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Art. II.—Book of the King's Son and the Ascetic

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ART. II.—*Book of the King's Son and the Ascetic.* By E.
REHATSEK.

THE striking fact that the Buddha has been officially enrolled in the list of the saints of the Christian Church has very naturally attracted much attention to the book to which this strange result is due. This book, a romance in Greek, founded on some unknown Buddhist life of the Buddha, was ascribed in some of the later MSS. to St. John of Damascus, and this was the view held by scholars until the publication in 1886 of the masterly monograph by M. H. Zotenberg (*Notices sur la livre de Barlaam et Joasaph*). He there shows conclusively that the John who was the author of the romance was not John of Damascus, but a monk of the convent of St. Saba near Jerusalem, who wrote it in the commencement of the seventh century A.D. This romance, whose hero, though really the Buddha, appealed so strongly to the sympathies of the Christians, that they raised him to the rank of a saint, contains, besides the description of the life and character of the hero, a number of fables, some of which have been traced back to the Buddhist Jātaka book, while the source of others is still unknown. This being so, it becomes of great importance to ascertain the earliest form of the story. Now it is admitted that the numerous versions of it in various European languages (of which a list is given in my '*Buddhist Birth Stories*,' vol. i. pp. xcv and foll.) are all derived from the Greek of John of St. Saba. There is

also an Arabic version, written in prose by a Christian, which M. Zotenberg has shown to have been based on the Greek text (*loc. cit.* pp. 79-81). This was imitated in an Arabic poem written by a Muhammadan, and now lost, and this again gave rise to a Hebrew prose work called 'The Prince and the Ascetic.'

At the Oriental Congress held at Vienna in 1888, Dr. Fritz Hommel read a paper on a prose Arabic version of the story, written by a Muhammadan, and described already in 1858 by Dr. Blau from a MS. in the possession of the German Oriental Society. In the Transactions of the Congress Dr. Hommel published the text of this version (also entitled 'The King's Son and the Ascetic'), which he believes to be translated directly from an original Pahlavi version, and to be entirely independent of the Greek romance. M. Zotenberg, on the other hand, holds this version also to be based on the Arabic poem mentioned above. This work is now presented in English to our readers in a version by Mr. Rehatsek, of Bombay, and following, it is to be presumed, the Arabic text as published by Dr. Fritz Hommel.

It would be unnecessary to point out either the utility or the interest of this labour for which we are indebted to Mr. Rehatsek. It can of course throw no light on the still unsolved problem as to when and where the hero of the story, the Buddha, was canonized as a Christian saint. But on the other two questions which await solution, that is to say, the early migration of the romance itself, and the relation of the fables it contains to the Buddhist Jātaka stories, it is of the greatest importance.

I would venture to call attention here to a very interesting discussion of the history of the romance, written from

the strictly Catholic point of view by M. Emmanuel Cosquin, in the 'Revue des questions historiques' for October, 1880. Professor Max Müller's paper on it in his 'Selected Essays,' and my own summary in the Introduction to my 'Buddhist Birth Stories,' may also be mentioned.

T. W. RHYS DAVIDS.

Book of the King's Son and the Ascetic.

In the name of Allah the merciful the element! This is an abridgment from the book of one of the distinguished philosophers of India. It is a book of eloquent allusions, pleasing instructions, and beautiful meanings [or ideas]; may Allah cause us to profit thereby. Amen!

The author of it has recorded that there was in the country of India a great king, who, on account of his extreme love for the world, was turned away from contemplating eternity so ardently towards [the affairs of] his kingdom, that there was no one who dared to find fault with him. He alienated the adherents of the [Buddhist?] religion, and attracted the adherents of the idols. Having one day made inquiries about a man of the people of his kingdom whom he had been in the habit of consulting, he was informed that he had verily abandoned the world, his family, his property, and had joined the [community of] ascetics. This greatly astonished the king, who then sent for the man, who on making his appearance, and being seen in the condition of asceticism, was reproved by the king as follows: "Whereas thou hast been one of the grandees of my kingdom, thou hast [now] debased thy soul, hast separated thyself from thy family and hast sought vanity." The ascetic replied: "O king! Although thou art under no obligation to me, it is nevertheless incumbent upon thee to listen to my words without anger, and then to act as thou deemest suitable; because anger is a foe to intellect, since it is a bar between

him who is under its influence, and between what he is to hear and to understand." The king replied: "Speak!" The ascetic then continued: "Is the guilt of which thou accusest me to redound upon me, or upon thee?" He said: "Upon thee and upon me; for, when any man wishes to commit suicide, I must not leave him the option to do so. I consider the destruction of his life [to be] like the destruction of any other man's life, because I am his protector and the judge for and against him. Accordingly I judge thee and punish thee for destroying a life of my subjects, which is thy own life; for the loss and grief thou hast brought upon thy family." The ascetic rejoined: "I do not think thou canst punish me except by arguing, and an argument can be established only by judges. Although at present no human judges can trouble thee, thou possessest two of them, to one of whom I agree to submit." He asked: "Who are these two?" The ascetic continued: "He to whose decision I shall submit is thy intellect, but he from whom I desire to be excused is thy wrath." The king replied: "Say what thou listest, but give me some information, and tell me since when thou art of this opinion, and who has helped thee thereto?" The ascetic continued: "As to my information, it is that in my young years I heard one word which fell into my soul, and became like seed sown; it then grew and prospered till it became the tree which thou beholdest. I had namely heard a speaker say that 'a fool considers that which is a thing to be nothing, and that which is nothing to be a thing. He who does not scorn that which is nothing will not obtain that which is a thing. He who does not look upon that which is a thing, will not rejoice his soul by abandoning that which is nothing. The thing is eternity, and that which is nothing is the world.' This statement had impressed me, but it, and the prompting thereby, as well as the contemplation thereof, were overpowered by lusts, until the world appeared to me, as I believed it in my folly to be, a thing, whereas it is nothing; since it has shown to me that its life is death, its wealth is poverty, its joy is grief, its satiety is hunger, its health is disease, its strength is weak-

