus through your generous mercy to eradicate my enemy."

But the hermit (to whom past, present, and future were revealed) said to the king: "No need, my friend, of emaciating self-denial. In Vasumati's womb lies one who shall infallibly delight the king and destroy the whole host of foes. Endure for a space." At once the words "It is true" were spoken by a voice in heaven. And the king embraced the hermit's promise.

Presently, when the days of her pregnancy were past, Vasumati gave birth at an auspicious moment to a son marked with all marks of royalty. And through a chaplain, Brahma's peer in holiness, the king, mindful of his duty, gave the name Rajavahana to the dainty prince radiant in infant baptism and trinkets fit for a baby boy.

At the very same time charming sons were born to the counselors Sumati, Sumantra, Sumitra, and Sushruta. They shone like the new moon at its rising, they were destined to long life, and their names were Pramati, Mitragupta, Mantragupta, and Vishruta. With these sons of counselors as his friends, Rajavahana grew up, enjoying the sports of boyhood.

Now one day a certain holy man, delivering to the

king a certain dainty prince, radiant with the marks of royalty and a delight to the eyes, said with much emotion: "O joy of earth, when I entered the wood to gather sacred grass and fagots, I beheld an unprotected woman shedding the tears of patent misery. And when I asked her: 'Why do you weep in a wild wood?' she wiped away her tears with her lotus-hands and sobbed out her story: 'Hermit, the king of Videha surpasses the love-god in beauty, and his glory is the theme of gathered gods. He, with queen and prince, came to Blossom City—since the king of Magadha was his friend—for the festival of the parting of the queen's hair. After a time, the king of Malwa, strong in Shiva's favor, came to assail the king of Magadha. Between these two famous champions arose an incalculable conflict, in which King Praharavarman of Videha stood beside his friend until his own contingent was shattered. He was then seized by the victor, but dismissed for mercy or merit, and started for his capital with such tattered troops as had survived the slaughter. Then, on the rough road through the forest he was fiercely assailed by a savage multitude, protected the women with the bulk of his force, and barely escaped.

" 'Now I had been chosen to nurse his twin baby boys, and I could not keep pace with the swift flight of the king, nor could my daughter. At that moment, like wrath incarnate, a tiger, open-mouthed, leaped snuffling toward me. In terror I tripped on a spur of

rock and fell. The baby dropped from my hands beneath a cow that lay there dead. While the tiger tugged hungrily at the body, he was killed by a shaft from a bow. And the baby, his hair all tousled, was seized by the savages and taken I know not where. Nor do I know what became of my daughter, who carried the twin prince. So I swooned, recovering in the hut of an amiable shepherd who healed my hurts. When I recovered, I felt I must find the king, but I am perplexed. I have no companion, and my daughter is lost.' This story she told, then added: 'I will go to my master alone,' and started on the spot.

"Thereupon, grieved at the sorrow of Your Majesty's friend, the lord of Videha, I sought the prince, the scion of his line. In my search I came to a shining shrine of the Dreadful Goddess, where wild savages were about to sacrifice the prince to the goddess, in hope of a long succession of such victories. 'How shall we kill him?' they debated. 'Shall we slash him with a sword as he hangs from the branch of a tree? Plant his feet in a sand bank and make him the target of a flight of sharpened shafts? Or let him run the gauntlet of a many-legged pack of frisky curs?'

"Then I said to them: 'Most noble savages, I am an aged Brahman. I blundered from my path in the wild and dreadful wood and laid my son in a shady spot while I went a little distance to recover the trail. I have searched but cannot find where he went or who seized him. Many days have passed without

sight of his face. What shall I do? Where shall I go? Can it be that you gentlemen have seen him?'

" 'Most worthy Brahman,' they replied, 'we have one here. Can he really be your own? If so, take him.' And, fate being kind, they let me have him. I gave them my blessing, took the boy, restored him with cool water and what little I had. Now I trustfully bring him to your bosom. You resemble the prince's father. Pray protect him." And the king, moderating a little his grief at his friend's misfortune by the pleasure of seeing this source of his friend's joy, named the boy Upaharavarman and cherished him as he did Rajavahana.

On a certain holy day the king, traveling to bathe at a place of pilgrimage, passed a hut of the wild folk; and beholding a surpassingly beautiful boy being fondled by a woman, he was so overcome with curiosity that he questioned her: "My good girl, that lad is splendidly handsome and bears all the marks of royalty. He is not born of your breed. Whose eyes should he delight? How has he come into your hand? You must tell the truth." And the wild woman bowed low, replying prettily: "O King, when the king of Videha—he looked like the king of heaven—was on the trail near our village, a band of our wild fellows looted all he had, and my husband seized this prince and gave him to me to rear." Then the sagacious king, after reflection, inferred this to be the second prince mentioned in the hermit's narration, wheedled

the woman with flattery and something more substantial, gave the boy the name Apaharavarman, and entrusted him to the queen's care.

On another day a pupil of Vamadeva, one Somadevasharman, delivered a baby boy to the king, saying: "Your Majesty, on my return from a bathing pilgrimage at Ramatirtha, I saw in a stretch of forest an old woman who carried a splendid boy, and I said politely: 'Who are you, mother? Why do you wander wearily, holding a boy, here in the midst of the forest?'

" 'Worthy hermit,' said the old woman, 'there is a land beyond the sea named Kalayavana, where dwells a merchant named Kalagupta, wealthy and worthy, who has a dear daughter, a delight to the eyes, named Suvritta. She married a handsome man of affairs from this country, son of a counselor of Magadha's king, a man of charming virtue named Ratnodbhava, a tireless traveler; and she brought him a splendid dowry. In course of time, when his graceful lady became pregnant, Ratnodbhava, homesick for a sight of his brother, somehow persuaded his father-in-law and embarked with his lovely bride for Blossom City. On the voyage the ship was buffeted by monstrous billows and foundered. Now I had been chosen to nurse my lady languid with her burden, so I bore her up in my hands, bestrode a plank, and came somehow safe to shore. Whether Ratnodbhava was drowned with his friends or by what means he came to land, I do not know. Today, at the last limit of misery, Suvritta bore her son here in the midst of the forest. She swooned with the pangs of labor and is lying in the cool shade of a tree. And since it was not possible to stay in the wild wood, I undertook to find a path leading to some settlement; but it seemed wrong to leave the baby beside his unconscious mother, so I brought the boy too.'

"At this moment a wild elephant appeared. In terror at the sight she dropped the boy and ran, while I waited developments from the shelter of a neighboring thicket of vines. While the huge elephant was gathering the baby, like a mouthful of green stuff, from the ground, a lion with a fearful roar fastened his fierce grip upon him. Mad with fright, the elephant tossed the boy so that he fell from the sky. Yet long life was predestined, for a monkey perched on a lofty branch, picked him with the notion that he was ripe fruit. Finding him quite unlike fruit, the monkey flung him down at the base of a broad branch and made off. The baby, a glorious fellow, took all his troubles unhurt. And when the lion had killed the elephant, he too departed. I then issued from my thicket and contrived to retrieve from his tree the baby, who seemed splendor solidified. I searched far in the forest for his mother, but failing to find her, took the boy and told my teacher, at whose command I bring him to you."

And the king, marveling at the simultaneous good fortune of all his friends, yet anxious concerning the

father's fate, gave Ratnodbhava's son the name Pushpodbhava, and handing the boy to his uncle Sushruta, told the tale of adventure with mingled grief and joy.

Another day Vasumati appeared before her belovèd with a boy on her bosom. And when he asked: "Where does this one come from?" she replied:

"Last night, my king, when my eyes were sealed in slumber, a heavenly lady laid a princely boy before me, awakened me, and said with deference: 'O Queen, I am a lady of the Yaksha demigods. I am called Taravali, dear daughter of Manibhadra, and the belovèd of your counselor Kamapala, son of Dharmapala. With the consent of the Yaksha king, I have brought you this child of my body, that he may loyally attend your son Rajavahana, that pure treasure of glory, destined lord of the lands of the sea-girdled earth. Pray cherish him as you would the god of love.' And while I paid her honor, my eyes aflower with wonder, that sweet-glancing Yaksha lady vanished." Hereupon Rajahansa, his mind amazed that Kamapala had won a Yaksha bride, summoned the amiable counselor Sumitra, gave him his own nephew (with the name Arthapala) and told him the whole strange adventure.

On yet another day a pupil who lived in Vamadeva's hermitage produced a dainty blossom of a boy who appropriated the glory of the gods and made a mock of Love's deadly beauty. "Your Majesty," he said, "on the occasion of a pilgrimage I came to the bank of the Kaveri, where I encountered an aged

woman who wept as she clasped to her breast a tousle-headed boy. 'Who are you, mother?' I said. 'Whose are the eyes that delight in this boy? Why did you enter the wild wood? What is the source of your sorrow?'

"She wiped away her tears with both hands, gazed at me as at one able to pluck the dart of her sorrow, and told me that sorrow's source: 'Brahman, Rajahansa had a counselor named Sitavarman, whose younger son Satyavarman came as a pilgrim to this region. On a certain land-grant he married a Brahman's daughter named Kali, but as she was childless, he wedded her sister Gauri, a girl of golden beauty, who bore him a son. One day the jealous Kali enticed the boy and me, his nurse, on some pretext and flung us into this river. I clutched the boy with one hand and paddled with the other until I caught the branch of a tree swept down by the current. I laid the boy upon it and was floating down stream when I was stung by a black snake that cowered in the tree. The tree of my refuge stranded at this spot. But the venom burns, I am already dead, and there is none to protect him in the forest. Such is my sorrow.' With these words she fell to the ground, her limbs twitching with pain from the pitiless poison.

"For all my heartfelt pity I failed to conjure the poison away with my texts from Scripture, and when I searched for a curative herb in the neighboring jungle, I returned only to find life departed. Thereupon

I performed the holy ceremony of cremation and took in charge the helpless boy, though my mind was distraught with grief. Perceiving the hopelessness of a search after Satyavarman, since, when I heard his story, I had not learned the name of the land-grant where he lived, I reflected that you were the natural protector of your minister's son, hence I have brought him to you." Upon hearing this tale, the king was distressed by his clueless ignorance of Satyavarman's whereabouts, so delivered the boy (whom he named Somadatta) to an uncle, the counselor Sumati, who lavished upon him the care and affection that he felt for his own brother.

So, with a band of princely boys about him, Rajavahana enjoyed the sports of boyhood, went riding on everything that could be ridden, and in due course endured the hair-clipping, investiture, and the other sacraments. From appropriate professors the boys learned the whole art of writing and mastered all the local dialects. They became versed in complete Scripture with the six ancillary disciplines; proficient also in all traditional tales, not to mention poetry, drama, romances, novels, mythology, and the more elaborate fiction. They became erudite in ethics, grammar, astronomy, logic, metaphysics, and all related subjects. They digested the writings of Kautilya, Kamandaki, and other works on the prudent conduct of life. They cultivated a gift for the lute and other musical instruments, adding a talent for choral singing and the

science of rhetoric. They mastered the mysterious powers of gems, magical spells, and drugs. They excelled in equitation, as well as in riding elephants and other creatures. They perfected themselves in the technique of various weapons and acquired a scientific skill in thievery, gambling, and the arts of deception in general.

Hence, when the king beheld that princely band, radiant in youth and diligent in duty, he thought: "It is rough on my enemies," and straightway experienced the extremity of joy.

CHAPTER II

THE BRAHMAN'S SERVICE

One day Vamadeva came before the king who sat surrounded by his band of princely lads—a high-bred brotherhood, graced with all graces, who cast a doubt upon the love-god's beauty and made a mock of the war-god's spirit of daring; whose hands, furthermore, bore the plain marks of royalty, the banner, the sun-shade, and the thunderbolt. The king bowed his head in accepted deference, the black hair of the bending boys clustered like bees about the hermit's lotus-feet. Then Vamadeva warmly embraced the boys, the destined destroyers of their foes; pronounced a benediction well-weighed and self-fulfilling; and said: "Delight of earth, your generous son enjoys that lavish loveliness of youth which must seem the ripe fruit of your ambition. Surely the time has come when he and his companions should undertake the conquest of the quarters of the world. Rajavahana is apt for any hardship. Let him march to the conquest of the quarters."

When the king beheld the lads, lovely as the love-god, manly as classic heroes, capable of the wrath that reduces foes to ashes, mocking the speed of the wind, their martial dash assured him of success. He therefore gave the prince fit instructions, appointed the

others his counselors, and at an auspicious moment dismissed them to victory.

Now Rajavahana, following a favorable prognostic, marched a certain distance, then plunged into the Vindhya forest. There he encountered a man whose members were maculated with welted scars, whose body was hard as iron—a Brahman betrayed by his sacramental cord but manifesting the wild energy of a savage, a hideous sight. Yet on receiving a civil greeting, Rajavahana said: "Man, why do you dwell alone in the heart of the Vindhya forest, a wild wood where terror dogs the trails, fit habitation for beasts, remote from the haunts of men? The sacred cord across your shoulder marks you a Brahman. The scars suggest a savage. Explain the paradox."

The man thereupon, believing that the glorious youth had more than mere human power, learned from the prince's companions his name and lineage, then told his own story: "O prince, in this forest dwell many nominal Brahmans, men who abandon scriptural and other learning, spurn the duties of their order, put away truth, purity, and all the virtues; who seek after sin, following the lead of savages and eating their food. Of one of these I was the reprobate son, and my name is Matanga. With a barbarous band I would enter settlements, seize wealthy villagers with their wives and children, imprison them in the forest, plunder all their property, and destroy them. So I lived, a stranger to pity.

"One day I spied a band of my companions in a desolate spot preparing to kill a Brahman; and pity pierced my heart so that I said: 'Sinners, you may not slay a Brahman.' Red-eyed with wrath, they exhausted the lexicon of abuse. Made indignant by their taunts, I fought long to save the Brahman; but they struck me down. I died and went to hell where I beheld the death-god seated in the midst of a great assemblage on a lion-throne inlaid with gems, and surrounded by embodied spirits. I paid him honor with the *rigor obsequii;* but he, regarding me, called his counselor Chitragupta and said: 'Counselor, that man's death-hour has not come. His life was evil, yet he met his end defending a Brahman. From this moment the stain of sin falls from him, and his light shall arise in the doing of good deeds. Let him inspect the choicer tortures of those most deeply damned, then reassume his former form.' So Chitragupta exhibited here and there those bound to red-hot posts of iron, those flung into broad saucers of boiling oil, those brayed by clubs, those chiseled by sharp-edged adzes, then dismissed me after deducing an admirable moral.

"Reassuming my former form, I found myself lying for a moment on a rock in the heart of the great forest, under the eye of the Brahman now performing his devotions. Soon after, kinsmen of my caste learned the adventure, hastened to me, took me to a dwelling, and healed my hurts. The grateful Brahman did not depart until he had taught me to read, had epitomized

for me various Scriptures, had given me moral instruction as a detergent of unrighteousness, had opened to me the worship of that Shiva accessible to the eye of true faith, and had received from me the reverence due a teacher. From that hour I turned my back on the whole company of kinsmen who associate with savages; I ponder prayerfully that moon-browed Shiva who is all life's sole master; I dwell in this wild wood a stranger to iniquity. Your Majesty, I have a secret for your ear alone. Come with me."

He withdrew the prince from his comrades, and continued: "O King, before this morning's dawn Shiva drew near as I slept; broke the seal of my slumber, his countenance lovely and serene; and spoke to me as I bowed low in veneration: 'Matanga, by the bank of a stream in the heart of the Dandaka forest, behind a crystal symbol of my divinity adored by heavenly saints and angels, near a rock marked by the footprints of Himalaya's daughter, a certain cave opens like the mouth of Brahma. Upon entering, you will find there deposited a copper plate. Consider it a decree of the Creator, perform the fate-compelling ceremony thereon described, and you shall become lord of the lower world. Your companion in the adventure is a prince who will arrive today or tomorrow.' Sir, your arrival fulfils the divine decree. Make me happy by befriending my ambition."

He bowed his head. Rajavahana assented and, leaving his comrades sunk in slumber at night, came

with Matanga to another forest. Then in the morning, when the prince's companions found no trace of him, in deep depression they searched minutely through the neighboring jungle. Failing, yet determined to find him, they planned bold, distant expeditions, agreed on a rendezvous, and scattered.

Meanwhile Matanga, serenely satisfied and safe in the matchless manhood of the prince, fearlessly entered the cave, which he discovered through the secret sign of Shiva's giving. Seizing the copper plate, he pursued that path to the world below, stopping near a swan-dotted pool in a pleasure grove beside a splendid city. Here he offered in sacrifice an assortment of materials prescribed by Shiva, while Rajavahana gazed amazed and prevented intervention. When the flame leaped high from the fagots and sacred butter, he muttered a prayer and offered his body, the home of past pieties, receiving in return a heavenly body that flashed like lightning.

Straightway a girl, bejeweled with glittering strings of gems, the comeliest in the whole world's family of lovely ladies, accompanied by many modest maidens, glided forward with the grace of a swan and offered the brilliant Brahman a single flashing gem. And when he asked her name, she slowly lifted respectful hands and spoke with a bird-song's wistful sweetness:

"Best of Brahmans, I am the dear daughter of the best of demons. My name is Kalindi. My father was this world's mighty monarch and overcame gods in

battle, until Vishnu, impatient of his prowess, sent him a guest to the death-god's city. Then, seeing me sunk in a sea of sorrow at his loss, a holy hermit took pity on me, saying: 'Maiden, when a man appears who seems a god, he shall become your lover and shall rule the whole world below.' When I heard his word, I waited long, longing for sight of you as the pensive plover waits wistfully for thunder, the promise of rain. I see your arrival as the ripe fruit of my desire. With the permission of the ministers who support my state, I come to you, mounting the chariot of a heart whose driver is Love. Embrace as bride the glory of this world's kingdom, and let me share her wifehood." Thereupon Matanga, with Rajavahana's consent, married the maiden. Much pleased with the winning of a divine bride, he appropriated the kingship of the world below and felt complete complacence.

Since Rajavahana desired to return to earth in order to rejoin the band of comrades whom he had eluded in making this expedition, he accepted a token of Matanga's gratitude for friendly services in a gem, the gift of Kalindi, that counteracted hunger, thirst, and other tribulations; bade Matanga farewell after a brief escort; and retraced the path through the cave. Failing to find his comrades there, he roamed the earth. In his wandering he entered a park in a spacious suburb. Here he was planning to rest, when he caught sight of a man who had entered the garden and sat with a lady in a hammock, while pleasant friends

were grouped about them. The man's heart seemed to blossom with supreme delight and his lotus-face to burst into flower as he leaped from the hammock with the cry: "It is my master, the gem of the lunar line, the pure treasure of glory. It is Rajavahana. Oh, happiness! When I least hoped it, I fall at his feet. Today is a holiday for my eyes." Herewith he manifested his excess of joy in the grace of thoughtless speed, and, as the prince stepped forward three or four paces, touched with his brow his master's lotus-feet, while from his chaplet laughing jasmine blossoms dropped.

The prince's eyes filled with tears of joy as he embraced the throbbing form. "My good, my excellent Somadatta!" he cried. Then, seated in the cool shade of a dilly tree, he asked with fond familiarity: "My friend, in what region, in what manner have you lived? What is your present goal? Who is this lady? How have you come by these companions? Pray tell me." And Somadatta, his fierce fever of anxiety allayed by the fortuitous meeting with his friend, folded his lotus-hands and modestly related the nature of his adventure.

CHAPTER III

SOMADATTA'S ADVENTURE

"Your Majesty, while wandering with the aspiration of doing you some humble service, I was tortured by thirst in a forest region, so drank cool water from a vine-bordered stream, beside which I found a splendid gem. This I secured and continued my journey until the excessive heat of heaven's gem made advance impossible. Upon entering a temple found even in this jungle, I discovered an aged, discouraged Brahman with many sons and made compassionate inquiries. The Brahman answered, his face pale with privation, but reflecting the great hope that filled his mind: 'Oh, sir, I save these motherless sons by every pitiful shift. For the moment I give them what alms I can collect in this wild wilderness, living here in Shiva's shrine.'

" 'Brahman,' I asked, 'from what country comes the king who camps near by? What is his name and the occasion of his coming?' 'My good sir,' answered the Brahman, 'Mattakala, king of the Latas, heard untold tales of the matchless beauty of Vamalochana, a pearl of a girl, daughter of Viraketu, lord of this land, and besieged his capital after he had spurned the demand for his daughter. Then Viraketu flinched and surrendered his daughter, a mighty bribe. The lord

of Lata, delighted at winning the maiden, started home, resolved to hold the wedding only in his own city, and camps at present in this forest for a hunting holiday. But Manapala, Viraketu's imperious minister, incited by the priceless maiden and indignant at his lord's humiliation, has interposed the camp of an army counting all four service branches.'

"At this point pity so filled my spirit that I gave my gem to the poor Brahman, reflecting that he had a large family of boys, was scholarly, penniless, old, a fit object of charity. His countenance blossomed with boundless bliss, and he departed with redundant benedictions. Thereupon, being weary, I fell into a pleasant slumber.

"Presently, conducted by a number of swordsmen, the Brahman returned, both arms bound behind him, and the marks of whips upon his limbs. 'There is your thief,' he said, pointing at me. The king's hirelings loosed the Brahman, refused to hear my tale of the acquisition of the gem, seized me roughly (though they could not frighten me), dragged me by cords to a dungeon where they indicated certain men in fetters with the words: 'There are your friends,' and fettered both my feet. In bewilderment and hopeless tribulation I turned and said: 'Well, my rough and ready men, for what cause do you endure the dolor of a dreary dungeon? They called you my comrades. What does it mean?'

"Perceiving my plight, those manly thieves related

the doings of the king of Lata (already known to me from the Brahman's narrative), then continued: 'Worthy sir, we are servants of Manapala, Viraketu's minister. At his command we made our way by night through an underground passage into the dwelling of the king of Lata, with the object of assassination. Not finding the king, we consoled our disappointment by abstracting a great treasure; then plunged into the jungle. Next day great numbers of the king's men tracked us down, surrounded and caught us with the treasure, brought us fast-bound to camp. But missing a single priceless gem at the final inventory, they fettered us as you see, to kill us if we failed to restore the ruby.'

"Now when I learned of the gem and the spot where it was found, I concluded that my find must be this very ruby; so touched on the Brahman's wretched poverty that had prompted my gift, and imparted my name, birth, and the circumstances of my search for you, sir, thus forming friendship with conversation natural to our situation. Then at midnight I burst their bonds and mine, seized with their aid all the weapons of our sleeping sentinels, dispersed the charging watch with some smart display of valor, and escaped to Manapala's camp. And Manapala treated me with honor when he heard from his own servants the tale of my origin, my self-esteem, and my recent prowess.

"Next day certain envoys came from Mattakala,

delivering this rancorous message to Manapala: 'Counselor, sturdy thieves abstracted great treasure by means of an underground passage into my royal residence. They took refuge in your camp. Surrender them. You will rue a refusal.' At this the counselor's eyes grew red with wrath, and he snubbed them thus: 'Who is the king of Lata? What meaning has his friendship? What profit in further service of the booby?' The men reported Manapala's fustian verbatim to Mattakala, who, enraged and also proud of his personal prowess, advanced to fight with a small force, while haughty Manapala, having previously resolved on battle, equipped his men and advanced with eager fearlessness.

"I too prepared for battle with the serviceable equipment courteously provided by the counselor—a chariot with several horses and a skilful driver; a stout, well-fitting coat of mail; a bow; a double quiver stocked with various kinds of arrows—and, confident in my contingent, followed the counselor intent on destroying his foe. Avoiding the tangled struggle of the hostile hosts, wantonly delighting in my strength of arm, I shot a shower of shafts and struck down my foes. Then, guiding my splendid chariot-horses toward the enemy king, I swiftly overtook his chariot and cut off his head. When he was down and his surviving soldiers scattered, the counselor, supremely joyful, made sure of assorted horses, elephants, and other booty, and paid me peculiar honor. The king also,

upon learning all details of the adventure from a messenger despatched by Manapala, came with great gratification to meet us. Expressing surprise at my courage, with the consent of counselors and kinsmen he celebrated no small festival, giving me his own daughter on a lucky day and anointing me crown prince.

"Since then, I spend my days anticipating the wishes of the king and enjoying manifold delights with Vamalochana (whom you see here), yet subject to fits of depression when, as often, your absence stabs my heart with pain. Hence, taking competent advice, I have come today with my wife to a spot sacred to reunion with friends, hoping to win the favor of that supreme Shiva whose home is Mahakala. And Shiva shows mercy to the faithful. Through his grace I see your lotus-feet and attain the pinnacle of joy."

Having listened to the tale and complimented his friend on his courage, Rajavahana, censuring fate for the unmerited trial, recounted the detail of his own adventure. At its conclusion he perceived before him Pushpodbhava, so eagerly bowing that his brow touched his toes. With a warm embrace, his bright eyes dimmed with tears of joy, the prince indicated him with the words: "See, my good Somadatta! Here is Pushpodbhava." The two friends, dismissing the sorrow of long separation, found delight in an embrace.

Then the prince, seated once more in the shade of the tree, said with a courteous smile: "Comrade, I

had a Brahman's business to perform, and being sure that my friends would interpose an obstacle if they knew the facts, I departed, leaving you all asleep. Tell me the decision of my friends on waking. Where did they go in search of me? And what has been your personal journey?" The other swept his brow with dutiful hands and told his deferential tale.

CHAPTER IV

PUSHPODBHAVA'S ADVENTURE

"Your Majesty, your friends did indeed infer that you had gone to serve a Brahman; yet being unable to determine the direction taken, we scattered and went our several ways to search for Your Majesty.

"For my part, I roamed the earth in search of Your Majesty until a day when I found the ray of the midday sun unendurable, so that I seated myself for a moment in the cool shade of a tree beneath a cliff. Glancing up, I beheld before me the shadow of a man, but shaped like a turtle with all his limbs drawn in at noon. I felt pity for any man falling with such precipitancy from the sky, so I caught him in mid-air and eased his fall to earth. He had lost consciousness in the dreadful drop; and when I revived him with cool restoratives, the tears of limitless misery streamed from his eyes as I asked why he fell from the precipice.

"He wiped the teardrops away with his finger tips and said: 'Kind sir, I am Ratnodbhava, son of Padmodbhava, counselor of the lord of Magadha. On a trading trip I came to Kalayavana, a land beyond the sea, where I married a merchant's daughter. While I was returning with her, our ship was shattered at sea within sight of land; and all were drowned, save that I, through fate's partiality, came somehow safe to

shore. Yet having lost my dear wife, I struggle still in a sea of misery and see no shore of that sorrow, though, from reverence for a certain holy hermit's counsel, I have dragged out sixteen dreary years. Hence I flung myself from the mountain.'

"At this moment a woman's moan was heard and the words: 'A prophet has promised reunion with your husband and your son. It is sinful to weary of waiting and to cast yourself into the fire.' When I heard this, it flashed through my mind that the man was my father, and I said: 'Father, I have much to communicate to you. However, it must all wait. In this emergency, I cannot disregard the woman's moan. Pray stay here a mere moment.'

"I hurried away and soon found myself in the presence of a woman who, with folded hands, was desperately plunging into a fire that writhed with horrid flames. I snatched her from the blaze, conducted her to my father, and said to the moaning old woman who accompanied her: 'Mother, whence come you two? Why do you suffer in this wild wood? Tell me.'

" 'My son,' she sobbed, 'this is Suvritta, daughter of a certain Kalagupta, a merchant in Kalayavana, a land beyond the sea. While she was traveling with her beloved husband, the ship sank at sea. With me, her nurse, she clung to a plank and came through lucky fate to shore. Her hour was upon her, and she bore her son in a jungle. And when—unhappy me!—the baby was seized by a wild elephant, she wandered

on with me. She trusted a prophet's prediction that she should meet her husband and her son after sixteen years, and spent that space of time in a pious hermitage; then, unable to endure her shoreless sorrow, kindled a fire and was about to sacrifice herself.'

"On hearing this, I recognized my mother and grew stiff with deference. Then I gave her my full history and introduced to her my father whose face already was aflower and his eyes wide with wonder at the nurse's tale. My parents recognized each other by certain tokens and thrilled with bliss. They anointed their dutiful son with a stream of joyful tears, clasped me close, caressed my head, then seated themselves in the shade of a tree.

" 'How fares our gracious King Rajahansa?' asked my father, and I told him all—the loss of the kingdom, your birth, sir, the accumulation of princely lads, your undertaking to conquer the quarters, your journey with Matanga, the reason for our search after you. Then I found them a home in the hermitage of a holy man.

"Thereafter, still intent on searching for Your Majesty, but recollecting that money is the necessary condition of all success, I procured a band of disciples, apt assistants in the occult science for the possession of which I am myself, sir, under obligation to you. With them I visited the archeological remains of cities in the heart of the Vindhya forest, and, by means of magic ointment, discovered jars filled with valuables

at the roots of such trees as betrayed the presence of various treasure. These I exhumed, after posting sentinels on every side, and made a pile of countless coins. I next visited a merchant caravan that, arriving opportunely, encamped in the neighborhood; purchased stout oxen and sacks; packed the sacks on the oxen; and transported the treasure to camp, dissimulating the character of my merchandise.

"With the captain of the caravan, a certain merchant's son named Chandrapala, I formed a friendship and entered Ujjain in his company. To this great city I also brought my parents. Then, with the guidance and approbation of Chandrapala's father, Bandhupala, a man in whom all virtues kept house, I constructed a secret chamber, after catching a glimpse of the king of Malwa.

"Now when I prepared to search for you in wild forest regions, my admirable friend Bandhupala learned my intention and said: 'You cannot search the whole boundless earth. Forget your dejection; live quietly. I will tell you as soon as I see a happy omen that indicates the finding of a guide for you.' My heart revived with the nectar of his counsel, and I continued with him from day to day.

"But at last I saw a pearl of a girl named Balachandrika, who seemed the guardian goddess of a certain merchant's dwelling. Her figure was instinct with the fresh grace of youth, her face charmed like the moon, and her person was grateful as moonlight

to the eyes. My self-possession was shaken by her loveliness, and I became the target of Love's flowery shafts. She too, with the eyes of a startled fawn, cast in my direction more than one sidelong glance that served as arrow for blossom-arrowed Love; and she trembled like a vine that sways to a gentle breeze. Her curious glances played upon my person, drawn, withdrawn in a drawn battle between love and shyness, betraying her state of mind. While her sweet hints revealed her feeling, I planned the means of happy meeting.

"One day Bandhupala went with me to a wooded park at the city's edge, in order to win news of you by divination. And while he listened to the speech of birds beside a certain tree, I wandered in a distant grove, indulging melancholy joys. There, beside a lovely lake, I beheld Balachandrika, wistful and wan, sole source to me of cherished wishes. I thrilled to the charm of her winsome glances, fascinating with troubled love and bashful eagerness, but I saw that the gleaming smile of that blossom-face was sad with the havoc of ravaging passion. I must know the cause of this, so approached her courteously and said: 'Sweet maiden, why is your face a fading flower?'

"She trusted me with her secret; forgetting shame and fear, she told her hesitating tale: 'Gentle friend, King Manasara of Malwa, yielding to the infirmities of age, anointed his son Darpasara lord of Ujjain. This prince, ambitious to rule all lands of earth encir-

cled by the seven seas, departed to perform austerities on Kailasa peak, leaving as regents two cousins, Chandavarman and Daruvarman, men of headstrong character. Now while Chandavarman rules the whole realm without a rival, Daruvarman, transgressing the command of uncle and elder brother, pursues with wicked purpose the wives and wealth of other men. And since one day perceiving that my heart gives itself to you (whose beauty, sir, is like the love-god's), he makes light of the sin of violating a virgin, and strives to force my inclination. Hence my anxiety; hence my melancholy.'

