

spot where the body had been burned, and had then gone away. The king said, "O friends, that was really the thief. Ye have acted wrongly in not laying hands upon him."

The thief thought, "I shall be acting badly if I do not throw my uncle's bones into the Ganges." So he assumed the appearance of a Kāpālika,¹ went to the place where the corpse had been burned, smeared his body with ashes, filled a skull with bones and ashes, flung it into the Ganges, and then went his way. When the king had been told by his men all that had happened, he said, "O friends, this was really the thief. Ye have acted wrongly in not laying hands upon him."

From the "Kah-gyur." One of the oldest of popular tales is the story told by Herodotus (bk. ii. chap. 121) of the treasury of Rhampsinitus, which its builder's two sons are in the habit of robbing, until one of the thieves is caught in the snares set for their feet, whereupon the other, to prevent a discovery, cuts off his brother's head and runs away. The king gives orders to expose the corpse, and to keep watch so as to see whether anyone weeps and wails over it. The surviving son, forced by his mother's threats to look after his brother's burial, comes to the spot provided with skins of wine, makes the watchmen drunk, shaves off the right side of their beards, and carries away the dead body. Thereupon the king's daughter is obliged to yield herself to everyone who will relate to her the cleverest and most scandalous trick he has ever played in his life. The doer of the deed comes and betrays himself. But when the princess tries to seize him, he leaves in her hold, not his own hand, but that of the dead man. At last the king promises his daughter's hand to the doer of this deed, so the thief reveals himself and receives the princess. As a like legend is connected with the treasury of Hyrieus in Orchomenus, where Trophonius cut off the head of his brother Agamedes, and as according to Charax the same story is told also of the treasury of Augeias at Elis, we can easily understand why some commentators, like C. O. Müller, wish to claim the legend for the Greeks, while Buttmann wishes to trace it to the East.—TRANSLATOR.

¹ A skull-carrying Śiva-worshiper.

The King Who Made Mats

From the Persian

IN ancient times there was in the country of Aberbajjan a king who cherished wisdom and administered justice; the tiller of his equity-loving nature kept the garden of his kingdom always clean of the chaff and trash of oppression, and preserved with the light of the torch of high-mindedness and largesses the surface of the breast of those that hoped and solicited, from the darkness of hardship and destitution. By means of his discernment he became acquainted with the worth and station due to men of profession, and always honored the high polish of the speculum of accomplishments and perfections with the throne of dignity and the place of respect.

One day whilst he was sitting in the palace of pomp and splendor, dispensing justice and retribution, and engaged in diving into the depths of the circumstances of the people, two men took hold of the collar of complaint. One of them had no trade, and the other was skillful and accomplished; and although the one who had no trade brought forward arguments and evidences in support of his claim, and it became clear that he was in the right, the king purposely turned the scales in favor of the clever fellow, and ordered the man without a trade to be punished.

The king happened to have a vizier equal to Plato in science, and who always drew upon the leaves of the book of circumstances with the pen of propriety of opinion and prudence of arrangement. Wondering at the decision of the king, he rose from his place and said:

"O thou leader of the caravan of prosperity of realms, by the blows of whose world-conquering scimiter the peace of the breasts of opponents is destroyed, and from the fruits of whose convoy of success the countries of the hearts of the amicable are made populous and flourishing, I have

a request to make: first that the skyward-flying Homai¹ of your gracious disposition may pervade the atmosphere of compliance with my solicitation."

The king said, "Explain."

The vizier answered: "I pray that the life of this innocent youth, whose guiltlessness must be visible upon the mirror of your majesty's mind, may be spared for my sake; and that it might be disclosed to me why your majesty pardoned the guilty and condemned the innocent man?"

The king said: "I have absolved him, whom you call guilty, because I have arrived at the certainty that he is unblamable and has the right on his side. I also have reason to believe that this is not the proper time to elucidate the matter, but it will be done as soon as we are alone."

A short time afterwards the tree of the assembly shed the leaves and fruit of its multitude; the lamp of the apartment of privacy was trimmed and made bright, when the king spoke:

"Thou quintessence of acuteness, something happened to me once which plunged me into the sea of astonishment; since that time I made a vow to show favor to a man who has a profession, even if he should be blameworthy otherwise; and to punish and persecute him who has no trade or occupation, even if he should be my own son; so that the high and the low, seeing this, be induced to teach their children trades in conformity with their circumstances; because labor is too simple and gentle a refuge from misfortune and a means to attain prosperity.