ness, its honour is degradation, its pleasure pain. And why should not its life be death, since the tendency of life therein is towards death ; and why should its wealth not be destitution, since no one gains anything therefrom without the need of something else, in order to make it serviceable in the same way as the owner of a beast requires the food for it, the price for it, the binding place [*i.e.* stable] for it, and the utensils for it. Then, in order to utilize all these things, he stands in need of something else, so that when destitution is removed, and none befalls him from his family and property, and [from] necessity, he is beset by other wants. And how should not its joy be grief, since it [*i.e.* grief] is lying in wait for every one whom gladness has befallen from it in order to pursue him with grief : nor is any one addicted to the world secure, when he experiences a joyful event, that this very event will not result in a calamity to him. If then it be unavoidably necessary to become severed from family, children, and property, and this separation takes place forcibly in ways accompanied by many evils, is it not more worthy, with reference to all the just-mentioned things, that an intelligent man should abandon them voluntarily, before any of the just-noticed ways, which often take place, befall him, and he should not be grieved if he has obtained it [*i.e.* worldly prosperity], nor ought he, on the contrary, to wish for it, and covet it, if he has not obtained it. And how should not its repletion be hunger, since it kindles [thirst] in the body, and if he finds no water to quench it therewith, it consumes his body, and if he prevents it from consuming his body, by nourishing the latter with food and drink, this will be strength for the repetition of a similar kindling ; and the habit of repletion is [followed by] weakness in hunger. And how should its health [*i.e.* of the body] not be malady, since its health depends upon the equilibrium of the agglomerated humours of it, which are antagonistic in their qualities ; and the [substance] most closely connected with life is the blood, as well as the most evident. The blood is most closely connected with sudden death, with pestilence, with angina, with quinsy, with cancer, and with pleurisy.

And how should its strength not be weakness, since it is necessarily subject to dissolution? And how should its honour not be degradation, since we never see in it an honour but it terminates with removal, and what degradation is worse than removal from honour? And how should its pleasure not be pain, since it is [only] the cessation of pain, and terminating in the briefest period of time, is followed by that pain which it had just caused to cease, and when we consider this [succession of pleasure and pain] in the lives of kings, and their terminations, we find the days of their honour short in comparison to the days of their degradation, and the degradation of their terminations. And, by my life! that man who has received enjoyment from the world ought to despise it more, because it may happen any day that it becomes inimical to his property, family, children, or dignity, or body, or soul. Why should I not despise the world since it again takes away what it bestows, brings on a bad end, despoils him of what it has given him, and brings upon him ignominy; it abases him whom it exalts, and causes him to grieve; it severs connection with its lover, and repentance pursues him; it misleads him who obeys it, and wretchedness pursues him; by its dalliance it invites falling into its snares, and entails fatigue and trouble in [those who strive for] deliverance from it. It is the companion of treachery and the road to destruction; it is the much-stumbling ridden beast and the worn-out ship, the house with many snakes, and the park abounding with beasts of prey. It is considered necessary, but is not necessary to any one; it is the mistress who loves no one; is playing with its companion whilst feeding him, whereas it has destined him to be eaten; and making him its servant whilst pretending to serve him. It makes him laugh, then laughs at him; it insults him, and is then coveted by him; it makes him weep, then weeps for him, and whilst it spreads out its hand for [receiving] a gift, lo! it has spread it out for mendicancy and poverty; it knots [*i.e.* adorns] his head with a crown, then buries his head under ground; it ornaments hands and feet with gold, then shackles them with iron; it seats a man on a throne

one day, and seats him in prison the next. It spreads out for a couch gold brocade to him in the morning, and spreads out for him earth in the evening. It collects for him singers, buffoons, and panegyrists, then it collects upon him [*i.e.* his corpse] persons who sing threnodies, weep and lament; it causes his family to love his presence, then it causes them to love his absence: it perfumes his odour to-day and infests it to-morrow. It fills his soul with its hopes, and his fist with its gifts in the morning, but plunders his soul and his fist in the evening. It is pleased with a change of the whole in everything, and it foists the base into the place of the excellent. It removes a nation from scarcity to plenty, but also from rest to fatigue, and from hunger to repletion, until when this [state of affairs] is reversed plenty is snatched away, a bar is interposed between them and between easy nourishment, so that verily strength is taken away from them after abundance, and they return to the most fatiguing labour.

