

Forgotten Books

— www.forgottenbooks.com —

Copyright © 2016 FB &c Ltd.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

To the Librarian :

The accompanying copy of “The Layman Revato; A Story of a Restless Mind in Buddhist India at the time of Greek Influence,” is sent without charge, trusting that you will place it permanently upon your shelves and so classify it that it may be found by studious readers interested in the subjects to which it relates. It is a work of research and reflection, appealing little to the ordinary novel reader; hence its fictional structure might be, so far as possible, ignored. For the guidance of your cataloguer I may suggest that the chief topics of the book are Buddhism and India (historical, literary, philosophical), while other possible references would be the following: Period of Asoka; Greek Philosophy; Alexander the Great (his influence on Asia); Comparative Religions; Pali Literature.

A formal acknowledgement is unnecessary, but I would appreciate a postal upon receipt, stating that the book has arrived and will be preserved in your library.

Respectfully,

EDWARD P. BUFFET,

804 Bergen Avenue,

Jersey City, N. J.

THE LAYMAN REVATO

ORY OF A RESTLESS MIND IN
BUDDHIST INDIA AT THE TIME OF
GREEK INFLUENCE

BY
EDWARD P. BUFFET

LIB. OF
CALIFORNIA

EDWARD P. BUFFET

804 BERGEN AVENUE

JERSEY CITY, N. J.

(Address for orders or other correspondence.)

1914

70 340
AUGUST 1960

PREFACE

The meeting of West and East through Alexander's invasion is better known to us as a glittering generality than in its detailed results. Obscure is the effect of Hellenic influence upon Bactria and India. Archeological research, however, is revealing the Græco-Buddhist buildings and sculptures of Gandhāra and other districts, where oriental ideas are carried out with a classic technique. We have learned that the Buddhō figure, which is now so familiar all over Eastern Asia, and which to us appears so characteristically "native," is really a debased copy of a Grecian original. Before the coming of the "Yonakas," it appears that Buddhō's disciples had not presumed to depict their master otherwise than by the symbol of a tree, a footprint, or the like.

Such tangible memorials as stone images but feebly indicate the mutual influences and modifications that may have taken place in two great religions which were opposite as the poles of the earth in their attitude toward life. One stood for self-repression, the other for self-expression; one for "the will to refrain," the other for "the will to act"; one for the gospel of Tolstoi and the other for the gospel of Nietzsche. Such is the great issue between East and West. Upon it the world was divided then and is divided to-day. It united, in Christianity, to a synthesis which again and again has been broken up. It still wages war within the mind of many an individual, as of Henri-Frédéric Amiel. While we dwell upon the meeting of the two cultures, we shall fail of our lesson if we find in it merely an idle story of the past and do not allow its appeal to our innermost feelings, or realize that it is alive with relevancy to the problems of the modern world.

The present, largely historical, although structurally imaginative, study is a rendering of Indian life and thought toward the close of the third century B. C., in the last days of Piyadasi, Asoko, the "Buddhist Constantine." It projects an interplay between Buddhism and Hellenism, like that which has left a trace on the Punjab monuments, into the Ganges valley at this earlier period; yet where and when an intercourse had actually been established for two generations. We shall see an architect and sculptor, whom Asoko has procured from a Western land, beautifully externalizing the conceptions of the puritanic Buddhism, yet perverting them by an idolatrous apotheosis. As we bring together, in many ways, the cultures and ideals of East and West, we shall observe their reactions, thus making a moral laboratory study of the world.

But this is not all that my book means. So complex are its contents and purposes, that I do not know how to indicate them in brief. On one hand, it is a conglomerate from the literature of its age,

having cost such long and painstaking research as one puts into a large treatise on history or philosophy. The different lines of study that I have followed for it cannot here be enumerated. Bewildering, however, as is the mass of material accumulated, I trust that those who explore it carefully will find a strong unity.

I solicit the attention of the thoughtful student rather than of the amusement seeker. It is regrettable that space does not permit copious notes and citations which might distinguish the large number of extracts from Pāli literature and other informatory matter scattered throughout. I am sorry that this is knit together by fiction, but how otherwise could I have had freedom to treat the subject so humanly as I have tried to do? For, after all, neither history nor romance is here primary, but an endeavor to peer into some of the most inscrutable mysteries of duty and to witness the travail of a soul. Whoever does not bring hereto something of personal experience, will carry nothing away.

However strongly Buddhist is the temperament of my created character, Revato, he must be understood as having one of those morbidly adventurous minds which cannot be bonded by any imposed philosophy. Whether the ideas ascribed to him are natural outgrowths from the Buddhism of his day, are modern ones grafted thereupon, or are truly independent of time and place—this question I leave to the few critics qualified to judge. In justice to Christianity, I admit a possibility that I have credited to an earlier age some moral perceptions which are peculiarly its own. Moreover, there is certainly in Revato a pathological element.

Pseudo-mystics and fad religionists have rendered the very word "Oriental" suspicious. In spite of the Epilogue, there may be a reluctance to read my book on the part of serious Christian thinkers, whom I am especially anxious to reach, and who ought to sympathize with the deep soul of Revato. Is it to be condemned that, while reverting to a time centuries before the Galilean ministry, and dwelling among some of its noblest anticipations, an author should heartily drink the spirit of his surroundings? Christ is now supreme, however usefully Buddhō may be qualified to serve as His helper, and the demand of Christianity to be spread everywhere is implied in its very nature.

A word in passing as to the coincidences so constantly met with in comparative study of religions. The tyro is sure to frame ambitious hypotheses of borrowing. Wider reading should teach him caution in theorizing, because of the very redundancy of such resemblances and because they can be found where borrowing is out of the question. For example, I once compiled a list of startling likenesses, in

minute detail, between the lives of Buddhho and St. Francis. There is much yet to be explained about the law of coincidence in Religion, Jurisprudence, Biology and other lines. Is it impossible that, after all, life may be subtly directed by a tendency of approximation to certain ideals or arch-types, among which humanity standardizes the animal world and Jesus the spiritual?

Coming back to "Revato," let me say that the Pārāyana monastery is not historical, but that in great measure the description of Pātaliputta city, and still more that of Rājagaha, has been worked out by laborious research. Most of the monasteries mentioned in the story are real.

In many cases I have followed native tradition uncritically, as in attributing the authorship of certain sayings to Buddhho and his disciples, the walls of Rājagaha to Govindo. My knowledge of Indian natural history has largely come from ancient sources; I have often used Pāli names for trees, etc., and such description as those of the forest voices in Chapter XIII are idealized. "Gotamo's Gate," on the north of Pātaliputta city, is assumed to be shifted from its traditional site in the west side of the old village. Too late I find that I probably erred in dating the river flood stage after the close of the rainy season, rather than within that period.

Nearly all the Greek poetry used I have put into its present metrical form, availing of such prose translations as are found in Lang's "Homer's Hymns" and Wharton's "Sappho." They are adapted at pleasure; thus, I have not hesitated to make patchwork of Sappho fragments, nor to incorporate in an Anacreonic ode a fitting line from Theocritus. Certain quotations are *verbatim* in Way's spirited verse, namely, his Euripidean choruses, "Flowing with milk is the ground," from the "Bacchanals," and "Oh, the works of the Gods," from "Andromache."

The Buddhist poetry I have spent much time in working out from the books of the Pāli canon, sometimes with, often without, close reference to other translations. Much has been taken from

the "Thera- and Theri-Gāthā," so beautifully rendered into German by Karl E. Neumann, under the title, "Die Lieder der Mönche und Nonnen Gotamo Buddhho's" (Ernst Hofmann & Co., Berlin). Just on going to press, I have had the advantage also of Mrs. Rhys David's English translations of the same, "Psalms of the Brethren and Sisters" (published for the Pāli Text Society by Henry Frowde). Neither of these translators, however, is to be held responsible for my free-and-easy renderings, some of which I now discover to be quite distorted from their real meanings, yet in a manner which adapts them well to my present literary purpose. The poems and fragments from this collection are chiefly those on pages 1, 2 (both); 8, 10, 15 (first); 26 (second); 31, 34 (last); 46, 50 (first); 67, 75, 79 (third); 80 (third); 81, 82 (second); 83 and 92.

In several poetic fragments and otherwise, I have followed, or been helped by, Strong's "Udāna," Müller's "Dhammapada" and Fausböll's "Sutta-Nipāta." On the last are based the lines concerning Nibbāna, late in Chap. I and the Further Shore, beginning Chap. VI, both of which are adapted from my versions printed in the "Open Court," Chicago.

I have no idea how many hundred books I have read or consulted in preparing for "Revato," and cannot give a list sufficient to cover even my real indebtedness, but the following deserve mention: Everything of T. W. Rhys Davids', especially his "Buddhist India"; also, in the "Sacred Books of the East" series, his "Buddhist Suttas" and (with Oldenberg) "Vinaya Texts," from which source books I have worked into my story numerous passages. Like every Pāli student, I add my praises to Childers' wonderful, if obsolete, dictionary; among other uses, it has served me extensively as a phrase-book. Much has come from Cowell's Cambridge edition of the Jātaka, Warren's "Buddhism in Translations," Smith's "Asoka," Beal's "Hiuen Tsiang," Legge's "Fā-Hien," Cunningham's "Ancient Geography of India" and "Archeological Survey Reports," Waddell's "Excavations at Pātaliputta," Lassen's "Indische Alterthumskunde," Foucher's "Art Gréco-Bouddhique du Gandhāra," Carus' "Gospel of Buddha," Moore's "Iti-Vuttaka," Feer's "Sūtra d'Upāli," Philpot's "Sacred Tree," Farrar's "Old Greek Nature Stories," Easby-Smith's "Songs of Alcaeus," Buckley's "Euripides," Fairbanks' "First Philosophers of Greece," Kerr's "Bacchae," J. M. Edmonds' "Sappho Fragments," in the *Classical Review*, June, 1909.

THE LAYMAN REVATO

CHAPTER I

GIJJHAKŪTA, THE VULTURE'S PEAK

Autumn life is fast returning
Where the spoiling storm winds blew;
Limbs are leaved and boughs are burning,
Flaming every floral hue.
'Tis a year-time strong with yearning;
Valorous man, it calls on you.

Tree buds crumble here and yonder,
Prodigal with flocks and scents;
Fruits on every fluttering frond are
Waxing large in recompense.
'Tis a moon when strong men wander.
Hasten to be going hence!

Thus have I heard. At a certain time many bhikkhus of the Sangha were dwelling through the rainy season at the priories in the Bambu Grove and Jivako's Mango Grove by Rājagaha. But the Venerable Bhāradvājo and the Venerable Kondañño, likewise mendicants of the Society, dwelt in leaf huts which they had built on the mountain of the Vulture's Peak. When the four months' rain ceased, as the moon came to a full in the early winter month Kattika, the brethren held the great festival of Pavāranā—"Invitation"—mutually inviting rebuke for offences seen or heard or suspected, and having received new robes, they set forth upon their journeyings about the country.

Now on the day which began the forthwandering, toward sunset, the young lay disciple, Revato Yuvāno, Receiver of Royal Customs at Rājagaha, having ascended the mountain of the Vulture's Peak, drew near to where the Venerable Bhāradvājo and the Venerable Kondañño were. Having drawn near, he passed around them, keeping his right side toward them, and took his seat respectfully at a little distance. When seated, he addressed them thus:

"Long life to your Reverences."

To this vain greeting, as Buddho had expressly permitted, they answered for civility's sake: "May you live long, āvuso—friend."

"How soon do you start, bhavantā—Reverend Sirs—and whitherto?" asked Revato.

"To-morrow before the meal," Kondañño replied. Short and squat was he, not over-old; his face was shaped like his begging bowl and red as an indago-

NOTE: A casual reader may prefer to pass rather lightly over the first two chapters, which are introductory. The first lays an ethical and psychological foundation; it defines that concrete moral perplexity by which the large, vague problem of the book is primarily exemplified. The second chapter is partly a retrospective character study, partly a historical *excursus*.

Cold comes not with frosty shiver,
Heat is not unduly pressed.
Month of every boon the giver!
Sons of Sākya, rise from rest;
'Tis a time to cross the river,
Facing toward the unbound West.

Hopefully man toils in tilling,
Strews in hope the seedling grain;
Hopefully, their cargoes filling,
Merchants voyage across the main.
Cheered by hope, my heart is willing;
May that hope of mine be gain!

paka bug. "We shall pass for alms and preaching through the villages toward Pātaliputta," said Kondañño.

"Thither am I going also," spoke Revato; "I have determined that I must resign my office."

"Your office!" exclaimed Bhāradvājo. Crisp was his countenance like the sear leaves strewn round about by the rainy season, as well it might be, for eighty vassas had fallen upon it; but his form was still straight like a bambu clothes-pole. "Resign your office which you obtained through the memory of that blessed arahat, the Elder Mabindo!"

"Supposing, bhante," rejoined Revato, "that the Thera Mahindo were to-night returned to us across the sea from Tambapannī Island, and supposing that, reluctantly, I should explain to him my reasons, and should ask of him, 'Satthā—Master—what ought I to do in this matter?' I have no doubt he would answer, 'It is meet to be weary of, it is meet to be estranged from, it is meet to be set quite free from the bondage of all composed things.'"

"Can you not confide equally in your friends at home?" asked Bhāradvājo. "I, alas, have progressed but a little way in the Paths; though I am old, I remain only a learner. The Venerable Kondañño, however, is wise. You know that he can recite the whole Discipline and more than half of the Higher Doctrine. Let him pass judgment on your case."

"Oho, Upāsaka—Layman—the Venerable Bhāradvājo would flatter me!" cried Venerable Kondañño; "but he knows it to be a fact that in me dwell the Six Knowledges and the Ten Powers and the Four Grounds of Confidence. Do not hesitate to ask me any question that you choose and I will gladly impart to you the best of my experience."

Both of the Brethren had been Revato's lifelong intimate counsellors and yet on this occasion he

hung back from frank speech to either. The craving for a good confessor and director is stronger than almost any other human want; it is a demand the denial of which has wrecked myriad souls; but where the heart is deep, satisfaction of its need becomes difficult or impossible. Did not the dying Buddho leave his disciples to explore singly the darkness of Eternity when he said: "Be ye lamps unto yourselves; be a refuge to yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp. Look not for a refuge to anyone beside yourselves"?

To seek advice, moreover, on a deep and delicate question, of the pedant Kondañño, Revato's mental self-respect forbade. The Venerable Bhāradvājo, he felt to be a saint like them of old, like those who formed that little circle around the Blessed Master during five and forty years of tireless wandering. If any man in these days might become an arahat, surely Bhāradvājo, in spite of his disclaimer, had attained that state; his presence breathed the purple cloud of Nibbāna. Like Gotamo, he pervaded the world with kindness. Appropriate to him seemed the words of Sirimitto the Elder:

"Who wrath nor hate nor judgment in word or thought hath
known,
He, in the long Hereafter, hath never cause to moan.

"Well barred is passion's portal, but friendship's door is wide;
Him, in the long Hereafter, shall never woe betide.

"Among the lowly Brethren, clear-eyed, with vision plain,
Men cannot call him wretched—his life is not in vain."

Yet, as Revato felt, Bhāradvājo's clarity of perception extended only through the world of his own transparent heart. With the denser problems of life he lacked experience. His very mildness and innocence set his limits as an adviser. Therefore the visitor said:

"My reasons for resigning, bhadantā, cannot be explained. It is better for me not to try."

"I know how little the opinion of another would dissuade you," said the Venerable Bhāradvājo, "and perhaps, after all, your purpose to set your life free is the fruit of a good kamma. Let me speak now, my son, what has been upon my heart from your childhood but which up to this time I have hesitated to utter. I have ever been waiting to see you become pabbajjā—to forsake household life for the homeless condition. You, if any man, are fitted to take the bowl and yellow robes. Few samanas—recluses—ever become so well versed in the Dhamma as you are already. I trust that even now you have entered the Paths and I am certain that if you train yourself by the full Discipline you will, even before you leave this life, attain the Supreme Goal."

"I am sorry to grieve you, bhante, but this is not for me. I must struggle and suffer and fail on lower ground."

The old monk held silence for a moment, then recited tremulously:

"Susukhang vata nibbānaṃ
Sammāsambuddhadesitūṃ
Asokang virajang khemaṃ
Yattha dukkang nirujjhati.

"(Yea wonder-sweet Nibbāna lies,
Declared by Him so Purely Clear,
Woeless Retreat where passion dies
And every pang will disappear.)"

"How few of the bhikkhus, bhante," said Revato, "ever reach the Refuge or even act as if they cared to."

"Not few, but many, āvuso, many attain in this life, more in the paraloka. But some, alas, have joined the Sangha for lesser reasons: to escape the tyranny of kings or to be safe from robbers or to gain food and clothing. I was a mere boy when I became a novice; I knew not the aim, but I thought: 'They are wise scholars, these samanas, Sons of the Sākiya, they will be able to teach me.' By them I have been taught and now I both know and understand what is the reason and advantage in Renunciation. Our Renunciation is to the end that present sorrow may perish away and that no further sorrow may arise; this complete passing away without clinging to the world is our highest aim."

"To me this is all a mirage," said Revato.

"How strong in you, Layman, must be your clinging to the world!" sneered Venerable Kondañño. "Is it because you possess a few more of its illusive delights than some other men that you cannot let go your grasp? Little you know what renunciation means!"

"And do you know what Renunciation means?" retorted Revato, turning toward him with less reverence than befitted an upāsaka, a mere lay disciple, in addressing an ordained religious.

"Renunciation? Oh yes, Layman, I know," answered Venerable Kondañño complacently. "Renunciation is the third among the ten Perfections. It is the state of an anāgāmi, one who has entered the third of the Four Paths and will not be reborn in this world. Renunciation was fulfilled by the pre-incarnate Buddho times without number, as in the abnegation by which he abandoned his throne when born Prince Somanasso, Prince Hatthipālo and the pandit Ayogharo. But the acme was reached when, as related in the Lesser Sutasoma Birth Tale, he said, 'A kingdom dropped into my hands; like spittle vile I let it fall, nor felt for it the smallest wish, and thus Renunciation gained.' Let us now discuss in detail the elements whereof Renunciation consists and the classes into which it falls. Firstly—"

"I will take them for granted," interrupted Revato, "as I have heard them all from you before. You are able to tell about Renunciation as others told you who themselves never knew what it is to renounce, and you are ready to talk flat self-contradictions rather than lose the credit of saying every-

thing that you can think of. Now listen, if you will, while I declare to you what Renunciation is like, as I have seen it many times loom before me:

“When a man yields up by his own act that which he deems most needful to his life’s happiness, be it wealth or home or some great opportunity, or security from violent death, starvation, torture; and when he thus foregoes because he cannot enjoy this benefit except by some past fraud or untruth or other wrong, unintentional perhaps on his part and slender as the finest filament of a creeper, a remote link in a chain of causation, yet an efficient link nevertheless—when, I say, a man thus rejects his advantage, he knows what it means to renounce. Was it not of such matter that the Blessed One thought when he said:

“‘Not in the lofty air nor ocean’s hollow
Nor dark in some deep cave’s perpetual night,
Nor any earthly where shall cease to follow
The present power of a past unright’?

“Or if, after long struggle toward some noble end, for one’s own good or others’ sake, he can now, if he would, reach forward and touch it with his hand, yet a shadow of guile, seen by his eye alone, falls between him and the goal and he will not cross that shadow—he knows what it means to renounce.

“But infinitely beyond even this, bhadantā, is the relinquishment of Nibbāna itself—of the peace attainable in this life and of that ineffable Peace which remains after the personal elements have fallen apart. It is not an ignoble fancy, which some of the schismatics of our religion conceive, that Buddho has, by reason of his unspeakable compassion, refused to enter the Nibbāna which he attained, but is tossing still in the whirlpool of existence in order to rescue poor wretches from its waves of ignorance and craving. It may be that you and I, bhadantā, when, on some unknown ocean, many an eternity hence, we have sounded with our feet the shallows that slope to the Further Shore and can behold, as it were, the sightlessness of its intertwining forests and hear the murmur of its never-ending silence—that you or I then may be impelled to turn about and fling ourselves once more into the deep. For even here and now, as we are engulfed in the agony of the feeling world, comes a strong impulse to combat this misery with a very lawlessness of endeavor, ignoring that Way which leads to the Cessation of Sorrow. Whoso, in pity for anguish, denies himself the way of escape from anguish—he knows what it means to renounce.”

“You have described, Layman, the conduct of a fool,” rejoined Kondañño. “He who would relieve the suffering of the world must the more zealously train himself. He must observe the four Excommunicatory rules, the thirteen Public Disciplinary rules, the two Restrictionary, the thirty Forfeitory-Expiatory, the ninety-two Expiatory, the four Confessory, the Regulatory, the seven—”

“Yakkhamatta!—Demoniac!” muttered Revato under his breath, but Venerable Kondañño heard him and desisted from prolonged hortation.

“It appears to me,” remarked Venerable Bhāradvājo, who had not heard Revato’s epithet, “That when a man breaks a rule or even swerves from the Eight-fold Path because of compassion, this may be but another and better manner of following the Path.”

“In the twenty-seventh section of the fifth chapter of the commentary on the second Pārājika, they who from compassion released deers and boars from snares and fishes from a net were held not guilty of larceny.” This from Kondañño who was ready to sacrifice both argument and resentment to an opportunity for display of learning.

“But why, āvuso,” asked Venerable Bhāradvājo, “why, if you have sounded the depths of renunciation so far as have few mendicants, do you hold back from pabbajjā, from going forth yourself? Is it because the difficulties seem too great to you? Believe me, you over-estimate them and you ignore the rewarding peace and bliss of the cloister.”

“Not for me is the outward cloister, bhante. If ever I find such a retreat it must be a cloister within my heart. Not *kāyaviveka*, bodily seclusion, but *cittaviveka*, spiritual seclusion, and either way, with no confident hope of final *upadiviveka*, separation from the properties of being—that everlasting Peace.”

“The outward seclusion is almost indispensable to the inward, my son.”

“Almost? It is altogether indispensable,” broke in Venerable Kondañño. “Have you forgotten that it was my discussion of this question with Moggaliputto Tisso, even the Archbishop Upagutto, which led to its embodiment in his ‘Account of Opinions.’ My precise contention was, that though a layman may become a saint, he cannot remain one.”

“You know better than I, bhante,” said Bhāradvājo to Kondañño. “It is true that the Blessed One advised the beneficent rich merchant Anāthapindiko, of Sāvattthī, to remain at his affairs and guard the interests of those dependent upon him, since it is not wealth, but cleaving of the heart thereto, which poisons. But how many are there who can possess without clinging? Remember, that the layman Sono Kotikanno was advised by the Venerable, the Great Kaccāno to practice the discipline at home. Twice, after futile attempts, he pleaded: ‘It is not easy for a man who dwells at home to live the higher life in entire fulfillment, in complete purity, in all its bright perfection.’ When finally he was permitted to shave his head and don the yellow robe he quickly attained that wisdom and purity which the Lord of the Dhamma so highly praised in him.”

“Do not imagine, bhante,” returned Revato, “that because I refrain from taking the bowl and yellow robe I feel less accountable for discipline. Happy are they whose consciences are appeased by the eight precepts for the householder; such complacency may or may not be a fruit of good Kamma, but at any rate it is denied to me. The burden imposed upon me is to suffer all of the monastery’s privations with

none of its requitals, to dwell free from guile though exposed to manifold temptation, to remain clean like the lotus in the foulest mire. Instead of the forest calm, for which I yearn to replace the void of expelled ambitions, I must be jostled by offensive folk on the burning highway. In abandonment of my livelihood I must face old age with no comfortable dependence upon the bowl that never goes empty. All this I must endure against thwarting and contempt on every side. The rabble will shout after me: 'Why forsooth should the layman Revato profess to be walking in the Paths when he dare not shave his head and go among the monks? Verily the layman Revato is unwilling to submit himself to the discipline of the Dhamma! A hypocrite is the layman Revato'."

"But it would be the height of folly," said Bhāradvājo, "for you in your self-training to forfeit your livelihood. In so doing, you would be departing from the Middle Way taught by the Tathāgato, who, when he prescribed freedom from care for the body, provided means for relief from such care. Utter destitution would defeat its own purpose."

"The purpose in my case is not self-training," said Revato, "it is honesty. I must defray my obligations. You could not see why I should not join the Sangha? Here is a definite ground on which I am by its rules ineligible—I am a debtor."

"You have shown no evidence of it," remarked Venerable Bhāradvājo. "Of whom did you borrow?"

"It is a debt not by borrowing but by fraud."

"Datthacora! rascally thief!" exclaimed Kondañño clutching tightly at his bowl. "Abbhutang vata bho! dubbhagang vata bho! dusīlang vata bho!—Mysterious, alas, oh! unfortunate, alas, oh! immoral, alas, oh!"

Bhāradvājo checked his brother monk with the words: "The Blessed One admonished us that he who warns another must not only be himself pure and of great wisdom but must possess a kindly heart." Then to Revato: "You have defrauded no one, āvuso, I am confident. I would not stir your pride by praise, but all Rājagaha calls you the most scrupulous revenue officer in the continent of Jambudīpa."

"I see," answered Revato with a sigh of resignation, "that the more we talk the farther apart we get, and now that I have said so much I might as well tell the whole story. If I let you hear it, I may save you from the guilt of manesikā, thought guessing, which ~~one~~ of the amusements prohibited to you Bhikkhus."

"Ingha tvang! Come you then!" continued Revato, "Tatrāyang anupubbikathā, here's the tale from the beginning.—You admit that I am fairly honest in my dealings, don't you? That I levy upon each caravan that passes through town a sum fairly proportioned to the goods in the carts, no more and no less, of which amount I deliver to the royal treasurer all except my lawful perquisites?—Saccang nu kho etang no—Is this true or not?"

"Saccang, true, Revato."

"And you are aware that other collectors, for personal reasons, exact unjust amounts, of some merchants more, of others less, but on the whole vastly more; out of which they enrich themselves although they are enabled to return to the exchequer larger sums than I do. For not all merchants, neither all customs men are as honest as Anāthapindiko of Sāvattthī."

"I dislike to think so," said Venerable Bhāradvājo, "still, 'tis so alleged by many who understand the matter as I do not."

"And you concede that if I held not the office, one of those cheating collectors would fill it?"

"That seems reasonable."

"So then, were it not for me the King's receipts would be larger?"

"Ama, yes."

"And also certain corrupt merchants, such as Sañjayo the Licchavī, Tapusso of Bārānasī, dealer in Kāsī land muslins, and Bhalliko Dārucīriyo, who spends a year traveling across the Jambu Grove from Roruka by the Hinder, the Western, ocean where ships of the Yonakas arrive from the edge of the world—these traders, bhante, and many like them who would obtain unrighteous forbearance of the customs—does not my strictness cost them dear?"

"Evang, even so, Revato, and great merit it is to you that they cannot save it."

"Well then, bhante, we are agreed that my tenure of office is a continual loss to the King on one hand and to the corrupt merchants on the other."

"Ko te doso—what is thy fault?" said Venerable Bhāradvājo. "No one loses anything to which he is entitled."

"True in a sense, bhante, but in another aspect doubtful. Are not all beings, whether kings or traders, men or animals, angels or demons, entitled to every advantage that would accrue to them from my doing right? Is there not due to them immunity from any damage occasioned by my doing wrong?"

"Are you not doing right, āvuso, in administering your office justly?"

"While I hold it I must administer it justly, for the justice of the immediate act is paramount and otherwise, too, the innocent would suffer. Is it then a wrong in me that the undeserving are injured? That depends upon whether my conduct be otherwise clear in holding the office; if it were so, there need be no misgiving. But if I be not clear, I am defrauding on one side or the other so long as I remain at my post. The fact is, bhante, that I transgressed in that ever I accepted it."

"Transgressed in accepting it, moghapurisa—foolish person!" exclaimed Bhāradvājo with an epithet of unusual severity for him, though sanctioned by the example of his gentle Master. "Was it not freely granted you by the Angel-Beloved, the Gracious Mahārājā Asoko in fulfillment of the promise made to his brother the Thera Mahindo?"

“The transgression,” explained Revato, “was not in outward actions, but within my own heart. When I recalled His Majesty’s memory to that promise I did so as a work of covetous desire.”

“Perhaps desire is not always a bad kamma,” replied Bhāradvājo after a pause, seeking for a rejoinder that would have been both apt and orthodox, but finding none.

“How, how indeed!” cried Kondañño. “Desire not always a bad kamma? From desire, attachment springs, from attachment existence, from existence birth, from birth old age, death and misery, and thus around the wheel till desire once more arises.”

“Kondañño is right,” admitted Bhāradvājo in meek retraction. “Still, I do not think Revato did any wrong in soliciting the collectorship.”

“Let us simplify the case,” persisted Revato. “Whether desire be always pernicious is irrelevant, whether my act was in its nature evil, is irrelevant. The fact remains that when I went to the king to proffer my request I was dominated by a desire which I then felt to be wrong. As a result of a wilful violation of my sense of duty, I obtained my post whereby the king and the unjust traders are losing sums of money which have already amounted to more than I possess or can ever acquire. For, bhante, though the caravans that pass the way of the road through Rājagāha are fewer than of ancient times, yet they bring wealth when they come.”

“According to your logic, Layman,” remarked Kondañño, “there could be nothing in the world untainted with consequential sin—not even the life of an arahat, which sufficiently proves its absurdity.”

“Your sin is a bygone matter,” said Venerable Bhāradvājo, “and its bad energy will be spent in some future birth. Your duty at present is to make the best of your existing circumstances, however they were brought about.”

“In general,” said Revato, answering Venerable Bhāradvājo, “your rule is the only reasonable one to follow, yet I dare not condone with it a plain, avoidable, continuous and remediable injury to any person.”

“As concerns the merchants,” argued Kondañño, “you need have no scruples; you have merely thwarted their designs to defraud the King.”

“Have I not already explained, bhante,” persisted Revato, “that I must not do them a wrong even to defeat their crimes? If the perfect only had rights, who but arahats would possess any? Is it not stealing to carry off the booty from a thief? A learned muni such as you cannot be unfamiliar with the case of the amba fruit in the canon law—

“Quite so,” interrupted the Venerable Kondañño. “It is found in the second Pārājika book of the Sutta Vibhanga, which treats of ‘Taking the Ungiven Thing.’ Robbers had stripped a mango tree and being pursued by the owners, dropped the fruit. Some monks with thievish intent, picked it up, and when the case was brought before Buddho were adjudged Pārājika — excommunicated. Likewise

were convicted the bhikkhus who stole meat from cattle thieves.”

This incident led straightway to a discussion of the question whether the thievish monks’ crime lay against the robbers or against the true owners of the fruit and meat, but no solution of this subtle doubt was forthcoming and Revato adhered to the opinion that two wrongs could not make a right.

“And even if it were true, bhavantā,” he argued, “that I owe no duty to the dishonest merchants, I surely owe one to the King.”

“Against him,” declared Venerable Bhāradvājo, “there is no injury, since one so wise in the Dhamma and so practiced in virtue as he would not willingly profit by anything unlawfully acquired. He seeks not those products of fraud and oppression which might be turned in by a cheating collector in your place. Be at rest in the thought that if he knew, he would approve your conduct.”

“He is old,” answered Revato, “and his treasure will soon pass to his successors. They are not his equals in devotion to the Dhamma and they might not so readily reject the fruits of dishonesty. In withholding from him, I am withholding from them. Moreover, I am already robbing the innocent objects of his charity throughout the world.”

“It is a thankless task to dispute with you, Revato,” exclaimed Bhāradvājo almost petulantly. “The longer you talk the more unreasonable you become. But how would your resignation of the office reduce you to poverty as you have been claiming? You still have your estate here at Giribbaja.”

“That would not suffice to cover the losses I have caused. Of old the Teacher told Vaddho that one must look upon sin as sin and do frank contrition. How can such repentance be for me without restitution?”

“What’s this you say? You wouldn’t throw your property away, would you?”

“Not only that, but all I could earn the rest of my life.”

“To whom,” asked Kondañño, in wide-eyed wonder, “do you propose first to tender your possessions—to His Majesty or to the merchants? I doubt if one of them is base enough to accept the offer.”

“I shall probably retain it all now—indefinitely. I lack the courage of my convictions. The atmosphere of learned moralists like yourself benumbs me. What I propose is not a present active surrender of my life’s goods but a potential one. I can no longer count my little possessions as my own, but as a trust to be relinquished one day, probably in old age when I am unable to work. Meanwhile I must shape my life in accordance, spending as little of my income on myself as possible and making every endeavor to increase the principal which ultimately must be given up. To this end I must toil like a Sudda, denying myself comfort and rest, fearful to repose in the cool of the trees at noonday and forbidden the meditation that is needful to

spiritual attainment. Before the world I shall occupy a false position, for while I excite the sharp envy that riches draw after them I shall be lacking even the eight chattels of a mendicant to call my own. Because I cannot give away the goods of another, I shall be called miserly and uncharitable; I must turn from my door the holy friar and the starving dog."

"The Discipline," said Kondañño, when Revato had finished, "lays down that he who suggesteth difficulties of conscience to another in order to make him trouble committeth a Pācittiya offence. And in the book of the Truth-Steps it is declared that they who see sin where is no sin enter the path of destruction."

"The same is said," retorted Revato, "of those who see no sin where sin is. 'By seeing according to the reality,' as elsewhere the Elder Adhimutto observed, 'one never goeth to destruction.'"

"How long," inquired Venerable Bhāradvājo, "has this trouble been upon you?"

"Since the day, seven years ago, that I took office, it has been rising around me as if I were hemmed in by a river freshet. At last the waters touch my feet and soon thy will be over my head."

Bhāradvājo commenced to intone:

"Where the spreading floods are surging,
Saith of old the Blessed One,
'All the race of men submerging,
By decay and death undone,
I will name an isle of saving.
Those who find it find the best.
Nothing holding, nothing craving,
They have reached the Perfect Rest.
This the island of Nibbāna'"—

"Don't talk to me about Nibbāna, bhante," cried Revato, as though the word in his ears had been a red-hot iron. "You are speaking a different language from any that I can understand. When a man is maddened with problems of present conduct he can neither comprehend nor endure the idea of spiritual raptures. I can contemplate Nibbāna when in the mood for it, but that is growing infrequent. These moral doubts harass me day and night, year in and year out—not only the one I have told you about, but thousands of others, many of them vastly more complex, more distressing and—as you would say—more foolish. They insinuate themselves everywhere like serpents—like the Virūpakkhas, the Erāpathas, the Chabyāputtas, the Kanhāgotamakas. Buddha told us to love these reptiles. Am I thus to love my doubts?" Revato ended *mahāhasitūṅhasanto*—laughing a great laugh.

"Just as when a hen," the old monk said in a low voice, "with eight or ten or twelve eggs, has carefully sat upon them and around them and brooded over them, yet she becomes anxious and a longing arises in her heart, 'Oh that my little chickens would break open their shells with their beaks or with their claws and safely come forth into the light!' yet all the while those little chicks are destined to break

the shells and come forth—even so, the brother who is fast enclosed in darkness by a hard wall around him, yet who is persistent and determined, will surely come forth into the light, surely reach up to the higher wisdom, surely attain the Extreme Security."

Revato smiled his incredulity. "Take comfort at least," encouraged Bhāradvājo, "that if you are subjected to unusual troubles, you are endowed with extraordinary power to submit and renounce."

"Renounce?" exclaimed Revato, "I can't renounce. When I perform such feats of self-abnegation as few of you monks ever dream of, I am still only a hypocrite—hollow as a reed. In all I do I am a mere actor of a drama, watched by myself. I no more taste of my religion than the spoon tastes the soup. Besides, I never accomplish the conclusive act of renunciation, there is always some reserve. Especially there is no true sacrifice of my heart. As much as I agonize to perform it, I am like a felon whose hands and feet the king has cut off for his crimes, who is clutching at roots and grass to drag himself up the bank of a rising river, grasping with his stumps of arms which have no means to take hold.

"Are you such a criminal?" exclaimed Kondañño in virtuous horror.

"My heart is a vālakantāra—a jungle of serpents and wild beasts," answered Revato. "In truth that is one reason why I cannot join the Order—I would never dare to make confession—yet I could not do so intelligibly if I would—and were I to try, the Brethren would never hear me out but would deal with me in pity as a madman."

Kondañño, now relenting, volunteered to prescribe for Revato effective spiritual remedies. He advised the forty subjects of meditation, to wit, the Ten Kasina trances of concentration, the ten ponderings on Physical Corruptions, the ten Reflections, the four Sublime States, the four Formless States, the Perception and the Analysis. He advocated especially the ten salutary cemetery reveries on corpses in as many successive stages of decay. He further recommended the violent breathing exercise which rids the mind of evils as a great storm allays the summer dust.

The Venerable Bhāradvājo more simply suggested: "Tāta—my dear child—postpone your journey to Pātaliputta until the next moon."

"I cannot, bhante, for beside the resignation of my work, there are sundry accounts to adjust, for which I must visit the Capital at this time.

"Then promise me to defer your resignation till a future occasion."

"Ask me not to promise anything. No man who perfectly respects his word can bind up his future conduct without finding himself somehow entrapped. Insincere as I am, half my life's troubles have come from promises and vows—uttered often in words that spring to the lips unpremeditated."

"Then before your act is final," pleaded Bhāradvājo, "submit your case to Migalandiko, the King's

Dhamma-mahāmatto—the High Minister of Religion. You know it is his business to hear appeals from all branches of the public service grounded in moral questions, and to correct evils.”

“No man living is able to alter the facts of the case,” answered Revato, “but at least I might make the experiment and see whether the High Minister of Religion can perform the impossible. Now, Dabbo Kumāputto, the Dhammayutta—Assistant in the Department of Religion—at Pātaliputta, is my friend. I might first call on him.”

At this moment came sportively up to them a pack of yellow robed boys, the sāmaneras, novices, who waited upon the ordained members of the Order and received instruction.

“You would better not say anything to them,” whispered Kondañño to Revato. “Your influence might not be good for them. They must not be exposed to the temptations of anyone who has confessed to fraud in the King’s business.”

Revato turned from him with scorn and after a greeting of reverence to Venerable Bhāradvājo, prepared to descend the mountain.

The neophants had come to Kondañño to make informal confession, to recite those passages from

sacred canon which they had been studying through the afternoon, and to attend upon his words of wisdom. As they grouped cross-legged on the ground around their teacher, Revato heard him launch into a disquisition on “dependent origination” which boded ill for weary young brains.

The Venerable Bhāradvājo meanwhile had assumed a posture of revery and, as was his wont, would pass the first watch of the night in pondering on some chosen theme.

“As the lightning seeks a cleft of Vebhāra or Pandava, thus having come to a mountain cavern, the son of the Freed One is afire”—jḥāyati—he burns, he meditates—the word for both is the same. But the fervours of Bhāradvājo’s nature were ever of the sort which led to tranquility. The workings of his mind were no churning of trouble. His life arranged itself in no complexities.

“It is easy for the good to do good.”

Unwilling to disturb further the devotions of his aged counsellor, Revato passed around him with right side nearest, and left him to visions of rapturous joylessness on the ground hallowed by so many vigils of the attained Master.

CHAPTER II

RĀJAGAḤA

GIRIBBAJA, BERGENBURG

Revato turned away from the leaf huts which his friends, the friars, had built high up on the side of the Vulture’s Peak mountain. Close at hand, at the head of a rocky gulley, was the favorite cavern retreat of Buddho, and in front of it the stony cells that Anando and other of his disciples had so often occupied. From yonder cliff the treacherous Devadatto had flung a rock and wounded his Master’s foot. High above towered the fair green pinnacle of the mountain.

A bend of the path threw open a far vista of country sloping northward toward Gangā River. The far, flat horizon was studded with a few purple cloud shapes emblematic of the great mountains of Himavanta which abode there and which were visible from hills beyond the river, though never from Rājagaha for all the straining of expectant eyes. Those mountains were the enchanted land of Aryan legend. Certain pinnacles were popularly indentified with Meru, Kelāsa, Cittakūta and others, whose wonders had been handed down from the old religion. Mount Meru, or Sineru, with its reputed 84,000 yojanas—588,000 miles—of altitude, was the very centre of the world, the heaven of Sakko, of Indo, which the orthodox Brahmin might have sought in a life-destroying quest, like the desert pilgrimage of Pāndu’s sons with fair Dropadī and the dog,

while the Buddhist read therein lessons of sparkling angels, now sporting with goddess girls in sensuous gardens of Nandana, but anon to be hurled down frigid precipices to the country of the titanic Asuras in expiation of former lives and to be fed on fire by lictors of Yamo’s Niraya for so long a time that all Himavanta might therein be worn away by the occasional whisking of a little silken kerchief.

Revato, it is true, had no fixed faith in Sakko’s heaven or Nandana garden. He took little interest in the popular superstitions which clung to the rational doctrines of the Dhamma as drops from the muddy waters of deva worship out of which it had emerged, thus stultifying its own favorite figure of the lotus which remains clean amid foulness.

Yet if the worlds of pleasure had never touched him with a sense of reality, those of pain had held their power over him since the nights of his shuddering infancy. Optimistic denials he impugned on the ground that they might as well be raised against the existence of all evil, wherein they would be refuted by evident facts. “The game is serious according to the stake,” he reasoned, “though it be but a game of chance, and where prodigious kappas of time are set against a few years, what signify the torments of life compared with the hazards of that desert which no camel has crossed?” The cogency of these dreadful appeals lay most of all in his con-

science—an *ad hominum* sort of argument by which he disproved his own skepticism and which served more than any other force to strengthen him against laxity or compromise in life. Where to-morrow's death curbs the eating and drinking of to-day, there must be faith though it cannot find itself. A life thus buttressed might evince worldly fortitude if not courage, and justice if not generosity.

The northern sky faded. Revato gazed upon it no more, but descended the mountain side and turned up a rough defile leading southwestward, between two ranges of hills, toward the city. All around were sweet-smelling lodda and sparkling-leaved assattha trees and the kanaka, the perennially blooming tree of gold. At the base of the rocks, the bright rose-apples of the jambu blinked in their leaves. Revato walked warily for fear of snakes in the shadows, yet rapidly to lessen the time of exposure to that tiger which long had terrorized the region and had devoured six persons, among them the old nun Sumedhā. Before quite dark, he crossed the southern shoulder of Mount Isigili and entered a gate of the outer wall, which followed the apex line of the ridges encircling the populous valley. From this elevation he could look over the inner city at his left and beyond it to the ruined palace of Jarāsandho at the base of Mount Pandava. Northward, between the walls, he could see where, in the sanghārāma of Jīvako's Mango Grove, the brethren were kindling their oil lamps. Some of these monks had made the town monasteries their retreat all through the wet vassa months; others deemed it a better following of Buddho's commandment to retire for the Lenten season to outlying caves or leaf huts. Many of these were now returned to the communal vihāras to pass a few days before starting on their alms and preaching tours, or to remain longer if they did not intend to walk abroad. Still without entering the inner wall, Revato skirted the base of Mounts Isigili and Vipula, passing near the dense, cool mango grove. Across the way from it he reached the Hatthinipura gate of the central city which looked northward through the pass between converging Vipula and Vebhāra where opened the port of the outer wall. Through this finally he came out from the valley enclosure. Beside him the rivulet Sarassatī, which traversed the town, flowed through the pass to be reborn in larger streams and in mighty Gāṅgā; to merge at last in the Nibbāna of ocean. Haze of hot springs on its banks intensified the evening crepuscle. Its surface still obscurely reflected the western sky. Across the stream flew a great marsh bird and was lost to sight in the purple-toned thicket of Veluvana, that Bambu Grove where Buddho so often dwelt. There came to Revato's mind an old hymn of the Faith:

“Yadā balākā sucipandaracchadā
Kālassa meghassa bhayena tajjitā—

“When bright as the light, from a dark cloud in fright,
There comes a pale crane, wide-winged on her flight,
And seeking a refuge, she reaches a home,
Ajakara's river is then my delight.

“When white on the sight, from a dark cloud in fright,
There comes a pale crane, wide-spread on her flight,
And questing a shelter, she finds an abode,
Ajakara's river is then my delight.”

To-night was no storm in the sky nor noise in the wave, but a sensuous tenderness of perfumed air which did all that Nature could do to imbue the heart with Nibbāna. There is, however, an intensity of moral struggle to which the philosophy of peace is an insult, and such was Revato's. A slight calming of nerve was performed for him by these gentle influences, but in the suggested spiritual consolation he could find no part.

The highway, as it emerged from the mountain-girt valley, skirted the Veluvana—Bambu Grove—containing the Kalandaka-nivāpa—Squirrels' Feeding Ground—and many vihāras of the faithful. About its solemn edifices grave, pale-robed figures could be discerned in the twilight. The stillness of early night was broken by a flaw of wind which set the bambu stems rattling together, “Tatatatāyati,” like the old bones with which, when a boy, Revato had played in the neighboring cemetery.

Revato now turned abruptly southwestward behind the toe of Mount Vebhāra, upon whose shady side were continued bambu thickets, containing close at hand the Pippala cave where Buddho so often had meditated and, far along the mountain, the great Sattapanni cavern at whose door had assembled the First Council soon after Buddho's death, to repeat the precious words bequeathed from his lips and pass them down by an unbroken chain of memory. Instead, however, of continuing past these grottoes, Revato branched off into a by-road and soon reached the gate of his own abode.

The old city of Rājagaha lay in a far northeastern offshoot of those mountains, the Viñjhas, which divide the valley of Gāṅgā from that great central plateau, the Dakkhināpatha, Dekkan, Southern Road. The city dated from immemorial days. It had witnessed the tumults of nations stirred up by the abduction of Sītā from Rāmo. A thousand years had passed since the war among the offspring of the Great Bharata when its king Jarāsandho had been slain by Bhīmo, son of Pāndu—a bloody memory for the present era of peace. The compact, closely built town, hardly three miles in circuit, had been laid out, it was said, by that ancient architect, the Mahā Govindo, and its massive walls of stone were a marvel throughout the land of Magadhā. Giribbaja, the Mountain Stronghold—Bergenburg—was from of old its favorite name, for it nestled in the hollow of five precipitous hills, Vebhāra, Vipula, Pandava, Isigili and Udaya*, which 'twere

* For this southeastern hill I can find no name of the Buddhist period, but feel justified in using the modern one, because that is in good Pāli form and is used somewhere to denote the “Sunrise Mountain.”

infidelity not to mention severally, so teemed they with memories of Buddho. Far as traveled the Dhamma, there followed it the fame of the "Five Hills," yet with a sad confusion, for strangers classed among them Gijjhakūta, the Vulture's Peak, which really was a sixth mountain northeastward behind Pandava as a spur to the group. It rose terrace upon terrace, highest and grandest of all and dearer to the pious heart than even Vebhāra.

That fragrant sacrificial kusa, or muñja, grass, which abounded in the vicinity, had given the old city another characterizing name, Kusāgārapura. Its third cognomen, Rājagaha, the King's House, more properly belonged to the new town on the open land below the valley. Thither had the seat of Magadhā government been moved in Buddho's time, nearly three centuries before, though now departed from the region. The story ran that King Bimbisāro had decreed banishment to the "cold forest"—the cemetery—for anyone who negligently allowed his house to take fire, and when it chanced to be the palace which burned, he drove himself to exile upon the charnel ground beyond the northern gate. Thus, the "King's House" had formed a nucleus for the more modern town.

THE HEIR TO THE REVATOS OF OLD

Revato's homestead, in which he had spent all the remembered years of his thirty or more, stood some distance off the road between the two cities. The dwelling was built of brick, stuccoed, larger and older than neighboring ones, and it was curiously adorned with moulded cornices. Farther out in the country were fields which one of Revato's remote ancestors—unlike the Ariyas generally, who were inclined to leave agriculture to the earlier inhabitants—had cleared from the forest and which had remained a heritage, tilled by servants or on shares while the owners had often been officially and otherwise occupied. Legally, these servants were held in a mild serfdom, but had one of them chosen to better his condition elsewhere, Revato would not have said him nay, and might have been the gladder party, for they maintained the upper hand of him in their dealings. Most of the neighboring land had from of old been cultivated by peasant proprietors or communal villages. Since the consolidation of the empire, the titles to arable land had become more largely vested in the Crown, and this included Revato's, so that only the possession, not the property right, came down to him through the last few generations. The difference was no mere distinction, for it subjected him to a rental tax averaging a fifth of the produce; in addition, he had to contribute about one-third of it in water rates for irrigation. No wonder that farming had ceased to pay! Before he took the customs office he never could make ends meet without spending much of his own time in the fields, often plodding behind the oxen at the plough.

The family were of noble white Khattiya color, like the Gotamo Buddho himself, though the force of

such a rank was much lessened by the confusion due to erasure of class lines in the religious Order. There the meanest outcaste could become a peer with the highest saint. The Venerable Bhāradvājo was born of the white Brahmin color, and Venerable Kondañño as a bourgeois Vessa mixed with some non-Aryan blood, but in the Sangha they shared as brothers. Since the building of new Rājagaha, the old mountain city had been given over largely to families who were Brahmin, not only in color, but also in religion. With these deva worshippers the Buddhist Brahmins were less closely in sympathy than with their neighbors of other colors but their own faith. If they could forget caste lines when meeting consecrated samanas, why not among fellow laymen? Especially might this be easy between the Khattiya and Brahmin, whose rivalry, founded on the conflicting claims of Church and State, was disarmed by the overthrow of priestcraft. Quite of another category were their social differences from the plebian Vessas, still more from the servile, mongrel Suddas or the outcaste Candālas and Pukkakas, of an-ariyaka—non-Ariyan—subjugated stock. Religion had not destroyed the racial instinct of self-preservation from drowning in impure blood. Not the meekest among unworldly brethren could help but see with satisfaction the untinged whiteness of his Aryan skin or could forget if his parentage was among the castes of the Twice-Born.

Revato's own position at Rājagaha was anomalous, for his father's family were unknown to its traditions. His mother, Sundarī, through whom descended the estate, had in her youth attended on the queen at Pātaliputta, where she had married, soon to be deserted by her husband and return to her father's house with her child. She was a strong-spirited woman who kept herself by preference in seclusion as strict as, by a growing custom, the aristocracy enforced on wives and widows of wealthy men in the large towns, but this implied no recognition of sex inferiority on her part. Rather, it was an alienation from her neighbors in experience and feeling. To her religious duties she was punctiliously faithful; even in so clerically populous a district as Rājagaha no alms bowl ever left her door without rice, curry or sweet cakes, while robe stuffs of her donation busied many a monastic sewing party with their adaptation after they had first been dyed a tawny yellow to mimic the dust-heap rags of more fervid days. But there was perceptible in her attitude toward the doctrine and discipline a certain deficiency of enthusiasm, a tacit failure of whole-hearted approval, which suggested that, if she had broken the fetters of present worldly desire, she was wilfully wearing those of memory.

Of his father, who had died before the beginning of Revato's recollection, she spoke not, but the faint revelations of her manner when any remark grazed the tabooed subject were like glimpses of a god. The little he knew had been told him by the monks from hearsay, one fact being his father's

early death in some wild adventure. There were many other circumstances that might have excited his curiosity, but having grown up from infancy fixed with the habit of ignorance concerning them, his mind had never chanced to receive an impulse to their discovery. (Our long limitations of thought astound us after we break them, but many we never break. The mental eye is marvelously able to overlook its blind spots.) For example, he never had settled his father's caste. His mother's pedigree and his own exceptional lightness of complexion seemed sufficient guarantee, and he failed to realize the reserve in which he was held by some of his more punctilious acquaintances who were aware of the doubt.

