

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*

**T**HERE 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

have you prescribed for each?" And they thereupon, one by one, answered all the king's questions. Then one among the physicians, when his turn came to be questioned, said this, "The merchant Mátṛidatta has been out of sorts, O king, and this is the second day, that I have prescribed for him *nágabalá*." When the king heard that, he sent for the merchant, and said to him, "Tell me, who fetched you the *nágabalá*?" The merchant said, "My servant, your highness." When the king got this answer from the merchant, he quickly summoned the servant and said to him, "Give up that treasure belonging to a Bráhmaṇ, consisting of a store of *dínárs*, which you found when you were digging at the foot of a tree for *nágabalá*." When the king said this to him, the servant was frightened and confessed immediately, and bringing those *dínárs* left them there. So the king for his part summoned the Bráhmaṇ and gave him, who had been fasting in the meanwhile, his *dínárs*, lost and found again, like a second soul external to his body.

### *The Duel of the Two Sharpers*

*From the Arabic*

THERE was once, in the city of Baghdad, a man hight Al-Marwazi who was a sharper and ruined the folk with his rogueries and he was renowned in all quarters for knavery. He went out one day, carrying a load of small pebbles, and swore to himself that he would not return to his lodging till he had sold it at the price of raisins. Now there was in another city a second sharper, hight Al-Razi one of its worst, who went out the same day, bearing a load of round stones, anent which he too had sworn to himself that he would not sell it but at the price of sun-dried figs. So the twain fared on with that which was by them and ceased not going till they met in one of the khans, and one complained to other of what he had suffered

on travel in quest of gain and of the little demand for his wares. Now each of them had it in mind to cheat his fellow; so the man of Marw said to the man of Rayy, "Wilt thou sell me that?" He said, "Yes," and the other continued, "And wilt thou buy that which is with me?" The man of Rayy consented; so they agreed upon this and each of them sold to his mate that which was with him in exchange for the other's; after which they bade farewell and both fared forth. As soon as the twain were out of sight, they examined their loads, to see what was therein, and one of them found that he had a load of small pebbles and the other that he had a load of round stones; whereupon each of them turned back in quest of his fellow. They met again in the khan and laughing at each other canceled their bargain; then they agreed to enter into partnership and that all they had of money and other good should be in common, share and share alike. Then quoth Al-Razi to Al-Marwazi, "Come with me to my city, for that 'tis nearer than thine." So he went with him, and when he arrived at his quarters, he said to his wife and household and neighbors, "This is my brother, who hath been absent in the land of Khorasan and is come back." And he abode with him in all honor for a space of three days. On the fourth day, Al-Razi said to him, "Know, O my brother, that I purpose to do something." The other asked, "What is it?" and the first answered, "I mean to feign myself dead and do thou go to the bazar and hire two porters and a bier. Then take me up and go about the streets and markets with my body and collect alms on my account.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly the Marw man repaired to the market and, fetching that which he sought, returned to the Rayy man's house, where he found his fellow cast down in the entrance-passage, with his beard tied and his eyes shut, and his complexion was paled and his limbs were loose. So he deemed him really dead and shook him but he spoke not; then he took a knife

<sup>1</sup> Moslems are bound to see True Believers decently buried, and the poor often beg alms for the funeral.