As to thy words, O king, of my having ruined my family and abandoned it: verily I have neither ruined nor abandoned it, but have joined [myself] to it, and segregated [myself from others] to it; because I was looking [formerly] with a bewitched eye, not distinguishing therewith familiars from strangers, nor foes from friends, when however I obtained a discerning eye, I looked, and lo! those whom I had reckoned to be familiars, companions, and brothers, had become beasts of prey, having no other care than to devour me, or [fear] to be devoured by me. Their difference consisted in proportion of their excellence in strength, some of them being like lions in bravery, or like wolves in rapacity, or like dogs, now barking angrily and now cajoling obsequiously, whilst some were like foxes in deceit and thieving; the intention however was identical, although the mode [of executing it] varied.

If thou wert to consider thy own case, O king, thou wouldst perceive that those of thy family, and those who obey thee, are worse [disposed] towards thee than strangers and distant persons. But as to my present state, I possess

[therein] familiars, brothers, and protectors who love me, and whom I love, so that love is among us, neither lost nor interrupted. They serve me, and I serve them, for wages which do not fail; accordingly the service is never discontinued. All of us aspire to what it is possible to enjoy together; nor is any one of us prohibited from gathering for himself at any time, what another gathers, so that there is neither contention among us, nor envy concerning the manner in which he collects it. These are the professors of [the Buddhist?] religion whom I have joined, and have aspired to safety for my soul as they have [for their own]. But those whom I have spurned and cut off are the adherents of the world, which is nothing, and thou verily knowest its attributes and its acts, so that if thou desirest me to explain 'the thing' prepare to listen to [what I have to say of] it." Then the king said to the philosopher: "Thou discernest nothing, and conquerest [discontent] only by [enduring] transitory wretchedness, and by [entertaining] vain hope, and by [bearing] eventual privation. Depart from my kingdom, for thou art corrupt."

Nativity of the King's Son, may Allah approve of him.

In those days a boy was born to the king, and he was greatly delighted thereat, because he was anxious to possess male offspring. He then assembled the astrologers and the U'lamâ to prepare a nativity for him, whereon they reported that [the subject of] this nativity would attain a higher station than any king of the kings of the earth. A scholar among them said thereon: "I do not think that the nobility this boy will arrive at will be the kind of nobility that is attained in the [affairs of the] world, and I am of opinion that he will become a leader in asceticism, and of a high degree in religion among the degrees of eternity." Hereon the king's joy at [the birth of] the son disappeared; then by his order a town was set apart for him, and he selected for his service and education trustworthy guardians, whom he summoned to his presence and ordered never to mention among themselves

death or eternity, neither religion nor asceticism, and neither removal [from this world] nor return [to the next world]; and that, if they perceived one of themselves instilling into him doubts or complaints, they should make haste to expel him from among them, so as to cut off from their mouths the mention of the things he had prohibited them to notice. Accordingly when the boy had become able to understand speech, nothing of the kind was uttered by their tongues.

The king happened to possess a wazir who satisfactorily administered his affairs, but the favourites of the king envied him. He [the wazir] went out to hunt, and met a cripple whom he questioned, whereon the latter informed him that he had been maimed by a beast of prey. He said to the wazir: "Attach me to thyself in order to find advantage by me." He then ordered him to be conveyed to his habitation.

The wazir happened to be a true believer [in asceticism], but concealed his faith for a wise purpose. Envious persons then maligned the wazir to the king, [alleging] that he was coveting the kingdom. They said: "Try him by telling him that thou desirest to follow asceticism and to abandon the kingdom, that thou mayest see him encourage thee therein." This they did, because they knew the opinion of the wazir concerning asceticism and the abandoning of the world. When the wazir entered to the king, the latter said: "O wazir! thou hast indeed beheld my greediness for [the affairs of] the world since I have become a man, and verily I have investigated what has past, but find in my hand nothing [profitable] from it, but that which remains [of my life] resembles that which has elapsed, and will certainly also slide away from my hand; wherefore I intend to exert that [assiduity] for eternity, which I have exerted for the world, and for this [purpose] I find no means except to abandon the kingdom and its people, and to embrace ascetic life, and [tell me now] what is thy opinion?" The wazir replied: "O king! That which remains [or is permanent], although it is hoped for, does not [yet] exist, but is worthy to be sought, and that which is perishable, although it exists, is worthy to be rejected." Then the weighty impression this reply had

produced manifested itself on the face of the king, and the wazir returned to his house in fear, not knowing what to do. He then interviewed the cripple, and informed him of what had taken place. The latter replied: "I am of opinion that the king thinks thy intention is to succeed him in his dominions; therefore, when thou risest in the morning, thou must throw away these habiliments of thine, don the garb of asceticism, and shave thy head; then go publicly to the palace of the king. This will astonish the people, who will inform the king about thy state, and he will then call thee and ask thee concerning thy act. Then say: 'This is what thou hast invited me to, because it is proper that he who advises his companion and master to do a thing, should not demur to share it with him. Arise then with us, because I consider that to which thou hast invited me, to be the most rational and most excellent [of pursuits] in which we are [capable of engaging].'"