"When I had learned her heartfelt, overflowing love for me, and the obstacle to the success of my longings, I comforted my weeping belovèd; and having excogitated a plan for killing Daruvarman, I said: 'Gentle maiden, I have devised a pleasant plan to kill your black-hearted lover. Through trustworthy friends you must spread among the citizens the report that a holy saint has made the following prediction: "A certain Yaksha demigod dominates Balachandrika as a succubus. If any bold fellow, matrimonially eligible, and avid to enjoy her boundless beauty, shall vanquish the Yaksha in the love-chamber, and shall issue forth unscathed after enjoying the heavenly bliss of conversation with the fawn-eyed maiden and her single girl companion, he is destined to clasp in marriage that bosom lovely as a pair of sheldrake birds."

" 'Now if Daruvarman, hearing continual gossip to this effect, is frightened and keeps quiet, so much the better. If however his depravity drives him still to seek union with you, then your friends must say to him: "Sir, since you are the counselor of King Darpasara, it would be undignified to attempt this deed of daring in our dwelling. Rather let the citizens witness the flower-eyed maiden conducted to your palace. If there Your Highness shall have his sport with her, then he may marry her and fulfil his wishes." To this he will assent. You will then visit his palace, and I will go too, wearing the dress of a girl. In some private chamber I will kill him by brute force, using fists and knees and feet; then leave the house with you, composedly posing as your girl companion. This plan you must adopt without fear or shame and afterward reveal our overwhelming love to your father, mother, and brothers, winning them by every argument to our marriage. They will surely give you to a youth like me, well-born, wealthy, and handsome. And when you have told them the manner of Daruvarman's death, you must report what they say.'

"Her flower-face seemed ready to bloom as she replied: 'Dear friend, it is your task to kill cruel Daruvarman. When he is dead, your wishes will doubtless bear fruit. It shall be as you say. I will follow instructions exactly.' With this she darted many a half-glance at me and very deliberately went to her home.

"I next returned to Bandhupala and learned from his divination that I should be reunited with you, sir, only after the lapse of thirty days. I accompanied him to his home, whence he dismissed me to my own dwelling. Here I received a message from Balachandrika that she was preparing to visit Daruvarman, having been summoned to sport in the love-chamber by this victim caught in the tangling toils of my device. Therefore I deftly affixed to the proper portions of my person the frippery appropriate to a pretty girl—gems, anklets, girdle, bracelets, armbands, earrings, necklaces, silks, and powder—made myself feel natural in a stunning frock, and with my darling called at the fellow's door. He, when the porter announced us, came forward ceremoniously, forbade all other attendants to leave the doorway, but conducted Balachandrika and me to a boudoir. Meanwhile, since the Yaksha story had become the talk of the town, an inquisitive crowd of citizens gathered expectantly round Daruvarman's door.

"That creature, devoid of discernment and dominated by passion, led my lady to a gem-incrusted, golden couch with swan's-down cushions, offering her and me—for the dim light and my bewitching dress quite concealed my sex—an assortment of luxuries, including ornaments of gold and gems, gay stuffs of finest texture, yellow sandal mixed with musk, betel with camphor, fragrant flowers. For just twenty seconds he stood there chattering, and laughing as he

talked; then, blind with passion, showed a mind to fondle the sweet maiden's bosom.

"My turn had come. Red with wrath, I dashed him headlong from the couch and drubbed him dead with fists and knees and feet. Then, rearranging my jewelry disordered in the heat of the tussle, and soothing my shuddering darling, I returned to the court of the palace and screamed aloud as if shaken by terror: 'Oh, oh! The hideous Yaksha that dominates Balachandrika is killing Daruvarman. Quick, quick! Look at him!' When the gathered crowd heard this, tears streamed and shouts of mourning deafened the horizon. They rushed in, gossiping together: 'He *knew* a mighty Yaksha lived in Balachandrika. Yet Daruvarman, blind with passion, had to invite *her*. His *own* act killed the fellow. Why mourn for *him?*'

"In the midst of this hubbub my love's eyes danced with fright, but I was shrewd enough to hasten home with her. After some days I publicly married my moon-faced maiden in the manner prescribed by holy men, and enjoyed to the full the exquisite delights of long-anticipated love. Today, being the day foretold by Bandhupala's birds, I left the city, waiting without; and now my eyes enjoy, in seeing you, a second blissful holiday."

When Rajavahana had listened to his friend's story, he recounted to him with unflagging gusto his own experiences and Somadatta's; then bade Somadatta return as soon as he had worshiped Shiva, lord

of Mahakala, and had conducted wife and friends to their camp. Thereafter, attended by Pushpodbhava, he entered the capital of Avanti, Ujjain, that heaven on earth. Once there, Pushpodbhava introduced him to Bandhupala and other friends as his prince, son of his kingly master, thus conciliating for him abundant homage, but gave out the report abroad that he was an eminent Brahman, proficient in all polite arts. In his own home he provided his prince with baths, food, and other daily comforts.

CHAPTER V

THE MARRIAGE OF THE BELLE OF AVANTI

Then came the spring. In separated hearts the season fanned the flame of fondness with southern breezes (leading Love's marshaled army) that blew dilute as if subtilized by the snapping of serpents crowding tree-cavities on Malabar Mountain, that traveled tranquilly as if balanced by their sandal's perfumed burden. It made the horizon's circle vocal with coo and hum of bees and cuckoos whose throats were thrilling to the flavor of the mango blossoms' honey. In minds of self-sufficing maids it caused fantasies to flower, and flowers to flare on mango, vitex, red *ashoka*, dhak, and sesamum. It spurred the spirit of sensitive taste toward love's great festival.

In this entrancing season the belle of Avanti, Manasara's daughter Avantisundari, with her favorite friend Balachandrika who loved a frolic in a lovely country garden, surrounded too by a bevy of the city's sweetest maidens, piled sand in the cool shade of a baby mango tree and there paid playful worship to the love-god with a varied heap of fragrant offerings, among them perfumes, blossoms, turmeric powder, and strips of Chinese silk.

Into this wooded garden, like Love with Spring,

came Rajavahana attended by Pushpodbhava; for he longed to behold the belle of Avanti, the image of the goddess Charm. From time to time, from spot to spot, he listened to polylogies of cuckoo companies and parrot parties and swarms of bees amid mangoes gay with crowding twig and flower and fruit on branches swaying to the southern breezes. He gazed from time to time at lakes winsome with clear, cool waters tunefully troubled by serried swans and cranes and ducks and sheldrakes that gaily played where lotus clusters—blue and bright and white—began to open into flower. So, with unhesitating grace, he drew near the lovely ladies. Then Balachandrika waved a hand that said: "No shyness! Come!" And summoned thus, surpassing heaven's king in majesty, Rajavahana stood face to face with slender-waisted Avantisundari.

She shone, a creation of Love. Yes, Love had fashioned a paragon of women, as if he wished, in wistful memory of Charm, to image forth this duplicate. He formed her feet from the sweetness of two autumr lilies in his own pleasure pool; the languid grace of her gait from the course of a wanton swan down a long lake in a planted garden; her calves from a quiver's curve; her comely thighs from the shapeliness of two plantain stems by the door of a summer-house; her generous hips from the sweep of conquering chariots; her navel (which seemed an eddy in Ganges' stream) from the semblance of an early-

flowering ornamental lotus bud; her three plicatures from the ordered rise of a palace stairway; her capillation from the lovely sheen of bees that, clinging, form Love's bowstring; her breasts from the beauty of two full golden bowls; her arms from the delicacy of vines in a bower; her neck from the symmetry of a conch of victory; her lip, like a *bimba* fruit, from the redness of mango flowers that maidens fondly wear above the ear; her sweet smile from the splendor of Love's flower-arrows; her every word from the witchery of the soft song of Love's first messenger, the cuckoo; the breath of her sigh from the gentleness of the southern breeze, leader of all Love's soldiers; her eyes from the pride of two fishes figured on a conquering banner; her brows from the curve of a bow; her face from the spotless enchantment of Love's first friend, the moon; her hair from the similitude of a pet peacock's fan. Then he bathed the image in sandal perfume, mingled with essence of honey and musk, and polished it with camphor dust.

Like the embodied goddess of beauty, the daughter of Malwa's monarch gazed at one who seemed the love-god, incarnate, self-propitiate, self-revealed to grant her heart's desire; and such emotion filled her that she trembled like a vine swaying to soft breezes. Hence she relied on a demure deportment and turned aside, making shy trial of this demeanor now, and now of that.

With passionate wonder he gazed at her and mur-

mured: "Surely, when God created his host of lovely women, *she* was a marvelous accident, as when (to quote the homely proverb) a worm traces a perfect letter while boring in a book. Else, why did he, possessed of such creative skill, fashion no rival loveliness?" And she, unable for shame to face him, withdrew half-hidden among her friends, still gazing at Rajavahana from under arching eyebrows with sidelong glances of eyes half-closed yet seeking his. His beauty was the snare, and she the deer.

He also felt his heart the target of bitter shafts that sapped his strength with the sum of graces which she then revealed. Meantime she wondered: "No rival vies with him in charm. In what city does he make holiday for the eyes of blissful maidens? Among all matrons blest in husband and in son, what mother, through possession of this gem, becomes herself the central pearl of honor's diadem? Who is his goddess? What his errand here? Since I discovered that he mocks the love-god's beauty, the jealous god tortures me cruelly, makes me a disembodied spirit like himself. What shall I do? How can I know him?"

Now Balachandrika, interpreting their secret feelings by research of their manners, felt that a full recital of the prince's story would not be etiquette before a company of young ladies, so introduced him in more general terms: "Princess, this is a gentleman of lofty birth, proficient in all gracious arts, a dangerous enemy, one who draws near to the divine. He is a

judge of gems and charms and balms. He merits attention and should receive your homage."

The princess, serenely greeting this echo of her own desire, gently ruffled by rapture as a wave by a zephyr, provided a decorous throne for the prince who transcended the love-god's deadly beauty. Then, by the skilful hand of her friend, she paid him homage with abundant, varied offerings, including perfumes, flowers, rice, camphor, and betel leaves.

Meanwhile Rajavahana was thinking: "Surely, in a former life she was Yajnavati, my bride. No otherwise could such love for her rise in my heart. In the hour when the curse was fulfilled, the holy hermit did indeed grant us a common memory of that life; yet when occasion offers, I will awaken her remembrance by hinting the details." At this moment a beautiful swan moved gaily toward him. And seeing Balachandrika, at the princess' eager instigation, prepared to catch it, he thought: "The time to speak has come." Thereupon Rajavahana, an artist in narration, related this graceful tale:

"Dear friend, in days long past there was a king named Shamba. With his heart's dearest he thought to spend a happy hour beside a lotus pond. There in a cluster of red water lilies lay a swan that slept inert. He crept upon it, caught it, and bound its feet with a cord of lotus fiber. Then, gazing at his belovèd's loving countenance, while a slow smile bloomed upon his cheek, he said: 'My moon-faced bride, the swan is

bound and lies calm as a peaceful saint. Go with him where you will.' Then the swan pronounced a curse on Shamba: 'O King, I *am* a saint, vowed to lifelong poverty and chastity. I lay in this lotus cluster, deep in devotion, sunk in bliss, when you brought shame upon me for no cause beyond your kingly pride. For this sin endure the torment of separation from your love.' And Shamba's face grew sad, for he could not suffer separation from the mistress of his life. He fell stiffly to the ground and spoke imploringly: 'Master, forgive a deed inspired by ignorance.' Then pity entered the holy heart, and these words were spoken: 'O King, throughout your present life the curse shall be remitted. Yet my words may not be frustrate. In a life to be, when this flower-eyed lady's soul has entered another body, you shall love her with devotion. Then, because you have bound my feet for two moments, for two months your feet shall be fettered, while you endure the sadness of separation from your love. Yet you shall live long thereafter with your bride, in kingly happiness.' He also granted both a memory continuing from life to life. Therefore—you must not bind a swan."

When the princess heard this tale, she regained remembrance of her own former life. Her memory whispered that this was indeed her soul's delight; and the stem of devotion put forth blossoms as she said with a tender smile: "Dear sir, in days long past Shamba thus bound the swan in deference to the appeal of Yajnavati. Thus in the world even discerning men do wrong for gallant reasons." In this fashion maiden and prince, by hints revealing each to each a common knowledge of life and names recalled from long ago, felt their hearts fill with a passion of love.

At this moment the queen of Malwa, with her retinue, approached the spot to witness her daughter's holiday. But Balachandrika, seeing her from afar and fearing disclosure of the secret, waved an agitated hand that sent Rajavahana with Pushpodbhava into the cover of a group of trees. Manasara's queen remained but a moment to enjoy her daughter's gay and graceful play with her friends; then wished to conduct the princess to the palace.

As the belle of Avanti followed her mother, she spoke these words, ambiguous between swan and prince: "O splendid royal creature, you came to me in the garden to share my holiday, and I send you away untimely. I follow my mother, for such is my duty. Love me no less for this." She added courteous nothings, but more than once her wistful eyes turned back to seek his face, as she moved toward the palace.

There, introducing the subject of her longing, she learned from Balachandrika his name and lineage, while Love's bewildering arrows pierced her heart. In the anguish of separation she faded daily like the crescent of the waning moon. Food and all occupation grew distasteful; in a quiet chamber her slender body tossed on a couch of flower clusters and single blos-

soms sprinkled with sandal perfume. Her girl friends, grieved to see their dainty princess so tortured by the flame of love, devised and used many refrigerant remedies—water for sprinkling gathered in golden bowls, with infusions of sandal, cuscus, and camphor; garments made of softest fibers; lotus-leaf fans. Yet this cooling service of her person, like water in boiling oil, turned to universal heat.

On Balachandrika, distressed and at her wits' end, the maiden turned a tear-dimmed, peeping glance from half-closed eyes, and with lips parched by hot sighs of absent love, she slowly sobbed: "They say, my dear, Love has five arrows, made of flowers. It is not true. He strikes me with countless shafts, and they are iron. My dear, I find the moon more fierce than the fire beneath the sea. For though the ocean dries when entered by the fire, it swells again at the moment when the fire departs. But how can I describe the cruelty of the ruthless moon, who kills the lotus, home and birthplace of his own sister, Beauty? The southern breeze blows thin, scorched, doubtless, by contact with a heart that shrivels in the flame of absence. This couch of new-plucked blossoms burns my body, as if tufted with flames of desire. Even this sandal sears my limbs, as if thick with clotted venom from the dripping fangs of serpents that coiled round its mother-tree. Give over your toil to cool and heal. The prince whose beauty beats the deadly love-god, is the only physician for the sickness of love. And him I cannot win. What shall I do?"

Now Balachandrika perceived that the delicate princess was reduced to the last extremity of love's fever, with no salvation other than the handsome Rajavahana to whom her heart was subject; and she thought: "I must bring the prince at once. If not, Love will lead her down the path of memory. Well, when prince and princess met in the garden, the archer-god shot simultaneous shafts. Therefore, it should be easy to bring the prince." She then left the belle of Avanti in the care of friends deft in necessary service, and visited the prince's dwelling.

She found Rajavahana (whose heart seemed a quiver to hold the flower-arrows of the archer) reclining on a couch strewn with blossoms that withered at the touch of his fevered limbs, and conversing with Pushpodbhava concerning the mistress of his life. When he saw that mistress' favored friend draw near, he thrilled with joy to find before him in Balachandrika the very simple that he sought. And when her gracefully joined hands were lifted, seeming a lovely lotus bud against the background of her brow, he offered her a decorous seat, received a gracious gift of betel leaves and camphor from Avantisundari, and begged for tidings of his love.

This was the flattering reply: "Your Majesty, since seeing you in the garden, she is racked by love and finds no peace on beds of flowers. She seeks the unattainable, as a dwarf the fruit on a lofty tree: love-blinded, she seeks the bliss of resting on your bosom. Unurged, she has written a letter and bade me deliver

it to her belovèd." The prince took the letter and read:

> Your body, like a tender flower,
> Shows matchless love-compelling power;
> Dear friend, you must not let me find
> A hardened heart, to love unkind.

When he had read, he said with reverence: "Dear friend, you are at once the belovèd bride of Pushpodbhava, who follows me like a shadow, and, so to speak, the projected life of that fawn-eyed maiden. Your wit watered the vine of this enterprise. I will do anything. The fawn-eyed lady accuses me of carrying a hard heart. When she met my gaze in the garden, she straightway stole my heart and took it home with her. Let her judge whether it be soft or hard. It is no light matter to enter a maid's chamber. Yet in one day or two at most, I will contrive a proper method to be united with her. Give her this word from me, and let it be your care that no harm befall one delicate as a siris flower." And Balachandrika, joyful at receiving his love-laden message, departed for the palace.

Rajavahana also withdrew with Pushpodbhava, to console the woe of absence in the garden where he had experienced the blissful vision of his soul's chosen. There he found the grove of trees whose twigs had yielded flower clusters to the maid with partridge eyes; the spot where she, her face entrancing as the autumn moon, had offered worship to the love-god; the cool bank of sand that preserved her footprints;

the remnant of the meal untasted by his sweet-smiling lady; the blossom couch within the bower of jasmine vines. Ever recalling beginnings half-completed when he met the perfect princess, ever beholding with alarm—for they seemed the tufted flame-points of passion—the young mango twigs that trembled in the gentle breeze, ever hearing the coo and cry and hum of love's whisperers, cuckoo, parrot, and bee, he moved from spot to spot, for emotion forbade repose.

At this juncture a Brahman chanced to appear, attended by a fellow with shaven pate. The Brahman charmed by his taste in costume, for his robe was gay and finely woven, while showy gems hung sparkling from his ears. Observing that Rajavahana was source and center of a circle of majesty, he pronounced a benediction. And when the prince courteously inquired: "Who, sir, are you? In what branch of scholarship are you eminent?" he announced: "I am Vidyeshvara, the scientist. My special field is legerdemain. I travel widely, providing diversion for princes, and have today reached Ujjain in my rounds." Then, regarding Rajavahana more narrowly, he laughed and asked with meaning: "Why so pale in this pleasure-garden?"

To this question Pushpodbhava felt it incumbent on himself to give respectful answer: "Surely, sir, your first words came to us from lips friendly to goodness. Your chaste benediction made you at once a dear friend of ours. And what secret is kept from

friends? When the princess of Malwa came to this garden to celebrate the spring festival and chanced to meet this prince, a passion came to birth, mutual and overwhelming. His present melancholy results from the lack of means to bring about a firm and happy union."

Then Vidyeshvara, remarking the sweet embarrassment of the prince's countenance, said with a quizzical smile: "Your Majesty, what ambition of yours is unattainable while I am at your service? I will perplex the mind of the monarch of Malwa by scientific jugglery, will celebrate his daughter's wedding in the very presence of the populace, and will introduce you into her chamber. This proposal should be conveyed beforehand to the princess through the agency of her friend." And the prince, delighted to find unselfish friendship, witnessed a display of Vidyeshvara's dexterity in jugglery, tested his judgment of deception, of pretended affection, of genuine devotion, and parted with high esteem.

So Rajavahana, deeming his desire as good as granted through Vidyeshvara's scientific skill, returned with Pushpodbhava to his dwelling, whence he sent to his darling, by the mouth of Balachandrika, an account of the plan for their union undertaken by the Brahman; then, torn by impatience, he tried to fight the night.

When morning dawned, the scientist Vidyeshvara, correct in taste, style, deportment, and gait, with

numerous attendants equally correct, came to the palace entrance, briskly presenting his credentials to the doorkeepers, who obsequiously informed the king of the arrival of a conjurer. The king of Malwa, himself desirous of witnessing the spectacle, spurred furthermore by curious ladies, summoned the scientist into a special chamber, where he pronounced a formal benediction and was bidden to begin. Then amid the blare of the banging band, while warbling women cooed like mating cuckoos, while waving peacock feather-dusters fascinated the spectators' spirits to a pitch of passion, while the whirl of attendants gyrated about him, he stood for a moment with squinting eyes. Straightway hooded serpents, with violent venting of vehement venom, dazzling the palace with the jewels on their crests, crawled horribly forth. But numerous vultures seized the monstrous snakes in their beaks, and paraded the sky. Next, the Brahman astonished the king with a spectacle of Man-lion tearing the devil chieftain Hiranyakashipu, then said: "Your Majesty, as our concluding number it is proper that you witness a scene of happy omen. We are therefore to present a wedding, initiating a long life of felicity, between a maiden personating your daughter and a prince marked with all marks of royalty."

Receiving the permission of the expectant monarch, his face blossoming at the quaint conception of success in such a stratagem, he smeared his eyes with a most mystifying lotion and peered about him. And

while all the spellbound spectators cried: "This *is* magic!" at the appearance of Rajavahana, his heart aflower with bliss, and of Avantisundari, forewarned and richly decked with splendid gems, the prestidigitator showed his perfect familiarity with every text of the marriage service by uniting them before the sacred fire.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Brahman cried aloud: "All creatures of magic, begone!" and all the phantom forms obediently vanished. Rajavahana also, previously instructed in the mechanics of disappearance, floated like a specter into the maidens' apartments. The king of Malwa, for his part, considering this a superior exhibition, gave the Brahman scientist a munificent fee, dismissed him, and withdrew to the inner palace.

Meanwhile, the belle of Avanti, with her best friends as bridesmaids, conducted her husband to a splendid chamber. Thus Rajavahana, tasting fruition of his wishes through powers human and superhuman, systematically conquered the shyness of his fawn-eyed bride by tastefully tender attentions, taught her the bliss of abandon, awakened an intimate confidence. Finally, eager for the heavenly delight of hearing a belovèd woman repeat his own words, he related the complicated and exciting history of the fourteen divisions of the universe.

CHAPTER VI

RAJAVAHANA'S ADVENTURE

When the perfect princess had listened to the outline of cosmic history, her eyes blossomed with wonder; and she said with a smile: "Belovèd, through your kindness I know today why ears are mine. Today you have given me the lamp of education, dispelling the darkness in my mind. Ripened now is the fruit of the devotion paid your lotus-feet. What service may I do you, to balance the favor of your kindness? For I have nothing of my own, since all is yours. And yet, poor as I am, I retain one dominion. For without my will you cannot taste my kiss, poor fare perhaps for one who has touched the lips of Erudition; or clasp me to your bosom, where Beauty's breasts have lain."

With this she rested her generous breast on her lover's bosom like a cloud upon the sky, while her eye, sparkling with awakened passion, was bright as a full-blown plantain flower; while her mass of hair mocked the peacock's splendid fan (being dotted with blossoms that drew the flashing bees); and shyly kissed her lover's lip, a red flower bud to her, and a gem darting red rays of light. Released by passion's first surrender, the charming chain of joy uncoiled yet more its gay, surprising links. When love grew faint, they

slept; and to both came a dream in which they saw an aged swan whose feet were bound with lotus stems. They woke together. Then the prince found his feet concealed by silver fetters, caught, as it seemed, in a binding chain of moonbeams that had strayed among lilies.

The princess perceived it, bewildered by wonder and terrible fright, and loosed her throat in a scream. Thereupon the whole houseful of maidens, as if enveloped by flames, as if harried by goblins, shuddering, oblivious of the relation between present act and future consequence, forgetting their engagement to keep the secret, bruising their limbs on the floor, splitting their throats with shrieks, veiling their cheeks in rivers of tears, went crazy. At this moment of muddle the chamberlains, who had unhindered entrance, bustled in, crying: "What now? What now?" and discovered the plight of the prince. His personal dignity curbed their handcuffing zeal, but they made an immediate report to Chandavarman.

Flaming with fury, he entered. He listened with fire in his eye; and having identified the pair, he sneered: "Aha! Here he is, the friend of Pushpodbhava, that foreign son of a merchant, that money-mad prig, that husband of Balachandrika who caused my younger brother's death—damn her! Here he is, the handsome coxcomb, the arrogant artist, who tickles the silly townsfolk with his skill in a pack of juggling tricks, and fools them by shamming the dignity

of something superhuman! A bogus robe of virtue outside, and rottenness inside! A mountebank! A quack! Aha! And here she is, his mistress—curse her!—the belle of Avanti, who disdains men like lions, even men like me! This very day she shall see how her husband adorns an impaling-stake! The drab who dirties her family!"

Distorting his brow in a horrible frown, he seemed the death-god with stiff arm rough as a bar of black iron when he seized the prince's hand (fair as a lily and marked with the royal marks of lotus and wheel) and tugged with brute force. The prince, a natural hero eminent in all manly virtues, felt patient endurance to be the sole specific for a calamity sent by fate, so cried: "Remember, O graceful as a swan, the swan's story. Endure, my soul, two months." With this consolation to her who, being his life, longed to leave life behind, he passed into the power of his enemy.

Then the queen and king of Malwa learned the facts with pain; yet, made indulgent by their son-in-law's beauty, they saved him from death, though his enemy hinted the alternative of suicide. But since they had abdicated, they could not rescue him from misfortune. For vindictive Chandavarman despatched a full report to Darpasara, performing austerities on Kailasa peak; seized Pushpodbhava's whole fortune and imprisoned his entire household without trial; and kept Rajavahana confined, like a lordly lion cub, in a wooden cage. Such torments as hunger and

thirst were indeed averted by the power of the magical gem which lay concealed in his thick-growing hair; but Chandavarman, trusting none but himself, had him transported on an expedition to destroy the king of the Angas, who had refused a request for his daughter's hand.

With an army of terrifying size, Chandavarman besieged Champa, the Anga capital, whose king, Simhavarman, was indomitable as a lion. Too impatient to await the near arrival of kings summoned by his numerous envoys and hastening by forced marches to his relief, he breached the wall; issued forth with a mighty force; and, like Disdain clad in living flesh and blood, assailed the hostile host. In that great struggle Simhavarman's entire army melted away; he was battered by a hundred bitter blows and was captured by Chandavarman, who leaped with superhuman agility from elephant to elephant. Yet his life was spared by the victor, who, feeling an overmastering desire for the daughter Ambalika—reputed a pearl of a girl—plucked all the darts from his person, but kept a previous promise by thrusting him into prison. Thereupon, hosts of astrologers concurred in computing that the princess should be married that very day, when morning dawned.

While Chandavarman was making festive preparations, a courier named Enajangha returned from Kailasa peak, reporting this response from the plenipotentiary Darpasara: "Fool! What possible mercy

can there be for one caught violating the virgins' apartments? The king is old. Senility strips his mind of pride and scorn. He takes his naughty daughter's part. But why should you humor any whim of his? Do not delay to give my ears a holiday by sending word that the lovesick swain has been executed with fancy tortures. And the naughty girl, with her younger brother Kirtisara, should have her feet tied and be kept in jail."

Hereupon he glared at his attendants and issued orders: "At dawn bring that vulgar violator of virgins' chambers to the palace door. And tether alongside the big elephant Hot-baby with all his trappings on. As soon as I am married, I will give that villain with my own hand as a plaything to the elephant. Then I will climb Hot-baby's back and go to capture that crowd of kings who are coming to help my enemy, with their treasure and their animals."

So, at the first blush of the following dawn, the prince was brought by guardsmen into the royal courtyard. Near him stood Hot-baby, with dripping cheeks. At that moment the prince felt his feet freed from the silver fetter, which, transformed into a heavenly nymph winsome as the crescent moon, walked about him with respectfully lifted hands and said with deference: "Your Majesty, lend me your gracious attention. I am a nymph named Suratamanjari, child of Somarashmi. One day, when my gaze was riveted on a silly swan snapping at a lotus in the sky, my

pearl necklace parted in my effort to stop him and chanced to drop where the great sage Markandeya was dipping in and out a shallow Himalayan pool. It fell on his head, doubling the silver luster with the flash of gems. But he was enraged and let fall a curse upon me: 'Wretched female, turn to inanimate metal.' Yet he relented, decreeing that this sorrow should pass after I had served two months as a chain for your lotus-feet, and granting me full powers of perception.

"When for this serious offense I had become a silver chain, a fairy named Virashekhara, son of Manasavega and grandson of Vegavat, a king of Ikshvaku's line, came to Kailasa peak and possessed himself of me. Thereafter, being at enmity with the fairy emperor Naravahanadatta, scion of King Vatsa's line, who continued a hostility begun by his father, he sought a competent ally and came to an understanding with austere Darpasara, who promised him his sister, the belle of Avanti.

"One night when moonlight purified the sky, flesh conquered spirit; and he, longing to behold Avantisundari, dear goal of his desire, visited the women's chambers that gleamed like the palace of heaven's king. Safe in his magic power of invisibility, he discovered her at the moment when her head rested on your bosom, sleeping in love's sweet faintness, her passion's flood diked by your nectar-tales, your concatenated history of creation, continuance, and destruction of the cosmos. Infuriate, yet curbed by your

personal dignity in his deep desire to lay hands upon you, he used what power fate gave him while you and she lay sleeping in the utter bliss of mutual embraces: he fettered your lotus-feet with me, a silver chain, and departed, ramping with rage. Today my curse is fulfilled, and your bimensual subjection. Grant me your gracious pardon. What may I do for you?" She fell at his feet and was dismissed with the direction: "Comfort with this story her who is my life."

The very next moment shouts arose: "Murdered! Chandavarman is murdered! His sturdy arm was just extended, fervent for the hand of Simhavarman's daughter Ambalika, when a cursèd thief pounced on him, drubbed him, and stuck a knife in him. Then the villain spread a mat of a hundred corpses on the palace floor, and stalks about unabashed." On hearing this, the prince tossed the mahout aside, mounted the must elephant, and made for the palace at top speed, while the great beast's impetus ploughed a path through the infantry. Into the palace he burst, shouting with a voice deep as many thunders: "Who is the hero who has done this great deed, hardly possible for a mere man? Let him come forth, and mount this must elephant with me. He is safe at my side, though gods and devils pursue him."

Hearing this, the man came forth with intense delight, advanced saluting, and briskly mounted the back of the elephant, which crumpled at command. Even as he climbed, the prince recognized him; and

his eyes blossomed with joy as he cried: "Ah! My dear, my very dear Apaharavarman!" Then, as his friend sat behind, he caught two sturdy arms thrust beneath his own armpits, thus seeming to embrace himself; after which, he reached behind him and clasped his friend. But Apaharavarman broke the friendly bond at once in order to hurl to the ground picked men of diverse enemy service branches, proud of their pluck, who surged about, using bow, discus, lance, barb, dart, spear, club, mace, and other assorted weapons. A moment later he saw that army surrounded by another host that doubled in from every side.

Presently a gentleman—blond as a wingseed blossom, with hair like a black gem, with hands and feet as fine as lilies, with long eyes brilliant black and milky white, with a jeweled dagger at his hip, with silken robe, slender and broad in waist and chest—showered dexterous shafts on the hostile host, while sternly scoring with his toes the roots of the ears of his fleet, approaching elephant. This man, inferring from previous description that Prince Rajavahana was before him, bowed ceremoniously, then fixed his glance on Apaharavarman and reported: "Following your instructions as to route, this gathered group of kings has come to the relief of the Anga sovereign. The enemy army is crushed and dispersed. Women and children could take their weapons. What next?"

"Your Majesty," cried the delighted Apaharavarman, "pray grant this faithful servant the favor of a glance. You are to consider his get-up a disguise and his name Dhanamitra an incognito. If you have no objection, let him free the Anga king from confinement and assemble the dissipated treasure and animals, while Your Majesty seeks a retired and pleasant resting-place. Then let him wait upon you with yonder kings friendly to us." "As you will," replied the prince, and, following the indicated path from the city, he dismounted from the elephant beneath a tremendous banyan tree in silky sand cooled by puffs of wind from Ganges' billows. Apaharavarman too, having already dismounted, quickly smoothed with his own hand a space of Ganges sand broad as an elephant's back and seated himself comfortably.