Again, he had never heard his father mentioned by name. As successor to his grandfather, Ajjuko, he had been assumed to adopt the latter's surname Kaccāyano, but had acquired a nickname which fully supplanted it. This was Yuvāno, meaning Young, the aptness of which was never made clear, since he had always been old beyond his years. Perhaps the epithet was due to occasional ebullitions of vivacious spirit which, habitually imprisoned, burst forth at times to an ecstasy as of young animals sporting in the Spring. His gravity and levity intruded each on each most fitfully. He was like the child of a hen which southern merchants once had brought from the eastern country and which had been beloved by a crow; for whenever this chick essayed to crow like a cock he would say "caw, caw," and whenever he tried to utter the voice of a crow he would call "cock-a-doodle-doo."

Revato "Yuvāno's" playmates, from which his nickname had come, were fond of pronouncing it so that it sounded like Yāvano, which is the same with Yonako, Ionian, Foreign—as if they felt the presence of some strange element.

The personal name Revato, which he bore, though suggested by his birth in the nakkhatta, or asterism, of Revatī, was also an heirloom encrusted with many previous memories from the hands through which it had passed. First of all, if the legends were credible, it had belonged, in long-ago eternities, to a former Buddho. The inspiration which he should derive from this fact, his teachers were ever impressing upon him, but he himself found more to awaken enthusiasm in thoughts of Revato Khadiravaniyo, the Forest Habitant, and Kanka-Revato, the Victorious One, true, living men of his name, who only two or three hundred rainy seasons before had looked in the face of the Blessed One, had heard his compassionate words and had followed him through the years of footsore wandering. One of these famous apostles Revato had been our Revato's uncle, many generations removed.

Then again, something like halfway between that time and his own, came the celebrated Elder Revato of Soreyya, near Takkasilā, who had presided at the Council of Vesāli, where the lati-

tudinarian heresy was condemned, and which marked the great schism. A man of prodigious learning, who knew by heart almost the entire Canon of Scripture, he was "intelligent and wise, modest, conscientious and devoted to the precepts." At Vesāli, he was a guest of that Polycarp in apostolic succession, Sabbākamī, who had been a pupil of the disciple Anando and who had lived to become the oldest therā in the world. These two patriarchs communed in their cell of the causes which had prolonged their lives in vigor (for Revato after his journey required neither sleep nor rest). "They say, beloved one," spake Sabbākamī, "that you have continued thus long by ease of life, and this indeed is a life of ease, the continuance in love." "Even of yore, when I was a layman, Sir," answered Revato, "much love was laid up in my heart; therefore it is that I now live much in the sense of love and I have long since attained the Goal of Peace. And you, by what manner of life have you now lived these many years?" "By abiding in the sense of emptiness of worldly things, beloved one, I have lived these many years."

The Venerable Bhāradvājo, when a novice, had been told by his superior that, while the latter was a very young child, an ancient monk had stopped at his mother's door and she had given the lad a sweet cake to drop in the bowl, bidding him to remember always how he had made an offering to the famous Revato of Soreyya. But vastly more than this, it was that self-same bowl—an iron one—which Bhāradvājo now carried, he having received it through several generations of superiors and pupils under the canon law of heredity by personal service. Bhāradvājo still lived in hope that this bowl would one day pass to Revato Yuvāno.

The previously mentioned remote uncle of Revato Yuvāno was reputed as the author of a certain hymn among those in the Thera-Therī-Gāthā, a numerous collection attributed to early Elders and Elderesses who had lived in the days when doctrine was simple, piety fervid and the joy of salvation a real experience. These gāthās ran as follows:

"When, household life renouncing,
To homeless ways I turned,
The lore of guile and malice
I straightaway unlearned.

"I counsel not to injure
The living high or low.
Their pain is not my pleasure;
A wiser plan I know.

"For I have learned that friendship,
That rich, impartial good
Which grows in swift progression
As Buddho told it would.

"Of all I am a comrade,
To all a brother true.
With each that feels and quivers
I feel and quiver too.

"I train my thoughts to ponder
On amity and peace
And wait that perfect Respite
When suffering shall cease.

"Unmoved and never yielding,
My soul hath rare delights,
Intent on holy musings
Abhorred of wicked wights.

"For in the true disciple
Of him so clear and high,
A noble stillness enters
When thoughts of evil fly.

"Like adamant mountains
Firm in their stable bed,
That monk no more shall tremble
In whom is folly dead.

"They who stand pure by purging
Are jealous for the clean;
No hair-tip mote of evil
Can hover long unseen.

"Just as a guarded city
Is watched on every side,
Without and in keep vigil
Nor let the moments glide.

"In life is not my pleasure
Nor death is my desire;
I, like the stolid worker,
Await my promised hire.

"Not eager for departure
Nor yet with life elate,
Attentive, understanding,
I mark the time and wait.

"I've done the Buddho's bidding,
The Teacher's rule employed;
My heavy burden's fallen,
My craving is destroyed.

"That cause for which, renouncing,
I wandered forth at first
Is now the vital reason
That all my fetters burst.

"Achieve ye then by vigil
As I have done before,
Now perfect in salvation
And soon to be no more."

Such were the homely, earnest lines which Revato had been taught from infancy as a guide and inspiration for his life. They had been woven into the texture of his growing mind and, if their familiarity to him had bred contempt, they were nevertheless a part of himself. The amiability, the peace, the perfection of this Revato Thero he had failed to develop, but there is no doubt that much in him of scruple, much of inoffensiveness, much of strong, if misapplied, moral power, was due to this ancient namesake, this patron saint.

The morbidly conscientious strain in Revato Yuvāno was derived, like his worldly possessions, not from his mother but through her from his grandfather, the Venerable Ajjuko, who had died twenty years before. Ajjuko had in his old age left the household life for the homeless one, transferring his

lands and cattle to his young grandson, as one civilly dead.

Thereafter he had tenanted one of the old cave parivenas, cells, on the Vulture's Peak and had never again entered his home. Revato remembered him silently standing at the door that had once been his own, taking his bowl from his sling and holding it out to await a pinda, a morsel, of rice and vegetable curry from his daughter's hands, yet tremulous lest filial piety should shorten the begging round.

That impulse to self-mortification which led the Brahmin hermits to excesses carried Ajjuko into macerations of hardly less severity through the ingenious difficulties which he read into Buddho's clear, mild precepts. Between ancestor and grandson there was, however, this difference, that, whereas Revato reasoned from first principles, Ajjuko's casuistry had never peered behind traditional rules, but only was concerned with their interpretation. For example, five trades have been denounced by Gotamo as wrong, even for a layman—commerce in slaves, meat, weapons, liquors and poisons.

"If these practices be evil for one who has not yet entered the consecrated life," argued Ajjuko, "how much more is it the duty of a samana to remove any implication of sin!" Bond servants he no longer held; during his worldly life he had repeatedly offered to release them from that mild servitude which stood in Magadhā for slavery, and they had declined freedom. But there were present issues in rejecting every morsel of meat curry from his bowl; in avoiding to touch any sharp-edged instrument, even a knife with which to cut a mango fruit; in refusing the narcotic drinks and noxious herbs which were presented to him in sickness. These over zealous scruples had not lessened the haughtiness of the lady Sundarī toward the Order and the Doctrine.

It was by Venerable Ajjuko that the child Revato had been brought under special notice of the Society. When the old man died he had left to Venerable Bhāradvājo, in particular, a religious guardianship, which office had rested well on the appointee.

Revato's most familiar comrades from infancy had been the monks, upon whom he might almost have thereby fixed the guilt of kulasamatthadosa—the offence of associating with the laity. Correspondingly, his intimacy with his worldly neighbors was weak. The various removal in estate and condition already mentioned typified his relations with them. A certain aloofness had always existed, hardly hostile or depreciatory on either side, an elusive distinction. It might reasonably have been attributed to a multiplicity of minute outward unlikenesses—but an astute observer would have sought the cause of Revato's ungenial singularity in that inward isolation which enhanced those slight idiosyncrasies of person and status. His was one of those natures born to aloneness, who may be called in a spiritual sense *suññāgāragato*, solitude-gone, established in isolation of heart.

THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS
Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

DELVE INTO FANTASY, MAGIC, MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

Forgotten Books'
Full Membership gives
access to 797,885 ancient
and modern, fiction and
non-fiction books.

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies

he said, "material and spiritual, and the spiritual is the higher."

In Salvation by Merit we may suspect a perversion from Salvation by Character (a nobler idea, however insufficient when tested by human weakness.) Though Kamma means Deed, Act, the subjective value of the Deed was originally seen to lie in its self-disciplinary power, and the state of mind behind the Deed counted for more than the overt act.

In spite of the fact that Gotamo's philosophy rested on a denial of the old self-soul, it replaced it by a very efficient soul in the form of this same Kamma, a force by which the individual, so long as tainted with evil, was renewed in the hereafter, thus precluding escape from punishment by the expedient of death. Kamma was therefore a seed planted to germinate anew.

It was pre-eminently the believing patronage of King Bimbisāro that disposed the Master to pass so many of his rainy seasons at the Magadhese Capital, whither his journeys reciprocated from Sāvattihī, chief city of the Kosala Kingdom. Sometimes he traveled eastward through Bārānasī, on the Ganges, sometimes northward to the edge of the Great Wood, to Vesālī of the Vajjian Licchavis, strong among the free clans in their resistance to encroaching monarchies.

During his first season of ministry at Giribbaja, Buddho had encamped in the Latthivana Grove, southwest of town, by the road leading up from Uruvelā. As a preferable place of residence, the Veluvana was soon bestowed upon him and his disciples by the King. Here, again and again, he passed his Lenten seasons of rest and preaching. Sometimes for retirement and meditation, he would retreat to the caves on Gijjhakūto, while companies of the bhikkhus raised temporary grass huts on the slopes of Isigili or other mountains.

Many folk resorted to him at the Bambu pleasure-ground to dispute with him until they could no longer resist his gracious words. There came among others the brilliant young court physician, Jīvako Komārabhacca, of ignoble birth but royal adoption, who had studied his profession in the great university town of Takkaṣilā, far in the mountainous Northwest. By him, as a token of his devotion to the Enlightened One, and to meet the needs of the growing Saṅgha, was given the Mango Grove, which he further endowed with a preaching hall, and which since has borne his name. He it was who also healed Gotamo of a disease acquired, evidently, by wearing patchwork robes of offcast rags found in cemeteries and on dust-heaps. By his tactfulness the Tathāgato was led to discard this custom for a fashion of attire more sanitary and more consistent with his own policy of moderation.

Considerate indeed was the Dhamma's Lord of his disciples' comfort and impartial in his regulations, for he allowed to all a thickness of clothing gauged by the needs of the most sensitive. From his sump-

tuary laws sickness wrought a liberal dispensation. A general rule permitting use of weavers' looms he had made in consideration of a nervous invalid brother whose mind craved absorption in a handicraft.

Such incidents touched Revato with the gentle human reasonableness of the Blessed One. Narrow religionists might contend for an unswerving omniscience in the Master, which their cherished traditions belied, but for Revato such a belief would have destroyed half the confidence in that wise leadership. The Layman preferred to recognize Bhagavā's open-mindedness, his discreet opportunism, even; his supreme devotion to truth although it might prove his own fallibility; his implied consent to readjustments of opinion which future knowledge might demand of others. Did not Gotamo, in his last hours with his disciples, advise that after his departure they should heed the words of any qualified teacher among them, and did he not offer them full permission to abolish all the minor precepts?

Revato could not bring himself to follow blindly, even Satthā, the great Teacher. He acknowledged that every man whose ethics are real must form them for himself, shaped by the specialties of his own conscience, wherein dwells ultimate authority. While he could not avail himself of the distinction between monastic and lay morality, he felt, on the other hand, little bound by what seemed accidental, conventional. An appreciation of a similar candid spirit in the Lord of the Dhamma himself tended to check Revato's centrifugal disposition and hold him to the Faith. Broadminded and humanly flexible, as Revato saw him, was the Tathāgato. But there was about him a perfection which seemed superhuman. Weary and wordy were the old texts, all that puerile taste could do had been done to mar the fair image of the Exalted One. Yet, even in the most grotesque tales, it was impossible to find one smirch upon the purity of his conduct, one wantonly severe word that had escaped his lips. When reflecting upon the clearness and patience of that character, Revato felt a barrier rise between himself and his own lower nature. To quiet the heart's clamor for indulgence, for laxity in the conditions of salvation, no other means was half so potent as fixing the thoughts upon him.

Especially was Buddho's freedom for conviction shown when, at the entreaties of his kinswomen aided by the persuasions of Anando (still the saint beloved by women) he first admitted their sex to the company of sanctified ones—even if reluctantly.

In his fifth vassa, spent here at Rājagaha, there came to him from his home city Kapilavatthu the tidings of his father's last sickness and, hastening across the intervening expanse of country, he arrived before the end. It was soon after this that he framed the rule for a female Order into which were admitted his foster-mother Pajāpatī and Yasodharā that had been his wife. His son Rāhulo, while yet a young lad, had followed him among the brethren, later to

become a devoted samana. Thus was removed the bitterness of that harsh abandonment (cruel most upon himself) to which his heart had compelled him for the deliverance of humanity.

For this elevation of woman from her low estate, his breadth of mind might well astound, since he held sex to be wholly evil, and in his time sex and woman were ideas almost inseparable. His achievement was to create a new and higher kind of life, wherein would be neither male nor female.

Even more willing had the Tathāgato been to ignore the differences of vanna, color, and to shame away the injustice of society. The Buddhist movement was not a mere selfish contest of the powerful and wealthy Khattiyas to gain spiritual lordship as well, for if so, they would not have shared the spoil equally with the despised colors. Pure benevolence must have actuated Jino—the Conqueror—Buddho, when,

“Er zerbrach die Zwingherrnburgen
Und zerbrach des Knechtes Joch.”

A delicate consideration had been shown by the Blessed One even for his enemies, the Nigantha heretics. When Siho, the Licchavī generalissimo, had turned from that religion to his, he had counseled: “Deem it right, Siho, still to give the Niganthas those alms which they have so long received at your house.” And yet these false religionists were at that very time fomenting public clamour against him by malicious slanders!

Revato admired also the scorn with which Gotamo had treated vain display of supernatural powers. Here at Rājagaha was still standing the house of the man whose magically fetched down bowl had occasioned enactment of one of the canonical disciplinary rules. In the Bambu Grove the teacher had convinced the householder Sigālo that the only charms which can securely guard the six cardinal points of a home are the circumradiant potencies of good deeds.

Here too, at Rājagaha, lingered the pathos of Buddho’s old age, beset with many sorrows. His cousin and disciple Devadatto had led a schism from the Society under pretext of demanding a stricter rule and even had attempted his Master’s life by rolling down a rock, still pointed out on the mountain side of the Vulture’s Peak. Bimbisāro, who, throughout the long ministry, had been his royal and loyal friend, was succeeded on the throne by the parricide Ajātasattu. News arrived that the King of Kosala had almost wiped out the Sākiya clan at Kapilavatthu, Gotamo’s own people. An attack upon his friends, the free Vajjians, was plotted by Ajātasattu, who had the affrontery to ask his counsel concerning the bloody expedition. “As long as the Vajjians adhere to their ancient virtues,” Buddho answered, “so long will they prosper.” Then he prepared to depart northward on his last journey by a road which led through the country of the beleaguered Vajjians, and beyond it, toward the devastated home of his childhood.

From illusions of sense he had been free longer than most men are born to live, yet the love of natural things had never wholly died within him. Calling together in mind the scenes now to be beheld no more, he uttered those cries of human feeling which the monks whom Revato knew still intoned in their recitations: “Ramanīyang Rājagahang, ramanīyo Gijjha-kūto pabbato—How pleasant is Rājagaha! how pleasant the Vulture’s Peak Mountain! pleasant the Banyan tree of Gotamo; how pleasant the Robbers’ Cliff; pleasant the Sattapanni cave on the slope of Mount Vebhāra; pleasant the Black Rock on the slope of Mount Isigili; pleasant the mountain cave of the Serpents’ Pool in the Sītavana Grove; pleasant the Tapoda Grove; pleasant the Squirrels’ Feeding Ground in the Bambu Grove; pleasant Jivako’s Mango Grove; pleasant the Deer Forest at Maddakucchi!”

Dragging himself by slow stages, he crossed Gangā at Pātali village where Sunīdho and Vassakāro, Ajatasattu’s chief ministers, were building against the Vajjians an outpost, destined before Revato’s time to become the capital of all India, and committed himself to their territory. A precious heritage of narrative preserves the events of the few following months; his many parting counsels and consolations of his inner friendly circle; his artful reasoning to soothe the feelings of him whose hospitality was the innocent occasion of his final sickness.

Northward he labored, following the hot low-lying river banks, till the glistening peaks of Himavanta arose before him and, upon the westward road along its foot-hills, which led to the old home, he began to feel reviving mountain airs. But they came too late. Day by day he felt the power of death more strongly upon him and more welcome was the surrender to it. It had come already to his two chief disciples, for in the month Kattika, when the moon was at the full, the Great Sāriputto died and in the dark of the self-same moon the Great Moggallāno was clubbed to death by robbers at the instigation of Nigantha ascetics. “I too will pass away—in Kusinārā,” thought Bhagavā.

There was no longer any strength to complete the journey home, and so, as it proved, he fell upon parinibbāna in the sāla grove of the Mallas at Kusinārā, on the further side of the river Hiraññavatī.

With light reflected from the Perfectly Illumined One, shone many lesser characters of olden Rājagaha, men and women, members of that inner circle of disciples, companions of his weariness, who had abandoned all to follow him. Some of their personalities were nearly as familiar to Revato as those of Bhāradvājo and Kondañño. There was Bhagavā’s most intimate attendant, whose devotion seemed almost worthy of the great compassionate nature which evoked it—Anando, whose life was like a Spring day of cloud and sunshine mingled—Anando, erring and backward in the Paths (consoling thought for others) yet who alone of all the brethren remained

beside his Master in the charge of the mad elephant; who, in those last hours at Kusinārā, was brought to the bedside from weeping against the lintel of the door; and who in after days looked back with particular yearning—

“Through five and twenty rains I served
The Blest One while he dwelt apart;
From works of body never swerved
Nor works of word nor works of heart.

“And when the Buddho wandering walked
I, shadowing, wandered far as he,
I heard his wisdom while he talked,
The truths he uttered fell to me.

“Alas, a learner still I stay
Who full salvation yet must find,
And the Teacher now has passed away
Who so transcendently was kind.

“When scattered ash my Comrade lies
And the Master’s life has long an end,
A charnal, musing exercise
Becomes my best remaining friend.”

Poor Anando’s difficulty in working his way along the Paths of perfection was fortunately not a tribulation common to all believers. To others the heroic life seemed so easy and its fruition so consciously assured! Witness Elder Revato, of the old hymn.

How marvelous the work that the Tathāgato had wrought in the world! How many souls in ancient days had found through him that perfect peace which still lived in their rhythmic exultations! How many lives still were softened and illumined by the remembered precepts of the Teacher!

Into the history of Magadhā, yes of entire Jambudīpa, and far among the border lands, all unthinkably dark with cruelty, he had shone with beams of pity, lighting to mercy the lives whereon they fell.

It was no wonder that the superstitious were hastening to apotheosize their Deliverer. The conception of him (however little Revato then understood this) was already beginning to run a course of changes which, during many centuries, would pass through peculiar phases:

There was first the man Gotamo, of noble, but not majestic birth, radiant in his purity, his pity and in his wisdom to discern the heart’s needs. This was the Buddho known to them who saw him face to face and to those of later years who, like Revato, could read between the lines of legend.

But the Oriental can neither admire without dazzle nor express without hyperbole. Hardly had the sage passed away when he was exalted to royal station and endowed with every transcendent quality of the ideal prince. Not alone was he given the attributes of a contemporary rājā, but he was traced to former incarnations as a Great King of Glory, a Universal Monarch of the Golden Age, with possessions manifold those of the most opulent living potentate.

It was an easy transition from a worshipful king to a worshipped god. Buddho had degraded the Hindu

deities to impotent demi-gods and had discouraged inquiry concerning a First Cause; the god on whom he taught dependence was that abstract divinity, Law.

But since men, and women especially, insist on looking to some helpful Personality outside of themselves, and since their enlightened Master embodied all of such personal helpfulness that they knew, it was inevitable that they should deify him, so amending his doctrines as to prove that he had not yet ceased to exist. This third stage of the Buddho conception was being felt after by some in Revato’s time. Thus was the human Buddho transformed into the Royal and into the Divine Buddho.

The fourth conception—if a prophetic anachronism may be allowed—was the metaphysical Buddho to be dreamed of especially in distant Japan—an idea farthest of all removed from the historical one, yet elevated above the intervening superstitions to a high philosophical beauty. He is the Reality behind the Ideal universe—

“I live within material forms of flesh,
But when I was not, *Self* was ever there,
For *Self* is Buddha.”

“Year after year the annual flowers bloom
Upon the bush uninterruptedly.
Thus Buddha lives unchanged; but we that are
But shows and shadows of the Inner Soul
Bud, bloom and die as changing years roll on.”

This, however, is not the faith in which mankind will rest. “The human heart is a great glutton”; moreover we are helplessly dependent. There is still another course which the doctrine took, a by-path from the main road of development. Some reach out toward a Pure Land, a Western Paradise, where Amida Buddho shall bring unimpaired the souls which entrust themselves to him—

“I take no rope in my unskillful hands
Nor labor at the oar to cross the stream.
The Boatman whom I trust will row me o’er
To the safe haven of the Shore Beyond.”*

PRESENCE—THE EMPIRE OF PEACE

—But to revert. After the Great Sage’s death, his cremation and the distribution of his relics to eight suppliant kings and clans, his disciples returned to Rājagaha where they held the famous first ecumenical council in front of the Sattipanni cave on the slope of Mt. Vebhāra, probating, so to speak, his testament, by reciting, as each could remember, the precious legacies of teaching which he had bequeathed.

The freedom-loving Vajjians eventually succumbed to the spread of empire and, within less than a hundred vassas after Buddho’s death, their conquered city, Vesālī of the Licchavis, succeeded

*These three stanzas from the Japanese are in the version of the late Rev. Arthur Lloyd. I understand that he attributed the Pure Land cult to early Christian influences. In the Idealistic philosophy we seem to find the Vedānta.

Rājagaha as the capital of Magadhā. Within another reign the throne was moved to Pātaliputta, city of the Trumpet Flower Sons. Before the end of the second century, the kingdom had attained truly imperial power in Jambudīpa. It was further extended by the adventurer Candagutto, who established in dominion the Moriya, Peacock, dynasty. He it was who beat back the fair-skinned Yonas that had settled in the border countries from the days of the invader Alasando and established his own government over their colonies. While he subdued their arms, their arts and sciences continued to creep into his domain but were more than returned in deeper philosophies which they embraced. It was not the proud, active Yavana whose spirit gained the mastery, but the meek, passive Ariya.

As is always the case, the inhabitants of Jambudīpa had to pay well for their pride or acquiescence in imperial magnitude and power. What with heavy land rents, irrigating water rates, tithes on commercial transactions and other imposts, collected often under penalty of death for dodging, taxes became the chief part of their lives.

Now the birth of Candagutto's grandson, Asoko Vaddhano, was like the coming of a second Buddho who would be to the social world what Gotamo had been to the world of individuals. His goodness was not by nature, however, for when he came to the throne he was called Asoko the Wicked. In the ninth year of his reign he subjugated the Kālingā countries, on the eastern coast of the south. He did not conduct his campaign according to those most merciful practices of Aryan warfare which might leave the husbandmen tilling their fields unmolested while battle waged around them, but he tore from hermitages even holy samanas. Abuses of this war, with its usages hardly better, wrought in the monarch a remorse which drove him for refuge to the doctrines of the merciful Buddho, and he became thenceforth a King of Peace. While the religion had lost much of its early purity, it had become so diffused among the people as to temper them to a mildness of conduct never before known, and now, when endorsed by the State, its influence for good became incalculable.

Asoko's long reign, after his conversion, was spent not only in establishing the forms of the Dhamma religion and endowing it with costly edifices and carved stones, but in acting its spirit. He who once, it was said, had maintained a torture chamber to inflict on miserable creatures, human and animal, the torments of hell in similitude, now planted trees and dug roadside wells far and wide for their comfort and fixed dispensaries of medicaments appropriate to man and beast. If his demands were still large toward those who had, his benevolences were great toward those who had not. Munificent as were his public alms, no one could tell the extent of his bounties, for he was an outspoken advocate of secret charities. His zeal to spread the saving Truth knew no sovereign limitations; "All men," he said, "are

my children." His missionaries crossed the southern seas to Tambapannidīpa and passed far beyond Himavanta to the hindermost regions of the world, where the desirous Yonas worship their lustful gods, rear beautiful cities of illusion, and store up bad Kamma against the suffering ages of the future.

Asoko—Sorrowless—he might not truly be, for contrition and sympathy were strong in him, but he gave all his heart to following the way that leads to the cessation of sorrow. As Devānam-Piyo Piyadassi Rājā—The Devas' Darling, His Majesty the King—he might appear before the world in proud rock-graven edicts, but, being no lukewarm believer, he personally submitted to the laws of a lay disciple and later of an ordained mendicant in the Sangha.

Asoko's conversion had taken place longer ago than Revato could remember; hence he had always lived in an environment of peace and good will. True, the charities of the royal family were rarely needed to relieve starvation; famines were rare in Magadhā, with its twice-yearly harvests. Religious prosecution had been little known among the Ariyas and hardly was a check upon violence now required, but Piyadassi went beyond toleration, inspiring the disputing secretaries to mutual esteem. His subjects, whether Buddhist, Brahmin or Jaina, were all recipients of favor, and if he was chiefly zealous for that religion which he believed to be true, he could still dedicate magnificent cave dwellings to the use of others. At one point, however, he hesitated. The Brahmins, in their festivals to their gods, had been wont to massacre numbers of horses, sheep, goats, swine and other living creatures, performing their rites not merely with flowers and perfumes, but with gory carcasses. These practices he discouraged, since he would not condone murder under the cloak of religion. Further he minimized the slaughter of animals for food, decreeing for example, that no peacock or antelope should be put to death at the Capital.

Mutterings of discontent at this tenderness of heart should have been disarmed by knowledge that he had limited the deaths of living creatures for his own table and finally had abandoned that butchery altogether. Along with the slaughter of animals, the King had suppressed a certain offensive holiday feast at Pātaliputta, and though he was not opposed to public gaities of the right sort, yet the popular amusements were generally attended with so many evils that his influence acted to curtail their number and license. Among many of his subjects, this restraint bitterly counted for more than all his beneficence.

A growing disuse of cruel punishments in Jambudīpa was lessening human pain to an inestimable extent. If still torture was employed in criminal process, and corporal penalties imposed, it was only of seeming necessity for the ends of justice, restricted in various ways by Asoko's command, and grievous in any case to his spirit. It was limited to the

purleus of crime, and the quiet citizen, not to mention the monk, dwelt secure from arbitrary molestation. At Rājagaha were old men who, in their prime, had lost hands and feet, noses and ears and lingered as object lessons by which the younger generation might know that the present rarity of such cruelties was not according to the custom of the world. But man is so unreflecting that if, by some contingency, his day be clear and cool, he forgets that stifling rain ever falls or sunshine ever scorches and kills. Only those who, like Revato, cast their thoughts afar told themselves that the life around them—

“Grün das Gefilde, fruchtbar; Mensch und Herde
Sogleich behaglich auf der neusten Erde”—

was just a paradisian dream in the world's night.

THE CREEPER OF CRAVING

As the guards that had surrounded the happy home of the young Gotamo had been powerless to exclude sorrow, so, in the delicate immunities of Revato's surroundings, was no effective barrier to gloom and fear.

A minor note truly was resonant in the hushed sounds of Rājagaha. With regal glories gone afar, it had sunken into a mellow decadence. While its environs were increasingly populous with holy men and women intent on discipline and contemplation, the chief secular inhabitants were old families like that of Revato's mother, reduced, but still tacitly proud and clinging to their ground like seamed weather-worn rocks on the mountain side. In many of them might have been traced a particular sequence of character development down the generations. With abilities inherited from ancient, rough, liberty-loving clansmen, the vassals of the Serpent Kings in Gotamo's day had become successful and luxurious men of the world. Thus, from vigor had grown culture, refining if divitalizing. As royalty passed away and the new puritanic religion spread, culture was chastened into modest dignity, self-restraint and stern virtue. There were moral giants in those days. But harsh parents make kind children; the oncoming generations were subdued in spirit, and, while clear in conduct as their fathers had been, they were tempered with exquisite mildness* and tolerance. The old stocks were then near to running out. Buddha's principles, hostile to fecundity, operated not in the monastic order alone. The Paths pointed to by his precepts tended, even in the household life, to racial Nibbāna, Surcease. Whether the reason be physical or spiritual, in-so-far as the soul outgrows its brutal partner, the body, prolificness wanes, and this may be a merciful provision of nature, since when the mind becomes most highly organized and sensitive, its balance of pain counterweights beyond endurance. This stage of dying agony in the generations, to which the phase of calm gentleness gives place, had fully been reached in the heart of Revato. From the strong and wise and upright and amiable

men that had preceded him at Giribbaja, he had received in heirship all of their sorrows, few of their joys. The keen, restless mind was his—in that he might not be their inferior—and his delicacy, if not consistency, of motive was a refinement upon their honest instincts. He knew that he was weak in will, in the achieving will, yet fain he would console himself with a belief in his power to resist whatsoever might shame the noble-hearted line that ended in him.

That he was to be the end, had intuitively become a conviction which every year grew firmer. In this reflection there was to him a pensive and perhaps unwholesome fondness, not entirely due to Buddhistic considerations, but arising in his artistic sensibility. It harmonized with the moribund solemnity of Rājagaha—a solemnity like the gloom within the aisles of a great spreading banyan whereunder, on its rich, black soil of decay, gorgeous plants languish to death as the shade more densely enshrouds.

There was a story that one of Asoko's younger brothers (not Mahindo), as he followed the chase one day and watched the sporting of the deer in the forest, had thought: “Why should not the well-housed monks also amuse themselves?” Thereupon Piyadassi vested him with the sovereignty for seven days, saying “At the end of that time thou shalt die.”—Then, when the period had elapsed, “Why art thou so ematiated?” “From horror of death,” was the answer. “My child,” said Asoko, “this hath taught thee that for them whose mind is continually upon death there can be no diversion.”

In such a *memento mori* was grounded the mind of Revato. And yet there were occasions, rare indeed, when it could skim the ground lightly and airily as a deer escaped from a snare.

Revato had gotten his education from the monks at Giribbaja and at the great University of Nālandā, so conveniently near his home city. At first his mother had objected to his studies.

“If he learns writing,” she had protested, “it will make his fingers sore; if arithmetic, his breast will become diseased by much thinking; if money changing, his eyes will suffer.”

“But he is delicately nurtured,” Bhāradvājo had pleaded. “Unless he devotes himself to study he will be unable to acquire new riches or augment the riches he possesses. Only thus can he live a life of ease and without pain.”

Of course the arguments for learning had prevailed, when supported by Revato's own inclinations. Once started, there had been little check upon Revato's mental acquisitions and his studies had been elective.

When very young he had developed his memory by learning long suttas from the sacred recitations. Few friars could repeat as large a proportion of the Canon as he. There was at this time a new movement which advocated the commission of the Tipitika—the Three Baskets of sacred lore—to writing; but that art, however useful for inscriptive and

commercial purposes, seemed ill-adapted to preserving extensive works of literature in their purity. The most careful scribe would make mistakes, to avoid which nothing seemed so reliable as the trained memory when constantly verified by a consensus of oral scholarship.

Revato had soon learned to read and write and to use figures. He had also dipped into many higher studies, such as Poetry, Music, Medicine, Astronomy, Magic, Causation, Law, Conveyancing and Commerce, with monks who before their pabbajjā had been secular scholars. One of these happened to know Navigation and Revato had dallied even with this, for the love of acquisition, however useless to him. His linguistic knowledge was considerable, although limited to the related dialects of the Ariyas. Beside the Magadhese he could speak one or two other vernaculars, was necessarily proficient in Pāli, the literary language of his religion, and understood Sanskrit in its Vedic and Brahmanic, as well as its current forms.

Opposition on the part of narrow mentors like Kondañño had excluded him not from the classics of the false old religion, neither from its epic ballads, nor yet from its variant philosophical systems. All these, like the fifty-two heresies of his own sect lately confuted in the great work of Archbishop Tisso, he had found intensely interesting, but generally barren and unsettling. They proved nothing, but the habit of pondering them loosened one's hold on one's own faith. It is declared among the "Enunciations" of Buddho that,

"There be contentious, quibbling samanas
Who see the matter only on one side,"

but Revato had brought himself to the point where he saw every matter on at least two sides, to the disadvantage of both. This disposition had, no doubt, been born in him, but it had grown by indulgence. His conscience was not clear in that regard.

But Revato's gluttonous mind had craved that mysterious wisdom to be found nowhere short of Gandhārā. The first major disappointment of his life had been the denial of his desire to attend the famous schools at Takkasilā in that far northwestern province which had for some time been held by the Yonakas and was still filled with their wonderful, mysterious learning. The disappointment had remained in him a root of bitterness and had grown up into an habitual yearning toward Yonaloka with its marvellous knowledge. However laudable an ambition this might seem in itself, it became in him a source of morbid discontent, the bane of which he realized. This was why, when later he was free to go and once had actually set out for Takkasilā, he turned back after a day or two of brooding and struggle with himself in the loneliness of the crowded road. The craving in that direction however was not destroyed and was the underlying reason why he had sought the custom-house appointment. Outwardly, that event was brought about as follows:

While Revato was an infant, the glorious zealot Mahindo, younger brother of Asoko, had come to dwell as a hermit in that selfsame cavern on Gijjhakūto once occupied by Gotamo. Here he had been in near fellowship with the Venerable Ajjuko, Revato's grandfather, and had stooped to kindly notice of the child on more than one occasion, now faintly remembered. Subsequently, the eremitic prince had removed to Pātaliputta and lived in an artificial cell on a stone hill, which his royal brother built for him to resemble the Vulture's Peak. Not long after that, the great Church Council at Pātaliputta had commissioned him to preach the Saddhamma on Tambapannidīpa, the far distant Island of Lankā, and he had sailed forth upon the great ocean to be followed later by Asoko's daughter Sānghamittā bearing a slip from the sacred Wisdom Tree at Uruvelā. Before leaving Magadhā he had secured from his royal brother a promise of future preferment for Ajjuko's grandson, Revato.

Now the peace and liberality of Asoko's reign had wrought no general reduction of taxation, but only an attempt to check its abuses and to apply its proceeds to good ends. Of old times, before the little states of Jambudīpa had been consolidated, their foreign customs were an important source of revenue. With the obliteration of boundary lines and far removal of frontiers, internal revenues, such as land taxes and tithes on trade, had risen to paramount importance. Still, the old custom house at Rājagaha was kept open to take toll of passing caravans. Its receipts were small compared with those in the days when that city was still metropolis and capital, and competition for the receivership was not so sharp as of yore. Travelers through Rājagaha now were mostly pilgrims to Uruvelā or friars whose holy poverty exempted them from demand and search—an immunity which had been abused in certain cases as the Canon Law recorded. By reason, however, of the occasional foreign caravans which still halted at the office, it was a point of informatory contact between Rājagaha and Yonaloka. This was the insidious thought which came to Revato when he learned that the long-time incumbent of the office was about to retire and assume the yellow robe. He strove to banish the thought, but succeeded only in obscuring it by other considerations. So he nerved himself to solicit a redemption of the king's ancient pledge. It is doubtful if Revato would actually have gone to Pātaliputta for the purpose, but it occurred (in retribution for his yielding to desire in some former life, he afterwards thought) that about this time Asoko came on a pilgrimage to Giribbaja. Revato arranged to be in waiting with his friends on the Vulture's Peak where he could present himself in audience under easy and favorable conditions.

With whatever embarrassment Revato entered Piyadassi's presence, it was immediately transformed from the cringing before Majesty to a spiritual awe

before Holiness. At first the Darling of the Devas failed to recall his promise.

"Now we, friend," he said, "who be called kings, are very busy and have many duties. If we had promised we could not remember. Pray refresh our memory."

Here the Venerable Bhāradvājo interposed with details which he could supply as Revato could not and which gave the necessary clue.

"I remember that which my lord hath indicated," answered Asoko and immediately granted Revato's petition, bidding him arrange matters at pleasure. In the manner of bestowal there was a shadowy quality of pitying unsympathy, as from one whose mind is occupied with business of a deeper nature, and Revato felt shame.

Thus at the start his air castles were thinned, and they were soon to be dissolved. His concealed desire to look into the imagined rich life of the Yonaka peoples miserably failed, for he found the language of commerce inadequate to exchange other than the most sordid ideas with the foreign merchants that stopped to pay duty, if indeed they were cognizant of higher things, which their deportment failed to reveal. In various ways, this enlargement of Revato's life, instead of brightening the world for him,

only increased his opportunities of unhappiness. Four years now had elapsed since the appointment and every day his burden had been growing heavier. The culminating detail of his distress was that which he had just revealed to the monks on the Vulture's Peak.

The lady Sundarī, who awaited Revato's return that evening, knew of his intended journey to Pātali-putta, though she did not know the reason. Before he retired for the night, she handed him a little gem-like object which he had never seen before, saying:

"This would be yours some day, Revato, and while we are apart it is safer in your possession than mine, for your life is younger and more secure. Take it as a talisman if you will, and see where it guides you."

When Revato lighted a lamp and examined the gem, he found it to be made of dark stone with relief work carved from white stone, and seemingly all in one piece. It was of foreign workmanship, beyond the skill of any lapidary in Magadhā, clever as they were, and it showed a woman, in flowing robes, holding a small stringed musical instrument, something like a parivādinī lute.

CHAPTER III

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF BUDDHO

FELLOW TRAVELERS

The morning on which Revato set out for the Capital to do the thing that seemed to him just fell in the season of dry air which follows the oppressive Autumn rains. The ploughmen and sowers worked lustily and even the washermen beating their clothes on flat stones in the brooks thumped with unusual alacrity as they chewed their betel-nut. The hills that Revato left behind him were covered with sere leaves torn off by the storms—Buddho's own symbol of the excommunicated brother who has committed the mortal sin of dishonesty—but fresh greenage had already usurped their places and the roadside was voluptuous with blossoms.

Revato traveled in an unpretentious wagon drawn by a yoke of bullocks from his farm, which were driven by a retainer Pilindavaccho, of the Sudda color. His spirit favored this happy mean between a pretentious hired elephant and the self-locomotion of the mendicants. When, on rare occasions, he had himself conveyed the customs receipts to the royal treasury, he had provided a more elaborate outfit, but now he preferred to typify that renunciation which in his mind was already a fact accomplished. Incidentally, the plainer his equipage the less his hazard of highwaymen who still infested certain forests through which the road passed.

They were worthy successors to robber Angulimālo, of Buddho's time, who, as implied by this acquired name, wore a necklace of knuckle joints, even after his conversion and ordination, until required to put off that ornament, owing to the alarm which it aroused.

After passing, almost at the outset, through the new city of Rājagaha, Revato continued northward along the great highway hallowed by the last journey of the Tathāgato. The foothills and upland fell off toward the lowlands of Gangā valley where the jungle was cleared up into fields of paddy, barley, sugar-cane and pot herbs, irrigated by extensive reservoir and canal systems, now overflowing. Water was no luxury at this season and the fords of the swollen rivers were precarious.

Revato soon overtook a caravan of three hundred ox-carts stretching as far as the eye could reach along the road. They were jolting forward about half as fast as a man could walk, and he soon passed them. He had had official dealings with them the day before and the leading trader greeted him with a sullen face. The merchants in another caravan, which he met traveling southward, extended a friendlier recognition.

Numerous were the religious men of all cults—Deva-worshipping Brahmin pandits, versed in the

Get Smart

Over 2,000 years of
human knowledge in
797,885 volumes

Instant access
\$8.99/month

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies



bones of your 'arahats.' The king in his dotage is crazier than ever. He continues to crave his own praises on pillars and to scratch every roadside rock with fussy laws on matters with which a secular ruler has no concern. Have Niganthas then no rights? Was power wrested from the Brahmins for Sākiyaputtīyas above all others?—But this will not last forever. We will not always be despised outcasts." The last words were uttered in a canny tone.

"It is only truth that wounds." Revato was aware that, in this diatribe, exaggerated though it was, against that majestic person whom he revered next to the Blessed One, the weaknesses of an otherwise strong character were skillfully exposed. The layman was angry and he retorted:

"Dubbinīṭā—you villians!—What you squirm under is Piyadassi's censorship of morals. You Niganthas in old time murdered the Venerable Mahā Moggallāno and now I dare say you lie in wait to assassinate the King because his goodness puts to shame your depravity. Come now, tell me why you are on the road toward the Capital."

However little of this accusation Revato meant, or assumed to mean, it strained his diplomatic relations with the Jainas beyond the yield-point. Muttering, the two wanderers quitted his carriage and his company.

At Nālandā, where Revato soon arrived, the Blessed One had tarried on his final wandering, in the Pāvārika mango grove. Here he had repeated those vital words which, as he went from place to place, he uttered with the repetition of old age: "Fruitful is reason if it be girt with revery, fruitful is revery if it be girt with righteousness. Reason thus guarded can destroy the great evils—lust and self, delusion and ignorance."

Not far from here the Thera Sāriputto had been born and here he had passed out of the world. A magnificent thūpa now marked the spot where his body had gone up in flames. A large and ornate abbey had lately been erected here by Asoko who had convoked to it a thousand of the most learned Buddhist sages. Their fame was attracting disciples from far and near, so that this was becoming a university rivalling Takkaṣilā and second to none for instruction in sacred literature.

At one of Piyadassi's pleasant, shady rest houses near the town gate, Revato stopped, intending to wait while Pilindavaccho prepared a meal with the kitchen facilities provided there by hospitable citizens. It was not long before he espied arriving the comrade friars, Venerable Bhāradvājo and Venerable Kondañño.

They intended to visit the sanghārāma where Kondañño had in mind to expound the Law to the erudite doctors and convince them thus and so by his reasoning. First, however, our two pilgrims must collect their day's meal from the local householders, then, without delay, they would proceed to the monastery and finish eating it before noon. Kondañño suggested that they avail themselves of

the supply of rice provided for travelers at the rest house, but Bhāradvājo discouraged this lazy method.

"Through which side of the town will you pass for alms, bhante?" asked Kondañño of Bhāradvājo. "The well-to-do people, you know, inhabit the eastern part."

"Then I will take the western," answered Bhāradvājo. "The Blessed One instructed us not to discriminate between the gifts of rich and poor, so when one or the other must be chosen it should be the worse."

"Since you so prefer," answered Kondañño with resignation, "I will consent to follow the east side."

It was decided that the monks, instead of proceeding with their meal to the monastery grounds, should return to eat it in company with Revato. Straightway each removed his sandals and, after knocking off the dust, slung them in a bag over his shoulder; thus prepared, they entered the town.

Ere long, each came in with his pindapāta of food. Kondañño's bowl was heaped with sweet rice, fruit curry, cucumbers and delicious honied meal cake, while in Bhāradvājo's was only some sour husk porridge in which swam a little bran loaf and much dirt.

The suggestion came from Revato that all three should divide their lunch, share and share alike, the partition plan being quite in accord with custom among the monks. Bhāradvājo would not agree to it, though when Kondañño, not to be outdone in generosity, offered him one of the meal cakes, he accepted so as not to seem churlish.

The diners squatted cross-legged on broad, low chairs provided for the purpose, placing on stools in front of them their bowls with water jars and a few loose mangoes which, being damaged, were permitted food. The brethren found themselves without a water strainer suitable to avert the destruction of precious insect life, for Venerable Bhāradvājo's utensil had been lost on the way and Kondañño's had sprung a leak. But by the providential foresight of the Discipline they were permitted in this contingency to use as strainers the corners of their upper robes.

It was edifying to see the Venerable Kondañño eat, punctiliously complying with all Buddho's rules of sacred etiquette. Neither did he press down his victuals in the bowl from the top to pick or choose one morsel before another, nor did he make his food into too large balls, nor open the door of his mouth till the billet was brought close to it, nor put his whole hand into his mouth, nor toss the food in, nor nibble it, nor stuff his cheeks, nor scatter the rice, nor put his tongue out, nor smack his lips, nor make a hissing sound, nor lick his fingers, nor lick his bowl, nor touch the water jar with food-soiled hand. It may have been that the Venerable Bhāradvājo likewise observed these table precepts, but his manners were so inconspicuous that he lost the credit for them. He ate the husk porridge and all its nameless accidental condiments with as perfect

a relish as one could show who tasted it no more than did the spoon. Verily the abnegation of appetite hath its compensations! Thus it was that the Buddho's disciple, the Great Kassapo, having entered a village for alms, once waited at the door of a leper. When, with decaying hand, the householder was preparing a morsel for him, there crumbled off a rotten finger which dropped into the bowl. "Seated at the base of the wall," declared Mahā Kassapo, "I ate that morsel, and as I ate I felt no disgust whatsoever."

While the party at Nālandā were eating their meal, the sun reached the centre of its course, which warned the monks that the appropriate season for their solid food that day had passed. With a sigh, Kondañño forewent the consumption of his choicest cake. The compassionate Bhāradvājo suggested that it might not be wrong to avail of the indulgence claimed by the monks of the Great Council and continue eating until the afternoon shadow reached a breadth of two fingers. Kondañño, however, spurned this heretical temptation, with a sharp rebuke to his elder comrade.

After their meal at the rest house, the three friends again parted. While the bhikkhus tarried behind for their visit at the sanghārāma, Revato ordered Pilindavaccho to yoke up his steers and was soon jogging along the highway northward of Nālandā.

THE ANTELOPE

All that afternoon and the next day Revato traveled on without exciting incident. His cart and oxen were ferried across one or two rivers, the fords being impassible. He spent the first night out at a roadside rest house, beside which Asoko had dug a delightful well and into the windows of which drifted the odors from a surrounding grove of mango trees planted by the same human providence. The next evening he fell in with a caravan of friendly merchants whose carts were drawn up in circular laager, and encamped within their protecting curtilage. The third day differed little from the first two except that the country through which he passed was lower and marshier and hotter; makasas, dangsas, sūcimukhas—gnats, gad-flies, needle-faced mosquitoes—abounded there, and the phanindas—cobras—wore a still more sullen aspect than those of the hill country.

Late that afternoon, when Revato had come almost within a yojana of the great capital city, one of his cattle went lame and, rather than cause the beast to suffer, he put up his rig at a little village, leaving it in charge of Pilindavaccho to abide the event, while alone he pushed forward to finish the journey on foot. Soon he came to the bank of a considerable nadī and took ferriage to the western side, along which the road continued. He was walking still through the open country when darkness fell.

By and by he saw, in what seemed to be a paddy field near the road, the glare of a fire about which a great throng of people moved and filled the air with low but voluminous sound. Above their voices, shrill though faint, rose a single shriek, convulsively renewed with the outgo of each breath, and expressing such an abandonment to agony as in all his life among mankind and animals he had never heard before.

The road he found to be blocked with a crowd of halted elephants and horses.

"King nām' etang—What's the meaning of this?" inquired Revato of the nearest by-stander. The man failed to understand his language, so he repeated the question to another.

"Eneyyakang! enneyyakang!—The antelope! the antelope!" came a tremulous whispered answer.

The Antelope?—At first that term was meaningless to Revato. Then there stole into his memory a passage of the sacred recitations wherein, for spiritual warning, the varieties of judicially inflicted pain are enumerated with all the hideous unreserve that a few pregnant names can compass. He pushed through the crowd and came close to the fire.

A man was lying nailed to the ground by iron pins driven through the joints of his elbows and knees. These tapered spikes had spread open the bony sockets, tearing the ligaments from their roots. Flames adroitly spaced licked his limbs, making them hiss and charring them to a blackness perceptible in the glare. Repeatedly had his tormentors withdrawn the stakes and set him on his protruding shank and arm bones, only to impale him again in his prone position with further distention and rending of the joints.

When Revato reached the fire the victim was making no more sound except a spasmodic snorting and a gurgling in his throat. His shrieks had been hushed by a red-hot stone in his mouth.

A small dog was fidgeting about him, tail between legs, whining perplexedly, fearful to come near him yet occasionally venturing to tongue his raw members.

"Pour hot tela oil in its ear," suggested somebody in stupid reference to an irrelevant Brahmin superstition; for they say that if you fill a dog's ear with boiling oil he will howl to Indo, who will take away the agony. No heed to the suggestion was paid by anyone, nor did the little being wait to undergo the experiment, however valuable it might have proven to Science. He slunk away among the legs of the crowd. After he had gone, there became evident a fact which he had detected immediately, that his master was now passed out of pain.

Revato stayed till he was sure that the sufferer could feel no longer; then he sought among the by-standers for someone to tell him what it meant.

"The unbelieving King of the Three Kālingas is returning from a visit of tribute to Piyadassi," explained an intelligent old man of the Brahmin color. "While in Pātaliputta one of his own servants

made love to a lady of the Kālingā harem and he could scarce wait till he got clear of the city before dealing out punishment. What will Piyadassi say when this matter is told him? It is many years since such cruelty has been seen in Magadhā, but I can recollect the time when one might come upon such a sight at any crossroad."

Faint and dizzy, Revato threaded his way among the jam of lavishly equipped, fretful elephants and strange, barbarous slaves of the Southern country, passing through them as if they were a jungle of trees, and plodded on to solitude upon the dark highway.

Before long, he felt something brush against his foot and he made the leap instinctive to one native in a serpent land. The object, however, proved itself by its voice to be a dog, no doubt the "Antelope's," which by some acuteness of canine selection had singled him out as a new guardian.

"*Ichhitang te vada, tāta—speak thy desire, little friend. Kissa hi nāma me 'vang pitthito pitthito anubhandasi—Why on earth dost thou follow thus after, after me? Ahang na te sāmikang homi—I am not thy master.*"

The dog cried and jumped to touch his sensate hand with its dry nose.

"Very well then," answered Revato with indifference, "I will be thy lord if thou desirest it so much. Thou shalt follow me forever and thy name shall be *Dukkho, Anguish.*"

He passed on without further parley, the dog after him, and as he went he hummed to himself with the reiteration of an unconcentrate mind which craved the lulling monotone of the rhythm:

*"Tato nang dukkhang anveti
Cakkang va vahato padang."*

*"Thenceforth as he goes he is followed by pain
Like the foot of the ox with the wheel in its train."*

RATIVADDHANA—THE GARDEN OF INCREASING DELIGHT

As the two travelers trudged along, the dim village outlines became more numerous. The road was increasingly wet and in one place was flooded so that they found it necessary to make a detour through the fields. At this point a warning growl from one of them broke the other's lethargy and enabled him to avoid what probably was a snake. Such walking was hazardous of venom but this now disturbed Revato little. Moreover, he was already at the outskirts of Pātaliputta, the lamps whereof glimmered in aqueous reflection on the meadows flooded by Hiraññabahu just before it merges into Gangā. The moon now came up and fell across the ornamented domes of five thūpas beyond which towered the Great one with its relics of the Tathāgato radiating through the heavy masonry their sacred memories. Revato passed beside many grand buildings, with high gateways, railings and ornamental pillars filmily outlined with their scroll work and graven figures.