The wazir did as he was bidden by the cripple, whereon the king vented the anger which was in his soul upon him, and relegated him in his irritation to a place of the ascetics whose habitations were in the hearts of the people [or, who lived in the very midst of the people]. Then he ordered them to be exiled from his whole country, threatening them with death if they refused compliance; accordingly they began to flee and to abscond. The king went out [afterwards] to hunt, and perceiving two men from a distance, he had them brought to his presence, and lo! both were ascetics. Then he asked them why they had delayed leaving. They replied: "We are weak, have no beast, nor provisions." The king said: "Who fears death, let him make haste [to depart] without provisions." They both continued: "We do not fear death, but expect it, and are pleased therewith, but we have abandoned what rejoices the inhabitants of the earth, have left it and do not return to it." He asked: "Then you have really not fled from fear of death?" And they replied: "No! We have fled because we disliked to aid thee against ourselves [*i.e.* to aid thee to get us into thy power]." Then the king ordered them to be burnt, and pro-

claimed the cremation of all ascetics to be found in his dominions. May Allah be pleased with both of them !

Attainment of Puberty by the King's Son.

The son of the king grew most handsomely in body, prospered in his education, and progressed in his learning [under his instructors], but discovered that he was guarded by them from going out, looking, and hearing. Then he said : "Perhaps they know better [than myself] what is good for me ;" but when he increased in years, in experience, and in intellect, he said : "I do not see that they possess excellence over me, and I must not allow them the management of my affairs, and I shall leave the option to myself ; but I ought to ascertain their opinions, and allow them to participate therein [*i.e.* in the management]." He intended to ask his father why they were surrounding him, and said : "This matter originated only with him, and he has not informed me thereof ; but I must ascertain this from one who can be cajoled by promises and frightened by threats." Accordingly he turned to one [of his guardians] with whom he had entertained intercourse ; this and his intimacy he augmented, and then said to him : "As thou seest, the king is paying me visits, and the kingdom will [in course of time] devolve upon me, so that thou wilt be in the happiest position if thou obeyest me, and in the worst plight if thou opposest me either immediately or hereafter." Then he learnt the truth from him, and placed trust in his fidelity. Afterwards they conversed more at length, till he informed him of everything, and he thanked him. When the time of his father's visit arrived he said : "Dear father ! Verily thou art conscious of the incongruity of my position, and the anxiety of my soul in this confinement ! When thou wast in a similar position, thou wast not in this state, and didst not continue therein ; change, as thou seest, is continuous." Then his father knew that his imprisonment would only increase his discontent. He said : "My son ! I wanted to ward off calamities from thee, so that thou shouldst hear and see only

what pleases thee." Then the king ordered his courtiers to make him ride out [from time to time] in the handsomest manner, and to turn away from his road every evil sight, as also to assemble near him handsome singers. After he had been [thus] riding about often, the people began to be displeased with the trouble of removing the diseased and the cripples from his way. Accordingly they one day made arrangements with two fellows who used to beg together for alms. One of them was swollen, full of tumours, and of evil aspect, lamenting violently ; and the other a blind man, who urged his guide to remove him quickly from the road. When the king's son perceived them he was horrified at the spectacle, and asked : "Is it possible that this befalls other men besides these two ?" And the reply was affirmative, whereon he gradually began to hate life and to think lightly of the royal power. Afterwards he saw an old man, whom age had bent, whose hair it had blanched, whose skin it had tanned, and changed his forces to weakness. Then he asked : "What is this ?" And was told that it is decrepitude. He further queried : "How long does it take a man to reach it ?" They said : "A hundred years or so." He asked moreover : "And what follows then ?" And being told that death ensues, he continued : "How quickly are days followed by months, and months by years, and years by [the termination of] life ; the occupation [which we ought to follow] is different from that which we are engaged in." Then he departed, repeating these words, and the wish for the enjoyment of the world and of its lusts abandoned him.

He met the aforesaid man with whom he had entertained intercourse and intimacy, and asked him : "Knowest thou any persons whose position is different from ours ?" He replied : "Yes ! The ascetics, who spurn the world and seek eternity. They possess knowledge and words [*i.e.* tenets], but the people are inimical to them, and the king, thy father, has exiled them and burnt them up with fire." Thereon the king's son became like one who is seeking something he had lost, and the fame of his beauty, perfection, understanding, civility, knowledge, and abstention from the world became

known in distant regions, so that it reached an ascetic philosopher in the island of *Sarandib*,¹ whose name was Belavhar. He said: "I must extricate this living man from among the dead." Then he travelled to him, and when he reached the city in which the king's son was, he threw away the garb of asceticism, and donned the costume of merchants. He roamed about the gate of [the mansion of] the king's son, till he made the acquaintance of the chamberlains, and used politeness till he secretly met the aforesaid man who was familiar with the king's son, and said to him: "I am a foreigner from Sarandib, and have arrived with a strange and most noble article; its profit [*i.e.* virtue] is that it cures the sick, causes the blind to see, and strengthens the weak. I find no one more worthy to possess it than the king's son, on account of his beauty and his perfection." He replied: "Thou describest a wonderful thing, and as to thy intelligence, I see no flaw in it, and thy words are beautiful, but I must not mention thy information till I see thy article." He said: "Besides my trading I am also a physician, and see that thy sight is weak; my article has a brilliancy which cures weak sight, but the king's son is young, of strong sight, and I shall see whether he requires this [remedy]." The chamberlain then entered, and informed the king's son about him. The soul of the king's son suggested to him that now his desire for a knowledge of asceticism would be gratified, and he ordered him to be secretly admitted. The philosopher Belavhar brought with him a package containing books, and said that it was his stock-in-trade. When Belavhar entered and the chamberlain went out, the king's son received him in the handsomest manner, honoured him and extolled him. Then Belavhar said: "O son of the king! I verily believe thou hast honoured me more than the people of thy country [have done]." He replied: "On account of the great [information about asceticism] which I hoped for on thy part." He continued: "O son of the king! Thy parable with me