As the prince sat thus, Dhanamitra hastened to him with low obeisance, and with Dhanamitra came Upaharavarman, Arthapala, Pramati, Mitragupta, Mantragupta, and Vishruta; also King Praharavarman of Videha, Kamapala, lord of Benares, and Simhavarman, sovereign of the Angas. Penetrated with joy, the prince arose, crying: "Is it possible? The whole company of my friends! What a festive occasion!" And when they had greeted him with due ceremony, he embraced them with passionate fondness. He also looked with a filial eye upon the three kings —of Benares, Videha, and Anga—presented by his friends, and thrilled with delight when they fervently embraced him, their grey hair waving with joy.

Then, after the interchanges of affection, at the urgent desire of all his dear comrades, he recounted his own adventures with those of Somadatta and Pushpodbhava, thereby clearing the ground for an ordered narrative of his friends' experiences. First among them was Apaharavarman, who related the following history.

CHAPTER VII

APAHARAVARMAN'S ADVENTURE

"Your Majesty, on the day when you plunged into Devils' Hole in order to serve a Brahman, and all your friends set out in search of you, I too roamed the earth. Now I learned from a certain group of gossipers that in the Anga country, on the bank of the Ganges outside the capital Champa, there lived a great sage named Marichi in whom potent austerities had begotten divine insight; and I traveled to that region, desirous of learning from him your whereabouts. In his hermitage I discovered under a baby mango a hermit pale with depression of spirit, from whom I received the attentions due a guest. Then after a moment's rest, I said: 'Where is saintly Marichi? I desire to learn from him the route of a friend who had occasion to make a distant journey. The sage has an international reputation for miraculous powers of penetration.'

"With a deep-drawn, burning sigh he told this tale: 'Such a sage there was in this hermitage. To him one day there came in deep dejection a member of the frail sisterhood, named Kamamanjari. She had fairly won her name as gem of the Anga capital, but her breasts were starred with teardrops and her disheveled hair swept the ground as she paid him

homage. At the same moment a group of her relatives, headed by the mother, came running compassionately behind her and fell to the ground in a long line before the hermit. That merciful creature consoled them with his liquid tones and asked the courtezan the source of her distress; and she, with seeming shame, despondency, and dignity, replied: "Holy sir, your servant is a vessel of tribulation in this life, yet, in hope of a blessèd resurrection, takes refuge at your holy feet, known as a defense of the afflicted."

"'At this point the mother lifted her hands, touched the earth with hair dappled with grey, lifted her head, and spoke: "Holy sir, this your maid-servant acquaints you with my own wrongdoing. And this wrongdoing of mine lay in the performance of my obvious duty. For obvious duty is as follows for the mother of a *fille de joie:* care of her daughter's person from the hour of birth; nourishment by a diet so regulated as to develop stateliness, vigor, complexion, intelligence, while harmonizing the humors, gastric calefaction, and secretions; not permitting her to see too much even of her father after the fifth year; festive ritual on birthdays and holy days; instruction in the arts of flirtation, both major and minor; thorough training in dance, song, instrumental music, acting, painting, also judgment of foods, perfumes, flowers, not forgetting writing and graceful speech; a conversational acquaintance with grammar, with logical inference and conclusion; profound skill in money-making, sport, and betting on cockfights or chess; assiduous use of go-betweens in the passages of coquetry; display of numerous well-dressed attendants at religious or secular celebrations; careful selection of teachers to insure success at unpremeditated vocal and other exhibitions; advertising on a national scale by a staff of trained specialists; publicity for beauty-marks through astrologers and such; eulogistic mention in gatherings of men about town of her beauty, character, accomplishments, charm, and sweetness by hangers-on, gay dogs, buffoons, female religionists, and others; raising her price considerably when she has become an object of desire to young gentlemen; surrender to a lover of independent fortune, a philogynist or one intoxicated by seeing her charms, a gentleman eminent for rank, figure, youth, money, vigor, purity, generosity, cleverness, gallantry, art, character, and sweetness of disposition; delivery, with gracious exaggeration of value received, to one less affluent, but highly virtuous and cultivated (the alternative is levying on his natural guardians, after informal union with such a gentleman); collection of bad debts by vamping judge and jury; mothering a lover's daughter; abstraction by ingenious tricks of money left in an admirer's possession after payment for periodical pleasures; steady quarreling with a defaulter or miser; stimulation of the spirit of generosity in an overthrifty adorer by the incentive of jealousy; repulse of the impecunious by biting speeches, by pub-

lic taunts, by cutting his daughters, and by other embarrassing habits, as well as by simple contempt; continued clinging to the open-handed, the chivalrous, the blameless, the wealthy, with full consideration of the interrelated chances of money and misery.

" ' "Besides, a courtezan should show readiness indeed, but no devotion to a lover; and, even if fond of him, she should not disobey mother or grandmother. In spite of all, the girl disregards her God-given vocation and has spent a whole month of amusement—at her own expense!—with a Brahman youth, a fellow from nowhere whose face is his fortune. Her snippiness has offended several perfectly solvent admirers and has pauperized her own family. And when I scolded her and told her: 'This is no kind of a scheme. This isn't pretty,' she was angry and took to the woods. And if she is obstinate, this whole family will stay right here and starve to death. There is nothing else to do." And the mother wept.

" 'Then the hermit spoke to the gay girl: "My dear young woman, be assured that life in the forest is difficult. Its reward is either final salvation or a period in Paradise. Now of these the former is grounded in profound insight and is, as a rule, hardly attainable; while the latter is easy for anybody who fulfils the duties of his station. You had best resign your visionary ambition and abide by your mother's judgment."

" 'But she impatiently rejected this sympathetic

counsel, saying: "If I find no refuge at your holy feet, may the god of fire provide a refuge for my misery."

" 'So the hermit, after some reflection, said to the courtezan's mother: "Go home for a time. Wait a few days, until this delicate creature, wonted to pleasant luxury, grows disgusted with the hardships of life in the forest and, with the aid of repeated homilies from me, returns to normalcy." And her relatives withdrew, assenting.

" 'Now the courtezan grudged no devotion to the holy hermit. She wore a neat and simple costume; was not overattentive to ornament; watered the seedling trees; took pains to gather bunches of flowers for ceremonies of worship; made a pleasing variety of offerings; provided perfumes, garlands, incense, lamps, dance, song, and instrumental music in honor of Love's chastiser, Shiva; drew the hermit into corners to discuss the relations of the three things worth living for (virtue, money, and love); and discoursed decorously of the Supreme Being. In a surprisingly short time she had him in love.

" 'One day, seeing that he was secretly smitten, she said with a little smile: "Why, the world is a fool even to consider money and love in comparison with virtue." "Tell me, my soul," said Marichi, "by what percentage you value virtue above money and love." Thus encouraged, but slow and shy, she began:

" ' "A poor, ignorant thing like me! Can I teach a

holy hermit the bigness or littleness of virtue, money, and love? Still, your question is just one more kindness to a servant. So listen. Of course, without virtue there *isn't* any money or love. But virtue without those things gives us blissful felicity, and we can get it by simple introspection. It doesn't depend so much on external instruments, the way money and love do. And if nourished by seeing the real Truth, it isn't hurt if you pursue—just a little, you know—money and love. Or if it is, it is restored without much trouble and you win a special blessing by avoiding that sin in future. For example: Brahma pursued Tilottama, Shiva violated a thousand wives of hermits, Vishnu flirted with sixteen thousand girls, Prajapati offered love even to his own daughter, Indra was Ahalya's paramour, the moon-god fouled his teacher's bed, the sun-god debauched a mare, the wind-god seduced the wife of a monkey, Brihaspati ran after Utathya's wife, Parashara deflowered a fisherman's daughter, his son intrigued with a brother's wife, Atri had dealings with a doe. And when immortals do all those things, such devil's tricks don't injure their virtue, because they have the power of Truth. And when a soul is purified by virtue, dirt never sticks, any more than in the sky. So I feel that money and love don't touch even one per cent of virtue."

" 'Having listened to this, the sage felt the tide of passion surge, and he said: "My pet, you are truly wise: with those who have vision of the Truth, virtue

is not shackled by the indulgence of sense. But from birth I have never studied the doctrine of money and love. I ought to learn their nature, attendant conditions, and reward."

" ' "Well," said she, "the nature of money is to be earned, multiplied, and saved; its attendant conditions are agriculture, cattle-raising, trade, peace, war, and so forth; its reward is charity to the deserving. Love's nature lies in an exquisite contact with ineffable joy in a man and a woman whose minds concentrate on sense-experience. Its attendant conditions are all that is blissful and blazing in this contact. And its reward is a manifest and self-communicated gladness, intensely delightful, arising from reciprocal tangency, sweet in memory, occasioning self-approbation, supreme. For love's sake, men—even men who live in the most sacred places—endure grievous martyrdoms, great sacrifices of money, terrible battles, sea-voyages, and other fearful dangers."

" 'Hereupon, were it constraining destiny, or the woman's smartness, or his own dulness, he forgot his vows and yielded to her fascination. She put the poor booby in a carriage and carried him far away along the splendid public street to her own home in the city. And drums were beaten with the announcement: "Tomorrow is Love's festival."

" 'The next day, when the sage had been bathed and anointed, had assumed a pretty garland, had practiced lovers' manners and so turned his back on

his true profession that he grieved if a moment passed without her, she took him along the gaudy public street to a holiday crowd in a wooded garden, where the king sat among hundreds of young ladies. And when the king said with a smile: "My dear, be seated with His Holiness," she made a fluttering curtsy, smiled, and sat down.

" 'Thereupon a most beautiful woman rose, lifted her joined hands, and curtsied to the king, saying: "Your Majesty, she has won the bet. From this day I am her slave." Then the crowd raised a racket rooted in wonder and delight. The king too was delighted and dismissed the courtezan with gracious gifts of precious stones in settings and a great train of attendants, while the most eminent ladies of her profession and the most prominent citizens gave her a multitudinous ovation.

" 'She, however, before going home, said to the sage: "My duty to you, holy sir. You have put your servant under no transient obligation. You may now resume your vocation." "My darling," he cried, pricked by love as by a knife-point, "what does it mean? How can you be so cynical? What has become of your superlative fondness for me?"

" ' "Holy sir," she replied with a smile, "you saw the girl who just confessed defeat before the royal retinue. She and I once had a tiff, and she said with a sneer: 'You boast as if you had seduced Marichi.' So

I wagered my freedom and went into the business. And I won. Thank you so much."

" 'Thus cast off, the poor innocent repented and listlessly returned to the woods. And I, dear sir, am the wretched man whom she treated so. The whore who had the power to inspire passion, has herself, by withdrawing it, encouraged religion. Soon I shall be able to bring myself to attend your business. Till then, remain in Champa, the Anga capital.'

"Now the sun went to his setting, as if fearful of touching the darkness that drifted from the hermit's soul; the red flare of passion left the sage to gleam as evening twilight; the clusters of day-blooming lilies shrank together as if his tale had made them indifferent to life. And I, having accepted the poor fellow's offer of aid, sat with him, telling twilight tales; shared his bed for the night; and when the red rays of the waking sun—mocking the blossoming twigs of the wishing-tree—shot like a forest fire from Sunrise Peak, I said a respectful farewell and started for the city.

"In a lonely spot outside a monastery that stood beside the road, I beheld a naked Jain monk seated in a grove of red *ashoka* trees, careless of his religious meditations, wasted with mental misery, deserving first prize for homeliness—a pitiful presence. And I noticed that the teardrops falling on his chest carried lumps of dirt dislodged from his face. So I drew near

and made inquiries. 'Austerities and tears,' I said, 'fit ill together. If it is no secret, I could wish to learn the source of your sorrow.'

" 'Listen, kind sir,' he said. 'I am the eldest son of a prosperous merchant named Nidhipalita in this very Champa, and my name is Vasupalita. But my nickname is Ugly, because I *am* ugly. There is another named Handsome in town, and he is handsome; he is rich in social attractions, but ill endowed with wealth. Between him and me a quarrel was fomented on the subject of good looks and cash by such city scoundrels as pick a living out of quarrels. One day in a holiday gathering we indulged ourselves in a budget of cutting taunts, rooted in mutual disdain. The scoundrels had started the squabble themselves, but they claimed to appease it by laying down this principle: "Neither looks nor cash is the proof of manhood; but he is the best man whose youthful vigor attracts the gayest girls. Now Kamamanjari is the nonpareil among these young persons. He whom she prefers, may fly the flag of fortune." We agreed and sent her our proposals.

" 'Now it was I who awakened a loving rapture in the creature. At least, she came to me, as he and I sat there; darted at my person a dark-eyed, sidelong glance that was both flower and fetter; and caused my embarrassed rival's face to fall. I fancied myself happy, and made her mistress of my money, of my house,

of my household, of my person, of my life. She left me a loin cloth. Cast off as a beggar, the target of universal ridicule, unable to endure the gibes of the city's dignitaries, I welcomed instruction concerning the path of salvation from a certain monk in this heretic monastery; then, considering how natural was such a costume for those emerging from a house of evil fame, I felt a surge of religious despair, and abandoned the loin cloth, too.

" 'But presently, when the dirt caked on my person, when my hair was plucked till it hurt horribly, when I suffered the exquisite tortures of hunger and thirst, when even in standing, sitting, lying, and eating I was cramped like a new-caught elephant in disciplinary chains, I pondered profoundly: "I am of Brahman origin. It is irreligious in me to condescend to this heretical course. My forefathers trod the path prescribed by revelation and sacred tradition. And I am sunk so low as to wear scandal-breeding canonicals, to invite condign chastisement, and even—by hearing constant blasphemies against Vishnu, Shiva, Brahma, and other true gods—to harvest hell when I am dead. Such doctrine, fruitless, deceitful, false! To think that I should practice it as true!" With that estimate of my own perversity, I betook myself to this lonely clump of *ashokas*, and here I weep profusely.'

"At this point I pitied him and said: 'Be patient, sir. Remain here yet a little while. I will endeavor to

persuade that female to make voluntary restitution of your possessions. There are ways and means.' So I consoled him and rose to take farewell.

"Even while entering the city, I learned from street gossip that the town was full of skinflints and capitalists; and, since I desired to bring these gentry to orthodox thinking by revealing the perishable nature of riches, I resolved to tread the path of scientific thievery. I did not sit down until I had entered a dive and mingled with the professionals. I found no end of enjoyment observing their skill in all the twenty-five branches of the art of gambling: their sleight of hand, extremely difficult to detect, over the dice-board; the accompanying sneers and jeers; their death-defying truculence; their systems (chiefly argument, force, and bluff) devised to gain a gambler's confidence and calculated to win the stakes; their flattery of the strong; their threats toward the weak; their cleverness in picking partners; their fantastic means of allurement; the varied wagers proposed; their magnanimous way of dividing the cash; the intermittent buzz of talk, largely obscene; and much besides.

"Now when a player made a careless throw, I laughed a little. But his opponent seemed to flare up, looking at me with an eye red with wrath, and shouting: 'Man, you tell him how to play when you laugh. Let this uneducated duffer go. I'll just play with you —you seem a smart one.' The proprietor offered no objection: he clinched with me, and I won sixteen

thousand dinars. Half I gave to the proprietor and his staff; half I pocketed. Then I rose, and with me rose delighted congratulations from the company. I humored the proprietor's invitation and shared a most noble banquet in his establishment. But he who had occasioned my gambling incarnation, became a friend, trustworthy as a second heart. His name was Vimardaka.

"From his lips I studied every house in the city, with emphasis on wealth, occupation, and character; then in a darkness black as the stain on Shiva's neck, clad in the concealment of a black cloak, girded with a sharp sword, provided with a varied kit—trowel, scissors, tweezers, dummy, magic powder, trick lamp, measuring-tape, hook, cord, dark lantern, bee-basket, and other tools—I visited the house of a miserly capitalist; breached the wall; penetrated the interior unperceived through an opening narrow as a telescope, all as unconcerned as if entering my own dwelling; appropriated considerable capital; and departed.

"On the public street, dense with palpable darkness from black and crowding clouds, I suddenly perceived a momentary splendor like a lightning flash. This resolved itself into a young woman wearing gleaming gems; she drew near, having issued forth at that spacious hour, and seemed the city's guardian goddess angered at theft in the city.

"And when I sympathetically inquired: 'What is your name? What is your goal, my soul?' she stam-

mered this terrified reply: 'In this city, sir, lives a most worthy merchant, Kuberadatta. I am his daughter. At my birth my father promised me as wife to a certain Dhanamitra, a wealthy youth of our own city. He, however, showed an extraordinary nobility: when his parents perished, with his own property he purchased poverty (if the expression is permissible) from a throng of jobbers. As a consequence, people pleasantly tacked to him the honorable sobriquet of "Mister Noble"; and poor as he was, he still sought my hand. But now that I am a woman, my father refuses me to a beggar and plans to bestow me on a certain wholesaler named Arthapati—a rich man, as the name indicates. This calamity, you must know, impends at dawn of day. I knew it, and consented to a meeting with my darling. I gave my servants the slip; and through the street where I played as a girl, I go to his dwelling—a woman whose escort is love. Do not prevent me. Take this treasure.' And unfastening her jewels, she handed them to me.

" 'You are a good girl,' I said, consoling her. 'Come, let me accompany you to your lover's house.' But when I had taken three or four steps, the gleam of a torch stole our shroud of darkness; and a sizable squad of police fell upon us, baton and sword in hand. 'Feel no fear, my dear,' said I to the trembling girl. 'The last resort is this arm of mine, with its friendly sword. But from regard for you I have devised a pleasant plan. I will lie here, counterfeiting the

cramps of deadly poison, while you tell those fellows: "We entered this city by night. My escort—whom you see—was stung by a serpent there at the corner of the public hall. If you have any kindly necromancer who can restore him, he would also save a helpless woman's life." ' And the maiden, there being no other way, put a terrified stammer into her tone and a storm of tears into her eyes, tremblingly tottered forward, and repeated my words, while I lay counterfeiting poison cramps.

"So I was examined by one of them, who fancied himself as a poison specialist. He treated me with signet rings, charms, spells, silent prayer, and other specifics—without success. Then he reported: 'It was a cobra. He is done for. You can see that his limbs are rigid and discolored, his eye is filmy, his respiration has just ceased. Weep your fill, my soul. Tomorrow we shall have a cremation. Who escapes fate?' And off he went with the others.

"I rose and conducted her to Mister Noble, to whom I said: 'I am a thief. I met this lady in midjourney; she was on her way to you, escorted by a loving heart. I sympathized and brought her safe. These jewels are hers.' And I gave him a gleaming mass that cleft the veil of darkness.

"Mister Noble took them and said, his shyness struggling with his joy: 'Sir, you have this night given me my darling, but stolen my power of speech, for I know not how to express myself. Shall I call your

action unique? I should be lessening your constant character. Shall I call it unequaled by others? The comparison would limit your natural faculty, since avarice and other human failings are foreign to you. Shall I aver that you have this day breathed life into virtue? The statement would be quite discourteous to your previous glories. Shall I say that nobility has now found its true externalization? Such an assertion would be improper, as neglecting your normal purpose. Shall I declare that your generous deed has purchased my freedom? I should insult your intelligence, implying an extravagant price for a trifle. Shall I swear that this body is yours, a return for the gift of my love? I should forget that this body, destined to death if I lost her, is also your gift. Ah, only this statement will fit the case: you must care for me from this hour, since I am your slave.' And he fell at my feet.

"I helped him to rise, pressed him to my breast, and said: 'Dear sir, what is your present purpose?' And he replied: 'Without her parents' consent I cannot marry her and live here. Therefore, this very night I plan to flee the country. Yet who am I, to be honored by your concern?'

" 'Right,' said I. 'The discerning man does not reckon lands as native or foreign. However, this lady is exquisitely dainty, and forest trails are roughly strewn with hardships. Such an unmotivated flight from the country smacks of a certain flabbiness, both

of intelligence and character. It is better to live with her happily in this very city. Come, let us take her to her own dwelling.' He agreed without demur; we took her home at once; and while she served as picket, he and I stripped the house to the bare clay walls.

"Then, after an expedition to conceal our booty, we fell in with policemen; and finding a must elephant kneeling beside the road, we tossed the driver off and mounted. But even as I made the animal rise, he tangled his forefeet in his neck-rope; and since he braced himself on the broad chest of the fallen driver, his great tusk was smeared with clinging gore when he pounded the police. We used him to pulverize Arthapati's house. Next, we drove him into a deserted garden and dismounted by catching the branch of a tree. Then we started home, had a bath, and went to bed.

"Presently the sun's disc was lifted; it seemed the ruby horn of splendid Sunrise Peak lifting from the sea and was gay as a golden garland of flowers from the wishing-tree. We rose, washed our faces, repeated our morning prayers, then roamed the town agog at our exploits, and listened to the babble in the houses of bridegroom and bride. Arthapati was consoling Kuberadatta in the matter of money, but postponing for a month his marriage with the daughter of the family.

"Thereupon I whispered these instructions to Dhanamitra: 'Visit the Anga king, my friend, and secretly show him this wallet of choice leather, saying:

"Your Majesty surely knows me. I am Dhanamitra, only son of Vasumitra, the multimillionaire; but a throng of needy beggars stripped me, so that I became an object of derision. And when Kuberadatta, reproaching my poverty, planned to give to Arthapati his daughter, a sweet girl betrothed to me from birth, I entered an unkempt garden near the city, resolved to die of heartache. But a tangle-haired hermit snatched the knife from my throat, asking: 'What is the cause of this desperate deed?' 'Poverty,' said I, 'own brother of derision.'

" ' "Now he took pity on me, saying: 'You are a fool, my boy. There is nothing more wholly reprehensible than suicide. Good men do not destroy the soul; they use the soul to save the soul. There are many means of making money, but no means of making life by patching a cut throat. And what need? I know my thaumaturgy: I have contrived this magic wallet of choice leather which holds a lakh. With its aid I granted their desires to people during a long residence in Assam; but when envious age assailed me, I came hither, hoping to find this region a heaven on earth. I give the wallet to you. In other hands than mine it is said to work only for merchants and courtezans. Moreover, anything sinfully stolen by its owner, must first be restored; anything honestly earned must be given to gods and Brahmans. Then, if set in a hallowed spot and worshiped like a god, it will be found filled with gold every morning. Such is its nature.' Herewith he gave it to me, and as I bowed, he vanished in a rocky cave. This priceless leather wallet I have brought, feeling that I should not make a living by it without previous report to Your Majesty. Of course, Your Majesty is the final arbiter."

" 'Now the king will be quite certain to say: "I am delighted, my dear sir. Go, and enjoy your treasure to the full." Thereupon you will say: "Be graciously pleased to see that nobody steals it." This also he will assuredly promise. You will then go home, will disburse charity according to a set program, will worship the wallet each day, will fill it each night with the proceeds of robbery, and each morning will exhibit it to the populace. Presently greedy Kuberadatta, no longer caring a straw for Arthapati, will voluntarily approach you with his daughter. Next, purse-proud Arthapati will be angry and try to sue you; after which, you and I, by artful dodges, will leave him with a loin cloth. Besides, this maneuvre will quite conceal our own thievery.'

"Dhanamitra was delighted and did as I suggested. That very day Vimardaka, at my instigation, entered Arthapati's service and fanned his hostility to Mister Noble; while greedy Kuberadatta turned his back on Arthapati, obsequiously offering his daughter to Dhanamitra. And Arthapati fought back.

"In these same days announcement was made that Kamamanjari's younger sister Ragamanjari was to give a musical performance in public, so that gay so-

ciety gathered with tense anticipation. I was there too, with my friend Dhanamitra. And when her dance began, there was a second dance on the stage of my heart. For the archer-god lurked in the cover of the lotus cluster which her flashing glances made, and tortured me terribly, seeming to draw power from the medley of all emotions and sentiments dramatically communicable. She seemed the city's guardian goddess angered at theft in the city as she fettered me in the twining coils of coquettish glances darkly gleaming like blue lilies' glossy petals. After the dance, as she stood, a shining success—whether flirtatiously, or graciously, or fortuitously, I do not know—she darted at me, unobserved even by the girls, more than one peeping glance with playful fluttering of arching brows; then, with a little careless, gleaming smile, departed, still escorted by the eyes and thoughts of all. I went home, my hunger replaced by resistless longing, and feigning a headache, lay limp on my lonely bed.

"Now Dhanamitra, deeply versed in the book of love, came to me with this confidential report: 'My friend, that courtezan is blest indeed, to whom your heart is thus devoted. I have closely followed the course of her feelings, too; the archer-god will soon stretch her also on a bed of arrows. A meeting is simple to arrange, since you both pursue an honorable purpose. But you must know that this gay girl adopts a most elevated style, running counter to courtezan

character. She declares: "My price is virtue, not cash. Hereafter, no gentleman may hold my hand except in matrimony." Now her sister Kamamanjari, failing in repeated dissuasion, and her mother Madhavasena sobbed out this tearful petition to the king: "Your Majesty, we had high hopes that your servant Ragamanjari—with character, accomplishments, and cleverness to match her beauty—would fulfil our ambitions for her. But she is a complete disappointment: she breaks every family tradition; she is indifferent to money, and expects virtue as payment for youthful favors. She obstinately apes the conduct of a good woman. Now if—even at the cost of Your Majesty's high intervention—she should at last return to normal manners, it would be a sweet relief."

" 'And when she still turned a deaf ear to the admonitions of the obliging king, her mother and sister besought the sovereign with importunate tears: "If any snake should deceive and ruin the girl against our will, you must torture him to death like a thief." So matters stand: her relatives will not consent without money, and she will show no favor to a man who offers money. You must reconcile these opposites.' 'There is nothing to reconcile,' said I. 'We will seduce her with virtue and secretly satisfy her relatives with money.'

"So I won the good will of Kamamanjari's chief go-between, a certain Buddhist nun named Dharmarakshita, with such bribes as tatters and scraps; and through her mediation I struck this bargain with the

cocotte—that I should steal from Mister Noble and give to her the miraculous wallet, in return for Ragamanjari. Receiving her assent, I put the matter through; then seduced Ragamanjari by my virtue, and plucked the flower of her hand.

"On the evening when the theft of the magic wallet became known, in the hearing of noteworthy men about town (summoned ostensibly for another purpose) my spy Vimardaka, a nominal partisan of Arthapati, turned upon Dhanamitra and rated him roundly. 'Sir,' said Dhanamitra, 'what object has this barking at me in another man's quarrel? I do not recall doing you the slightest injury.' 'Regular purse-pride!' retorted the other, still seeming to scold. 'After the other fellow has paid his honest tax for a wife, you dazzle her parents with cash and try to get the girl. Then you ask: "What injury have I done you?" Well, everyone knows that Vimardaka is the projected life of wholesaler Arthapati. Here I am—I am ready to give my life for him. I wouldn't shrink from Brahman-murder. If I wanted to keep my eyes open just one night, I could lower the high temperature of your pride in that magic wallet.' Still speaking, he was bustled away by prominent citizens, who indignantly tried to squelch him.

"This occurrence, with a previous reference to the loss of the magic wallet, was reported with counterfeit distress by Dhanamitra to the king, who summoned Arthapati and privately inquired: 'Sir, have you

acquaintance with one Vimardaka?' 'Certainly, Your Majesty,' replied the booby. 'He is a very close friend. What service can he render?' 'Can you produce him?' asked the king. 'Assuredly I can,' said he, and going forth, he searched minutely but vainly in his own house, among the gay girls, in the gambling dive, in the market. How could the lubber find him? Inasmuch as Vimardaka, commissioned by me, and having received from me a token by which to recognize you, my prince, had started that same day for Ujjain to search for you, sir. So Arthapati, failing to find him, and feeling his own responsibility for the felony, was mad enough or frightened enough to contradict himself; and after demonstration by Dhanamitra, was seized by order of the angry king and thrown into chains.

"In these same days Kamamanjari, desiring to milk the magic wallet with due regard to all conditions imposed, paid a secret visit to Mister Ugly, whom she had previously milked dry and converted into a naked heretic. She restored his entire stolen fortune and returned only after begging his forgiveness with no end of amenity. And he, his soul thus snatched from naked heresy by my pastoral ministrations, returned with extreme delight to his true religion. The lady meanwhile, in her eagerness to milk the magic wallet, stripped her house in a very few days to the bare fireplace.

"Then at my suggestion, Dhanamitra confided in

the king: 'Your Majesty, the girl Kamamanjari is so outrageously grasping that people have fastened upon her the nickname Greedy-girl; yet today she is heedlessly throwing away her furniture, down to mortar and pestle. This, I believe, results from her possession of my magic wallet, for such is its nature. It is said to work only for merchants and courtezans. I have my suspicions of her.' And she, with her mother, was immediately summoned before the king.

"I took her aside to say with simulated agitation: 'Surely, madam, your thorough and strikingly public generosity has brought you under suspicion of posessing the magic wallet. You are summoned by the Anga king to answer for this; and if repeatedly pressed, you are certain to plead its acquisition through me. Then I shall be put to death by torture. And when I am dead, your sister will cease to live. And you have become a beggar. And the magic wallet will return to Dhanamitra. This emergency is calamitous, however you face. What remedy is there?'

" 'Too true,' replied she and her mother with tears. 'Through our childish simplicity the secret is as good as out. If the king insists, though we may deny twice, thrice, even four times, we are sure to impute the theft to you. And at the mention of your name our whole family would be ruined. Well, this disgrace roots in Arthapati; and the whole capital knows our intimacy with that lumpkin. We can best shield ourselves by claiming that he gave it to us.' This I approved, and the two ladies went to court.

"There the king examined them, saying: 'It is not decent for courtezans to pretend to charity, since it is no decently earned money that men bring to them.' He hammered this point home, terrifying them by hints of the slitting of ears and noses, until those two damned whores accused the wretched Arthapati of the theft. The king in a fury condemned him to death, but was restrained by none other than Dhanamitra, who respectfully pleaded: 'Oh, sir, royal tradition graciously grants exemption from the death penalty to merchants guilty of such felonies. If you feel furious, confiscate the criminal's property and exile him.'

"Thus Dhanamitra received wide applause, the monarch was gratified, and purse-proud Arthapati, reduced to a single rag, was exiled in view of the whole city. A certain portion of his possessions the king, following a compassionate suggestion of Dhanamitra, bestowed on Kamamanjari, who, duped by the mirage of the magic wallet, had quite stripped herself. Dhanamitra married his good girl on a lucky day. And I, successful in my stratagem, filled a house with gold and gems for Ragamanjari.

"But the skinflint and capitalist class in that city was so plucked that its members wandered for alms, begging bowl in hand, from house to house of the destitute class, now grown wealthy with *their* property,

bestowed by me. For no man, however shrewd, can cross the line traced by fate. So in my own case: one day I was ingratiatingly offering Ragamanjari something to drink in order to end a lovers' quarrel, and when I had too often sipped the wine of her lips, sweetly and repeatedly offered, I was smitten by an intemperate madness. Now it is the nature of intemperance and enthusiasm to adopt a wrong method in habitual actions. So, as madness mounted, I cried: 'In a single night I could steal all the money in this city and fill your house with it;' and repelling hundreds of humble obsecrations from my dearest, like a must elephant fiercely snapping his chain, with no great retinue, but attended by a nurse named Shrigalika, I started, sword in hand, as impetuous as you please. Even when I met policemen, I attacked them without thinking, and was not particularly angry when they took me for a thief and struck me. It seemed a game. But the sword dropped from my groggy hand, so that I only killed two or three before falling, my eyes rolling and bloodshot. The nurse ran to me at once, with bleats of misery; but my enemies fettered me.