He reflected only that it was yet some distance to the walled city.

Far in the east were lights which, he needed not to be told, were burning in the huge cruciform Kukkutārāma—the Cock Garden Monastery—which Asoko had erected to shelter a thousand bhikkhus. From that day when the holy Thera Upagutto Tisso had first incited Piyadassi to enduring works, the monarch had been covering all Pātali-putta—yes all Jambudīpa—with religious memorial and residential piles. Where formerly only grass and earth and wood and brick had been used for building, he was content with nothing less enduring than hewn stone, to fashion and adorn which he commissioned skilful craftsmen to explore the mysteries of Yonaloka. Grand structures though they were, and magnified by the crepuscle of night, Revato now saw them with the apathy of a beast. He sensed them but hardly perceived them. His mind was in the condition of a wounded body when the shock of the blow still staves off feeling and inflammation has not yet set in.

Mechanically, he directed his course to the northwest, crossing bridges and winding among lagoons, passing the Fiery Well, which yet in thought burned red with blood from the slaughter house of Asoko's unregenerate days. On the left, against the walled town, was the vast palace precinct of the Moriya dynasty, a fortified city in itself, where Candagutto had encamped his legions of archers and horsemen and elephants; which also he had adorned with magnificence unsurpassed on earth. On a visit to Pātali-putta, long before, Revato had inspected these gardens and pools filled with rare and beautiful living things which grew from the ground and flew in the air or swam in the water. He had seen beside them their inanimate similitude—golden vines twining upon tall pillars, birds delicately feathered by the silver-smith.

Asoko, during his reign, had enriched the palace grounds with many an edifice of peace and piety, but the trappings of personal pomp were allowed to grow shabby. The grand exterior of the palace housed the mean appointments of a mendicant.

Most of the buildings now looked dark and deserted, although the royal family and courtiers were not bound by the rules to which His Majesty had subjected himself. In a low house near the gate, a light was burning and toward it was directed a line of people, some apparently of rank, others mean and wretched. This was the audience chamber which the King held open to the lowliest of his subjects, having promised to receive them, with whatsoever petition, at any hour of the day or night.

Far back from the road, on the side of the palace toward the town, shone in the moonlight a graven lion which stood on a sandstone pillar as tall as ten men. It marked the site of the hell-mimicking torture chamber of Asoko's evil days. Some distance ahead, rose the city palisade of sāla logs placed so close together that not even a cat could have

squeezed through, with its 64 gates and 570 towers; towers which not a bowman had needed to climb this many a year and gates which stood open to all comers.

While still passing the palace curtilage, Revato began to hear from a spot within it a sound of music, a measure undulating in soft, voluptuous tones. The approach being unobstructed, he turned inside toward the place whence it emanated and came to a tree-planted enclosure lit up by numerous oil lamps which swung from the boughs. It was the Rati-vaddhana park—"The Garden of Increasing Delight." There were tanks filled with lotus flowers now open to the moonlight, and, on the edges of the pools, stone terraces and porches with carved balustrades. Odors of candana, or sandal-wood, of campaka and sweet unknown perfumes drifted beyond the pale of the grove. One of the tree trunks was dressed up in robes and mask as a bearded giant. A festal crowd was watching the sinuosities of nātakīs, dancing girls, whose dangling trinkets flashed in the lights, while the surge of the musical instruments, to which they moved, lute and pipe, drum and cymbal, was overtone by the breezy tinkle of bells which hung from the branches. Some of the spectators were evidently rich men of the city, but others of light complexion were clad in foreign simplicity with full robes but few ornaments other than crowns of ivy leaves and flowers. All of these strangers were dressed in a similar style, very womanish as it appeared, though most of them wore full beards. There were, however, two or three whose figures and flowing hair proclaimed them to be really women—women mingling with men at a public revel!

Anon the tender music ceased, and, as the dark dancing girls rested, the fair Yonas, men and women, sprang forth cavorting wildly, flourishing long rods and shouting "Evoe!" "Evoe!" Then in full, loud chorus, they raised a song of their own in an unknown tongue, moving the while in no set figure of dance, but with free and rising expression of their madness. Quick and light sometimes was the chorus, then it swelled in vociferous uccā sounds, tumultuously:

"Ρεῖ δὲ γάλακτι πέδον, ρεῖ δ' ὀλνφ, ρεῖ δὲ μελισσᾶν
νέκταρι, Συρίας δὲ θρώσκει λιβάνου καπνός."

Again it speeded and, broken upon by shrill notes from the pipes, it came along like river waves beating the shore in a monsoon:

"ὦ ἴτε βάρχαι, Πακ-
τῶλου χρυσορόδου χλιδᾶ
Μέλπετε τὸν Διόνυσον
βαρυβρόμων ὑπὸ τυμπανῶν—"

Thus on, and on with increasing frenzy.

In Revato this song produced the feeling of an elusive memory. Not the strange words, but the mental odor of feeling which the music carried, related itself to some blissful hour before the beginning of present consciousness. Perhaps it was on a

morning in the heavenly garden of Nandana in some former birth—at all events the memory evaded his efforts to fix it.

He was aroused by the voice of Dukkho barking at the carousers. Whatever disapproval Revato might have felt concerning the wantonness of this festival—wantonness at least as judged by the Buddho's standard—was swallowed up by indignation at its heartlessness. The power of pain was strong upon him; the clash of this orgy against the evening's cruel tragedy made him sick and desperate.

*"Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā Sam-buddhassa!" he cried under his breath.

The words thus profanely spoken were no less than the sacred Gloria, the highest of all adoring ascriptions to his blessed Master.

The instinct of a brain frantic, whether in mortification or despair, is to apply upon itself a counter-irritant. A shriek of blasphemy uttered in such condition is no vulgar presumption, but springs from an inexorable demand of the mind to embrace whatever it holds most in abhorrence. Remorseful reaction usually follows at once.

In this case, however, the momentum of despair did not instantly spend its force. By the lightning movement of his brain, Revato sought for a further self-martyrdom. There came to him a thought of the gem which his mother had given him, with the graven venikī—lute-girl. It seemed to symbolize this uncontrite, uncompassionate festivity and he was impelled to throw it away. Thus, however, to treat the keepsake so highly prized by its giver would, he realized, be a contemptible act, and it was precisely for that reason, in order to fasten upon himself a shame at which he shuddered, that the impulse became irresistible. This train of reflection passed in the time of a heart beat, and before he could bring his saner judgment to bear, with a spasmodic motion like the recoil from a serpent's stroke, he had flung the pretty pebble into a lotus tank.

In the quick premeditation of the act, he had reflected that the stone possessed little intrinsic value. If it had been a merchantable asset, convertible for the relief of suffering, he even then might have preserved it. His destructive impulse was spiritual rather than material in object.

Bitter repentance followed the act. It dissolved, however, in a whirl of confused emotions which took new shapes from moment to moment as he proceeded on his way. Revato now crossed the moat and entered the town proper. He walked through the city like a somnambulist, turning into the winding market thoroughfare, which he followed from end to end. The dark narrow ways were packed with closely-built dwellings, rising story above story, each house tenanted by many families. They were mostly of wood, some of brick and plaster, a few

*"Honor to that Blessed, Sainted, Fully, Perfectly Enlightened Buddho."

modern edifices of stone. In the better districts they were of grand architecture, having tiered arches above the doorways, bay windows, lofty balconies and belvederes. Their stuccoed walls bore a profusion of cornices and fretwork moulded with relief images and cut with lettered inscriptions. Of these mansions he took no heed, but the misery of the poor tenements found a welcome in his thoughts.

He passed near a hill of hewn stones, huge and high, piled as if by giant hands, and gullied at the top like the approach to Buddo's cave on Gijjhakūta. This was the hermitage where the royal Elder Mahindo had, for some years after quitting Giribbaja, continued to subdue his heart in seclusion before entering upon his mission to men.

By this time Revato had almost crossed the town diagonally and was approaching the northern wall, which lies toward the river Gangā, but a by-way brought him to his destination. It was a private house where he had lodged before, and where he was sure of admittance even at this late hour.

After making himself known he, with his dumb follower, was shown up two flights of dark stairs to the apartment where he must remain till morning. He returned anon to procure a bowl of rice milk for Dukkho who, after lapping it, fell asleep. For the master, sleep was not to be entertained even as an elusive hope. The fever of his wounded spirit was now supervening. It compelled him to meditation upon yatānā, torment, and kāranā, agony.

THE COMMUNITY OF PAIN

Revato strove to reproduce in his mind the feelings of the Black Antelope, summoning before his memory the severest hurts of which his own experience afforded a knowledge, whether by crushed finger or sprained limb or brief contact with fire. Could these be multiplied intensively a thousand-fold, they might approach the anguish of this victim; but such abstract knowledge, he was aware, brought no truly sympathetic sense of the actuality.

Most persons who had never been put to torture treated it as a light matter in the world, just as the spectator of death turns away and goes about his business with eyes that have not pierced the veil of the tragedy. Torment was supportable by those who never had felt it; who assumed it to be like other discomforts of life; who did not know that the limit of endurance is often reached at its very beginning, and that during the ensuing hours or days of it, it keeps on beyond all endurance, beyond all words.

Revato took note that torture had always been the practice of strong men toward weak men the world over, and that it was so still, in spite of much clemency and mitigation where Asoko's good will controlled; that during every moment of time, in many places, numerous victims were contorted in dolorous ecstasy. The agonies thus voluntarily inflicted by human caprice and sagaciously contrived to wrest the keenest of protracted pain from

the bodily regions of most exquisite feeling—such pain as rarely is approached in the quick, clumsy knocks of chance—must far exceed in sum of anguish all the ills that come by disease and accident. So much for the pains of this life; of sufferings in other worlds, the heart's forebodings, or perhaps its memories, might testify.

For a moment the spirit of Revato yielded to its instinct to cry out for revenge upon the makers of pain everywhere, but his judgment soon told him how much worse than useless this would be, for it would merely add to the sufferings of the victims those of the persecutors, who would feel just as acutely and who were no better able to bear it. Was not torment itself due to revenge? If two wrongs did not make a right, why should three wrongs?

He tried to think of pain that had been endured in the past as no longer valid, because it has ceased; but although unable to explain how, he was sure that this consoling temporal philosophy was in some way fallacious.

Revato had never before perceived so clearly as now the relative paltriness of his own identity. He felt himself melted in the huge cauldron of animate things. Suffering is suffering and of no less consequence whoever the sufferer may be. Only through illusion could he ever have been contented while another agonized. What is pain, he asked, but some violation of law, some discord in the harmony of Nature? Suffering, then, is the effect of such a discord upon an intelligence which perceives it. Few minds are equipped or willing to realize anything outside of their own bodies, but if they had perfect knowledge they would have perfect sympathy, and pain would reach them equally through whatsoever body it was received. *Phassa*, touch, produces *vedana*, feeling, but does not the real suffering take place in *saññā*, the corresponding perception? Only because of its better connection with the region of disturbance, is our *saññā* irritated by the contacts of our body rather than with those which befall another. But in-so-far as we possess *viññāna*, reason, our minds can overleap physical limitations, and suffering, wherever in the universe it occurs, becomes equally our own.

Dukkho was lying by Revato's bed, whining at the separation from his former master, not without some sad, doggish memory of its awful significance. Suddenly he gave a yelp.

"Ko nu āvuso—How now, friend?" said Revato. "Art thou dreaming that they are treating thee as they did thy master?"

The dog had been stung in the foot by a satāpada, a centipede.

"If I were truly wise, his hurt would be just as much mine," thought Revato. Because of the better communication between his paw and his mind than between his paw and my mind, he feels it more than I. Had I perfect insight like the Buddho, I should receive the dolorous intelligence equally with Dukkho."

There arose in his recollection certain gāthās from the hymn which the Blessed One addressed to the sage Asito:

“Toward the living void of wrong,
Whether feeble, whether strong.
‘Just as I am, so are you;
Just as you are, I am too.’—
Thinking thou art such as they,
Do not slay nor cause to slay.”

“As one would be happy in a dear, only son,” said another of old, “so in all beings everywhere, let him be happy.”

And if he cannot, like the cheerful-minded saint, feel that happiness is the lot of all beings, nor in the long run, even of a few, must he not share their travail?

Thus began Revato to learn the meaning of *Sabbatattā*, *cunctus ego*, identification of all creatures with one’s self. His own individual troubles shrank to the vanishing point. So far as his limited mind was capable, he bore in it the sorrows of the Cosmos, —not as distinct from it, but as a molten part and parcel of that infinite community of suffering.

The revelation was tinged with no exaltation nor spiritual pride, but was filled with a sense of unspeakable horror, with ravings upon the reality of earthly and hellish tortures which cast him into fever and sweat and violent chills that caused his teeth to chatter like the rattling of bambu stalks in a gale.

So was Revato submerged in despair. But the drowning man will clutch at a straw which, in his delirium, will seem to him a great buoyant timber. After hours of sleepless tossing had dragged on, while Revato’s successive moods of gloom evolved like lurid images in closed eyes and his lucubrations had fatigued themselves to incoherence, he found at last the straw, which he grasped like a dying man.

That straw was a memory of the festival in the Rativaddhana pleasance, whose clinging music played itself over and over in his head. To speak critically, this was a revolt of his selfish corporeal nature against the stern altruism of judgment—such a revolt as will come when intellectual frankness is carried too far—a rebound against the narrow confines of mental endurance.

He formed a wish to walk once more through the pleasure garden, and in that trivial prospect he felt a

thrill of joyful expectancy, for when the eyes have grown used to darkness, a slender beam of light makes a brilliant illumination.

“How lightly is my body tossed
When lifting joy assails,
And airily, like cotton down,
Goes drifting on the gales!”

Quickly his conscience smote him and accused him of the desire as an evil. Self-examination convinced him that had there been no ladies in the party he would be regarding the Rativaddhana stolidly. Sophistry essayed to coerce this plain truth by representing that he was merely projecting a stroll in the dewy morn among the quiet trees and pools which their nymphs must long since have deserted.

“How are we to behave, Lord, toward woman-kind?” the gentle Anando had once asked his Master. “Don’t see them, Anando.”—“But if we should see them, what are we to do?” Don’t speak to them, Anando.”—“But if they should speak to us, Lord, what are we to do?” “Keep wide awake, Anando.”

“I will act according to the precept of the Blessed One,” thought Revato, “and if I do, there is no reason why I should not visit the grove.”

Immediately after this thought has passed through his head he regretted thus having made what might be construed as a vow to bind his conscience. He was ever making what he subsequently regarded as vows, hampering his future freedom of choice, and the more he strove against the habit the more he betrayed himself into them.

But even with the fiction of such a safeguard against the dangers of his proposed ramble, he failed to deceive himself, or to avoid a consciousness that he wanted less to enjoy the park itself than to revive its associations. The stern Buddhist criterion was not in error, and his desire to go was its own condemnation.

Dawn was already looking in at the window. Striving to transfix one of the elusive moments when his conscience gave the ghost of an approval, Revato sprang up, cast his garments about him, dashed down the stairs and out of the house, breaking loose from deliberation and keeping free by bodily momentum.

Dukkho stayed in the room and whined.

CHAPTER IV

PROTE

The misty air of early morning which, after Revato’s restless night, felt at first depressing in its chilliness, soon restored his animation and, by a rapid transition, the sorrows of the old day gave place to the exhilaration of the new.

Strolling, he retraced his way to the palace grounds and the Rativaddhana pleasance, wherein he sauntered. The transparent ponds were matted with water lilies and loti, white and yellow and blue, interspersed with red blossoms fallen from the

palāsa trees, which together with fruitful mangoes cast on the pools their shade. He recognized the tree that had been dressed up as a giant with bearded mask, its upper branches spreading above the head and a little altar placed near for incense and offerings. On the trunk now hung musical instruments, scented tresses and other votive relics of the orgy, while on the ground were débris of wassail. How like was this in some ways to the tree worship of the village folk! Yet where they drew from their superstitions lessons of goodness, charity and respect for the simple gifts of the poor, these impious foreigners perverted religion to purposes of debauchery.

A turn of the path among the trees brought him face to face with a woman. He recoiled in amazement, for it seemed to him that the trinket which he had flung away the night before was taking human life and stature. She was a young lady, hardly more than a girl, dressed in a straight full skirt with an ungirt upper garment hanging loose over it from her shoulders. It was the costume of Yonakīs; Yonaka pallor possessed her face and arms. She held against her breast a little golden harp shaped like the one on the cameo.

"Don't see them, Anando!" The Master's first injunction had already been shattered.

"Don't speak to them, Anando!" This contingent precept was yet inviolate, and Revato quite intended to keep it so. He had always been more or less in awe of the sex, partly from inculcated distrust, partly from the quite contrary tendency of unsophisticated youth to suppose all women filled with contempt and resentive dignity toward that verminous biped, man. However, to avoid occasion of speech, Revato might have made more haste to pass along than in fact he did.

"Bho sappurisa"—it was the nymph addressing Revato with condescending speech in correct Pāli prettily timbred by her foreign tongue. "Bho sappurisa—O my good fellow—do you see that little black and white object which lies in yonder lotus blossom? Ingha tvang, nang me āhara—Won't you please fetch it to me?"

"Bhadde tvang kā nāma—Who are you, fair lady?" he cried as if in doubt of her earth-born nature.

"Mānusī ahang asmi—Human I am," she answered reassuringly.

Revato stood irresolute.

"Ehi vigāhehi bāla, Come plunge in, you simpleton," she encouraged. "Don't you see what I want? I'm not asking you to pluck a blossom. Are you afraid that you will be changed into one yourself like Dryope when she ravished away the home of the nymph Lotis. Take courage, tāta, no lotus flower will you ever become."

Finding no plausible excuse, Revato waded into the shallow water and recovered from its flowery place of lodgment the gem that, a few hours before, he had tossed away. The pretty imaged lutist had

rested among the lotus petals like the Blessed One in popular fancy. (*Om mani padume hom—Amen! The jewel in the lotus—Amen!*)

Having been discarded, she now belonged to her living antitype by right of discovery. So at least, Revato inferred from certain precedents in that sacred law commentary, the Sutta Vibhanga. Even had he asserted his older title, the claim would have been unprovable. He therefore meekly fetched the trinket to land like a retrieving dog and drippingly delivered it to her who waited for it on the bank.

The Yonakī had prepared to offer him money for his trouble, two or three māsakas, perhaps, or a pāda; but as he approached she drew back the coins. She had changed her opinion of his social station and perceived that the disorder of his travel-stained clothes was not due to mean quality, for she thanked him with less contemptuous speech than she had used in her request. As she scrutinized the graven gem, her eyes sparkled and then moistened.

"My country woman!" she exclaimed. "I was born on the very island where she had lived."

The girl had now lost all of her supercilious impertinence. She seemed, however, to possess little of the reserve expected in a stranger. Throwing her little lute against her breast, she began to sing to its accompaniment, in her alien tongue, a song sweet as the music of a Gandhabbī—a celestial musician—yet of a quality incontestably her own.

"What are you singing?" interrupted Revato with rudeness which his conscience dictated.

"Ah, it is unfair to you; you cannot understand me," she answered. "If I could, I would translate it into your own language for you, but as easily could I change myself into an Ariya. Although you must admit that I do fairly well with your barbarian Pāli, for I studied under the best masters while we tarried in Taxila. Let me sing it as it is, and I will interpret the meaning as I go along; thus you shall have both the sound and the sense."

Cleverly, in this way, with explanatory breaks here and there, she rendered for Revato her song:

("Long of old time, Atthis, I grew to love thee.")

"Atthis now cometh no more to me.

Yea, for death yearn I unfeignedly.

Yet, with tears, parting, protested she:

'Woe, our plight, Sappho, is piteous;

Hark, I swear, haste I unwillingly

Forth from thee.' Fondly I answered her:

'Go thy way, joyfully treasuring

All my love. Dims in thy memory

Soon our soft, beautiful indolence?

Many a rose mingled with violets

Curbed thy wild hair, which it garlanded.

Many a wrought, floreal catena

Bound thy neck, delicate prisoner.

Many a myrrh jar unbegrudgingly

Soothed thy mild skin, and exquisitely,

Oftentimes, lounging, we surfeited,

Taste uncloyed, scorning satiety.'

("Hateful now, Atthis, grown is thy recollection,
Fickle my child, flitting to seek Andromeda;
Cyprus holds thee—Panormos yet or Paphos?")

THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS
Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

DELVE INTO FANTASY, MAGIC, MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

Forgotten Books'
Full Membership gives
access to 797,885 ancient
and modern, fiction and
non-fiction books.

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies

wished ourselves back on the moist, fishy ways! Our desert pilot forgot his knowledge of the stars; thirst subdued the throat, and hunger the belly; our camels dropped by the way and some of our barbarian servants died, as did two of our own people. But still the gods hovered on high. We came at last to the shores of a great river, which we followed to lands of men. I will not tell you of the sore trials yet to be encountered in passing the tall mountains, where desire of grief again overtook us, nor of the joy whenever we entered the cities, no longer barbarians, but of Ionians. And finally, in spacious carts, we passed on to the land of the Prasioi, your Magadhā.

"Do you tell me then," she concluded, "that I should neglect the bright gods who have never neglected me? Some day my Pan will bear me home and lay me to rest on the grassy base of my own island Olympus by the heavy-booning wave of the Ægean where Poseidon shall forever shed salt tears over my grave and his voice shall mingle with my dreams."

"Where is your Pan now?" sneered Revato; "lurking about your door-step like a Sudda porter?"

"No indeed!" exclaimed she without taking offence. "He would never quit his haunts among the lonely hills and valleys to dwell in a large city. The god who attends on me here is familiar to the soil, a sojourner here ages ago, perhaps a native. It was from Jambudīpa that he came to us over the sunburnt plains of Persia, forbidding Media and happy Araby, across the golden fields of Lydia and Phrygia, reaching at last our Hellenic Thebes. He is a god of mirth and light-heartedness. In this bright, warm land whom could I worship with better grace? In our colder country we celebrate his revival with the Spring or his rich maturity with the harvest of the vine. Here it is fitting that we perform his rites when the steaming rains are ended and earth renews her freshness under the clear skies of approaching winter. Yes, you have really two Springtimes, so we may well hold two Greater Dionysia. Only last night we paid the god his tribute of joy."

"Was that what I saw and heard when I passed by here? No, it cannot be possible that you would have taken part in such debauchery!"

"It was only innocent mirth," she said. "Among the mountains in the north of my country, the feast sometimes runs to wantonness, but my friends and I conform to the moderate manners of the refined South."

"Would you be willing to repeat for me a few lines of the song you sang?" asked Revato.

"Gladly," she answered, "but you would tire in hearing them all. I will begin however."

She commenced to recite the dithyrambic in her strange tongue, her voice quickening with excitement as she proceeded. When she reached the words "Ρεῖ δὲ γάλακτι πέδον," he stopped her.

"Yes, that is what I was waiting for. Can you not explain to me what it means?"

Then, by her method of song in the original, broken with interpretations, which clumsily done would have spoiled the whole, but which under her skill made it clear and graceful, she rendered the lines.

"Flowing with milk is the ground, and with wine it is flowing,
and flowing

Nectar of bees; and a smoke as of incense of Araby soars;
And the Bacchanal, lifting the flame of the brand of the pine
ruddy-glowing,

Waveth it wide, and with shouts, from the point of the wand as
it pours,

Challenges revellers straying, on-racing, on-dancing, and throwing
Loose to the breezes his curls, while clear through the chorus that
roars

Cleaveth his shout,—'On, Bacchanal rout,
On, Bacchanal maidens, ye glory of Tmolus the hill gold-welling,
Blend the acclaim of your chaunt with the timbrels thunder-
knelling,

Glad-pealing the glad God's praises out
With Phrygian cries and the voice of singing,
When upsoareth the sound of the melody-fountain
Of the hallowed ringing of flutes far-flinging
The notes that chime with the feet that climb
The pilgrim path to the mountain!"

And with rapture the Bacchanal onward racing,
With gambollings fleet

As of foals round the mares in the meads that are grazing,
Speedeth her feet."

"There is nothing astonishing in that," said Revato, "although some names which are new to me."

"Did you expect anything astonishing?"

"I thought that there must be something wonderful in it," he answered, "but let that pass, for it was a whim."

"Beauty is no friend of surprise," she rejoined, "and beauty is the air that the Immortals breath."

"Amma—madam"—said Revato after a pause, "I have attended to you thus far as you have talked of your gods. Now pray listen to a word yourself. Are you not aware that they have no power to help you, and that they will not even help themselves, because they are dazzled by illusion, like you and me. To-day they are sowing to the senses, experiencing what they think to be happiness, but to-morrow they may be hurled down into torments such as you and I shall also undergo. How will you enjoy lying for hundreds of thousands of eternities licked by encircling flames with your tender joints all burst asunder by thick wedges?" These words he spake with the earnest of fresh reminiscence.

The girl showed a slight tremor at his graphic details but quickly took means to banish the painful imagery. With a stroke of her fingers across the strings of the lute, she burst out into another song:

"Unborn, on the olden aeons, drifted immortal plasms,
Moribund prey to aversion, scattered apart in the whirl-pool.
Kypris moved on the vortex, filling desire in its atoms,
Stirring all things with a will to draw nigh to each other.

Thus, on eternal chaos, eternal love was laboring;
And the froward paths turned toward and the separate rushed to
mingle;

Forth from their deathless deadness, a mortal life came flowing—
Myriad manifold creatures, variant, peculiar of purpose,

All that have been, or are now, or that grope in the fogs of the future—
Trees that form lodgment of air-fowl, grasses that grow in their shadow,
Fishes which drink of the sea-brine, beasts that find food in the woodland,
Women and men, strong-limbed, fertile in skill and invention,
Yea, and the glistening gods of sky-bound, starry Olympus—
All are the deed of desire and of love and of sweet Aphrodite."

"How can your sages teach you such an absurd and abominable doctrine?" cried Revato. "How can they be shrewd enough to discover that desire is what keeps us all in the Wheel, and yet such fools or such knaves as to applaud it—just as if they wanted to stay here?"

"Most of us do want to stay here," replied she.

"Not the clearly seeing," answered Revato. "Not those of whom the Blessed One declares:

"The wheel is broken, craving now is dead;
Nor flows the river on its dried-up bed.
Ne'er shall the shattered wheel roll on again,
And so is reached the Perfect End of Pain."

"Yes, it is true, lady, that from craving all things proceed and by clinging they persist;

"Mind-resulting, such our fate,
Mind-conditioned, mind-create."

"We fabricate," he continued, "each our own world of pleasure and ambition, in which are the occasions of our grief. The more diversified and lofty our interests become, the more numerous and poignant our sorrows. These, our realms, are like the poetry composed in a dream, mellifluous and ravishing at the time but commonplace trash if remembered after awaking. It is for such despicable baubles that we undergo torments. But just as, when asleep, we are half conscious that our dreams are unreal, yet because they are so delightful we refrain from breaking them off, so it is with the illusion of self. Even when it hurts us we still adhere to it, as if a kitten be biting its tail painfully yet continue to do so because the little tuft is so attractive. At last we become so enwrapped with our craving that we can no more rid ourselves of it than a sāla tree can shake off a long creeper that is coiled about its trunk. As the tree is destroyed, thus are we."

"So there then no rightful place for joy in life?" asked she. "It is wrong to wish to be happy?"

"For worldly happiness," answered Revato, "I can see no room unless it be that which comes unsought and gratuitously after we have completely renounced it and ceased to expect it. But all our selfish emotions must be dried up, our anxious projects abandoned, for these are streamlets tributary to the River of Life which continually flows into the Ocean of Sangsāra. You have heard how when the grandson of the devout lady Visākhā died she went at unseasonable hours with tear-wet hands and hair to declare to the Blessed One her grief.—'Do you not find, Visākhā, that there are sons and grandsons in proportion to the number of

men in Sāvattthī?'—'Yea, Sire.'—'And how many of Sāvattthī die daily?'—'Sometimes, Sire, ten of Sāvattthī die daily, sometimes nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, and sometimes only one. Of those who die daily in Sāvattthī, Sire, there is no lack.'—'What think you, Visākhā, have you found at any house those whose garments and hair have been unwetted by tears?'—'Not so, Sire; how is that possible with so many sons and grandsons?'—'Those, Visākhā, who have a hundred dear ones have a hundred sorrows, those who have one dear one have one sorrow. For those who have no dear ones, there is no sorrow.'

"Whatso of sorrow, what of pain and sighing
Pervades the earth, it from attachment springs;
Where craving is, there also grief undying;
No trouble follows him who never clings."

"I still will cling," said the girl, "to the memory of my island home. My life, be it long or short, shall be spent in the sunshine, in the busy walks of life, surrounded by the beautiful things which the gods have made and which they have taught men to contrive. They of Olympus dwell not in solitudes, nor would they have us to do so. It comforts us to think how much they resemble us in our frailties, but it must inspire us to reflect how we may grow like them in their splendor. We do so when we make the world glorious and magnificent. That can come only by cultivating with the finest training our desires and longings." Throwing her fingers recklessly across the strings of her lute, she trilled:

"Sweeter than harp, more golden than gold the sunlight;
Golden earth-fruits ripen in far-off Hesper;
To my warm soul delicate thoughts are welcome—
Seeking and yearning.

"From the hard hills, gloomy with flying shadows,
Comes a keen wind rattling the rusty oak leaves;
Trembles my soul thus in the gale of Eros,
Sweet-bitter fellow.

"What if unprized maidenhood always hold me?
What if elude me ever the garden islands?
Strip, ye strong gales, all of my brown repining—
All but my yearning."

"Itthi, kā hi nāma tvang?—Woman, who are you?" exclaimed Revato when she had finished.

"My name is Prote, and yours, pray?"

"Revato. I am called the Layman Revato Yuvāno."

"But why did you ask my name so abruptly?" she inquired for information.

"Because I thought it must be Tanhā-Rati-Arati."

"Lust, Folly and Ill-Will, my good Sir, the three daughters of Māro all rolled into one. Behold how learned I am in your philosophy!"

"It is no laughing matter, Lady. We, all of us who have not reached the Blessed Condition, are prone to yield to the desires of our hearts, strive against them as we may; we do so because those desires, bitter as they really are, seem sweet to our

perverted taste, and we feel we cannot resist them. But deliberately to cultivate such craving is a suicidal presumption which I would not charge upon the very devils in the hells."

Prote listened to this remark with exhausted patience and took it as favorable opportunity to close the interview by departing her own way. Before leaving, she restored to his hand the gem lady, saying:

"You braved the terrors of the deep to rescue her and she shall be yours."

Before he could make up his mind whether to accept or reject the gift, he stood alone. Another foreign woman, her maid-servant or slave, had appeared and, thus attended, she vanished from the Rativaddhana park.

CHAPTER V

A DAY IN TOWN

THE FLOWER SCAVENGER

Hardly had the voice of Prote ceased in his ear when Revato heard near him a song in another key—the shrill croak of a broken-voiced old man. He was a pupphachaddaka, a flower scavenger, one of those miserable creatures of the Pukkasa caste, despised even by Suddas, who try to maintain life by clearing away the wilted garlands which have served their brief day in god-houses or elsewhere, and perhaps realizing something on the second-hand stock.

To-day he was happy as a Khattiya prince; having risen early from the river bank where he had slept, he had come to collect the debris of last night's festival—treasure trove rich to him as a buried crock of gold. No wonder he was frantically endeavoring to sing the hymn of old Elder Sunīto:

"Of lowly parents I was born;
Scant profits of the world were ours;
My work was wretched and forlorn,
I gathered refuse wilted flowers—

"A lowly caste which men of worth
Leave on the left when passing by.
I groveled ever on the earth,
Since few there were so low as I.

"I saw betimes, as near he drew
To Rājagaha's opening gates,
That Being Altogether True,
On whom the Band of Brethren waits.

"My burden staff I dropped aground;
To reverence him, I ventured near.
Compassionate, he turned around,
That One Supernally Made Clear.

"Whom sentient worlds account sublime,
To him I crept with plaudits meet;
My sordid life of earlier time
I laid renouncing at his feet.

"The Perfect Lord of Sympathy,
Whose pity reaches everywhere,
'Come Brother,' gently said to me—
And fully thus ordained me there.

"Deep sunken in untiring thought,
In woodland glades, alone and still,
I led the life the Teacher taught
And carried out the Conqueror's will.

"By night's first watch I saw the sign—
A birth came back from long ago;
The middle watch, with eye divine,
I marked the systems' ebb and flow;
Till, e'er the watch of morning-shine,
My darkness fled forevermo'.

"And when the sun was near to rise,
Two chieftains of the angel bands
Appeared before my wondering eyes
And worshipped me with clasped hands:

" 'All hail, thou man of noble race!
All hail, who art a prince indeed!
Whose taints are purged beyond a trace,
Be votive offerings now thy meed.'

"When so the Master saw me there,
With angel cohorts at my feet
And glory filling all the air,
He spake these words I now repeat:

" 'Where fervent striving, self-command,
Where faith and goodness disenthral,
See there a twice-born Brahmin stand,
The highest Brahmin of them all.' "

Such had been the emancipation wrought by the Lord of the Dhamma. Poor creatures who, in the Brahmin days, might have had their ears filled with molten wax or their tongues torn out for meddling with high religion, were now accounted worthy of attainment to the most exalted estate. True, this particular outcaste had never complied with the conditions of enfranchisement,—perhaps he was contingently ineligible by reason of slavery or debt—but the consciousness of his recognized natural qualification must have been to him a deal of comfort. He saw reflected upon him a gleam, at least, of the glory which shone from the Thera Sunīto of the song, who, while still in his own despised condition, had been received not only into fellowship with the Brethren, but had been selected for the rare honor of immediate presbyterial ordination, passing over the diaconate. When the mean estate of the singer was considered, his boastful language became magnificent.

With less influential preoccupations on Revato's part, the flower gatherer's allusions to him who probes the spirit would have brought him to his senses, contrite; but so strongly was he then con-

trolled by the buoyant reaction of the morning, with its vision of new life, that, for the time being, he heard only the cheerful note in this anthem of consecration.

After passing through the park, he walked on under stress of an energy which clamoured to be converted into rapid motion. The ten saddas, or urban noises, which ordinarily jarred on his nerves, now stimulated them. He passed through the monumented suburbs near the palace, viewing with rapture, in the glow of the dawn, those edifices which by moonlight he had beheld with apathy. Before he realized it he was out on the country road among the wet paddy fields.

About the hour when the townspeople were opening their shops and beginning their day's work, and the monks from the vihāras were coming into the residential streets to fill their breakfast bowls, Revato caught sight of his own cart jolting toward him, with Pilindavaccho in command. The ox that had been lame was now going with scarcely a limp. This arrival provided the owner with a desirable change of clothing. Having secured his baggage, he resorted to a barber for a shave and to a public bathhouse where he might remove the smut and sweat of his journey. After an exhilarating plunge in a tank of cold water, and after being smeared with powder and clay, steamed in a hot-air chamber and vigorously massaged, he put on his fresh garments, including a sātaka, or cloak, of fine Benares cloth, which he had just purchased in the metropolitan shops. The physical purification did not fail of a sympathetic mental effect, and he returned to his lodging feeling like a man who has been promoted to a celestial Sagga after a term in the Tapanā hell.

When Revato entered his room, he was greeted with a whine from Dukkho who had patiently remained there awaiting him. His first act was to go in search for some food and drink for the dog and also for himself. After the meal he rested and was visited by reflections which burst the bubble of his happiness.

The lamentable failure of his last night's resolutions reproached him and he felt the almost ludicrous way in which successive safeguards to conduct—precautions of sight, speech and discretion—when the first in line is upset, tumble down like a row of poised bricks. The prime mover had been desire. His broken resolution, however, worried him not so much because of its late infraction, which was a matter of the past, as because he felt it still to be binding upon him. Habitually, his anxieties related to his future conduct. He must now undo, as far as possible, the wrong he had done, by avoiding another encounter with Prote and forever banishing from his thoughts all that she was or represented. The questionable strength of his obligation made it worse than if his duty had been more certain, his mind being thereafter constantly strained with the worry of doubt and indecision. His disposition to

self-argument had always taken advantage of his racial quietism to produce irresolution. At times there had sprung within him high exotic impulses to achieving endeavor which augmented his mental turmoil; with the result, usually, that he did nothing. That safety resides with inaction, was his philosophy, pusillanimous in sound, but complicated by difficult ethical considerations. May cowardice be charged against moral resistance and inward striving? Is not the truest exertion padhāna—that of the mind—which Bhagavā performed when, emaciate and motionless, by the river Nerañjarā, he withstood the assaults of the tempter Māro and steadfastly continued until he found the infinite rest? Deeds have different meaning and value in the physical and spiritual world.

Be the judgment thereupon what it may, Revato began to show hesitancy about carrying out the purpose for which he had come to Pātaliputta, that of resigning his lucrative office. The reason for such a change of heart may be suspected to reside in certain very obvious ambitions connected with Prote. There is a scintilla of truth in this, for he was human, but the explanation comes far short of fathoming his self-tantalizing ingenuity. The only shadow of chance, as he saw it, to be free and live as others did, was not in availing himself of his present business connections, but of cutting loose from them before they drew him any deeper into what he regarded as the indebtedness which tended to smother his life in a futile attempt at restitution. The decision to resign had cost a hard struggle and, after it had been reached, he, according to a habit, had philosophically striven to accommodate himself to the new condition. In this way, particularly now after meeting Prote, he had adduced those reasons which made him really anxious to be clear of his office. But as soon as inclination had been dragooned into line with duty, duty swung around to the opposite side. His conscience was like a weather vane which infallibly points against the wind. In his private, as in his traditional philosophy, desire was a sure criterion of wrong.

Reason for his shifting of opinion as to duty was found in the conflict of strict ethical ideals on one side and sane, practical morals on the other. At one time he might feel compunction to cast the deciding vote in accordance with his own rigorous logic, at another time to renounce his rectitude and defer to what he knew would be the opinion of most good men. So it was, that while preference deserted the side of retaining his office, his inward monitor veered to that direction. By no means, however, did he feel that he would be relieved from the final accounting required by perfect logic. To speak plainly, his conscience demanded that he do an injustice and finally repair it at the complete sacrifice of himself. So his situation became worse than ever. Thus, though doubtfully and falteringly, came forward a negative policy tending to hesitation and procrastination. It did not immediately check his

attempts to execute his plans, but every step was with self-reproach.

THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF RELIGION

According to his original project, Revato called that afternoon within the palace enclosure to see his friend Dabbo Kumāputto, a Dhammayutta, or Assistant Secretary in the Holy Law, subordinate under Migalandiko the Dhamma-mahāmatta, or High Minister of Religion. The functions of this governmental department were varied. It was concerned with ecclesiastical affairs proper; with the administration of royal alms; it supervised the female establishments of the King's relatives; entertained appeals in criminal cases of wrongful imprisonment or chastisement and could grant relief where men had large families or were advanced in years; it exercised, moreover, powers of intervention in other departments in cases savoring of a religious nature. In short, this bureau was the moral Censor and Court of Equity of the realm.

From natural hesitation to reveal his mind to Dabbo, Revato opened the interview with general topics of remark. The conversation drifted upon the buildings which the old king was erecting for sacred uses with more zeal than ever and upon the craftsmanship that he had imported for this purpose from distant lands.

Theretofore, the public edifices when of material more enduring than wood, had commonly been made of brick finely overlaid with chunam plaster on which were frescoed graceful devices of wreath and creeper, of ribbon or dragon's tooth and perchance a pictured scene from hallowed story. Asoko had substituted massive stone, no less elaborately, if more arduously and enduringly, adorned with carving. New forms of architecture and art began to appear; his builders returning from *studienreisen* to Takkasilā, Sāgalā, Persepolis and other regions of the nearer Yonalokas, executed in timid bas-relief designs of column and capital that were strange to Magadhā.

Dabbo gave particulars of a subject already vaguely known to Revato, that the Emperor was now seeking to copy foreign architecture more perfectly by imparting artisans from its native countries. His was not the arrogance of his father, Bindusāro Amittaghāto, who has sought to buy from the Yonaka king Antiyako, wine, figs and a sophist, only to be informed that the sophist was not for sale. With the respect due to a high contracting party, Asoko had secured the services of a skilled architect, Diyomedo by name, from the far-off true Yonaloka, and he had come bringing with him a staff of sculptors and master workmen. For so long a time they had been at work already, that their first great enterprise was well under way. This was a new sanghārāma, or "society garden," on an island in Gangā, opposite the city, near the place of Buddho's miraculous crossing, in commemoration of which event it was to be called the Pārāyana Sanghārāma, the Monastery of the Way to the Further

Shore." It was to comprise two large quadrangles of cells, an elaborate service hall, and a grand thūpa wherein would be enshrined the water pot and oil lamp which had served during Buddho's discourse in the rest house of Pātali village. The design of the service hall, now nearing completion, had been much admired and criticized, the latter chiefly owing to the simplicity of its lines. As a reluctant concession to the wishes of his royal employer, who objected to a style wholly beyond popular appreciation, Diyomedo had consented to carve around it a frieze representing scenes in the Jātaka fables, stipulating, however, that they should be arranged according to his own taste. His Majesty was so much interested in the work that he frequently visited the island to observe its progress. Dabbo suggested to Revato that he go there himself and take a look at it.

Up to this time Revato had been promising himself that he would gradually lead the conversation around to the subject of his call on Dabbo. Having failed to do so, he now availed of a lull in the discussion by making a plunge into the dreadful case. When once started, it was easy for him to talk—easier than for Dabbo to listen—but he insisted on finishing his story to the bitter end. His conclusion was that Dabbo should transmit his appeal to the Dhamma-mahāmatta, or at least introduce him gracefully to that dignitary.

"Why, tāta," sneered Dabbo, "the Mahāmatta (Great Minister) would help you merely by turning you out of your job. He would accuse you of rivalry with himself, seeing you are so mahāmatta (such a big fool)."

This stupid pun and a parting, "Bhaddang bhavato hotu—Good luck to you," were the only consolation Revato could get from Dabbo's quarter. He was thrown back upon the miserable support of his own resources. He must approach the High Minister, if at all, upon his own responsibility, but the chief's attitude was already hopelessly forecasted by his underling.

There remained the course of appeal to the King, who surely would not reject the petition flippantly, and whose door was always open to suppliants. This method was clear and plain, yet not too simple for Revato to discover some difficulty that he could raise in objection. He suggested to himself that the regular audiences were crowded and that he was sure he could not explain the intricacies of his case on such an occasion. He must arrange to meet Piyadassi when more at liberty—and would not the Pārāyana sanghārāma be a likely place for such an encounter? Both *pros* and *cons* of this project were numerous; the reasons underlying them were mixed and subtle. Since these motives were yet evasive in Revato's mind, it would be precipitate to define them here, but they will come to their own with the sequel.

LAMPS UNTO ANOTHER

That same afternoon Revato fell in with his old companions, Venerable Bhāradvājo and Venerable

Kondañño, who had just arrived in Pātaliputta. The latter was much perturbed.

"This morning," Kondañño exclaimed in a tone which suggested that his fetter of patigha, vindictiveness, had not been completely severed, "we met a great troop of people on the road with horses and elephants and armed guards—a royal march it seemed"—

"The Ex-king of Kālingā," supplied Revato.

"And his myrmidons beat us with sticks," continued Kondañño, "they lamed Bhāradvājo's wrist and cracked my bowl!"

"But it does not hurt much now, bhante," interposed Bhāradvājo, condoningly.

"It is astounding, bhante," cried Revato, "that the servants of any vassal monarch in the empire should not respect the person of a Sākiyaputtīya ascetic. The Mahārājā of Kālingā can be no loyal subject of Piyadassi, no more than he is a walker in the Holy Law; let me tell you what I know about him." And Revato proceeded to relate the story of the Antelope.

The monks listened with no emotional expression, Kondañño probably owing to his slight power of sympathy and Bhāradvājo because of an equanimity which had long ago discounted the travail of the world. By way of reply he intoned a gāthā:

"Unless your predelection be for pain,
From open or occult misdeed abstain.
If such a deed you're doing or will do,
There's no escaping of the pain for you."

"Kira—'tis rumored"—said Kondañño, "that the object of the Kālingissaro's visit to Pātaliputta is less well known to Piyadassi than to Prince Dasaratho. The latter has never shown any great affection for our Order, so far as his gifts are concerned. They say that he turns mendicants away from his door without a morsel. He is incensed at his grandfather's expenditures for charity and for the buildings which the Yonakas are foisting upon the old King. It is secretly believed that—but why should I repeat all that I hear?"

"Against the Kālingas Piyadasi committed the great sin of his unconverted days," said Bhāradvājo reflectively, and he murmured:

"Not in the highest air nor ocean's hollow
Nor dark in some deep cave's perpetual night
Nor any earthly where shall cease to follow
The present power of a past unright."

In spite of their misadventure, for which, perhaps, compensation lay in the gossip that it supplied, Kondañño was far from disconsolate. He was in good humor over his sermons preached during the journey and especially his disputations with the professors at Nālandā.

He assumed great scorn of Pātaliputta city with its ephemeral glories, as he declaimed in the words of an old-time saint:

"I fall when others rise,
I rise when others fall;
I will not dwell where others dwell
Nor share their joys at all."

Revato had never noticed in Venerable Kondañño such independence of spirit as these words would indicate, but he held his peace. Venerable Bhāradvājo, however, administered a gentle rebuke to his comrade by recalling to mind Elder Lāludāyi, also of old time. That worthy had a knack of croaking at a wedding, "Without your walls, where cross-roads meet, the foemen lurk," or at a funeral, "Oh, may you see a thousand such glad days"; but the Blessed One characterized him as deficient in common sense.

Such approval by the highest authority of a worldly, temporizing policy could not be unwelcome to a certain mood in Revato which now was on the alert for any argument or holy warrant in its behalf.

"Have you done the business for which you came here, Layman?" inquired Kondañño of Revato with a painful dryness.

"Not yet, bhante, I have somewhat changed my mind about it."

"Sādhu, sādhu!—Good, good!" exclaimed Venerable Bhāradvājo in a cheery tone. "I was confident that time would bring a cure. And now to change the subject, have you been to see the Pārāyana sanghārāma, the navakamma—new work—which the foreign mechanics are building for Piyadassi? They say its architect is the equal of Mahā-Govindo."

"I have not visited it, bhante; have you?"

"Not thus far, tāta. First must come a night's rest with the brotherhood at the Kukkutārāma; then we shall make the round for our pindapāta and must eat it as our bhatta—breakfast. After that, we shall certainly take a good look at the new vihāra of which all the friars on the road are talking. But after all, these new scenes can never be so gratifying as the old ones. That house over yonder stands on the site of the one where the Buddho last dined with the High Ministers of Magadhā, and the location of old rest house where he preached cannot be far from here."

"What is your opinion of the Yonakas, bhante?" inquired Revato.

"They are like all other living creatures, still shackled by the fetters," answered Bhāradvājo, "and destined to toss forever in the ocean of sangsāra, rebirth, unless they grasp the blessed Dhamma taught by Bhagavā and thus attain a foot-hold on the Further Shore."

"Let me tell you of one whom I met this day," and Revato described his meeting with Prote. "Now what have you to say about her, bhavantā?"

"Is she beautiful?" asked Kondañño.

"Beautiful as the daughters of Māro when they came to tempt Bodhisatto by the river Nerañjarā. But her physical beauty is nothing compared with her beauty of mind, or in turn, with the universal beauty which she reflects! I am well aware that most of this is the mere illusion of evil; yet there are certain elements in her discourse which have appealed

to me so plausibly that I cannot think them wholly bad. If only it were possible to separate the true from the false!”

“Avuso, Friend,” said Bhāradvājo solemnly, “your purpose is good, but you know nothing of the world’s ways. You attribute to this girl and her whims a dignity which is wholly imaginary. Her freedom of manner proves that she is no decent woman. She is a mere ganikā, a vesiyā, a vannadāsī, a rūpūpajivinī—a woman of the same sort as Ambapālī—

“Whose invitation to dine was accepted by the Blessed One,” interrupted Revato for the sake of argument.

“The Blessed One,” replied Bhāradvājo, “took his disciples with him and he taught her the way of deliverance. Let us hope that your new acquaintance may reach as saintly an old age in the cloister as did that lady Ambā.”

“Adhivāsetha—excuse me—bhante, but I think you quite fail to understand her. You declare that I know nothing of the world’s ways, but she belongs to a world of which you know nothing, and its ways may be different from those of our own.—Now, bhante, let me ask your advice upon another ques-

tion. Would it be well for me to visit the new sanghārāma?”

“And why not?”

“Because it is being built by the Yonas.”

“Not by a Yonakī girl. You cannot avoid her race in these days while at Pātaliputta. It would be wrong to deny yourself this opportunity for observation, since knowledge is beneficial to us if it be the right sort.”

We should belie Revato’s astuteness were we to dissimulate that he recognized in the mention of Yonakas and their works a temptation. There is, however, no great difficulty in stealing a march on conscience when the overt act is to be immediate or no hours of darkness and deliberation must first be wrestled through. His chance of meeting the King at the new abbey was supplemented by other plausible considerations, as, namely that he ought dutifully to acquaint himself with all that pertained to his religion. So it was that Revato set out that same afternoon for the Pārāyana sanghārāma. The searching eye of Buddho, had it been in Pātaliputta rather than in Nibbāna, might have detected a certain celerity in his movements, as if he apprehended that delay would change his mind.

CHAPTER VI THE PĀRĀYANA SANGHĀRĀMA

THE CHAPTER HOUSE

Thus of yore spake the Venerable Pingiyo to the Brahmin Bāvari:

I will tell the way which tendeth
To that Fair and Further Isle.
As he saw it, so he told it—
Sapient, without defile,
Passionless, desireless Master—
Wherefore would he speak with guile?

Doubt-dispelling, deep discerning,
Everywhere his eye can see.
World-revealing, all-prevailing,
Pure and painless, calm and free.
He, the true, the glorious Buddho,
Came, O Brāhmana, to me.

As the wood-bird finds the forest
From her bush-entangled nide,
As the wild-fowl quits the marshes
For the ocean, deep and wide,
I have left my trifling comrades
And have reached the Boundless Tide.

There is one alone unchanging,
From whose face the darkness flies,
High-born, luminously beaming,
Uncompared, beyond comprise—
Gotamo, the far-perceiving,
Gotamo, the very wise.

Vigilant, with eye of sprit,
I behold him night and day—
Clear, O Brāhmana, behold him—
So I do not think I stray.
All the night I spend adoring;
Can he then be far away?

Though my flesh be worn and wasted,
Though my carnal eye be dim,
Though my body cannot follow,
For I totter, weak of limb.
Forth in mind and thought I travel
And my heart is joined to him.

In the mire of old I struggled,
None to save or to redeem,
Frantic leapt from isle to island—
Then I saw Sambuddho’s gleam,
Who has broken loose from passion
And has crossed beyond the stream.

The Blessed One (appearing in splendor):

Vakkali by faith crossed over,
Alavi-Gotamo just as he,
And Bhadrāvudho the Brahmin;
So shall faith deliver thee;
Where the Further Shore is waiting,
From the Death-land thou shalt flee.