¹ *Suvarna-dvīpa*, gold-island, in Sanskrit; considered to be Ceylon by Oriental, but Sumatra by Occidental, scholars.

is like the parable of the king who honoured two destitute men on account of his religion."

First of the Parables of Belavhar the Ascetic Philosopher.

The king's son asked: "And how was that?" The ascetic replied: "It is on record that there was a king who loved what is good, and was stimulated thereto by [his intercourse with] pious and excellent men. One day, whilst he was going with his courtiers, he passed near two barefooted men, dressed in worn-out garments, but bearing the mark of righteousness and excellence. When he saw them, he alighted from his vehicle [or animal], embraced and honoured them, which [behaviour] displeased his courtiers. The king had a foolish brother who knew not the dignity of the professors of asceticism and of devotion, but he was under his brother and had nothing to do. The companions [*i.e.* courtiers] of the excellent king then went to him and said: 'Verily the king has despised his soul, and has exposed the people of his country to disgrace, by alighting [from his vehicle or horse] for the sake of two wretched men. Therefore reproach him, lest he repeat a similar thing again.' He complied, and when he had terminated his address, he received some kind of a reply, but went away without knowing whether he [the king] had become angry or pleased. Some time afterwards the excellent king commanded the herald of death to make a proclamation at the mansion of his brother, and to beat the drum of death at the gate of his mansion; this being the custom among them when they wished any one to be killed. Thereon the mourning women began their lamentations in the house of the king's brother, and the latter having put on the shroud [of death] proceeded weeping to the house of his brother the excellent king. When he came into his presence he fell on the ground, lamented, and raised his hands for imploration. The king then said: 'What troubles thee, O fool?' He replied: 'Blamest thou me for being troubled when thou proclaimest my death?' He continued: 'Art thou troubled by a herald

who proclaims my orders, whereas I am thy brother, and whereas thou knowest that thou hast not so offended me as to be deserving of death? Then how blamest thou me for being troubled by the herald of my lord when I saw him? And thou hast fallen to the ground, being troubled because I was reminded of that death wherewith I have been threatened since I was born. Depart [from me], therefore, because my wazirs have greatly misled thee, and their error will [soon] appear.' "

Parable of Four Boxes, good and bad.

The ascetic said: "Then the king issued orders, and four boxes were made for him. Two of them he besmeared with gold-water, and two with pitch; then he filled the latter with gold and jewels, but the former with stinking carrion. Then he assembled his wazirs, exhibited to them the boxes, and ordered them to appraise their value, but they said: 'Outwardly we perceive that we cannot assign any price to the gold-boxes on account of their excellence, nor to the pitch-boxes on account of their meanness.' Then he ordered the pitch-boxes to be opened, and the house was illuminated by [the brilliancy of] the jewels. Then he said: 'This is the parable of the two men whom you despised on account of their outward mean garb and destitute appearance, whereas they are full of righteousness, wisdom, and all virtues which are superior in value to these jewels.' Then he ordered the two gold-boxes to be opened, whereon malodorous vapours issued from them, and the dismal, changed, distasteful, disgusting forms having been uncovered, they turned away from the sight, and complained of the stench. Then he said: 'This is the parable of those adorned outwardly, who glory in these perishable impossible bodies, whilst their internal parts are replete with folly and wickedness, as well as with all kinds of defects which are more deformed and more impure than this carcase.' They then said: 'Verily we have been awakened and admonished.' And this is thy parable, O son of the king, concerning the honourable recep-

tion thou hast given me." The king's son then stood up erect and said: "Now I am certain that I have found what I was in search of; give me therefore more of it."

Parable of the Sower.

The ascetic said: "The sower went forth with his good seed to sow it. When he filled his hand therewith and sowed it, some of it fell upon the margin of the road, so that shortly afterwards the birds snatched it away. Some of it fell on a rock, but meeting with humidity and soil, it sprouted; but when the roots touched the dry rock it died. Some of it fell upon thorny ground, and when it was near bearing fruit, the thorns overpowered and killed it; but the smallest portion of it, which had fallen into good purified soil, was saved, became pure and prospered. The sower is the bearer of the word, the good seed is rectitude of speech. That which fell on the ground and was snatched away by birds, is that which does not pass [deeper] beyond hearing, so that it turns away and is lost. That which fell on a rock and withered when its roots reached the rock, is that [word] which he, who received it, desired to abide with him when it struck his ear, but he did not knot his intention thereon [*i.e.* he failed to retain it with a firm will]. That which grew, and was almost bearing fruit, but was destroyed by thistles, is that which he who had received it retained, until the work, that is to say the fruit thereof, was suffocated by lusts and cares and [thus] destroyed; but that which remained safe, pure, and prospered, is that which was accepted by the ear and the eye, and retained by the understanding and memory, was cherished by firm resolution, reflection and judgment, so that no associate [other impression] obtained obtained a share therein."¹ The king's son said: "I hope that my case will be that of the seed which remains safe, is pure, and prospers. Then narrate to me the parable of the

¹ Compare this with Matthew xiii. 3-23, and the identity will be found to be very striking.

world and the beguilement of the denizens thereof, and what their purpose is."