"Misfortune banished madness: I was sober in a moment, and my returning wits at once admonished me: 'Dear me! This is no small disaster, due to my own dementia. Besides, everyone knows that Dhanamitra is my friend and Ragamanjari my bride. For my wrongdoing they will both be tracked down and

will certainly be apprehended tomorrow. Here, however, is a scheme which, if carried through according to my directions, will preserve them and possibly pull me out of this hole.'

"So, when I had mentally settled on a plan, I snarled at Shrigalika: 'Be off, you lump of anility, and be damned to you! It was you who introduced that cursèd courtezan, that scaly Ragamanjari to my enemy, my pretended friend Dhanamitra, crazy over his magic wallet! Because I stole that scoundrel's magic purse and prigged your daughter's priceless jewels, I have to lose my innocent life today!'

"She was supremely clever: she caught my drift, and lifting her hands, humbly approached the men. She softened them with her tear-choked tone and begged in my hearing: 'Gentlemen, please wait long enough for me to learn from him exactly what has been stolen from us.' When they consented, she turned again to me, fell at my feet, and said: 'Oh, sir, forgive your servant's single offense. Of course, you must hate Dhanamitra—he seduced your wife. But you ought to pardon your humble Ragamanjari—consider how long she was faithful to you. And when a girl lives by her looks, her gewgaws are her soul. Tell me where her gems are hidden.'

"With a pretense of pity, I said: 'Yes, death has his hand upon me. Why should I persist in hating the woman?' Then, as if answering her inquiry, I whispered in her ear that she must do thus and so. And

she, feigning enlightenment, said: 'Long life to you! May the gods be gracious to you! May our lord, the Anga king, liberate you—he loves a man. And may these kind gentlemen be good to you.' She hurried away; and I, by order of the police captain, was led to jail.

"The next day I met Kantaka, the jailer. He was rather conceited, imagined himself handsome and a lady killer, had recently inherited the job from his defunct father, and was somewhat young, flighty, and green. He gave me a bit of a lecture, then said: 'If you refuse to return Dhanamitra's magic purse or if you fail to restore your pickings and stealings to the citizens, you will see the eighteen tortures one after another and end up by learning what death looks like.'

" 'My dear sir,' I answered with a smile, 'suppose I should restore all the money I have stolen since I was born, I could not fill the greedy maw of the magic wallet of my enemy Dhanamitra, that false friend who stole Arthapati's wife. Besides, I would endure ten thousand tortures sooner than give it up. You may regard this as final.' In some such fashion proceeded our daily inquisition, half wheedling, half bullying, while with congenial food and drink my wounds were healing, so that in a few days I was quite my old self.

"Now at a time when the day was dying in a blaze of sunlight yellow as Vishnu's robe, Shrigalika came with joyful face and flaming dress, waved the attendants aside, snuggled close, and said: 'I congratulate you, sir. Your admirable plan bears fruit. As you bade me, I found Dhanamitra and said: "Sir, your friend, having met such and such a misfortune, sends you this message: 'I am today in jail through the fault of drink (natural when one associates with courtezans); do not delay; this very day you must memorialize the king in these terms: "Your Majesty, through Your Majesty's grace that magic purse, stolen by Arthapati, has been recovered. But I scraped an acquaintance with a certain gambling sharp, Ragamanjari's husband, because of his wonderful finesse in the polite arts, in poetical questions, and in social tittle-tattle. Knowing him, I humored his wife by sending her daily such trifles as dresses and jewels. Now that vulgar-minded gambler suspected me and was angered to the point of stealing the magic wallet and his wife's jewel casket. On his next thieving expedition he was caught by the police. Once in trouble, he obeyed the impulse of earlier affection for a nurse of Ragamanjari, who had followed him weeping, and revealed to her the spot where the jewels lay hidden. Now if he could be neatly inveigled into surrendering my magic wallet as well, then Your Gracious Majesty might pardon him."

" ' " 'Thus approached, the king will not execute me, but will actually try coaxing to make me restore your property. This will work to our advantage.' " Now Dhanamitra obeyed instructions exactly, and

with no great apprehension, so confident was he of your competence.

" 'I, for my part, convinced Ragamanjari with the token from you, got from her all the money I wanted, and, in the way that you indicated, won over Mangalika, nurse of Princess Ambalika. Using her as a bridge, I promoted a tremendous friendship between Ragamanjari and Ambalika. And since I was the bearer of fresh presents every day and was lavish with ravishing stories, I basked in the princess' favor.

" 'One day as she sat on the palace balcony, I made a pretense of fixing the lotus over her ear, as if it were falling (though it sat well enough); feigning to fumble, I knocked it off; then picked it up from the floor and dropped it on Kantaka, who on some errand had entered the courtyard near the princess' chambers; and in the act I laughed aloud, pretending to scare some billing and cooing pigeons. So he thought he had made a hit and glanced up with a smirk, while the princess laughed heartily at my carryings-on; then I went through a smart little pantomime, so that he might imagine her conduct flirtatious, with himself the object of her attention. The love-god tautened his bow and pierced the policeman with a venom-tipped, bewildering shaft; yet he contrived to stagger from the spot.

" 'In the evening I visited Kantaka's dwelling, with a little girl carrying a basket which, I said, came from Ragamanjari's house; it bore the seal of the prin-

cess' signet ring and contained scented betel gum, two silk garments, and an assortment of jewels. Sunk in passion's unplumbed sea, he regarded me as a rescue ship, and rejoiced exceedingly. And when I described the vicissitudes of the princess' sufferings, the simpleton turned quite maudlin. At his request, I brought him next day—saying that his love sent them—a sticky mass of gum (my own leavings), faded flowers, and soiled linen. And I took things from him for the princess, which I secretly threw away.

" 'When love's flame had thus been kindled, I took him aside and tutored him. "Sir," said I, "the mystic marks on your person are not misleading. For a neighbor of mine, a fortune-teller, informs me: 'This kingdom will fall into Kantaka's hand. His mystic marks make that a certainty.' Naturally, then, this princess loves you. So the king, having no other issue, will indeed be angry when he learns that you have had dealings with her, yet fearing his daughter's death, will not only not destroy you, but will actually make you crown prince. Thus this business fits into predestined events. Why not serve fortune, my son? If you can devise no means of entering the princess' chambers, still the interval between prison wall and park palings measures only three fathoms. For that distance you can have a tunnel dug by some handy house-breaker. And when you enter the park, you will find sentinels in our service. For her servants are truly devoted and will not split."

" ' "A splendid scheme, dear lady," said he. "I happen to have a thief, a genuine son of Sagara for digging. If we take him, he will do this job in a jiffy." "Which one is he?" said I. "And why not take him?" Whereupon he indicated you with the words: "The fellow who stole that magic wallet of Dhanamitra."

" ' "Well then," I said, "you must come to an agreement with him, swearing that, once this job is done, you will set him free with happy dispatch. And when the work is over, you will fetter him once more, reporting to the king that this well-known thief is quite recovered, but so audacious and vindictive that he will not disclose the magic purse. Then you will give him his happy dispatch—in a word, kill him. Thus your aim is gained, and the secret does not leak." He agreed with delight and waits without, having delegated me to tempt you. You must plan the next step.'

" 'You have left me little to say,' I replied pleasantly. 'Your plan covers the case. Bring him in.' So the fellow was introduced and took an oath to set me free, while I swore not to betray the secret.

"My fetters were removed, I enjoyed a bath, food, and ointment; then began at the corner of the prison wall where the darkness was dense and dug a tunnel with a snake's-head spade. And I reflected: 'The man took an oath to free me, while it was in his mind to kill me. Even if I kill him, I am no oath-breaker.'

As I emerged, he extended his hand to fetter me, but I felled him with a kick in the chest and cut off his head with a knife. Then I said to Shrigalika: 'Tell me, my dear, about the entrance to the women's apartments. I should not like this laborious job to prove unproductive. I will prig some little memento there before I leave.'

"At the spot which she indicated, I made my way into the maidens' quarters. There, in the blaze of jeweled lamps I beheld the princess securely sleeping among attendants who slumbered sound after their giddy games. She lay on a couch whose ivory feet were shaped to the likeness of recumbent lions and set with splendid precious gems; its pillows were stuffed with swan's-down; and scattered flowers were strewn about its border. The instep of her left foot nestled beneath the right heel; the ankle showed a slight, sweet outward sweep; the calves lay close; the dainty knees were bent; the thighs had a graceful curve. One soft and shapely arm hung limp over the hip; the other comely arm was bent so that its open, flowerlike hand rested beside her cheek. Over the swell of the hips clung close the shift of Chinese silk. The lower body had a trim elegance; the generous breasts, like two budding blossoms, trembled in answer to each deep breath. On the charming flexure of the neck shone a necklace of rubies strung on a string of burnished gold; one earring lay snug, peeping from beneath a lovely ear half hidden, while the jeweled orna-

ment of the lovely ear which was wholly visible, darted pencils of light, gilding the ribbons in the loose-hanging hair that they informally fastened. The slight parting of two red lips was hardly noted by eyes intent on the innate beauty of each; one blossom-hand caressed and decked her cheek; shadowed in the mirror of her upper cheek, the bed's gay canopy rendered cosmetic service; the lotus-eyes were closed, becalmed the banner of the brows. Upon her forehead the beauty-spot of sandal paste was loosened by little invading pearls of weariness; like vines that stretch toward the moon, the locks of hair curled toward her face. Securely sleeping, in quiet recovery from gay and giddy play, one side half sinking in the dazzling whiteness of the coverlet, she seemed a lightning-flash lying in the lap of an autumn cloud.

"At this vision the red fire of desire darted sparks; I was frightened; I lost all lust for stealing; nay, my own heart was stolen by her; I stood for a moment uncertain, but thinking hard: 'If I do not win this sweet-eyed maid, love will not let me live. Yet if I approach her without warning, she will surely scream and slay my hopes, for she is a mere girl. Then my life would be forfeit. So this must be my plan.' I took from a bracket a tablet colored with a resinous paste, drew a brush from a jewel box, and wrote the following quatrain, referring to her, lying thus asleep, and me, prostrate at her feet:

Your slave bows low to seek
This one petition meek:
Sleep not so like a bride—
I am not at your side.

"From a golden basket I took a preparation of scented betel leaves, a bit of camphor, and some coral-tree gum, chewing them to produce a liquor red as lac; so with the tip of my tongue I outlined on the plaster of the wall a pair of loving sheldrake birds. Then I effected an exchange of rings and tore myself away.

"Returning through the tunnel into the prison, I found a fellow-prisoner, an estimable citizen named Simhaghosha, with whom I had fraternized in recent days. I told him how I had killed the wretched Kantaka and how he could win liberty by turning informer. Then I departed with Shrigalika.

"On the highway I fell in with a police patrol. And I thought: 'I can escape by running. They would never touch me. But she would be caught, poor thing! So this is better.' I scuttled straight toward them, clapped my elbows to my back, wheeled around, and cried: 'Gentlemen, gentlemen! If I am a thief, tie me up. That is your job, not this elderly female's.'

"From so slight a hint she divined my strategy, obsequiously drew near, and whimpered: 'Dear gentlemen, this is my son. He has long been under treatment for lunatic seizures. Just yesterday he seemed pretty well, quite his true self indeed. So I made bold

to take off his strait-jacket; gave him a bath, ointment, two spick-and-span garments; made him eat boiled rice and milk; and left him free on his bed last evening. But in the night he had another seizure, shouted out: "I'm going to kill Kantaka and make love to the princess," and started down the highway full gallop. When I saw my son in such a state, I followed, not minding the time of night. Please, please tie him up and give him back to me.'

"I turned on her with a shout: 'You ancient female, who has ever tied the wind-god? How can these crows fetter the monarch of the birds? Heaven forbid!'

"Then those fellows said to her: 'You are a lunatic yourself. You think a lunatic is sane and set him free. Who cares to tie him now?' And to the tune of this taunting and trimming, she chased after me, crying. I led the way to Ragamanjari's house, where I lavished redundant consolation on my bride drooping under the strain of long separation; and there I spent the rest of the night. At dawn I found Mister Noble.

"Next I visited holy Marichi who, recuperating from his difficulty with the gay girl, had recovered divine insight at the heavy cost of renewed austerities, and who instructed me that my meeting with you, sir, would take place in the circumstances since realized. Meanwhile, Simhaghosha had disclosed Kantaka's dereliction and had been appointed to the vacant office by the gratified king. He procured me—through

the same tunnel from the prison—a second entrance to the chamber of the princess, who received me pleasantly, having learned the story from Shrigalika and taken a fondness to me.

"In these same days Chandavarman, whose suit of Simhavarman's daughter had been repulsed, angrily clashed with him and besieged the capital. While he strove to close in, the Anga king, too impetuous to await allies, however near, himself breached the wall, issued forth, and fought a superior enemy. In that great struggle Simhavarman's armor was pierced, and he was forcibly captured. Then Chandavarman roughly seized Ambalika, conveying her to his quarters for a forced marriage; and we heard that he was dressing for a wedding at daybreak.

"Now I was in Dhanamitra's house, making certain festive preparations for that same wedding; and I said: 'My friend, a group of kings allied with the Anga sovereign, is close at hand. Using the utmost secrecy, you and the city elders must direct them hither. When you arrive, you will see an enemy shorter by a head.'

"He assented. None noticed my knife as with the rest I entered the doomed scoundrel's quarters, noisy with holiday bustle, cluttered with wedding paraphernalia, packed by a press of people crowding in or squeezing out. He was just ready to grasp the blossom-hand of Ambalika which droning clergymen before the sacred fire were offering with scriptural ritu-

al, when I clutched his long, strong arm, and drove the knife to his heart. A few others also effervesced, and I sent them below.

"As I stalked through the smitten, shaken quarters, I perceived the sweetly trembling form of the wide-eyed princess; I carried her into an inner chamber, longing for a blissful kiss. Just at that moment I was honored by hearing your voice, sir, deep as the roll of thunder from fresh-forming clouds."

Now Prince Rajavahana, having listened to this history, said with a smile: "Well, as a rough customer you excel the professor of theft." He then turned to Upaharavarman with the words: "Your story now. You have the next turn." The latter smiled, bowed, and began.

CHAPTER VIII

UPAHARAVARMAN'S ADVENTURE

"During my wanderings I found myself one day in the Videha country. Without entering the capital Mithila, I sought repose at a hermit's dwelling outside. Here an aged hermit woman gave me water to wash my feet, and I rested for a moment on the terrace. But from her first sight of me she strangely shed a limitless stream of tears. And when I inquired: 'What is this, mother? Tell me the reason,' she recited her pitiful tale.

" 'You must have heard, sir—long life to you!—that the sovereign of this city Mithila bore the name Praharavarman. He and King Rajahansa of Magadha were friends as close as the fabled Bala and Shambala, while their dear queens, Vasumati and Priyamvada, were such friends as you never saw. So Priyamvada, with consort as escort, came to Blossom City, eager to see her dear Vasumati and wish her joy of her first baby.

" 'Just at that time the king of Magadha fought a great fight with the king of Malwa, after which the king of Magadha went the way that ends in the vanishing point. The king of Malwa took pains to spare our monarch, who started for his own land; but learning that his kingdom had been usurped by Vikatavar-

man and the other sons of his eldest brother Samharavarman, and hoping for the gift of some kind of army from his sister's son, lord of the Suhma country, he ventured on forest trails and was plucked bare by wild looters.

" 'Now I held the younger of two baby princes in my arms; alone with him I fled deep into the jungle, terrified by the flights of wild men's arrows. There I tumbled when a tiger's claws skimmed close, and the baby dropped from my hands beneath a cow that lay there dead. While the tiger tugged at the body, his life was snuffed out by a shaft from a bow. The baby was seized by wild Bhil lads. Then a shepherd carried me, swooning and senseless, to his hut, where he gently healed my hurts. When I recovered, I felt I must find my king; but I was perplexed, for I had no companion. At this moment my own daughter appeared, with a certain youth. She was weeping bitterly.

" 'When all her tears were shed, she related the seizing by the Bhil chieftain of the prince whom she was carrying when our caravan was shattered, the healing of her hurts by a certain forest-dweller, her peremptory refusal—from disgust at debasing miscegenation—when he planned to marry her after her recovery, his resentful attempt to cut off her head in a lonely thicket, the wretch's death at the hands of this chance-met youth, and her own marriage. The youth, when questioned, proved to be an attendant of the

king of Videha, detained by a commission and later following the trail.

" 'The youth and I sought out our master, carrying such a report of the little princes as burned his ears and Queen Priyamvada's. Now a harsh fate ordained for the king a long war with his eldest brother's sons, in which, after much extremely bitter fighting, he was captured and the queen too became a prisoner. On me lies a curse: old as I am, I cannot lose this forlorn life, and have, you see, taken to hermit wandering; while my daughter, forlornly living still, has, you see, actually taken service with Kalpasundari, Vikatavarman's queen. And yet, if the two princes had grown up without accident, they would by now be just attaining such years and looks as yours. Oh, if they were here, the king's kinsmen would not be behaving so impudently.' And she wept without restraint.

"When I had heard the old woman's story, I too felt a surge of tears, and I confided in her: 'If things stand so, mother, be comforted. In your hour of need did you not beseech a holy man to care for the prince? He took the lad and saw to his rearing. That was a happy inspiration. You wonder why? I am the prince. And I might kill wretched Vikatavarman if I could somehow come at him. But he has a great many younger brothers, and the people of the city side with them; while no man in this land knows me for what I am. Why, my own parents would not recognize me, others even less. I must fit a plan to this exigency.'

"At my words the old woman embraced me with tears, stroking my head time and again, while her breasts grew moist and she quavered tremulously: 'My dear boy, long life to you! Blessings on you! At last all-blessèd fate shows a favoring face. At last Praharavarman is king in Videha, for at last you are ready with long, strong arm to ferry him over his misery's shoreless sea. Ah, me! Ah, me! How happy Queen Priyamvada will be!' And in her overwhelming joy she gave me a bath, a meal, and other comforts. That night I lay on a straw mat in the hermitage, reflecting: 'This enterprise demands chicane. Women are the natural source of chicaneries. Therefore I will get from her the news of the women's side of the house and thus initiate some maneuvre.'

"I was still reflecting when night retreated, dislodged (as it seemed) by the snorting impetuosity of the coursers of the sun that rose from the sea, and rising, made mild weather, as if the day-maker were cooled by his ocean sojourn. I left my bed, repeated to the end my morning prayers, and said to my foster-mother: 'Tell me, mother. Have you knowledge of the female court of headstrong Vikatavarman?' Before the words were out, a woman appeared, at sight of whom my old nurse cried, in a voice half stifled by tears of joy: 'Pushkarika, my child, this is our master's son. This is the prince whom I heartlessly left in the forest. Thus he comes back to us.'

"Then she, overpowered by overwhelming joy,

wept copiously and babbled abundantly; and when her spasms were spent, she plunged into court gossip with her mother. To me she said: 'My Prince, Kalpasundari, daughter of King Kalindavarman of Assam, surpasses the very nymphs of heaven in accomplishments and beauty; and she keeps her husband well in hand. Hence Vikatavarman, for all his numerous seraglio, has a single charmer.'

"And I replied: 'Take her fragrant garlands from me. Awaken hatred for her husband by reprehending his outrageous infidelities. Stir her self-pity by picturing Vasavadatta and other heroines of romance who had such husbands. Spare no pains to discover and publish the king's flirtations, however secret, with other court ladies; so stiffen her pride.' To my foster-mother I said: 'In the same way you too must drop everything else and keep near the queen. It must be your task to give me a daily report of all that happens there. But your daughter, as I said, if our scheme is to have a sweet, successful ending, must follow Kalpasundari like a shadow.' And the two women followed my directions exactly.

"After a few days my foster-mother said: 'My dear son, we have produced and fixed in her such a state of mind that she thinks herself pitiable as a jasmine vine wedded to a nim tree. What next?' I painted my own likeness and said: 'Take her this. And when you have exhibited it and expatiated on it, she will be certain to ask: "*Is* there any man as good-

looking as this?" And you will answer: "What if there were?" Then you must let me know what she says to that.'

"She agreed and visited the court. When she returned, she took me aside to report: 'My son, I showed that picture to the adorable queen. She was a picture herself as she pored over it and said: "This world has found its master. For even the god of the blossom-bow does not possess such beauty. He in this picture is a perfect picture. Nor do I know anybody in the country who could make a thing so perfect. Who painted it?"

" 'I smiled and observed: "Your Majesty, it is as you graciously affirm. It is impossible to imagine even the blessèd love-god as being so beautiful. And yet, between sea and sea the world is wide and fate is great. Somewhere even such beauty might be realized. Suppose some youth were found, possessing such beauty and other things to match—artistic gifts, character, scientific attainments, education, style—*and* suppose he were of lofty birth, what good will he get from it?" "Mother," said she, "what can I answer? Body, heart, life—all is trivial and unworthy. So he will get nothing. But if this is not an imposition, you must do me the favor of revealing him as he is, so that my eyes may do what they were made to do."

" 'Then I clinched the matter by stating: "There is such a prince, traveling incognito. At the spring festival he chanced to catch a glimpse of you, playing

(like Charm in living flesh and blood) with your friends in the city park. He became a mere mark for the love-god's arrows and sought me out. His splendid beauty and yours, the unique attractions of both seemed to belong together; so I was induced long since to wait upon you with gifts from his hands, with garlands, wreaths, fragrant essences, and the like. With his own hand he painted his own likeness and sent it, to show how deep are his meditations on you. If this matter is settled, nothing is hard for him; he has much more than man's measure of strength, valor, and wit. I will introduce him this very day. You must grant him a meeting."

" 'She seemed to ponder a little before replying: "Mother, this is no longer much of a secret to you, so I will explain. My dear father felt a great affection for King Praharavarman. And Queen Priyamvada was a dear companion of my mother Manavati. Now these two ladies, before their babies were born, came to an agreement: 'The daughter of whichever has a daughter, shall be given to the son of the one who has a son.' But when I was born and Vikatavarman asked for my hand, Father unluckily gave me to him, thinking that Priyamvada's son had perished. My husband is hard-hearted, unfilial, none too good-looking, gawky in love-making, fat-headed about poetry, acting, and the arts, conceited about his courage, a terrible boaster, a liar, and he gives nice things to the wrong people. This husband doesn't please me much, es-

pecially lately. Why, he actually turned his back on my darling Pushkarika who was right beside him in the garden, and picked flowers with his own hand from the little sandal tree that I have tended like a baby, to adorn that girl Ramayantika, the girl who has fastened a jealous rivalry on me, who doesn't know her place, who always grabs the center of the stage. And just after I had left it, he amused himself with her on the jeweled bench in the enclosure on the pretty little hill. The man is impossible; he begins to neglect me. Why should I wait? Pain in this life clogs fear for the next. When a woman's heart has become a quiver for the arrows of the love-god, it is unendurable suffering to be forced to live with someone she doesn't want. So you must bring me together with that man today in the jasmine bower in the garden. Just merely from hearing about him I am terribly in love. And here is a pile of money. With its help I will set him in the rascal's place and give him my deep devotion. Then I shall begin to live." I promised and have returned. My prince must dictate the next step.'

"Then, when I had absorbed from her the details that concerned the terrain of the women's quarters, the disposition of the chamberlains, and the plan of the garden; when the sun's disc grew crimson as if blood were shed in the fall from Sunset Peak; when the sky spread dark and wide as if choked by smoke from the sun's coal dying as it sank in the waves of the

western sea; when the planet-heralded moon, proud of invading an elder's bed, rose up to enlighten me in my design against another's wife; when the god of the blossom-bow, ambitious to subdue the world, kindled his majesty with the smiling circle of the moon, eagerly moving (like the flower-face of Kalpasundari) to behold me, I duly sought my couch. There I fell into meditation: 'This business is as good as done. Yet there may be loss of virtue if I approach another's wife, though this is permitted by theologians in cases where both money and love are won. Furthermore, I commit this transgression while combining a design for the release of my parents from bondage; that should outweigh even this obliquity and leave me a balance, however slender, to virtue's account. And yet—and yet—when they learn it, what will Prince Rajavahana, what will my comrades say?' So I sank into troubled slumber.

"In dream I beheld the blessèd god with the elephant's head, who said to me: 'Belovèd Upaharavarman, feel no crippling indecision. In you dwells a spark of my spirit, and in that sweet lady the spirit of the goddess of the sacred river, wont to rumple Shiva's matted locks. In an earlier life, when vexed by my advances, she laid on me the curse of mortality; and I in turn cursed her, saying: "As here in heaven you bring delight to many, so—having become a mortal—be shared by more than one." Yet I added in answer to her plea: "I will myself give you a life's

devotion, yet I shall have one predecessor." Therefore do not shrink from this enterprise. It is destined.' I woke with calm joy, and spent the day in the thought of an adventurous meeting with my love, and of what should follow.

"On the next day the love-god, with no change in tactics, showered his shafts upon me. At last the lake of the sun's splendor dried, and muddy darkness grew. Black as that darkness was my cloak, and stout my mail, as, with sword in hand and other trusty appurtenances, recalling the landmarks mentioned by my old mother, I drew near the palace moat brimming with water. Beside the trench I found a bamboo pole which Pushkarika had providently deposited at the door of her mother's lodge; I laid it flat and crossed the moat; I stood it straight and scaled the wall. I reached the ground within by way of a brick stairway that climbed the height of the entrance gate. Once down, I skirted the row of dilly trees, followed the sandal-tree alley for a little distance, and heard to the north the plaintive cry of pairs of sheldrake birds. So to the north by the trumpet-flower path I felt my way for an estimated arrow's flight along the massive, bulging stucco wall; turned east by the sanded path with double border of clumps of *ashokas* and figs; and after a little faced south to enter the mango corridor.

"Then I touched the slide of my dark lantern and by its winking light inspected a thick-set bower of jasmine vines, sheltering a jeweled bench. On one side of

it I found an inner recess, walled about with rows of young yellow amaranths crowded with bloom, and a door made of red *ashoka* branches that had fallen to earth, dotted with the fresh glory of blossoming buds, pink with masses of gay flower clusters. I opened and entered. There was a couch thickly strewn with blossoms, lotus-leaf and dhak-wood receptacles filled with aphrodisiac delights, an ivory-handled fan, a vase holding scented water. I sat down and rested a moment, sniffing the heavy perfume.

"I heard the sound of gentlest feet. At once I left the rendezvous to stand outside, leaning on a red *ashoka* trunk. The lovely maid crept near—slowly, as if love were cooling—and not finding me there, was dreadfully shaken. Like a frantic swan she loosed a quivering cry, sweet with the passion that choked her throat: 'Too plain! I am deceived. I cannot live. O my heart, why deem the impossible possible; then suffer such disquiet that it cannot be? O blessèd archer-god, how have I sinned against you, that you burn me so, yet do not reduce me to ashes?'

"At this I opened the lantern and stood revealed. And I said: 'My jealous love, you have surely sinned deeply against the love-god, since you mock his very life, his goddess-bride with your beauty, his bow with the curve of your brows, his bee-strung bow-string with the luster of your dark curls, his shafts with your darting glances, his saffron-tinted banner of victory with the light of your lips, his foremost friend (the

southern breeze) with the breath of your perfumed sigh, his cuckoo with your sweeter song, his staff of flowers with your slender arms, his two bowls filled for the rite of universal conquest with your breasts, his lake of delight with your navel, his victorious chariot with your hips, the twin pillars of his temple's jeweled archway with your thighs, the flowers that deck his hair with the grace of your feet. The love-god has cause to torment you. But I am unoffending, and he earns blame by torturing me. Be kind, my sweet, give me life with your life-giving glances, for I am stung by the serpent of love.' And I embraced her. I clasped her close, while her eyes grew wide and soft in a passion of love.

"When she had yielded and when I perceived that her eyes were a little reddened and rolling, that her cheek was overspread with a gentle moisture, that her sweet murmurs were without restraint or coherence, that she bore blushing traces of teeth and nails, that her limbs grew limp as in despair, I relaxed the tension of mind and body, sinking into a state like hers. So severed yet united, we performed love's final ritual, abiding for a time in utter mutual trust, like two who long have known each other's thoughts. Then, with a long and burning sigh, with a somewhat wistful glance, I timidly stretched out my arms, embraced her gently, and touched her face with a tender kiss.

"Her tears started as she lifted lovely hands to her brow and said: 'Remember, my lord, if you go, my

life goes too. Take me with you. Else, I am nothing. I have no use save in your service.'

"And I replied: 'My sweet, what man of mind does not exult in a woman's love? If your heart is set on kindness to me, you must follow my instructions with no delay. Secretly show my likeness to the king and say: "Does this figure attain the limit of masculine charm, or does it not?" And he is certain to say: "It most assuredly does." Then continue: "Well, there is a certain hermit woman who has gained assurance by foreign travel, a true mother to me. She displayed to me this pictured form and said: 'I know a magic spell by use of which you may assume this form, if first you fast, then on a day of new or full moon, in a sequestered spot, at night, alone, you offer in a sacrificial fire abandoned by chaplains a hundred twigs of sandal wood, a hundred twigs of fragrant aloe, handfuls of camphor, and many silk garments. Then you must ring a bell. Now if your husband, summoned by the tinkle of the bell, shall confess to you his every secret, then close his eyes and embrace you, this form shall pass to him, while you regain your former figure. If this plan pleases you and your husband, there must be no deviation from the ritual prescribed.'

"' "If this refiguration commends itself to you, sir, come to a decision with friends, counselors, younger brothers, and citizens, and attend the ceremony approved by them." To this he will doubtless assent.

Then, when with due ritual the priest has pacified the sacrificial victim where the paths cross in this very garden, and when the fire is abandoned, I will enter under cover of the smoke and take my stand in this same bower. But when twilight darkens, you will whisper with a humorous smile to Vikatavarman: "You are a deceiver, and ungrateful. In the very figure gained by my favor, a figure that makes holiday for the eyes of the world, you plan to entertain my jealous rivals. For my part, I would not raise a vampire to my own destruction." Then you must seek me secretly, reporting what answer he makes. Thereafter, I shall know what to do. And see that Pushkarika obliterates my footprints in the garden.' She agreed, reverencing my words like a lesson in Scripture; still athirst with desire, she crept to her chamber. And I went as I had come, and sought my own dwelling.

"So the adorable lady played her part, and the rogue followed her leading. And the news of a miracle to be went buzzing among the citizens: 'Have you heard? By virtue of a magic spell of the queen's, King Vikatavarman is going to get a figure fit for a god. I don't think this trickery is exactly religious. And how about a possible miscalculation? They say the queen herself will do the job in the garden outside her own chamber. Yes, even the counselors have discussed and approved, and they are wise as the professor in heaven. If it works, it is the biggest miracle ever.

Well, you can't reckon the power of gems and spells and drugs.' While such gossip went the rounds, when the day of new moon came, when darkness deepened in the advancing hour of twilight, there rose from the garden outside the queen's chambers a column of smoke, empurpled like Shiva's neck. And the smell of sacrifices—milk, ghee, curds, sesame, yellow mustard, suet, flesh, blood—floated down the breeze and filled the air. And when the smoke suddenly thinned, I had entered there.

"Then the stately lady came to the summer-house, embraced me, and said with a smile: 'Rogue, your plan is successful, and that animal is finished. I tempted him in the fashion you taught me, saying: "Deceiver, I will not give you perfect beauty. For with that beauty you will be sought after by heavenly nymphs, not to mention women. And you are giddy as a bee. There is no telling where one so heartless would alight." He fell at my feet and said: "Belovèd, forgive my knaveries. Hereafter I would not notice another woman, even mentally. Hasten to fulfil your promise."

" 'So I have come to you in this wedding dress. At first, this wife was given you by love as priest, with passion's flame for witness; with this holy fire as witness, she is given again by her own heart.' And tiptoe on my instep, she clasped my neck with two arms like graceful vines while the tender intertwining fingers figured interlacing leaves, sweetly lifted her face—

a flower-face willingly lifted—and with wild, wide glances kissed me again and again.

