

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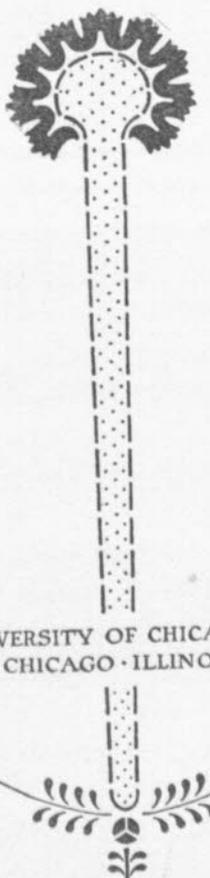
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TO MY LONG-PROVED FRIEND
RUTH N. PETERSSON
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

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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-

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 at-

titude 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 bevvies 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 dawn-

ing, 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 beloved 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 beloved."

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 Shrutu. 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 snuffing 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, Su-

vritta 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 beloved 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 Tara-vali, dear daughter of Manibhadra, and the beloved 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 tousel-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 sunshade, 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 complacency.

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 Vamalochna, 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 Vamalochna (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-

pled 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 beloved; 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 autumn 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 side-long 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 beloved'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 ap-

peal 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 beloved." 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 beloved 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 Vidyesvara, 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 aflamer 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 beloved 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 townfolk 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-tes, 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 cursed 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 Apaharavar-

man, "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 courtesan 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 blessed 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 calcification, 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-mak-

ing, 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 overthriftly 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 courtesan 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 snappiness 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 courtesan’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 courtesan 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 courtesan 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 allurements; 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 mid-journey; 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 na-

ture.’ 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 manoeuvre 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 courtesan 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 courtesan

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 hustled 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 possessing 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 our-

selves 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 courtesan, that scaly Ragamanjari to my enemy, my pretended friend Dhanamitra, crazy over his magic wallet! Because I stole that scoundrel's magic purse and priggèd 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 attend-

ants 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 Prahavarman 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 manœuvre.'

"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 blessed 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 blessed god with the elephant's head, who said to me: 'Belovèd Upaharavarma, 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 blessed 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.