Pingiyo:

I have heard the voice of Buddho;
Happily his word I hail.
He, the Perfectly Enlightened,
Has removed the darkening veil.
Never yet he spake unkindly
And his wisdom cannot fail.

There is nowhere in the god-world
That his reason has not been,
Not a fact whereof the Master
Has not pierced the origin,
He will end the doubters’ questions
If they will but let him in.

Get Smart

Over 2,000 years of
human knowledge in
797,885 volumes

Instant access
\$8.99/month

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies



tions of the building were eminently practical and there was little awe connected with it. Architecturally, it had not been prominently distinguished, but was often built as a wing to the vihāra quadrangle.

Naturally, Revato presumed the building in the middle of the court to be such a sālā, a conjecture which later was confirmed. But its glorification was puzzling, not to say suspicious. At any rate, this structure was now being treated by its builders as the chief work of the monastery, barring perhaps the unfinished relic thūpa, and its exterior challenged attention. The building extended to a length of about fifteen dhanus, bow-lengths, with a width of perhaps ten bows, and a height of thirty cubits. It was surrounded by a peristyle of fluted marble pillars which supported the overhanging obtuse, gabled roof. When close to these columns, so that he could run his eye along them, Revato noticed that they were not straight, but bulged out in the middle, an error which must be condoned by the otherwise faultless design. The ghatakas, "pots," forming the column heads were wrought around with embracing leaves of the padumaka, the lotus pattern; a familiar and appropriate emblem novelly applied.

As a crowning feature, the pediments and wide belts under the eaves above the architraves formed a cittāgāra, picture gallery, being carved with designs in low relief, which ran as a chain of imagery around the building. The white figures high in air stood out from a background stained red as an indagopaka bug, and they were embellished here and there with metal mountings which constituted parts of the pictorial design. There was, however, a peculiar absence of those redundant details and ornaments which crowded the background in native mural sculptures; and, as defined upon their colored setting, the forms looked meagre. This crudity was forgotten as the eye became accustomed to it, and the excellences of the method constantly grew upon the beholder. How unrelated were the figures here sculptured to the familiar ones based on the old wood-carving style and still wooden in their articulations! These groups were not boxed in as medallions nor separated by vine work, but flowed on continuously, in bold, graceful, vivacious lines. They did not look like images at all, but like real men and animals and trees which had been reborn in miniature with the pure white Ariya color. They appeared to be alive and in motion, so that one fancied he could follow their movements, and when he glanced away, he was surprised to find, upon restoring his look, that their limbs were still in the same position as before. Revato happened to notice that the lower part of the frieze was carved in less relief than the upper, whether due to convenience or negligence on the part of the sculptor, but it did not harm the general effect unless one were thinking about it.

The decorated meeting house thus bore such a wealth of imagery as, of old, Vissakammo had

wrought upon the enchanted car of Rāvano. It was not frivolous ornamentation, but replete with story and instruction. Reaching around the great edifice it embodied long histories of manifold incident and spirit. The groups formed a procession so skillfully arranged that through all the transitions of scene ran a pictorial unity.

Less mystery attached to the symbolism of the carvings than might have been the case had not Revato come prepared to interpret them. They were representations of Jātaka, or Birth tales, that vast collection of old marvel stories, dear to the heart of every Buddhist, who has learned them as a child, which depict the wanderings of Bodhisatto, the pre-incarnate lord, in manifold epiphanies on his long road to Buddhahood.

THE JĀTAKA FRIEZE

A royal stag lays his head on the slayer's block to save the life of doe.

A lion and bull are fighting, watched by a jackal who has brought it about by slanderous report to each of the other's sentiments.

Some monkeys deputed by a gardener to water young trees are economizing the water by first pulling up the trees to observe the size of the roots.

A murderous, giant crab lets go of a captured elephant's foot because entranced by the sweet feminine song of the mate.

A deer by the pool-side, snared in a noose which cuts him to the bone yet refrains from crying out until his fellows shall have slaked their thirst.

A cat, licking the gore of poultry on her chops, sits at the foot of a tree making amorous eyes at a coy and wary cock perched on a limb. Diplomatically he pleads his disapproval of miscegenation.

Monkeys are escaping from tree to tree on a bridge built by one of their number, and of which he forms a part; but a traitor among them, the pre-incarnate Devadatto, leaps on his back to destroy him.

A garlanded elephant stands weeping. In the forest he saved the life of a forester, who subsequently betrayed him; whereupon suppressing his anger he submitted without resistance to the hunters. But in his gilded captivity he remembers that his poor blind mother will now have no one to bring her the sweet wild fruit.

Men with clubs are slaughtering poor lean dogs, while sleek dogs in golden collars look on. The king's hounds have gnawed his chariot harness, and, unsuspecting the real culprits, he has decreed slaughter of all the canines in the city.

An injudicious lad is engaged with an axe in killing a mosquito which had settled on his father's bald head.

A monk is eating scraps left by a dog, and a woman who was his wife in his worldly days, stands by reproaching him; he replies that any food honestly obtained is right to feed on.

A ram, with head lowered, is about to charge a monk who stands delighted at the reverent obeisance. "In the whole world, this ram alone recognizes my merits."

An ascetic is lamenting over the dead body of a young elephant, though he has lived down regret for his relinquished wife and children.

Workmen with saws are cutting off the ends of a stake thrust through a monk's body. He was condemned on a mistaken charge of theft, in moral retribution for impaling a fly in a former life, but by his freedom from resentment while writhing in his torture he has led the king to release him, and since the officers cannot get the stake out of him, they are making it as convenient for him as possible. Henceforth he will be known as "Mandavyo of the Peg."

A wretch impaled on a stake for stealing flowers, that his wife might be adorned for a festival, is sad of countenance because she must miss the party.

A foolish mourning widower is gazing down at a maggot, his former wife, who in company with her new husband, tells him how happy she has become.

A barber finds a gray hair in the head of a king, which betokens the time that he shall renounce the world and prepare for death.

Here sits a man with his eyeball bulging from its socket while a surgeon applies a sharp drug to make it protrude farther and prepares with a lancet to sever the tendon. It is King Sivi giving his eyes to a poor, blind Brahmin. Revato knows the harrowing details of the long-drawn-out operation and the friendly remonstrances meanwhile which Sivi overcomes by his determination.

A young prince is seated with drooping head, silent. Those around him are trying in every way to rouse him. The sword-play, the dance, the soft charms of beauty, fail to attract his attention. Even pans of fire do not make him writhe. He remembers the unutterably more agonizing flames of hell wherein he dwelt for ages, and that is the cause of melancholy which has possessed him from infancy. When he hears the king sentence a robber to a thousand strokes with barbed whips, and other felons to various cruel punishments, he reflects: "My father is guilty of a grievous action which brings men to hell." Thus he comes to manhood silent and dead to the world except in-so-far as it concerns eternal agony.

Such were among the many little histories suggested in the carvings, whose meagreness of detail Revato's mind could supply. In each of them the Bodhisatto should have figured nobly, not always as the chief actor, but frequently as a wise arbiter, and the sculptor should have brought out the pious, often unexpected moral of the tale. But these religious purposes had often been subordinated to artistic and dramatic effect, so that the pictures were spiritually valuable only as reminders to those who already knew the entire stories.

So far as Revato had now observed them, the incidents had chiefly been chosen from among the cynical, the sad, and the ascetic narratives of the collection, some of them more after his own heart than, he guessed, after that of the Yonaka artist. But he had been following the line from the rear end of the building; as he approached its front the scenes changed in character. They became more optimistic, more worldly, more voluptuous, more heroic. Such qualities were readily found in the Jātakas by neglecting the moral conclusions and dwelling on episodes, irrespective of context. This, it seemed, must have been the sculptor's deliberate purpose. Preference was given to such stirring incidents as the following:

A war horse lay pierced by an arrow, and while men attempted to remove his armor of mail, he raised his head in vigorous protest. He had been smitten by a dart after bearing the knight, his rider, to the capture of six kings; and now to attack the seventh—he must be replaced by a hack! His entreaty was destined to prevail; he would carry his rider to victory and would pay for it with his life; and before dying he would prevail upon the knight's royal master to spare the lives of the conquered kings.

But the plastic interpretation glorified rather the martial spirit of this exploit than its charitable climax.

Briefly then, as one followed the frieze from rear to front, he read its motive to show a growth and

exaltation of military virtues, majestic attributes and wordly vanities, rather than of kindness, humility and self-sacrifice. Parallel to the progress of the Bodhisatto, as traced from lower to higher forms of life, the designer had indicated a development of morals from meekness to pride.

The technical method, however, of reaching a culmination was admirable. In the center of the front pediment stood the Wisdom Tree of Buddhho, before which all manner of creatures, human, mundane and supernatural—men, elephants, monkeys, birds, fishes, snakes, nagas, yakkhas, māras, devas and brahmas—were bowed, adoring. Thus the long procession on each side of the building had been moving toward the goal of Buddhahood—a perfect allegory of an old and familiar doctrine.

THE FALSE BUDDHO

It was a revelation to Revato that life could be so deceitfully mimicked in the surface of stone. A bright new world opened to him, a world of art, strange but not weird, rather sane and true, yet infinitely removed from the commonplace. In it were realized those ideals whereof the lute girl on the gem had been a shadowy type.

Despite the novelty of treatment, his familiarity with the manifold subject had enabled him to follow it through its graceful changes along the wall, charmed again and again at the fresh suggestiveness which had been drawn from themes to him so hackneyed.

Having surveyed the exterior of the sālā, Revato passed inside. He found the usual tokens of incompleteness, obstructive scaffolding, ropes, levers, tools and debris of marble and mortar. Several Yonaka foremen were impatiently directing the labors of their numerous native helpers or performing with their own hands those finer works in which their skill could not be delegated.

"Re! re! Heigh there! Do they allow visitors?" Revato asked of a dark-skinned journeyman.

"Not if they suit themselves, ayya—lord—but you can stay until they drive you out."

The unobtrusive deportment of Revato, however, preserved him from molestation and he wandered about in the building.

The interior walls were much plainer than the outside. Against the south one stood a stone dias intended for the abbot presiding at the meetings of the chapter. In the middle of the hall rose a higher and grander throne, with its back toward a large central column and facing the East.

Lo! thereupon sat a marble patimā, or image, of Buddhho in his favorite posture, with one leg folded on the other, meditative and self-possessed. The effigy was not colossal, but it was modelled to depict the ultimate of man's symmetry and strength. Transcending, however, such merely mortal nature, it wore a mien revealing superhuman power and unapproachable, godlike majesty. This was utterly foreign to the Buddhho pictured in the minds of his

true disciples, a being who, however deep in discerning sapiency and unbounded in pitying benignity, was yet intensely human. Admire as he might this marvel of art, Revato could not but feel an aversion from it, as if it had deprived him of a friend. Then he noticed that the image was set on its lotus-throne like an idol in a temple. This was most incongruous with the purpose of the place. The sculptors of old time had been content to symbolize the Master by his Wisdom Tree, although that custom did not prove an attempt to depict the lineaments of the Blessed One to be improper. It was especially fitting that in the chamber where his disciples were now to meet in conclave, as their predecessors had so often met with the living Buddhho for their moderator, the likeness of his presence should remain before them in the place of his accustomed seat, a seat which, however, would have been represented by a mat better than by a high throne. Notwithstanding his entry into the ineffable Nibbāna, he still lived and breathed for them in the precepts which were their rule and guide of life; perhaps it was right that they should employ a helpful graphical method of realizing the soul resident in the doctrine. But to couple this reverent mindfulness of their teacher with adoration was an abuse which would have made him sad.

The Buddhho patimā was yet unfinished, and one of the skilled Yonas was even then engaged in chipping its lineaments into perfect form. Near by stood another of his race, whom, in spite of rough, dusty clothes, Revato readily singled out as the master. He was a man some few years Revato's senior, of hugh, magnificent build, with full, ruddy face, curly brown hair, and beard, also curly, trimmed round. He scrutinized Revato with a searching look. There seemed to be something in the aspect of the young Magadhan that appealed to him not unfavorably. It may have been the well bred Khattiya's confident bearing or his color, almost as light as the Yonaka's; at any rate the architect elected to greet him with a civil commonplace remark:

"Do our efforts upon your new chapel meet your approbation?"

"They are worthy, Sir, of the heavenly architect Vissakammo who built the bridge to Tambapan-nidipa and the splendid city of Lankā; who created also the Palace of Righteousness for the Great King of Glory. But what most have won my admiration are the Jātaka images. Since I was taught the stories by the monks as a child, they have been filled for me with living people, but I never before felt their animation so much as to-day."

"They *are* alive," answered the architect, pleased with Revato's compliment, "they live as an essential element in your nation from antiquity—who knows how great? They are a precious treasure for any race to possess, for by them it proves its true racehood. You have little idea how long study Aristocrates, my chief sculptor, and I spent in familiarizing

ourselves with the Jātakas before we attempted to express any of them in stone. The process is vital, not mechanical; the idea must become a part of self and then self reproduces itself."

"You treat them more seriously than I supposed," said Revato. "The stories are so very simple; besides, few of the scenes that you have selected contain a deep religious significance."

"You confound religion with philosophy, I fear," replied Diomedes. "Philosophy is labored and individual, Religion is naïve and racial; for that reason it is the harder to grasp if the form has all one's life been familiar but the spirit has remained a stranger."

"Is this like your buildings in Yonaloka?" inquired Revato.

"So far as fitness allows. An exact copy of our style would be absurd. The lotus-leaved capitals, which you may have noticed on the columns of the portico, are of new design. Agreeably to your Eastern taste, I selected our most ornate type, but it was necessary to substitute for the acanthus leaves, which we imitate, some foliage pattern that would be at home in Magadhā. How are you pleased with the statue of Buddhho?"

"It is magnificent," Revato answered, "but totally unlike the great Teacher as I have always thought of him. You have made him look like a god."

"You satisfy me with praise!" exclaimed Diomedes. "It is a god that I have sought to make him."

"Surely, then, you cannot have given the same attention to the Suttas that you have spent upon the Jātakas, for if you had, you would perceive how alien is the Blessed One from such an imagery."

"Be assured that I did not lay the corner stone—the mangalitthakā, 'auspicious brick,' as you would say—of the sanghārāma before I had made myself adept in all the learning of your religion. Do not I speak your language fairly well? This dexterity was gained chiefly in doctrinal converse with your monks. It is because I have seen and felt for myself the divinity inherent in Gotamo Buddhho that I have sought to do him the tardy justice of giving it expression."

"I fear that you will increase the growing tendency of the people to worship him," Revato objected.

"Of course, men beholding this image will be impelled to bow down before it, and they will be inspired to high endeavor."

"Not height, but lowliness," said Revato, "was taught by the Master. His life was spent in toilsome wanderings and humble labors of persuasion. Habitually, he called himself the Tathāgato, the Likewise-Goer, he that cometh and passeth away as do other men*."

*While a doubt of interpretation condones it, I like to retain this favorite old one with the humble self-ascription.

"In his mildness there is strength," replied Diomedes, "and in his humility there is the power of a great god. Let his true nature be revealed. You Buddhists must come to your own. You are worse off than the Brahmins, who, whatever be their foolishness, possess great, majestic devas. We Hellenes know what it is to have gods, the noblest of all the world. Have you never heard of Zeus or of Poseidon, of Hera or of Pallas?"

"It seems to me, Sir, that you are playing with fond ideas. Do you truly believe in the existence of your gods, and if so, why? How can you take for granted those of Jambudīpa and even one whom you are imagining and constructing for yourself?"

"Do I believe in my gods? Ask me whether I believe in my state and in my city. Ask whether I believe in my father and mother, my schoolmasters and my boon friends. Ask me whether I believe in sun and moon, in rain and snow, in winter and harvest! My nation and my nation's deities are inseparable; if one be true, so are both. How then dare I deny the gods which stand likewise in the history of an ancient, noble people such as the Ariyas? How shall I fail to perceive the Divinity who resides in that choicest flower of the Ariyan Land, your Buddhist cult?"

"We, Buddhists," remarked Revato, "have gods enough and to spare. Have you never learned the nomenclature of our many Brahmālokas and Devalokas with their teeming populations? The Teacher made plain to us, however, that these beings are no more worthy of devotion than ourselves."

"Yes," replied the builder, "you have purloined the deities of the old religion only to treat them with a contempt that is worse than denial. You alluded, a moment ago, to Vissakamma, the heavenly architect and artist. You would never think of praying to him, would you? Now behold how differently you and I look at such matters. Every morning, as I enter this building, before I begin work, I implore his divine will to direct my mind and eye, just as I would seek that of Athene if I were still in Hellas."

"Then you seek assistance from one who is less able to aid your skill than your meanest Sudda laborer or Candāla outcaste."

"By what power," asked Diomedes, "do you think that my skill is created?"

"By the power of Kamma, Past Deeds, acting effectively according to the Saddhamma, the Perfect Law, which Buddhō perceived and expounded to the world."●

"Then you assume a law to be ultimate authority—that there is nothing behind it to which it owes its existence?"

"I make no such assumption," answered Revato after hesitation. "But if ever I try to think of the Causal Power that can account for all which exists, I am stupefied by the wonder of the idea which I feel, but cannot grasp. The Blessed One, as you know, disapproved of such speculations. He had seen in our country too many fruitless flowers of

imagination which run riot in the regions beyond all worlds. Some learned doctors spend their time arguing that the world was self-produced, others that it was produced by a force outside, others that it came without a cause of any sort. The Brahmins, versed in the Three Vedas, point out the way to a state of union with Brahmā, whom they neither know nor have seen, who dwells with neither wives nor wealth, who is free from malice, lust and pride, from sloth and weakness. But these same Brahmins, thought they profess a hope to attain unto him, seek after wives and wealth; they are filled with malice, lust and pride. The Teacher said that, 'If anyone is to attain unto a state of union with Brahmā, it will not be he who claims to know all about Brahmā, but he who is like Brahmā.' And again: 'Suppose a man wounded with a poisoned arrow were to say: "I will not have this arrow drawn until I know the caste of the man who shot it, his stature, color and town; and by what kind of a bow the arrow was impelled, with what sort of bow string, feathered from what bird, bound with thongs of what hide and headed with what manner of point." That, would be just like saying, "I will not lead the religious life under the Blessed One unless he elucidate to me all the problems of metaphysics." Whether the truth about them be this or that, there still remain birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation and despair.' It is the way of escape from these which the Buddho has made clear to us. He deemed it prudent that instead of passing our time in framing opinions on the nature of things and divinities which we cannot know, we should devote ourselves to cultivating those qualities of which we assuredly know that they tend to a happy result."

"Well spoken!" exclaimed Diomedes, "and in a sense true enough. We worship the gods, not as far-off concepts of philosophy, but as the helpful friends of our daily avocations, our sowing and our planting, our building and adorning, our festivals and our wars. But tell me, do you look for a state of union with Brahmā?"

"By no means," answered Revato, "since Buddha declared that all brahmās, as well as devas, are transitory creatures like ourselves. Neither believe we in a Paramattā, a constant Soul of the Universe. For we have learned that ourselves contain no attā abiding thus distinct from the body, but that all elements in our personality bear vital co-relations and are dissolved together, though they be reproduced in new births by kamma. With the fresh body is born a fresh soul. Just so, we might imagine an intelligence in the universe, which differs from Paramattā as our mind differs from an attā, and which dissolves and reproduces itself, with all visible things, from kappa to kappa—from aeon to aeon. But even this would not lead us back to the Root Cause."

"Have you ever heard the three Vedas recited?" inquired Diomedes.

"Much of them," Revato answered. "If, in their oceans of falsehood, there is anything worth pondering it is not the gods but *Tad Ekam*—That One."

"Tò Evs, for Whom some among our philosophers have sought," interjected Diomedes.

"He at Whom the Vedas hint in the awe of mystery!" Revato continued. "I confess that He has excited my wonder. Perhaps I am transgressing the commandment of Buddhó—the monks that I know would certainly think so—but as I feel the Teacher's spirit I don't think he intended the precepts to be taken in a slavish sense—we must be slaves to our own conscience but not to any external authority, even to his. Thus, I make bold to cherish, rather than to stifle, my dark suspicions that there is a Source whence all power proceeds."

"You hold, do you," asked Diomedes, "that concerning the object of man's highest concern he can have no specific knowledge?"

"I have always been alert for such knowledge," answered Revato with a sigh, "but it has never come my way."

"Such knowledge," Diomedes answered, "lies ever ready for your taking if you do not expect to see the bodily forms of the gods, but are content to behold their works, to worship and honor them. Attend to the words of a pandit who lived in my country:

"He that orders and holds together the whole universe, in which are all things beautiful and good, and Who preserves it always unimpaired, undecaying, obeying His will swifter than thought and without irregularity, is Himself manifested only in the performance of His mighty works, but is invisible to us while He regulates them. Consider also the sun, which appears manifest to all, does not allow man to contemplate him too curiously, but if anyone tries to gaze on him steadfastly, deprives him of sight. The instruments of the deities you will find imperceptible. The thunderbolt, though sent from above and working its will with everything in its path, is yet never seen approaching or striking or retreating. The winds too are invisible though their effects are evident. The soul of man, moreover, which partakes of the divine nature, if anything in man does, is clearly perceptible, but unseen. Meditating on these facts, it behooves you not to despise the invisible gods but, estimating their power from what is done by them, to reverence what is divine."

"There is reason in what you say!" exclaimed Revato with animation. "I follow your line of thought. The Cause is known by its fruits. What are the fruits? Are not all things that we behold and perceive? Is not the Blessed Dhamma, the Norm of Truth and holy living? Is not the Buddhó himself? Again, an object is wasted without a subject, a fine spectacle without an appreciative witness, sound without a hearer and light without a seer. Does the great spectacle of the universe fall only on blank, sightless space? Thus, while in some ways we know little about Issaro, the great Owner, about Sanang Kumāro, the Ever Young, yet in other ways we know much of Him, since we know what issued from His mind and what comes back to rest there. Surely this is vast knowledge if thought be the chief part of existence. With such knowledge, whether great or small, we must content our-

selves until further light shall appear, for the *Tad Ekam* has so ordained it."

"You grasp my philosophy well," replied Diomedes, "and your own is not ignoble; but both yours and mine, as I said before, are matters quite other than religion. This I should find it harder to teach you. For religion to become truly a part of one's life, he must have been born in Hellas. But to give you further proof that our religion does not cripple us in philosophy, let me entreat you to come to my house some day when work is done, and to read with me from the books of our sages."

"With utmost gladness," answered Revato, "though I do not quite understand what it is that you mean by the reading."

"I mean that the compositions of our munis are preserved by writing them down on prepared skins of animals, or fibres of river flags, from which we read them."

"Like an edict or a memorial inscription on stone or a business document or a letter?"

"Even so."

"And do you not know them all by heart; do not your learned men?"

"Only such passages as are most often read and may happen to become fixed in memory."

"I should think that the text would soon grow to be very corrupt," said Revato. "It is only by depending upon the agreement of learned memories that mistakes can be kept out. If a book is written down, errors will creep in, either inadvertently or intentionally, and thus will be perpetuated because no one is wise enough to correct them."

"Errors or no errors, I will hazard your judgment upon my books as they stand," said Diomedes.

THE RELIGION OF BEAUTY

"Tell me," continued the architect after a moment's pause, "whether having saturated your sight with the work of our Ionian artists does not make you feel gladder and better than you were before?"

"I cannot say that it does. Why should it?"

"Because beauty tends to elevate the soul. Every noble cult expresses itself in stately rites, majestic temples, choice words and sweet music. Religion inspires art and art inspires religion."

"Quite otherwise, so far as I have observed," answered Revato. "What you say may be true of religion as it was long ago when men were happy through ignorance and first sang the hymns of the Three Vedas, pleasing to the ear but unsatisfying to the thinking mind or the craving heart. Again, there may be an art inspired by an old, degenerate, formal religion, like that of the deva worshippers to-day, fruitful in gorgeous gods' houses and ceremonies, but powerless to mend the life. Otherwise, with a vital religion, that is to say with our own, or ours as it was in the beginning. Then the souls of men were too earnest to concern themselves with pleasing externals. They spoke in direct unadorned language, anxious not to charm, but to instruct and

to convert. In the songs they sang was little room for imagery and on their vihāras, ornament would have been considered sacrilege. Our forms are becoming elaborate now, I grant you, but that is because our early zeal is dying out and we are striving by unworthy means to kindle our emotions. I know little of religions in your country, but will warrant that the same natural laws control as in Jambudīpa."

"If you lived in our country," said Diomedes, "we should class you among those whom we call the skeptics. They treat with contempt our national faith and since they have arisen public morality has seriously declined."

"I cannot dispute your assertion without knowing the whole story," said Revato. "Are your 'skeptics' of that sort who deny religion altogether, or would they destroy an old form in order to make way for a better? May not the moral weakness of which you speak be chargeable to the old religion itself? No one could be bolder than our Buddhō in denying creeds, yet he did so in order that he might introduce a purer faith—one by which public virtue has been incalculably benefited."

Thus did Revato grope for a universal law which even a broad knowledge of history can imperfectly formulate, but which if framed might pierce the mystery of our modern future: When popular religious opinions are discredited, what is the moral consequence to a race?

A hiatus in the colloquy ensued, then the elder man spoke:

"My name, as you may be aware, is Diomedes—and yours?"

"Revato," answered he that bore it, "Revato, a layman, commonly known as Yuvāno, collector of Royal revenues at Rājagaha."

"Ah, you are the acquaintance of all others that I am gratified at having made," said Diomedes good humoredly. "Royal customs are the most important factor in our new building, and of late they have been the most difficult to come by. You know," he went on to explain, "that there is a strong cabal in the palace, directed against the King, and Prince Dasarathō is believed to be its instigator. Since he became heir apparent, he cannot content himself to wait for the death of his grandfather. The disaffected ones are raising the cry of extravagance and trying to make the people think that Asoko's mind has become too feeble to administer the government. He is well aware of the conspiracy but is meeting it only by conciliation both weak and impolitic. He has yielded by reducing expenditures, and has begun to do so at the wrong end, in fact, by cutting down the appropriations for completion of our work. He intends to go on as usual with his lavish charities for eking out the miserable, useless lives of slaves and vile beasts in his hospitals, and to let the finest artistic and spiritual embodiment in all Magadhā be born an incomplete, deformed monster."

"I rather think," said Revato, "that were I in the King's position I would do the same."

I can place myself at your point of view," replied Diomedes, "but did you occupy mine, you would see as I do. I could exhaust my powers of mind in pity for the fallen and suffering, but I know that it is better to husband my energies for the accomplishment of great purposes to elevate those who stand. Our efforts for the good of the world must be applied where they will be most effective, and that is only by encouraging those who are capable of exerting efforts in turn. The great benignant power of this structure, to which I devote the most magnificent thoughts that are in me, you may not clearly perceive, but let me tell you that it is worth the lives of many human beings—of many noble and competent lives, not to mention the mean and impotent—and more than all the jackals, elephants, apes and other beasts from Gangā to Himavā."

"Your work on this chapel," remarked Revato, "does not appear to be suffering from lack of funds. Pray, how can you get along so well without them?"

"We are not getting along without them. But to enter into full explanations would be indiscreet, even with so good a confidant as yourself. Suffice it to say, that more than one blind cat and singed monkey and barren hen in the royal asylums is on short rations and that I confess to certain words and acts of a prudent financial wisdom dissimilar from that which philosophical pedagogues recommend to beardless youth."

"If such be the case," answered Revato, "I advise that you convert this place into an Ajīvaka or a Nigantha temple rather than complete it as a hall for the Assembly of the Saints."

"Was ever any great work accomplished," replied Diomedes persuasively, "without disadvantage to some and without straining a point here and there? If we were unwilling to sacrifice or ignore ethical theories when occasion demanded, we could accomplish nothing. In every path of progress we can find plenty of such obstacles if we keep our eyes on the ground rather than steadfastly on the goal ahead. What are we to conclude then? That all efforts must be given up, all hope abandoned? No, rather that something is amiss in our moral notions. And here, if you will have it, is the solution: that things right and wrong cannot be judged apart from their surroundings, but we must ask whether they show symmetry and harmony where they stand, and we must consider the purpose to which they are put. Excellence and evil reside, not in the essence of qualities, but in their proportion and balance; good and bad are those mixtures that are properly or inordinately blended. In this world where justice must have bold defenders, of what use would be a man who was all love and no hate? Virtue is that which promotes the maximum efficiency, and a virtuous act is one that tends to a worthily effective result. If men would not kill how could they ever go to war?"

"Why should they go?" asked Revato.

"Ah, I perceive, you do not believe in war either. But suppose a country were invaded by a hostile army which was burning its cornfields and roofs and putting its inhabitants to the sword—would you not sympathize with the people in their resistance?"

"In such event," said Revato, "I should sympathize, though I might not approve. Likewise I would applaud, in emotion, though not in judgment, if an assassin were to strike down an oppressor. In no circumstances could I rightfully take life myself, yet there are conditions under which I might behold another taking life without an effort to prevent. If there were a cruel king accustomed to torture his subjects, it would not be for me to slay him; but if a rising river were about to engulf him, or if a tiger from the forest were about to seize him, I should feel no obligation to warn him of his danger. Similarly, if desperate men were about to destroy one who lived to inflict pain on others, I should look upon the slayers with gratification as on the elemental forces of Nature, which it was not my duty to oppose.—Nay, perhaps, I might remonstrate with them, for their own sakes, but I would not lift a finger to defeat their purpose."

"Your error," said Diomedes suavely, "lies in egotism." "If evil, as you regard it, has to be done in the world, why should you selfishly demand for yourself an immaculacy denied to your fellows?"

"I understand your words," answered Revato, "and they may be true. To you they seem clear; but they are like the entrance of a great cavern whose dark windings no man can fully explore."

"Furthermore, friend Revato," said Diomedes, "you err through looking at pain in a wrong light. It is the stuff whereof happiness is made. In travail are brought forth all noble creatures and in anguish are wrought all sublime works. I sometimes wonder if the marble from which we carve our columns and statues does not emit an inaudible groan at every blow of the mallet. But as I watch the workman with a well-aimed stroke drive his chisel into the firm stone, cutting a clear, fair, faultless line, I think: 'Truly a virtuous act.'"

"A virtuous act must be a kind act," said Revato.

Diomedes responded by leading him to an alcove where one of his sculptors was engaged in modeling an image of a deer impaled on the stake of a pitfall. Before him, as a pattern, in the same agonizing situation, like a bassia flower on its stalk, quivered a live doe.

Revato's impulse was to spring forward and remove it from the stake, but Diomedes, anticipating the effect of the spectacle upon him, held him firmly by the arm, saying:

"Tears and blood, my friend, are the sap of civilization's tree. What are the present pains of this creature compared with the exquisite and enobling feelings which her image, wrought out with all its ideal meanings, will bring to the multitudes who behold it for centuries to come?"

"Are you a god," cried Revato, "that you presume to know the future and, for the sake of a conjectural good, perpetrate certain cruelties?"

"Pooh! pooh! it is only an animal," said Diomedes.

Then commandingly, he led Revato away from the dumb martyr and back to the Buddho statue.

The dimming light and a sensation of impatience among the workmen now warned of the day's end. Before quitting for the night, attempt was made to shift the position of the Buddho image in order to get better light for future operations upon it.

As the men were moving the heavy marble block on its rollers, one of the helpers, a brown Pukkasa outcaste, awkwardly allowed it to slip, and it fell tilting against a column. In so doing, it caught the right arm of a Yonaka sculptor and held him painfully pinioned. The terrified native grasped a wooden rail and with frantic clumsiness endeavored to right the statue, impeding the efforts of everyone else.

"My poor Aristocrates!" exclaimed the architect. "The only carver at this end of the world who is able to realize my great conception! That arm is worth a kingdom."

Moving, as he spoke, calmly but quickly, Diomedes snatched a mallet and with a blow full in the face of the Pukkasa laid him bleeding on the floor. Then, with an adroitly placed lever, he pried up the statue and released the arm of Aristocrates. Most tenderly the architect examined and bandaged his skilled assistant's wound, which upon inspection promised only temporary disuse of the deft member. Meanwhile the other helpers, with sullen looks and mutterings, carried their comrade out of the Sālā."

Revato had witnessed the tragedy silently and with feelings which resolved themselves into a sick heaviness. It was all over in a moment, and then there was nothing that he could do. With expressive wordlessness, he turned his back on Diomedes and walked with downcast eyes toward the door of the chapel.

"What holy meditation engulfs the Layman Revato so deeply that he will not notice his friends?"

At the speaker Revato looked up, and Prote stood before him. Her face was lit by the fire of sunset but it seemed to be her spirit glowing through. Prote of the dawn had become Prote of the dusk.

"Has he not found cheerful companions this day?" she continued, filling up his void of answer.

"I have met two monks from my own city who were better than cheerful; they were wise."

"Pray, what wisdom did you learn from them?"

"I learned that womenkind are of two different sorts and that of one sort are they who make themselves familiar in their greetings to strangers."

Prote disdained to answer this remark except by a contemptuous snort; her experience in viewpoints enabled her to let it pass without resentment.

"You are welcome to the Pārāyana Sanghārāma," she continued, after a pause, magnanimously.

THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS
Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

DELVE INTO FANTASY, MAGIC, MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

Forgotten Books'
Full Membership gives
access to 797,885 ancient
and modern, fiction and
non-fiction books.

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies

CHAPTER VII

EARTH

I will sing of the Earth, All-Mother, eldest among the Immortals,
Who all that fare on the ground, in the sea or the volatile airways
Nourisheth well for their need and filleth with food from her
storehouse.

Joyful by thee are men in their offspring and happy in harvests—
Guardian of life till thou takest away the boon thou hast given.
Happy the sons whom thy favor hath guerdoned with manifold
riches,

Many which grow in their fields, many which graze on their
meadows.

Govern they well in the town, habitation of exquisite women,
Laden with honors and wealth but light in the sports of their
children.

Gaily their girls bedecked on the floreal swards go dancing.
Such are the sons of thy favor whom ageless Immortals call
Mother.

Whatso the song I be singing, still may I keep thee in memory.

WATER

It was Prote, the Yonakī, who as well as she might
in the soft oozing Pālī, which cleaves to the tongue,
interpreted to Revato this vivacious hymn of her
race.

He had met her at Gotamo's Ferry that morning
as she was rowed from the Pārāyana island by the
Yonaka servant in the marvelous little boat whose
emblem was the Water Nāgī.

"Kuhing yāsi king etang? Where are you going?"
she had asked him.

"I am looking for my dog, who has run away from
me," Revato had answered.

"This is not the place to find him," she retorted
pertly. "I doubt that you are very anxious about
it, anyway."

"I assure you that I am," he insisted with stupid
hypocrisy.

"I have a fondness for dogs, too," said Prote
relenting. "They are so susceptible of culture; they
take such an appreciative interest in everything
that goes on."

"When I was a child," remarked Revato, encour-
aged, "I loved them most for the sport of hunting
fleas in their hair. It is so exciting to discover the
slippery little brown insects and pursue them from
place to place in the furry jungle, losing track of
them at times and then, by a judicious movement
in advance, cutting off their retreat. And when
you have them captured, what a delightful little snap
they give as they burst between your thumb nails!
Yes, I confess that I enjoyed this wicked practice
when I was a child. Children are by nature cruel,
no doubt because of their nearness to the savage or
the wild beast which they have been in former
births. It is surprising how our dispositions change
with years. Not since long ago could I have brought
myself to hunt or injure any living creature. But I
err in speaking of beasts as characteristically cruel,
since they kill for necessary food and to defend them-

selves, whereas man often kills and maims from
sheer wantonness. Few men, moreover, are so altru-
istic as most dogs."

"Did you ever hear of Odysseus' dog," asked
Prote, "which died from joy for him when he returned
home to Ithaca after twenty years' war and wander-
ing? Had that creature lived, I am sure that it would
have followed its restless master on that new and last
voyage which he made out into the unknown West.
For you know that to Odysseus there was no repose
in the fulfilment of his life's labors but only a yearn-
ing after a still worthier attainment that lay beyond."

"Like the sons of Pāndu in the story of the Great
Bharato which the Brahmins tell," said Revato.
"Have you heard how they forsook the country whose
throne they had reclaimed, finding that therein was
no abiding satisfaction? How they set forth on foot,
to cross Himavanta and the waterless desert in
search for Indo's heaven? And how, one by one,
they fell in the sand till only the leader and the dog
kept on? And then how the master refused to enter
Paradise if his brute follower must remain behind?
This, I hold to be a rarer example of fidelity than
yours of the dog which died for joy, because the
parties were reversed."

"On my way to Jambudīpa," replied Prote, "I
passed through the city which Alexander named for
his dog Peritas."

They were reaching the limit of dog stories by this
time but Revato thought to mention Suko's white
terrier which sat upon its bench, eating from a plate,
and barked at Buddho. The Blessed One explained
that excessive riches in a former life had brought
this animal to its present low estate, whereupon the
creature went moping.

"What a foolish tale!" exclaimed Prote. "But
tell me, Layman Revato, what is your dog's name?"

"He is a melancholy being who followed me on a
terrible occasion, and I call him Dukkho, Anguish."

"By all means then, do not try to find him. Come
rather with me and enter the 'Nereid,' my boat,
while Nereus, the oarsman, propels us on a little
pleasure voyage where the banks are green."

"What will the people say of us!" exclaimed
Revato, aghast.

"If neither Helen or Penelope would have said
aught unkind, I shall not trouble myself about
barbarians," retorted Prote.

Accordingly, they arranged themselves in the skiff,
Prote on the stern thwart with her maid, Iasis,
holding to shade her a white native parasol, while
Nereus rowed amidships and Revato sat in the bow
to balance. It was an easy drift down-stream on
the headstrong Gangā nadī. Lest they should
throw too great a burden on the return trip, they

branched off into the affluent Hiraññabāhu—the Golden Armed—whose ripples sparkled aureate-red with the soils which it had drained. For a long time they were passing the high, far-stretching, many-towered city wall, the vast palace group, the tall monolithic pillars and the massive thūpas, by which Revato had come on his night arrival at Pātaliputta.

“The people already say that these gigantic piles must have been heaped up by yakkhas—genii,” observed Revato. “Have you in Yonaloka anything to compare with them?”

“Anything in Ionian land to compare with the work of barbarians!” sneered Prote; but she added, “If crude and grotesque, they are at least praise-worthy for bigness. A story has reached the Aegean shore, that your Pātaliputta is the greatest work of Herakles.”

“Who was Herakles and what was he like?” Revato asked her.

“What was Herakles like?” echoed Prote. “Oh, he was like the Architect Diomedes.”

Finally, after skirting the town palisade for almost a yojana—seven miles—they crept out in the open country where the banks of the stream grew fair to behold.

Along the margin, with its rising hollow bubbles, grew hollow reeds suggestive to Revato of human life and to Prote of Pan flutes; while over them hung an indescribable medley of branch and creeper in the profusion of tropical autumn. Sometimes the shores opened up into pleasant groves containing all manner of trees: the luscious amba, jambu and banana; the flowering mandārava; the red-blossoming palāsa or phandana; the stately tāla, fan palm; the fragrant candana and campaka; the useful sāka, teak; and one bend in the shore disclosed a forest of the segregarious strong sāla with its green-blue bark and lustrous white leaves. Occasionally would appear a massive Nigrodha, banyan, spreading out with his arched avenues of down-dropped saplings, while planted close beside him grew his consort, the As-sattha, Buddho’s Wisdom Tree, with her delicate, quivering, sparkling foliage.

Beneath the trees strutted sundry mayūras, peacocks, spreading wide their plumage to display those beauty spots which to Revato’s instructed fancy were candakas, full moon shapes, but which Prote explained as the eyes of earth-born Argos, implanted there by Hera. All lovely things, the layman warned her, were of the earth, earthy.

●
“Attend the strident peacocks while they spring,
With gaudy crest and beautiful dark wing;
In blatant voice they cry.
Like them this great bright earth with grass bedecked,
Its glancing waters, fleecy clusters flecked
On all-pervading sky.”

Often the branches held straw baskets placed by the villagers as shelter for birds; or there were seen lying bali oblations of food, tokens of a simple ritual devotion to the rukkhadevatā, the nymphean denizens of the trees.

Buddho, by his commandments, had protected vegetation from wanton destruction because it was food for sentient creatures, but his simple disciples found in the still life of the woodland other grounds for respect, investing it with mysteries, hoary by antiquity as the doting old religion which the Enlightened One had confuted with scorn.

His countrymen’s childish superstitions put Revato on the apologetic to Prote—apology, it must be admitted, rather to save himself by inviting her derision of them. She, however, saw no reason for contempt, but was interested in their simple druidism and encouraged him to tell her stories about the native dryads, the rukkhadevatā.

A sacred mukkhaka tree, as he related, had, in a past eternity, been selected by carpenters for lumber, but Bodhisatto, shaped as a chameleon, gnawed holes in it which made it appear rotten, thus saving the indwelling fairy and her children.

Bodhisatto himself was once a sprite in a sāla forest of Himavanta and he advised his kinsfolk to inhabit trees that stood close together; some, however, neglecting his counsel, chose great solitary trees in the populated open and were destroyed by their unsupported fall in a storm.

The denizen of a pucimanda or nimba tree under which a robber had taken refuge warned him away lest if he were captured there, a stake on which to impale him should be cut from the tree, to its destruction.

In a nigrodha lived a dryad to whom the squire of a little village offered a sacrifice of slain creatures, that he might obtain release from a vow; but this, the angel told him, was not the way to ensure the true Release.

Villagers, at a festival, were offering to their tree nymphs garlands, odors, perfumes and cakes, but one poor man, bringing to a castor-oil tree only a tiny husk loaf and some water, feared that the deity would disdain it and concluded to eat it himself. “Why rob me of my portion?” she asked him, and favored him by showing where, buried around the trunk, were pots of gold neck to neck.

All these little histories dated from the ages of the past, but even in modern times, it was said, the tree spirits sometimes manifested their presence to mankind. When the eloquent nun Sukkā, a disciple of the Buddho, was dwelling in her hermitage near Rājagaha, a rukkhadevatā domiciled near her accustomed walk, upon overhearing her words, quitted the tree and entering the town, summoned all men to come and learn from Sukkā.

Sylvan fantasies such as these had indeed for Revato a certain seriousness, because they suggested the extent and community of life in which lay a great mystery. Still he placed so little credence in them that he was astonished to find Prote attending to them as one who believed them. They brought to her mind, moreover, arboreal legends from her own land, which were dear to her and very real. The quiet life of the trees, she said, was the animation of

immortal gods who might be drawn into communion through their particular forest symbols. Thus, the stout oak was upheld by the Sky Father, the laurel had been planted by him who crowns the Muses, among the cultured olive trees dwelt the Wise and Skillful Goddess, while in the demure myrtle lurked the coy Lady of Love. In Prote's country the river banks were lined with tall, melancholy poplars, because they grew so along the stream of the Under World, where the daughter of Demeter had been led as a captive bride.

Yes, and many of these trees, generically or individually, held their tragic histories of life human or semi-divine, for they were men or women transformed into such shapes in perpetual retribution or memorial. So Prote went on to tell Revato of Daphne who, to hide from Apollo, was changed into a laurel, her arms its limbs, her hair its leaves; of Cyparissus who, bewailing a sacred stag which his dart had pierced, became a cypress tree that he might mourn forever; of Phillis who, self-hanged through the fickleness of Demophon, revived as an almond tree; of the shepherd Attis who was saved from vengeance for his aspiration to a princess by metamorphosis into a pine; of another shepherd who, mocking and terrifying the nymphs in their haunts, was transfixed as the bitter wild olive; how Clymene's daughters, lamenting their brother Phaeton, who had been hurled into Eridamus, remained standing on its banks as poplars; how Rhoeus, saving an oak tree, won in love its hamadryad but lost her by his inconstancy and his thoughtless injury of her messenger, the bee; how Pyramus, in mistaken grief over Thisbe's lion-rent veil, purpled with his ground-going life-blood the fruit of the mulberry, and how Thisbe, as she slew herself for him, turned it by her prayers to a funereal black.

At one point on the bank of the stream a column of smoke was ascending and, on coming nearer, the boat party passed a group of Brahmins putting to death a goat in sacrifice to their cruel devas. Perhaps it was a feast for departed kinsmen, or perchance to appease the consciences of the wealthy living.

"To save a life," remarked Revato, "would do more good than to destroy a thousand."

"You are ignorant," answered Prote, "of the wisdom of the gods, whose will it is that we appeal to them by such means. Are you and I to set our commonplace shrewdness above the mysteries of the Immortals? And if a friend from whom we had received immeasurable kindness all our lives were to come to our house as a guest, should we not esteem it inhospitable, to say the least, if we refused him a banquet? Ah, if you could only know the sacred grandeur amid which we make our offerings to Zeus and to Apollo, you would be lifted where the value of a goat's life is nothing to be considered."

In another sheltered spot, some men of the lowest class were watching a ram fight and prodding on the two staggering, blood-blinded brutes.

"Another unlawful cruelty," Revato observed. "In the old days there used to be fights of elephants and all sorts of animals. There were races between them too, which, if less cruel, were more foolish—between mixed teams of horses and oxen, for example."

Prote did not answer his remark; she was too much interested in looking at the duel of the rams. Much to his disgust, she commanded Nereus to slacken on the oars until it should be assured whether the white one or the black one would come out victor.

LAND

After they had witnessed the sickening finish and pulled on some distance further, Prote thought they had gone far enough, so the party landed near a highway bridge where stood a solitary rest house in the cool of some simbalī, silk-cotton trees, whose shadows on the grass looked black against the sunlight that sifted down through their leaves.

There was a sugar factory nearby and beside it men were mixing flour and cane dust with the molasses. Prote commanded Revato to fetch her some of this pasty compound, but it failed to please her taste and she bestowed it upon Iasis.

Revato's eye now fell upon a basket fish trap fastened in the river, and after investigation he set free its captive inmates. "How I envy them their freedom!" he remarked.

"Is stealing other men's fishes your idea of honesty?" inquired Prote.

"To liberate them is right if done from a motive of compassion," he replied. "Buddho himself released an ensnared deer. Fortunately this fish trap is a painless one; but have you ever thought of the pitfalls of sharp stakes, and the like, on which, in every forest, numberless innocent animals are caused to suffer for days, condemned to a death such as we shudder to inflict on robbers and men slayers? When I was a very young lad I made a gin which I set for a rat, and promptly forgot it. Two or three days later I found it with the poor creature caught by its leg, which, under the excruciating pressure, had withered and dried while I was taking my careless ease. Remorse has followed me ever since."

They now refreshed themselves at a wayfarer's well and plucked fruit from a public amba tree. One particular mango coveted by Prote defied all efforts at its capture.

"Why is your heart set upon that special fruit?" Revato asked her.

"Because it is like one you know, sir," she answered.

"Far on the branch swings a sweet fruit
Close to the end.
Gatherers passed, missing to find—
Missing it not—
Nay, for it hung quite out of reach."

It was past mid-day, the hot hour when Nature rested. The bee slept in the hollow chamber of the

In the third part of the pageant the religious and academic aspects of the thirteenth century find their representation in scenes where Roger Bacon holds the center of the stage. Had men been asked in Bacon's time to name the greatest figure in the learned world they would not have mentioned the English friar. They would have pointed to Albert the Great, or to Thomas Aquinas.

It is Thomas, therefore, greatest of the Schoolmen, the recognized philosopher of the Roman Church, who speaks the prologue to the scenes he yields to Bacon. His talent was early apparent in Italy, his home-land; it was disciplined under Albert the Great in Cologne and Paris; it came to its full manifestation in the "Summa" it created for all the world. As a teacher, Thomas not only convinced his hearers, but he stirred them as well. As a writer, he presented the articles of his faith, in question and answer, reasoned with all the skill and rigor of the logic of deduction, yet he disguised none of the difficulties which its enemies might suggest; but he had such command of the teachings of the ancients and of his contemporaries, and so fused them with the spark of his own genius that he overcame his critics, and left behind him the "final construction of the mediaeval Christian scheme."

PART III

PROLOGUE

THOMAS AQUINAS

Of those who in a troubled age were caught
Between two currents of contending truth,
I was the reconciler. One way the Church
Drew us, the faith delivered to the saints,
And one way drove the mind of Aristotle.

Hither by hands Arabian—Avicenna,
Averroës,—came his philosophy,
A Grecian gift, pleasant and perilous. Then
Young Abelard, the questioner, who would gauge
By reason the furthest mysteries of heaven,
Not in a glass darkly, but face to face
Daring to look on God. That humble man,
Peter the Lombard, for a widow's mite
Then gave to Holy Church the Sentences,
To lay the reckless seas Abelard raised.
Albert the Great, that strong intelligence,
My master, then arose, who greatly toiled
To show truth single in the universe,
And the Philosopher, where true at all,
One with the Fathers and with Holy Writ.
His task I finished, Thomas of Aquino,
And wed indissolubly our ancient faith
Forever with her ancient enemy.

I showed the power of reason—not, like Abelard,
Making presumptuous mockery of heaven,
But in its realm; and where the borders lie
I showed, between what man himself can know,
And what is knowable, but not by man,
And what no man discovers, but receives
From Power, Wisdom, Love, which three God is.

Nature and God make nothing vain; all light
Is to be walked in. Yet illusion oft
This sin-enchanted world deceives; not all
That shining seems, is light. And oft our wills
Are partisan, less loyal to the truth
Than to its radiant ministers. Foothills
Of reason we can climb, therefrom discern
Mountains unclimbed, and further heights therefrom
Argue, though not discerned. Reason alone
Walks lowly; winged with faith, it guides toward heaven.

See now a man whose reason guides toward earth,
And truth he yearns to worship in this world.

(Exit)

folly to set store by them. Did you never hear the song of the beautiful nun Khemā? Listen then:

“Thou art youthful and fair; I likewise am young and for pleasures.
Khemā, come joy to the five-fold musical measures.”

“There is nothing,” she said, “for this pestilent carcass but spurning.
When I think how it rots, my heart is assuaged from its yearning.”

“Like a burrowing dart, like a poignard, reeking and frightful,
Such is life-love to me, and I loathe what for thee is delightful.

“Now ruined is pleasure, the stronghold of Dark is destroyed.
O Sinful, O Death, be it known thy dominion is void.”

“You reach your conclusions by an ill road,” retorted Prote, “and it is a way which I decline to travel. Let us forswear melancholy themes. There was once a man in my country who had some of your gloomy notions, and even though they were tainted with no such loathsomeness, but were quite pleasantly expressed, the people found that he was a menace to society, he was corrupting the youth of the city; so they put him out of the way.”

“What harm did they see in him?”

“He was personally ugly, which was the lesser grievance. His views were not wholly to be condemned, for they showed genius, and they performed the good office of all dark things, in furnishing a background for the bright. Nevertheless they were untrue.”

“In what way?”

“They marred the symmetry of our exquisite life and religion.”

“You must,” said Revato, “pardon my amazement at your philosophy, that character is moulded by appearance.”

“The question is not of externals,” replied Prote; “it is the entire substance of which the outside is a part. Look at me!”

She turned toward him her fair glowing face, set off by a garland of wild flowers which she had just been weaving.

“What is that you have on?” asked he. “Ah, a vajjhamālā, a wreath, such as they place on a felon’s head before he dies.”

“Let that be so,” she retorted, “but dare you say I am not lovely?”

“Lovely as the daughters of Māro, god of death; as the nymphs of the Tusita heaven.”

