

the like. As for his mother, Shah Khatun, great was her longing for her child and she thought of him ever and news of him was cut off from her, so her life was troubled and she forswore sleep and could not make mention of him before King Cæsar her spouse. Now she had a Eunuch who had come with her from the court of her uncle King Sulayman Shah, and he was intelligent, quick-witted, right-reded. So she took him apart one day and said to him, shedding tears the while, "Thou hast been my Eunuch from my childhood to this day; canst thou not therefore get me tidings of my son, seeing that I cannot speak of his matter?" He replied, "O my lady, this is an affair which thou hast concealed from the commencement, and were thy son here, 'twould not be possible for thee to entertain him, lest thine honor be smirched with the king; for they would never credit thee, since the news hath been bruited abroad that thy son was slain by his uncle." Quoth she, "The case is even as thou sayest and thou speakest sooth; but, provided I know that my son is alive, let him be in these parts pasturing sheep and let me not sight him nor he sight me." He asked, "How shall we manage in this matter?" and she answered, "Here be my treasures and my wealth: take all thou wilt and bring me my son or else tidings of him." Then they devised a device between them, which was that they should feign some business in their own country, to wit that she had wealth there buried from the time of her husband, Malik Shah, and that none knew of it but this Eunuch who was with her, so it behooved him to go fetch it. Accordingly she acquainted the king her husband with that and sought his permit for the Eunuch to fare: and the king granted him leave of absence for the journey and charged him devise a device, lest he come to grief. The Eunuch, therefore, disguised himself in merchant's habit and repairing to Bahluwan's city, began to make espial concerning the youth's case; whereupon they told him that he had been prisoned in a souterrain and that his uncle had released him and dispatched him to such a place, where they had slain him. When the Eunuch heard this, the mishap was grievous to

him and his breast was straitened and he knew not what to do. It chanced one day of the days that a certain of the horsemen, who had fallen in with the young Malik Shah by the water and clad him and given him spending-money, saw the Eunuch in the city, habited as a merchant, and recognizing him, questioned him of his case and of the cause of his coming. Quoth he, "I came to sell merchandise"; and quoth the horseman, "I will tell thee somewhat, an thou canst keep it secret." Answered the Eunuch, "That I can! What is it?" and the other said, "We met the king's son, Malik Shah, I and sundry of the Arabs who were with me, and saw him by such a water and gave him spending-money and sent him toward the land of the Roum, near his mother, for that we feared for him lest his uncle Bahluwan slay him." Then he told him all that had passed between them, whereat the Eunuch's countenance changed and he said to the cavalier "Thou art safe!" The knight replied, "Thou also art safe though thou come in quest of him." And the Eunuch rejoined, saying, "Truly, that is my errand: there is no rest for his mother, lying down or rising up, and she hath sent me to seek news of him." Quoth the cavalier, "Go in safety, for he is in a quarter of the land of the Roum, even as I said to thee." The Eunuch thanked him and blessed him and mounting, returned upon his road, following the trail, while the knight rode with him to a certain highway, when he said to him, "This is where we left him." Then he took leave of him and returned to his own city, while the Eunuch fared on along the road, inquiring in every village he entered of the youth, by the description which the rider had given him, and he ceased not thus to do till he came to the village wherein was young Malik Shah. So he entered, and dismounting, made inquiry after the Prince, but none gave him news of him; whereat he abode perplexed concerning his affair and made ready to depart. Accordingly he mounted his horse; but, as he passed through the village, he saw a cow bound with a rope and a youth asleep by her side, hending the halter in hand; so he looked at him and passed on and heeded him not in his