Parable of the Elephant and the Man.

The ascetic said: "It is related that a man went out into the desert, and that whilst he was progressing, an elephant in rut attacked him. He ran, but, being followed by the elephant, and perceiving a well, he let himself down into it, hanging on to two branches which had grown on its margin, and placing his two feet upon something at the side of this well. When he clearly saw the two branches, he [also] perceived near them two rats, black and white, gnawing them incessantly. Then he glanced at what he had placed his feet upon, and lo! he beheld four serpents. Then looking into the depth of the well, he beheld a dragon with dilated mouth, desirous of swallowing him. Then he [again] raised his head towards the two branches, and lo! there was some bee-honey upon them, whereon he consumed some, and the enjoyment of the sweetness of the honey diverted his attention from [looking further at] the two branches on which he was suspended, but [afterwards] he took notice of the two rats who were hastening to cut [through] them, as well as of the four serpents, upon which his feet were resting, not knowing at what moment one of them might attack him, and the dragon with distended mouth, not knowing how he would fare in case he should fall into his jaws, and of the bees and the wasps which stung him whilst he was eating that honey. The well is the world, full of calamities, the two branches are [human] life, the two rats are night and day, and their haste in cutting through the two branches is the rapidity of [the succession] of days and nights in cutting away life. The serpents are the four temperaments, and when one of them is exorbitant, it kills; and the dragon is impending death, and the bees and wasps are misfortunes and calamities; and the honey is the beguilement of human beings in the world—by their slender enjoyment therein of the pleasure of life commingled with troubles and

difficulties—resembles the honey mixed with the stinging of wasps and of bees.” The son of the king said: “The parable is wonderful, and the similitude true; give me, therefore, another parable of the world, with its adherent beguiled therein by what does not profit him, [but] despising that by which profit redounds to him.¹”

The Man who had Three Friends.

The ascetic said: “It is on record that there was a man who had three friends. As to the first, he preferred him [to the other two] and honoured him with his soul by fighting for him. The second was inferior to the first, but he loved him and did not neglect him; and the third, being despised and degraded by him, he occupied himself very little with him. A calamity having befallen the man, he stood in need of his friends therein, and messengers of the king had arrived to take him away. He then went to his first companion, and said to him: ‘Thou art indeed aware how I prefer thee [to my other two friends], and I have spent my life for thee. This is the day of my necessity; what then may I expect from thee?’ He replied: ‘I have friends who occupy [and avert] me from thee, and they are now preferable to thee; moreover I have clothed thee with two garments [utilization of wealth for this and for the next world?], of which thou makest no use.’ Then he paid a visit to his second friend, and said: ‘I relieve thy want, and strive to gain thy approbation, but [now] I am in need of thee; then what may I hope from thee?’ He replied: ‘My own affairs engage [and impede] me from [aiding] thee to-day; and verily our connection is severed, since thy way differs from mine, I shall [however] side with [or accompany] thee a few steps, and then [I shall] depart to what is more profitable to me than thyself.’ Then he turned towards his

¹ This parable occurs also in *Kalila va Dimna*, of which see the text of M. de Sacy, ed. 1816, ch. iv p. 75. I have also embodied it in my *Indian Fables in Moslem Literature*, which are however still in MS. only, and will probably remain so; my MS. contains nearly one hundred such fables.

third friend, and said to him: 'I am ashamed [to ask] of thee, but necessity has driven me to thee; then what may I expect from thee?' He replied: 'Thou hast a deposit with me, and I am under obligations to thee, and thy neglect of me is of little account, for I am thy friend who will neither abandon nor surrender thee; be therefore not dismayed on account of the smallness of what thou hast paid me beforehand, because I have guarded it, augmented it for thee, and then left it at thy disposal. Of the small amount of property [or rather money] thou hast laid up with me, the double of what thou hast deposited with me [now] belongs to thee; and I hope that thereby the king will be propitiated towards thee.' The man then said: 'I do not know which of the two things I am to be sorry for, my nearness to a bad companion or my remoteness from a true companion.' The first companion is wealth, the second the family, and the third good works." The king's son said: "This is the truth, then give me more of it."

The Foreign King.