“And dare you tell me that this beauty is physical only, and does not pervade my whole nature?”

“Your whole nature it is, Prote, which must one day be dissolved, and who knows in what shape you will be reborn?”

“I know,” she retorted, “that if I am reborn I shall be reborn beautiful.”

“Do you remember, Prote, that in the picture gallery of the Jātaka stories, on the wall of the sālā, there is one which shows a monk plucking a lotus flower?”

“I remember it,” said Prote, “but I have never found out the moral of the fable.”

“That bhikkhu,” Revato explained, “was sunken in self-love, as you are, and for his sake Bhagavā made the lotus flower to appear. While he gazed upon it the petals fell off, it faded and withered away as every body must fade and wither. Then the Master said:

“Pluck out self-love as with your hand you pluck
The autumn water lily; set your heart
On nothing but the perfect Path of Peace
And that Nibbāna which the Buddho taught.”

With Revato’s insistent reversion to the hereafter of existence, Prote’s expression reacted to the intrusion of sinister thoughts.

“Ah, wretched Thyrsis, what avail thy sighs?” she cried, and murmured to her lute a little threnody:

“How swiftly mortal pleasure
Attains its ripe fruition,
And swiftly too is driven
On fate’s unpitying gales!

“One fleeting day we linger,
Perchance to ask, what are we?
And wonder what we are not,
For man is but a shade.

“Yet while god-given splendor
O’erspreads mine earthly pathway,
The light of life attends me
And sweet my tarrying here.”

“Do you flatter yourself that you can alter facts by refusing to look at them?” asked Revato, surlily. Her reply came as another and more cheerful song:

“What is thy tenure, Cicada,
Insanguinate, fleshless, ephemeral?
Glad yet thou art, by the dew-drops
Drunken, presager of Summer;
Dear to the tillers and Muses,
Dearer to other cicadas.
Phoebus hath formed thee for chirping,
And Earth, who hath cast thee so lately,
Giveth all things for thy pleasure
That are borne by the fields and the seasons.
Age cannot burden thy spirit,
But, loving and richly possessing
The world that is thine by thy nature,
In wisdom thou art an Immortal.”

MAJESTY

A splashing among the reeds at the water’s edge now diverted their attention, and to learn its cause Revato turned for a few steps into the underbrush.

“Come back, come back, there may be snakes!” cried Prote, and she turned white as a kanikāra flower in token of the dread wherewith her race had regarded the footless inhabitants of Bhārata Khanda since the days of the Macedonian invaders.

Out upon the path beside the highway, hopped a frog whose hind leg had been mangled by the water turtle which caused the splashing.

“Hideous creature,” gasped Prote.

“No more hideous than you and I were when we were as low on the staircase as he is now,” replied Revato.

"He is hideous," continued Prote, "not because he is a frog, but because he is no longer a perfect frog. I won't have him in my sight. Adhamo miga-jātānang, meanest of animals! Gacchāhi, gacchāhi—Get away with you! Sūsū! Hūhung!" she hissed and grunted, displaying her proficiency in the native language of "shooing" away animals.

She made a thrust with her foot to push the wounded creature back into the bushes. So clearly as a frog might, it gave utterance to its additional anguish.

"Aho pāpā—Oh wicked woman!" cried Revato, "have you none of your sex's pity! I could tell you of a mother in Giribbaja who, when her child was bitten by a poor scorpion, carried the brute tenderly out of the house—for it knew no better."

Prote laughed prettily. "I fear this frog is not so innocent," she said. "He is no better than those churls who, changed into frogs, dwell forever in a Lycian pool because they insultingly denied drink to Leto when with her children she fled from Hera."

"It stands to reason," answered Revato, "that every creature of mean estate has done something to bring him there. But we should forget their past and think only of their present forlorn condition. When Bodhisatto rescued from a flooded river a rat, a snake, a parrot and a prince, and warmed them by a fire in his hut, it was the rat which he comforted first, as being the weakest."

While they were talking, the frog had continued to evidence its sufferings.

"I will kill it to put it out of its pain," said Revato impulsively, and he sought for a mercifully heavy club.

"Have you more consideration for a frog's feelings than for a woman's?" asked Prote pettishly.

Revato hesitated, not on her account, but from realization that he was about to commit a great sin under the commandments of his religion. A short, but fierce, conflict took place in his mind between his bold intellect, which counseled him that death would be kind, and the traditionalism of his conscience by which deprivation of any life was forbidden. The latter control soon became ascendant, since here, as usual, he had courage to form a private judgment but not to act upon it. So he stood pitying the creature but doing nothing. Then a gust of strong feeling rushed through him and he thought: "I will do the humane deed of the moment, law, religion and fate to the contrary notwithstanding." So he picked up the stick that he had dropped, but before he could use it, his mind was penetrated by a new reflection: "After all, the holy law is right in weighing ultimate against proximate considerations. If I kill the frog, it will not end him, but merely transfer him to some other state, where he is likely to be no better off than he is now, perhaps far worse. His sufferings in the long run will not be lessened a particle, and I shall have done a bad deed to no purpose; the law is right because it is founded on reason."

What finally would have been the fate of the frog from Revato's hand was left undecided, for just then a great procession appeared down the highway. As it approached the bridge, it resolved to view as a troop of horses, followed by elephants with their riders under high canopies adorned with the peacock symbol of the dynasty. Both Revato and Prote recognized it as a royal progress.

Many nobles in the train were tricked out with all imaginable finery, chariot rugs, fans of buffalo tails, umbrellas, embroidered slippers, gold-encrusted canes, bracelets, diadems and other jewelry. To set round their magnificence there were no hump-backed dwarfs nor captives of war; there came, however, a band of savage hill-tribe men, not with the air of slaves, but with willing movements and happy faces. As the rear of the procession drew nigh, were heard the cheers of "Sādhu! Sādhu!" from stragglers who followed it. But the march was attended by no sound of war drums, for in their stead the Law of Righteousness reverberated.

Toward the end of the line, came a chariot drawn by milk-white horses, old and fat and lazy, and allowed to make the pace for the whole cavalcade. This vehicle was conspicuous for its shabbiness compared with the gilded turnouts before and behind. It was the hunting car of King Asoko, in which, so many years before, he had followed the chase to watch the dying agonies of nervous wild creatures.

That now purified conveyance rolled along empty. Behind it, with his bare, shaven head shielded from the mid-day sun by a coarse palm-leaf shade carried in his own hand, trudged an old, worn-faced man clad only in the three-fold yellow robes and girdle of the ascetic brotherhood. This was the God-Beloved, Gracious Asoko, Mahārājā over the vast territories of the Ariyas!

The two by-standers assumed respectful attitudes as the chariot passed, but its follower's eyes were submissive to thoughts that abode while his body wandered. His ear nevertheless was open to the feeblest petition of those who needed his arm to save.

A faint, woeful croak went up from the roadside and his glance fell upon the wounded frog. Directing the driver of his empty car to halt, he stepped down upon the path and lifted the little animal in a corner of his outer garment.

"Hambho! King nu kho ettha kāranang—How now! what can be the cause of this?" he inquired searchingly of Revato.

"It was committed by a tortoise, Great King, for what motive I do not know."

"Let us rejoice that none wiser than he hath this crime to answer for," rejoined Piyadassi. "Poor little friend," he added addressing his living burden, "thine enemy shall have his recompense one day but thou must bear him no ill will. Be patient and I will send for an unguent which may afford thee some relief."

By this time Piyadassi had recognized Revato and also Prote, both of whom, in their respective

Get Smart

Over 2,000 years of
human knowledge in
797,885 volumes

Instant access
\$8.99/month

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies



After the rear guard, which like all the rest of the company except Dasaratho, was unarmed, followed a rabble of spectators and beggars, lay and clerical. Among the latter Revato espied Dīgho and Nāthaputto, the two Nigantha yatis with whom we had fraternized and quarreled on the road from Rājagaha. They failed to notice him, although they passed so near that he could overhear Nāthaputto remark of some unnamed person:

"He'll soon come to his own."

While Asoko was performing his devotions, a grand official on an elephant had greeted Prote familiarly and, calling her to his side, engaged her in conversation which Revato did not hear. He noticed, however, the arch glances she turned toward him and the backward leer he flung at her as the procession moved on.

"Who was the gentleman that you spoke to?" asked Revato of Prote after the march had passed.

"Did you not know him? That was the Dhammahāmatṭa, The High Minister of Religion."

"You and he seem to be good friends."

"He controls the funds for ecclesiastical architecture," she answered cannily.

"A sad sight we have witnessed," remarked Prote as they floated down the Hiraññabāhu river toward home. "It is as if the Temple of All Gods in Athens were given over to bats and crawling lizards."

"If the sight of Piyadassi's old age so distresses you," answered Revato, "you must admit that life is, after all, a bauble."

The sight of old age is nothing," she rejoined. "A slave, a goat, or a hen may grow old. We care naught for that, but we deplore to see the lofty abased, the powerful paralyzed, the majestic made ridiculous."

"I fail to perceive the ludicrous side," answered Revato. "And as to power, there is none like that of the mind under a calm exterior. One of the old arahats said, 'By will I could cause a mad elephant to breathe not even to a measure of a blade of kusa grass.' Think how Piyadassi has quieted the furious elephant herd of mankind."

"Layman Revato," said Prote soberly, "I have been disposed to make you my friend, for I have felt that there was a great power in you which needs only a proper application. But let me say frankly that I am beginning to look upon you with contempt. The men whom we honor are not those that chatter like parrots, submit like cattle or squeal at pain like puppies, but those who see before them a goal and reach it. Some cross shadowy seas, some take strong cities; others whose skilful hand Hephaistos and Pallas Athene have instructed, pour gold around silver and achieve beautiful works. Each trains to the utmost every faculty that can serve him, and then resolutely, in spite of all obstacles, he presses forward to the end. The proof of my words is our civilization; the example nearest to hand is the architect Diomedes."

Her rebuke hurt him sorely but he understood that it was meant rather as a spur than as a dagger. So it proved, for she quickly resumed her gracious demeanor and was aimiable as ever during the remainder of the voyage to Gotamo's Ferry.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOUSE OF DIOMEDES

HE THAT WAVERETH

Antinomianism, like the laurel sacred to Æsculapius, is a deadly poison, but after the nature of pernicious drugs, if taken by small doses, in proper cases, it proves a salutary tonic. However the philosophy of "beyond good and evil" may be ambrosial food for *Tò Evs*, it is no pabulum for angels nor men unless, under peculiar conditions, most cautiously administered.

How the teaching to common people of superiority to moral law will cast them down to lowest depravity, was witnessed by both of those audaciously speculating races who met at Pātaliputta in Revato's time. Among the Ariyas in their Brāhmanical, not Buddhist, sects, mystical sages reached out for a God so infinite as to be unlimited even by righteousness, and when this notion trickled down to the ignorant masses, it inoculated them with the venom of that moral plague with which India is still putrid.

The lore of Hellas also was threaded with doctrines of irresponsibility, whether in the examples of the old mythology in the skeptical and pleasurable advisements of the Heracliteans that "good and bad are the same, to God all things are fair and just," or in the sane, prudential counsels of the Peripatetics. Whichever of these was the most efficient cause of the taint, it had broken out vilely on the fairness of that incomparable civilization.

But to natures like Revato's, where perverse conscientiousness has become a fever, a prescription of license may act with cooling and clarifying potency. Cajolment of pleasure, remittal or obscuration of consequences, may release the compressed energies of the mind to an elastic upspring, an *abandon* strong for happy achievement.

Somewhat such a liberation he was now experiencing, albeit reservation must be made of the questions whether in his case the stimulant was rightly measured and whether likely to have permanent

effect; whether the morbid factor in his make-up was—to use a cant medical term—functional, or organic and incapable of being eradicated; whether, indeed, it was possible for him to be other than a shuttlecock of reactions between those opposite elements in his nature, the perennial melancholy and the evanescent joy.

His association with the Yonas had intoxicated him as if by some drug which clarifies the mind for eager endeavor, confusing only malevolent ideas. Or it was

“Like the full moon after sunseting,
Rising rose-fingered and magical—
Ancient lights merged in effulgency
Starry eyes blurred to obscurity
Vague with salt ocean and pasturage,
Whereon dream-tinted, indefinite
Roses wild-nurtured, with anthriscas,
Clover blooms, honey-secretory
Drink the earth dewes to their quickening.”

Thus the sinister logic of duty was confuted in the only way that he could confute it—by forgetfulness. A diverting absorption of interest enabled him, when old notions recurred, to slur them over and avoid transfixation of their fatal details. Unhindered by particulars, he could contrast the life purposes of Ariya and Yonaka, making himself almost believe that he had found a worthy relief from Buddhist negations in Hellenic affirmations. His mind miniaturized the world's battleground of thought whereon are opposingly aligned the East and the West, the forces of asceticism and aestheticism, of self-repression and self-expression, of solidarity and individuality, of renunciation and realization, of the will to refrain and the will to act, of life for the future and life in the present.

What a newness of heart suffused him with this perfectly novel conception—the liberality, the tolerance of man's divine guardians, their will that we should be happy, their good-humored short-sightedness when sometimes we overstep the mark!

If results signified, Prote's careless way must be better than his own punctilious one, for while he became deeper entangled in the jungle, she bounded in the grassy open and sang the praises of those who did great beautiful deeds.

Were not also the pitying acts of Asoko great beautiful deeds? Yes, but they were of the sort to which Revato's mind was habituated and which were cognate with his old ill-working system, whereas the accomplishments of Diomedes inspired him by their freshness.

Revato was not insensitive to that Grecian vein of cruelty, whereof had he not already witnessed harrowing exhibitions? But the effect of these upon him was other than it would have been had they occurred less early in his new experience. They might have sufficed to shatter a favorable opinion already crystallized, but they could be accommodated by opinions that were still liquid. When we know the worst, it is easier to appreciate the best.

Doubtless, also, there was in Revato's attitude a tinge of selfishness which disposed him to condone unkindness to others in those who were kind to him.

It would be hypocritical folly to dissemble that Revato was influenced most of all by Prote's personality. Much as he might pretend to abstractions, and much of truth as there might be in the pretence, the strongest appeal was the concrete one of humanity. The best of us are materially definite in our susceptibilities and are naïvely controlled by sensuous *argumenta ad hominum*. A cool, caressing air on the cheek or a dry one in the lungs will make for us the happy destiny of all worlds. So, individual gladness in Prote's loveliness no doubt did more to impel Revato's philosophical handsprings than any power of reason.

Nevertheless, Revato's lifelong preoccupations were still so mighty as almost to subjugate human trivialities and enslave the particular to the general.

Eagerly he gave himself to the investigation of Hellenism as an emancipating power, suspecting that the examples he had already seen were only slight *indicia* of the magnificent whole. He fell to hoping also that it enshrouded a secret which he might discover—a secret which would reconcile incompatible contraries—the free, glad life with the life and hereafter of righteousness.

If not this yearned-for secret, at least a larger knowledge of Grecian culture now directly awaited him in his arranged-for visit at the house of Diomedes.

His invitation for the third day of the bright pakka, or fortnight, of the month Māgasira, was still outstanding and the time was drawing near. The definiteness thereof began to strike him with terror.

It was one thing to fall in company by Prote by chance—albeit a favored chance—and succumb to the delightful confusion of the interview; it was quite another matter to make such a meeting by set arrangement, with intervening days for reconsideration. The real excitant of these conscience pangs was his sense of the wrong for him of association with the Yonakī girl; the formal reason that he gave himself for his scruple was his vow or *quasi-vow*, made on the morning when first he met her. Had he not promised himself to avoid her, to abstain from speech with her and to guard his heart well if she should speak to him? All these three fortresses of conduct he had betrayed again and again. To surrender the first two with fresh resolves to hold the third was hardly worthy the name of self-deception, yet this poor artifice he employed upon himself repeatedly after it had been discredited by the event. Revato did not however attempt to override his “vow” merely by virtue of the subsequent acceptance of Diomedes' invitation, for he was too searching a moralist to hold that a duty may be shirked by incurring a subsequent contrary obligation.

With vain ingenuity of argument, Revato offered himself most diverse reasons for the contemplated

visit. Sometimes he would make believe that he might, by presentation of Buddho's truth, win the Yonas from the errors of their ways; he imagined himself laying this view of the case before Bhāradvājo and the old samana's rejoinder that it was his duty to seek every opportunity for converting an unbeliever. Does the heart ever outgrow its yearning for that license which consists in shifting responsibility upon some tolerant human authority?

With less insincerity, Revato pictured the necessity of company with Diomedes in order to be further initiated into Yonaka mysteries. He had already ventured too far to regain his old footing; he must go on and learn the whole truth, casting himself upon the grace of the new wisdom to sustain him in its own way.

The unrest into which this battle between duty and inclination threw him so occupied his mind as to leave no room for a return, at that time, of the old struggle regarding his tax collectorship. While to him the sanction of a pledge made in his own mind was far weaker than an obligation growing out of an evil course of conduct damaging to others, and therefore this new difficulty should seem less acute than the old one, still the present question was nearer, perhaps dearer to him, and so acquired a temporary paramountcy. If, therefore, the quietude of his old troubles was in part attributable to buoyancy of mind, it was also due to these later perplexities, to which even the factors of his emancipation gave rise. Hardly can more than one great woe occupy the mind at a given time. The coming of a new one quiets the old one as an ache in a new part of the body relieves a former one somewhere else. The difficulty on which attention is fixed appears more serious than a graver one that is temporarily neglected.

As nearer drew the day for the visit, Revato's misgivings increased until, in the lucubrations of the sleepless night before it, he made an insincere resolve to absent himself. Daylight, however, brought the courage, true or false, of a different purpose. When the fateful hour arrived, he took the bit between his teeth and dashed through every ethical objection.

FIRE

This day on which Revato betook himself to Diomedes' house was a festival of the Yonas when the workmen were relieved from their toils in the new sanghārāma. But the architect, who would not absent himself from his idolized building for an entire day, had named an afternoon hour when he should have returned from the island. The appointed time fell in the midst of a heavy, cold, rain storm. The house, which Revato had passed more than once before, stood a long distance east of his lodging, being situated north of the Market Street, about midway to the riverside. It had been built by its occupant according to his own ideas and looked from the outside, in every way, different from the usual high, narrow ornate dwellings of the city.

Separated from the street by a narrow yard, the wide, massive, plastered front wall of the building, only one story high, was blankly plain except for the door, two small windows and a niche containing a woman's helmeted head. On the door also was a bronze lion head holding in its mouth a heavy ring whereby visitors might make known their presence. Revato lifted the ring and let it drop back with a sharp, metallic rap.

The door was opened by a native servant, so that Revato was saved the trouble he had apprehended of making himself intelligible. He had been expected; would he come through into the aula?

On entering, Revato found himself in a narrow hall on one side of which seemed to be the porter's lodge, while the pervasive odor of a stable aroused his suspicions of the other. At the rear, the hall debouched into a court situated not unlike those of native mansions, but different in design. A colonade ran around it and about a central fountain grew plants of unknown species. They now dripped with rain as well as spray. While the attendant was hesitating whether to deposit him upon one of the chairs of this paradise or consign him to some reception room, Prote herself emerged from a passageway on the further side of the court and came to welcome him. This might or might not have been according to the proprieties of her nation, but for her it was entirely fitting. She bade him into a parlor opening from the court pending the appearance of her father who was delayed on his return from the island.

The storm had cast such a wintry chill upon the house that Prote called for a brazier of coals, and, quickly dissatisfied with their sole effect, had them applied to kindle a well-prepared pile of dry wood on a fire-place of the apartment. The flames quickly burst out and cheered the twilight of the room.

"Did you ever see a hearth-stone before?" she asked Revato. "This is the way we console ourselves through the winters in my island home. There snow comes down upon us from the dull mountains into the frosty brown valley while we look upon a ragged, terrifying sea."

"In my home among the hills," he answered, "the nights are sometimes so cool that we shiver unless we have a fire. Did you ever reflect," he continued, "how two branches rubbing may start a blaze, but the whole forest cannot extinguish it? And, Prote, as I sit here before these pleasant flames my heart condemns me for I think of the Blessed One's rejoinder in the herdsman's cottage."

" 'I have boiled my broth, I have milked my kine,'
Said the herdsman Dhaniyo;
'We dwell by the Mahi, I and mine,
My hut is roofed and the fire's aglow;
Now, Cloud-god, rain if thou dost incline..'

" 'I have quelled my sloth, I have balked my spite,'
Answering, Bhagavā said;
'By the Mahi dwelling a single night,
My hut is roofless, the fire is dead;
Now, Cloud-god, rain to thy full delight.' "

Her reply was in the words of one of her native songs:

"Rages the Storm God, huge in his heaven;
Winter lays hold on the swift-gliding waters;
Deep in dense woodlands, wide on the ocean,
Thracian tempest winds bellow.

"Abate thou the cold; heap fire-wood aplenty;
Mingle with honey strong wine, unconsidered;
Bind on thy brow soft, curled woolen comforts.
Gloom no guerdon hath, grief no emolument.
Bacchus, Oh cure our sick souls with thy simples,
Making us glad and forgetful."

While thus Revato waited with a lulled heart, intoxicated by the liquid fire-light and the aromatic smoke of the well-cleft sticks and by Prote's presence, the master of the house entered. After a kind, if condescending greeting, Diomedes called for lamps and took his visitor about the lofty-roofed guest rooms to point out the objects of curious charm with which they were filled. These had come either from his own land or from its nearer-by colonies or had been designed upon the spot by him and his assistants as models and studies for their work.

SCIENCE

Such a bewildering array of little white and colored gods and goddesses; of loharūpas, bronze images; of jars with narrow necks, slender stems and graceful handles, made of delicate, lustrous materials and engraven with festal processions! Here stood lamps and basins and glassware of marvelous patterns and polished silver mirrors. The walls hardly had room for all the drawings, casts and models of architectural details and embellishments. Untrained as he was in art criticism, Revato could only view the *ensemble* with confused wonder, conscious nevertheless of the preternatural beauty that pervaded it.

"Whoever," thought he to himself, "has put so much wisdom into clay or plaster or stone, "cannot be altogether foolish. Perhaps he could teach me many things which I am anxious to know and could point me to paths which I cannot find."

"I have also, friend," said Diomedes, "some other devices in my house which you may like better than these." So saying, he led the way through the court to a door near the back which opened into a great workshop and storehouse of mechanical contrivances. Here were clever arrangements of levers and pulleys, screws and cog wheels, with which, by exerting a little strength, vast power might be produced, whether for hoisting blocks of marble or for pressing out the fluid of grapes and olives. There were engines with moving pistons for raising water and for doing work by falling water. Diomedes pointed out a double pump which could throw a steady stream to extinguish a conflagration. Little fountains played in glass vessels of intricate arrangement. There were reservoirs which discharged in ingenious ways to tell the hour of day. A little four wheeled wagon carried on one axle an instrument by

looking at which the driver might know the distance traveled. A box of pipes discoursed music when blown by air under the force of falling water. The same inspiration caused a lifeless bird to sing. What would the dumb, grotesque, elaborately plumed silver birds in the old Moriya palace have thought if their insensate ears could have heard it? A little temple opened its doors when flames were kindled on a neighboring altar, the secret of which lay, as Diomedes explained, in the power of the element air, when, in the hollow altar, it was incited by the element fire. He then opened the window shutters of the temple and was greeted by a trumpet call. Beside the temple were a row of miniature theatres on the stages of which a flying fish sprang from water, a blacksmith smote an anvil, mimes danced and lightning flashed from the hand of a helmeted god—all without human intervention.

On one table stood atrocious engines of war—battering rams on wheels, cross bows bent with windlasses and stout spring poles that would hurl rocks over city walls. "I have vainly entreated Piyadassi to strengthen his armament according to these models," remarked Diomedes. Revato saw several globulous glasses which, when looked through, made the object on the other side appear larger than it really was. The architect told him that if these were held toward the sun they would cause fire. A hollow mirror, which he showed, would do the same, and if made large enough, might even ignite an enemy's ships. Most marvelous of all was a wheel with spokes or stages like the Wheel of Life, which would spin round when blown by a jet of steam from a pipe in the mouth of a brazen image.

"How do all these inventions appeal to you, a philosopher?" inquired Diomedes. "Our Ionian sages scorn them as fit only for an occupation of slaves, though I, as an architect, better appreciate their value. They minister to Beauty, by assisting in her works, be this their only worthy purpose."

"To relieve the labor of men and animals," answered Revato, "their hunger and thirst and disease and anguish, some of these things might be good. But in-so-far as they pander to cruelty or luxury, they are worse than useless."

"Luxury," replied Diomedes, "is relative. When people become civilized, as ours are, then what formerly they accounted luxuries become necessary comforts."

"First," said Revato, "bring all up to the same mark of welfare. Until then, riches are a pain to those who see but do not have them, and a curse to those who possess them exclusively."

"But," Diomedes continued, "is there not still another kind of benefit which may be derived from our experiments with the elements, earth, air, water and fire and from our observations of land and sea and heavens? I mean, do they not lead us to a knowledge of Truth?"

"If only we knew it to be Truth," said Revato, "but can we trust our perceptions?"

By way of reply Diomedes inscribed on a tablet a triangle and proceeded, step by step, to prove to Revato that the sum of the interior angles was equal to two right angles. "Have you any doubt in the matter?" he asked.

"None at all," Revato replied.

"Similarly," Diomedes said, "I could solve for you harder problems, like the quadrature of the parabola. This is in order to let you feel the firm ground under you and teach you confidence. It is true that not all forms of investigation admit of such a perfect demonstration, but by training our reasoning powers in this way, as a soldier by athletic feats, we are fitted to do battle with the great mysteries of the world."

A thrill passed over Revato, the wonder thrill of an eager, sanguine Springtime of Science. To his instructor it was the Autumn or Winter of an old Science, but for him the cycle of seasons was just opening and he yearned toward the wonderful harvests which he felt able to sow and reap.

This, however, was only a transitory emotion, for he soon realized how little he knew or could learn compared with his favored enlighteners.

"The means and methods are not for me," he said with a sigh. "One individual cannot become an adept in everything and my ways have otherwise led me. But oh that before I die I may know the farthest conclusions which your Yonaka wise men have reached! It will be like living in the days of a Tathāgato."

"I fear that your wish is not altogether a possible one," Diomedes replied. "The conclusions are so abstruse and contradictory that they can not be appreciated nor appraised except by one versed in the elements wherewith they deal. Our sciences are profound like your philosophy of the Dhamma, which when first I studied it, seemed to me very simple, but which is becoming to me more and more elusive of grasp, even in the meaning of the terms employed."

A BARBARIAN

When they had finished examining the wonders of the house and had returned to seat themselves on chairs of unusual design about the fire, Diomedes said: "Now, if you are willing, let us open some of our Hellenic books from which, as you remember, I promised to prove to you that wisdom is not confined to Jambudīpa."

Thus saying, he produced from a curtained alcove a round box stuffed full of tight rolls on end. These, upon untying, proved to be made of some flexible membraneous material which the Yonas used in continuous sheets to write on, instead of palm-leaf strips strung flat together.

"This book," said Diomedes, "is the corner stone of our literature and is the greatest work in the world. Shall I read you some of it?"

"Yes," Revato acquiesced, "If you can't recite it. We don't have to read our Suttas."

"Nor do we," retorted Diomedes, "but we prefer to. Time was when this book was written in the mind, as yours are. But we found out that the human intelligence could be put to better purposes than economizing ink and parchment."

Diomedes commenced by reading aloud a few gāthās in the original tongue—verses which surged, low, loud and long like storm winds on the Viñjha hills. Now they dallied in the head voluptuously like far-gone drowsiness, again they became sonorous of action and stirred up a will for exploits. Then he began to interpret them into Pāli and continued by communicating the meaning in preference to the sound.

It was all about a war caused by lust; a married woman had been carried off by a prince as Sītā was stolen from Rāmo by Rāvano, and in consequence allied armies were crossing the sea to attack the in-offensive subjects of the despoiler. Their leaders were boasting and swaggering and bickering among themselves, while shining devatās in the Heavens of Sense looked down meddlesomely and intrigued and quarreled over their unimportant affairs. Revato did not try to conceal his disgust with the brutal fighting which the poet glorified.

Prote was now sitting by the hearth while she she turned sea-purple threads of wool; going over the web she wove with a golden shuttle. Meanwhile she was not unmindful of her father's reading to Revato. Now she interposed:

"Whenever one dispraises heroic deeds, there is reason to suspect that he himself lacks ambition and courage."

"The merit of my criticisms," Revato answered back, "exists despite my own unworthiness."

The story that Diomedes was reading went on to tell how one of the invading rājās, outdomineering the others, pranced about beating with his royal sceptre any luckless proletarians that were not spry enough to dodge him, and shouting the while: "Common people have no concern in government; the wise devas have set one man to reign and rule; let everybody obey him."

Then, as the poet related, there was found only a lame, squinting hunch-back, named Thersites, who dared to stand up to the usurper and denounce the lecherousness and avarice for which he was dragging his countrymen to shed their blood in helping him plunder cities. In punishment, this croaker was stricken by the tyrant with a bloody weal on the deformed hump of his back, the pain of which made him shed many tears. The teller of the tale took no trouble to conceal his prejudices, since he glorified the despot while he held Thersites in contempt, gloating over the ill shapen body as if a mark of character and a fit subject for derisive scorn.

"For my part," interrupted Revato, "this Thersites is the first person in your book whom I have found to admire. He is like the ugly, odious, despised dwarf Bhaddiyo, whom the Blessed One pronounced mighty, strong and beautiful."

At this judgment, a groan sounded from Prote. Revato's literary criticism was too barbarous to be heard in silence. Her experience with his notions, however, enabled her to take it without verbal dissent, but she availed of the break to comment on other phases of the episode that had been read. With youthful, womanish, hero-worship and megalomania, she lauded the majesty of Odysseus.

"What a dull world this would be," she contended, "if it were all level like the plains of Gangā,—if there were no Himavanta vast in altitude, huge in mass!" The generality of men, she thought, were unfit to rule themselves, and there was always someone more competent than anybody else. Let him hold supreme sway and breed an illustrious race to perpetuate his power. Let him be endowed with all regal splendor to fire the imaginations of his subjects and win enthusiastic devotion to the State as typified in him.

"Enthusiasm," retorted Revato savagely, "is the most effective whip in the hands of tyrants. With it they goad on every ignorant or thoughtless man to further their own selfish ends. For this purpose they create transcendent virtues and crimes and call them by high-sounding names—'Patriotism,' 'Loyalty,' 'Lawlessness,' 'Treason,' and the like, which have little bearing upon public happiness but serve the objects of these oppressors. The foe against which cruel kings can never be secure is an assassin; hence they call assassination the worse of enormities and mankind by common consent have accepted their judgment."

"With good cause," returned Prote. "It is the most cowardly and merciless of all deeds."

"Cowardly to face almost certain capture and death by torture!" exclaimed Revato. "If going to war be brave, then the single stealthy warrior is most valorous, for his hazard is by far the greatest. Merciless to remove by swift means the perpetrator of a thousand slow murders! The assassin is like the surgeon who skillfully excises a diseased member; the soldier at best is like one who, in order to remove it, would batter to pieces with a bludgeon the sound flesh of the body."

"Would you then become an assassin?" she inquired.

"I was speaking of comparative, not absolute values," he replied. "In deeds that I would not do myself, I cannot resist a satisfaction when they are performed by men of elemental passions, just as I might take a grim pleasure in seeing a hand that was raised to inflict anguish struck down by lightning."

"Our friend is not wholly unreasonable, Prote," said Diomedes. "Did not a great light arise to the Athenians when Harmodius and Aristogeiton slew Hipparchus? Neither cause nor courage were absent from their deed nor did it fail to win its meed of torment."

Prote now perceiving the odds to be against her, essayed to strengthen her original contention for the excellence of royalty.

"Who would not suffer a hundred tyrants," she exclaimed, "if only to produce one Mahā-Alasando—towering on the battlefield as the Lesbian singer towers o'er them of other lands? His aim was not to enslave but to enoble. Because of the half life-time that he lived, a moiety of mankind are now Ionians."

"Is it from her father," inquired Revato, "that the lady Prote has learned to reverence kings and kings of kings?"

"Prote," replied the architect, "speaks for herself as a woman. Possibly you, sir, have had little experience with the sex, otherwise you would know that they are all by nature barbarians, delighting in barbaric display. For me, I like better the small democracy of cultured citizens. Ten are enough of them, a hundred thousand are too many. Therein is no ugly level, for ability has every opportunity to rise in preëminent influence."

"Thus," put in Prote, "the citizen may rise to become a monarch, and the school days of democracy may end in a grander life."

"There need be no inferiority on the part of anyone," continued Diomedes, "for the vocations in a civilized state are so varied that each may excel in his own peculiar way."

"Many of our Ariya clans enjoyed similar liberties," Revato remarked, "before they were subjugated by the kings of Kosalā and Magadhā. It is pitiful to reflect how one tribe after another has been overwhelmed. This very city was founded as an outpost at the beginning of the wars against the Vajjians, the Licchavis, of Vesālī. The Blessed One himself declared that so long as they dwelt in concord, held frequent public assemblies, preserved ancient institutions, revered and harkened to the elders, respected womanhood, and supported the offices of religion—just so long they might be expected, not to decline, but to prosper. And it was so, for they retained their independence long. But they were conquered at last, even they. This should be a token to us that we set not our heart upon those franchises which must be defended by force of arms."

"Likewise have been swept away the liberties of Hellas," remarked Diomedes pensively.

"After all," Revato added, "the equality even of our free clansmen was founded on oppression, as our life is unjust still, for our slaves share not with us."

"Slaves?" exclaimed Diomedes. "Do you call your servants slaves? You mild-mannered Ariyas have no conception what slavery means."

"Then did your free clansmen in Yonaloka hold slaves also?"

"Assuredly, and it would make your hair stand on end if you knew how we treated them and do still. That is a necessity to keep them in subjection. Without a multitude of people whose function is simply to labor, like your Suddas and outcastes, how can the fittest class be kept in leisure and means for carving beautiful images, delivering noble orations and performing illustrious services for the State?"

"Granted that these are worthy ends," answered Revato, "your reasoning might be sound. Your error seems to lie in confusing with good works brilliant ones, which are a fruit and a seed of profane desire."

"Tell me, however," asked Diomedes, "why it is that, since the government of Asoko has been so favorable to your religion and its principles, you are not an unswerving advocate of monarchy?"

"Because a particular benefit does not prove that its source is the best. Who can foresee the fate of Piyadassi's empire in the long run, and if they could, it would not affect the principle."

"I have heard a prediction," said Prote, "that Pātaliputta will hereafter be in danger from internal dissention, from flood and from fire."

"Buddho's own words," said Revato, "but it did not require his wisdom to make the prophecy, for internal dissention is everywhere, floods are to be expected where men build on lowlands by rivers, and some villian is sure to set a fire if you suggest the idea that there will be one. To perish, is the safest prophecy to make of anything that exists, except our own responsibility. When we perceive this latter and realize that it is a question for all time, the difference between kings and republics is very small to us. They are like the mud pies which children make, playing on the ground."

Diomedes and his daughter exchanged glances. This barbarian, whom they had brought into their house, amused them by his merciless reasoning, otherwise they would have had none of him, but there were times when he seemed to shrivel into a mere tiresome fanatic.

To bring in a new train of thought, Diomedes unwrapped another scroll, which he said might suit Revato better than the former one. It contained a story of a man who was shipwrecked on an island where dwelt a beautiful Yakkhini, or ogress, named Calypso. But she, unlike the Yakkhinis of Lankā, instead of eating him, treated him kindly and kept him on the island eight years. Finally, when he became homesick she gave him materials with which to build a raft and sail away. After he had voyaged for weeks, a great storm came up, destroying the raft. Still he clung to a plank for three days, and in the end, entrusting himself to the sea without any support, was cast alive upon the delectable shore of a river.

"I like this much better than the other sutta," Revato adjudged. "What does it mean: escape from the ocean of Sangsāra to the shore of Nibbāna?"

"I should be interested to hear the poet's comment if your interpretation were suggested to him," Diomedes replied.

"Where are the venerated books of your religion?" asked Revato presently. "Are you not at liberty to open them to me?"

"Our religion is not one of books," answered

Diomedes. "I was on the point, however, of reading to you from some of our philosophers."

"Pray do so by all means," said Revato.

"With the stipulation that you do not hold me accountable for their opinions. Our Hellenic sages, like yours, have made free to think for themselves, which they have done with great variety. In some of their speculations you may detect a likeness to your own."

PHILOSOPHY

In the first scroll from which Diomedes then read, was declared the Heraclitean doctrine of Flux. All things are in motion; nothing abides. No man passeth twice over the same stream; nay, the passer himself is without constancy. Life and death, waking and sleeping, youth and old age are the same, for the latter change and are the former and the former change back to the latter. Gods are mortals, men are immortals, each living in the others' death and dying in the others' life.

With amazement Revato heard thus clearly enunciated the familiar principle of *Anicca*, Impermanence. As Gotamo applied it to the human personality, it was *Anatta*, "No Self," the lack of any enduring *Ego* wherein we might find refuge from *Dukkha*, Pain, and which could remain unchanged in our passage from life to life. (For, under the Dhamma the mortality of the soul was no bar to resurrection and retribution.)

Asked Revato, "Tell me, Diomedes, what has been the moral influence of the Impermanence doctrine upon your people? It has taught mine to despise the vanities of life."—

"Which goes to show, Revato, that people find in a doctrine what they bring to it. Among us, opposite minds have plucked from Herakleitos what has appealed to their tastes. But most richly have his teachings borne amiable fruit. We Ionians are lovers of life—of life's vanities, if you will have it so. We reason that, if we are destined to last only for a moment, then during that moment let us be happy. It is on this consideration that Aristippus of Cyrene and that Epicurus the Samian base their joyous ethics, which most of my countrymen approve."

"How do they evade the consequences in rebirths?"

"They are not concerned with rebirths. These are the teaching of another philosopher, Pythagoras, who preached also a sad-faced abstention from meats and drinks.—But listen now to Parmemides of Elea:

"*Being is*. It is without beginning and indestructible; it is universal, existing alone, immovable in the hold of great chains, one and continuous without end; justice does not slacken her fetters to permit generation or destruction, but holds Being firm. Only in name do things arise and perish, change their position and vary in color. Without Being, thou wilt find no thinking. It is not subject to division nor compounded of parts, but is all alike. It

THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS
Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

DELVE INTO FANTASY, MAGIC, MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

Forgotten Books'
Full Membership gives
access to 797,885 ancient
and modern, fiction and
non-fiction books.

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies

humorously explaining to his host that he was an exploiter of fruit food only.

His persistent refusals of the meat furnished ample subject of conversation throughout the meal. Diomedes remarked that Pythagoras had forbidden beans as well as meat. Revato told how Buddho had permitted beans but had ruled out onions because they had caused a monk, after partaking of them, considerately to hold aloof from his brethren during the preaching of the Dhamma.

Never did Revato feel more at a disadvantage than in attempting to justify the distinction between killing to eat and eating that which has been killed. "They say that when a cow has been slain and dressed, she is no longer cow but meat," Revato contended, as the best argument he could remember.

The compromising attitude of Revato's religion toward meats did not extend to intoxicating drinks, the use of which he had been brought up to regard as in quite another category, positively, not contingently, evil. He told his hosts a story of how the Elder Sāgato, having freely indulged, helpless, and hiccupping nonsense, was carried by the brethren to the cloister park, where he lay on the ground with his feet disrespectfully toward Buddho.

"Well now, Brethren," said the Master, "is it proper to drink that which, when drunken steals away a man's senses?" "It is improper, Sir," said they, and he declared that the drinking of liquor must constitute a misdemeanor.

By this time, the substantial part of the meal being over, servants removed the tables and brought in a tall pitcher of wine with goblets. Among them was a great wrought cup all of silver, but the lips were worked with gold. Filling this, Diomedes dashed a part of it on the floor, exclaiming, "To Pallas Athene," then drank a swallow and handed it to his guest.

Boldly as Revato had refused the meat, he found the present situation embarrassing, but a happy solution for the dilemma occurred to him and he passed the cup on to Prote. Yet this only postponed the difficulty, for, after sipping, she returned the flagon to him.

"It will make you glad and forgetful," she said.

"Temperance," supplemented Diomedes more prosaically, "is intended to preserve our appetite for occasions, such as this, for its most happy indulgence."

Perhaps Revato's unfamiliarity with the temptation may condone his yielding. At all events, he drank; and having done so, it was an easier matter to accept the special goblet that was filled for him after that of the libation. There was nothing distasteful to him in the wine, as there had been in the meat. When later he pondered over himself, he felt like the mendicant who returned a straw yet purloined gold. But now the liquor, light and frugal as it was, cheered him and put him in a humor suited to the occasion.

The supper was concluded with a desert consisting of dainties imported from Yonaloka—dried figs, olives and nuts. When satiety had taken away the desire of eating and drinking, Prote sang to her lute and even ventured to execute a dance, sedately however as compared with the professional dancing girls of Magadhā.

It was now quite dark outside and Revato spoke of taking leave but Diomedes objected:

"It would dishonor our Greek wisdom were I to let you go after revealing it to you so incompletely. There is better yet to come. When we have spent the evening together you will depart with a more perfect insight of our philosophy."

Compliance was no hardship, and Revato stayed.

CHAPTER IX

THE PLANE TREE AND THE BODHI TREE

BEAUTY •

The story which Diomedes began after supper, from a freshly-unrolled book, was no dark legend of gods and heroes, but an account of two friends, who strolled from the restless town out among bright fields to the side of a brook where nymphs and dryads dwelt in fancy. There they seated themselves in the umbrage of a fronded tree called the Plane tree.

Not thus did Bodhisatto, fainting in body and riven with striving, approach the river Nerañjarā and sink beneath the Assattha tree—the Pippala, which thence is called the Bodhi, the Tree of Wisdom, but who could tell whether the Plane tree might not after all be the truer Tree of Wisdom?

"Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be wealthy, and may I have such a quantity of gold as only the temperate can carry. Anything more? That prayer, I think, is enough for me."

Thus spake Socrates as he sat by Phaedrus. This shrewd self-possession, this calculating humility, was not in the spirit of Buddho, but it might have its own valuable lesson to teach. And the lesson that the Ionian taught to his friend was this: How the soul may be winged by the beauties of this world and soar to a beautiful world on high.

He showed that, throughout successive births as beasts and man, we dwell on earth or in heaven or in hell, as the case may be. But the spirit of him who has never seen the Truth will not pass into the human form, for we must be capable of recollecting "those things which our soul once saw when in company with God—when looking down from above on that which we now call being and upward toward the True Being. And therefore, the mind of the philosopher alone has wings; and this is just, for he is always, according to the measure of his abilities, clinging in recollection to those things in which God abides, and beholding which He is what He is. And he who employs aright these memories is ever being initiated into perfect mysteries and alone becomes truly perfect. But, as he forgets earthly interests and is rapt in the Divine, the vulgar deem him mad and rebuke him; they do not see that he is inspired."

"Are you weary of Hellenic wisdom, Revato, or have you patience still to listen?"

"My patience to listen, Diomedes, is as enduring as yours to instruct."

"Then harken awhile longer to this, the greatest of all philosophers. Had he been born in Ariya Land, the people would have made him a god. They would have built to him temples hideous with painted wooden images. It is thus I am giving them a graven form worthy of worship in making a god of your Buddhó."

"Why then do you not manufacture of your own Enlightened One a new god in Yonaloka? It appears that they are as easy to make there as among the Brahmins."

"No Helene needs an image in order to be a god," rejoined Diomedes. "He comes of an Olympic race. As we are divine, so also are our gods human; they are our own flesh and blood; our blessed ancestors, vanished, yet ever close beside us with kindly interest in our affairs. Do not try to understand this, for you cannot."

"Madness," went on this philosopher, "is imputed to him who, when he sees the beauty of earth, is transported with the recollection of the true Beauty; he would like to fly far away, but he cannot; he is like a bird fluttering and looking upward and careless of the world below, and he is therefore esteemed mad. Few there are who remember the things of the other world and they, when they behold any image of that world, are rapt in amazement. For there is no light in the earthly copies of justice or temperance or any of the higher qualities which are precious to souls: They are seen but through a glass dimly."

"But Beauty we saw there shining in company with the celestial forms; and coming to earth, we find her here too, shining in clearness through the aperture of sense. For sight is the keenest of our bodily senses; though not by that is Wisdom seen, for her loveliness would have been transporting if there had been a visible image of her, and this is true of the loveliness of the other ideas as well. But Beauty only has this portion, that she is at once the loveliest and also the most apparent. Now he who has not been initiated, or who has become corrupted, is not easily carried out of this world to the sight of absolute Beauty in the other; he looks at that which has the name of Beauty in this world, and instead of being awed at the sight of her, like a brutish beast he rushes on to enjoy and beget. But he whose initiation is recent and who has been the spectator of many glories in the other world is amazed when he sees anyone having a godlike face or

form, which is the expression or imitation of divine Beauty; and at first a shudder runs through him and some 'misgiving' of a former world steals over him; then, as he gazes, the shudder passes into an ardour whereby he groweth his wings."

"What can this beautiful world be but Nibbāna?" exclaimed Revato. "Your muni speaks as do those who have attained it. Truly, as I affirm, we must withdraw our eyes from sensuous beauty and fix them upon the beauty of Truth as perceived in our hearts. Then let men call us mad.—It is said that only a Buddhó remembers his past lives. And can it be that from Nibbāna we proceeded as we aspire to return into it? Who knows?—But I believe with all my heart that we shall rise to the beauty of that world the most eagerly as we behold it with affection in the Blessed One himself."

"You wrest Socrates' meaning to conform it with your own notions," Diomedes rejoined. "He would not have us look for the Blessed City by blinding ourselves to earthly beauty, but he teaches us rather to dwell on all that is lovely in the outward life, seeing in it a shadow of the perfect spiritual world. Error consists in turning our eyes either wholly inward or wholly outward. Our life is here compared with a chariot whereunto are harnessed Sense and Spirit while the reins are in the hands of Reason to hold his team at an even pace."

"He has somewhere said," interposed Prote, "that beauty and goodness are the same thing and that neither one amounts to anything apart from its object. What is beneficial is good to whomsoever it is beneficial, and the beautiful must be considered with regard to the useful."

COURAGE

Another of Plato's suttas Diomedes opened to Revato. It was Laches, in which Socrates discourses with his friend of that name, and with Nicias, on Courage. Here were pointed out divers kinds of intrepidity. "For we must rank as courageous those not only who are such in war, but those who in disease, in poverty, or again in politics are courageous; and not only who are courageous against pain and fear, but mighty to contend against desires and pleasures."

"Truly," remarked Revato, "this Socrates would have agreed with Bhagavā when he said:

"Though, vanquishing a million men, in battle one engages,
Whoso himself can overcome, a grander conflict wages."

"Did you suppose, Revato," Diomedes answered, "that any noble thought could exist unknown to Hellas? Harken to this hymn addressed to Ares and attributed to our greatest of poets:

"Gleam with mild glow on my pathway, kindling my warlike
endeavor—
Strong to encounter my cowardly temper, my petulant passion,
Curbing the force of mine anger, which spurs me to mix in the
battle.
Hearten me, Blest One, to linger, harmless, unpained, in my peace
ways,
Deaf to the enemy's war-shout, far from the fates of destruction."

"That indeed," observed Revato, "is a type of nobility with which I had little credited your countrymen."

"Were it the prevailing type," Diomedes retorted, "my countrymen could never had attained their exalted state, or having reached it, they would quickly be enslaved by the barbarians."

As they read further in the book, they came to a definition of courage by Nicias. He maintained that courage is dependent upon a knowledge of the grounds of hope and fear, and hence a brute, be it a pig or a lion, cannot show courage, but only fearlessness or rashness."

"Good! good!" exclaimed Revato. "Most of those acts of men which are admired as heroic possess only this quality of brute recklessness. There is a courage of assured safety, such as Arahats possess. Thus Buddho's monks whose passions were at rest were calm before the assassin Migalandiko. There is a courage which is a deliberate exposure of oneself to privation, peril, pain or scorn, after a prudent weighing of these in the balance against certain results. This was the courage which Buddho commended. But what people generally have in mind when they speak of courage is a mad venturesomeness which is possible only by blinding one's eyes to consequences. Since we should always act with an outlook to eventualities, such courage is inherently evil. Readiness to face death, as men go into battle, ignoring what comes after death, is a fearful exhibition of this heroism. Why, even the damned in Purgatory fear death, little as it can aggravate their condition! But fatuous men so delude themselves as to count the cheers or jeers of their fellows, or the lust for revenge and loot, or the mere joy of killing, more important than millions of ages in the hells. In many ways this course leads to immeasurable cruelty and misery which would be escaped if cowardice prevailed. Not only those who go to war, but those of us who remain behind pass our lives in a state of foolhardiness, by reason of that animal vivacity which is the veil of Māyā before our eyes. Reason and virtue demand that we govern our lives by the calmest judgment; hence I laud what men call cowardice."

"Faint not, fool, in thy strong heart," interjected Prote from some one of her sources of songs, but in a tone which did not promote Revato's self-complacency.

"Lady," he managed to retort, "you are like the Queen of Kosala who was glad to go and see an army clad in armor standing on auspicious ground and to drink the water in which swords were washed."

WHAT THE GREEKS ALSO KNEW

Finally Diomedes went on to read how this same Socrates was condemned to death by vote of his fellow-citizens for corrupting their youth, because he had been searching into things of Heaven and the under world, doubting the gods in which the city believed and making the worse appear the

better reason. In the prison, as his hour for execution approached, he gathered about him a little group of friends to counsel and comfort them, as did the dying Buddho among his disciples. "All of us who were present," said the Greek who bears record, "were affected in much the same manner, at one time laughing, at another time weeping."

Alike the two Enlightened ones urged the mourners to seize this last opportunity for making known their perplexities: "If Simmias here, or anyone else, has anything to say, it were well for him not to be silent; for I know not to what other opportunity beyond the present anyone can defer it, who wishes either to speak or to hear about these things." So too the Bhavagā: "It may be that there is some doubt or misgiving in the mind of some brother as to the Buddho, or the Truth or the Path or the Way. Enquire, brethren, freely. Do not have to reproach yourselves afterward with the thought: 'Our teacher was face to face with us and we could not bring ourselves to enquire of the Blessed One when we were face to face with him.'"

Devoid of apprehension for himself, the man about to die, in either case, discoursed with his friends by the same leisurely, dialectic method, a monologue of leading questions periodically broken for the respectful assent "Certainly Socrates," "Even so, Lord."

This Greek led his friends into that "philosophy which is the highest music," and "hatred of which springs from the same source as hatred of mankind." He told them that the soul reasons best when in contact with no disturbing thing—hearing or sight or pain or pleasure of any kind.

"The lovers of wisdom know that philosophy, receiving their soul plainly bound and glued to the body, and compelled to view things through this, as through a prison, and not directly by herself, and *sunk in utter ignorance*, and perceiving too, the strength of that prison *that it arises from desire*, so that he who is bound as much as possible assists in binding himself—I say then the lovers of wisdom know that philosophy, receiving their soul in this state, gently exhorts it and endeavors to free it, by showing that the view of things by means of the eyes is *full of deception*, as also that through the ears and the other senses; persuading an abandonment of these so far as it is not absolutely to lose them, and advising the soul to be collected and concentrated within herself. . . . She abstains as much as possible from *pleasures and desires, griefs and fears*, considering that when anyone is exceedingly delighted or alarmed, grieved or influenced by desire, he does not merely suffer such evil from these things as one might suppose, such as either being sick or wasting his property through indulging his desires; but that which is the greatest evil, and worst of all, this he suffers, and is not conscious of it."