heart, but presently he halted and said to himself, "An the youth whom I am questing have become the like of this sleeping youth whom I passed but now, how shall I know him? Alas, the length of my travail and travel! How shall I go about in search of a somebody I know not, one whom, if I saw him face to face I should not know?" So saying he turned back, musing anent that sleeping youth, and coming to him, he still sleeping, dismounted from his mare and sat down by his side. He fixed his eyes upon his face and considered him a while and said in himself, "For aught I wot, this youth may be Malik Shah"; then he began hemming and saying, "Hark ye, O youth!" Whereupon the sleeper awoke and sat up; and the Eunuch asked him, "Who be thy father in this village and where be thy dwelling?" The youth sighed and replied, "I am a stranger"; and quoth the Eunuch, "From what land art thou and who is thy sire?" Quoth the other, "I am from such a land," and the Eunuch ceased not to question him and he to answer his queries, till he was certified of him and knew him. So he arose and embraced him and kissed him and wept over his case: he also told him that he was wandering about in search of him and informed him that he was come privily from the king, his mother's husband, and that his mother would be satisfied to weet that he was alive and well, though she saw him not. Then he re-entered the village and buying the Prince a horse, mounted him, and they ceased not going till they came to the frontier of their own country, where there fell robbers upon them by the way and took all that was with them and pinioned them; after which they threw them into a pit hard by the road and went their ways and left them to die there; and indeed they had cast many folk into that pit and they had perished. The Eunuch fell a weeping in the pit and the youth said to him, "What is this weeping and what shall it profit here?" Quoth the Eunuch, "I weep not for fear of death, but of ruth for thee and the cursedness of thy case and because of thy mother's heart and for that which thou hast suffered of horrors and that thy death should be this ignoble death,

after the endurance of all manner of dire distresses." But the youth said, "That which hath betided me was writ to me and that which is written none hath power to efface; and if my life-term be advanced, none may defer it." Then the twain passed that night and the following day and the next night and the next day in the hollow, till they were weak with hunger and came nigh upon death and could but groan feebly. Now it fortun'd by the decree of Almighty Allah and His destiny, that Cæsar, king of the Greeks, the spouse of Malik Shah's mother Shah Khatun, went forth a-hunting that morning. He flushed a head of game, he and his company, and chased it, till they came up with it by that pit, whereupon one of them lighted down from his horse, to slaughter it, hard by the mouth of the hollow. He heard a sound of low moaning from the sole of the pit; whereat he arose and mounting his horse, waited till the troops were assembled. Then he acquainted the king with this and he bade one of his servants descend into the hollow; so the man climbed down and brought out the youth and the Eunuch in fainting condition. They cut their pinion-bonds and poured wine down their throats, till they came to themselves, when the king looked at the Eunuch and recognizing him, said, "Harkye, Such-an-one!" The Eunuch replied, "Yes, O my lord the king," and prostrated himself to him; whereat the king wondered with exceeding wonder and asked him, "How camest thou to this place and what hath befallen thee?" The Eunuch answered, "I went and took out the treasure and brought it thus far; but the evil eye was behind me and I unknowing. So the thieves took us alone here and seized the money and cast us into this pit that we might die the slow death of hunger, even as they had done with others; but Allah the Most High sent thee, in pity to us." The king marveled, he and his, and praised the Lord for that he had come thither; after which he turned to the Eunuch and said to him, "What is this youth thou hast with thee?" He replied, "O king, this is the son of a nurse who belonged to us and we left him when he was a little one. I saw him to-day and his mother said to me, 'Take him with thee': so



this morning I brought him that he might be a servant to the king, for that he is an adroit youth and a clever." Then the king fared on, he and his company, and with them the Eunuch and the youth, who questioned his companion of Bahluwan and his dealing with his subjects, and he replied, saying, "As thy head liveth, O my lord the king, the folk are in sore annoy with him and not one of them wisheth a sight of him, be they high or low." When the king returned to his palace, he went in to his wife Shah Khatun and said to her, "I give thee the glad tidings of thine Eunuch's return"; and he told her what had befallen and of the youth whom he had brought with him. When she heard this, her wits fled and she would have screamed, but her reason restrained her, and the king said to her, "What is this? Art thou overcome with grief for the loss of the moneys or for that which hath befallen the Eunuch?" Said she, "Nay, as thy head liveth, O king! but women are weaklings." Then came the Eunuch and going in to her, told her all that had happened to him and also acquainted her with her son's case and with that which he had suffered of distresses and how his uncle had exposed him to slaughter, and he had been taken prisoner and they had cast him into the pit and hurled him from the highmost of the citadel and how Allah had delivered him from these perils, all of them; and whilst he recounted to her all this, she wept. Then she asked him, "When the king saw him and questioned thee of him, what was it thou saidst him?" and he answered, "I said to him: 'This is the son of a nurse who belonged to us. We left him a little one and he grew up; so I brought him, that he might be servant to the king.'" Cried she, "Thou didst well"; and she charged him to serve the Prince with faithful service. As for the king, he redoubled in kindness to the Eunuch and appointed the youth a liberal allowance and the abode going in to and coming out of the king's house and standing in his service, and every day he waxed better with him. As for Shah Khatun, she used to station herself at watch for him at the windows and in the balconies