The ascetic said: "The people of a [certain] town were in the habit of appointing a man who was a stranger to them and ignorant of their affairs to be their king, and expelling him after one year in a state of nudity, so that what elapsed of his royal affairs [or honours] became [the occasion of] calamity to him. One of them [who had thus been made king], when he perceived that he was [destined to remain] a stranger among the people of the town, sought no intercourse [or familiarity] with them, but endeavoured to find one of his own countrymen, or [some other person] who might inform him about their affairs and customs. He ceased not to search everywhere till he found one who revealed to him their secret, and hinted to him to accumulate at once as much as he could, so as to find it after his expulsion.¹ He did so, and the termination [of his reign] was for his own

¹ Is this something like the evangelical advice to make friends with the mammon of unrighteousness?

good. Thou also, O son of the king, art situated like that foreigner who wished to have no intercourse with those who were strangers to him, and I am the man who had been sought, and from whom thou wilt obtain direction and assistance." The king's son said: "I am a recluse in the world; then inform me on the state of eternity." The ascetic said: "Verily seclusion in [or rather from] the world is the key to [the] desire for eternity; and who desires eternity seeks it, and who seeks it finds the gate thereof, and who arrives at the gate thereof enters the kingdom thereof, and who enters the kingdom thereof enjoys the benefits thereof.¹ And how shouldst thou not be a recluse in the world when thou beholdest upon this body its influence which cannot be avoided, because heat melts it, cold freezes it, water drowns it, fire burns it, reptiles injure it, beasts of prey tear it to pieces, iron cuts it, and hard substances knocking against it break it, whilst disease and pain are by nature inherent therein; neither is there any expectation of its continuous health or immunity, it being moreover subject to [endure] heat, cold, disease, fear, hunger, thirst, and death." The king's son asked: "Were those thy friends whom my father had exiled and burnt?" And receiving an affirmative reply, he continued: "I was informed that the people gathered around against them with [or on account of their] enmity and evil speaking [or bad repute]." The ascetic said: "As to enmity it is [all] very well; but as to evil speaking [or bad repute] can it [or the accusation of it] be applied to one who is veracious and lies not, who knows and is not ignorant, who is satisfied with the smallest competency of everything, who abandons his property and family, who injures neither himself nor others; of whom no persons entertain fears that he will injure them or their families or their possessions." "Then how did the people agree to be their enemies whilst they disagree [in many things] among themselves?" He

¹ It may be seen that this declaration is entirely in the Buddhist sense, who do not require Allah—and only long to attain the *Nirvāna* which may perhaps be meant by the "kingdom of eternity" mentioned above—but He will also be alluded to afterwards; as also prophets, but none of them are specified by names or the religions they preached.

replied: "In the same manner as dogs gather around carrion [and agree in] biting it, but bite [also] each other, and bark at it, although they are of various statures and colours. Whilst they are fighting with each other for carrion, and a man happens to pass near them, they abandon each other and all rush upon the man, aiding each other against him, although he does not want their carrion, but they dislike him because he is a stranger to them, and they associate with each other. The carrion is the wealth of the world, and the various dogs which are fighting with each other for it are various kinds of men, who entertain no other care but [for the enjoyments of] the world. The man around whom the dogs assembled, who has no need of the carrion, is the ascetic who does not struggle with any one in [the affairs of] the world, and the people do not forbid this [indifference] because he is a stranger to them. And what more powerful argument is there [against the unreasonableness of this persecution] than that people at variance aid each other to assail him against whom no argument [of unworthiness] is adduced by knowing men?" The king's son said: "Execute thy purpose and treat me with thy medicines." The ascetic continued: "When a skilled physician sees a man's body worn out by lusts, by corrupt humours, and he desires to strengthen and to fatten it, he does not begin with food which produces flesh and strength, because he is aware that the mixing of strong food with corrupt humours is insalubrious to the body, but he treats him with what will destroy his corrupt humours, and purify his veins [*i.e.* blood], whereon he nourishes him with suitable food and drink; then he will become strong [enough] to bear the [food which is] heavy." The king's son asked: "Is that to which you are inviting me a thing which men attain by means of their intellects, so that they have chosen it in preference to something else?" The ascetic then said: "Verily this matter is too great to be an affair of the people of the earth, or that they should plan it by their own thought. If it were a thought of men of the world, it would be an invitation to its practices and ornaments, such as its food, drink, clothing,

accumulations, buildings, sports, and lusts; but it is a matter foreign thereto, and violating [the usages] thereof." He asked: "Does any one invite to this [asceticism] besides yourself?" He replied: "Yes! Religious people in all nations." The king's son queried further: "Then what has given you [ascetics] the preference [or superiority] in this matter [of the invitation] to others?" He continued: "The origin [or principle] of the invitation is the truth alone,¹ but the difference between us and between others is that this invitation ceased [or failed] to arrive and to appear upon earth with the prophets of Allah and His apostles during past ages [and has been promulgated] in various languages. Every invitation is a direction [or guidance] and [has] a correct purpose [or command], but the nations turn it away from its aim, and abandon the intention of its path, and continue to adhere to its name [only, but] pretend to understand it; and this constitutes the separation between us and them. We do not oppose any one, in any thing, unless we possess an argument against him [which we quote] from the remnant of the [sacred] books [which are still] in his hands, and from the sentiments which he utters. Our behaviour testifies that we are in accordance with the truth, and their behaviour testifies against them that they are in opposition [thereto]." He further asked: "Then how is it that when prophets and apostles arrive, then they are cut off, so that their vestiges become obliterated, and their sciences are ignored?" He replied: "Seest thou not the owner of the garden, how he establishes various plants therein, then hedges in every species of them, and enters it during some time only seldom; but when the vernal season is at hand he visits it, and proceeds to the side where his business is? The same is the case with the prophets and the apostles, because they come for the scope to which they have been ordered by Allah the great and glorious; and every season has its scope; the flower has one and the fruit another." He asked: "Do they proceed [only] to those of their scope, or do they

¹ Could this be the "supreme truth" of the Buddhists' *Paramārtha-satya*?

deliver a universal invitation, so that some accept it, and some who do not love them reject it? It seems they do not know those who respond to them, obey them, and are under their patronage [or government]." The ascetic said: "Listen to the parable which I shall narrate to thee."