"Know thou that when my father was yet walking in the garden of life, and was sitting upon the throne of happiness and government, on a certain day those who were present at the audience were discussing the advantages of trades and accomplishments, and although I had made myself acquainted with several sciences and accomplishments

¹A bird of happy omen; it is said never to touch the ground, and every head it overshadows will wear a crown.

befitting a royal prince, I was anxious to learn yet some other trade. I determined that each of the tradesmen established in the city should display his skill before my eyes in order that I might apply myself to any trade which should captivate my fancy. After having seen them no one pleased me so much as mat-making, because the master of that art had introduced into the specimen which he worked all sorts of pretty figures.

"The instructor was engaged and I was taught. I assisted every day, until I became skillful in this business.

"One day I happened to entertain a desire of making an excursion of pleasure on the sea. I took leave of the king and embarked on board a boat with a number of courtiers. We amused ourselves for two days with fishing, but as all mortals are subject to the vicissitudes of fortune, on the third day a dreadful storm arose, the sea was lashed by it into furious waves, our boat went to pieces, and my companions became food for the palate of the whale of destiny.

"I was floating about on a broken plank with two of my associates for several days, erring like chaff in the ebb and tide of the abyss, and having our throats choked every moment by the gripe of mortal fear; we humbled and turned ourselves to the footstool of the Answerer of prayers, because nobody ever besought Him in vain.

"By this favor the wind drove the broken plank toward the shore, and all three of us, having landed safe and sound, made our way to an oasis which contained various fruits, and aromatic plants numerous beyond conception; we disported ourselves several days in that place, and during the night we took refuge on the trees, for fear of rapacious beasts, until we reached the end of the oasis and entered the desert, through the ups and downs of which we progressed for several days till the guide of our destinies led us into the city of Bagdad.

"I possessed several rings of great value, and went to the bazaar in the company of my friends in order to purchase food; having sold a ring, we entered the shop of a

cook who had displayed a variety of dishes, and in whose service a handsome boy was busying himself; we handed to him a few dirhams to obtain some victuals. He cast a glance at us and said:

“‘Young men, nobility and greatness shine from your foreheads. In this city it is considered disgraceful that youths like yourselves should be eating their food in the bazaar; in the neighborhood there is a very beautiful room, to which people like you are accustomed to resort. Do me the favor to adjourn to that place, that I may send there something worthy of you.’

“He sent his boy with us, whom we followed; after a short time we arrived at the house, stepped into the porch and entered the mansion, which we found to be very neat and variously ornamented. We wished to remain there.

“The boy, however, opened the door of another apartment and affirmed it to be a very pleasant place; I entered it with my companions, and we were beginning to amuse ourselves by contemplating the exquisite and wonderful paintings that ornamented its walls, when the boy said, ‘I am going to bring you your meal.’ As soon as he was gone the floor of the house began to move as if a great earthquake had happened. We wished to take to our heels, but the pavement separated, and all three of us were precipitated into a subterranean well which was dark like the graves of infidels, and black like their hearts.

“We lost all hope and were ready to die; we said: ‘This time our adverse fortune has let fly the arrow of a strange event, and we have fallen into an uncommon place of destruction, so that the signification of our rescue will become as a word without meaning, like the name of the fabulous bird Unka.’

“That cook happened to be a Jew and an enemy of Mohammedans; it was his habit from a long time to make use of those compliments in order to decoy Mussulman foreigners to that house, whom he threw into that well, roasted their flesh, and sold it to other Mussulmans.

“Our necks were pledged in this affair and we were

in apprehension what turn it would take when the same youth descended into the depth of the well, having a sword in his hand, and was about to murder us, when we said to him: ‘Friend! What advantage is going to accrue to you from killing us, unhappy wretches! If gain be your object, we know the trade of mat-making which is very profitable in this town; bring the tools necessary for that occupation to this place, and we will make a mat every day.’ The wretch hastened away and informed his master of our intention; they provided us with the required materials; we made a mat, for which they threw down to us every day a loaf of barley bread.

