

perhaps these young merchants might go and slay her husband, she told the whole circumstance to her mother-in-law. Then her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, you have acted nobly, but possibly some misfortune may happen to my son in consequence of what you have done."

So the wise Devasmitá forthwith put on the dress of a merchant. Then she embarked on a ship, on the pretense of a mercantile expedition, and came to the country of Kaṭáha where her husband was. And when she arrived there, she saw that husband of hers, Guhasena, in the midst of a circle of merchants, like consolation in external bodily form. He seeing her afar off in the dress of a man, as it were, drank her in with his eyes, and thought to himself, "Who may this merchant be that looks so like my beloved wife?" So Devasmitá went and represented to the king that she had a petition to make, and asked him to assemble all his subjects. Then the king full of curiosity assembled all the citizens, and said to that lady disguised as a merchant, "What is your petition?" Then Devasmitá said, "There are residing here in your midst four slaves of mine who have escaped, let the king make them over to me." Then the king said to her, "All the citizens are present here, so look at everyone in order to recognize him, and take those slaves of yours." Then she seized upon the four young merchants, whom she had before treated in such a humiliating way in her house, and who had wrappers bound round their heads. Then the merchants, who were there, flew in a passion, and said to her, "These are the sons of distinguished merchants, how then can they be your slaves?" Then she answered them, "If you do not believe what I say, examine their foreheads which I marked with a dog's foot." They consented, and removing the head-wrappers of these four, they all beheld the dog's foot on their foreheads. Then all the merchants were abashed, and the king, being astonished, himself asked Devasmitá what all this meant. She told the whole story, and all the people burst out laughing, and the king said to the lady, "They are your slaves by the best of titles." Then the other mer-

chants paid a large sum of money to that chaste wife, to redeem those four from slavery, and a fine to the king's treasury. Devasmitá received that money, and recovered her husband, and being honored by all good men, returned then to her own city Tāmraliptá, and she was never afterwards separated from her beloved.

*The Sharpers and the Moneylender*

*From the Arabic*

FOUR sharpers once plotted against a Shroff, a man of much wealth, and agreed upon a sleight for securing some of his coins. So one of them took an ass and laying on it a bag, wherein were dirhams, lighted down at the shop of the Shroff and sought of him small change. The man of moneys brought out to him the silver bits and bartered them with him, whilst the sharper was easy with him in the matter of the exchange, so he might gar him long for more gain. As they were thus, up came the other three sharpers and surrounded the donkey; and one of them said, "'Tis he," and another said, "Wait till I look at him." Then he took to considering the ass and stroking him from crest to tail; whilst the third went up to him and handled him and felt him from head to rump, saying, "Yes, 'tis in him." Said another, "No, 'tis not in him"; and they left not doing the like of this for some time. Then they accosted the donkey's owner and chattered with him and he said, "I will not sell him but for ten thousand dirhams." They offered him a thousand dirhams; but he refused and swore that he would not vend the ass but for that which he had said. They ceased not adding to their offer till the price reached five thousand dirhams, whilst their mate still said, "I'll not vend him save for ten thousand silver pieces." The Shroff advised him to sell, but he would not do this and said to him, "Ho, shaykh! Thou wottest not the case of this

donkey. Stick to silver and gold and what pertaineth thereto of exchange and small change; because indeed the virtue of this ass is a mystery to thee. For every craft its crafty men and for every means of livelihood its peculiar people." When the affair was prolonged upon the three sharpers, they went away and sat down aside; then they came up privily to the money-changer and said to him, "An thou can buy him for us, do so, and we will give thee twenty dirhams." Quoth he, "Go away and sit down at a distance from him." So they did as he bade and the Shroff went up to the owner of the ass and ceased not luring him with lucre and saying, "Leave these wights and sell me the donkey, and I will reckon him a present from thee," till he sold him the animal for five thousand and five hundred dirhams. Accordingly the money-changer weighed out to him that sum of his own moneys, and the owner of the ass took the price and delivered the beast to him, saying, "Whatso shall betide, though he abide a deposit upon thy neck, sell him not to yonder cheats for less than ten thousand dirhams, for that they would fain buy him because of a hidden hoard they know, whereto naught can guide them save this donkey. So close thy hand on him and cross me not, or thou shalt repent." With these words he left him and went away, whereupon up came the three other sharpers, the comrades of him of the ass, and said to the Shroff, "God requite thee for us with good, in that thou hast bought him! How can we reward thee?" Quoth he, "I will not sell him but for ten thousand dirhams." When they heard that they returned to the ass and fell again to examining him like buyers and handling him. Then said they to the money-changer, "Indeed we were deceived in him. This is not the ass we sought and he is not worth to us more than ten nusfs." Then they left him and offered to go away, whereat the Shroff was sore chagrined and cried out at their speech, saying, "O folk, ye asked me to buy him for you and now I have bought him, ye say, we were deceived in him, and he is not worth to us more than ten nusfs." They replied, "We thought that in him was whatso we wanted; but, behold, in

him is the contrary of that which we wish; and indeed he hath a blemish, for that he is short of back." Then they made long noses at him and went away from him and dispersed. The money-changer deemed they did but play him off, that they might get the donkey at their own price; but, when they walked away from him and he had long awaited their return, he cried out, saying, "Well-away!" and "Ruin!" and "Sorry case I am in!" and shrieked aloud and rent his raiment. So the market-people assembled to him and questioned him of his case; whereupon he acquainted them with his condition and told them what the knaves had said and how they had cozened him and how they had cajoled him into buying an ass worth fifty dirhams for five thousand and five hundred. His friends blamed him and a gathering of the folk laughed at him and admired his folly and over-faith in believing the talk of the sharpers without suspicion, and meddling with that which he understood not and thrusting himself into that whereof he had no sure knowledge.

*The Withered Hand*

*From the Turkish*

ONE of the caliphs of the Abassides, named Mutaasid Billah Yansur bi nour Ullah, was a sovereign of great good judgment and careful justice. He one day, in company with his attendants, visited a palace situated on the banks of the Tigris, where he observed an expert fisherman throw his net into the river, and, after hauling it out, found only three or four fish in it. The caliph remarking this, commanded the fisherman to throw it into the water again for his sake, "and let us see," said he, "what my luck will be." The man did as he was ordered, and soon after, hauling his net out, felt something weighty among its meshes. In consequence of the increased weight, the attendants of the caliph had to aid him, and when the net