"Then I said: 'Stay right here among the amaranth clusters, while I go forth to finish what must be finished.' So I left her, approached the sacrificial fire, and rang the bell which hung from an *ashoka* bough, while she warbled, enticing our enemy like a minister of fate. And I proceeded to offer in the fire the aloe, the sandal, and the rest.

"The king drew near the appointed spot; and when I perceived that a measure of doubt and amazement laid hold on him as he stood, I said: 'Tell me the truth once more, calling this sacred fire to witness. I will dower you with this beauty, if you will not use it to make love to my rivals.' Then a clear confidence arose in him that this was no chicanery, but the queen herself; and he prepared to swear an oath.

"But I smiled and said: 'Why swear? What mortal woman can supplant me? And if you can win the love of nymphs, then do so. But tell me your secrets. When they are fully told, the old, accustomed form will drop from you.'

"And he confessed: 'I hold in bondage my father's younger brother Praharavarman. With my counselors I have resolved to poison him and proclaim his death by indigestion. To my younger brother Vishalavarman I have planned to give an army division for an assault on the Pundra country. A leading citizen from Panchala and a trader in my protection have

quietly advised me that a certain diamond worth the wide world, can be had for next to nothing from a Greek named Khanati. And a householder of my intimate acquaintance, a leader in his district, one Shatahali, has come to employ—for my advantage—certain army generals in an expedition to destroy by popular rioting that liar, that boaster, that rascally partisan Anantasira. Such are my secret plans for the moment.'

"Having listened, I said to him: 'Your life is done. Receive the reward that fits your conduct,' and bisected him with my knife. I flung the divided body into the handy fire that was blazing high with sacrificial butter, and there it was consumed. Then I comforted my heart's dearest, who showed some womanish distress; went, holding her flower-hand, to her chambers; with her permission summoned all the ladies, and straightway paid them my respects. After brief and pleasant conversation with these astonished ladies, I dismissed them all; then, clasping close my bride, spent a night that seemed too short. And from her lips I learned the character of the court.

"At dawn I bathed, repeated my prayers, and met my counselors, to whom I said: 'Gentlemen, my nature has changed with my form. The father whom I thought to poison, must be released and reinstated in this kingdom, which is his. We must show him filial obedience. There is no guilt like parricide.'

"I also summoned my brother Vishalavarman and

said: 'My dear, the Pundras are at present impecunious. If smitten by the blind madness of resentment, they might so forget themselves as to assail our realm, which is prosperous. Therefore postpone your campaign until failure of seed grain or ripened crops. For the moment a military movement is ill-advised.'

"To the two prominent citizens I said: 'I should lose virtue if I acquired a great treasure for no true equivalent, so pay its just price.'

"Next I summoned the district leader Shatahali and explained: 'It was planned to destroy Anantasira as being a partisan of Praharavarman. Why kill him now that my father is reinstated? Make no further move in this affair.' So they, recognizing every detail as squaring with their secret knowledge, were convinced of my identity; bestowed astonished praise upon me and the queen; released my parents from confinement; and restored their kingdom. And after I had secretly conveyed a complete account of my procedure through the old nurse, my parents climbed the climax of delight when I fell at their feet, and graciously invested me with the dignity of crown prince.

"With my spirit thus at rest, I had experience of pleasures embittered by the pain of separation from my prince, when presently I learned from a dispatch of my father's friend Simhavarman that Chandavarman was assaulting Champa; and realizing that aid to friends is no less incumbent than slaughter of enemies, I started with a considerable force stripped for

quick service. In so doing, I was heaped with cumulative holiday rejoicing, for I perceived the glory of my revered prince."

When he had heard this story, Prince Rajavahana smiled and said: "See now! The invasion of another's bed, effected by chicane at that, yet undertaken to release parents from the pains of bondage, enacted by annihilation of a wicked enemy, resulting in the acquisition of a kingdom, has brought the happiest consequences, both in money and virtue. What enterprise, indeed, of the intelligent fails to show a fair issue?" Then, fixing a long and loving glance on Arthapala's face, he bade him relate his adventure. The latter bowed and began.

CHAPTER IX

ARTHAPALA'S ADVENTURE

"I too, Your Majesty, intent on the same purpose as these friends, wandered the circle of the lands bounded by the billow-garlanded sea and came one day to the city of Kashi, to Benares. When I had bathed in the sacred pool whose waters are limpid as a fractured gem, when I had reverently worshiped Benares' lord, the ever-blessèd Shiva, I wandered still until I met an elongated fellow with sturdy arms like bars of iron, with loin cloth tightly girt, with eyes swollen and red from ceaseless weeping. And I reflected: 'This is a rough specimen, yet his eye shines dim through showers of misery and his habitude betokens desperation. The poor man is clearly careless of life and is about to meet some calamity rooted in the suffering of one he loves. I will ask him whether friendly service is possible, even from me.'

"So I approached and said: 'My dear sir, these regimentals hint despair. If it is no secret, I could wish to learn the source of your sorrow.' He inspected me respectfully, then said: 'What harm? Listen'; and seated with me beneath an oleander, he told his tale.

" 'My good sir, my name is Purnabhadra. I am a householder's son, but hung loose on society in the East. Though carefully reared by my father, I obeyed

the call of fate and made a profession of thievery. Now in this city of Kashi, while stealing in the house of an eminent business man, I was caught with the coin and fettered. I was condemned to die and the signal was given by the chief counselor, Kamapala, who looked on from the height of the palace entrance-gate; whereupon a must elephant called Death-winner, to whom murder was sport, lumbered toward me with monstrous trunk curled back, while the jangling of his bells was reinforced by throaty yells from the crowd.

" 'As he charged, I scolded him defiantly; as he aimed a glancing blow with his tusk, I thrust two stout arms into a perforated stick of wood and scrubbed his mouth; he seemed dismayed and turned. The infuriated driver headed him back with blistering words and kicks of unrestrained ferocity. Again with double rage I scolded and thumped until he turned and trotted off. Then, when I followed with boisterous abuse, the rabid driver screamed: "I'll kill you, you damned dummy of an elephant!" pounded the creature time and again with a sharp goad at the corner of the eye, and contrived to make him face me.

" ' "Take away this wormy animal!" I shouted. "Bring on a real elephant. I should like a moment's sport before I go my destined way." And when the beast saw me bellowing like mad, he disregarded the driver's stern persuasions and bolted. Then the counselor summoned me and said: "My good man, this

beast is death in the flesh; Death-winner is his name; murder is his sport. In spite of all, you have mastered him. Now if you abandoned your degrading profession, could you earn an honest living in our service?" "Yes, sir," I said; and he became a friend.

" 'One day I made quiet inquiries, and he confided his history to me: "In Blossom City lived Dharmapala, counselor of a victorious monarch, famed for prudence and sacred learning. His son Sumitra emulated the father in the prudential virtues. I am Sumitra's younger brother, but by another mother. My father, being conventional, tried to curb my dalliance with the gay girls, but my naughtiness was ineradicable. So I left home and wandered to the ends of the earth. In this city of Benares I visited a garden in order to worship Love's chastiser, Shiva, and there I chanced to behold Kantimati, daughter of King Chandasimha of Benares, playing ball with girl friends. I loved her, contrived to become acquainted, and secretly enjoyed her society in the palace. She became pregnant by me and bore a son.

" ' "The child seemed stillborn; lest the secret be let slip, a servant laid the body on a mound in the garden, whence a Bhil woman conveyed it to the graveyard. But as she returned by the highway at night, she was seized by policemen, was menaced with tortures, and in her fright she half revealed the secret. By order of the king she pointed me out as I slept securely at night in a recess beneath the mound in the

garden; I was tied with adequate cords, was taken to the graveyard, and was on the point of perishing beneath a sword held aloft by a headsman. But through fate's power I burst my bonds, seized the sword, killed that proletarian and a few others, and made my escape.

" ' "As I wandered helpless in the forest, I was approached one day by a maiden with her maidservant. Her beauty was heavenly, but she was weeping. Her lifted flower-hands sweetly framed her face, her curls played gaily round her cheeks as she bowed and sat with me in the cool shade of a mighty forest banyan tree; and when I eagerly inquired: 'Who are you, my soul? Whence come you? For what cause do you show favor to my poor person?' her answer was unstinted honey: 'Sir, I am the daughter of Manibhadra, a lord of the Yaksha demigods, and my name is Taravali. On one occasion, as I returned from Malabar, where I had paid homage to Lopamudra, the sage Agastya's wife, I found a crying baby boy in a Benares graveyard. I took him and loved him so that I carried him to my parents, and my father carried him to the palace hall of our god and king, Kubera, who summoned me and asked: "Maiden, what is your feeling toward this boy?" "Such tender love for this tender love," I replied, "as if he were a child of my body." "The poor girl is right," said he and related a terrific tale that related to the baby.

" ' " 'Of the complicated detail I grasped only this

—that you are Shaunaka and Shudraka and Kamapala, the same man in diverse incarnations; that Bandhumati and Vinayavati and Kantimati are the same woman; that Vedimati, Aryadasi, Somadevi are one and the same; that Hansavali, Shurasena, and Sulochana are not different persons; that Nandini, Rangapataka, and Indrasena are identical.

" ' " 'Now the herdsman's daughter whom you married when you were Shaunaka, was Aryadasi then, but today myself, Taravali. And the boy, when you were Shudraka, was born to me (Aryadasi in that incarnation) but reared by Vinayavati out of love persisting subliminally. To her, in her present life as Kantimati, the same child has been born. Thus fate snatched him from the jaws of many deaths and let me have him; and I, obeying the god's command, gave him to Vasumati, queen of Rajahansa who was then enduring hardships in the jungle, that he might serve her son Rajavahana, world-emperor to be. Thereafter, graciously dismissed by those whose word I honor, I came, by destiny's devious device, to bow low at the lotus-feet of one whom death has mouthed and dropped.'

" ' "On hearing this, I repeatedly embraced my love of many lives, consoling her over and over while happy tears rolled down my cheeks; then in a great palace which her divine power revealed, I reveled day and night in such delights as earth can hardly know.

" ' "After two or three days I said to my adorable

lady: 'My dear, I wish to repay a wrong: I wish to enjoy the pleasure of vengeance upon Chandasimha, who threatened my life.' And she replied with a smile: 'Come, dear. I will take you—to see Kantimati.' So at midnight I was taken to the king's palace. There I held a naked sword at his throat, awakened him, and while he shuddered, said: 'I am your son-in-law. Without permission from you I approached your daughter. I have come to wipe out that transgression by showing an interest in you.' Fearfully frightened, he groveled, saying: 'The transgression is mine. I was a fool. When you did me the honor of meeting my daughter, I broke all bounds like a lunatic and decreed your death. From this moment,' said he, 'Kantimati is at your disposal, and this kingdom, and my life, of course.' The next day he assembled all his counselors and gave me his daughter's hand with due ceremony. So Taravali told Kantimati the story of her son, and the tale of their former lives to Somadevi, Sulochana, and Indrasena. In this fashion I pass, indeed, as counselor, but am in fact crown prince, and spend gay days with gayest ladies."

" 'So he lived, the one sure friend of everybody, constant in kindness even to a creature like me. And when an intestinal disorder took his father-in-law to heaven—the queen's eldest brother Chandaghosha having previously tapered to annihilation in consequence of excessive attachment to women—the

worthy man anointed Prince Simhaghosha, a lad of some five years, and gave him fitting education. But the boy has the quick passions of youth; and certain cronies of slander-loving Chandaghosha have trapped him, saying: "That snake violated your sister. Afterward, while the king slept, he lifted a sword to kill him. The king, scarcely awake, was frightened into compliance and gave his daughter. Then he poisoned the king's eldest heir Chandaghosha, and at this moment is using you, whom he thinks a helpless boy, as a figurehead to lull suspicion in the people; but presently he will make way with you—he is quite callous. So strive to send him to the death-god's city." Though thus corrupted, the boy was unable, from fear of the fairy Taravali, to do him an injury.

" 'In these same days the queen dowager Sulakshana, observing an alteration in the bearing of Kantimati, made affectionate inquiry. "Your Majesty," she said, "you cannot play fast and loose with me. Give me the true explanation of the recent alteration in your flower-face." And she replied: "Madam, can you recall that I ever played fast and loose with you? My friend and fellow-wife Taravali is grumpy because our husband, when alone with her, blunderingly used my name to her; she disdained my fondness, she scorned my submissive courtesy, she flounced away in a huff. And our husband is depressed. Hence my melancholy." The pith of this Sulakshana whispered to her belovèd boy, who now forgets his fear. While

Kamapala betrayed the pain of separation in features jaundiced by longing for his love, in eyes dimmed by tears that manhood would not shed, in somewhat sapless speech turned arid (as it seemed) by burning sighs, while he could hardly perform his functions at court, the boy had him seized and fettered by conspirators. His imputed crimes are trumpeted from place to place, and his eyes are to be torn out with such savagery that death may ensue. This is why I stand alone and weep my fill; this is why I gird my loins and long to die in that most generous presence.'

"Now when I learned my father's perilous plight, I said in a rush of tears: 'My honest friend, why hide the truth from you? I am that son of his whom the Yaksha lady gave in pledge to Queen Vasumati, that he might humbly serve Prince Rajavahana. I feel in me the power to kill a thousand hirelings with uplifted weapons in order to rescue my father. Yet if one man, during the scuffle, should sink a knife in his body, then all my effort would be but an offering in dead ashes.'

"Before the words were out, a great snake raised his head through a hole in the wall. I charmed him and drugged him and caught him, then said to Purnabhadra: 'Dear friend, our end is gained. Unnoticed in the scuffle, I will let this fellow drop and will make him bite Father, but will arrest the poisoning process just at the point where he will be left for dead. Meanwhile, you must fearlessly enlighten my mother, saying: "Your son whom the Yaksha lady entrusted to Queen Vasumati in the forest, has returned, has learned his father's plight from me, and will use his wit to do thus and so. Now you must overcome your diffidence and send this petition to the king: 'It is doubtless a warrior's duty to chastise a scoundrel, whether relative or not, without compunction; but it is a woman's duty to follow the fate of her husband, whether scoundrel or not. Therefore I shall mount the pyre with him. Pray authorize the final rite that befits a young woman.' And he will certainly grant this request. Then you must convey your husband to his own dwelling and lay him on a bed of sacred grass in an unfrequented corner screened by a curtain, while you wait near by in the costume of a wife who follows her husband in death. Presently I will arrive in the outer court and will be admitted by you. I will resuscitate Father, and we will follow his recommendation as to subsequent action." ' The fellow agreed and joyfully bustled off.

"At the place of proclamation I climbed a tamarind tree with thick, spreading branches, and lay hidden, while the crowd sought the highest spots they could find; and high and low their chattering buzz began. Then my father was brought forth, his arms bound like a thief's behind his back, the center of a gabbling throng. Just below me they halted him while the headsman thrice made this proclamation: 'This is Kamapala, the counselor. Coveting the king-

dom, he clandestinely poisoned his sovereign Chandasimha and the heir apparent, Chandaghosha. Further, he plotted evil against our present monarch Simhaghosha, who now comes to years of discretion. He confidentially summoned to a secret interview the counselor Shivanaga, likewise Sthuna and Angaravarsha, and babbled of royal murder. These loyal men reported the plot, and the judge decreed deprivation of vision as the legal penalty for this kingdom-coveting Brahman. He is now on his way to have his eyes torn out. And if any second criminal be detected, His Majesty will in like manner visit upon him the appropriate penalty.'

"While the crowd cheered this announcement, I dropped the snake—whose hood swelled wickedly—on my father. Then I jumped down as if terrified; escaped identification in the throng; and when the vicious serpent stung my father, I quickly checked the venom's effect, saving his life, though he seemed dead as he sank to the ground. 'It is a fact,' I cried, 'that chastisement from heaven falls on him who scorns his king. The sovereign planned to take his sight—fate takes his life.' Some approved my dictum, but others carped; while the snake bit the headsman too and left the scene; for the frightened crowd dispersed and made way for him.

"Then my mother, learning the facts from Purnabhadra, displayed peculiar self-possession even in face of such an exigency: accompanied by servants of

the family, she boldly came on foot, sat holding my father's head in her lap, and made this request of the king: 'This is my husband; whether guilty or not guilty toward you, heaven only knows. That speculation is profitless to me. But he held my hand in marriage; I should bring dishonor on your family, should I abandon him. Pray permit me to mount the pyre with my dear lord.' This proposal delighted the sovereign, who decreed: 'Let there be rites consonant with family dignity. After their celebration, let my sister's husband experience the ultimate sacrament.'

"Now the headsman departed this life because I prevented every application of medical magic; and when I pointed out that Kamapala had been bitten by the same cobra, the king permitted transference to his own dwelling for a funeral eulogy. So my father was brought home and laid on a bed of sacred grass in an unfrequented corner. Then my mother donned her death-vestments, bade her friends a pathetic adieu, paid lingering worship to the house divinities, earnestly repressed the servants' lamentations, and entered alone where stood my father's bed. There she beheld her husband sound and well, for I had previously been admitted by Purnabhadra and had neutralized the poison.

"With the gushing tears of supreme delight she fell at her husband's feet; then hugged me again and again, while her breasts grew moist and joyful sobbing struggled with stammering speech: 'My son, I wickedly

deserted you the moment you were born. I was heartless to you; how can you be so kind to me? Ah, but your father did no wrong; you were right to snatch him from the jaws of death. Still, Taravali has no feeling; she really received you from the god Kubera and gave you to Queen Vasumati, did not give you to me. No, it was quite natural. I was not good enough. Such a heap of luck it would be if a wretch like me could drink in the nectar of your baby-talk. Come, embrace me!' And again and again she stroked my head, drew me to her lap, scolded Taravali, hugged me, drenched me with tears; her slender body quivered, and for a time she seemed another woman.

"My father also, lifted from hell to heaven, from woe so bitter to happiness so complete, extracted every detail of the story from Purnabhadra, and counted himself more blest than heaven's blessèd king. But when I had given a brief account of myself, I said—for my parents were lost in joy and wonder: 'You must give orders for our future course of action.' 'My dear son,' said my father, 'this house of ours is walled in an extensive circuit, it is an inexhaustible repository of weapons, and its defenses are unassailable. Moreover, many feudatories are under obligation to me, and a majority of the citizens do not approve my degradation. Besides, I have some thousands of soldiers, with friends, sons, and wives. So let us hold our ground for a few days, stirring passions foreign and domestic. We will direct these passions; will instigate

to effort subjects, enemies, and hereditary foes; and will extirpate this intractable king.' 'So be it. I see no objection,' said I, approving Father's plan.

"While we stood thus on the defensive, the king learned the story with qualms of self-reproach and applied various offensive maneuvres, which we countered day by day. In this posture of affairs I discovered through Purnabhadra the location of the king's sleeping quarters and at once dug a tunnel with a snake's-head spade, starting from the corner of the wall of our own dwelling and debouching in a girls' dormitory, a regular heaven on earth, where the womenfolk were flustered on beholding me. One maiden among them seemed the crescent moon, disconcerting with her loveliness the dark of the underworld; or the earth-goddess in living flesh and blood; or Shiva's bride descending to vanquish demons; or the blessèd love-god's love sojourning in the world below; or kingly glory hiding in a hole to escape the sight of so many unworthy kings; or an image of burnished gold, dazzling in splendor. She trembled before me like a sandal sapling before the southern breeze.

"In this company of ladies, constituted as described, there was a silver-haired chaperon—she seemed a stalk of the white-blooming grass—who fell at my feet and said with timid dejection: 'Pray grant us a guaranty of safety, for we are women, and have no other recourse. Are you a prince, athirst for com-

bat with devils, eager to enter hell? Pray tell us your name and the cause of your coming.'

"And I replied: 'Ladies, feel no fear. I am Arthapala, son of the distinguished Brahman Kamapala and of Queen Kantimati. For good and sufficient reasons I was threading a tunnel connecting my house with the palace and, in so doing, encountered you. Tell me,' said I, 'who you are and how you come to dwell here.'

"The old lady lifted her hands and spoke: 'Blest are we, my prince, that these eyes see you safe. Listen. To Chandasimha, your mother's father, Queen Lilavati bore two children, Chandaghosha and Kantimati. Now Chandaghosha, the heir apparent, was excessively attached to women; consequently he faded away and went to heaven during the pregnancy of his queen Acharavati, who later gave birth to a daughter, the maiden here present, Manikarnika. But the pangs of labor slew her, and she followed her husband. Then King Chandasimha summoned me secretly and issued orders, thus: "Riddhimati, this maiden shows the signs of future fortune. Hence I plan to educate her properly and give her to Darpasara, heir of the monarch of Malwa. Yet I feel some fear, derived from the doings of Kantimati, as to the public acknowledgment of nubile maidens. You therefore (with generous assistance) are to rear her in a great subterranean dwelling, which I have constructed, to baffle my enemies, in the recesses of an

artificial hill, providing it with numerous rooms for social and theatrical use. It contains supplies that you could not exhaust in a hundred years." Hereupon in the double thickness of the wall of his own apartment he shot back a panel for a cubit's breadth and through the opening compelled us to enter this place, where we have seen the passing of twelve years and where this girl has grown from child to woman. Meanwhile, the king has quite forgotten. By her grandfather, it is true, this maiden was destined to Darpasara; but before her birth, your mother Kantimati won her in a game of chance, so that her own mother promised her as wife to you. Hence you alone, my prince, should plan what is proper.'

"And I rejoined: 'I must first finish a small job in the palace; then I will return and do what is right by you.' So I followed a passage which they lighted, shot the panel, entered the chamber where Simhaghosha slept securely at dead of night, and captured him alive. Like the king of birds with a snake, I clutched and bore my wriggling prey through that same hole in the wall into the presence of the ladies. I took him home, fastened his feet with fetters of iron, and privately exhibited him to my parents, his face dirty from measuring the dwelling, his eyes reddened by copious tears; and I told the story of the secret passage.

"My parents, overjoyed, multiplied his fetters—for they were alert to his evil disposition—and with

all due ceremony bestowed the damsel's hand upon me. The kingdom lacked a lord and fell to us. My mother suggested the liberation of Simhaghosha, but we dreaded sedition and kept him a prisoner. Such was our situation when the Anga king, Simhavarman, was assailed by enemies; and we, aware of his devoted loyalty to you, sir, marched to his relief. Thus I was honored by sprinklings of dust from your lotus-feet. And now let Simhaghosha, though all unworthy, cleanse himself of all his trespasses by propitiatory prostration at your feet." And Arthapala raised his hands and bowed.

Then Prince Rajavahana spoke: "Great valor, and great ingenuity of design! Let your kinsman be liberated and brought before me." He turned to Pramati, saying with an affectionate smile: "We now await your adventure."

CHAPTER X

PRAMATI'S ADVENTURE

He bowed and told this tale. "Your Majesty, when widely wandering in search of you, I once came to a halt beneath a lordly, sky-scraping tree that grew on Vindhya's side. Since still the declining sun, like a spray of blossoms, adorned the brow of the West, I bathed in the waters of a pool; then paid homage to the twilight, while darkness slowly leveled gulch and hill. To make a bed, I strewed the ground with flowering twigs; then lifted my hands and prayed: 'May the resident divinity of this tree be my refuge as I sleep unguarded in this wild wood, fierce with its hosts of murderous prowlers, with its deep caves puffed with floods of nocturnal darkness black as Shiva's neck.' And I lay down, pillowing my head on my left arm.

"A moment later, my limbs were strangely thrilling to such felicity as earth can hardly show, my senses were steeped in ecstasy, my soul was filled with life and joy, my hair was rapturously erect, my right arm throbbing auspiciously. I slowly opened wondering eyes to behold above me an awning of dazzling silk, that seemed a beam of the spotless moon. Glancing toward the left, I observed gay couches along a mortared wall, where women most securely slept.

Turning to the right, I perceived a single maiden, who lay on a bed white as a mass of nectar foam. The finely woven shift slipped from her bosom; to her person clung clustered light like the tusk of the primal boar; loose on her shoulder hung a silken robe that recalled the sea of milk: she seemed the earth-goddess, fainting with fear. With the breath of sighs that caused red rays of light to ripple gaily round her blossom-lip, sighs that were laden with fragrance from her flower-face, she seemed to fan the dying spark of love slain by the deadly fire of Shiva's eye; the lovely eyes were closed, the face asleep, as when imprisoned bees lie slumbering in the folded lily's cup. She seemed a jeweled vine from the wishing-tree in Paradise, plucked by the arrogant elephant of heaven, and tossed to earth.

"And I reflected: 'What has become of the wild forest? And how is it replaced by this massive palace that towers like the war-god's sharp-pronged lance and grazes the empyrean vault? What has become of the flowery bed strewn on the forest floor? And how is it replaced by this couch of swan's-down and silk, brilliant as moon-rays massed? Who are these lovely sleepers, calm as a bevy of nymphs that have swooned on falling from swings whose cords are made of moonbeams? And who is she of the lotus-hands, who lies like a goddess on a bed of silk spotless as the full moon of autumn? No goddess can she be, for she shrinks like a lotus-cluster at the soft caress of moonlight; for

her cheek, dotted with pearls of weariness, seems a mango fruit, white and ripe, dappled with drops of sap that dripped from the broken stem; for her breath comes panting, fired by her new-won womanhood; the pigment pales on her breast; her garments show the soil of use. She must be mortal woman. Yet—heaven be praised!—her youth is virgin: for her limbs are supple, though rich in feminine grace; her complexion, though winsome exceedingly, is interwoven with pallor; her face has nothing florid, a stranger to the pressure of remorse; her lip is a jewel, clear as coral; her firmly modeled cheek is not too rounded nor too red, but like the petal of a champak bud; she sleeps in sweet security, free from fear of shafts of love; her breast is innocent of passion's pitiless deformation; and I, whose heart respects the bounds of righteousness—I love her. But if my love is fully shown in an embrace, she will surely wake with a scream. Yet, not embracing her, I shall never sleep again. Well, come what may, I will put fortune to the test.' So I touched her gently, but myself feigned sleep, in a strange commingling of passion and timidity.

"A curious tremor shook her. Though her left side thrilled with pleasure, the slow beginnings of a yawn left her limbs languid. The lifting lashes quivered over half-opened eyes still dimmed by weariness, the perfect charm of her girlish glance subdued by uncompleted sleep. Stirred by miracle-working love, her shy states of feeling shifted (but description is vain)

being compounded of fright and wonder and joy and passion and apprehension and gayety and woman's wish to charm. The voice that strove to wake her maidens, the heart that was yielding to assaulting love, the limbs on which her agitation issued as pearls of moisture—these with a mighty effort she held to their service. Sweetly peeping, her eager eyes marched to slow reconnaissance of my person. She raised her head and shoulders, yet still lay timidly upon the bed.

"For all my depth of love, a drowsiness overcame me; I know not how. My body suffered sensations of discomfort, and I awoke. Awake, I saw before me the same wild forest, the same great tree, the same couch of leaves. And night grew light with dawn. And in my mind was fixed this mystery and purpose: 'Was it dream? Hallucination? Illusion sent by devils or by gods? Come what may, I will not leave this bed of earth until I know the truth. While life persists, I will lie down beside this goddess.'

"A woman appeared before me. Her slender figure drooped like a chaplet of lilies scorched by the rays of the sun; her robe was travel stained. Her lips, strangers to rouge and showing pale, their luster fading under burning sighs, seemed to be spouting dusky smoke from the gloomy fire of separated love; her eyes were reddened, as if unceasing streams of weeping had drained them, leaving only blood behind. With her abundant hair plaited in a single braid and fluttering

only within the bonds of chaste decorum, with her black hood of a fabric finely woven but tattered, she seemed the animate banner of wifely fidelity. Though sadly wasted, she retained, through heavenly intervention, some freshness of color.

"I fell at her feet. Two graceful arms that quivered with joy helped me to rise. She embraced me as a son, stroked my head; and the milk of tender affection flowed from her breasts; tears less scalding choked her utterance as she lovingly stammered: 'My dear, my dear! Did Vasumati, queen of Magadha's monarch, tell you how Manibhadra's daughter, Taravali, delivered to her hand the baby Arthapala and disappeared after narrating a strange tale learned from the god Kubera and relating to herself, her husband, her son, and her friends? Well, I am Taravali, the mother of you boys. Vexed with unreasoning pique, I flounced away from the protecting care of your father Kamapala, son of Dharmapala and younger brother of Sumantra. Penitent and lonely, I was visited in a vision by a goblin-like creature who laid a curse on me, saying: "You are jealous. That you may suffer a full year of loneliness, I will possess you." And even as he spoke, I awoke, imp-ridden. That year is gone, long as a thousand years. Last night, having learned of a festive assembly summoned in Shravasti by Shiva, god of gods, and seeing my kinsfolk convoked from every quarter, I started, curse-free, to seek my husband's side; at that moment

you arrived and fell asleep with the prayer: "May the resident divinity be my refuge." Still clogged by the cruel curse, I did not at the moment fully recognize you, yet realized that I could not abandon a suppliant to the unending hazards of this wild wood; I therefore took you with me as you slept.

" 'But when I drew near the hall where gods were gathered, I reflected that I could not attend the divine assembly in company of a mortal youth. Just then I chanced to perceive Navamalika, daughter of Shravasti's sovereign who is deservedly named Dharmavardhana, Virtue's Extender. She lay, for relief from summer heat, on a soft and spacious couch upon the palace balcony, and I thought: "Thank heaven! She slumbers, and her maidens are deep in sleep. This princely Brahman may rest here a mere moment until I return, my duty done"; and I laid you there to rest while I sought my destination.

" 'When I had inspected the splendid festival, had felt the comfort of converse with my own people, and had shown veneration for the lord of the triple universe with a diffidence enhanced by consciousness of my own transgression, I paid homage to the blessèd mother, the mountain's daughter, Shiva's devoted goddess-bride, who favored me with the smiling words: "No more fear, my dear. Now abide at your husband's side. The curse is overpast."

" 'At once my self-possession was restored. I returned, and seeing you, knew you for what you are.

"See," I said, "this is the friend and very life of darling Arthapala: this is my son Pramati, to whom, in ignorance indeed, I have been heartlessly indifferent. For now his love is fixed upon her, and the maiden loves the youth. Yet both feign sleep and—whether from shyness or alarm—do not communicate their feeling. And I must go, while still this maiden, breathed upon by love, preserves her secret unimparted to friend or waiting-maid. For the moment I remove the prince, that he may later create his opportunity, find fit means, and gain his goal." So I used my power to plunge you into slumber, and returned you to this leafy bed. Such is the truth. Now I would seek your father's kindness.' And as I bowed, she embraced me time and again, stroked my head, kissed me on both cheeks, and departed, faint with affection. Then I, a slave to love, turned my face to Shravasti.

"On the journey I came to a large market town, where business men were raising a tremendous bombilation over a cockfight, so that I could not repress a snicker as I joined them. And a certain Brahman who sat near me, a gay old gentleman, quietly asked an explanation of my merriment. 'How in the world,' said I, 'can men be such fatheads as to match Crane, that cock in the western pen, against Cocoanut, the rooster in the eastern pen? Cocoanut outclasses him.' 'Be still,' said the wise old boy. 'Don't give these ninnies a tip,' and he handed me some betel gum (cam-

phor flavor) from his little box, filling in the intermission with spicy anecdotes. Then the two birds went at each other full tilt, stab and counterstab, with wing-flapping and defiant cock-a-doodling. And the poor cock from the western pen was beaten. The old gentleman, delighted at backing a winner, made a friend of me in spite of the disparity in age; gave me a bath, food, and other comforts in his own house that day; and when I started next morning for Shravasti, he set me on my road, turning back with the friendly farewell: 'Don't forget me when your business is done.'