and gaze upon him, and she frying on coals of fire on his account; yet could she not speak. In such condition she abode a long while and indeed yearning for him was killing her; so she stood and watched for him one day at the door of her chamber and straining him to her bosom, bussed him on the breast and kissed him on either cheek. At this moment, behold, out came the major-domo of the king's household and seeing her embracing the youth, started in amazement. Then he asked to whom that chamber belonged and was answered, "To Shah Khatun, wife of the king," whereupon he turned back, quaking as one smitten by a leven-bolt. The king saw him in a tremor and said to him, "Out on thee! what is the matter?" Said he, "O king, what matter can be more grievous than that which I see?" Asked the king, "What seest thou?" and the officer answered, "I see that the youth, who came with the Eunuch, was not brought with him save on account of Shah Khatun; for I passed but now by her chamber door, and she was standing, watching; and when the youth came up, she rose to him and clipped him and kissed him on his cheek." When the king heard this, he bowed his head amazed, perplexed, and sinking into a seat, clutched at his beard and shook it till he came nigh upon plucking it out. Then he arose forthright and laid hands on the youth and clapped him in jail; he also took the Eunuch and cast them both into a souterrain under his palace. After this he went in to Shah Khatun and said to her, "Brava, by Allah, O daughter of nobles. O thou whom kings sought to wed, for the purity of thy repute and the fairness of the fame of thee! How seemly is thy semblance! Now may Allah curse her whose inward contrarieth her outward, after the likeness of thy base favor, whose exterior is handsome and its interior fulsome, face fair and deeds foul! Verily, I mean to make of thee and of yonder ne'er-do-well an example among the lieges, for that thou sentest not thine Eunuch but of intent on his account, so that he took him and brought him into my palace and thou hast trampled my head with him; and this is none other than exceeding boldness; but thou shalt see what



I will do with you all." So saying, he spat in her face and went out from her; while Shah Khatun said nothing, well knowing that, as she spoke at that time, he would not credit her speech. Then she humbled herself in supplication to Allah Almighty and said, "O God the Great, Thou knowest the things by secrecy ensealed and their outwards revealed and their inwards concealed! If an advanced life-term be appointed to me, let it not be deferred, and if a deferred one, let it not be advanced!" On this wise she passed some days, while the king fell into bewilderment and fore-swore meat and drink and sleep, and abode knowing not what he should do and saying to himself, "An I slay the Eunuch and the youth, my soul will not be solaced, for they are not to blame, seeing that she sent to fetch him, and my heart careth not to kill them all three. But I will not be hasty in doing them die, for that I fear repentance." Then he left them, so he might look into the affair. Now he had a nurse, a foster-mother, on whose knees he had been reared, and she was a woman of understanding and suspected him, yet dared not question him. So she went in to Shah Khatun and finding her in yet sadder plight than he, asked her what was to do; but she refused to answer. However, the nurse gave not over coaxing and questioning her, till she swore her to concealment. Accordingly, the old woman made oath that she would keep secret all that she should say to her, whereupon the queen to her related her history, first and last, and told her that the youth was her son. With this the old woman prostrated herself before her and said to her, "This is a right easy matter." But the queen replied, "By Allah, O my mother, I prefer my destruction and that of my son to defending myself by a plea which they will not believe; for they will say: She pleadeth this only that she may fend off shame from herself. And naught will profit me save long-suffering." The old woman was moved by her speech and her wisdom and said to her, "Indeed, O my daughter, 'tis as thou sayest, and I hope in Allah that He will show forth the truth. Have patience and I will presently go in to the king and hear his words and machinate