“We were continuing in this state for some time, and were despairing of our condition, when a stratagem occurred to me; I finished a mat with all possible care and ornaments, and wove into its borders the description of my circumstances in the Arabic language. This happened during the reign of Harun Alraschid, so I said if this carpet were to be offered to the Khalif a considerable sum might be gained.

“The greediness of the Jew having become an obstacle to his circumspection and to his regard of consequences, he carried the mat to the palace of the Khalif, who highly approved of it. But after he had examined it more minutely he discovered the explanation round its borders, and having by the perusal of it arrived at the state of things, he asked the Jew where he got the mat from, and whose work it was? He answered: ‘I have a friend in Busra who sent it to me.’ The Khalif said: ‘Wait a little, that I may present thee with a reward worthy of it.’

“Having called for a servant he whispered something into his ear; the servant left, and having delivered me and my companions from the well, carried me to Harun. As soon as the Jew perceived us he began to tremble; the Khalif asked: ‘Who are these?’ The Jew struck with his hand the ring of the door of negation and said: ‘I do not know.’ The Khalif ordered the instruments of torture to be brought forward; when the Jew heard this he

confessed everything. Harun commanded the Jew to be suspended upon the tree of punishment, and the poison of perdition to be poured into the throat of his existence.

"My prudent plan was highly approved of; I was sent to the bath and presented with rich clothes; the Khalif asked me about my adventures, which I related to him from beginning to end; and as the long service of my father had laid the Khalif under obligations to him, and as the Khalif knew that I was the apple of the eye of that monarch, he was the more kind to me and said: 'Be of good cheer! Please God, we will help you to go to your country.' After having entertained me for several days he presented me with nearly ten strings of camels and all sorts of articles which are necessary or useful to Grandees, and dispatched me with fifty men and a letter to my father, to my own country.

"When I arrived in my own capital the corpse of my father was just being carried out of the city. After having mourned over the death of my father I established myself upon the throne of dominion. Although my peace was for some time in jeopardy from the misfortune just mentioned, nevertheless it is by the help of a trade that I was saved. I have perfect confidence in skillful men and I have decided always to honor men that have a profession, and to despise those that have none."

The Bráhmaṇ Who Lost His Treasure

From the Sanskrit

THERE is a city named Śrāvastī, and in it there lived in old time a king of the name of Prasenajit, and one day a strange Bráhmaṇ arrived in that city. A merchant, thinking he was virtuous, because he lived on rice in the husk, provided him a lodging there in the house of a Bráhmaṇ. There he was loaded by him every day with presents

of unhusked rice and other gifts, and gradually by other great merchants also, who came to hear his story. In this way the miserly fellow gradually accumulated a thousand *dinárs*, and, going to the forest, he dug a hole and buried it in the ground, and he went every day and examined the spot. Now one day he saw that the hole, in which he had hidden his gold, had been re-opened, and that all the gold had gone. When he saw that hole empty, his soul was smitten, and not only was there a void in his heart, but the whole universe seemed to him to be void also. And then he came crying to the Bráhmaṇ, in whose house he lived, and when questioned, he told him his whole story: and he made up his mind to go to a holy bathing-place, and starve himself to death. Then the merchant, who supplied him with food, hearing of it, came there with others, and said to him, "Bráhmaṇ, why do you long to die for the loss of your wealth? Wealth, like an unseasonable cloud, suddenly comes and goes." Though plied by him with these and similar arguments, he would not abandon his fixed determination to commit suicide, for wealth is dearer to the miser than life itself. But when the Bráhmaṇ was going to the holy place to commit suicide, the king Prasenajit himself, having heard of it, came to him and asked him, "Bráhmaṇ, do you know of any mark by which you can recognize the place where you buried your *dinárs*?" When the Bráhmaṇ heard that, he said, "There is a small tree in the wood there, I buried that wealth at its foot." When the king heard that, he said, "I will find that wealth and give it back to you, or I will give it you from my own treasury, do not commit suicide, Bráhmaṇ." After saying this, and so diverting the Bráhmaṇ from his intention of committing suicide, the king intrusted him to the care of the merchant, and retired to his palace. There he pretended to have a headache, and sending out the door-keeper, he summoned all the physicians in the city by proclamation with beat of drum. And he took aside every single one of them and questioned him privately in the following words: "What patients have you here, and how many, and what medicine