"I continued to Shravasti, where, weary with travel, I lay down to rest among vines in a park outside the city. Awakened by the cry of swans, I rose to see a maiden drawing near, whose feet were eloquent with tinkling anklets. She approached, alternating her attention between me and the figure of a man resembling me, drawn on a tablet which she held in her hand; she stood for a time in wonder, speculation, and joy.

"So, seeing my own likeness there on the tablet and assuming that the play of her glances was not accidental, I said: 'Surely this pleasant spot, this dedicated garden, is common property. Why weary yourself with irksome standing? Will you not be seated?' And she sat down with the smiling reply: 'You are very thoughtful of me.' Our desultory conversation developed some personal detail, on which she relied to

remark: 'You are a guest in my country and seem somewhat fatigued by travel. If it is not wrong, you would confer a favor by resting today in my house.' 'My dear young lady,' said I, 'it is not wrong at all, quite the reverse, rather'; and I followed her home, where I was served with a bath, food, and entertainment fit for a king. When I was comfortably seated, she secretly inquired: 'In your devious journeyings, dear sir, did you anywhere by any chance encounter anything in the nature of a miracle?'

"Then this flashed through my mind: 'There is genuine ground for hope. This girl may be a friend of the princess, who may have been unriddled by the whole obtrusive throng of waiting-women. Why, on this tablet appears the palace balcony, with its orient awning shading her; the sweetly tumbled couch, shimmering like clustered clouds of autumn; and the likeness of myself, at rest against its edge, my eyes lapped in slumber. Oh, surely the princess too has been laid so low by love that she, frantic with feverish torment of unendurable feeling, persistently pestered by solicitous friends, gave them an adequate answer by this creation of careless artistry. This maiden questions me because her suspicion is roused by the correspondence of feature; I will resolve her suspicion by telling the plain truth.'

"With this purpose I said: 'Dear maiden, give me the picture.' And she put it in my hand. I took it and added my darling, counterfeiting slumber, faint with

the flickering passion of love; then observed: 'When asleep in a vast, wild wood, I encountered a maid like that, resting beside a man like this. Was it a dream, do you think?' She gleefully demanded details; and I told the whole story, while she described her friend's varying moods toward me. Then I said: 'If your friend's heart inclines to show me kindness, wait a few days. I will return when I have devised some plan for dwelling in the maidens' quarters without awakening suspicion.' I won her reluctant assent, returned to the market town, and sought out my gay old gentleman.

"He gave me his bustling attention; provided a bath, food, and the like as before; then inquired privately: 'Sir, why have you returned so promptly?' 'You have reason to ask. Listen, sir,' I said. 'There is a city called Shravasti, whose sovereign is King Dharmavardhana, an epigonous son of Virtue. He has a daughter Navamalika, the refutation of Beauty, the life of Love, the denial of daintiness to the jasmine bud. When I chanced to behold her, she pierced my mortal part with a shower of sidelong glances that seemed a flight of the shafts of Love. Impotent to draw those darts, I return to you, a physician rivaled only by the divine authority on medical science. Will you generously play a part in my plan? I wish to shift to woman's costume and to become your daughter. You will take me to court and will say to Dharmavardhana as he sits on his judgment-seat: "This is

my child, my only daughter. At her very birth, her mother found final rest. I have reared her, a mother and a father too. Now a certain Brahman youth, matrimonially eligible, has gone to the Avanti capital, Ujjain, planning for her sake to earn his marriage-portion of education. The girl has a fondness for him and should not be bestowed on any other. But she is a young woman, and he is dilatory. I wish to fetch him, marry him fast, delegate responsibility to him, and retire to religious meditation. In view of the difficulty of protecting daughters who have left childhood's years behind, more particularly motherless daughters, I appear before Your Majesty, the refuge of the afflicted, standing toward your subjects *in loco parentis utriusque*. If Your Majesty, the model of antique royal virtue, can regard as worthy of your gracious favor an aged Brahman of some scholarship, no resources, and postulant humility, permit this maiden (whose character is irreproachable) to repose in the shadow of your arm until I fetch her predetermined bridegroom."

" 'To this he will certainly give joyful assent and will ask me to live with his daughter. Now on the twelfth day of the proximate month, when you are gone, there will be a festive bathing pilgrimage of the court ladies. You will then be waiting, with a bridegroom's trousseau, in a temple of the war-god, lying in the midst of a clump of ratan about three miles east of the bathing-pool. I will spend the intervening

time, with no questions asked, in the pleasant society of the princess; then in the course of this festival I will playfully enter the stream of Ganges; and while all the girls are giddy with gayety, I will dive and swim under water, coming to the surface in your vicinity. I will next don the costume you have brought, discard my feminine apparel, and follow you, nominally as your son-in-law to be.

" 'Now when the princess fails to find me after searching everywhere, she will weep and mope in her chamber, saying: "I will not taste food without that girl." When a great caterwauling results, when servants bawl and girl friends whimper and citizens mourn and king and counselors are at their wits' end, you will seek an audience, exhibit me, and say: "Your Majesty, I introduce my son-in-law, a deserving servant of your might. He is erudite in the four bodies of Scripture; grounded in the six ancillary disciplines; a master of formal logic; *au courant* both as to theory and practice in the sixty-four social accomplishments; a specialist in literature relating to elephants, chariots, and horses; a champion archer and club-fighter; versed in mythology and traditional lore; a creative artist in poetry, drama, and sophisticated fiction; a scholarly economist and mystical theologian; never envious of another's talent; a candid friend; capable; generous; blest with a retentive memory; unassuming. I do not discover in him the most minute positive blemish, or deficiency in virtue. Hence he should

not enter the family of a mere Brahman like me. Let me bestow your daughter upon him, then—so please Your Gracious Majesty—proceed to that final self-examination that befits my declining years."

" 'When he hears this, a pallor will invade his countenance, an extreme dubitancy will oppress his mind; and with his counselors he will endeavor to pacify you by preachments on the impermanence of mortal things. You will turn a deaf ear, strain your lungs in lamentation, choke your throat with ceaseless weeping, bring logs of wood, kindle a fire at the palace entrance-gate, and prepare to mount the pyre. Then king and counselors will fall at your feet, the king will bribe you with unstinted gifts, and will give me his daughter. Presently, appeased by my competence, he will devolve on me the whole burden of royal administration. This seems the plan to pursue, if it meets your approval.'

"Then that wisest of wise old gentlemen (Panchalasharman was his name) rehearsed the points in the plot, and entered on its execution, adding ingenious details of his own. The fruition of my wishes followed according to schedule; and, like a bee, I tasted the flower of my virgin jasmine. Thereafter, with the double purpose of succoring King Simhavarman and of keeping the rendezvous with my friends, I mobilized all my troops and marched hither to Champa, where heaven grants me a blissful meeting with my prince."

Having heard the adventure of Pramati, the prince observed, while a smile bloomed slowly on his face: "Energy disguised as grace, vigorous action masked by gentle manners—it is the wise man's way. Now," and he turned to Mitragupta, "you have your entrance cue."

CHAPTER XI

MITRAGUPTA'S ADVENTURE

He told this tale. "I too, Your Majesty, having the same inducement as my friends for wandering, chanced upon a great festive gathering in a park outside the city Damalipta in the Suhma country. There in a sequestered bower of creeping vines I beheld a pensive youth, diverting his thoughts by playing a lute. 'Dear sir,' I asked, 'what is this festival, and for what purpose celebrated? For what cause do you, sir, disregard it and sit apart in seeming pensiveness, with a seven-stringed lute as sole companion?'

"And he replied: 'My kindly friend, Tungadhanvan, the childless king of the Suhma country, prayed for two children at the feet of Shiva's bride, who now, forgetting her love for her Vindhya home, dwells in yonder shrine. As he fasted and slept, she spoke to him in a dream: "One son shall be yours, and a single daughter shall be born. The son shall live a servant of the daughter's husband. The daughter, on the third day of every month from her seventh year until her marriage, must honor me by a dance in which she plays with a ball, that she may acquire a virtuous husband. She must be given to the man whom she loves. And this festival must be called the festival of the ball."

" 'With no long interval, the king's dear queen, Medini, gave birth to one son, and a single daughter was born. Today the princess Kandukavati—the girl with the ball—will honor the moon-browed goddess with her ball play. But her friend Chandrasena has been my foster-sister, and dear to me; and she, in recent days, has been the object of impetuous advances from Prince Bhimadhanvan. Hence I sit pensive apart, stabbed by the darting pain of Love's arrows, seeking a trifling consolation in the plaintive strain of the lute.'

"At this moment a tinkle of anklets drew near, and a maiden appeared. His eye bloomed wide when he saw her; he rose, and when he sat down in the same place, her arms were round his neck. 'This is my life,' he chirped, 'whose loss burns like fire. The prince is Death, taking my life and leaving me cold. Yet prince he is; I cannot injure him. So I will give her one last, lingering look at my person, then cease to draw breath that has no recompense.'

"Her face swam in tears as she clung closer, saying: 'My dear lord, you must not for my sake dare any desperate deed. You are the son of Arthadasa, a most respectable merchant, and your elders named you Koshadasa; but because you were so devoted to me, your enemies gave you the nickname Veshadasa —the gay girl's slave; so if you should die and I should live, I should prove the proverb that gay girls are heartless. Take me today to some nice country.'

"He turned to me and said: 'My dear sir, among the kingdoms visited by you, which one is wealthy, fertile, and prevailingly populated by the virtuous?' 'My dear sir,' I replied with a slight smile, 'the sea-clad earth is wide. There is no end of pleasant populations in one region and another. Further, if unable to devise a plan for your happiness and union here, I will myself serve as guide.'

"At this point the jingling of jeweled anklets was heard. The girl jumped up, saying: 'She has come. Princess Kandukavati is about to honor the Vindhya-dwelling goddess by playing ball. At this festival of the ball the exhibition is public. Satisfy your eyes; come and see. I must wait upon her.' She went, and we followed her.

"The red-lipped princess stood on a great, jeweled dancing platform when I first beheld her. So straightway was she in my heart that neither I nor any other saw her pass. I gazed amazed and thought, distraught: 'Is this the goddess Beauty? No, no. In Beauty's hand a lily lies; her hand is the lily's self. Beauty was sought by primal man and antique kings; her virgin virtue is unstaled by custom's history.'

"Even as I meditated, with wholly faultless grace she crossed her hands and touched the earth with blossom finger tips; her black curls rippled as she paid a fluttering curtsy to the blessèd goddess; she held the ball as if she held the love-god in her hand, his eyes flaring with impatient passion. With playful grace

she dropped it on the ground. As it rose sluggishly, she struck it with her flower-hand—the thumb a little bent, the tender fingers extended—bounced it from the back of her hand, and caught it falling in mid-air, while her flashing glances flickered round it like bees about a blossom cluster. Then she let it fall. Patting or pounding, *andante* or *allegro*, she kept its motion timed with her forward or backward steps. Inert, she made it hop with heartless blows; frisky, she soothed it. Sidewise and straight she struck, with the left hand and the right in turn, making it fly like a bird. If it soared too high, she caught it, taught it moderation; she tossed it wide from side to side, then brought it home.

"Such was her sweet, surprising sport, bringing each moment the cry or the sigh of applause from the fascinated spectators round the platform. While I stood gazing, leaning on Koshadasa's shoulder, with tingling cheek and widened eye and momently mounting emotion, she learned the peeping glance of coquetry from love, till then a stranger, her graceful, curving eyebrows swerving sweetly as she followed the flight of the ball. The greedy bees that sought to seize the fragrance of her flower-face she seemed to pelt with blooming, rippling rays of light reflected from her lips, rays made wavy by her quick-drawn breath. In her swift pursuit of whirling circles traced by the ball, she seemed to inclose herself within a cage of flowers, in shy avoidance of me. She struck in

five directions, as if fearfully baffling the love-god's five arrows, flying simultaneously. In flexuous dash she mocked the lightning flash, with its eager gleam against the dark. Her twinkling feet kept time to the tinkling jewels that decked her; her red lip was washed with light as she smiled at the part she played; she tossed to its place the wealth of hair that sought her shoulder. With the jingle of stricken gems on her girdle string, with the gleam of rustling silk that swung from her swaying hips, she gave graceful life to the ball with blows from lovely arms now bent, now straightened. Then she would fold her arms; then her curls would flutter to rest on her back as she stooped. The rapid readjusting of the fallen earring's golden plate hardly hindered the timing of her steps, and the ball whirled out or in with each quick lift of hand or foot. As she rose and sank, her central necklace string was seen and lost by fleeting moments; as she bowed and stood erect, her pearls had no repose. The breeze from the blossom over her ear served as fan to dry her cheek's cosmetic moistened by starting drops; one blossom-hand was busy in patting the gown that slipped from her bosom's slope. She crouched and rose; she closed and opened her eyes; she paused and began again: and wonder awoke as the princess gaily played.

"Whether bouncing the ball from the ground or keeping it in the air, whether playing with one or with more than one, she showed us many sightly tricks.

Then at the end of her friendly diversion with Chandrasena and other girls, having worshiped the goddess, attended by my heart as devoted companion, flashing at me a sidelong look like a lotus arrow of blossom-arrowed Love, with a slyly repeated backward turn of a face as sweet as the full moon's disc and a glance that left me in doubt whether or no her heart had darted to meet me and been recalled, she went with her friends to the palace.

"Faint with love, I went to Koshadasa's dwelling, where he assiduously entertained me with a most superior bath, food, and other comforts. In the evening came Chandrasena, who showed quiet respect for me, then with tender gentleness rubbed shoulders with her lover and sat down. Koshadasa was delighted. 'All my life, my sweet-eyed love,' he caroled, 'may I thus receive your kindness.' 'Why make a mere prayer of it, my friend?' said I with a smile. 'There is a magic lotion with which she may anoint her eyes. Then when she approaches the prince, she will seem a she-monkey to him; he will forget his love, and abandon her.'

"But she smiled as she replied: 'Oh, sir, you are much too kind to your very humble servant, with your readiness to strip her of human form (without rebirth) and make a monkey of her. Enough of this! There is another way to gain our end. The princess, when playing ball today, was smitten, sir, by your beauty that makes a mock of the love-god, who, as if

angered, tortures her terribly. Having penetrated her secret, I shall tell my mother, who will tell the princess' mother, the queen, who will tell the king. And when the king learns the situation, he will bestow his daughter's hand on you. Then the prince must live as your servant: such is the decree of the goddess. And when the kingdom is subject to you, Bhimadhanvan will be in no position to flout you and pester me. So let our friend be patient for three or four days.' With this she bowed to me, embraced her lover, and withdrew. The night dragged away while Koshadasa and I made endless arrangements to conform to her plan.

"When morning dawned, I did my devoirs; then visited the garden blest by the remembered vision of my love. There the prince met me, spoke without insolence, and engaged me for a time in agreeable conversation. Conducting me to the palace, he provided a bath, food, and a couch as luxurious as his own. While I slept, enjoying in dream the bliss of beholding and clasping my darling, he ordered many stout-armed menials to bind me most securely with fetters of iron. And when I awoke, he pitched into me roughly: 'You sneak! Chandrasena's chatter—damn her! —drifted through the lattice and was overheard by a hunchback woman that I employ to follow her and spy on her. So you love that hussy Kandukavati! And I am to live as your servant! And I mustn't flout you! And I am to give Chandrasena to Koshadasa!'

With this he turned to a fellow beside him, shouting: 'Throw him into the ocean!'

" 'Yes, yes, Your Majesty,' cried the fellow, as jolly as if a kingdom had been given him, and he did it. With nothing to cling to, I tossed my arms wildly and clasped to my bosom a stick of wood that fate provided; so I floated while the day passed and a long, long night. At daybreak I spied a kind of boat, manned by Greeks. They pulled me in and reported to their captain Rameshu: 'Here is a man wearing fetters of iron. We found him in the water. We could use him to sprinkle a thousand bunches of grapes at a time.'

"Just then a galley, attended by numerous smaller craft, bore down on us, terrifying the Greeks. The swift boats were about us in a moment, like dogs around a boar. A fight followed, in which the Greeks were worsted. But when they were demoralized and disheartened, I encouraged them by saying: 'Strike off my fetters, and I will destroy your enemies single-handed.' They did so; and I, with a horn-bow that shot showers of shafts with a terrible twang, made mincemeat of all those hostile hirelings.

"I leaped on a boat lashed alongside, and on its death-strewn deck engaged in single combat with the captain, whom I captured alive. He proved to be Bhimadhanvan. He showed embarrassment when I introduced myself, and said: 'My son, have you observed how oddly fate can hop?' But the crew of the merchantman bound him fast with my discarded fetters, trolled out their joyous chanties, and paid me something like worship.

"However, the ship got out of hand when buffeted by contrary winds; she fell far off her course and fetched up at a tight little island. Being in need of fresh water, fuel, bulbs, roots, and fruit, we landed on a compact pile of rocks. Before us rose a great mountain. 'Ah,' said I, 'this is a charming mountain side, a most lovely lower slope where the very rocks are fragrant, cool mountain water rich with moonlike drops of honey from lilies blue and white, an entrancing grove of trees laden with blossom clusters in varied hues'; so I gazed and gazed with eyes that would not be satisfied. I climbed unaware to the summit and came to a pool tinged red by the flashing rocks of a ruby stairway and dusted with lotus pollen.

"After I had bathed, chewed a few nectar-sweet lotus stalks, and pinned a white lily on my shoulder, a hideous ghost rose from the bank and plunged toward me, crying 'Who are you? Where do you come from?' in a tone of scolding disapproval. 'My dear sir,' I replied without alarm, 'I am a Brahman, as you can see. I have been traveling—from an enemy's hand into the sea, from the sea into a Greek ship, from the Greek ship to this admirable mountain with its complex geology, and I chanced to rest beside this pool. Greetings!' 'If you don't answer my questions,' said he, 'I'll eat you.' 'Very well,' said I. 'Ask them.' So our interview continued with a single quatrain:

Can a woman's heart be callous?
How do good wives please the soul?
Can true love mistake its object?
Smartness gain a distant goal?

" 'As to that, you must consult Dhumini, Gomini, Nimbavati, and Nitambavati,' I answered. And when he said: 'Tell me. What sort of women were they?' I related this story.

" 'There is a country called Trigarta. In it lived three householders with much accumulated capital; they were brothers, and their names were Dhanaka, Dhanyaka, and Dhunyaka. During their lifetime Indra sent no rain for twelve years: the grain drooped; plants failed to seed; trees bore no fruit; the clouds were barren; rivers dwindled; swamps were mere mudholes; many springs went dry; bulbs, roots, and fruit grew scarce; story-telling declined; social pleasures fell into disuse; robber bands multiplied; anthropophagy appeared; human skulls, white as cranes, rolled underfoot; thirsty crows migrated in clouds; cities, villages, towns, and other settlements decayed.

" 'When these householders had exhausted their store of grain, and had eaten in turn the goats and sheep, the drove of buffalo, the herd of cows, the maidservants, the manservants, the children, the eldest and the middle wife, they agreed to eat next day the youngest wife, Dhumini. But Dhunyaka, the youngest brother, unable to eat his darling, fled with her that same night. Carrying her when she grew weary, he plunged into a forest. Relieving her hunger and thirst with his own flesh and blood, he carried her, until in mid-journey he encountered a man writhing on the forest floor, with hands and feet and ears and nose cut off. This man too he charitably took on his shoulder, and in a forest nook abounding in bulbs, roots, and deer he laboriously thatched a hut of leaves, where he lived a long time. He treated the pitiful mutilations with oil of almonds and sesame, and shared his own meat and vegetables equally.

" 'One day, when the wounds were healed and vigor had returned, when Dhunyaka had gone to hunt deer, Dhumini approached the man with sexual desire, and for all his upbraiding, forced him to satisfy her. When her husband returned and asked for water, she tossed him the bucket and rope, saying: "Draw your own drink; my head aches." Then, as he drew water from the well, she gave him a quick push from behind.

" 'She put the cripple on her shoulder and wandered from land to land, winning the name of a devoted wife and a variety of honors. Finally she settled down in immense affluence through the favor of His Majesty of Avanti. Presently she learned that her husband, accidentally discovered and rescued by thirsty merchants, was roaming Avanti, begging his bread. So Dhumini deposed that he was the wretch who had mutilated her lord, and had that saintly

character condemned by the unwitting king to torture and death.

" 'But when Dhunyaka was being led to execution, his arms bound behind his back—since a prolongation of life was predestined, he cheerfully said to the functionary: "If the beggar whom I am supposed to have mutilated is prepared to speak ill of me, my punishment is deserved." "No harm in trying," said the officer, summoned the cripple, and presented him. That upright fellow wept profusely, fell at the saintly feet, and gave a true relation of the man's charity and the woman's vile behavior. The king, enraged, disfigured the trollop's face and appointed her cook for the dogs, while Dhunyaka became the recipient of his favor. And that is why I say that woman's heart may be callous.'

"Then, at the ghost's request, I told the story of Gomini: 'In the Dravidian country is a city called Kanchi, where lived Shaktikumara, the multimillionaire son of a merchant. As he approached the age of eighteen, he anxiously reflected: "There is no true happiness for a man without a wife, or with a wife who lacks the appropriate virtues. Now how could I find a virtuous wife?"

" 'So, diffident of the problematical satisfaction in a wife recommended by others, he became a fortune-teller, tucked a measure of rice in his garment's hem, and roamed the earth. Now those who had daughters

exhibited their daughters to him as a man who could interpret stigmata. But whatever the stigmata, he would say whenever he saw a girl of his own caste: "My good girl, can you feed me properly with this measure of rice?" As a result, he wandered from house to house, ridiculed and rejected.

" 'In a city on the right bank of the Kaveri in the Shibi country, he one day inspected a maiden presented by her nurse. She was meagerly begemmed, for she with her parents had run through a great property, though still possessing a dilapidated mansion. When he set eyes on her, he thought: "In the case of this girl, not a single member is too fat or too thin, too short or too long, lacking in symmetry or purity of outline. The fingers have a tinge of pink; the hands are marked with many stigmata of fortune—the barley-corn, the fish, the lotus, the bowl, and others. The ankle joints are even; the feet plump, not stringy. The calves have a classic curve; and the knees slip almost unobserved into the swell of the thighs. The hips are balanced, regular, weetly set, and shaped like chariot wheels. The navel has elegance, flatness, and depth; the lower body is adorned with three plicatures. The breasts, with emergent nipples, give a broad-based beauty to the entire chest. The graceful arms are marked with the lines that promise money, grain, and numerous sons; the nails have a glossy polish like a jewel; the fingers are straight, tapering, pink; there is daintiness in the slope of the shoulder, and an absence

of knobbiness at the joints. The slender neck shows the conch-shell's curve. The lip has a slight pout and an even color; the charming chin does not retreat; the cheek is full and firm; the brows unite to form a black, soft, wavy line; the nose resembles a half-blown sesamum blossom; the great, gentle eyes have a sweet and modest glance, yet flashing with three colors—pure black, white, and the pigmented part; the brow charms like the crescent moon; the curls are bewitching as a mine of sapphires; each lovely ear has double decoration, its ring and the winsome line of a drooping lotus stem: the whole face is like a lily. Her hair is abundant, long, curly (not kinky), not fading even at the end, of a smooth, glossy black throughout, and fragrant.

" ' "Such is her person; the character must correspond. Besides, I love her. So I will apply my test and marry her. For endless regrets are the certain portion of the heedless." So, with an affectionate glance, he said to her: "My dear young lady, are you by any chance competent to convert this measure of rice into an adequate meal for me?"

" 'Hereupon the girl signaled with her eyes to the old serving-woman, who took the measure of grain from his hand, washed the girl's feet, and seated her in a spot, carefully sprinkled and swept, before the house door. The girl trampled the fragrant rice, dried it a little at a time, turned it repeatedly in the sun, put it on a hard, level spot, struck it very gently with

a hollow stalk, and extracted the kernels without crushing the husks. "Mother," she said to the nurse, "jewelers find a use for these husks, which serve to polish gems. Take them these, and with the pennies earned buy firewood—solid sticks, neither too moist nor too dry—a modest kettle, and two saucers."

" 'When this had been done, in a shallow, wide-mouthed, pot-bellied mortar of *urjoon* wood, with a long, heavy acacia pestle, plated with iron at the head, smooth in the body, and with a perceptible tenuity in the waist, she caused the grains to rise and fall with the busy grace and skill of her arm; repeatedly made them hop and sink with her fingers; stripped them of awns in the winnowing sieve; rinsed them a number of times; then—having paid honor to the fireplace—dropped them into quintessential boiled water. As the grains softened, hopped, and swelled, she collected the fire, fitted the lid to the kettle, and strained off the scum. Then she patted with the ladle; stirred a little at a time; and making sure that the clots were cooking evenly, set the kettle upside down. Next, she sprinkled with water such fagots as were only scorched and sent the charred, but no longer burning, sticks to the retailers with the command: "For the pennies you get for these, buy as much as you can in vegetables, butter, curds, oil, emblic, and tamarind."

" 'When the nurse had done this, she provided a couple of hors d'oeuvres; then, remarking that the scummy broth should be set in a new saucer planted

in moist sand, she cooled it with a gentle breeze from a palm-leaf fan, added sufficient salt, and let the smoke from the wood fire scent it; she also ground the emblic fine to bring out its odor, sweet as a lotus; next, by the lips of the nurse, she invited him to take a bath. This he did thoroughly, receiving oil and emblic from her after she too had bathed.

" 'After his bath, he seated himself on a plank set on the pavement (sprinkled and swept), and fingered the two saucers of liquid served on the quarter of a greenish white plantain leaf clipped from a tree in the courtyard. Then she set the rice gruel before him. He drank, relaxed, felt happy; and satisfaction pervaded his frame. Next, she served him two ladlefuls of rice, and brought a little butter, soup, and a relish. The following course was the rest of the rice, with curds, powdered spices, and fragrant, refreshing buttermilk and clotted cheese.

" 'The man enjoyed his meal to the last morsel, then asked for water. She let it spout a continuous stream from a new pitcher; it was rich with the odor of incense, perfumed with fresh trumpet flowers, fragrant with full-blown lotuses. He set the saucer to his lips. His eyelashes were tinged and granulated by clinging drops, cool as snow; his ears took delight in the trickling sound of the stream; his cheek tingled and thrilled at the delicious contact; his nostrils expanded to the rushing gush of fragrance; his sense of taste was entranced by the exquisite flavor: he drank

the pure water in great gulps. Then, in obedience to a nod, the maiden gave him a gargle from another vessel. Finally, the old nurse cleared the table; and on the pavement, freshly cleansed with cow dung, he dozed for a time, wrapped in his ragged cloak. Greatly pleased, he married the girl with all due ceremony and took her home.

" 'After marriage, however, he neglected her and kept a mistress, whom the wife also treated as a dear friend. Her husband she served as a god, indefatigable in personal attention, indomitable in household duty, winning the devotion of domestics by inexhaustible considerateness. Subjugated by her merits, the husband subordinated the entire household to her, made her sole mistress of life and person, and thus enjoyed virtue, money, and love. And that, I may say, is how good wives please the soul.'

"Then, at the ghost's request, I told the tale of Nimbavati: 'In Surat was a city called Valabhi. In it lived Grihagupta, a ship captain, rich as the god of wealth. He had a daughter Ratnavati, whom a merchant's son, Balabhadra, came from Madhumati to marry. The bliss of secret love with his young bride was, however, impetuously overdone, so that in a flash he conceived no small hatred for her. He did not wish to see her again. He disregarded hundreds of admonitions from friends, feeling such embarrassment that he actually avoided the house. From that mo-

ment, relatives and strangers mortified the unhappy woman by saying: "This is not Ratnavati, the Jewel Girl; this is Nimbavati, the Bitter-fruit Girl."

" 'After a certain interval of humiliation and of wondering what to do, she saw an aged hermit woman, her foster-mother, approaching with flowers from a sacrificial service; and alone with her, she wept piteously. The old woman tearfully tried every means to soothe her and asked the cause of her weeping; whereupon, for all her shame, the matter being so important, she forced herself to stammer: "Oh, Mother! What can I say? Unhappy love is a living death for women, for honest wives especially. My case is an illustration. All my relatives, my mother more than any, look at me with contempt. Oh, give me a kindly glance. If you won't, this very day I shall lose my useless life. But do not repeat my secret until it is all over." And she fell at the old woman's feet.

" 'The latter helped her to rise and said with a rush of tears: "My dear child, you must dare no desperate deed. Here am I, awaiting your commands. Just in so far as I have value, I am wholly at your service. If you are quite despondent, then practice penance (I will show you how) with the aim of otherworldly blessings. Surely this is a consequence of sin in a past existence that you, with such a figure, such character, and such social position, have become, without visible reason, an object of hatred to your husband. If there is any possible remedy for your

husband's alienation, point it out; for your intelligence is keen."

" 'So the wife painfully pondered for a time with downcast face, drew a long, burning sigh, and said: "Holy mother, her husband is the sole divinity for a woman, at least for the good kind. Therefore I must contrive something that will result in doing what he wishes. Now next door lives a merchant, our most prominent citizen by reason of gentle birth, property, and intimacy with the king. His daughter Kanakavati has much my bearing and figure, and is a very dear friend of mine.

" ' "I will play with her, and being on the balcony of her mansion, will double the number of my jewels. Meanwhile you, by piteous petition to her mother, must somehow manage to bring my husband to her house. When you are just below, I will go giddy with gayety and drop a ball, which you will catch and put in his hand, saying: 'My son, that is your wife's friend Kanakavati, daughter of Nidhipatidatta, our most prominent business man. She is quite scandalized with you on Ratnavati's account, thinking you frivolous and heartless. So you must restore this ball; it is enemy property.'

" ' "Hereupon he will certainly look up and will mistake me for my friend; then when I bow and beg for the ball, while you nudge him again, he will return it with eagerness. From this initial weakness you will cause him to fall in love, grow warmer and warmer,

appoint a rendezvous, and elope with me to another country." The old woman joyfully assented and carried out the plan.

" 'So Balabhadra, deluded by the old hermit woman, took her for Kanakavati, made sure of her treasure of jewels, and eloped in the interstitial darkness of night. The old woman then spread this gossip: "Balabhadra told me yesterday that he had behaved like a fool in neglecting Ratnavati without valid reason, in insulting her parents, and in disregarding his friends; and that, having thus involved himself, he was ashamed to live here. I presume it will soon appear that he has taken her away." On hearing this, her relatives made only perfunctory search.

" 'Now on the journey Ratnavati procured a slave woman, had her carry the provisions and other baggage, and so came to a hamlet. Even in that small place Balabhadra, a shrewd business man, multiplied his modest capital into a great fortune. He was accounted the leading citizen and had a corps of servants in proportion to his wealth. On one occasion he beat the housekeeper severely, saying roughly: "You neglect your work, you steal everything in sight, you are impudent." The servant was furious and betrayed the critical point in his secret history, which he had told her in a moment of confidence.

" 'Upon this information, the avaricious police captain convoked the town council and took him to task, saying: "This scoundrel Balabhadra is living in

our city with Kanakavati, whom he stole from her father Nidhipatidatta. You gentlemen will not object to the entire confiscation of his property."

" 'This alarmed Balabhadra, but Ratnavati said to him: "Do not be alarmed. Tell them that this is not Nidhipatidatta's daughter Kanakavati, but Grihagupta's daughter Ratnavati, given you by her parents in Valabhi and decently married. If they do not believe, let them send a messenger to her relatives." Balabhadra consented and remained on bail from his guild until Grihagupta, informed by letter, visited the hamlet and returned most joyfully with daughter and son-in-law. In view of this, Balabhadra became very devoted to Ratnavati, still imagining her to be Kanakavati. Hence I say that love may mistake its object.'