somewhat in this matter, Inshallah!" Thereupon the ancient dame arose and going in to the king, found him with his head between his knees in sore pain of sorrow. She sat down by him a while and bespoke him with soft words and said to him, "Indeed, O my son, thou consumest my vitals, for that these many days thou hast not mounted horse, and thou grievest and I know not what aileth thee." He replied, "O my mother, all is due to yonder accursed, of whom I deemed so well and who hath done this and that." Then he related to her the whole story from beginning to end, and she cried to him, "This thy chagrin is on account of a no-better-than-she-should-be!" Quoth he, "I was but considering by what death I should slay them, so the folk may take warning and repent." And quoth she, "O my son, 'ware precipitance, for it gendereth repentance and the slaying of them shall not escape thee. When thou art assured of this affair, do whatso thou willest." He rejoined, "O my mother, there needeth no assurance anent him for whom she dispatched her Eunuch and he fetched him." But she retorted, "There is a thing wherewith we will make her confess, and all that is in her heart shall be discovered to thee." Asked the king, "What is that?" and she answered, "I will bring thee the heart of a hoopoe, which, when she sleepeth, do thou lay upon her bosom and question her of everything thou wouldst know, and she will discover the same unto thee and show forth the truth to thee." The king rejoiced in this and said to his nurse, "Hasten thou and let none know of thee." So she arose and going in to the queen, said to her, "I have done thy business and 'tis as follows: This night the king will come in to thee and do thou seem asleep; and if he ask thee of aught, do thou answer him, as if in thy sleep." The queen thanked her and the old dame went away and fetching the bird's heart, gave it to the king. Hardly was the night come, when he went in to his wife and found her lying back, a-slumbering; so he sat down by her side and laying the hoopoe's heart on her breast, waited awhile, so he might be assured that she slept. Then said he to her, "Shah Khatun, Shah Khatun, is



this my reward from thee?" Quoth she, "What offense have I committed?" and quoth he, "What offense can be greater than this? Thou sentest after yonder youth and broughtest him hither, on account of thy wicked desire." Said she, "This youth is my son and a piece of my heart; and of my longing and affection for him, I could not contain myself, but sprang upon him and kissed him." When the king heard this, he was dazed and amazed and said to her, "Hast thou a proof that this youth is thy son? Indeed, I have a letter from thine uncle King Sulayman Shah, informing me that his uncle Bahluwan cut his throat." Said she, "Yes, he did indeed cut his throat, but severed not the windpipe; so my uncle sewed up the wound and reared him, for that his life-term was not come." When the king heard this, he said, "This proof sufficeth me," and rising forthright in the night, bade bring the youth and the Eunuch. Then he examined his stepson's throat with a candle and saw the scar where it had been cut from ear to ear, and indeed the place had healed up and it was like a thread stretched out. Thereupon the king fell down prostrate before Allah, who had delivered the prince from all these perils and from the distresses he had suffered, and rejoiced with joy exceeding because he had delayed and had not made haste to slay him, in which case mighty sore repentance had betided him.

*Devasmitá*

*From the Sanskrit*

THERE is a city in the world famous under the name of Támraliptá, and in that city there was a very rich merchant named Dhanadatta. And he, being childless, assembled many Bráhmans and said to them with due respect, "Take such steps as will procure me a son soon." Then those Bráhmans said to him: "This is not at all difficult, for Bráhmans can accomplish all things in this world by

means of ceremonies in accordance with the Scriptures. To give you an instance, there was in old times a king who had no sons, and he had a hundred and five wives in his harem. And by means of a sacrifice to procure a son, there was born to him a son named Jantu, who was like the rising of the new moon to the eyes of his wives. Once on a time an ant bit the boy on the thigh as he was crawling about on his knees, so that he was very unhappy and sobbed loudly. Thereupon the whole harem was full of confused lamentation, and the king himself shrieked out 'My son! my son!' like a common man. The boy was soon comforted, the ant having been removed, and the king blamed the misfortune of his only having one son as the cause of all his grief. And he asked the Bráhmans in his affliction if there was any expedient by which he might obtain a large number of children. They answered him, 'O king, there is one expedient open to you; you must slay this son and offer up all his flesh in the fire. By smelling the smell of that sacrifice all thy wives will obtain sons.' When he heard that, the king had the whole ceremony performed as they directed; and he obtained as many sons as he had wives. So we can obtain a son for you also by a burnt-offering." When they had said this to Dhanadatta, the Bráhmans, after a sacrificial fee had been promised them, performed a sacrifice: then a son was born to that merchant. That son was called Guhasena, and he gradually grew up to man's estate. Then his father Dhanadatta began to look out for a wife for him.

Then his father went with that son of his to another country, on the pretense of traffic, but really to get a daughter-in-law. There he asked an excellent merchant of the name of Dharmagupta to give him his daughter named Devasmitá for his son Guhasena. But Dharmagupta, who was tenderly attached to his daughter, did not approve of that connection, reflecting that the city of Támraliptá was very far off. But when Devasmitá beheld that Guhasena, her mind was immediately attracted by his virtues, and she was set on abandoning her relations, and so she made an