How like a sutta from the Baskets of his own Law this address sounded to Revato! Little had he thought to hear from the lips of a Yonaka so clear an admission of the evil resident in desire and in sensuous life.

Prote, whose pretty eyelids had been drooping during the long locutions that had preceded, was roused by this last to pugnacity.

"Father," she exclaimed, "have you not too much patriotism to mislead Revato with such

travesties of our Ionian ideas? He will think that our philosophers are as morose as his own. No, Revato, our truest philosopher was she who taught that according to the intensity of our feelings, we live."

"You Yonakas, who have outdistanced the rest of the world in refinements of life," said Revato, "have a great external show of joy, and it may be that you are able to feel pleasure more keenly than we, but I venture to say that, were the whole truth known, there would be found lurking under those pleasures thorns of anguish sharper than any which we have to endure."

"That may be true," replied Prote, "but is not the ability to experience such happiness—are not the multifold forms of happiness which our culture opens to us beyond those which the barbarian knows—more than a compensation for the attendant pains?"

"Frankly, I think not," said Revato. "Of those joys and miseries which are entailed in the development of our lives, the suffering builds up more rapidly. This is the universal law."

On this question, as they had before proved, Prote's and Revato's opinions were irreconcilable. A judgment was asked of Diomedes.

"Discretion lies in moderation," he affirmed.

"Precisely," said Revato. "There I agree with you. Only our variance in defining the word 'moderation' would leave us far apart."

"More of this anon," said Diomedes, "but first shall we read more of the *Phaedo*?—

"Each pleasure and pain nails the soul to the body and fastens it to it, and causes it to become corporeal, deeming these things to be true whatever the body asserts to be so. It cannot pass into Hades in a pure state, but must depart polluted by the body, and so quickly falls again into another body, and grows up as if it were sown, and consequently is deprived of all association with that which is Divine and pure and uniform.' "

"Sown like a seed!" exclaimed Revato. "That is right. That explains how we pass from one birth to another. Kamma is the force in the seed by which it puts forth a new body."

Perhaps in all that was read, Revato most admired the Socratic qualification: "To affirm positively, indeed, that these things are exactly as I have described, does not become a man of sense."

At Cebes' remark upon the alarm of one who should die in doubt whether his soul, in its disunion with the body, might not entirely perish, Revato was startled by the opposition of such a fear to that which harassed himself. While he, in common with his countrymen, was oppressed by the stupendous difficulty of escaping from existences, these Westerners looked upon such release as a calamity, and Cebes even with a naïve disregard of preparedness for hazards.

Much akin to the Yonaka muni as he felt himself in many particulars, Revato, with his Buddhist pre-occupations, was conscious of an impassible gulf be-

tween their views of the soul's nature. It was upon the dissolution of the soul, or mind, into elements at death, a theory earnestly combatted by Socrates, that Buddho based his religion. Yet he remained not in the abyss of negation from which Socrates raised the skeptic Simmias, but by the affirmation of Kamma he established the law of futurity and retribution as firm as adamant.

"The soul," said Socrates, "goes to Hades possessing nothing but its discipline and education." This, at least, was the essence of Buddho's doctrine, it being explained that the soul which goes to Hades consists of naught else but that discipline and education. There it is sown as a seed to raise unto itself a new body and mind. That mind, by the Buddhist theory (when consistently maintained) will possess no historical memory, but it may be said to have as a moral memory, the memory of conscience, for it will read its past written in its present condition. Indeed, we may presume that the identity of character will restore the soul in duplicate of the old one, virtually the same, and linked with former lives almost as closely as our to-days are linked with our hazy yesterdays. Thus, from the voice of denial echoes a great affirmation.

THE TEACHER OF ALASANDO

The hour was now so late that Revato again moved to depart, but Diomedes detained him still, saying:

"I fear that my promise has ill been kept and that I have been reading to you those things which I knew would appeal to your interest, rather than those which best illuminate our Hellenic life and which you most need. But you shall not depart without carrying away a few thoughts from our most sensible of teachers, the preceptor of Alexander."

"We are in search of something that is concrete and practical," read Diomedes, "rather than of abstract Ideas. The physician's investigation concerns not health in general, but of this or that particular man."

"The man who is truly noble and sensible does what is noblest under the circumstances, as a good cobbler makes the best shoe he can out of the leather that has been given him."

"The elements of our conduct are spoiled either by excess or defect. In anger, for example, we are wrong if the anger be either too violent or too slack, but right if it be a *happy medium*. Thus it is with fear, confidence, lust, compassion, pleasure and pain."

"A small deflection from the right is not blameworthy, but only a considerable one, for it is hard to judge precisely where the mean lies."

"A man may be praiseworthy for rejecting the results of logic when he finds them objectionable."

"The man of Perfected Self Mastery delights not in vicious things; but those which conduce to health and good condition, being also pleasant, he will moderately grasp, and also such other pleasant things as are not injurious."

"All men rightfully grasp at pleasure, since all aim at life, and life is working and each works with the things he likes best—the musician with melodies, the student at speculations, etc. And pleasure perfects the act of working, and so life, after which men grasp."

"For noble things, even the desires themselves are praiseworthy, and for ignoble things blameworthy."

"Higher than pleasure, though involving it, is Happiness. This, at its best, is a continuous, enduring, leisurely, detached, contemplative, god-like state. To possess it requires sufficient worldly goods for personal well-being, but no excess. It is not for animals nor slaves, but for sages."

Among these prudential, cultural, life-exalting counsels of Alasando's tutor, were sentences which caused Revato's spirits to rise like a captive bird, forgetting the cage that limited its flight; with a will almost that would have annihilated that cage by ignoring its existence.

How glorious is freedom from the petty restraints of unyielding law! from the purposeless wasting of a lifetime within its prison! How grand to be at liberty for expedient action, shaping one's conduct for greatest usefulness, most perfect results—What could be a better rule of life? The good in such achievements is definite, positive; they are the most tangible criterion of virtue. Should not those courses of action which lead to them be followed and those courses of action, or halting places of inaction, which are aloof from them be shunned? If theory clash with practice, so much the worse for theory. If logic work harm, let logic go.

So Revato told himself. He also reasoned: "These Yavanas, whether they be right or wrong, are not ignorant of any side of any question. Is not every idea known to the wise men of Jambudīpa found somewhere in the teachings of their philosophers? Ascetic morality has been repudiated in Yonaloḥa because it has been tried and found wanting."

It is true that a misgiving lurked in Revato's mind due to the affirmation of Aristoteles that, after all, justice is not one of those questions which admit of compromise. Injustice being the gravamen of the Layman's difficulties, he could not rid himself of the lurking consciousness that his attempt to destroy them was merely covering them up. Still, he reflected, the Yonaka moralist would probably have refused to class his obliquities with things really unjust or dishonorable and would have swept them aside as trifles which ought not to be allowed to hinder a symmetrical development of character, a successful persistency in career.

In the few moments remaining before his protracted departure, Revato discussed with Diomedes the opinions of this last great teacher. He noticed in them the same recognition of the inter-relation of desire, pleasure and life which lies at the bottom of Buddhō's system and which he had identified in other of the Yonaka sages expounded by Diomedes and Prote—usually, however, with an exaltation on their part of that which the Sākiya called an unqualified evil. The question of happiness and its goal interested him as tending toward a conception of Nibbāna, although he thought the distinction between happiness and pleasure to be sophistical, unless meaning merely a difference of lower and higher pleasures. He reserved, however, the question whether there might be a condition of satisfac-

tion which was not pleasure or happiness, but something higher than either, however inconceivable by reason. Another subject of remark was Aristoteles' Happy Medium.

"The Lord of the Dhamma, also," said Revato, "proclaimed the Middle Way. But his was another path from the Mean of your sage. Yours is adapted to the genial life of rich cities, his to the quiet of the many-treed forests on the hills about my home at Giribbaja."

"What kinds of trees grow at Giribbaja?" asked Diomedes with real interest.

Revato named the sāla, the teak, the banyan, the pipphala, the lodda and what others he could recall.

"I have need of the choicest woods," Diomedes explained, "for framing and trimming the sanghārāma buildings—for beams and rafters and jambs, for doors and window frames and shutters and balconies. No trouble has been spared to obtain the best lumber adapted to each purpose. In crossing the mountains on our way to Jambudīpa I noticed how large and straight grew the Devadāru—sharp spined 'Tree of God'—and would you believe it? I have since dispatched foresters to that far north-western region to fell for me those trees and float them down upon the rivers. Their wood has its special uses; to other ends I require the pick of your southern hard timber."

"We have some tinduka ebony," Revato suggested.

"Saccang nu kho! True, now, indeed!" exclaimed Diomedes with unfeigned delight.

"If you wish to learn more about our trees at Rājagaha than I can tell you," Revato answered, "you might consult the Sākiyaputtiya samana Kondaṇṇo, who was a wood seller before his pabbajjā and who spends every vassa among us. He is now in Pātaliputta, staying at the Kukkutārāma."

"I would like to talk with him," said Diomedes eagerly. "When can you meet me there and introduce me to him?"

"Shall we say to-morrow at two muhuttas—an hour and a half—before sunset? He will probably then have returned from the day's wanderings."

"Very good," replied Diomedes, "I shall doubtless take occasion by the end of hemanta—the winter season—to prospect your Rājagaha mountains for timber."

"To that time," said Revato, "I shall look forward expectantly. If, when you arrive, you will call on me at the custom house, I will bid you welcome to my home."

Diomedes promised that he would do so, being in his best humor since he had heard about the trees. Revato did not know whether it would conform with Yonaka etiquette were he to suggest that the architect bring his daughter too; but he hoped that so the event might turn out. With pleasant anticipation of this, and also of to-morrow's meeting with Diomedes, at least, in the Kukkutārāma, Revato took a late leave of his friendly host and hostess.

CHAPTER X

THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF THOUGHT

Where earth nor water, flame nor wind, attaineth
 A footing ground, there gleams not any light;
 Not there the sun appears nor moon remaineth
 Nor is it yet the dwelling-place of night.
 He knows it well whose holy mind constraineth
 To broodings of the Truth-fraught eremite.
 No world of shape nor unformed world shall bound him,
 Delight and anguish nevermore confound him.

AT THE COCK GARDEN MONASTERY

It was far into the *pacchābhatta* of the day—that long period which intervenes between the late morning meal and fall of night—that the meditating, studying and conversing *bhikkhus* in the Cock Garden Monastery were startled by the news that two foreign women and a man sought admittance at the gate. The women proved to be Prote and her maid Iasis, the man her boatman Nereus.

Revato, who was waiting, met her with wonder and embarrassment, to catalogue his emotions only in part. She explained to him that her father had found in a wall of one of the cells at the *Pārāyana* abbey a crack caused by undermining in the recent freshet, and had sent word to her that he must remain on the island until he should get the structure safely shored up. In default of instructions to the contrary, she had thought proper to come here herself and present the excuse to Revato. She had made the trip in the *Nāgī* boat by a circuitous route, down the *Gangā* and up the *Hiraññabāhu*, entering a lagoon and threading through the canals south of the city till solid ground blocked the way. There a chair had met her by arrangement and had carried her over the, not very long, land journey to the *Kukkutārāma*.

Prote was quite willing to look about the priory quadrangle with its rows of cells. It was built on a larger scale than the *Pārāyana*, for it had been erected by Asoko to shelter a thousand monks and to constitute the capitol, so to speak, of the Dhamma religion. The buildings were brick and *sudhākamma*, stucco work, embellished with five-ribbon scrolls, dragon's tooth tracery and figures which made of them wonderful *cittāgāras*—"picture galleries." Prote, however, called them crude and tawdry.

With curiosity she inspected the various offices of the great institution and watched the brethren at their divers avocations. Some were stitching robes, others dyeing the fabric, a few repeating sacred texts, more gossiping.

Prote did not meet the Venerable Kondañño, who for some reason failed to return to the monastery when expected, so that Diomedes' absence saved Revato from a broken engagement on his part. Kondañño was to start northward the next morning, and consequently the plan for an interview with him was abandoned.

With some trepidation Revato led Prote to the cell of the Venerable Bhāradvājo; he did it upon her own request.

Since Bhāradvājo's arrival at *Pātaliputta*, the infirmities of age and hardship had swiftly descended upon him. He had found it necessary to remain at the Cock Garden convent, abandoning his plan for a winter's travel north of the great river, and was even questioning whether, when Kondañño should rejoin him, he would be strong enough to return and spend the next vassa at *Giribbaja*.

"I too," he might have said in the words of the Blessed One on his last pilgrimage, "I too am grown old, and full of years, my journey is drawing to its close, I have reached my sum of days; and just as a worn-out cart can only with much additional care be made to move along, so, methinks, the body of the Tathāgato can only be kept going with much additional pains. It is only, when the Tathāgato, ceasing to attend to any outward thing, or to experience any sensation, becomes plunged in that devout meditation of heart which is concerned with no material object—it is only then that the body of the Tathāgato is at ease."

Bhāradvājo felt not quite at home with the *bhikkhus* of the *Kukkutārāma*. Much true piety and humility as there might be among them, there was also, as inevitable in the midst of that capital city, a great deal of disguised worldliness and ambition, a vast amount of clerical politics, bickering and intrigue. They all treated him with kind deference, but his simplicity was alien from the spirit of the institution and he longed to build once more his grass hut on the Vulture's Peak, for the Lenten season, in the presence, as it were, of his blessed Master. Yet, like *Pingiyo* of old, he had the consolation:

"Though my flesh be worn and wasted,
 Though my carnal eye be dim,
 Though my body cannot follow,
 For I totter, weak of limb,
 Forth in mind and thought I travel
 And my heart is joined to Him."

When Revato and Prote found Bhāradvājo, he was sitting in front of his red-washed cell, by the *cangkama*, that cloistered walk where the monks are wont to move to and fro in meditation. Not now could he move to and fro, but he was seated in the lion posture of revery. The Layman had felt misgivings as to the monk's demeanor toward this *Yonakī* woman and toward himself as her companion. He had also entertained a hope that his venerable friend would recognize the evasive truth that lay in her life philosophy and make it easier for him, Revato, to grasp. In both of these expect-

tations he was disappointed, for the old man's mind had entered a state almost of impassivity to scenes around him.

"Santang, santang! Hush, hush!" cautioned Revato to Prote upon perceiving Bhāradvājo's condition of revery. He looked up, aware of their approach and spoke a few words, but connected conversation was impossible to him and his talk took the form only of mutterings reminiscent unto earlier times or allusive to present emotions. Prote's proud spirit became abashed by the perceptible atmosphere of vital, noble facts beyond her understanding.

"Kacci nu bhoto kusalang, I trust there is health for your Reverence?" she ventured.

"Vimutto, vimutto, released, released," he murmured.

"Are you perfectly contented and happy?"

"Adukkho, asukho, adukkho, asukho—Painless, joyless, painless, joyless," and he continued to asseverate, "adukkho, asukho, asukho, adukkho."

The visitors remained for some time in a hush, but afterward began to converse, whispering between themselves, and withdrew to continue their talk as they strayed about the great pool in the court.

"He seems to be perfectly happy and yet he claims to be free from joy as well as from pain," said Prote; "what does he mean by it? Why should one strive to be free from joy? What value can there be in anything except felicity?"

"That is what we were discussing yesterday, don't you remember?" said Revato. "Pleasure is freedom from pain, and is negative, though it seems to us positive. And yet it may be that the absence of pain and joy alike which holy men experience in ecstasy is really a deep form of pleasure. Or, perhaps in Nibbāna there is a sort of bliss superior to any kind of joy. For Nibbāna is well called Sududdasa, 'Very Hard to Behold.' It is the Ineffable, the Inconceivable; it is the Atakkāvacara, Outside-of-Thought-Sphere, which our understanding fails to grasp.

" 'Reach that Eternal Stage, that Utmost Height,
So Clearly Pure, so Subtle, Hard of Sight.' "

"You have heard," continued Revato, "the fable of the blind men who examined an elephant each by feeling of a different part and then vainly disputed among themselves what an elephant was like. Just so, we who have sensed only a little portion of all that exists cannot be made to perceive matters in which we have had no dealings. We know about Nibbāna only two facts: First, that it is the perfect condition, or rather, unconditioned; and second, that it is unlike anything with which we have had to do. Therefore, I make bold to argue that since we have experienced joy, joy cannot make there its home, and since we have felt sorrow, that state must be sorrowless. But we need not, on the other hand, presume Nibbāna to be a stupid lethargy, such as

an absence of pleasure and pain seems to us; for since torpor is a fact of our knowledge, torpor cannot there abide."

"Did Buddho teach all this?" asked Prote.

"Not exactly, but implicitly. When the ascetic Vaccho enquired of him where an arahat goes after death, he showed that this was like asking whether a fire that has gone out has gone east, west, north or south. The fire, which depended on fuel of grass and wood, when that fuel has all gone, is said to be extinct. Just so it is when all properties by which we can describe the existence of the saint have been destroyed. He that thus has been released from form and formlessness is, however, deep, immeasurable, unfathomable like the ocean. To say that he is reborn would not fit the case; to say that he is not reborn, would not fit the case."

"The Tathāgato," Revato went on, "thus declared himself free from all theories; he refused to tell whether Nibbāna is a state of existence or non-existence, since this question was to no practical purpose. Still, I do not think he meant to forbid our wondering about it, as a sin, but only to show that it is foolish to speculate where there are no grounds of knowledge. I have pondered much upon that Ananto—that Sassatiko—that Eternal—State, but my notions are in harmony with Buddho's meaning for they are deductions from its very mystery."

"It is the life of the aeons, as we would say," remarked Prote, half sympathetically, then she added with a feebly cynical reaction, "Have you never visited Nibbāna?"

"I? Nonsense! There are myriads of births yet before me. But its attainment would not enable me to make it clear to you, for those who have entered it, even in this life, find no words by which they can describe it to others."

"So far as I have learned your religion," said she, "Nibbāna is to me blank nothingness, for in entering it, the consciousness and other attributes of life are destroyed, or rather they are so sterilized that they have no power of re-creation after the natural death of the saint. Is this view of mine correct?"

"It is, so far as anyone can understand the case," Revato answered. "You have a wonderful mind for a woman to seize on truth. By strict worldly logic there is nothing in the idea of Nibbāna on which a state of existence can be based, and, in any sense to be terrestrially grasped, Nibbāna is simply a region of nibbuta, being blown out.—But there are regions where logic is stultified by facts: One of them is the Origin of the primary Cause of things; another may be Nibbāna. In this very obscurity lies the possibility that Nibbāna, even after death, may be something real, something copious and magnificent. The Tathagāto declared:

" 'All the rivers of the world and all the torrents of rain that fall from the sky enter the great ocean, and no deficiency or surplus of water is perceptible in the great ocean. Thus when innumerable saints

Get Smart

Over 2,000 years of
human knowledge in
797,885 volumes

Instant access
\$8.99/month

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies



Prote commanded Nereus to ship his oars and let the craft drift with the current, which was slower than during the flood of the preceding fortnight, yet rapid enough for their desires. So smoothly flowed the stream that the boat's progress was perceptible only by the fixed lights. They kindled a lantern with sides of horn so thin as to let through the shine of the inner lamp, and fastened it on the skiff's prow.

The girl was in a mood for frank, earnest speech, and in the Pāli tongue, which she had learned to use so dexterously, her words were safe from the profane understanding of Nereus and Iasis. In the river those who would might read the lesson of every seaward flowing stream, which is written in all languages and in all lives:

Nuestras vidas son los rios
Que van a dar en el mar,
Que es el morir.

The scene in the Kukkutārāma might have prompted such an expression, but not by the will of Prote. Her conversation played about the beautiful cities of her own country and the heroic deeds of its sons.

Revato listened, attentive not to the martial exploits, but to her recital of high thoughts and great works in peace. Presently he said:

"You admit, Prote, do you not, that, as we were remarking at the vihāra, there are subjects, like Nibbāna and First Causes, where logic is confuted?"

"I do not think so," replied she; "logic would never fail us if we used it properly. Anything can be rationally explained, if it is understood."

"Then perhaps," said Revato, "you, who see many things so much more clearly than I, can answer for me a riddle, which is a more perplexing one than Nibbāna and to me more vital. Here are two roads of life. One is the path of strict righteousness, wherein if a man walk he must subject himself to renunciation and failure, must reject all earthly happiness for himself and even his efficiency to help mankind. The other is the way of you and your countrymen, which conscience does not infest and yet which is full of beauty, joy and beneficent result. These are hostile opposites. I know that the first is true, you know that the second is true. Is one of us crazy or are we both? Is there no reconciliation in logic or beyond logic? Upon your answer depend life now and countless lives to come. Prote, Prote, answer my riddle."

"What ground," she retorted, "have you for charging us Hellenes with being unscrupulous malefactors? Do good and evil grow on the same tree?"

"Yes, on the tree of the human heart," answered Revato. "Custom may lead the best of men to perpetrate any enormity as a matter of course. Witness torture—What crime can be worse than to inflict it?—yet the mildest of kings use it without pausing to consider. Still it is not of heinous wrongs that I would now accuse your people, but of such as our inmost hearts must judge. Things which you may

regard as virtues become mortal sins under our blessed Dhamma. Have you never heard of the monk who was accused of stealing scent from a lotus flower, because a small offence shows in a pure person?"

"If offences be trivial," Prote exclaimed, "they *are* trivial; then why worry?"

"Nothing, however small," insisted Revato, "is trivial if it is an āsava, a taint of character. Not the magnitude of a sin but its recognition by our minds, our conscience clinging to it, makes it a vital trait in us."

"Suppose," argued Prote, "you owed a rich man a few grains of rice, to pay which would starve you, and you knew that he was perfectly willing to remit the debt, would you not be a fool to give it a further thought? If there is wrong in anything we do, the reason must be that it tends to work harm against the world; when, therefore, the world scorns to consider an injury, why should we dwell upon it?"

"Have we not," contended Revato, "responsibilities which the world is powerless to relieve?"

"Responsibilities to whom? To the gods? They are lenient. To the Fates? They also have common sense."

"To the law of Paticcasamuppāda, of cause and consequence," Revato answered, "the law that our immeasurable future is bound to be just what we make it by the intents of our heart. There is no weakness, no forgetfulness:

"Not in the lofty air nor ocean's hollow,
Nor dark in some deep cave's perpetual night,
Nor any other where, shall cease to follow
The present power of a past unright."

"The worst that can be charged to one's account," said Prote, "is impiety against the gods. With that they are more angry than with anything else; still they may be mollified, even for this, by our contrition and expiatory rites.

"Lofty and large the Immortals, still do they deign condescension;
Moved are their hearts by fragrant incense and smoke of the altar,
Sprinkled libations or vows which the penitent pay to incline
them;

For, ever there be a deliction, it leads to a prayer of appeasement.
Prayers of the contrite are daughters of Zeus, the offspring of
Kronos,
Halting and haggard and shame-faced watchers afar on trans-
gression,

Long outstripped by the fleet-foot Sin, whom following after,
Over the world they wander to heal the harm that awaits them.
Whoso holdeth in honor the daughters of Zeus, they will favor,
Winning to pardon their father who reigns on the heights of
Olympus."

"Prote," exclaimed Revato, "I must set you down as an Ahetukī—a disbeliever in Causation—an infidel. How can anyone with your otherwise clear mind be sunken in such ignorance?"

"By causation," she replied, "you refer to Yathādhamma, justice. But the severity over which you gloat is most unjust."

"I'm not quite sure I do mean justice," said Revato. "Justice is such a familiar idea that we take it for granted, but if we really try to grasp it, it vanishes. Between doing wrong and suffering pain in consequence, there is a relation according to the way the world is made, but not, so far as I can see, in pure reason. Two wrongs do not make a right. Punishment is only a rough and ready expedient of Nature and man, producing results. That is partly why I pity the felon more than the martyr. The former is punished doubly—both outwardly and inwardly—and no evil is righted, but a new wrong is committed. Some can assuage their pity at misery on the theory of demerit in past lives, but I cannot to my satisfaction."

"Then it is you yourself who are the unbeliever in Causation," exclaimed Prote. "You deny Buddho's basic doctrine."

"If I do," he answered, "I distinguish between fact and reason. The latter should govern the spiritual realm of life and teach us mercy rather than retaliation in our dealings one with another. Yet it should not lead us to forget that we are caught in an endless chain of consequences, be they logical or illogical."

"The worst that can happen to us is to leave the world," said Prote, "and our transition will not last long."

"How can you blink the truth, Prote, that this world is for us only a little link in a chain?"

"What proof have you of that?"

"None that you would accept. When I try to rest it on firm grounds I am at a loss, and I begin to question my own belief in it. But then I reflect: 'If I did not believe it, how unspeakably different would be my purposes in life from what they are now?' So I prove to myself, not the fact indeed, but my faith in the fact. If the probability that we shall be reborn after death is no greater than one sesamum seed, still that little seed contains a germ of possibilities greater than all Himācala. Therefore, in proportion as I realize this, I declare that, in spite of many doubtings, I have tremendous faith in the Dhamma. An old saint said of Bhagavā:

'He will end the doubters' questions
If they will but let him in.'

"Until you, Prote, become imbued with his teachings you can never see things through eyes like mine. Not that I have attained to a supernal knowledge—I who have never complied with the conditions announced by the Blessed One:

"If a brother should desire to touch and feel with his hand even the sun and moon, mighty and powerful though they be, and to reach in the body even to the heaven of Brahmā, let him fulfill all righteousness, let him be devoted to that quietude of heart which springs from within, let him not drive back the ecstasy of contemplation, let him look through things, let him be much alone."

"I do not think to touch the sky with my two arms!" cried Prote, "and I would not dwell alone

to attain it. Come, make an end of this soul-wasting grief. You are as bad as the monk I heard of, who so brooded on the thought of death that the sough of the wind, the rustle of a fan, or the cry of a bird would make him shriek in abject terror and dash away. Such men we call 'cowardly after a brutish sort.' And you are like Pentheus, the sombre-visaged king who fettered the limbs of Dionysus, but soon after, falling himself under the spell of the revellers, was torn to pieces by his own drunken mother, whom the gods incited to avenge his cruel repression. Your grievous spirit will make you finally rebound to riot and destruction."

"I might have known, Lady," said Revato sadly, "that you could never answer my riddle. Our souls are divided by an impassable wall. You have treated me with that most ignoble mockery, absolute misapprehension. You would clothe a foul skeleton in rich, perfumed garments, you would gather lillies in a lake of blood."

"You may be wiser than I in many ways, Revato, but do not suppose that you can compass the mind of the Immortal Ones, who contrived all that we know and are. You say yourself that bounds are set to reason. Why not seek consolation in your ignorance?"

"Oh, the works of the gods—in manifold forms they reveal them;
Manifold things un hoped for the gods to accomplishment bring,
And the things that we looked for, the gods deign not to fulfill
them,
And the paths undiscerned of our eyes, the gods unseal them'"—

During the dialogue Prote had evinced a growing disquiet at the preferably never overstepped limits of her living interests. Repeatedly she shuddered and bit her lips as if to emphasize her defect of adjustment. This last reply was her final effort at debate. Finding that Revato did not immediately respond to it, she took occasion for an attempt to extinguish the mortuary discussion with a fresh breeze of life.

"For me," she said, "the hereafter will be a memory of my to-days, a memory which will linger when you and I are gone. As the colors of the fields and wood renew, season by season, I trust that they may forever bloom a little brighter because of my presence now."

They were still floating on, with unrippling motion, down the Golden-Armed river, toward its confluence with the greater one. Above the earthly Gangā, with its reflected lights, flowed the skyey Gangā—The Milky Way—with a soft radiance all its own—an undeviating stream whose banks were fixed eternally, like the Sambuddhasandakasa, the Firmament of Buddho's truth.

Not such a far, unattainable region now claimed Revato, but his delicious terrestrial environment, for Prote, striking once more her lute strings, sang to the happier notes of the sky, which she, as ever, was alert to read, a song which brought it near to encourage her own good humors:

“I, a terrestrial reveler,
Gaze on the glittering star-dance,
Westerly, down in the sky.
Be it not said that when others
Made merry, I ever stood mournful
Or pressed a slow, pondering heel-print.
But crested with wild-flung garlands,
I have smitten the sonorous tambour,
Leading the life of the orb-world,
Lyre-bearing, crowned, like me.”

At last the thoughtful despair in Revato's heart fell asleep from weariness, while unreasoning joy exerted its latent resiliency. Peace possessed him, as gentle as the gliding of the unpropelled boat. That voyage was destined to remain a transfixed event among the fleeting memories of time.

CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT RENUNCIATION

As, early on the morning after his visit to the Kukkutārāma and return by boat with Prote, Revato walked forth from his lodging through the city streets, he came up behind an old mendicant friar with bowl half full of rice and herbs collected at the charitable doors of the citizens. The absence of flesh food from the bowl indicated that its bearer was one of those most consistent and tender-hearted devotees who not only avoid killing or causing to kill any animal, but refuse to partake of its substance though it has already been slaughtered. This bhikkhu was bent and feeble; his face was profoundly sad, yet almost childish in its expression, although it was a countenance that suggested a history of strength. Not at first did Revato realize that he was brushing against the poor yellow robe of Asoko Piyadassi, King of Kings. When recognition came to him Revato fell back abashed. Loitering afar, he followed the royal monk in the spirit of a worshipper.

As the mendicant walked with eyes downcast to a plough's length ahead of him, going from house to house and omitting none, he would stop before the doors and, silently holding his bowl, await a pinda-pāta, then totter forward with diminished strength. Cares not alone of politics, but responsibility for the temporal and eternal happiness of living millions, human and animal, had brought him as low as old Bhāradvājo, of whose tranquil years he had by a score the advantage in fewness. When he passed the hermitage hill, he stopped and fixed his gaze on the grottoed summit once tenanted by his young brother, the missionary Mahindo. All Magadhā knew the burdens of family sorrow that he was bearing—the sacrifice of his best-loved ones for the salvation of distant Lankā, while among those of his household who remained had arisen opposition to his good efforts, treason against his throne, and, in the nearest relation of all, a nameless infamy.

From one house before which Asoko stopped came a gruff voice:

“Bhikkhumhi yāhi! Beggar begone!”

This was not the ordinary smooth refusal, “Atic-chatha, Seek alms elsewhere.” Into the word “Beggar” the speaker's tone imported none of the

exalted sense due to a holy man. It must have been a Brahmin or Jaina who, returning evil for good, was disposed to feed no mendicant of another religion.

Revato darted up furiously, angry at this unusual insult offered to the yellow robe as much as to its royal wearer. But seeing how meekly and wearily the king passed on in silence, he felt that composure was the royal pleasure.

Now came to Revato a remembrance that this was his long-awaited opportunity to address himself to the king regarding the customs receivership. For the last few days he had almost forgotten about it, although it ostensibly was the only object that was keeping him so long in Pātaliputta.

Before he had quite summoned resolution to speak, his attention was diverted by the King's itinerary, for Asoko now turned into the street where dwelt Diomedes the architect. When arrived at the Yona's door, the mendicant halted and stood in his usual receptive attitude, ready for a morsel to complete his breakfast.

For a long time the occupants of the house gave no evidence of noticing his presence; then the door opened and a Yonaka serving man set upon him a ferocious-looking dog. The creature, however, was better than its master and, after a perfunctory bark, came up to Piyadassi wagging its tail.

However curt had been the Brahmin's rebuff, no Ariya would ever have committed such an outrage as this. Revato was now ready in earnest to lay violent hands upon the Yonaka. But suddenly in the doorway stood Prote.

Unthinking as yet who waited in front of her, she was anxious to repudiate the inhospitable conduct of her servant and she came to bid the old monk enter her dwelling. Asoko staggered through the door and corridor into the central court. As he stood holding to a pillar, she recognized him and with a cry of horror, prostrated herself at his feet and kissed his alms bowl.

“Mahārāja, namo ty atthu,” she cried—“Great King, hail to thee! Svāgatang te Piyadassi—Welcome to thee, Majesty.” Sternly he bade her arise, and then her adoration of royalty ran riot with

proffers of every hospitable office for his honor and comfort.

He ignored them, but commanded in a quiet tone of authority:

"Fetch for me the rug that is hanging yonder, and spread it beneath the potted tree, for a couch with its head to the north. I am weary and would lie down."

She brought the rug and spread it beneath the potted tree for a couch, with its head to the north. Piyadassi laid himself down in the dignified way that a lion does, on his right side with one leg resting upon the other. Then he spake no word and made no motion.

Prote knelt in front of him and fanned him; Revato stood close by. While thus they waited, the sun crept high in the heavens.

By and by there occurred to them both this thought: "How calm are all the limbs of the great King Asoko, the mendicant! Oh may it not be that he is dead?"

Then King Asoko, the mendicant, opened his eyes and moved his lips and spoke to them thus:

"Friends, I put away ease, I put away pain, and by the dying out both of gladness and sorrow I entered into and remained in a state of purified self-possession. I pervaded one quarter of the world with Mettā, Friendship, and with Muditā, Congratulation, and with Karunā, Compassion, and with Upekhā, Equanimity; so did I the second quarter, and so the third and so the fourth. Thus the whole wide world, above, below, around and everywhere, did I continue to pervade with heart of kindness and sympathy and pity and peace, far-reaching, grown great and beyond measure, free from the least trace of anger or ill-will."

He paused, and Prote, anxious to stimulate him, addressed him thus:

"Thine, O King, are four-and-forty thousand cities, the chief of which is the royal city of the Trumpet Flower. Arise, O King, reawaken thy desire for these; quicken thy longing after life.

"Thine, O King, are mansions having staircases of gold and silver, of crystal and beryl, having chambers filled with ivory and sandal-wood and all manner of gems; with chairs and divans whereon are flower-embroidered cloths and long-haired rugs and magnificent antelope skins and cushions of purple silk. Thine, O King, are state elephants and horses with trappings of gold, and gilded banners and coverings of net-work. Thine are chariots with skins of lions and of tigers and of panthers, whereof the chariot called the Flag of Victory is the chief. Arise, O King, reawaken thy desire for all of these, quicken thy longing after life.

"Thine, O King"—

But he interrupted her:

"At other times, O lady, thou hast addressed me in pleasant words, and sweet. Yet now in this last time, thou speakest in unpleasant, disagreeable words."

"How then, O King, should I address thee?"

"Thus, ayyā, shouldst thou address me: 'The nature of all things near and dear to us, O King, is such that we must leave them, sever ourselves from them, separate ourselves from them. Pass not away with longing in thy heart. Sad is the death of him who longs. Unworthy is the death of him who longs. Thine, O King, are these four-and-forty thousand cities, thine are these palaces, these elephants and these horses. Cast away desire for them; long not after life.'"

When the desire is dead, events matter not. For him on whom life had no more hold, it was still in store. Asoko arose from his rest with the vigor of a man and the majesty of a king. With all his monastic discipline, he was yet the great monarch; though the royal elephant had been tamed, it was still powerful in its movements.

Prote beheld him with the eye which glistens toward a hero. "O Majesty, Devānam-Piya, of the Moriya line, whose emblem is the bird of our Immortals' queen, as she remaineth ever young, so thou, King of human men, art still in thy prime—still for life and love. Hark, it is I, a fair woman, who tell thee so."

A storm of beauty swept across her face, tempestuous beauty such as Revato had never seen upon it and which filled him with wonder, almost angry. Her eyes were fastened upon Asoko's face with a boldness that might have caused offence to the King, confusion to the friar. In neither capacity did he show any perturbation, but calmly returned the gaze and answered her:

"Dhīṭike, daughter, thou art fair and full of youthful ardor, as was mine own child when she left me, to carry over the waters that blessed branch which will bear saving fruit for a nation. May'st thou, like her, embrace the blessed Truth."

Prote dropped her eyes, confused. Then, in an altered tone and manner, with a new form of earnestness, she said:

"Wilt thou pardon my forwardness, O King, and wilt thou consent to listen if yet again I address thee?"

"Mine ear," he replied, "has long been open to the meanest among the border tribes of my people to audit their complaints. I have encouraged their confidence. Why then, lady, should I repel thine? Only, pray tempt me not with evil enticements."

"Great King," said Prote, "I will speak only that which tends to thine honor. Thou hast inherited a dominion which Alexander coveted in vain, a realm which thou hast made vast among the empires of the earth. Well may it be called Sammudapariyanta—Ocean Bound! Thou hast established it in tranquility and justice and the art of war hath long been disused. Think not that age hath of necessity sapped thy power, for did not my countryman Nestor, having already survived two generations of men, acquit himself with valor in the great war? But of one thing be admonished, I pray thee, by me,

though I am but a child. For I have traveled across the countries of the world in journeying from mine to thine; and as I passed through I saw them filled with vast armies constantly habituated by warlike kings to hard campaigns. Especially on the borders of the fair-haired Saka barbarians, which are not far from thine own, were many alarms and rumors of invasion by those innumerable cruel tribesmen. The long peace of this land cannot endure forever. The natural law of nations is to conquer or to be conquered. Thou art prepared neither to attack nor to defend. Before thee are two futures: to preserve an empire as magnificent as Alexander's or to see it swept away."

Then Piyadassi answered her:

"It was Jino, lady, Jino the greatest of Conquerors, who declared that while one remaineth in a dwelling he may subdue the earth without rod or sword, he may rule in justice. But should this yet fail, did not the same Blessed One also say:

" 'Alas for life, by nature evanescent,
Concrete of properties which wax and wane;
They all arise, they all return quiescent—
But their allayment is our utter gain.' "

"O Great King, bear with me still," cried Prote. "If the glory of thine empire be nothing in thine eyes, yet is not the progress of thy Religion? Is not the consolation that it bringeth to its devotees, is not the mercy which it hath in store for all beings?"

"If a downfall be indeed at hand, bhaginī, sister, yet will this be better than that it should be averted by unrighteousness. Did not the Blessed One foretell that defection from the Perfect Way must come and that it would be brought about by the agency of women? The Saddhamma eradicated by force may again take root, but if decayed from within it must perish. How can I seek to perpetuate the religion of mildness by deeds or threats of violence which are contrary to its nature, and in the very doing of which that religion would cease to exist? Thou and I are not accountable for the results of the Holy Law, but for obedience to it. Had we perfect wisdom like the Clarified One, then perchance we might study remote ends, but short-sighted mortals, as we are, we must adhere to the precepts which he taught us, especially to the principle of kindness. Thus will the most good kamma be sown, the most beneficent energy will be generated."

"By thy mercy, O Piyadassi, endure my speech yet a little longer. I am about to tell thee what no one else hath dared to whisper to thee. Thou wilt be amazed at my boldness, but I entrust myself to thy clemency. Hast thou suspected that thy throne and Religion are both in danger, not only from foreign foes, but from traitors among thine own kindred? Here is no question of great military preparation, but of quick, decisive, and therefore merciful, action."

Then Asoko, answering her, recited this gāthā:

" 'Wonder-sweet our dwellings be,
Girt by anger, anger-free;
Angry folk around us press;
Live we always angerless.' "

He repeated also the stanza:

" 'Vanquish wrath by harmless living,
And with goodness conquer sin;
Men of greed by open giving,
False of word by candour win.' "

When therefore he had uttered these verses he continued in speech as follows:

"In the ninth year of my reign I conquered the Kālingas with great slaughter for which I have ever since felt deep regret, sorrow and remorse. All men are my children, and just as I desire for my children that they may enjoy every kind of prosperity and happiness, both in this world and the next, so also I desire for all men. Even upon the unsubdued borderers and forest folk in my dominions I have compassion and will that they be not afraid of me, but that they should trust me and should receive from me happiness, not sorrow. This, in my opinion, is the chiefest conquest—the conquest by the Law of Righteousness. By that law I conquered both in my dominions and in far distant Western realms, even to that of Antīyako* Yono, and beyond to where reigned the four kings Turamayo, Antikini, Mago and Alasando. I will that my heirs on the throne and as many as come after me may not suppose it to be their duty to effect a new conquest by arms, and that, even if they become engaged in a new conquest, they may find pleasure in patience and gentleness, and may regard as the only true conquest that effected through the Law of Piety which avails both for this world and the next. But if they fail to walk in the way of forbearance, it will be the fruit of my own bad example, when I subjugated the Kālingas. And if still the effect of that bad example can be overcome, it will only be by setting an example of meekness in such time as yet remains to me. And I have come to realize that, however great be the importance of creating happiness in this world, nothing is of supreme importance save the concerns of the World to Come. For me all things are now past, are ended, have vanished away. Impermanent are composed things; untrustworthy are composed things. It is meet to be weary of, it is meet to be estranged from, it is meet to be set quite free from the bondage of all composed things."

Having completed this declaration, he said: "I am faint, bhadde, dear lady, from want of food. For my sake it matters naught, but I must sustain my strength yet a little while longer for the good of my people, who are my children. I must now hasten home to eat of the alms in my bowl."

*Antiochus of Syria, Ptolemy of Egypt, Antigonos (Gonatas) of Macedonia, Magas of Cyrene and Alexander of Epirus.

"Deign, O thou Holy one, to dine here," entreated Prote, "as they say the Blessed One feasted on sweet dishes of boiled rice and cakes, here in this town, with Sunidho and Vassakāro and in Vesālī with—with Ambapālī."

"I cannot tarry, dear girl, but place if thou wilt a morsel of rice in the bowl, for space remaineth."

Into the courtyard the noonday sun was shining and the pillars on the eastern side were just beginning to cast a shadow. Piyadassi saw the shadow and said calmly:

"It is now past mid-day and too late for the bhatta—the meal. I must not break my fast with solid food until to-morrow. Keep, I pray thee, dhīte, the food in this bowl for them who suffer by its lack. I will take only a draught of rice milk, highly praised by the Blessed One.—Handa ca dāni mayang gacchāma—Now then, I must be going."

Thus saying, and declining every proffer of assistance that Revato dared to make, the royal bhikkhu departed as he had come.

Said Revato: "Farewell, Prote."

"Why farewell in this hasty fashion, Revato? You have not yet disclosed what brought you here."

"That which brought *you* here now carries *me* away," he answered, and without more words returned to his lodging.

Hastily he packed into a bundle the requisites of his journey and, after summoning a porter from the neighboring street, took his way to the chief caravansary of the city. Here, upon inquiry, he learned that a halted party of traders was preparing to press on toward Rājagaha that afternoon, among them being Subhaddo of Alavī, the woolen merchant, who was amicably known to him. His own equipage, with Pilindavaccho and the steers, was still quartered on the outskirts of the town, having been held during the fortnights through which he had daily been representing to himself that he was about to return. He could not have told why he attached it to the slow caravan—hardly for reasons of safety from robbers; perhaps to ensure morally the continuance, if not the speed, of his homeward journey.

A brief interval before departure afforded time for a parting call on the Venerable Bhāradvājo at the Cock Garden Monastery.

"Where is the Yonakī woman?" asked the old samana. "Why did you not bring her with you this time?"

"Reproach me not, bhante," said Revato. "All that is ended."

"I do not reproach you, my son," replied Bhāradvājo, "I could not help being glad to see you happy even when I knew that your pleasure was bitterness in disguise."

"You cannot be more deeply aware of that fact than I am," answered Revato.

"Very good. This is grateful news to me, and it will be welcome tidings to King Asoko also."

"King Asoko! Does he concern himself with my personal affairs?"

"He knows you better than you know yourself; we have spoken about you much of late."

"Why, bhante, as well as I have been acquainted with you all my life, I have never suspected that you were privileged to such intimacy with royalty."

Asoko's condescending goodness was thus brought home to Revato in a new light. It filled him with wonder and contrition to learn that he, individually, was embraced by the comprehensive, yet specific solicitude put forth by that earthly lord of salvation.

After Revato had left the Kukkutārāma, as his attention reverted to the merchant caravan with which he was to travel, an association of ideas recalled to his mind, with a twinge, that purpose for which he had come to Rājagaha—the resignation of his tariff collectorship. Any present painfulness of this subject was from habit rather than from distinct perception of the reasons for its dolor. Its intricate details had so long remained dormant that he could not readily reawaken them in memory. He wondered whether now before quitting the city he should not seek the King again and lay down his office, but as nearly as he could remember, the last oscillation of his mind when the matter had been under careful consideration had opposed this action. Upon now reopening the question, he might gradually have recalled his former arguments and brought them to a different conclusion, at the same time renewing his distinct comprehension of his unescapable difficulties, but he was not fated to restore their place in his attention at this period. The general remorse and abasement into which he was plunged afforded no foothold for any specific grief or apprehension.

Revato took his way from the city past the Rativaddhana garden, as upon the night of his arrival. Once more he tossed into the pond his gem graven with the Greek girl, satisfying himself that this time it lodged upon no lotus flower, but sank among their tangled roots in the greedy mud. Considerations of filial duty, which before had reproved him for his act, made now no protest, since the moral necessity of repudiating all that the image stood for was indisputably paramount.

He joined the caravan and, at nightfall, was advanced on the way toward Rājagaha. When they reached a certain point on the road, he alighted and walked into an open field near at hand. There were the remains of a fire now almost overgrown with fresh weeds, among which he descried some charred bones from a corpse which had been consumed upon it—after what form of death he knew.

Upon overtaking his companions, and riding on a little while, he heard beside him a familiar whine. It was Dukkho, his dog, in a starving condition.

"Kahang bhane tumhe ime divase na dissatha?" he called down languidly, "Where in the world hast thou been not to show thyself all these days? Art thou following me once more? Why didst thou de-

sert me? Because I deserted thee, eh? Very well, we will forgive each other and forget the past with a mutual promise never again to part."

So the dog, keeping close to Revato, followed him home and into the house with perfect assurance of domicile.

Sundarī, his mother, did not take kindly to the creature, which was caused less by aversion to dogs

in general than by an intuitive antipathy for this individual.

"You must not let him stay here, Revato," she said.

"He intends to remain," replied Revato solemnly, "and it is neither in your power nor in mine to thwart his purpose."

Dukkho remained.

CHAPTER XII

A VISION OF DEATH

THE PLUCKED OUT EYE

In the olden days of simple doctrine and consecrated life, there dwelt at Rājagaha a Sister in the Bhikkhunīsaṅgha, named Subhā, who was young and lovely to behold. As this nun was entering one day alone into the shady solitude of Jīvako's Mango Grove, a gallant intercepted her, as is related in the ancient ballad:

Hithermore the woodland whiling
(Votive park of Jīvako),
One to Subhā came beguiling,
In her pathway to and fro.

This diffident maiden answered him:

"How provoked I thee to linger,
Making my transgression much?
Buddho's daughter's every finger
Must be consecrate from touch.

"All my heart is in attending
His, the perfect Master's will.
Pure am I and unoffending;
Why obstruct my pathway still?"

But the lover persisted, cajoling her:

"Young and innocent, why sadly
Cling to hermits' garb and food?
Come with me, and we go gladly
Wandering in the flowery wood.

"Odorous buds are scattering madly,
Yea, the Springtime hours are good!
Come with me, and we go gladly
Wandering in the flowery wood.

"Ripple soft the pointed grasses,
High above the boughs are blown;
Doleful yet is she who passes
Through the woodland aisles alone."

Then he strove to break her purpose by artful change of appeal:

"Tigers lurk, unapprehended,
Furious elephants, my child,
Where thou goest undefended,
Through that vast and fearful wild."

But since danger had no terrors for Subhā, or else because she was reasonably skeptical of those

wild beasts in the urban Mango Grove, this villain reverted to his vein of enticement and flattery:

"Like a golden angel maiden,
Denizen of Paradise,
Should thy beauty be arrayed in
Kāsi robes of costly price.

"'Mid these leaves of languorous motion,
May thine utmost wish unfurl;
Thou art worthy my devotion
More than any goddess girl.

"If thou wilt attend my saying,
Lofty mansions I'll prepare,
Damsel servitors arraying
Towers and chambers high in air.

"Gems and jewels I will find thee,
Lustrous, dazzling to behold;
Filmy Kāsi webs shall wind thee,
Pearl-encrusted, barred with gold."

Subhā again indignantly interrupted him:

"Where is any charm exalting
In this corpse of vile decay,
Unenduring, dead, revolting,
As it slowly rots away?"

Her beau, however, was at no loss to point out such charms:

"Eyes, the soft gazelle beseeming,
Yea, like oreads' of the hill;
As with mine I watch them gleaming,
Love and longing wax and thrill.

"In thy face, those eyes, unfolding
Like an aureate lotus flower,
Still with mine I stand beholding;
Love and longing wax in power."

The girl was now aroused to vehement protest:

"Groping in a trackless thicket,
Meru's top o'erleaping wild,
Snatching at the moon to pick it—
So thou temptest Buddho's child!

"Nay, my soul is free from craving—
Earth and Heaven attest its void—
Long it grew, but since my saving,
Root and all have been destroyed."

THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS
Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

DELVE INTO FANTASY, MAGIC, MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

Forgotten Books'
Full Membership gives
access to 797,885 ancient
and modern, fiction and
non-fiction books.

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies

who will right our wrongs for us and humor our vagaries. When we grow older and are cast into the sea of life to swim for ourselves or sink, this feeling becomes grotesquely foolish. Still it may persist, as persists to the day of our death the conviction that there is a human paternity somewhere to look after us if we fail to look after ourselves; as persists also a craving for tolerant spiritual directorship which will relieve us from fidelity to our own consciences.

Such faults were woven into Revato's nature like a tape worm in the stomach of a sheep, and beside many others of greater complexity, they were blended with better instincts to right living. He candidly acknowledged to himself that his outward rectitude was supported upon a structure of diverse unprecedented reasons which was rotten in several of its members.

The self-pitying instinct in Revato was brought to its most violent exertion when he met Prote face to face and avoided addressing her. It was a sudden, unexpected encounter in Jivako's mango grove, where she was walking attended only by her maid Iasis. He turned into a by-path before she had time to accost him, but for an instant their eyes had met and she could not have doubted his recognition. The affront was so evident that she refrained from calling to him, as no doubt she would have done had she believed his slight unintentional.

By this act Revato felt that he had irretrievably cut himself off from the recent past and from any future that might have been linked to it. The conscious discourtesy, the unkindness, the ingratitude of his behavior overwhelmed him with shame. It was that shame which his ideals of renunciation required him to bear, yet in which renunciation he was deprived of spiritual reward, because he yielded the while to an unwholesome sorrow for himself and had incited himself to his deed partly by a desire to cause that sorrow.

THE GREATER CONSIDERATIONS

However, if Revato's moral motives contained unworthy elements, there were also good ones, according to the peculiar standards of his religion, and otherwise. He brought to bear the salutary arguments of death and decay. From a child he had willingly lived in a wakefulness to those facts which most people endeavor not to realize until they are brought close to the end of life.

Dissolution was ever going on in his mind. Not far from his home lay an old cemetery, or charnal ground, where the remnants of burned corpses were thrown and others placed whole to rot. It had been the child Revato's playground and its scattered bones his toys. No need to remind him of the monkish dhutanga virtue of *sosānikanga*, the exercise of dwelling in mortuary proximity and contemplation. He failed not of *padhāna*, exertion. When Prote's image now arose in his fancy, he transmuted it into a dead body; he pondered on putrification as the natural state of those concretions whose sound-

ness and beauty were impermanent, evanescent, transitory.