"Finally, when questioned by the ghost, I told the story of Nitambavati: 'In Shurasena is a city called Mathura. In it lived a youth of good family, a devotee of social elegancies and gay girls. In his friends' behalf he brought many disagreements to a happy termination by sheer strength of arm, so that rough customers gave him the nickname Thorny.

" 'One day he met a foreign artist, carrying a picture of a young woman, the mere sight of which made Thorny lovesick. "My dear sir," he said, "this seems incongruous. The figure is almost too beautiful for virtue, yet the modest pose indicates lofty breeding, the complexion is clear, the person charms by a cer-

tain measure of innocence, the glance shows self-esteem. Yet her husband is not traveling: she lacks the single braid and other tokens of separation. Further, the beauty-spot is set on the right side. I believe that you have represented, with exquisite address, the wife of a dilapidated old business man, miserable from the lack of normal satisfaction."

" ' "You are quite right," said the painter, with admiration. "This is Nitambavati—attractive as her name—wife of the merchant Anantakirti in the Avanti capital, Ujjain. Entranced by her loveliness, I painted her thus." And Thorny, his mind in a whirl, started that moment for Ujjain to see her. He assumed the name Bhargava, disguised himself as a beggar, entered her house, and beheld her.

" 'His passion mounted at the sight; on leaving the house, he asked and received from the aldermen the position of policeman in the cemetery. There he procured shrouds from corpses and other garments, with which he paid court to a Buddhist nun named Arhantika. Through her he sounded Nitambavati, who scolded the nun and refused.

" 'Informed by the nun that she was an honest woman, difficult to seduce, he gave his go-between secret instructions: "Approach the merchant's wife once more and whisper this: 'You know me as a seeker after salvation, sunk in religious meditation upon clear perception of the vanity of unregenerate life; could such as I desire to deprave honest wives? The

notion is preposterous. No, I tested you to discover whether such levity, common with the other sort of woman, made any appeal to you, blest with a noble fortune, superhuman beauty, and early youth. I am delighted to find such incorruptibility. Now I wish to see you a mother. But your husband is the subject of demoniac possession, is debilitated by jaundice, and incapable of functioning. You cannot have a child by him without remedial measures. Now please pay attention. You are to enter the orchard alone and, with all secrecy, put your foot in the hand of a necromancer whom I shall conduct thither; when he has spoken a spell over it, you are to feign a lovers' quarrel and kick your husband in the chest. Thereafter he will be successful in making you the mother of a bouncing baby and will treat you like a queen. Pray feel no hesitation.' That she will consent, is obvious. At night you will introduce me into the orchard, and her too. I need ask no further favors from you."

" 'To his great pleasure, the nun approved. That same night he entered the orchard; and when Nitambavati was produced by the zealous holy woman, in pretending to touch her foot he snatched a golden anklet, lightly scratched her thigh with a knife, and scurried off. In dreadful agitation she rated her own frivolity and was ready to kill the nun; she bathed the wound in the garden pond, and bandaged it; then, with a view to symmetry, she removed the other anklet, and lay alone in her bed for three or four days.

" 'The rogue meanwhile approached Anantakirti, offering the anklet for sale. "This is my wife's anklet," cried he. "How did you come by it?" But he pressed in vain for an answer, the fellow insisting that he would speak in the presence of the merchant guild. At last he ordered his wife to send him both her anklets; and she, in shame and alarm, sent the other one, with this message: "Last night I went to rest in the orchard and lost an anklet when the fastening slipped. I hunted for it today, and did not find it. But here is its mate."

" 'Upon this information, the merchant took the fellow before the merchants' guild. There the rogue, when questioned, modestly reported: "It is known to you of course that by your appointment I guard the graveyard, making my living thereby. I even spend my nights in the cemetery, thinking that grave-robbers who would seek to avoid me, might occasionally burn the bodies. The other night I saw a woman, a brunette, clawing a half-burned corpse from its pyre. Her greed was greater than her timidity, so that I caught her; and I chanced to scratch her thigh slightly with my knife. I also snatched this anklet from her foot. At this point she made off in a hurry. I have told you how I came by it; further action rests with you."

" 'So the citizens, after deliberation, unanimously voted that she was a witch. Her husband cast her off, and the rogue encountered her at night in that same graveyard; she was lamenting piteously, knotting a noose, and preparing to die. He soothed her, saying: "My sweet, maddened by your beauty, I suggested through the nun many means of winning you; and when they failed, I adopted this means to give you undivided, lifelong love. Forgive your slave who has no other hope." He fell repeatedly at her feet, wheedled her hundreds of times, and won her consent—for she had no other recourse. So it may be said that cleverness gains a difficult goal.'

"Having listened to this, the ghost paid me honor. At this moment pearls, big as half-developed ironwood buds, and drops of water began falling from the sky. I glanced up in considerable surprise, to see a giant dragging a struggling woman with him. 'Look at that ill-bred ogre, abducting a woman against her will!' I cried, grieved at my limitations in celestial locomotion and my lack of a sword. But my friend the ghost rose with a scolding cry: 'Stop, scoundrel! Stop, kidnaper!' and took issue with the giant. The maiden, dropped in heedless fury, came falling from the sky like a blossom cluster from the tree of Paradise, and I caught her with upstretched arms. She trembled, kept her eyes closed, and tingled with pleasure at touching my person, so that I held her just so, not setting her down.

"Meanwhile the other two were destroying each other with mountain crags, vehemently uprooted

trees, and blows from fists and feet. But her I laid on the softest sand of the lake's petal-dotted margin, made a rapturous inspection, and discerned my life's sole darling, Princess Kandukavati. As I soothed her back to calmness, she examined me with peeping glances, recognized me, and piteously weeping, said: 'Oh, my dear lord, at the festival of the ball I fell deeply in love at first sight and was encouraged by my friend Chandrasena with tales of you. So when I heard that you were drowned in the middle of the sea by my wicked brother Bhimadhanvan, I eluded my friends and servants and went alone into the garden, longing to leave life behind. There that nasty giant—who can change his form at will—made love to me. I rejected his proposal with quivering terror, but he seized me and made off. And here he came to his end, you saw how. And I, by happy chance, fell into the hand of the lord of my life. Bless you!'

"On hearing this, I descended the mountain with her and embarked. We cast off the moorings; and the ship, flying before the return wind, sailed back to Damalipta, where we disembarked in a hurry. We were met by the wailing of weeping citizens, lamenting: 'Tungadhanvan, king of Suhma, childless through the loss of son and daughter, and stricken in years, sets forth with his consort-queen to seek slow peace by starvation on stainless Ganges' shore. The loyal Board of Aldermen, knowing no other lord, plan to die beside him.'

"At once I reported the facts to the king and restored both his children. In his delight the lord of Damalipta made me his son-in-law, and the prince became my servant. At my command, the creature, for dear life's sake, dropped Chandrasena, who gave her love to Koshadasa. Thereupon, I marched hither to succor Simhavarman, and now experience a blissful holiday in beholding you, my lord."

"A strange evolution of fate!" cried Prince Rajavahana, "and manliness happy in seizing opportunities!" Then, while a smile sparkled on his lip, he fixed on Mantragupta a glance that flowered with joy. The latter's lifted hands half hid his face, and as his lovely lip twitched with the soreness left by a charming mistress' kisses, he told his tale without the use of labial letters.

CHAPTER XII

MANTRAGUPTA'S ADVENTURE

"I too, O joy of the king of kings, longing to learn the fate that followed you into the mountain cave, came in my wandering to Kalinga. At a little distance from the Kalinga city, I sat on the fragrant, flower-strewn slope of a hill, in a wild wood adjoining a cremating cemetery; sleep licked my eyes, and I reclined.

"While darkness drifted from black night's spreading tresses, at the hour when fiends are free, fog falls, cold chills, and the whole world snugly hugs its home —as I fought the slumber that softly stroked my eyes with rustling bustle from densely interlacing branches —there came to my ear this strident whining of two giants, male and female: 'Why does that villainous magician—damn him!—choose to give orders at the hour when love is longing, and so abuse poor people distressed by excess of passion? May some omnipotence confound our vile king's magic!'

"A curiosity assailed my heart to see who this magician was, and what this magic, and what this menial giant had in hand. So, moving a little distance toward him, I beheld a creature with body-decorations formed from grimly gleaming bits of dead men's bones, with smears of ashy dust from half-charred coals of fire-scorched wood, with matted hair tawny

as the lightning flash; his left hand sprinkled sesame, mustard, and other substances with constant crepitation upon a fire that spouted flame-sheets as it clutched each moment and devoured its diverse fuel—an ogreish fire that gulped the blackness of encircling forests. Before him cringed the menial, crying: 'What must I do? Grant a command.' From that bestial being he received this order: 'Go to the palace of Kardana, Kalinga's king; bring hither his daughter Kanakalekha.' And the giant did it.

"With frightful fear, with tear-choked throat, with torment-tortured heart, she screamed for father and mother, while the sorcerer scattered the drooping blossoms of her chaplet, tore the ribbon, and clutched her flowing hair, quivering with zeal to sever her head with the knife he had whetted on a rock. In a flash I snatched the knife from his hand, severing his own head with its matted mass of unkempt hair and thrusting it into the hollow trunk of a handy rotten tree. On seeing this, the compliant giant's anguish languished, and he said: 'Oh, sir, sleep never visits my eyes for the badgering gripe of this beast. He menaces, he terrifies, he issues immoral orders. Oh, you have done a happy, holy deed in sending that human crow to taste the flavor of hell's torments in the son of Lucifer's city. You are a treasure of mercy, an infinity of glory; and your humble servant longs to do your bidding. Quick! Issue orders.' And he bowed low.

"So I instructed him: 'My friend, this is the path trodden by the righteous, for petty cause to show no petty gratitude. If then your purpose holds, restore to her home this maiden whose lissom form, impatient of abuse, has been most roughly abused by that immoral creature. Thus you would completely satisfy my heart.'

"On hearing this, she darted a somewhat sidelong, bravely gleaming glance, that seemed a dark-hued lily clinging to her ear; with languid charm she made graceful play with eyebrows curved like Cupid's bow, dancing on the stage of her forehead; her cheek tingled with a blush; she hovered midway between desire and shrinking; with toetips curled and flashing light from their nails, she nervously marked the ground, while she turned aside the flower of her face; her breath that, issuing from her mouth, burdened her blossom-lip, that dried the sandal powder on her bosom's slope (wet with intercrossing beads of spray from streams of joyful tears), slow-drawn yet swift as Love's skilled shaft in piercing its target of the heart—that breath framed in the tremulous gleam of a smile these few words, soft and sweet as a cuckoo's song: 'Oh, sir, for what cause do you snatch your handmaid from the clutch of death, only to fling her straight into the sea of love, tossed by tempests of passion, restless with billows of longing? I would be considered but a grain of dust on your fair foot; if you feel pity for such, let me linger, clinging still. And if

you dread to dwell in a princess' palace, lest the secret be calamitously betrayed, dismiss the fear; for my friends and my attendants are devoted and will strive that none may know.'

"Then the love-god drew his bowstring to his ear and pitilessly pierced my heart; her peeping glances, like ferreous fetters, bound me fast; I fixed my gaze on the giant's face, and spoke: 'Should I disobey this winsome lady, love would lead me straightway to nothingness. Take me with this fawn-eyed maiden to the maidens' mansion.' And that night-flier took me to the maidens' wing of the palace, dazzling as massed clouds of autumn.

"There for a certain space of time, at my moon-faced maiden's behest, I stood on the moon-balcony, my desire for independence oozing at sight of her. But she roused certain girls, her friends, from heedless slumber by gentle clapping of her hands and gave them knowledge of our situation. These then approached, and prostrate at my feet, their eyes filled with starting tears, spoke in soft, singing tones blurred by the buzz of numerous bees drawn to the filaments of flowers in their hair: 'Sir, your glory vanquishes the sun. This friend of ours failed to be plucked by death only because she became the target of your glance. She has now been given you by Love, her guardian, with passion's flame as witness. Then let your soft eyes behold this passion-quivering gem of wonder adorning a bosom unshaken as a rock on the

Mount of Jewels; and let her breast be blest with the close embraces of a most fitting mate.' Thus the fetters of my love were riveted by her most courteous friends, and I was beatified in union with my lissom lady.

"Then came a season when the hearts of absent husbands languished, when the crowding iron-woods drooped at the assaults of greedy bees, when the sesamum trees dotted with beauty the face of flashing forests, when playful King Love stole the waking wingseed blossoms to serve him as golden umbrella, when the rush of southern breezes blew bees and blossoms from the mangoes, when warbling cuckoos' passion offered impassioned fairies their initial weapon for campaigns of love, when shyness fought with eager longing in the minds of modest maidens, when breezes cooled by contact with sandal on southern mountain slopes gave graceful dancing lessons to various classes of vines. At this season Kalinga's king, with the women of his court, his daughter, and all the city's population, for thirteen days gave way to the taste for playful holidays in a forest by the sea—a forest that assaulting sunbeams could not enter, with sandbanks stroked by blossom clusters on vine twigs bending to the rush of buzzing bees, and cooled by clouds of spray from breaking billows.

"There women gathered by the thousand for continuous song and concert and for amorous dalliance. And while the king delighted in coquetry's endless

crisscross, quite subdued to love of love, a numerous sea-borne army startled him; and Jayasimha, king of Andhra, took him captive with his queen. My darling also, Kanakalekha, was led captive away with her friends, her eyes dancing with fright.

"Then the flame of love devoured me, all thought of food subdued by anxious longing; grace left my person as I pondered: 'Gone! The daughter of Kalinga's king, with father and mother, in hostile hands! That king will of a certainty lose self-control and strive to seize her. This she will not endure, and will find a way—poison perhaps—of sudden death. When she is in that state, love will loose my hold on life. What rescue may there be?'

"At this point appeared a Brahman, journeying from the Andhra capital, who told this story: 'Jayasimha has striven to slay Kardana from rancor roused by numerous reproaches, yet spared him for love fed by the sight of Kanakalekha. But the princess, possessed by a certain Yaksha, disdains to stand before the monarch. The latter, calling numerous necromancers to his aid, struggles to expel the spirit, but vainly.'

"Then I saw hope. From that old hollow tree that had set the stage for Shiva's dance I drew a mass of matted hair, becoming so an unkempt sorcerer, and concealed all my person with a begging-wallet and abundant rags. I also enlisted certain disciples, whom I kept in constant good humor by gifts of food, garments, and the like, acquired from people fooled by a pack of juggling tricks.

"After some days I came to the Andhra capital, at a distance from which I dwelt in a forest beside a lake that stretched away like the ocean, was dotted with bits of petals dropped from countless lilies clipped by swarming swans, was made beautiful by flocking cranes. I displayed dexterity in bamboozling all the citizens, attracting them by artful dodges that my disciples advertised, until this report of me was universal: 'You know that hermit who sleeps on the bare ground at the edge of the lake in the wilderness? He has all the Scriptures—all their mysteries and the six ancillary disciplines, too—at the tip of his tongue. And all the other books that nobody understands—he will explain you their meaning from the meaning of those. Nothing falls from his lips that isn't so. Besides, he is benevolence personified. That is why his ceremonies always succeed. Just by sprinkling on their heads a few grains of dust from his feet, lots of people have been cured of lots of diseases that no doctor could touch. Purify your head with water that has washed his feet, and that moment disappear the fiercest seizures that follow all the machinations of necromancers. You cannot imagine any limit to his power. And he hasn't the least grain of conceit.'

"This gossip, being in everybody's mouth, sufficed to entice the king, whose mind was concentrated on the expulsion of the Yaksha that possessed Kanaka-

lekha. He visited me daily; manifested the most worshipful consideration; bribed my disciples; and at last, picking his moment, bashfully besought my services. I plunged into meditation, received illumination at the proper moment, fixed him with a stare, and spoke: 'My son, your effort is worthy. For the acquisition of this jewel among maidens, sole repository of all stigmata of fortune, will lead to domination of the earth, shining in her girdle of the milky sea, radiant with a thousand strings of pearls in the Ganges and other streams. Yet the Yaksha who possesses her permits no necromancer to behold those eyes, graceful and dark-hued as lilies; therefore be patient for three days, while I endeavor to attain your object.'

"Thus instructed, the king departed happily. And I went forth, night after moonless night, when the whole horizon was engulfed by multitudinous, clinging grains of darkness and sleep held all eyes of men in its fetters, to hollow out with a spade, at a distance from the landing steps, a spot on the shore of the lake, water-tight, with a hardly discernible aperture, yet possible to enter from water-level. When I had closed the entrance with thick-set stone and brick until I deemed the appearance of the shore unsuspicious, I cleansed my person with my morning bath, took red lilies in my hands, and adored the sun—the central gem in heaven's pearl necklace of countless constellations; the sole lion for the slaying of night's dark, wild elephant; the graceful dancer on the stage of Golden

Mountain's peak; the only crocodile to breast the gathered, billowing clouds of heaven's sea; the witness of right and wrong; the possessor of a thousand beams to streak with beauty the body of the East. Thereafter I sought my dwelling.

"When the three days were gone, when the lord of day showed a glory equaling the splendor of the golden slope of Sunset Peak and was yet more beautiful beside the swelling, sandal-scented breast of twilight (who clothed herself in impalpable air for fear of insult from Shiva's jealous bride), the king drew near, so lowly bowing that his diadem flashed reflected light from the nails of my feet on the ground. And I discoursed thus: 'I felicitate you on seeing the happy issue of your wishes. For in this world success visits no soul that does not strive, while all blessings are ever ready to the hand of those not indolent. Thus my spirit has been induced by your lofty, pure-minded piety, by your worshipful deference, to so consecrate this lake that here and now success may come to you. At midnight you are to plunge in throat-high, then straightway float as quiet as may be on the water's surface, holding motionless the breath in your body. After a moment, for one who gives ear to the raucous cries of frightened swans scratched by the prickly stalks of swaying lotus clusters hidden in the waves that lap the shore, there will become audible the rumbling roar of mighty waters. When that rumbling ceases, you will emerge, dripping, with slightly red-

dened eyes, but endued with beauty charming all beholders, before which that Yaksha will not dare to stand. And the maiden's heart, fettered by love's unbreakable bonds, will find unendurable a moment's intermission of your society; while the wide expanse of earth (your second bride), not overmuch regarding your disdained rivals, may undoubtedly be considered safe in your hand. If this approves itself, let functionaries soundly based in varied specialties, with numerous other well-wishers, provide and produce a hundred fishermen; let them post hundreds of confidential agents at determined intervals along the lake; and let them institute an alert service of sentinel soldiers at a distance of thirty fathoms from the bank. Who knows, in such a case, what enemies may plot, if a loophole be left?'

"This captivated his fancy, while his functionaries raised no objection, since they could detect no defect in the plan and realized that the king's design, born of deep desire for the maiden, was irrevocably fixed. As he stood there, absorbed in his purpose, I addressed him: 'O King, I have lingered long among your people, yet such long lingering is not recommended to such as I. When your object is attained, you will see me here no more. So long I have lingered, feeling that my departure would be reprehensible if I rendered you no service after receiving some mouthfuls of food in your kingdom. I have now rendered such service. Go then to the palace, bathe in pure,

pleasantly scented water, assume white garlands and cosmetics, propitiate with gifts appropriate to your power all the divinities of earth; then return, dispelling night's deep darkness with thousands of flames on torch-tips dipped in oil of sesame, and strive toward success.'

"And he, to manifest his gratitude, replied: 'This success is no success if you, sir, are absent. Such lofty indifference is a melancholy thing, depriving your unoffending servant of your presence. Yet the words of the worthy may not be frustrate.' And he departed for his bath.

"So I went forth in the lonely night and hid in the hole in the shore, pressing my ear to a tiny crack. At midnight came the king, having completed the ceremonies enjoined; posted guards from spot to spot; and brought his fisherfolk. Since the inner prickings of apprehension had been banished, he plunged with abandon into the water of the lake. And when, with flying hair and stopped ears and nose, he reached an elephant's depth, I caught him as he floated by a crocodile's trick, myself not emerging, and wrapped my begging-wallet round his throat. In my pitiless grip, under blows from fists and feet relentless as the ruthless death-god's gripe, he soon became motionless. Then I dragged the body to the hole, hid it, and issued from the water.

"Among the gathered soldiers that change of form awakened amazement. But I mounted an elephant,

laid claim to the white umbrella and all other shining insignia of royalty, and traveled by the king's highway, the throng falling back in fear of a beating from the truncheons of grim policemen. That night emotion drove desire of sleep from my eyes. And when the sun's circle swung in sight, seeming the red-streaked head of a heavenly elephant or a jeweled mirror for the face of the East, I did my devoirs; seated myself on the royal throne brilliant with thick-set gems that bristled with rays of light; and addressed my retinue seated near, whose attitudes were constrained by respectful timidity as they observed my conformance to convention: 'Behold the power of holiness, since through that unconquerable hermit's sinless self-discipline I acquired this changed and most sightly body, lustrous as a lotus petal, in that lake whose lilies draw the happy bees. Today let every heretic head be bowed in shame. Now let the temples of the most high gods—Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, and the rest—witness pious services of dance and song. And let all applicants receive from this palace sufficient wealth to banish misery.'

"And they, their eyes wide with a sense of the miraculous, cried: 'Subdue, O lord of the world, the whole wide world; hide beneath your glory the glories of the primal king.' Repeating such blessings, they performed the ceremonies enjoined.

"Now when a maiden named Shashankasena, a dearly loved friend of my belovèd, chanced to come

before me on some mission, I quietly inquired: 'Have you by any chance at any time seen such a person as I am?' After a brief glance, her heart climbed the climax of joy; she made pretty play with the gleaming grace of a smile; she covered her blossom-lip with the swaying branch of her hand; the moisture of joy loosened the rouge around her eyes; bowing low, she stammered slow words of affection: 'Indeed I know well, if this be no web of magic. Tell me what it means.' I told her all, and taught her lips a message to produce perfect bliss in her friend's heart. Thereafter I freed the king of Kalinga and paid him honor; he gave me my darling in lawful wedlock; and happy with her, I ruled the realms of Andhra and Kalinga. Then I led hither a sizable army to succor the Anga monarch assailed by his foe, and chancing to meet you in the midst of my friends, felt my soul overflow with delight."

While all the friends greeted with congratulations this tale of clever craft, Prince Rajavahana, his lip bathed in the light of a smile, declared: "A marvelous feat of holiness! In this case also religious self-denial bears noble fruit! But joking aside, we witness here the quintessence of adroitness and resolution, culminating in joy." Hereupon he cast on scholarly Vishruta a glance that seemed a blooming lily, and said: "Will you descend into our mortal world?"

CHAPTER XIII

VISHRUTA'S ADVENTURE

He told this tale. "Your Majesty, I wandered too; and in the Vindhya forest I met beside a well a lad of some eight years, unfit to suffer, yet suffering from hunger and thirst. He stammered with fright: 'O noble sir, help me in my suffering. An aged man, my sole support, fell into this well while drawing water to quench my devouring thirst, and I cannot pull him out.' I approached, extracted the old gentleman by means of a vine-stem, reinvigorated the boy with water drawn through a hollow bamboo and five or six fruits which I knocked with stones from the top of a bread-fruit tree that rose an arrow's flight above us. Then I sat in the shade and questioned the ancient: 'Father, who is this boy? Who, indeed, are you? And how did this mishap befall?'

"He choked with tears as he replied: 'Listen, noble sir. In the Vidarbha country lived one Punyavarman, the gem of Bhoja's royal line, who seemed a partial incarnation of Virtue. He was powerful, truthful, bountiful; self-disciplined, he disciplined his people and attached his dependents; he was glorious, lofty, vigorous in mind and body; he made masterpieces his model, and undertook what was feasible yet ideal; he caressed the wise, impressed his servants, blessed his

kinsfolk, distressed his foes; he was deaf to illogical discourse, insatiable in his thirst for virtue, discriminating in the social arts, a penetrating critic of ethical and economic compendia; he recompensed the slightest favor munificently, supervised treasury and stables heedfully, controlled all functionaries watchfully; encouraging the conscientious by gifts and honors, he had a ready remedy for calamities brought by gods or men; he was deft in applying the six expedients and regulated the four castes with traditional wisdom; his glory was pure. He filled the life of a man with worthy deeds, yet for the unworthiness of his subjects was translated into divinity.

" 'His successor as ruler of the land was his son Anantavarman who, though rich in every virtue, happened to be somewhat inattentive to administrative duty. One day he was privately admonished by an aged counselor, Vasurakshita, a favorite of his father's and an outspoken man: "My son, you possess in full measure every personal advantage, beginning with noble birth. Your intelligence is naturally keen, and distinguished beyond others by large attainments in dance, vocal music, and similar arts, as well as in the subtle minutiae of poetry. Yet that intelligence, undisciplined in political science, appears dull, like gold not purified by fire. For even an exalted king, if devoid of trained intelligence, does not perceive when enemies are getting the better of him. Nor can he properly discriminate effect and cause. Acting imprudently, he is baffled in his enterprises, is exploited by subjects and foreigners. He is despised, and his commands no longer conduce to security or prosperity of his people. His people, disobeying his edicts, say what they like, behave as they like, confound all the proprieties. And people who disregard decorum exile their master and themselves both from this world and the next. Surely, the common man travels contentedly only on the road lighted by the lamp of tested knowledge. Nay, the divine eye of demonstrated fact ranges unimpeded over objects recondite or remote, over past, present, and future. Without it, though boasting two large, wide-opened eyes, a man is blind, unable to discern the nature of things. Therefore abandon your passion for decorative studies and master political science, necessary in your station. Fortify your power by this acquisition; establish an enduring and unquestioned rule over the sea-girdled earth."

" 'On hearing this, the king said: "My teacher gives me opportune instruction. It shall be done." And he entered the women's part of the palace. When he took occasion to mention the matter to the ladies, he was overheard by a fellow, Viharabhadra, who was sitting there—a skilful mind-reader, a privileged person, an adept in song, dance, instrumental music, and related arts, a connoisseur of unconventional women, shrewd, talkative, suggestive, critical, a buffoon, a scandalmonger, a detractor, ready to take bribes even from ministers of state, an instructor in all naughti-

ness, a pilot in amorous intrigue, a corruptor of youth.

" 'This fellow smiled and said: "Your Majesty, whenever a man becomes the lucky recipient of power, rascals find means to abuse his mind with manifold inducements, thus serving their own purposes. Some, for example, holding out the hope of exquisite rewards to be enjoyed actually after death, shave his head, tie him with cords of sacred grass, wrap him in a fuzzy skin, smear him with butter, send him starving to bed—meanwhile abstracting all his property. Even more terrible are the hypocrites who rob him of son, wife, body, and life itself. And if a fellow of the more sensible sort refuses to part with his possessions for this mirage, yet others crowd around him, saying: 'We know how to convert a single penny into a fortune, how to kill all your enemies without a sword, how to make an unaided mortal emperor, if you follow the path we point out.'

" ' "And when he asks: 'What path is that?' they continue: 'Well, there are four royal studies—theology, agriculture, metaphysics, political science. Three of them—theology, agriculture, metaphysics—are big and slow to show results. Leave them alone. Just study political science. Now Professor Vishnugupta has made a little epitome of this for the king—twenty-four thousand lines of poetry. Learn it by heart, apply it in detail; and it does what it promises.' 'Good,' says he, and starts to study. He learns it (meanwhile

growing old) and finds that book leading to other books. It can't be truly understood until the whole wordy mass is mastered. Well, suppose he does master it, later or sooner. The first result is that he no longer trusts anyone, even son or wife. Even for his own belly he must have just so much porridge, made of just so many grains of rice. For the cooking of just so much porridge, he must be given just so much firewood, correctly weighed and measured.

" ' "Having risen from table, after absorbing a fistful (or half a fistful) with his mouth rinsed (or unrinsed), he must spend the first eighth of the day in listening to a complete statement of receipts and disbursements. While he is listening, a double amount is stolen by the knavish bureaucrats who have the wit to multiply a thousandfold the forty tricks of peculation taught by Chanakya. In the second eighth, his ears tingle with the vociferation of litigious subjects—a tough life! And even so, the legal officers determine victory and defeat according to their own notions, making the king responsible for injustice and shame and for their own interests. In the third eighth, he gets a chance to bathe and eat, but he is always afraid of poison until the food is quite digested. In the fourth eighth, he stands stretching out his hand to receive gold.

" ' "In the fifth, he has great bother with counsels of state. Here too, the counselors make private combinations as if they were neutrals, and juggle at their

own sweet will the inexpedient and the expedient, the possible and the impossible, the reports of envoys and spies, places, times, enterprises, situations, so picking a living from their adherents, opponents, and friends. By secretly stirring foreign and domestic passions, then seeming to pacify them publicly, they hold their monarch in subjection. In the sixth, recreation or more counsels of state; you see, his maximum time for recreation is ninety minutes. In the seventh, a tiresome military review. In the eighth, worry about the competence of his friend, the general.

" ' "When at last he greets the twilight, in the first eighth of the night he must interview secret agents and, in accordance with their reports, set desperadoes at work—murderers, incendiaries, poisoners. In the second eighth, after snatching a bite, he says his prayers like a priest. In the third, he lies down to a musical accompaniment and can sleep (perhaps) through the fourth and fifth. Let him rest as best he can, poor duffer, with his mind dizzy with everlasting fretting. Then in the sixth begins bother with books and bother with business; in the seventh, more counsel and despatch of messengers. Of course the messengers exaggerate both pleasant reports and accounts of misfortune, to increase their trade on roads where they pay no tolls; by manufacturing business out of next to nothing, they keep forever on the go. In the eighth, the chaplain and others come and say: 'A bad dream last night! The planets are adverse, and the

omens evil. Let us have expiatory services, and let all the sacrificial equipment be of solid gold—only so is the ceremony efficacious. These Brahmans are almost like the god Brahma; a benediction pronounced by them brings a double blessing. And those others are pitifully poor, with large families, and are competent performers, but have never yet received a fee; anything you give them spells heaven, long life, avoidance of calamity.' Thus they extract tremendous fees in others' names, and slyly devour them.

" ' "So when a man learns his political science and governs accordingly—without a particle of repose day or night, with no end of botheration, with unremitting irritations—he finds it difficult to control his own household, not to mention an empire. Whatever gifts, whatever homage, whatever compliments he gets from his fellow-scholars, he thinks a cheat and does not trust them. Now lack of confidence is the mother of misfortune. The less technique a man uses, the better he succeeds. Science is wasted. Why, even a baby contrives to get milk from his mother, one way or another. Drop this cramping research; follow your instincts to the pleasures of sense.

" ' "Take the very fellows who preach: 'This is the way to conquer the senses; this is the way to elude the six enemies (desire, anger, greed, passion, perversity, envy); always apply the four rules of strategy to friends and enemies; spend your time in worrying about peace and war; don't give a moment to pleasure'

—why, these pious frauds enjoy the salary stolen from you in servant-girls' houses. And what kind of scamps are the inspired scribblers who are so fierce on theory—Shukra, Angirasa, Vishnu, Indra, Parashara, and all the rest? Did they conquer the six enemies? Did they practice what they preached? You can read success or failure in what they actually did. Besides, the educated are fooled by the uneducated, in plenty of cases.

" ' "Would it not be silly for Your Majesty, considering your universally honored ancestry, blooming youth, handsome appearance, and limitless power? Don't spoil it all by studying science: that makes you distrust everybody, interferes with enjoyment, compels you to consider alternatives, and so troubles every enterprise with doubt. You have ten thousand elephants, three hundred thousand horses, no end of foot soldiers; and your treasuries burst with gold and gems. And if all the people in the world should eat for a thousand ages, they would not empty your granaries.

" ' "Isn't it enough to take pains with what others have earned for you? Why, the life of a mortal passes like four or five days, and precious little of that fit for real enjoyment. Fools earn money and go to seed doing it; they don't want to take the smallest nibble at what they have earned. Why spin it out? Pack the administrative burden on devoted friends who have backs for burdens; amuse yourself with these heavenly ladies; indulge in song, music, drink, and gossip as occasion offers; make your body pay its way." With this he fell flat on the floor and lay still, his hands clasped on his brow, while the ladies laughed aloud and their eyes twinkled approval.

" 'Then the monarch smiled and said: "Rise! You give me good advice, and are therefore my teacher. Why behave in a manner so unprofessorial?" So he helped him to his feet, remaining in playful humor.

" 'In the following days, when repeatedly stimulated by the old counselor to the appointed task, he assented verbally, but inwardly despised him as a pedant. So then the counselor reflected: "I am an obstinate blockhead. Urging him to an irksome task, I have become in his eyes an importunate bore, an object of ridicule. His conduct is quite obviously altered. Thus, he no longer looks on me with affection; he does not speak with a smile, or impart his secrets, or touch my hand. He does not sympathize with my setbacks, or congratulate me on happy occasions. He sends me no ingratiating gifts and does not enumerate my services. He no longer inquires about my household, or notices my friends, or confides his plans to me, or invites me to visit the ladies. Moreover, he employs me in humiliating jobs, permits others to pre-empt my chair, gives his confidence to my enemies, leaves my remarks unanswered. He reprehends my familiar failings, turns any *faiblesse* of mine into a jest, rejects his own conviction when championed by me, does not ac-

knowledge the valuable gifts that I send, causes the blunders of political scientists to be bellowed forth in my hearing by fools. The great Chanakya is right in saying: 'We love the sympathetic mischief-worker; we hate the unsympathizing benefactor.'

" ' "Yet what can I do? Despite his waywardness, I cannot abandon this king, my king by generations of inheritance. Yet not abandoning him, what benefit can I confer, when my words go unheeded? Surely, this realm will fall a prey to Vasantabhanu, lord of Ashmaka, who knows his political science. I only hope that disasters, when they come, will bring our king to his senses. Though misfortunes, among their disagreeable consequences, may also produce hatred, still, since honest conduct does not please him, let the inevitable misfortune come. If I can bridle my malicious tongue, I may somehow keep my footing at court."

" 'While the counselor was in this mood and the king was flirting, Chandrapalita arrived, son of Indrapalita, counselor of the lord of Ashmaka. He had been exiled by his father for loose living, and came attended by numerous bands of musicians, by craftswomen of no mean skill, and by many menials and spies in disguise. With such an assortment of diversions he captured Viharabhadra, and so bridged the gap to the king.

" 'Whenever he found an opening, he would white-

wash some vice or other, after this fashion: "Your Majesty, there is nothing so beneficial as hunting. It gives the legs magnificent exercise; and long-winded speed might prove very handy after a defeat. It dries up the phlegmatic humor; thus promoting digestion, the sole foundation of health. By reducing fat, it makes the body vigorous, sinewy, agile. It gives power to endure cold, heat, wind, rain , hunger, thirst. It interprets the mental activities of living beings from their physical expression. It supplements scanty crops with the flesh of deer, buffaloes, wild oxen, and other game. It makes land routes secure by killing such creatures as wolves and tigers. It explores mountainous or forested regions, with their varied resources. It wins the confidence of jungle tribes. It fosters energy, thus impressing hostile armies. These advantages deserve a high rating.

" ' "Or take gambling. It develops an unexampled magnanimity, since you drop a pile of money like a straw. With its alternations of winning and losing, it liberates you from servile joy or despondency. It nourishes impetuosity, the basis of all manliness. It compels a continuous exercise of quick intelligence in detecting tricks (very difficult to perceive) with dice, sleight of hand, the board, and other equipment. Demanding exclusive attention, it gives superb training in mental concentration. It makes for delight in audacity, the companion of brisk resolution; for ability

to hold one's own while rubbing up with the toughest customers; for the cultivation of self-reliance; for getting a living without stinginess.

" ' "Or again, take the society of good-looking girls. That makes money and virtue worth having. That means genuine manly pride; skill in thought-reading; conduct untainted by sordid greed; training in all the social arts; quickness of wit and speech because you must be forever devising means to get what you lack, to keep what you get, to enjoy what you keep, to dream of what you enjoy, to pacify the peevish, and so on; public deference for your well-groomed person and stunning clothes; social acceptability; great respect from servants; smiling address; dignity; gallantry; the winning, through children, of salvation on earth and salvation in heaven.

" ' "Then again, take alcohol. This fortifies the charm of youth through steady use of spirituous antidotes to numerous diseases. It neutralizes all misfortunes by increasing self-esteem. It kindles sexual desire and improves the capacity for pleasure. It drowns the consciousness of sin, so counteracting morbidity. By removing the fetters of reticence, it conduces to mutual confidence. By repressing envy, it makes for pure joy. It encourages continual enjoyment of music and other sense-impressions; the acquisition of countless and varied friendships; unrivaled beauty of person; unparalleled graces; martial spirit, resulting from the loss of fear and depression.

" ' "Beneficial also, on occasion, are scurrility, cruelty, and spoliation of goods. For a king is not a hermit, subduing the six enemies to bask in religious peace, nor can he be held to commonplace morality."

" 'So the poor king adopted these opinions, like the counsels of a teacher, with the greatest respect; while his ministers, imitating him, embraced vicious courses without restraint. And as all were equally self-indulgent, no man investigated another's delinquency.

" 'Since king and ministers behaved alike, the bureaucrats consumed the profits of their own labors, thus slowly drying up the sources of revenue, while their master's expenditures increased daily; for he was subservient to gay dogs. His confidence was increased by finding a community of tastes in the vassals, prominent citizens, and district leaders to whom, with their wives, he issued invitations for alcoholic *conversaziones*. He found them ready to transgress convention and took liberties with the ladies on any pretext; while they, abating their reverence for court ladies who met them half way, indulged in many flirtations.

" 'Presently, all the ladies of the land, finding indelicacy easy and pleasant, broke the bonds of decorum; they did not care a straw for their husbands as they listened to the proposals of crowding lovers. Passionate squabbles resulted. The strong killed the weak. Thieves stole the wealth of the wealthy. The paths of crime were free and frequented. Citizens

whose kinsfolk were slain, whose property was plundered, who were sick of slaughter and bondage, loosed their throats in sobbing lamentation. Unjust punishments begot fear and wrath. Greed stalked through impoverished households. The self-respecting flamed with humiliated pride. Treasons flowed from all these wrongs.

" 'Then poisoners and other plotters, in the pay of the lord of Ashmaka, destroyed Anantavarman's picked soldiers and debilitated his army by many devices. Dressed as hunters, they enticed men by stories of abundant game into ravines without exit, then set fire to the dry grass and bamboo clumps at the entrance. They urged the killing of tigers and other wild beasts, then helped the beasts to kill them. They enlisted deadly hunger and thirst against men led far astray by desire for the water of some choice well. They led rough chases that caused falls from cliffs on treacherous slopes covered with grass and brush. They drew thorns from feet with poison-tipped knives; they made easy prey of stragglers, striving individually to rejoin a scattered troop. Others they shot with arrows, pretending to mistake them for deer; or dared them to scale rugged heights, and pushed them off with no witnesses; or disguised themselves as men of the jungle to overpower small bands in a thicket. They forced others into brawls at gambling matches, cockfights, festivals, and the like; made them injure each other; fomented secret unpleasantnesses, then published the resulting insults before witnesses, thus compelling duels to conceal dishonor. Attaching themselves in the guise of friends to others' wives, they suggested acts of violence aimed at lovers, husbands, or both. They seduced some with fit females, lurking at the rendezvous and bursting out with damning evidence. Some they induced to enter caves, to dig for treasure, to practice magic, attributing their death to the difficulties of the job. They would persuade men to mount must elephants, meanwhile suppressing precautions; or, on some wild wager, excite a rogue elephant against a picked troop. They assassinated those who quarreled over a donation, casting the blame on the disputants; they secretly smote those who abused vassal cities or districts, and proclaimed the names of personal enemies. They spread debilitating disease by encouraging constant indulgence with that kind of female; they skilfully rubbed poison on garments, ornaments, garlands, and salves; they fostered sickness in the name of medicine.

" 'Then Vasantabhanu instigated Bhanuvarman, lord of Vanavasi, to make war on Anantavarman, who mobilized for offense the moment his boundary was violated. Of all his vassals, the first to arrive and the most welcome was the lord of Ashmaka. When the others gathered, they made a short march, encamping on the bank of the Nerbudda.

" 'At this juncture, the king summoned a girl in

the train of a powerful vassal, the lord of Kuntala; she was dancer to the person of His Majesty of Avanti, was called "the human sylph," and was highly extolled by Chandrapalita and others for terpsichorean talent. On seeing her dance, he fell in love, made her drunk, and abused her.

" 'Then the lord of Ashmaka whispered to the lord of Kuntala: "This wanton king outrages our wives. What measure of humiliation must we endure? I have a hundred elephants; you have five hundred. Let us join forces, and speak a quiet word to the lord of Murala, Virasena; also to Ekavira, lord of Richika; to Kumaragupta, lord of Konkana; and to Nagapala, ruler of Sasikya. They will infallibly resent his insolence and fall in with our plan. Besides, this lord of Vanavasi is a dear friend of mine. We will let him engage our blackguard in front, while we attack from the rear. And we will divide the treasure and animals."

" 'Receiving joyful assent, he made up parcels as gifts—twenty fine garments, twenty-five portions of gold, saffron, and blankets—chose a fit go-between, came to an understanding with the vassals mentioned, and won them to his plan. For these vassals and for the lord of Vanavasi, Anantavarman next day became mincemeat, because he despised political science.

" 'Now Vasantabhanu, having set his own guards over the chaotic booty of treasure and animals, made this insidious proposal to all his confederates: "Divide the spoil in proportion to your exertions and your contributions of force. I shall be content with any fragment you may allot." Thus he baited all the vassals into a ruinous squabble, and himself swallowed the whole plunder. After bestowing a petty fraction on the lord of Vanavasi, he faced about and reduced the entire realm of Anantavarman.

" 'In this posture of affairs, the aged counselor Vasurakshita, with the help of certain hereditary servants of the monarchy, contrived to escape with the lad Bhaskaravarman (whom you see here), with his elder sister, the thirteen-year old Manjuvadini, and with their mother, Queen Vasundhara. The counselor, foreseeing the inevitable disaster, perished by an inflammatory fever; but certain friends (of whom I was one) conducted the queen and the royal children to the city Mahishmati and presented them to Mitravarman, her consort's half-brother.

" 'This scoundrel fancied her as loose as himself; and when she repulsed him, he heartlessly strove to kill this lad, imagining that she preserved her honor only to keep her son fit for the succession. When the queen understood the situation, she besought me thus: "Father Nalijangha, wherever you have to put him, save my boy's life, and your own. If my life is preserved, I will follow. And when you are secure, send me a message."

" 'I managed to spirit him away from the muddle at court and plunged into the Vindhya forest. I gave

him a few days' rest in a herdsmen's hamlet—for we traveled on foot—but fearing a descent of the king's agents even there, made a further long journey. Then, when dreadful thirst distressed him, I tried to give him water but stumbled and fell into this well, where you were so kind to me. Henceforth, sir, pray help this helpless prince.' And he bowed respectfully.

"Now when I inquired concerning the mother's origin, he told me: 'His mother was born to Kusumadhanvan, lord of Kosala, and Sagaradatta, daughter of Vaishravana, a merchant of Patna.' 'In that case,' said I, 'his mother and my father had the same maternal grandfather.' And I embraced him tenderly. Then the old gentleman asked which of the sons of Sindhudatta was my father, and showed great delight at hearing the name of Sushruta. Thereupon I engaged to destroy the arrogant usurper by adopting his own political tricks, and to re-establish the lad in his paternal inheritance; but the more pressing anxiety was the alleviation of his hunger.

"At this moment two deer flashed past, and a hunter who had missed them with three arrows. Snatching from his hand his remaining two arrows and the bow, I shot. One arrow pierced beyond the feather, the other not so far; but both deer fell dead. One I gave to the hunter; the other I scraped, cleaned, skinned, and cut up, then spitted the quarters, neck, and other parts over the coals of a bonfire, and satisfied

the hunger of my two companions and myself with roast venison.

"The barbarian was greatly tickled by my smartness in this business, and I asked him: 'Do you happen to know any news from Mahishmati?' 'I left the city today,' he replied, 'after selling tiger skins and leather goods. You can wager I know. Chandavarman's younger brother Prachandavarman is coming to make a proposal to Manjuvadini, Anantavarman's daughter, and the city is set for a holiday.'

"Then I whispered my aged friend: 'That knavish Mitravarman is trying to win the mother's confidence by honorable conduct toward the daughter, through whom he will draw the boy back in order to kill him. Therefore return, give the queen secret assurance of the lad's welfare and of my existence, but lament in public that the young prince has been eaten by a tiger. That traitor, inwardly delighted, will express insincere sympathy for the queen; whereupon you will bear him this message from her: "The boy for whose sake I opposed your purpose, has for my sins departed this life. Today I am ready to receive your orders." This will please him and cause him to co-operate.

" 'Then she must dip a garland in water holding the deadly *vatsanabha* poison in solution and lay it on his chest and face with the conjuring spell: "May this become a sword-thrust if you are a sinner and I a faithful wife." This will prove fatal. Next, she must

drop this antidote in the water, dip the garland, and give it to her own daughter. When he dies and the girl is unaffected, the citizens will say: "She *is* a faithful wife," and will follow her lead.

" 'Then she must send a message to Prachandavarman: "This realm lacks a leader. You should appropriate it, and this maiden too." Meanwhile, the boy and I, disguised as grim ascetics, will dwell beside the cemetery outside the city, awaiting alms from the queen's own hand.

" 'At this point, let the queen make a secret communication to staid, respectable citizens and chosen counselors: "The Vindhya-dwelling goddess visited me in the night with gracious power of vision. Four days from now, Prachandavarman will die. On the fifth day, a certain Brahman youth, if he finds her shrine on the bank of the Reva empty, will—after all worshipers have withdrawn—fling wide the door and come forth with my son. He will guard this kingdom and make my son its ruler. The boy is meanwhile held hidden by the goddess, who has assumed the form of a tigress. And dear little Manjuvadini is the destined bride of the Brahman youth. All must remain a profound secret among you until these things come to pass." '

"The old gentleman joyfully approved, and started; events followed as planned. And gossip spread in widening circles: 'What wonderful power have faithful wives! One touch from a garland proved a sword-

thrust for him. And you can't possibly say there was any trick in the business, because the very same wreath, given to her daughter, looked beautiful on her breast, didn't kill her at all. Anyone who disobeys this faithful wife, will just turn to ashes.'

"Now when the queen beheld her son and me approaching, in grim ascetic garb, to receive alms, her breasts grew moist as she rose to greet us, and her voice broke with joy as she said: 'Receive my reverence, holy sir, and relieve my helplessness. To me it is all a dream. Is it true, or not?' 'Results will show,' said I, 'no later than today.' And she replied: 'If so, your handmaid is blest indeed. For the dream promised her a protector.' And she bade Manjuvadini bow, while the girl's shy demeanor betrayed her pleasure at the sight of me. 'If you are playing me false,' continued the queen in happy mood, 'tomorrow I shall have to punish this hermit lad of yours.' 'Very well,' said I with a smile, and accepted her alms; but my manhood melted as my glances led to an absorbing passion for Manjuvadini.

"I summoned Nalijangha; and as he followed me forth, I quietly inquired: 'Where is that rogue Prachandavarman, whose speedy doom has been predicted?' And he replied: 'Quite certain that the kingdom is his, he is in the royal reception hall, where actors fawn upon him.' 'Then wait in the garden,' I bade my venerable friend; deposited my trappings in an empty cell by its wall; and engaged the prince to

guard them. I myself assumed the costume of a professional entertainer and went to amuse Prachandavarman.

"At the hour when the sun's rays redden, I presented a vaudeville program adapted to the mentality of the gathering—dance, song, assorted pathos, and the like; hand-waving, foot-flourishing, and high kicking; the scorpion wiggle, the crocodile waddle, and the fish twitch. Next, I snatched knives from the nearest, disposed them about my person, and exhibited certain spectacular and scientific specialties, such as the hawk swoop and the osprey dive. Then I hurled a knife a distance of a hundred and twenty feet, striking Prachandavarman in the chest, while I bellowed: 'May Vasantabhanu live a thousand years.' A mercenary flourished his sword to cut me down; I leaped on the hump his shoulder made, easily paralyzing him and widening the excited eyes of the crowd; then at a bound I took the twelve-foot wall.

"My first word on landing in the garden was: 'Here is the visible track of my companions'; for the footprints were not obliterated in the sand leveled by Nalijangha's steps. So I hurried to the east along the wall by the alley of *tamal* trees, then ran to the south where my trail was lost among scattered heaps of bricks, leaped the encircling moat of the rampart, and darted into the empty cell. Here I assumed my earlier garb and returned with the prince to the cemetery, while the court, agog at my exploit, was hesitant in

pursuit. Now previously I had devised a nook for concealment in the shrine of the goddess, in the very base of the statue; its entrance was hidden by slabs of stone movable from the side.

"Then as the dark night glided by, the lad and I attired ourselves in silken garments brought by eunuchs and adorned with priceless gems; entered there; and remained without a sound. The queen had on the previous day given the fire-sacrament with fitting ceremony to Prachandavarman of Malwa and had reported to Chandavarman that his death was due to a treacherous trick of the lord of Ashmaka. This day at dawn she came with the respectable citizens, counselors, and vassals previously bidden to the rendezvous, and worshiped the blessèd goddess. Before all these witnesses she proved the shrine empty by investigating every recess; then stood at gaze with the crowd, while a shrill drum-beat gave the signal.

"The signaling sound trickled through a tiny crack; I applied my head to the iron pedestal carrying the image and, gripping it with both hands, swung one side over—a task to tax the energy of a muscular man. Then I emerged with the young prince.

"I replaced the grim goddess, flung wide the door, and made my appearance, addressing the citizens who fell flat with glances of glad conviction, with visible thrills, with lifted hands and mounting astonishment: 'The Vindhya-dwelling goddess thus enjoins you through my lips: "I mercifully took the form of a

tigress to conceal this lad, whom today I restore to you. From today you must receive him as my son, the fondling of no heedless mother." Furthermore, you are to consider me his protector, whose ambition it is to shatter that pot which is Ashmaka—the cruel lord whose false heart is betrayed by his very skill in devising uncounted guileful wiles. As the wages of this protection, the holy goddess graciously grants me the lad's sweet-faced sister.'

"At this the people cried with delight: 'Blest is Bhoja's dynasty, receiving you as its chief from the holy goddess.' My mother-in-law attained a state of ineffable bliss, and that very day gave me Manjuvadini's blossom-hand with all due ceremony.

"Under cover of night I completely plugged the nook beneath the statue, so that searchers found no cranny for hiding. The people indulged in gossip that made them forget their meals and was enriched with invented details; they inferred that a spirit of divinity dwelt in me; and my word became law. They bestowed on the prince the title 'Son of the holy goddess,' and this became a source of prestige. On an auspicious day I clothed him brilliantly and had the chaplain perform the rite of investiture; I let the lad learn political science, while I attended to the details of government.

"Then I reflected: 'The realm is indeed docile to the three factors of power, while the factors—wise planning, prestige, and energy—so dovetail as to accomplish results. Our ambitions are defined by wise planning, set in motion by prestige, brought to a happy issue by energy. Now the tree of government—whose fivefold root is wise planning, whose double stem is prestige, whose four branches are energy, whose seventy-two leaves are the counselors, whose six twigs are the six expedients, whose flower is power, and the fruit, success—should benefit its governor. But so wide are its ramifications that one needs a companion for full exploitation. Now Aryaketu, Mitravarman's counselor, having his origin in Kosala, is loyal to the prince's mother and possesses the qualities of a counselor. Through contempt of his advice, Mitravarman came to grief. If he could be secured, it would be a blessing.'

"So I summoned Nalijangha and gave him secret instructions: 'Father, put this question privately to noble Aryaketu: "Who is this mystery man that enjoys the glory of our kingdom? You know the snake has caught our young prince. Will he spew him out or swallow him?" Then convey his answer to me.'

"Presently he brought me this report: 'I waited upon him with frequent gifts, skilfully beat about the bush, stroked his hands and feet, then in a moment of perfect confidence questioned him in the fashion dictated by you. And he made answer: "My very dear sir, you are much mistaken. This man gives evidence of pure aristocratic descent, unrivaled penetration, superhuman vigor, measureless nobility, miraculous

skill with weapons, no mean acquaintance with the arts, a benevolent spirit, and a majesty irresistible to his enemies. In him converge virtues, elsewhere hardly to be discovered individually. To his foes he is a upas, to the loyal a sandal tree: witness his supplanting of pedantic Ashmaka, and the restitution of our prince to his paternal dominion. Depend upon it, sir." '

"Even after this, I tested the man by a number of traps before familiarizing him with my design. With his friendly aid I selected truthful, incorruptible counselors and spies diversely disguised. Learning from these that the whole realm was avaricious of wealth, very uppish, and intractable, I publicly extolled generosity; exalted piety; confounded heretics; cleaned up prickly enemies; baffled the stratagems of foes; settled the four castes in their several duties; determined to replenish the treasury, since the best measures of regulation are dependent on money, and there is nothing more fatal than weakness in that department. Such were my principles of government."

CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

"And I reflected: 'My subordinates, without exception, are most valorous and so devoted to me as not to care a straw for their lives in comparison with my command. With the total armies of two kingdoms at my back, I am not inferior to Vasantabhanu, lord of Ashmaka, and I hold the advantage in political science. I am therefore competent to conquer Vasantabhanu and to establish in his paternal inheritance Bhaskaravarman, son of Anantavarman, sovereign of Vidarbha. Besides, the rumor springs up everywhere that this prince is the adopted son of the holy goddess and that I am his deputed companion. Even yet no man knows that this is a consequence of my craft. Now our partisans have confidence in this prince Bhaskaravarman, believing that he, the son of their rightful lord Anantavarman, will gain this kingdom through the grace of the holy goddess; while the army of the lord of Ashmaka, realizing that the prince enjoys the favor of the goddess, and that human power is no match for power divine, has little stomach for a fight with us.

" 'Again, our hereditary counselors, desirous from the first of the prince's elevation, and now secured by gifts and honors from me, show a peculiar enthusiasm

for the prince. On the other hand, reliable emissaries of mine have, at my command, greatly gained upon the intimate servants of the lord of Ashmaka and have insinuated this quiet word: "You are our friends, hence have a right to hear from us what is profitable. If any side with Vasantabhanu, lord of Ashmaka, in dividing the prince from his companion, the famous Vishruta, deputed by the goddess herself, and fight with him, they too will become guests of the death-god. So long as the lord of Ashmaka adopts no hostile measures, you will follow Bhaskaravarman, son of Anantavarman. Thus the lord of Ashmaka may dismiss alarms and live in peace and prosperity with his people. Otherwise, he will fall a victim to the trident of the holy goddess. Inform all, once for all, of the commands the goddess lays upon me. We feel a sincere friendship for you, so long as all abide by our bidding." '

"Upon hearing this, the intimate servants of the lord of Ashmaka, who already realized that the prince was the nursling of the goddess, were shaken in allegiance. And since the message came from me, they fell decidedly under my influence.

"Now the lord of Ashmaka, becoming familiar with all these circumstances, reflected: 'All the hereditary subjects of the prince desire him as their sovereign; while my servants, remote and intimate, seem shaken in allegiance. If then I remain at home, relying on leniency, I shall be unable to guard even my

own kingdom, permeated by disaffection. Hence, before it comes to a dissension with my troops, whose wavering betrays my own uncertainty, I will employ them in war; in that case, he will be obliged to give me a brief interview.' With this in mind, impelled to the crime of unmotivated invasion, he marched with his army against us, and into the jaws of death.

"Apprised of his approach, the prince led our van; while I mounted a horse and rode straight at the lord of Ashmaka. Thereupon his entire army drew the inference that there could be but one unique explanation for the charge of a single man against so limitless a host—namely, the guardian favor of the goddess; and they stood stock still like painted pictures. I singled out Vasantabhanu and challenged him to combat; he faced me and fetched a stout blow with his sword. Parrying this with particular skill, I countered; and as his severed head dropped on the ground, I shouted to his army: 'Let any who still desire to fight, step forward and fight with me. If not, let all fall at the feet of the prince and become his men. Thereafter, undiminished in livelihood, securely pursuing their several avocations, let them dwell in peace.'

"Without delay or exception, all servants of the lord of Ashmaka clambered from their mounts, fell before the prince, and became subservient to him. I installed him as lord of the kingdom of Ashmaka, confirmed the hereditary functionaries in their offices,

and appropriated the army of the lord of Ashmaka. With it I proceeded to Vidarbha, anointed Prince Bhaskaravarman in the capital city, and set him in the place of his fathers.

"One day, when the king was with his mother Vasundhara, I said respectfully: 'I desire to undertake a certain task. Until it is performed I can nowhere remain at ease. Pray permit my wife, your sister Manjuvadini, to dwell a few days with you. I wish to wander for a space of time, seeking one I love; when that person is found, I will return.'

"Now the king asked his mother's permission before replying: 'You, sir, are the unique cause of our wonderful success, evidenced in the winning of this kingdom. Without you we cannot for a moment bear the burden of this kingdom. How can you make such a proposal?'

"But I replied: 'You need not cherish a grain of anxiety. In your palace is the pearl of counselors, Aryaketu, capable of bearing the burden of several such kingdoms. I will put him in charge before departing.' Though plied with much such argument, the king and his mother delayed my departure some little time with acts of affectionate insistence. Incidentally, he gave me the kingdom of Prachandavarman, overlord of Utkala.

"When I had settled that government, I bade my young king farewell and began my journey in search of you, sir. But being summoned by Simhavarman,

the Anga monarch, to succor him, I came hither, where whatever good I ever did, had rich reward. For here I met my master."

Hereafter, the princes there assembled—Apaharavarman, Upaharavarman, Arthapala, Pramati, Mitragupta, Mantragupta, and Vishruta—sent servants to summon Prince Somadatta, who was enjoying the position of crown prince in Patalipura and who, with his bride Vamalochana, was awaiting the invitation. Then all, in the companionship of Rajavahana, told tales in mutually pleasing union until from Blossom City came a dispatch sent by King Rajahansa. With this in hand, the gathered princes bowed before Rajavahana, saying: "Your Majesty, receive this dispatch of your father, Rajahansa." He rose, bowed repeatedly with deep respect, and received the dispatch before these witnesses.

Then Prince Rajavahana laid the letter on his brow, lowered it, broke the seal, and read in the hearing of all: "Blessings and benedictions. Given from Blossom City, our capital. King Rajahansa greets Rajavahana and the other princes sojourning in the city of Champa and sends these directions in writing. When you bade us a dutiful farewell and set forth on your journey, we established our residence in a forest glade by Shiva's shrine. Thither returned the army, reporting that Rajavahana had withdrawn by night to a shrine of Shiva in order to worship the god; that

all the remaining princes, failing to find him in the morning, had vowed to bow with Rajavahana before Rajahansa or to die, and had scattered.

"When we learned your story from the lips of the soldiers returning thence, your mother and I, two hearts sunk in a sea of unendurable sorrow, determined to visit Vamadeva's hermitage and, having made him acquainted with these events, to leave life behind. But when we arrived and bowed before him, our purpose was already known to that holy sage, to whom past, present, and future are revealed. Discerning our determination, he spoke: 'O King, all your purpose is already known, through the power of divine insight. These princes of yours, having for Rajavahana's sake suffered sorrow for a season, will then, through turn of fate and matchless valor, complete the conquest of the quarters. They will win many kingdoms and at the end of sixteen years will return in the train of Rajavahana victorious, to fall prone before you and Vasumati and to perform your commands. For their sake therefore you must dare no desperate deed.'

"Trusting the holy sage's word, the queen and I have fortified our hearts and drawn breath until this day. Now when the limit drew near, I visited Vamadeva's hermitage and spoke respectfully: 'My lord, the limit set by you is near at hand. Is further intelligence in your mind today?'

"The holy sage replied: 'O King, Rajavahana and

all the other princes have vanquished many doughty foes, have completed the conquest of the quarters, have subdued the earth, and are united in Champa. Send speedy couriers with dispatches to recall them.'

"I hearkened to the words of the holy sage and have sent this dispatch to summon you. If you delay a moment more, you will hear that I and Vasumati, your mother, are but a tale remembered. Realizing this, drink only water on your journey."

So they laid their sire's dispatch on their brows and determined to go. They determined also to assign adequate forces to the guarding of the conquered kingdoms and to appoint to every office a fit and competent functionary; further, to secure their line of march with proper detachments, to defeat their initial enemy, Manasara of Malwa, annexing his kingdom also, and then to bow in Blossom City before the feet of King Rajahansa and Queen Vasumati. So, taking their wives, they marched with a picked force against the monarch of Malwa. And Rajavahana, surrounded by companion princes, the moment he reached Ujjain, straightway defeated and slew—despite his might—Manasara, monarch of Malwa. He recovered Princess Avantisundari, freed Prince Pushpodbhava with his household from the prison where he was kept by the counsel of Chandavarman, and with his aid settled the kingdom of Malwa, appointing certain statesmen and soldiers to guard it. With the remainder of their picked army the princes came home to Blossom City

and there—Rajavahana leading—adored the feet of Rajahansa and of their mother, Vasumati. These two, on winning back their sons, felt their happiness complete.

Then, in the presence of the king and of Vasumati the queen, Vamadeva, penetrating the longing of the ten princes, said to them: "Depart now together and rule in righteousness, each his own kingdom. But when desire awakens, then return to bow low at your parents' feet." So all the princes, receiving with reverence the command of the sage, bowed before him and their parents; went and paraded the conquered world; then returned and related, in the sage's presence, each his own tale. And the parents, hearing those most ingenious adventures testifying to the native valor of their lads, experienced the extremity of joy.

Then the king deferentially addressed the sage: "Holy sir, through your grace we have attained a bliss surpassing human wishes, beyond the range of speech or thought. Henceforth it befits me to live a forest hermit at my teacher's feet, aiming at full possession of my soul. Pray ordain that Rajavahana be anointed ruler over the kingdom of Blossom City and over Manasara's realm; that the remaining kingdoms be severally assigned to the nine princes; that these princes, obeying Rajavahana yet in perfect amity, pluck all thorny rivals and take joy in the earth who wears the four seas as a girdle."

And the sage, perceiving the lads insistent to dissuade their sire from embracing the hermit life, said to them: "My princely lads, your father treads the path becoming to his years. In my hermitage he will lead his pious life with no hardship. Pray do not dissuade him. For there he will win the grace of God. Nor would you be always happy in your father's house." They bowed to the holy bidding and ceased their insistence.

So Rajavahana was established in Blossom City; and all his comrades, with his consent, governed their several kingdoms, coming and going at will to greet their parents. Thus settled, all the princely lads, righteously ruling—under Rajavahana's command—the circle of earth's lands, in amity perfectly reciprocated, delighted in kingly joys that gods can scarce attain.

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This index has been prepared to facilitate correct pronunciation.

Consonants are pronounced much as in English; vowels as in Italian.

The distinction between long and short vowels is important, long vowels having real musical length and short vowels being genuinely short. Consequently, correct pronunciation gives somewhat the effect of chanting.

Long vowels are marked by the macron. All unmarked vowels (not diphthongs) are short.

The accent is indicated, though the rules for its placing are almost those of classical Latin.

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