But it would discredit the dignity of Revato's mental condition to assume that Prote was the circumference, as well as the centre, of his circle. His ponderings dealt with solemn matters compared with which woman was a trifle. Though she might be the most tantalizing of any single allurements, there were facts before him that overrode the power of feminine attraction.

More difficult to cope with even than Prote's memory, was a yearning toward the world she typified, a world whose magnificent qualities he could not ignore and which he had vainly striven to fit into an appropriate place in his own universe. Her earth indubitably fostered the highest type of mankind from a cultural point of view. Rough-shod ambition was indispensable to its attainment. But if there was any truth in Buddho's teaching, such ambition was pernicious. Where then lay the fallacy? Were the objects of Yonaka striving good or bad?

They led, he reflected, to extremes both of happiness and of suffering. Diomedes had contended that the former more than compensated for the latter. Was he right?

No—and here the light broke into Revato's mind—intensity of joy was not a requital for intensity of anguish. Both were evils, the sorrow as a present calamity, the worldly joy because of its seductive effect upon the character.

Over Revato the Dhamma would have had little power had it treated the questions of suffering and death by ignoring them, by diverting attention to more cheerful subjects. To those who have learned the secret of sorrow, there is no real encouragement other than through a full recognition of its truth. In sadness is their only comfort and the *via dolorosa* is their only path to peace.

Revato's endeavor to quiet his hunger for things—things typified by those of the Ionian world—was not without indications of success. He had caught glimpses of a vision which for its clear beholder has the power of a blessed living death.

There were some in Ariya Land who taught that the universe is substantiated only by illusion and who ended their philosophy in a sense of utter nothingness. This was the goal of one of the highest Attainments in the meditations of the Buddhist sage. Others, but not of that faith, fixing their gaze upon the Eternal Spirit, became stone blind to the temporal. In either case, they and the world had reciprocally ceased to exist, they had entered that state of Nibbāna which is possible even before the elements of terrestrial life are dissolved.

Fortunate, Revato admitted, it was for the world's system (fortunate either for better or for worse) that the enlightened were few in number. To keep the earth's wheels turning quietly, illusion was an indispensable lubricant. Life was based upon self-deceit and shortsightedness, upon miscon-

ception of the near and imperception of the far. Were it not so, there would have been no effort, no progress. Calculation of results disarmed courage; estimation of probabilities crippled hope; vision of injustice paralyzed action; insight of realities reversed desire. Life understood became life impossible—but rarely it was understood. Men continued to be cajoled by caressing pleasures of the hour, or they were stimulated by expectations of the next hour, and if, when the next hour came, the anticipated enjoyment was deferred, they merely postponed it to the next, and the next, and so on till the end of their days. Those a little nobler minded fastened their eyes upon some coming perfection of society, which equally proved a mirage. Thus the lowest by illusions of sense, the higher by delusions of hope, were nourished on emptiness. The few who had apprehended the High must starve.

The conviction of terrestrial nothingness was for Revato neither a metaphysical hypothesis nor a Theistic emotion. He had no controlling belief in the idealistic philosophy clearly enunciated in the Vedānta and frequently upspringing, if not deeply rooted, in his own religion. Neither could he follow the Vedāntist devotees into any vivid, emotional experience of a Divine, Pervasive Person. But his mind was able to make judicial comparison of time and Eternity in their importance, a dispassionate judgment which resulted in passionate conviction. When, unexpectedly, in the dead of night, perhaps in starting up from a dream, he caught a glimpse of the future and all that it involves, the present shrank to such dimensions as if not existing at all; as if no pain or sacrifice here and now was of any consequence whatever. Beside these brilliant flashes of alarm, there were others, less coruscant, of wonder. Like the sunlight, defused and deadened by impending haze, so that the disk of the orb is invisible yet its effects pervading, he beheld the emanations from that Substance in which is comprised the Answer.

Fleeting as were his visions of living death, impossible as it was to sustain the intensity of emotion that they produced, their effects lasted over the intervals between them. If the awe of the Infinite did not extinguish the finite, at least a dread of the endless annihilated the transitory. Earth had dwindled to non-entity.

In his memory lingered a fragment which Diomedes had read him from the last words of a Yonaka muni condemned to death: "Is the deep mediation of the Enlightened One anything else than separation of the soul from the body? And is not this to die, for the body to be apart by itself, separated from the soul, and for the soul to subsist apart by itself separated from the body? Is death anything else than this?" Feelings worthy of an Arahāt! How different this serene detachment from Revato's own!

And yet, he pondered, were these no real values even in life? Was there nothing intrinsically worthy of endeavor?—Refreshment in Nature? Truth dis-

covery? Beauty perception? Beauty creation? Approbation of just men? Approval of conscience? Yes, these were good when related to the life that ends in Eternal Rest, which implied that they were bad as properties of the life that was hostile to it. Was it then inherently wrong to receive joy from such delights even in their earthly relations? Perhaps not wrong if they came as joys unsought, as by-products of self-discipline, but in any case extremely dangerous.

The quest for knowledge, for truth—was that also perverse? Did not Buddhō open his mind wide to all wisdom "that leadeth not to sin"? Yes, but it was said also of the Saint that "he is no follower of philosophical views, nor a friend of knowledge; he is indifferent to learning while others acquire it." Therefore, Revato inferred, even truth was an unworthy object of search if one were prompted by the cravings of a selfish curiosity.

Self-conquest was best aided, not by *tapa*, fiery trial, as the Brahmin ascetics contended, but, as the Master had sanely pointed out, by freedom from the thralldom of sensations, whether of delight or of agony. If even the voluntary sufferings of the devotee were futile, how much more deplorable was the great mass of human and animal misery that came unbidden! Contentment in plain, wholesome things—that was the true philosophy of life, the "Middle Way" of Buddhō.

There remained then one object of striving which, even physically, was right and good—the lessening of anguish. In the discernment of philosophic altruism was scope for the boldest speculations, most logical deductions. In the assuagement of worldwide anguish, in all artful works that might tend to such alleviation, lay ample opportunity for every man's strongest powers. Thus, while jealously avoiding all promotion of high aesthetics, the furtherance of humble ease opened unlimited fields for enterprise in politics, law, science, industry, and what not. Trifles as these things might be by comparison with Eternity, in themselves they were absolute.

To Revato was now ever present a corporeal reminder of those great departments of the sentient world which lie outside of humanity, though closely affiliated and, as his doctrine taught, reciprocally transmutable with it. Dukkho was now his constant attendant, a melancholy companion who, throughout the dog's own waking and even sleeping moments, evidenced himself by frequent low whines which seemed uncalled for by circumstances. A close sympathy was established between dog and master, a mutuality often evidenced by tokens of psychical intimacy at which Revato marveled. It was an instructive study for Revato to observe how every slight motion on his part was followed with understanding on the dog's part; how perfectly each could predict the other's movements, influence him by slight suggestions, tacitly indicate changes of mood and carry on sport which was clearly under-

stood to be such and was guarded by a code of honor against undue roughness, under which both parties felt perfectly secure.

A moral consciousness also was clearly shown in Dukkho. If Revato was weak enough to let an inward groan become vocalized, the dog would approach and paw upon him in altruistic pity. A foible to which the animal occasionally gave rein, in relaxation from his habitual sobriety, was the pursuit of kukkuktīs—hens. Once, while thus engaged, he was stung by a bee, whereupon he hid in shame for the remainder of the day, fully aware of the invisible kamma which had wrought his retribution.

Such traits of likeness between man and dog were indeed offset by a mountain of differences, of limits over which the latter could not pass. Revato hardly knew whether to call the similarities or antitheses more characteristic. But of this he was convinced, that if the contrasts were significant of great facts, the resemblances were also, and that they were enough to establish a very close relation between himself and the more helpless creatures that swarmed around him, a relationship demanding deep interest and pity both for this world and worlds to come. He was led by this thought as by many other of his independent reflections to the feet of his sapient Master.

SUÑÑATĀ—EMPTINESS

While disinterestedness thus had power to lay strong hold upon Revato, neither its claims nor those of religious self-seeking controlled him to the perfection of Saintship. His heart, after all, was a ravenous tiger. The old broken fetters of self-delusion and life-love were ever re-uniting about his limbs. Repeated failures taught him how better to direct his efforts for effectual release. He must be loosed from all sense of earthly possession other than as a mere licensee or a tenant at a will not his own. If the breezes blew they produced a grateful refreshment, but if they withheld their motion he would not complain. He would not say in the evening "I hope that tomorrow will be cool," for he had no claim on tomorrow nor on to-day. Peace comes only "When unremembered is the thought 'my own.'"

Trouble cannot lodge where there is nothing upon which trouble can take hold. There might be a logical defect, yet was there not also a great truth in the old verse:

"On covered roofs it falls,
But not on open roofs, the rain;
If but you will take off the roof,
'Twill ne'er be wet again?"

By such paradoxical policy, such abdication of ordinary prudence, reversal of the canons of reason, might be attained that Ultimate Condition which is described in a variant of the metaphor, that state of quiescence of turmoil and trouble when:

"The Wheel is broken, craving now is dead,
Nor flows the river on its dried-up bed;
Ne'er shall the shattered wheel roll on again,
And so is reached the Perfect End of Pain."

That desire in itself is an evil thing, Revato's common sense never could admit in the sweeping manner of his teachers. But his experience had otherwise led him to a nearly the same conclusion. He had found that almost invariably the wish for a thing raises a necessity to violate our sense of right just a little in order to obtain it. This presupposes a delicate conscience habituated to be on the alert for traces of evil. If the wish be not primarily wrong, it teazes a conscience thus practiced into detecting the wrong. The outcome is therefore an identification of wishing with depravity, which confirms practically, if not quite in theory, the doctrine of Buddhō that a taint inheres in desire.

If, at least, the question arises whether, in a particular case, duty lies with or against inclination, there is a strong presumption that they are opposed, because where they agree, action follows spontaneously and a conscious moral issue is not raised.

Two general rules might have summed up Revato's philosophy of moral discipline: Abstention, first from that which involves wrong and compromise; second, from that which has for its purpose luxury, as distinguished from comfort. But no purification of the body with a surgeon's knife was ever more severe than the one which the heart must undergo if subjected to these principles. Total severance of conscious worldly attachment must inevitably follow.*

Happiness which comes unbidden, therefore, is the only earthly form that is not alloyed. Even to suppress desire with a view to obtaining such happiness would be merely a self-deceiving indirection.

Not the outward cloister but the inward, Revato felt, was the residence of duty. To bear his part on earth oblivious to its seductions, this was his task.

Casual experience with the world should, he perceived, be made by a right spirit to subserve inward freedom. Thus, as had been said:

"No form-fancy kindling,
But haply beholding
Each object unyearning,
The vision is clear;
Sensation is dwindling,
Detachment unfolding;
The sorrow discerning,
Nibbāna is near."

*"We must learn to look upon life as an apprenticeship to a progressive renunciation, a perpetual diminution in our pretensions, our hopes, our powers and our liberty. The circle grows narrower and narrower; we begin with being eager to learn everything, to see everything, to tame and conquer everything, and in all directions we reach our limit—*non plus ultra*. Fortune, glory, love, power, health, happiness, long life, all these blessings which have been possessed by other men seem at first promised and accessible to us, and then we have to put the dream away from us, to withdraw one personal claim after another, to make ourselves small and humble, to submit to feel ourselves limited, feeble, dependent, ignorant and poor, and to throw ourselves upon God for all, recognizing our own worthlessness, and that we have no right to anything. It is in this nothingness that we recover something of life—the divine spark is there at the bottom of it. Resignation comes to us and, in believing love, we reconquer the true greatness."—H. F. Amiel.

Renunciation to Revato was no mere acknowledgment of external barriers, but a self immolation at heart. He was further aware—and this was the hardest of all—that it would go for naught if he solaced himself with secret bitterness. He should “live and die in the shade” but he must do so with unfeigned good cheer.

“How blissfully we live who nothing hold!
Like sparkling angels, we will feast on joy.”

It was the duty of such unnatural bliss that most made him feel the despair of his condition.

His mind anon reverted to that day after the Pavāranā festival when, on the Mountain of the Vulture’s Peak, he had instructed his reverend friends as to the meaning of Renunciation. How much more his ponderings of the few intervening months had taught him concerning the subtle implications of that word! The Venerables Bhāradvājo and Kondañño had by this time returned from the Cock Garden; Bhāradvājo had marvelously recovered strength and had been able to accompany his fellow, with a sturdy stride, back to the old Hill City. To them one day Revato unburdened the thoughts that pressed for utterance:

“If, after a man has thrust aside that which is most dear unto him, he reflects, ‘Perhaps this was unnecessary, unwise; maybe the time will come when I shall find it right to revoke my abdication; why should I exert my ingenuity to render such recall impossible?’—yet if, finding this ensealment of quit-claim more difficult than the main act, he nevertheless puts his purpose beyond possibility of reconsideration—he knows what it means to renounce.

“Have you not heard of the monk who loved his garden so well that after leaving the world he six times backslid by thoughts of his spade which he had concealed, yet finally, carrying it to the riverside, shutting tight his eyes and whirling it thrice around his head, he flung it with elephantine force straight into mid-stream, determined that it should not fall where he could fish it out again, and who then, as a lion roars, shouted: ‘I have conquered.’?”

“Or if, as it may befall, a man has already cast away what seemed to him the essence of his life, so that he becomes like dead; yet if, anon, in the sunshine, his animation renews and fresh joys begin to bud; if, in plain terms, his heart discovers residual or fresh interests, nursing them till they become full grown and take the place of the old ones, and if he must likewise sever them off, one by one—he knows what it means to renounce.

“Ah, but our grasping is like that of a monkey which lets go of one branch only to catch hold of another! Yes, when the heart of the mendicant, who has broken all other attachment, fixes only upon a dog, a tree, a mouse or a cockroach in his cell, it goes to show that the spirit is yet unsubdued. Think of the bhikkhu in the story who harbored a viper as a pet and who, when warned by Bodhisatto, answered

that it was dear to him and that he could not bear to part with it; for which obstinacy he lost his life.

“Ruthlessly, then, we must lop off every green sprout of desire although the very pruning stimulate a ranker growth. We are to stifle all sense of acquisition or property by treating everything we possess as a jewel picked up in the road, whose sparkle we may enjoy only until we find the owner. Yes, we must even combat that insidious guile with which we think to hold a vested interest of selfish delight in necessary acts, such as eating, and must cultivate rather the *pahānapariññā*—a clear consciousness of rejecting pleasures of appetite while we eat to sustain life. In his ‘Enunciations’ the Tathāgato declared:

“ ‘When power of ancient wrong is overthrown,
When old, corruptive dust no longer clings,
When unremembered is the thought “*my own*,”
Then age-long sorrows perish from their springs.’

“Perhaps, after one has broken the power of the five crude senses, there waxes acute that subtle sense which clamors, ‘*An-aññatāṅ ñassāmi*—I will know the unknown.’ He seeks happiness in the pursuit of wisdom and he thinks: ‘Though I have given up all my goods, my thoughts are my inalienable property; though I have subjugated my body, my mind cannot be suppressed; I seek only Truth and Truth is a right object.’ Then comes a misgiving and he begins to reflect: ‘Why do I pursue the Truth? Is it not for vain curiosity? Is it not for pride? Is it not for the bold enjoyment of confuting my elders? Is it not in hope that I may prove the blessed Dhamma to be false and with impunity may defy the law of Cause and Effect?’ Wisely did Bhagavā reprove our speculations on dark subjects—on the first origin of things, the eternity of the world, the nature of Nibbāna and similar problems which we cannot solve and which divert us from themes on which we need to ponder. And even to uproot weeds of error may be untimely if they are growing close to sacred flowers that risk destruction with them. For Truth is a fearful peril, and though it must finally prevail, that will not save him who injures others or himself by hasty meddling in word or thought. I say not that his duty lies in falsehood, but in silence. Hereby may it be known when to follow Truth is lawful—when she is sought after not with delight, but in travail of soul. For to the sage as to the sensualist, death lies in longing. He that for this cause slays his intellect—he knows what it means to renounce.

“Thus it was that Tālaputo struggled:

“ ‘Desire and folly I forsook, the bitter and the sweet—
Fair images and feelings dear that flesh or mind would greet,
These all alike I left behind—and shall I now retreat?’

“Wilt thou beguile me, O my heart, by cunning tricks concealed,
Again, again, once more, my strong resolve to yield?
To madness thou hast often lured, and led me far afield.

“Now this, my heart, at rest, at large, I’ll set before thy sight—
That where a wish is there is love, and where is love, delight;
So, like a raging elephant, I’ll handle thee aright.’

"Having put away all the pleasures of mind, as well as of sense, is there not a reward in the approbation of good men? But some are called upon to forego even this, to let themselves be misunderstood, be charged with ungenerosity, ingratitude, cowardice, dishonor, when a word would refute the accusation—a word which must not be spoken. It has often seemed to me that no other part of the Great Renunciation could have been to the Blessed One so full of anguish as bearing the reproach of unkindness when he left those near to him in order to seek salvation for all mankind. Whoever consents unjustly to be reviled of men and women—he knows what it means to renounce.

"Being harassed, as we have seen, by the mistaken scorn of mankind, the heart would take refuge in its own impervious cavern. But self-approbation, which there dwells, is a most venomous snake and will sting to death every housemate. When even a faultless life has become an object of clinging, it turns to poison like other desires, and occasion may arise for its painful sacrifice. How few there be, bhante, who can interpret this saying, that 'the craving for brahmachariya'*—for pure life—is among those which ought to be destroyed. This meaning I have found therein: Since all conduct must be a choice between wrongs, the lesser preferred to the greater, it will often occur that those works should be elected which most humiliate spiritual pride by destruction of fond ideals, and this will especially be true where the heart most yearns for its own peace. Whoso thus mortifies even his conscience—he knows what it means to renounce."

"You are preaching heresy, Layman!" exclaimed the Venerable Kondañño. "For the arahat there is no choice of evils, but he is perfect in all his deeds. Remember how the Blessed One declared: 'There are those who take for truth the teaching of the trouble maker that, whatever one attains to, it is sprinkled over with evil. There is a second opinion, that no harm resides in lusts. Both of these views of life—despair of good and sensuality—enlarge the realm of death. And that, in turn, tends to the increase of speculation?'"

"Does the arahat," asked Revato, "never walk abroad after dark?"

"Certainly," Kondañño answered, "if for a good work."

"And when he starts out, is he not aware that he will most likely trample to death some earth worm? This assuredly is a choice of evil."

"With your subtleties you are impugning wisdom of the Buddho," retorted Kondañño; "but you do only confirm the truth of his word, that the ascription of evil to the holy redounds to pernicious speculation. You who but now were asserting that men ought to renounce their right to speculate!"

*Iti-Vuttaka, sec. 54, which I follow Moore in taking at its face value, despite the suspicion that an error has somewhere entered.

"I did not claim that we should never speculate," answered Revato, "but that we should do so with discrimination. We must fit our discourse to the hearer, avoiding what would stimulate his disposition and rather applying a wholesome corrective. To you, soaring in your windy sanctimony, I may speak words that would be serpents' fangs to some ignorant worshipper in yonder licentious deva temple.

'When others fall, I rise,
When others rise, I fall,'

as you are fond of quoting from saint Piyañjaho of old."

"A moment ago," argued Kondañño taking a new tack, "you were contending for uncompromising perfection of life, as if the slightest wrong would taint it wholly. But now you affirm that all conduct is a balancing of evils. I cannot reconcile the two theories."

"A slight wrong," answered Revato, "becomes a great wrong if it be a necessary stepping stone to a great object. When done for a purpose it must be measured thereby. To such wrongs I especially referred. Some evils, moreover, are totally condemned by their very nature. Among them are all words and acts that are not transparent in candour. Honesty differs from many virtues in this, that it admits no compromise. Again, where inaction is possible, we are less justified in doing a wrong than where no passive alternative is offered. For which cause, I am every day more sluggish to act. I do not claim that these arguments are perfect. We are dealing with elusive matters. I own that I feel promptings to bolder reasonings, such as I dare not suggest even to you.— But enough of this, for I must finish telling you what it means to renounce.

"In its despair, the mind will clutch at self-pity, as a man swept away by a freshet on Gangā river snatches a drifting log. Such inward grasp is more difficult to break than the hold of him who drowns. If Anando, gentlest of all the disciples, was excluded from the Great Council and held back from sainthood until he had ceased to harbour a grudge in his heart, how can we break the fetters while we cherish an injured spirit? When we have flayed ourselves for duty's sake, are we forbidden to cry out with pain? He who, having thus flayed himself, does not cry out even in spirit—he knows what it means to renounce."

Still at times was Revato brought back to a source of solace. The strongest aid in his difficulties, one to which in his most harrassing trials he could turn with assurance of soothing and stimulus, was the power of a compelling, yet winning personality.

An atmosphere almost of holy clearness sometimes enveloped him when he dwelt upon the calm, spotless life of his enlightened lord. As his thoughts turned from Prote and those things which she and hers represented, to him who, upon these same forested hills, had gone out from every household

gain and comfort and had lived unmoved by the enticements of the world, Revato realized the weakness and shame of any yielding in himself, and he perceived how full with the true elements of satisfaction were the compensatory privileges of those who immolated their earthly hearts.

RAIN

Such, during the months that dragged along after Revato's return to Rājagaha, was his inward life, that is to say his true life. His outward life, if that mattered, was marked by few incidents. He continued to perform the duties of his office in a mechanical way, for in-so-far as he had mastered the hopes and fears connected with it, and had assumed indifference to personal results, however dolorous, the moral stress to immediate change pressed less heavily upon him, and whether wisely or mistakenly, his conscience for the time being tolerated a cautious policy of *laissez faire*.

The two months of Hemanta, early Winter, which season had chiefly comprised his visit at Pātaliputta, were soon over and were followed by the chills of Sisira, the cool, dewy time. A new year came in almost abreast with Vasanta, that far-too-brief period of vernal transition when, remembering our shivers, we welcome their relief, heedless of the worse fate that is in store. Quickly it merged into Gimha, Summer, a time of parching heat, when verdure burned from the fields, forest brooks and springs dried up, birds cowered with spreading beaks, four-footed beasts lay dead of thirst and the valleys were thick with mountain serpents which had quitted their rocky dens in quest of water.

When the month Asālha drew near, the hangsas, wild swans, might have been descried high aloft, in flocks, flying toward Himavanta, to spend their breeding season about the Anottata tarn on Mount Kelāsa. At the same time, the mendicants of the Order in companies or in pairs or singly, were returning from their scattered alms and preaching tours to pass the coming lenten season at Rājagaha. Day by day they continued to wander in, until hundreds, even thousands, had arrived and taken up their residences in the sanghārāmas of the Bambu and Mango groves. Some, more zealous and some more traditional than the rest, sought out meditative grottoes on the mountain sides or framed and thatched for themselves grass huts, like the disciples of yore.

● Eager to inward compellings,
Houselife and home they forsake,
Dallying not in their dwellings,
Flitting like swans from their lake.

Among those who passed on from the comfortable monasteries to special retreats in more austere quarters, were the Venerable Bhāradvājo and the Venerable Kondañño, who, as usual, resorted to the huts on the Vulture's Peak.

Suddenly, one night, the sky became radiant with forked lightning playing against the tops of

Vipula and Vebhāra, the air grew resonant with thunder and the world was swept by a southeast gale like the all-destroying wind at the end of an aeon—the Yugantavāto.

Water poured as if Sakko were bringing down the Gangā of the heavens. It was the beginning of the monsoon, which had broken up the summer.

After its violence abated, its clouds lingered over the country, discharging a constant downpour, which laid the dust and turned vegetation green, though the forest trees were bared by the gales. Vassāna, the Rainy Season, had begun.

Their lenten retirement was, of all yearly events, dearest to the fervent souls of those brethren who minded not the depressing influences of the constant rains. It was a time for hard spiritual exercises, for exalted rhapsodies. Those most ardently seeking seclusion had penetrated into the deep woods and passed weeks at the foot of some tree in the dripping jungle encompassed by boars, antelope, deer and snakes. Thus long ago the Thera Tālaputo:

When will the time of the rain outpour
New-born waters adown on me,
In my hermit's dress on the greenwood floor
In the way of the Master who comes no more—
When shall it be?

When shall I sit in the caverned hill
Where the peacock's call comes in to me
And I hear the skyward songbird's trill
And I soar to a sky that is higher still—
When shall it be?

When, as the maul of the hell-world flings
Gangā's terrible floods at me,
Shall I sap their power in their utmost springs—
There is naught to harm but in him who clings—
When shall it be?

When shall I war, with an elephant's ire,
On the sensuous foes that encompass me,
Till I feel decay in its cause expire
And my soul is rapt with a mystic fire—
When shall it be?

Revato sought company with his two friends at the Vulture's Peak less often than formerly, and, when he came, there was in him a listlessness not unnoticed.

"It must be due to the weather," he said when questioned. Hardly could an explanation have been more plausible. Never throughout a four months' vassa had the rain poured down more continually. It flowed in perpetual torrents through the mountain gullies, swelling the Sarassatī brook to a mighty river and flooding the fields about the walls of the new town. The unseen sun diffused its heat over the earth, day and night, lifting the fallen water in vapor like the mists of the hot springs, to remain low-suspended over all the earth and discharge in a sluggish drizzle upon the now defoliate forest. In the rain came myriad creeping and flying and crawling and gliding creatures to torment and terrify the sleepless hours of darkness.

Only twice during this long Lenten period, did the receding clouds disclose the moon. On these two

nights, so delightful for their rarity, open air preaching services were held in the Mango Grove. People of the city and from neighboring villages came to sit on the grass in a glade of the park and listen to the monks as they instructed and admonished or told tales from the Jātakas to draw the attention of the more ignorant hearers. Aside from

these occasions, life was an oppression. Caravan trade was halted by the swollen rivers and the doors of the custom house closed for lack of business. Revato was left with nothing to do but to turn his thoughts deeper into his heart, woeful retreat as that might be from the dismal prospect outside.

CHAPTER XIII

A VISION OF LIFE

“Just as when, O Brethren, at the end of the last month of Summer, the dust and dirt are destroyed by a great unseasonable storm which perforce allays and suppresses them, even thus, O Brethren, when *Intent Contemplation in Breathing* is practiced, increased and perfected, yea when it is sweet, pleasant, delightful and enduring in the effect produced, it perforce allays and suppresses bad, evil things.

With the month Asālha, when the days are longest, had come that monsoon which broke up the Summer, but its benefit had been illusory, for not even the scorching drought could so depress the heart of man and Nature as did the steaming rains which ensued. Some alleviation was felt after the first two vassa months, when Autumn coolness crept into the air. A more beneficent change overspread the world toward the end of the fourth month when, as Assayuga was giving place to Kattika, a north wind came from Himavā, driving together the clouds and shepherding them down the sky like flocks of sheep.

“In the last month of the rain,” as an old recitation runs, “in Autumn time, when the sky is clear and the clouds have rifted, the sun, ascending the sky and pervading all that is situate either in light or in darkness, doth shine and glow and radiate.” Thenceforward by day the heaven became a deep blue wherein at evening the stars expanded like loti on a lake. In the valleys plentiful kāsa grass arose, rapidly approaching its wonted height of ten or twelve cubits and whitening the land with its silvery wool. Leaves and blossoms of every sort put out on trees and ground, for the season of early Hemānta, Winter, was the true time of Spring. The air had become resilient and hard as glass; it quickly dried up the dampness of the fields and forests, save where floods remained in great pools. Likewise it dried the sweat and the tears of mankind. In the alternations of earth, which, like man, is fated to endless sangsāra, this among the times of year is Brahmāloka. While Farmers went forth to plough and ditchers to dig, the brethren, who till themselves, set out upon their annual travels, not without confidence of support by the way and readiness of spiritual ministry to others.

Under the influence of this season, Revato the Layman resorted one day to the forest at the foot of

the Vulture’s Peak mountain for the purpose of breathing. It was not to be the inhalation of the light-hearted holiday maker, nor yet of the suffocated lungs which might physically crave these crisp northern airs, but the measured, prolonged, thoughtful, purposive, expiration and inspiration of the striver after peace.

“Forests are delightful,” says one; “where the world findeth no delight, there the passionless will find delight, for they seek not after pleasures.”

This eremitic exultation was heard in many of the psalms familiar to Revato; in none more rapturously than that of Ekavihāriyo, the Dweller Alone. He was identical with King Asoko’s younger brother, Prince Tisso, who after these blissful experiences at Rājagaha, had gone to end his days in a monastery of that distant southern land, Kālinga.

THE SONG OF EKAVIHĀIYO, THE ANCHORITE

If before me, if behind me, treads no follower to intrude,
Sweet the season that shall find me deep in sylvan solitude.

Let me seek those wildernesses which the Enlightened Lord
extolled.
Glad the monk whose purpose presses far to the deserted wold.

Trained in rapture-kindling trances, soon sensation falls away;
Though the elephant advances, bold I to the woodland stray.

Fair the flowers in Sīta’s ramble, where, what time my limbs I lave,
Up the mountain side I’ll amble to the coolness of a cave.

Solitary, unprotected, in the beautiful great wood,
I will dwell—how soon perfected, purged the wrong, performed
the good?

Prosper now my strong intention, let my strenuous will succeed,
Doing, void of intervention, mine, and not another’s deed.

By myself the conquest winning, I will tread the jungle track,
All decay and root of sinning purging e’er I turn me back.

Where, on perfumed, fresh perflations, tree-flung scents come
fluttering down,
I will rend my crude illations seated on the green hill’s crown.

Cool the mountain cave around me, ripe the flower-clad grove
distils,
Dear the land where I’ve unbound me—Fortress of the Circling
hills.

Waxing will pervades me stronger as the discal moon inflates
Sin shall compass me no longer, nor a new becoming waits.

Get Smart

Over 2,000 years of
human knowledge in
797,885 volumes

Instant access
\$8.99/month

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies



vato did likewise.) "Inhaling a long breath, he reflects, 'I am inhaling a long one.'" (Thus did Revato.) "Exhaling a long one, he reflects, 'I am exhaling a long one.' Inhaling a short one, he reflects 'I am inhaling a short one.' Exhaling a short one, he reflects 'I am exhaling a short one.'"

Revato obeyed the regulations conscientiously, changing between the meditative and the reverential attitude each moment, but so far he felt no effect. However, this was only the beginning, so patiently he continued to follow the stages of the discipline.

"He exercises, 'I will inhale conscious of all my body.' He exercises, 'I will exhale conscious of all my body.' He exercises, 'I will inhale with respiration tranquilized.' He exercises, 'I will exhale,' etc. 'I will inhale feeling joy,' etc. 'I will inhale feeling delight,' etc."

Revato felt neither joy nor delight. The words only mocked him. He might make efforts at tranquilization frantic enough to tear himself to pieces, but he could not convert his discontented heart into a contented one. Still he persisted:

" 'I will inhale and exhale experiencing attention and consideration. I will inhale and exhale with attention and consideration tranquilized. I will inhale and exhale, conscious of my mind. I will inhale and exhale with mind rejoicing—with mind composed—with mind passionless—contemplating Impermanence—contemplating Desirelessness—contemplating Cessation—contemplating Salvation.'—Thus one inhales, thus he exhales."

Revato completed this programme as well as he was able. In attention to the overt acts of respiration, he had followed instructions, but his endeavors to meditate coördinately on moral truths had not succeeded. The psychic horse in the team required constant goading. His thoughts were forced and mechanical, and fugitive at that. He was aware that he had failed to concentrate properly and that his real viewpoint throughout had been that of a critical, almost cynical looker at himself.

Still, this was only a first attempt; long self-training might be necessary. Revato determined that he would coerce his unruly mind and repeat the exercises until he succeeded or proved success impossible.

Again and again he applied the formula, sometimes with signs of progress, sometimes without them. By the time the sun showed noon, he had gone over it more than twenty times. This, he thought, was almost enough proof that he had never been born for "tranquilization of mind in breathing."

He reflected, however, that what other men had accomplished, he should be able to achieve if he persisted, and therefore prepared himself to devote the whole afternoon and night, if need be, to exertions. Though hungry and thirstier, he denied himself food, taking only a few swallows of water from a basin formed between two trees that had sprouted from an old stump.

The afternoon proved a duplicate of the morning except for its greater weariness. By dusk Revato was in a state of exhaustion which bore some faint resemblance to the Jhāna trances. The hope that this likeness might mean a genuine identity put him into a nervous tremor, yet a subdued one—for he was so tired and drowsy. He had ceased to apply the breathing exercise and was respiring at random. His thoughts were no longer confined to orthodox subjects of meditation but strayed off unchecked.

The jungle about him shut off all distant prospects. While the sun glow remained, his gaze reached no farther than the rocks in front of him. One huge boulder had been cleft in two, perhaps that very one taken by the blessed Master to symbolize the state of him who is cloven from the company of the faithful. A separation as complete, it seemed to Revato, had been his first, last and ever.

As darkness thickened, his attention wandered to the sharp outlines of the tree tops fringing a narrow field of star-strewn sky. At the end of the valley was a glow indicative of the rising moon, but elsewhere the depths of the forest were unlighted save by fire-flies and glow-worms near or farther off, which marked the varying translucency of the foliate regions. Among those multiform trees and creepers, now indistinguishable, his mind's eye roved with the appreciation of a native woodlover. Sweet smells, drifting to him from the campakas and candanas, soothed him and floated his fancy along. He told himself that he could hear the minute rustle of the *sumanā*, the great flowered jessamine, in the still air; could feel the fall of celestial *mandārava* blooms, as upon the new-born and dying *Buddho*, and with them many other flowers, from *kanaka* and *vakula*, from *pāṭali* and *punnāga*.

Greatest of all the forest, the *Nigrodha*, banyan, spread wide, sheltering his numerous progeny, his support in old age yet doomed to be crushed by his fall. Beside him fluttered the fairy-leaved *Assattha*—the *Bodhirukkha*—the Wisdom Tree, under which *Gotamo* the *Sākiyan* had persisted through fortnights of vigil and exertion, like Revato's own, to a complete victory. It was not insignificant that *Buddho's* tree should be the lady of the woodland, for she represented a religion whose strength lay where woman's virtues do, in humility and forbearance.

By and by, the hunger of Revato's fasting led his imagination to trees ministrant of food: the *amba*, the *jambu*, the *tinduka*, the *labuja* or bread-fruit, and the banana. After them he came to the bitter *nimba*, at which his thoughts lingered longer than under the other fructiferous trees.

Growing round about, darkened but clear to the mind's eye, were the robust trunks of teak and iron-wood, while on yonder mountain side thickened a forest of *sāla*. At the picture of these timber trees, so useful to builders and architects, Revato's heart leapt, smitten with an intrusive emotion, but by forceful habit he stifled it. He turned his thoughts

to another association of the sāla, for between its twin-grown trunks had been laid the couch of the dying Tathāgato.

Now Revato's heart wandered off among pārijātikas, coral trees, and simbalis, the soft silk-cotton trees, of Nandana garden in the Heaven of Sense. Again, it returned to the earthly jungle and was contritely fixed upon the latās, creeping vines, of many sorts, which grew as tree parasites, twining and tangling upon large, strong trunks such as the sāla, spreading them over with gorgeous flowers but strangling out their robust lives and fating them to an early decay. So tanhā, craving, climbs and clings about mankind.

He felt the members of this woodland growth to be his comrades, citizens with himself in the mysterious republic of life and linked with him in further relations of destiny perhaps deep and far-reaching. He envied the trees. They too must decay, but they would never know it, and some of them might survive him by a thousand years. Theirs was the beauty of life without its misery and dark future, for had not Buddho taught that they are free from our Wheel? Yet might they not be in a wheel of their own? Did their prolific vanity, like that of the sentient world, store up a bad kamma, reserved to work out retribution? Could desire permeate even their insensibility? These were hard questions.

But since Revato had become too drowsy to hold himself up in continued self-reproach, his mind fell off upon humble low-growing shrubs such as the asoka plant—the bitterless.

Anon he began to remember old tales about the spirits that are sometimes domiciled in trees, and how those near neighbors of our houses offer us many opportunities for reciprocal kindness and helpfulness. From these and other stories, dear to his childhood, taught by the monks and believed by the people, issued a sylvan population of gentle fairies and fierce or benevolent monsters, serpentine Nāgas and devouring Yakkhas, winged Garulas and musical Gandhabbas. With them came an impulse to acknowledge their reality—an impulse the source and association of which he did not recall, but which urged him to a naïve acceptance of this friendly or mischievous company, invisible at the moment but ever lurking and liable to spring out. It was with a bitter sense of emptiness that his incredulity dismissed them.

All at once, Revato's attention was drawn by his sense of hearing, and the forest became to him alive with noises before unnoticed. Insects and birds, hairy four-footed creatures, were arousing each other by their nocturnal voices. Buzzing around were little gnats, gad-flies, and mosquitoes. Jhallikā, crickets, chirped. Confusedly were mingled the "kekā" of the peacock; the "uhu" of the uhunkāra, hoot-maker—owl; the drum-beat of the wood-pecker; the gossip of the parrot; the taunt of the kokila, cuckoo; the mutual warnings of monkeys at

approach of a snake; the crackling dash of deer; the clumsy tramp of an elephant. From afar came the gurgling note of the hangsa, wild goose, or the ruddy goose, the vakkanga. There might be heard also the howls of more ferocious beasts—boars, wild dogs, jackals, hyenas or tigers.

Some deep-voiced animal would call to its mate in tones of loving passion. A little sārī bird shrieked in the claws of a sakunagghī, hawk, which was carrying it off to be devoured by her offspring, for their nourishment and growth, that soon they might go forth from the nest, mate and raise future broods of hawks to be fed on other little birds.

Their tunes were many but their song was one, the song of life, life abounding, life exuberant, life jubilant in the fresh, expansive winter season, eager to perpetuate and multiply itself, eager to increase by destroying others.

Within the compass of Revato's ear clamoured the population of a world, type and parcel of still larger worlds, all full of the same fatuous craving, striving and attainment—mamāyitā kāmā—the lust of self. This hour an ecstasy of self-realization, the next spoliation, anguish, decay and death; but in death, life continued to repeat the same round of production, suffering and dissolution, ever increasing as it rolls on.

All playful imaginations, all self-magnifications, in Revato were chased away by pity—pity unlimited in its breadth and height and depth, by which he was himself included, but only as one among the myriads, brother to the meanest glow-worm on the grass.

His mind reverted to the beginningless past from which he believed he had come up through every one of these forms of sentient life around him, feeling in succession all their joys and woes. Thus, by imagination, if not by supernal vision, he attained to the Saint's miraculous retrospect, and this became generalized as the Divine Eye, which rested not on merely personal experiences, but through them watched the flow and permutation of all the universe.

Ineffably sad as were these dreamy fancies, they shaded off into peace, and thence his emotion began to rise deliciously. Bliss pervaded him, as of the Deva worlds long ago passed through, or perhaps the joy of forgotten infancy. All sorrow melted into happiness, and this moved with an assured rhythm.

Finally the melody assumed a definite, vocal character. It came from far in the distance, a sound which was not of the forest denizens. It arose from the limit of audition and swelled out as it drew nearer. The sound was a song in men's voices accompanied by reedy pipes. Closer it approached, until the words became distinguishable, words in a foreign tongue, yet not unheard before:

"Flowing with milk is the ground, and with wine it is flowing, and
flowing
Nectar of bees; and a smoke, as of incense of Araby soars;
And the Bacchanal, lifting the flame of the pine, ruddy-glowing,
Waveth it wide, and with shouts, from the point of the wand as it
pours,

Challenges revellers straying, on-racing, on-dancing, and throwing
Loose to the breezes his curls, while clear through the chorus that
 roars,
Cleaveth his shout."

Now shone the glare of torches. Onward came the bearers along a pathless way, dashing through the thickets and clambering over rocks. They were passing Revato, within the distance to which an average man can throw a clod of earth—a group of bearded males in the dress of women, mantled with deer skins. Their heads were crowned with ivy and they bore, beside the torches of resinous wood, wands with blunt, conical ends, which they brandished to their shouts of “Evoë! Evoë!” Responsive to this Euan cry, came the applause of “Sādhu! Sādhu!” from low-caste natives who followed them.

At the front of their band they led a heifer clad in drapery like their own, which beast those behind it were goading and prodding with their wands to urge its clumsy gait through the impeding bushes.

But the most appalling sight was an emblem borne aloft by the foremost of the party—a vile symbol recognizable in the torchlight as having been pilfered from the gateway of a neighboring deva temple.

Among the rioters Revato saw several whose faces he knew, including Nereus, the boatman, and Aristocrates, the skilful sculptor.

“Re, Re! Tittha re! Hello, hello! Stop, hello!” called Revato.

Aristocrates slackened his pace.

“Kuto āgato 'si tvang?—Whence comest thou?” called the Layman.”

“Ἦκω Κιθαιρῶν' ἐκλιπών, ἴν' οὐποτε
λευκῆς ἀνείσαν χιόνος ἐξαυγεῖς βολαί.”

chanted Aristocrates. Then he repeated in the vernacular, as a condescension to Revato's ignorance of the nobler tongue:

**"I from Kithairōn come, where never fail
The glistening silver arrows of the snow."**

By that time he and the humbler oarsman, now oblivious of differences in degree, had seized Revato by the arms with violent joviality and they bore him along in the front of the procession. Singularly, he offered no resistance. They pressed to his lips a flask of wine and he drank a long swallow of the unaccustomed fluid, which went to his head and raised him from the depths to the summit of the world. He was no longer tired, he was no longer sorrowful, he was no longer dignified; he was filled with energy to vent in a frantic dash through the thickets with his hilarious company.

Behind them straggled a party of disreputable pariahs bearing vessels like those of the mysterious soma cult, in which doubtless they had feigned a membership to ally themselves with the Yonas in bibulous rites. Revato could now behold

them with contemptuous yet kindly amusement, which did not detract from his adventurous enjoyment.

A forced, but unreluctant, convert to this boisterous forest worship, Revato's heart now overflowed from unsuspecting springs of enthusiasm. He had become a participant with all his soul in this festival to the amiable woodland deities; in a celebration, as they would have mortals celebrate, of the fresh young season in its totality of verdure and in its delicious particular manifestations.

“Glad on the mountains is the worshipper
When from swift revel-bands
Upon the earth he falls,
Wearing the sacred fawn-skin robe, and thirsting
For blood of goats, eating with joy raw flesh,
Climbing the Phrygian and Lydian mountains,
But Bromios the leader is, Evøe!”*

Across the gullies they rushed, along their sightless path, and up the slopes of Gijjhakūta, whose steepening acclivity they now were fain to clamber more laboriously; sometimes dropping to hands and knees, yet ever forging onward. A luckless Yona was bitten by a snake and fell to the ground in shrieking terror. His companions passed on without stopping for him, but an enthusiast seized the serpent by its neck and carried it along, fondling it.

They reached the lofty open space on the mountain and flung down their torches to sputter among the rocks. Then, without delay or ritual, their leader drove a knife into the throat of the panting heifer and the impetuous ones rushed to drink her blood as it spouted, hurling themselves pell-mell and fighting with each other no less than with the struggling animal for the thick, warm beverage.

Revato recoiled and stood for a moment watching the feast. How familiar were the outlines of the surrounding rocks in the torchglare and moonlight! He did not at first realize the reason; then there darted through him a memory that this was the hallowed scene of Buddho's meditations. The recollection thereof struck into him like the first agonizing thrust of the executioner's stake.

As a wretch dragging himself away though transfixed by the impaling timber, he fumbled his way toward the path that led down the ravine to the old city and looked not back after his raving associates.

Yet their voices followed him. The more moderate among them still carried by the grand enthusiasm of the orgy, rather than by its beastliness and abominations, continued with their disciplined voices to chaunt the chorus:

“ Ἰκοίμαν ποτὶ Κύπρον,
νᾶσον τᾶς Ἀφροδίτας,
ἐν ᾗ θελξιφρονες νέμον-
ται θνατοῖσιν Ἑρωτες—

*This is in Kerr's versification, the foregoing two quotations are Way's and the final one the author's.

"Hence, Oh I'd hie me to Cyprus,
Isle of the Foam-born Goddess,
Range of desirous Eroses,
Skilful in mortal enchantments!
Fruitful its rainless meadows,
Moist in the mazily flowing
Streams of an alien river.
What still is the crown-land of beauty?
Pieria, holden of Muses,
Slope of Majestic Olympus.
There shalt thou bring me, O Bromios,

Bromios, first of the Bacchanals,
Lord where the Euan cry soundeth.
There, with the Graces, desire also dwelleth,
There Bacchanals revel in rites unforbidden."

The words were strange but the melody was a sufficient interpreter to him of their yearning aspiration and freedom. This parting song remained with him as a reality while all other experiences of the past day and evening slunk away like a nightmare.

CHAPTER XIV

YUGANTAVĀTO—THE AEON-ENDING TEMPEST

Before the horse dealer Assamusāvādiko, of New Rājagaha, had given his merchandise its morning nutriment, he beheld at his gate Revato, the Customs Collector, who addressed him in hasty words:

"Re! sappuriso, my good fellow, how many yojanas can your best horse travel in a day?"

"My horse Vāyu, Sir, can travel twelve yojanas in a day, Sir, without sweating beyond the saddle."

"What is his price?"

"Two thousand five hundred kahāpanas, Sir."

"Bring him here at once, ready to mount. You may call at my office for the money!"

"Sādhu, Sādhu!" exclaimed the trader, amazed at such simplicity in driving a bargain and fearful lest it would be reconsidered before payment.

The horse Vāyu was accordingly fetched, with saddle and bridle. Silently Revato sprang upon him and galloped away.

A familiar bark sounded at his heels. It was the voice of Dukkho.

"Apagaccha, Apagaccha—go away, go away!" commanded Revato. I have permitted thee to follow me everywhere else this whole year. Here thou canst not come. Yāhi, yāhi—go, go!"

On through the streets he coursed while the startled burghers rushed to their doors to stare after him, till he reached the northern gate. Through that gate he had passed in the same direction, almost exactly a year before, in how different a frame of mind toward how different a world!

As a result of chance coincidence contributed to by the perennial regularity of monastic habits, the Venerable Kondañño and the Venerable Bhāradvājo were starting out that same day for their annual Fall countryside wanderings. Revato overtook them less than half a yojana beyond the new town. Coming up to them on a rough gallop, he dismounted and placed Vāyu's bridle in Bhāradvājo's hand.

"Ride him for me, bhante. I cannot proceed in this way any longer. I am in too great a hurry, I will run on foot."

"You know, āvuso, that it is unlawful for me to ride," answered Bhāradvājo.

"Then lead the beast. For I have no time to wait the procrastinations of horses."

"Where are you going?"

"To Pātaliputta."

"Turn back, my son, turn back."

"I cannot."

"Take this warning," groaned Bhāradvājo: "Last night the Evil One, Namuci Māro and his frightful host beset me in my hut on the Vulture's Peak, as they did the Blessed One in his exertions by the river Nerañjarā. And what form do you think they assumed? They appeared as Yonakas. Turn back, my son, oh turn back," and the Venerable Bhāradvājo began to weep.

Nothing, however, might now restrain Revato. In such frantic restlessness that he could not content himself with the passivity of an equestrian, he compelled upon Venerable Bhāradvājo the custody of Vāyu and forged ahead by strides which soon distanced him from the clerical party.

Estimate the possibilities of such a nervous energy, its first intensity, its power of endurance under early winter skies, and credibility will admit that he covered the twelve yojanas of road to Pātaliputta by the afternoon of the second day.

The Hiraññabāhu river, where he met it, was in greater flood than the year before and he had difficulty in getting past the overflowed region.

Arrived at the grounds of the palace, he passed the office of his friend Dabbo Kumāputto, the Dhammayutta, who hailed him from within with a vociferous greetings, then added in a lower tone:

"A prudent measure on your part, Revato, to come and pay your respects to the Regent thus early!"

"The Regent?"

"Yes, haven't you heard. Dasaratho has been in control these five days."

"But what of the Great King Asoko?"

"He is Great King still, but in name only. They will conceal the true situation from him if possible. For the present, Dasaratho calls himself merely Yuvarājā, Junior King."

"And what will this lead to?"

"A gradual change of policy, no doubt, a return to former conditions. Dasaratho has announced that he does not pretend to be wiser than all other rulers of the earth in methods of governing a people. The chief innovation at present is in the royal almonry office. The Treasury will not hereafter be impoverished to fatten unworthy incompetents whether animals or human beings. Donations to religious orders will be somewhat differently distributed. In fact, some attempt may be made to compensate for partiality shown to ours in the past."

"Yes, for instance?"—prompted Revato.

"The new Yonaka building on the Island," said Dabbo, "which was intended as a sanghārāma for our Sākiyaputtiya samanas will be turned over to the Niganthas, who will convert the sālā into a temple of gods."

"But that would destroy the significance of its plan and decorations to which so much skill and pains have been devoted."

"Tāta—my dear friend"—said Dabbo, "you and I as public office holders by favor of the Court, believe that it will *not* destroy the significance of plan and decoration, but rather that it will adapt the building to the appropriate use for which it was unwittingly conceived and which has remained for the Yuvarājā Dasaratho by his luminous wisdom to discover."

Revato was so angered at this temporizing speech as to sacrifice all further gratifications of his curiosity by Dabbo. He proceeded at once to the house of Diomedes.

At the architect's door Revato knocked repeatedly with the ring in the lion's mouth, but could obtain no answer. Finally a neighbor woman called from a window across the way and told him that she thought no one was at home. During the past few days she had seen many carts loaded there with strongly bound bundles presumably filled with household chattels. That day she had observed nothing but the closed port.

Forthwith Revato went down to the river bank at Gotamo's Ferry where the Ionians had been wont to embark for the island. Then, for the first time, he realized the magnitude of the freshet. The tributary rivers reaching to lands which only his fancy knew, had collected, from the late unprecedented rains, huge volumes of water which, after long transit, were now being crowded into the throat of Gangā to be spilled over the lowlands. Already a higher stage had been reached than for many years, several of the city streets were inundated and the flood was rapidly rising.

The wharf at which the Yonaka boats had been moored was visible only in its highest reach of bank. Their larger boat lay there now, but the little Water Nāgī craft was missing. Revato found the old ferryman Nadītariko but could obtain from him no important information concerning the foreigners.

"Make ready your boat and row me to the island," commanded Revato.

"Impossible, Sir. Look at those waves; see how those trees go down the stream. We should be swept to destruction."

"Rent me your boat then at any figure and I will go alone."

Revato thrust into the poor man's hand a gold suvanna which was almost enough to buy the vessel outright; then against tears and prayers of the terrified owner, he launched into the rapids.

To reach the island or fail, was a matter quick of decision. The current would bear him down upon it in almost no time if by a few vigorous paddle strokes he could supply the cross component of motion.

Fortune and alertness favored him. Before he realized it, his keel, impelled by the momentum of the passage, was scraping far over the submerged reeds of the island shore. The water had risen about the vihāra walls and flooded the courts so that Revato pushed his boat through the gate into the first quadrangle. He noticed the thūpa in the middle, which did not seem much higher built than a year before, yet which a second glance showed to be substantially progressing. The gateway leading into the second court was sufficiently unobstructed to let the boat pass.

This yard was still unenclosed at the further end, so that one looked down the river over a broad surface of continuous water. Even through the court, the outward flow was strong. In the centre the sālā rose out of the flood. To a column of its porch was moored the little Nāgī boat so familiar to Revato. He brought his own alongside and dragged it part way up the flagging, where it stuck so fast that he did not stop to tie it.

Through water ankle deep on the porch, Revato made his way to the open door of the chapter house and entered.

Since his first and only previous visit to the building, just one year ago, its aspect had not greatly changed; the scaffolding and debris remained; but close observation, even in that dim light, showed an advancement in detail and trimming. Apparently the edifice was now in a condition where little but removal of the rubbish was needed to reveal its perfection.

The sublime, false Buddho in the centre of the room was seated with full majesty upon his throne. Around were fittings and massive furniture of precious and fragrant woods, some of which, as Revato guessed, had been growing last year upon the Rājagaha hills.

All at once the house became resonant with a mournful sound, a man's deep voice full of unwonted emotion. It was the voice of Diomedes, the architect, who lay prostrate before his fair statue. In his own tongue, uncomprehended by Revato, rang out his suppliant words. His tones were almost theatrically modulated, yet glowed with a fervor which attested his ardor. He wept as Revato had thought it shame in a man to weep, yet not in a stage beyond

self-control, but as one in whom the seasonable expression of strong feeling is part of a life system. Prayer of anguish and adoration Revato felt him to be uttering, prayer to the stone figure that his own brain had imagined and in fashioning which his own hand had wrought. Why had he deserted his country's gods to worship the false likeness of a man who condemned all gods?

And yet there was in the demeanor of Diomedes something which not only spoke of dignity but whispered of truth. Was it foolishly that in such distress he sought a companionship other than of flesh and blood? For an object to which he might appeal, what would suffice but the highest that he knew? And had not the highest that he knew been put into that image? Even Revato could detect something of its loftiness, and what was he to measure the soul of Diomedes?

To interrupt the devotions would have been a crudity unworthy of a pariah. Revato therefore waited in silence, afraid to make any further motion. He had not, however, reckoned upon the protractedness of Diomedes' orisons, which continued until the building darkened by twilight and by a thunderstorm audible within.

Before the end, Revato felt a warm, moist object on his hand and discovered it to be the tongue of Dukkho. His dog must have tracked him all the way to Pātaliputta and swum the raging river, as its bedraggled hide evidenced. Revato quieted him with one of those expressive touches which suffice between sympathetic natures, and they waited together.

At last the architect rose to his feet. From a recess below the statue he drew a lighted lamp which he elevated and waved before the Buddho with ritual solemnity such as Revato had often observed through the doors of Brahmin temples. Then bending to the floor, he applied the lamp flame to a heap of shavings. A sacrificial altar perhaps. If so, an innocent one, for upon it lay no fleshly being.

Fire burst out and spread. Revato noticed that it had been built among inflammables leading to the woodwork of the building. Beside the scaffolding, there were other combustibles—frame and trim, such as rafters, beams, door jambs, window frames—enough, if burned, to ruin the structure. Could it be Diomedes' intention to immolate this daughter as dear to him as his first born? The fire's progress soon left no doubt of it.

With his ethical philosophy of the moment, Revato pondered his proper course of action. The destruction of so much property was inherently wrong, for it meant so much waste of a value that might have been used to relieve distress. True, the Buddho image was misleading and evil and capable of no good use, but it was a minor feature of the edifice and possible of elimination. True, also, the Nigantha ascetics to whom the building was about to be transferred were tainted with gross errors, but there

was much good in them nevertheless, and were they as depraved as Namuci Māro, it would be no sin to give them a sheltering roof. Plainly therefore it was a duty to save the building.

Salvage of property, Revato felt, ought not to be made if it necessitated a dangerous attack upon human life or limb. But this did not preclude forcible restraint if it could be executed harmlessly.

Rushing to the end of the hall, Revato thrust the bonfire away from the igniting woodwork, then grasped Diomedes by the wrists with all the strength at his command. He might as well have tried to fetter torrential Gangā. With a single contemptuous motion, like his prototype Herakles, the reputed builder of Pātaliputta, Diomedes shook off Revato, who fell into a heap of rubbish. The architect's next act was to repair the damage done to his incendiary enterprise, after which, in the light of the reviving flames, he scrutinized the countenance of Revato, who by that time was risen to his feet.

"Ah! Revato, the Layman. This is a pleasant surprise. Be assured that I appreciate your conscientious motives. It was a disappointment not to find you in Rājagaha."

The last remark was uttered in a tone which made Revato cringe. What could be said after that? Revato slunk to the door, intending to find his boat. He had not counted on the change of conditions since his entry. Utter darkness prevailed and his face was smitten by dashes of rain tangled up in wind. Stepping out, he found himself knee-deep in rushing water. Only by clutching at railings could he move about with any safety. It was impossible to reach the place where he had left his boat. A flash of lightning showed him the empty spot from which it had gone adrift and he perceived that Diomedes' craft had also broken loose. Apparently there was no escape from the building.

He rushed back into the hall where the fire had already gained indefeasible mastery. One side of the room was shrouded with flames. It was no time to dwell on bitterness.

"Do you intend to perish with your handiwork?" he asked the architect.

"Not I. My boat awaits me."

"You are mistaken. It has been carried away by the flood and so has mine."

It was then that the infinite worldly wisdom of the architect suffered abasement. He realized that he had made a foolish blunder and that the consequences might be serious.

"For myself I have no wish to live, but I would not leave my daughter alone in this barbarous land."

"Let us try to extinguish the fire," said Revato.

"It has taken too firm hold to tempt my weakness thus," answered Diomedes. "Better let me die than that this, my younger child, be perverted from the divine purpose for which she is by nature fitted.—Yet why need we perish? If we remain here we can evade the fire and run no greater risk than of a little dampness."

The three waited side by side and watched the progress of the conflagration. As the flames illumined the face of the false Buddho image, they seemed to evoke a hellish character which had been occulted in the twilit stone.

Hotter grew the interior of the sālā. The men and dog retreated towards its vestibule. The water outside had reached the floor level and was trickling in, to rise at the further end in hissing clouds which mingled with the smoke. There came also the sharper hissing of snakes, at first refugees from the flood and now fugitives from the fire.

Then a thunderbolt crashed through the roof and split midwise the Buddho statue, which dropped apart on either side of its throne.*

"Zeus has wreaked the vengeance of the jealous Immortals," said Diomedes.

A fragment of scaffolding fell on Dukkho and crushed his leg. He howled miserably. Revato could lighten his pain only by compassion.

"Hark! Aristocrates! Aristocrates!" cried the architect, and darted to the door.

There entered several Ionian builders, the same whom Revato had left in the orgy on the Vulture's Peak. They had come in the large boat seeking their master.

Outside, the rest of the crew waited on board, having thrown a line around a porch column.

In the bow, revealed by the glow through the doorway, crouched Prote, shielding her shoulders from the rain with a workman's mantle, while her hair streamed in the wind.

"Revato," he thought he heard her say, before he had any idea of her recognition.

He plunged through the water and stood holding the side of the vessel.

"Revato, if you are coming ashore, get into the boat," commanded Diomedes with little patience.

"I have left my dog in the sālā. Wait till I fetch him."

"Pshaw! Be quick about it."

Aristocrates then excitedly spoke a few words in Ionian to his master. They evidently conveyed some reason for great haste, since Diomedes cried:

"We cannot waste an instant more. Will you leave the dog or shall we leave you?"

*Since writing this paragraph, I have noticed a similar idea in a poem by Rabindranath Tagore.

"I will take my chances with the dog," answered Revato.

The oarsmen had held their blades poised to take the water. Awaiting no further order, they now swung a concerted stroke which shot the craft out into the swift current.

In a flash of lightning Revato caught the last glimpse of Prote. Her words to him, if any she spake, were lost. But e'er the tempest drowned all hearing, her voice arose shrilly audible with a snatch from one of those suttas which she had taught him to understand:

"O lamp-bearing Day, and thou portant
Gleam of God, before me afresh and afar,
Lies a new land, a new destiny.
Farewell to thee, dear Light."

And now, left along with his dog, Revato had made the choice of the pilgrim king in the epic of his race. Perhaps for him it was less a courage toward the hazards of the Undiscovered Country than a confidence in present remaining resource.

In quick execution of his plans, he lugged to the door of the building some boards and rope sufficient for a raft that would support him and the dog. This he built as Odysseus had constructed his float to venture upon the many-waved sea from the island of Calypso. Having finished his raft, Revato fastened it to the porch, thinking that perhaps he could remain till morning.

The fire, however, crept to the vestibule, out of which poured flames that rendered lodgment untenable. The roof crashed in. Volumes of flame belched upward and sparks flew above them. Indo was battling against Aggi, but to-night the transcendent Sky God had become powerless against the Fire Deity.

Outside, the current was rushing violently, for it had broken down large portions of the vihāra walls and was sweeping directly across the sanghārāma, which thus had become virtually a part of the open river. The foundations of the sālā itself were cracking.

Revato concluded to delay no longer, but lashed himself fast upon the float with the whining Dukkho. Thus he committed himself as it were, to the Vala-bhāmukha—to the trough of the ocean about Mount Sineru when smitten by the storm of an epoch.

CHAPTER XV SALVAGE

Now it was so, that the Venerable Bhāradvājo and the Venerable Kondañño, after being passed by Revato on the road from Rājagaha, had continued their journey toward Pātaliputta. Bhāradvājo was leading the horse Vāyu by the bridle which Revato had placed in his hand.

"Why do you not ride, bhante?" inquired Kondañño.

"Why should I shift my labor upon another? The horse has its own weight to carry as I have mine. Moreover, would it not be contrary to the commandment?"

THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS
Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

DELVE INTO FANTASY, MAGIC, MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

Forgotten Books'
Full Membership gives
access to 797,885 ancient
and modern, fiction and
non-fiction books.

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies

“Prote, to Revato the Layman: You remember when last we met—no not the last time but the time which let us regard as the last—there stood before us a great disaster, a calamity to the world, which we strove to avert. That evil fortune has now come to pass, yet there is still a possibility of defeating it, which I cannot explain to you but in which I need your aid. You must transmit the letter that accompanies this to certain persons in the palace, which you can do through your friends the mendicants without arousing suspicion. Let it be delivered if possible to the High Minister of Religion, personally; if not, then to the Third Municipal Commissioner of Alien Residents, but to no one else. I should say, hand it to the King himself, but what hope is there that he would heed it?”

Thus abruptly closed the hastily-written letter. Revato dismissed the bearer, feeling him liberally to seal his silence, and then considered his proper course of action.

It was not surprising that Prote, with her acquaintance in high circles, especially as one of the Ionian race so influential upon Aryan affairs, should have deemed herself equipped for political intrigue and should have employed it in an attempt to defeat the Dasaratho conspiracy. Revato remembered her familiarity with the Dhamma Mahāmatto at their meeting by the bridge. The counterplot, however, would doubtless lead to bloodshed, which price Asoko had expressly refused to pay for his throne. Would it be right for Revato to further such a purpose by transmission of the message? He thought not.

In this quandary he adopted the course of shifting responsibility. He laid the matter before Bhāradvājo, who, if anyone, must smuggle Prote's document into the palace, and left it for him to do as he should see fit. After listening to all Revato's moral objections with his usual distaste for fine-drawn argument outside of the traditions, the old man declared for the letter's delivery. To comply with the request was, he thought, the fulfilment of a sacred trust and, more than that, an act of kindness to the sender. If, as Revato believed, it was intended to perpetuate the régime of the holy Dhamma what could be a more worthy object? And that evil would have to be done to promote this good result, was mere conjecture. Besides, he was not sure that force in such a case would be unjustified. On this point Buddho's teachings were open to differences of interpretation.

Thus the man of peace, who to save himself would not have harmed a single leg of a centipede, became the willing promoter of a bloodthirsty plot. By his privileged and unsuspecting access to the palace privacy, he was enabled to deliver the letter according to its intention. Never, however, came any news of a result. The incident was closed except in Revato's conscience.

There were destined to be times when would flash upon Revato the enormity of his act, if appraised by the consequences that might have

followed it, and he was conscious that the failure of those outcomings affected his guilt not a particle. Yet he felt that this escape would color the judgment of men upon him, even of those who sanctioned no violence; for no one consistently weighs intentions apart from results. Aware, then, that his conduct, even if fully known to everyone, would incur little censure, he was unable adequately to rebuke himself. So weak is the strongest human will that the most independent and fastidious moralist irresistibly defers to public estimation.

The burning sālā had been watched all night by those among the people of Pātaliputta who were not engaged in saving their own possessions from the flood or in seeking to appropriate the flotsam of others. Morning showed the sanghārāma as a heap of ruins hardly visible above the water which had coöperated with the fire in its destruction. There went up at first a cry of sympathy for Diomedes, the architect; then of questioning why he and his fellows were not among the crowd by the waterside. Soon it became known that they were nowhere in the city. By the third day word came that their large boat had been found on the other side of the river. Then gradually arrived from the Licchavī country rumors of a Yonaka caravan which had passed northward along the road leading through Kotigāma, Nādika and Vesālī, to the foothills of Himavanta and thence to all the countries of the West.

Suspicion had by this time identified the Ionians with the arson of the sālā. It was seized by the enemies of the old regime, by which the Yonakas had been patronized, to inflame the time-serving populace against that race. The many who long had muttered against Asoko for giving them so few festivals and entertainments now had their public, if vicarious, revenge. The house of Diomedes was broken open; such of his furniture and art works as he had left behind were cast out into the street. Personal assaults were made upon certain of his compatriots who remained in the city. On the whole, however, the habitual mildness and self-restraint of the Aryan people kept them from such extremities of violence as would have been reached by a western people equally impassioned.

A reward of a hundred gold suvannas was offered by the regent Dasaratho, in the name of Asoko, Piyadassi, for apprehension of the incendiary. Had Revato's adventure become noised abroad in detail, it could not but have placed him in peril. None of the monks at the Kukkutārāma, except Bhāradvājo, was aware of his voyage to the island, though they knew enough to ask some embarrassing questions, but the ferryman Nadītariko had beheld his passage. Others, no doubt, had seen him in the boat and might now recall the fact significantly. There was nothing for him to do but expect the worst and hope for the best.

Time passed by without fulfillment of his fears, and, since each day lessened the danger, he came to

feel reasonably safe. He was constantly harassed, however, with doubts whether he ought not to betray himself by correcting some deceitfully evasive statements which inadvertently he had made in regard to his casting up by the river. The right to profit by these deceptions he never satisfactorily settled.

Revato dwelt for months at the Kukkutārāma in care of the brethren, who considered him unable as yet to return home. His rough voyage had left in him an effect not clearly to be explained, yet which became dolorously manifest in his head when he attempted any exertion. Word was sent by a caravan to his mother at Rājagaha that she might look for his arrival any day, and this was followed by others of the same tenor, but without realization. The Venerable Bhāradvājo also remained at the abbey, but the Venerable Kondañño had crossed the river as soon as the flood sufficiently subsided and proceeded on his wanderings northwest. "I am off for a long journey this winter," he said, "to Sāvattihī, to Hatthinipura—perhaps farther yet."

One Sabbath day, when all the brethren at the Kukkutārāma were assembled for recitation of the Pātimokkha, the great Confession, a servant of the lower class came from the palace bearing a message from the royal prisoner.

"It was once my great joy," the message ran, "to bestow upon saints of the sanghārāma gifts worthy of a universal monarch. Of late I have sought to do the same; I have commanded my treasurer to send you large sums of money. Did you receive them? I feared not. Then I sent you the gold and silver vessels from my table. Did they reach you? I despatched after them the earthen dishes that were all I had left wherefrom to eat. Did they likewise miscarry? I asked my ministers, 'Who is king of this country?' They answered me, 'Your Majesty is king.' Why did they say from their kindness that which is untrue? I am fallen from my high estate. There is nothing left whereof I may dispose as sovereign save this āmalaka fruit. I send it, therefore, Brethren, to you. Behold, it is my last gift; to this have come the riches of the Emperor of Jambudīpa. My royalty and my power have departed; deprived of health, of physic and of physicians, no comfort is left me save from the Assembly of the Saints. Eat this fruit which is offered with the intent that the whole Sangha may partake of it, my last gift."

The servant, one at least faithful to his abased master, delivered the āmalaka fruit to the monks. In reverent compliance with the request of its giver, they divided it in portions minute enough for distribution among the whole great assembly. The ritual service in which they had been engaged was suspended in order to partake of this pinda, truly sacramental in its character and intent, with a solemnity which perhaps no company of holy men

had felt since those on whom fell the words of the dying Buddha.

To Revato, a mere auditor of the Chapter's devotions, intrusive as he felt himself, was vouchsafed a share in this feast.

THE CALL OF YONALOKA

In the late summer time, when the rains were soon to commence, the Venerable Kondañño, after his eight months of wandering, returned to the Cock Garden abbey. He had travelled farther than ever before, to the head waters of the great rivers among the northwestern mountains, even as far as the subject province of Gandhārā. Those regions swarmed with Yonas inhabiting towns, such as Sāgalā and the great Takkasilā, which was said to be laid out like their own cities in the original Yonaloka. He had much to relate of the wonderful vanities there looked upon and of the progress that the Dhamma was making among the unsaved. He had himself entered unbidden and preached in the Yonas' Temple of the Sun at Takkasilā and had made a few converts before being chased and stoned by the mob. Outside of the city was a still larger idol house built of beautiful porphyry and surrounded with columns. It had in the center a pool kept full by streams; and inside, around the shrine, were wonderful pictures representing the battles of Alasando and the Porava king. In this temple a Yona had accosted him by his name saying, "Bho Kondañño," but because addressed in such familiar *Bhovādi* terms, without the reverence due him, Kondañño had vouchsafed no reply.

At Sāgalā he had received an alms of a Yonakī whose excremental carcass was glossed over with a transitory show of beauty seductive to behold. She had asked him whence he came. "Nassa vasalī, Perish, vile woman!" he had first answered; but after importunity had condescended to give her the desired information. She had then enquired whether he knew anything about Revato, called Yuvāno, and upon learning of that layman's rescue after his adventure, as Kondañño understood it, she had seemed disburdened. Her father was tarrying at Sāgalā to finish a shrine of some ephemeral heavenly devatā with whose name Kondañño had not troubled to charge his memory. After that, she hoped, they would return to her own Yonaloka. She had commissioned Kondañño thus: "Say to the Layman Revato: 'The Yonakī Prote greets you by me,' and tell him that there is this side of Transmigration a *sukha-sukka* land, a country where both happiness and purity together dwell."

More than this, perhaps, Kondañño could have told him about Prote, but Revato forbore to enquire. It was hardest for him to withhold the vital question, how long must she remain in Sāgalā before Diomedes' work would be accomplished and she pass forth to be lost forever in that distant western land obliterative to him of identity, like the Arūpaloka, the Formless World?

As Kondañño left him, he was lying in a little black-washed parivena, cell, upon a low bed resting on cords passed through holes in the side frames, a small wool-stuffed pillow supporting his head. The latticed window had been furnished with mosquito curtains to add to his comfort. He strove to bring himself face to face with his thoughts. He had staked his destiny upon the expansive life, hoping against reason that it would reward him with light and freedom, and now it had abandoned him to his fate in the old contractive life to which he had proved recreant—No, rather, the new life had not so much abandoned him as left him in a position where he should voluntarily renounce it forever. This was what made him dizzy and faint—not Prote's flight, but her tarrying.

Through the sultry afternoon he lay in the little vihāra while his mind split into separate streams like Gangā nadī at its mouth. The strongest of these thought currents diverged from him as Gangā sometimes leaves its channel. His own self became his spectator and criticized his emotional experiences. Again, it centred its attention upon a speck of dust, which swung from a bambu clothes pole above him by a filament of cobweb, until this became to him the most absorbing object in the world.

Toward evening, when the air grew cooler, someone brought Revato a bowl of rice milk and this slight diversion was the signal for a reaction of

feeling and purpose, as had been a similar ministry by Sujātā, the herdsman's daughter, to the fainting Bodhisatto beside the river Nerañjarā. "I will cast in my all with the great venture!" exclaimed Revato inwardly; "I am gaining strength and can travel. I will hasten to Yonaloka and will discover the saving Truth."

This frame of mind was, however, of short duration. Objections, one by one, presented themselves and he despaired of fulfilling the plan. Its restlessness remained in him and he felt a compelling stress to be up and moving, if not to Sāgalā then somewhere else. Longer passivity would throw him into convulsions.

"When, bhante, will you return to Rājagaha?" he asked of the Venerable Bhāradvājo that evening.

"Not until you are strong enough to go with me, my son," was the response.

"I shall be able and ready to start to-morrow morning," was Revato's firm declaration.

So the next day, after procuring a cart in which to convey Revato, the Venerable Bhāradvājo and the Venerable Kondañño set out with him and returned to Rājagāha. They took him to his home and left him with his mother, the lady Sundarī, who herself was in failing health. His house was not far from the sanghārāma in Jivako's Mango Grove, where there was a monk celebrated for medical skill.

CHAPTER XVI THE ESTUARY

The cloister in the Jivakambavana had always worn for Revato an air of homely familiarity, next to his own house. Traditions of the donor of the grove, that zealous young lay disciple, the physician Jivako Komārabhacco—his very name Jivako suggestive of the *life* which he sustained—had imbued this umbrageous precinct with suggestions of the healing craft. It had never formally become a sotthisālā, hospital, such as Piyadassi and as the heads of wealthy burgher families established here and there in order that the diseased, maimed and crippled, orphans and destitute might get the medicines and food which they needed and might remain till they became better. Forms of external benevolence such as this were a way in which the devotion of the laity expressed itself under guidance of the monks rather than a function of the Order itself.

At this time, however, there happened to be resident at Jivako vihāra a brother who before his ordination had been distinguished as a physician, and when afflicted mortals came to the convent, drawn both by his reputation and by Jivako's historic name, they were not turned away, but the place became quite a centre of curative charity.

During the long, slowly moving epoch of his life that he now entered, Revato was destined to become like a habitual inmate of the Mango Grove. While he continued to reside at home, it became the goal of almost daily pilgrimages, for its distance just limited the amplitude of his unaided locomotion and furnished the one diversion in an otherwise monotonous existence. During long periods, increasingly frequent, the monks kept him at the sanghārāma under their constant care.

The monastery was a busy clearing house of news, and Revato, little as now as he was himself concerned, overheard reports of the great public affairs throughout Jambudīpa. The regent Dasaratho had made no sharp changes in its government. At the outset he disappointed the Niganthas who got only the ruins of the Pārāyana sanghārāma, destroyed by flood and fire. Diplomatically, he continued to patronize the other sects, such as the Brahminists, the Ajivakas and the Buddhists also, to whom, in compensation for the Pārāyana, he dedicated certain costly hewn caverns, to hold as long as sun and moon should endure. Certain much-heralded reductions were made in taxation, such as an abolition of the

Get Smart

Over 2,000 years of
human knowledge in
797,885 volumes

Instant access
\$8.99/month

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies



ments, to compulsions toward sacrificing others—far harder than sacrificing himself?

When his mind became too tired to follow these abstruse conjectures he fell back to a simple contemplation of the bedrock, kindness. From the old Aryan root *mitra*, a friend, had come the enriched, softened Pāli word *mettā*, a clear, all-compassing friendliness of heart. It was to be the distinctive characteristic of that next Buddha—Metteyyo—who should come to restore the world after the culmination of the present degenerating age. Revato remembered the enumeration of merits which entitled men to behold him. Among such favored ones were they who in their longing should make gift of only a handful of flowers, a mouthful of food; those also to whom well doing was a delight. Could, by any means, he, Revato, be accounted worthy, in some future birth, to greet this Messiah?

Among the monks and their adherents Revato's sober manners earned him no mean reputation for sanctity. He conformed punctiliously to the formal rules for householders, even taking upon himself many of those intended for novices and members of the Order. They generously admitted him to peculiar privileges of fellowship, notwithstanding he had no formal status among them.

But in his heart he felt few corresponding consolations. He was conscious of an apathy, a critical spectatorship, toward all that was sacred. Whereas his earlier struggles with religion had been deficient in some elements of sincerity, they had nevertheless been characterized by a certain earnestness very intense in its way and actuated by a persistent vitality of effort. Now, however, he seemed to be spiritually dead. It was a natural result, he told himself, with more or less truth, of his dalliance with desire, his headstrong pursuit of folly. He knew that it had been contributed to also by his perennial lack of intellectual humility, by his contempt for old beliefs, his rashness in speculations.

In a belated ghastly attempt to atone for the past, he now strove to thrust his mind beneath the yoke of accredited doctrines; he tried to apply for himself those definite methods prescribed for salvation by discipline—persistence in the eight-fold path, rupture of the ten fetters. But he was aware through it all of a dilettantism, a mock-heroism in the part that was played by his would-be self, and observed by his natural, contemplative self.

There are many who will say that Revato's gathering darkness might have been illumined if only he could have felt the effect of certain spiritual lights needful to ordinary men—a definite God, a clear outlook beyond the grave, active work for humanity. But the existence of mental clouds which are opaque to these illuminants is well recognized when seen in obvious lunacy, and no man can surely judge what condition of mind is, or is not, spiritually translucent.

Yet in his dejection, his disillusionment, detachment, there was a victory of self-mastery which under

other conditions might have become a power for good. Could he have mixed once more with the world, well and strong, his life might have become one of exquisite tenderness, a ministry of pity if not of hope, and the more vital if, instead of jocularity, which is common enough, his mood had been an unutterable compassion. But such a possibility was now gone to waste and lay in the mountainous dust heap of the what-might-have-been.

Among the host of his ancient doubts and apprehensions, not dead but sleeping, often one or another would awake; forgotten wounds would reopen.

On a certain Uposatha day, the fourteenth of the half month, the chapter resident at the Mango Grove had met in their assembly hall to unite in the general confession of innocency. Revato was seated propped against a pillar, behind the *sāmaneras*, novices, maintaining the distance of two and one-half cubits required of a layman, according to the rule of exclusion as tolerantly construed. A thin-faced Elder repeated the warning charge: "He who has committed an offence may confess it; if there be no offence, you shall remain silent; from your being silent I shall understand that the reverend brethren are free from offences."

Then began the recitation of the *Pātimokkha*, commencing with the four *Pārājikas*, or mortal sins, the second of which is any "taking of an ungiven thing," which were followed by the three-fold adjuration to reveal guilt. The leader made the usual pause, expecting only the silence in which the enumeration of each degree of wrong was commonly received, since the monks were supposed already to be clear by private confession. But the congregation was startled by a nervous, hoarse voice from the back of the room:

"Apatti 'hang—Guilty, I."

The Brethren understood Revato well enough to overlook this interruption of their solemn service. Few placed any credence in the self-accusation. Though they did not understand its occasion, they assumed that it was some self-tormenting vagary on his part.

Revato was actually in the throes of a sharp return of his old difficulty relating to the custom house. It was a matter of many months since he had dropped out of his office, and the unsettled moral obligations only once in a while arose from the buried past to confront him. When, by pondering, he restored their distinctness, their perplexities remained as insoluble as ever. To be sure, he had little of life now at stake, whatever might have been the outcome. But he could not take advantage of this fact to shirk the humiliations which he had foreseen as incident to his attempts at restitution. Moreover, his dependent ease and indolence seemed a sin. He had no claim to be supported in luxury by the world, but rather owed a duty to all mankind of sacrificing his pleasure, his comfort, to lighten their burdens. This had never before been so clear to him as now

when weakness compelled him to be a recipient of services, rather than a bestower.

When, formerly, Revato had in imagination followed to a logical conclusion the surrender of his livelihood, he had felt himself bearing through the streets which knew him the bhikkhu's bowl without the bhikkhu's honor. Now, in an unlucky moment, this baneful picture rearose. His mood of conscience suggested that, although his lack of assurance deterred him from yet attempting the pecuniary renunciation, he should not thus evade its shameful consequences to himself.

For a time he could summon neither physical nor moral strength to act upon his impulse, but as each morning he watched the monks start forth with their bowls slung in net purses and saw them return with provisions for the bhatta, he was sharply reminded of his unfulfilled duty and was thus allowed no opportunity to forget it. Finally, with an energy of nervous excitement, he arose one morning from a sleepless bed, borrowed from a monk a cracked bowl, presuming not however to put on the yellow robe which was its mate, and stole forth from the vihāra unobserved. He was next heard of in the thick of the old city, tottering from house to house to supplicate mutely the dole of life. At his heels was his three-legged dog. The people that knew him by sight thought him mad, while others, compassionate of his ematiation, heaped his bowl with pindas. In this condition he was found by the Reverend Bhāradvājo, who led him back to the convent.

Incidents such as this marked only rare victories of his accusing conscience. For the most part, he drifted from day to day taking no measures toward making those vast restitutions which he still assumed to be the goal of his life. One reason was the languor of his physical and mental disease into which the temperamental inertia of his more healthy years had merged. On the whole, he now suffered less constantly from these old wounds than from his disability of heart to engage in sincere devout meditation—although the latter, he feared, was bound up in the former.

He could not, or would not bend to that complete resignation of mind in which the fond past might be remembered with no shadow of expectancy. Throughout the first three months after his return to Giribbaja, while rain-clouds constantly pastured upon the country, he was ever mindful of the season when winds of Himavanta would huddle them in a flock upon the fold of ocean. By that time he might be strong to travel—and the road to Sāgalā was well-marked. The self-struggle that this must involve, he postponed toward the vague day of departure. When the moon entered the mansion where that day might have awaited, Revato's bodily inability was kind to him by settling the question for him.

The journeying of time thereafter was so quiet that, before he realized it, the dreaded endless period had come when Sāgalā was no longer a goal

and when all that had made it a goal must be lost in the farther West—whether

“Cyprus holds thee, Panormos yet, or Paphos.”

But so dreamy had his moods by this time become that they harbored fancies of still more adventurous pilgrimages of discovery and reunion. The personal cravings were melting away, were fusing into yearnings for the ideal. There arose before him those islands, washed by hoary waves, on whose green banks goodness and beauty, pity and joy, justice and success dwelt in harmony.

Once and again, while he grew more feeble, he would leap from his couch in the exhilaration of some uplifting emotion and exclaim: “It is time to start.” Then gradually, as he realized the futility, he would sink back with fancy crushed but still germinal. From his invalid's mat he would strain his eyes toward unbeheld Mandāra, that western mountain which is the home of the setting sun.

The news of Asoko's deposition and decline had crept to the shores of the eastern sea and across the expanse to Tambapannidīpa where the Thera Mahindo was perfecting his work of conversion. Here also the Therī Sanghamittā had come, not like Sītā of old into amorous captivity, but gladly bringing a slip from the Mahābodhi tree of Uruvelā to be planted and to stand forever in the Mahāmega garden at Anurādhapura. She was dwelling there still as abbess of the Hatthalaka vihāra.

Now, by precept and example of Buddhho, attendance on a sick parent may override the duties of the religious life. So the Therī said, “I return to Pātaliputta.” Followed to the shore by the monarch of Lankā and his people, who permitted her to go only upon promises of return, she took ship for the coasts of Jāmbudīpa. After long perils she landed at the port of Tāmalipī. Thence the Therī made her way to the Capital in time to console her father's last hours and to stand beside the funeral pyre. She then decided not to return at once to the island but to pass a season in retreat at Giribbaja, where she took up her residence at a convent of the bhikkhunīsangha in the Veluvana.

Revato saw her as she came with a party of sisters escorted by old Bhāradvājo on a visit to the Mango Grove, there to derive stimulus from its hallowed memories and especially to study the skilful methods of treating afflicted patients. Bhāradvājo pointed out to her Revato, as he lay on his mat under his customary tree. She stopped and spoke to him in a manner which evidenced previous information and interest concerning him. That was the beginning of an acquaintance which lasted throughout her residence at the nunnery in the Veluvana, whence she often came to the Jīvakambavana, sometimes lingering there in earnest conversation with Revato.

The lady Sanghamittā—Friend of the Society—a name not hers from infancy but acquired with her blessed office—appeared to Revato in beautiful dissimilarity from all other women he had known.

Those wise rules laid down by the Blessed One to guard the modest reserve and feminine dependence of the Sisterhood seemed in her case almost an impertinence. Her beneficent experience, taken with her native purity, was all the law she needed, controlled by which she could live in the open and make her sweet influence pervasive. In her presence the discipline became irrelevant, obsolete. She did not in fact violate any formal rule of conduct—her reverence for the Dhamma and its lord was too humble for that—but had she done so no one would have thought it evil and nothing that she could have done would have been evil.

Thus came into Revato's experience a new, though belated, friendship which, more than anything else in the world, soothed and ennobled it. In her aloof, but tender companionship, her deep, clear insight, penetrating further than anyone else had ever done into the caverns of his soul, he realized how rich may be the compensations which the impoverishing Law of Righteousness has to offer. While of old he had been able somewhat to calm his tempestuous heart in a negative way by thinking of his self-denying Master, here now was a positive appeasement of his restlessness in a guise more concessive to his humanity. A pang might find him when he compared this sober benediction of the chastened present with a certain shining vision of the sometime past, but for the most part, he was willing to be content with this new apparition while it remained, aware that it also must vanish. At the end of Lent the royal nun made her last greetings and returned forever to Tambapannidīpa. In that progressive emptying which is the nature of human life, she passed forth as another had gone before, leaving a new void to be filled by the rising tide of an existence which was pure memory and meditation.

All this time Dukkho, the lame dog, had remained with Revato. The creature was showing more signs of age—he had always been old, it appeared—and spent most of his time in sleeping. He no longer followed his master's step but sought quiet corners where he dozed for days at a time. His unaccountable fits of whining were now infrequent. There seemed to be even an indifference to his benefactor, an indifference of decay, when the enfeebled body becomes selfish for its own sustenance, and the noblest of emotions fail in the sluggish mind.

As months and years went by Revato himself grew physically weaker, yet without pain or perceptible organic disease, his case baffling the best medical skill at Rājagaha. Perhaps his malady was nothing less than an appropriate success of his long struggle for extirpation of desire, of clinging, of ambition, which emotions, whether appraised by the Ariyan or Ionian estimate, are admitted to be the springs of life.

The submission, such as it was, became more possible from Revato's final conviction that the outcome of his career could by no means have been materially changed. His efforts to support his

aspirations upon his old preoccupations had been like trying to make a mustard seed stand on the point of an awl. His relations to the world had been affected by traits of mind which, whether right or wrong, were as fixed as those of the incurably insane. The problems he had sought to solve, whether or not in their nature capable of elucidation for others, had been necessarily opaque to him. This he should not have admitted from the beginning.—Man must never accept defeat until the end, or if it is so plainly written in him that he cannot ignore it, then his endeavor must be to wear that defeat with all possible compensations and sweetness.—But looking back impartially from the close, as Revato was entitled to do, he perceived how inevitable had been the failure of his adjustment to earth. As this conclusion allayed the irritation of regret for mistakes and wasted opportunities, it permitted some degree of resignation and even tranquility.

Already his soul seemed to itself a peta, a ghost of the dead, lingering among scenes of his life and dwelling in his body as petas sometimes lodge in corpses, an independent haunting visitant. His earliest learning had been from the old collection of ghost stories, fascinatingly awful to him then, but later deemed foolish. Now, as they came back to him, they were easy and pleasant to let roll through his mind. The unphilosophical, irresponsible gliding about of the sad petas thin as sere leaves and their silent acceptance of the balī or nivāpa, the alms set out for them, now pacified Revato, and he was continually slipping into self-identification with them. To observers he seemed tranquil, satisfied; actually, his self-tormenting faculties were jaded. Their lassitude permitted his mind to sink deeper and deeper into those channels where thought flows on without being broken into ideas of things.

Pleasure no longer tempted him nor sorrow disturbed. Observation had faded, reflection was dying out. He hardly still perceived, and his consciousness had become little more than a mental sensation. This perhaps was not far from the *Arūpaloka*, the Formless World, or even the region of the Ineffable.

As in the severed, remote past, he had drifted down the Golden-Armed River, he and Prote, in the Nāgī boat borne along with unperceived motion, like the stars which floated in celestial Gangā—so now he was drifting down the River of Life, on which no stars looked, with that same languor of movement which marked not the passage, whether fast or slow. Thus he floated on and on till the unwatched shores receded on either side and a swell came in from the sea, meeting the downward current and rocking him drowsily with its interminate undulations.

The approach of sleep all men know; the entrance thereupon no man ever perceived. One may critically study his own preparations to fall asleep, but he cannot carry his inquiry to the door of slumber. Thus it is with death. That phenomenon in the experience of each is observed only from the hither

THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS
Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

DELVE INTO FANTASY, MAGIC, MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

Forgotten Books'
Full Membership gives
access to 797,885 ancient
and modern, fiction and
non-fiction books.

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies

On the eastern outskirts of the city was a shady park containing a high dome of masonry and a large block of buildings. Spare-bodied, shaven-headed men in tawny gowns draped over one shoulder, were coming and going through the large gateway that admitted to an inner court.

"Shall we not ask for supper and lodging here?" suggested Jehonadab.

"When I was of your age," he continued musingly, "I dwelt in the deserts east of Jordan river. There, solitary or in companies, were many holy men living after the manner of these whom we see here, striving to subdue the lusts of the flesh and lusts of the eye and pride of life. Our fellowship was not with the priests in the temple, who despise the stranger, but with the called of God out of every nation. Among us came John and outdid us all in self-macerations. There sojourned with us at times the Messiah himself. He knew like us the severance of family ties, the emaciating fare of the desert, the vigil in solitudes among wild beasts. From our hands He received the baptism with which to go forth among men, His body to be soiled with the city, His soul to remain pure as the desert air.

"These brethren, here," continued Jehonadab, "if they are like others of their Order whom I have observed, are not given unto austerity only, but to righteousness and compassion. Now it seems to me, if the Master were with us that He would lodge with them gladly; that He would find among them men after His heart and that He would receive from them refreshment both of body and of spirit."

The strangers' application for entertainment was received by the monks with manifest surprise, indicating that it was somewhat unusual in that city with its public inns and officials appointed for the oversight of sojourners. They met the request, however, with all kindness, brought water and towels for the swollen feet, oil for a soothing chrism and fresh garments to replace the travel-stained dress. Then followed a simple supper, it being assumed that the visitors were unhampered by the Order's own meal-time restrictions.

Later they were invited to the vihāra of the Chief Thera, or Abbot. He summoned to aid in conversation a certain monk, who, before he left the world, had been ambassador to one of the Hellenized countries and was fluent in Yonaka speech. The abbot himself came and, speaking through this interpreter, said:

"You are welcome, friends, to share such things as we possess—rice from a begging bowl; hard couches in a bare cell. Tell us, however, the object that has brought you so far from home as Jambudīpa."

"We have come," answered Jehonadab, "to proclaim our religion among them who know it not. Such a journey for such a purpose no doubt seems to you a strange thing."

"Why should it seem a strange thing, Sirs?" replied the abbot. "Did not our commissioners

carry the Blessed Dhamma into your countries? You will here find many Brahmins and others who may profit by what you bring. As for us, we already possess the truth, but we will gladly attend to what you have to tell. You are therefore welcome to this ancient dwelling of homeless mendicants and to the great Amalaka Fruit monument."

"For what reason do you call it the Amalaka Fruit monument?" inquired Biophiles.

"Because on this spot Devānam-Piyo Piyadassi, the same who had sent his envoys of the Dhamma to your land, when he was stricken in years and had been deprived of his dominion, bestowed upon the brethren of that day the single āmalaka which was all he had left. "Now pray tell me, Sir," asked the abbot civilly addressing Jehonadab, "how many rains have fallen upon you since you abandoned the household life to walk in the Paths of your Law."

"It is twenty years ago now, that the Lord called me to follow Him," answered Jehonadab simply.

"And you, friend?" turning to Biophiles.

"I am not under law," replied the young man; "under Grace I have been for only two years. But do not say that I have abandoned the household life. I have at home a wife and children to whom I hope, please God, some day to return."

"Ah!" exclaimed the abbot, able otherwise to cloak his disapprobation. "And since I began as a learner is twice the time that you both together have spent. But it is not only time which signifies. Now," he concluded, "is the hour for evening meditations and I must leave you a while. Doubtless you have similar duties to perform in accordance with your own discipline."

Later in the evening the abbot rejoined Jehonadab and announced his readiness to hear whatever the travelers had to relate. Biophiles had already fallen asleep, for his energetic, restless days left much need of recuperation. Jehonadab, however, sat up and conversed with the therā long into the night. They spoke freely of those vital concerns to which both their lives were devoted and which they followed with so similar a spirit that the difference of expressions was no barrier to sympathy. Jehonadab discoursed most of the newly arisen Enlightened One, for proclamation of Whose truth he had undertaken this mission. The abbot marveled at his recital and exclaimed: "I had hoped to live until the day of Metteyyo Buddhō, the Buddhō of Kindness, and this can be no less than he."

From the human phases of his religion, in which the therā was already like-minded, Jehonadab passed on to explain those tenets to which the Dhamma afforded no parallel: union of Universal Power with Personal solicitude and approachability; transmutation of pain to blessing; abnegation which is rest in Another; remediability of imperfect performance; hope for the weak-hearted as well as for the strong; widening aspiration. To these avowals the abbot listened appreciatively, yet with a reserve which veiled any disposition to appropriate

them, any questioning of those contrary preoccupations long held with so pure a conscience.

Jehonadab did not press these considerations farther at that time but was content to dwell upon the masterful Personality Who had been expressed anticipatorily in the Sākiya prophet. He talked from memory about That One Who had banqueted in sybaritic halls, yet had known and approved the way of poverty and fasting; Who had honored the marriage feast, yet had made and commended the celebrate's renunciation; Who had worn Himself with humane activities, yet had spoken not a word to encourage worldly culture and progress; Who had submitted and taught submission to authorities, yet Who had defied them to the death; Who was the Prince of Peace, yet the Lord of Hosts—hosts of them that patiently suffer violence; Who had proclaimed liberty from the Law, yet demanded a righteousness above that of the scrupulous Pharisee; Who had taught a new worldly wisdom, yet regarded the world as a passing show; Who had founded a Kingdom which was within it but not of it; Who had come to bring more abundant life, yet conditioned discipleship on the repudiation and hatred of life. Yea, and so complexly fecund had been his germinal utterances that they were springing everywhere into luxuriant growth, differing in foliage and fruit according to the soil into which they had fallen. Men of dissimilar races, feelings and habits were drawing from His teachings the principles with which to animate and develop those elements of most originality in their own natures.

"I have often thought," remarked the abbot, "that there are at work in the moral world two opposite forces. With one force man represses his inclinations, by the other he assists them. The first is seen by the rising sun, the other attends its going down. In some hearts they dwell together, but are perpetually at war. It seems that in your Enlightened One they both must have dwelt, and for once lived at peace. Is not this true?"

"It is true," answered Jehonadab.

"If you are not too weary," said the abbot, "I will tell you a story I had, when a young sāmanera, from my superior, to whom it came down in the Order, through the lips of saints long since in parinibbāna. It is a story such as only we quiet, pondering ones would care to tell or hear."

"Pray, proceed," answered Jehonadab.

Then, so well as it had been understood and long handed down; so clearly as finally it could be transmitted through an interpreter, the abbot related to Jehonadab the story of the Layman Revato.

Before he finished, the false dawn had glowed and faded; the light of morning was ready to break.

"It occurs to me," said the thera wistfully, after he had ended the tale, "that if Revato could have learned the doctrines of your Enlightened One, the discordant motives which sounded within him might have been brought into harmony and the problems which crushed him down might have been solved. Is not this true?"

"An impulse," replied Jehonadab, "urges me to tell you that it is true; but a still voice reminds me that my religion is not to be recommended by any presumptuous claim. The perfected harmony of my Master could exist only in His completeness. It was broken when he passed from earth and to restore it will be an age-long task. He came to inspire men for the work of overcoming the world, not to give them a magic formula for a world already conquered. And what is the world? Is it only earth and water and stones and trees? Is it merely the opposition of wicked men? No, it includes realms of mind and spirit, of wisdom and duty with their own peculiar difficulties. He told us many things for our guidance, but how many more there are that He had no time to tell! Many questions He answered, but how many questions will hereafter arise that could not have been imagined in His day and ours! How numerous will be the perplexities that are bedded from birth in the soul of their unfortunate bearer like a crooked bone in his body! Our Lord has begun for us the age-long task of refashioning human life. However much He will aid us, it was not His promise that the work would be done before labor to the death. Often an elaborate plan will prove defective; many a structure reared with travail will tumble in ruins before it is done; life-long we may have to toil as vaguely as a blind horse in a mill; those workmen who were born and live in despair may die therein. I firmly believe that the Master Mind will, by this very disorganization and waste, somewhere achieve a perfect result. I trust that there is a goal for the race of man even here on earth, although that is a matter of hope rather than of assurance. But at any rate, He will not withhold their wages from those bewildered servants who have made of their work an arduous failure."

D GLOSSARY

D GLOSSARY

Get Smart

Over 2,000 years of
human knowledge in
797,885 volumes

Instant access
\$8.99/month

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies



GLOSSARY

Following is a selected list of Pāli words which will aid the reader. It has been the practice throughout this book to employ the Pāli, rather than the Standard Sanskrit form. Furthermore, in agreement with the judgment of Neumann and of Edmunds, though contrary to common usage, the actual nominative ending “o” for masculine nouns is followed, so far at least as personal names are concerned. I trust that scholars will not be unduly severe upon me for having assumed Pāli as the spoken language of Magadhā.

Ajivaka—Member of a sect of ascetics in Buddho’s time. They have been regarded as a Brahminical order, but this is now disputed.

Arabat (Arahā)—A Saint.

Ariya—An Aryan, here limited to an Aryan Hindu.

Assattha—The Pippala, Bodhi, *Ficus Religiosa*, Wisdom Tree.

Attā—Self; the soul, or spirit, in a sense denied by Buddho as against the Brahmins.

Avuso—Friend! A familiar form of address.

Bali—A religious offering, as of food to tree deities.

Bhagavā—The Blessed One, Buddho.

Bhante, Bhadante—Your Reverence! Plural, Bhadantā.

Bhatta—A meal. Specifically breakfast, the monk’s one daily meal.

Bhikkhu—Beggar; Buddhist mendicant (title of honor).

Bodhisatto—A being destined to attain Buddhahood; applied to Buddho in former births.

Buddho—The Enlightened One.

Brāhmana—A Brahmin. The name is applied not only to Brahmins proper, but by the Buddhists, in a spiritual sense, to their own saints. Moreover, since many Buddhists were Brahmins by caste, judgment must be used in interpreting the name where it occurs.

Candāla—A man of mean caste, or outcaste.

Deva—A god; in Buddhism, virtually a mere angel.

Dhamma—Nature; thing; law; technically, the Buddhist religion.

Gandhārā—A country in the region of the modern Candahar, Afghanistan, and probably including some of northwest India. It was a meeting ground of the Buddhist and Greek civilizations.

Gāthā—A verse or stanza.

Gijjhakūta—The Vulture’s Peak Mountain, at Rājagaha.

Giribaja—The Hill Stronghold, old Rājagaha.

Gotamo (Skt. Gautama)—Buddho’s family name.

Himavanta, Himavā, Himācala—Himalaya.

Jambudipa—The Rose Apple Tree Island, of Buddhist cosmography, but practically the Buddhist name for India.

Jambusando—The Rose Apple Grove, a term for Jambudipa.

Jātaka—A birth story, of which there is a collection containing nearly 550, narrating Buddho’s exploits in former incarnations.

Jino—The Conqueror, applied to Buddho and also to Mahāvīro founder of the Niganthas, or Jains.

Kamma (Skt. Karma)—Deed, work; technically, the continuing power of past deeds over our destiny. •

Kāmo—Wish; lust; Cupid.

Kappa—An aeon.

Khattiya (Skt. Kshatriya)—A man of the warrior caste or secular nobility, to which Buddho belonged.

Lankā—Ceylon.

Magadhā—The country of which Rājagaha had been capital, and which formed the nucleus of the empire.

Moriya (Skt. Maurya)—The Peacock dynasty, to which Asoko belonged.

Muni—A sage.

Nibbāna (Skt. Nirvāna)—Extinction of evil and of the properties of being. It may be entered in this life. Whether at death it means total annihilation has not been settled. It must, of course, be distinguished from the Vedantist Nirvāna, which is absorption in God.

Nadi—A river.

Nigantha—The Unfettered, a Jain.

Pabbajjā—Giving up the world to become a monk.

Pāli—That particular dialect of Sanskrit in which the Southern Buddhist canon has been preserved. Traditionally, it was the Magadhā vernacular, which is now disproved, and no one knows just where it was spoken. It may, however, have been used as the common literary language of Buddhism at about the period of Asoko. Strictly speaking, Pālī denotes the Buddhist canon, rather than the language.

Pārājika—Involving defeat; applied to the four great rules whose violation was punished by excommunication from the Order. They are subjects of special treatises in the Vinaya, or canon law book.

Paraloka—The Next World.

Parinibbāna—Perfection of Nibbāna, death of a Saint.

Pātaliputta—City of the Trumpet Flower Sons, capital of Asoko’s empire. The modern Patna.

Pinda—Food given in the alms bowl.

Piyadassi (Piyadasi)—Title by which Asoko was known in his edicts; believed to signify virtually “His Majesty.”

Pukkusa—A Pukkasa, outcaste or Pariah.

Rājagaha—The King’s House, former capital of Magadhā. It comprised two neighboring towns, the name more properly applying to the newer one. This book has more to do with the older one and its environs.

Saddhamma—Good Doctrine, Holy Law, True Religion, Buddhism.

Sādhu—Good; apparently sometimes used in applause.

Saka—A Scythian, this vague term signifying tribes supposedly of Turanian blood, yet whose possible identity, in one case, with the Saxons in Asia is a curious speculation.

Sākiya, Sakya—Gotamo Buddho’s clan. (Were we to accept its derivation from Saka, we might argue that he was of Saxon blood.)

Sākyaputtiya Samana—Sakya-Son Ascetic, a common term for monks of the Buddhist Order.

Sāla—The timber tree *Shorea Robusta*.

Sālā—House, room; hall in monastery.

Samana—An ascetic; a Buddhist monk.

Sāmanera—A novice.

Sangsāra—Reincarnation.

Sangha—Assembly, Society, Brotherhood, Buddhist Order of Monks.

Sanghārāma—Society Garden, that is to say, the enclosure and buildings comprising a monastery.

Satthā—Teacher, Master, epithet for Buddho.

Sudda—A Sudra, member of the fourth, or laboring, caste, of non-Aryan blood.

Sutta—A “thread” of discourse; a book.

Takkasilā—A city in northwestern India famous as a Brahmin university town and often identified with the Taxila of the Greek writers.

Tambapannidīpa—Ceylon.

Tāta—My dear, my good sir.

Tathāgato—A name applied to Buddho and commonly used by him for himself in the third person, as Christ spoke of “The Son of Man.” The resemblance is still closer if we accept that interpretation by which it would mean the “Likewise-Goer,” “Passer Away,” “He Who Goes the Way of All Flesh.” According to later opinion, it signifies “The Attained One.”

THIS PAGE IS LOCKED TO FREE MEMBERS
Purchase full membership to immediately unlock this page

DELVE INTO FANTASY, MAGIC, MYTHOLOGY & FOLKLORE

Forgotten Books'
Full Membership gives
access to 797,885 ancient
and modern, fiction and
non-fiction books.

Continue

*Fair usage policy applies