Parable of the Bird, compared to the Prophets.

"It is said that on a certain coast of the sea there is a bird which lays many eggs; but a time arrives when it becomes difficult to him to dwell on the said coast, and he finds no means of subsistence [except] in another region, until the said time elapses. Accordingly he takes up his eggs and distributes them in the nests of [other] birds, egg by egg among the eggs of every species of birds. Then the birds cherish his eggs with their own, and his little ones come out with theirs, till the time of his return arrives, when he passes near those nests in the night and gives forth sounds which his little ones and others hear, but only his own gather around him when they hear his voice, the other birds not responding to him. The same is the case with the prophets and the apostles, because their invitation is responded to only by the people who belong to them." He asked: "If then thou art of opinion that the words of apostles are not like the words of [other] men; are they the words of Allah and his angels, or of others?" He replied: "Seest thou not that when people desire some beast or bird to understand that it is to advance, to retreat, to meet, or to back out, they find that beasts and birds cannot bear [*i.e.* understand] their actual words, and place upon them [*i.e.* communicate with them by means of] such threats and signs which they are able to bear [*i.e.* to understand], by means of which they attain their purpose with them. In the same manner, when men were too weak to bear [*i.e.* to understand] the words of Allah and of his angels, according to their [actual] form, perfection, and quality, sounds [*i.e.* expressions] were delivered [to them] which they return to [*i.e.* use] among themselves, by means of which they listen to words of

wisdom, through [the medium] of tongues of flesh, like the sounds of whistling or threatening which are addressed by men to beasts. In the same manner the spirit of wisdom is concealed in those sounds; and as words, when they contain the wisdom of Allah, are ennobled on account of the nobleness thereof, so bodies are ennobled by spirits, and as bodies void of spirits are useless, so from words when they are void of wisdom, which stands in the place of spirits, no profit can be derived." He asked: "How is it that this wisdom, of whose force and excellence thou hast given some account, is not profitable to all mankind?"

*Parable of the Sun of Hearts and of Eyes.*¹

The ascetic said: "Verily the light of wisdom is like two suns rising together; their light striking the faces of all mankind, the blind and the seeing. When the evident [conspicuous] sun rises [*i.e.* is visible] to conspicuous eyesights, it causes a division of men into three stations: one of them possesses good sight, to which the brilliancy is profitable, and which is strengthened by looking thereat; whilst another of them is blind, [remaining] a stranger to the brilliancy, who does not at all profit by the rising of the sun; and one of them has a diseased sight, who is accounted neither among the blind nor those of sound sight; he profits by the brilliancy according to the measure of his eyesight, and will be injured by the brilliancy according to the measure of the weakness of his eyes. Thus also the sun of wisdom, which is the sun of hearts, when it shines upon hearts, causes a division of them into three stations. The station of those endowed with sight [*i.e.* judgment] is, that they act according to wisdom, and honour the adherents thereof by choosing it, trusting in it, acting according to its requirements, spending their time in learning what they have not [yet] learnt of it, and in practising what they have

¹ Buddhists often use the term *internal law* to designate Buddhist instruction, and *external law* for general instruction, which may perhaps bear some analogy to the two suns here described.

not [yet] practised of it. The position of those who are blind [*i.e.* undiscerning] is, that in which the relation of their hearts to wisdom resembles that of a blind eye to the sun; whilst the state of those with diseased hearts is that where knowledge [or theory] is deficient and practice weak; good and evil, truth and vanity, being accumulated therein. And the difference between these two suns is, that most of those to whom the internal sun has risen, with its charms, are blind to it. In every stage of the stages of internal vision there is a difference as in the grains of pearls, and although all are called by one name there is nevertheless much difference between them." The king's son asked: "Is there [any] salvation for the defective [or guilty]?" He replied: "Verily there is deliverance [or manumission] in liberation [or emancipation] from folly and error, and there is salvation¹ in adherence to the protection of wisdom, and a portion thereof not falling [away or lost] is something, even if it be little." He asked: "Thinkest thou my father has heard anything of these words [or tenets]?" He replied: "I am of opinion that the information was not given to him." He [further] asked: "How have the philosophers failed to do so, and have not spoken to him on this important subject, and advised him?" He replied: "Because they knew the [unwillingness of the] recipient of their words; thus, perhaps, some philosopher may associate with an ignorant man all his life, and be loved by him, there being no difference between them except in [matters of] belief; he is nevertheless pained [*i.e.* reluctant] towards him, and does not think proper to open out [*i.e.* to reveal] to him the secrets of wisdom when he does not consider him worthy, as was the case with the prosperous king and his sage wazir."

The Prosperous King and his Sage Wazir.

"We are informed that there was a righteous king, and that he had a wazir who encouraged him to righteousness.

¹ These words may perhaps be intended to mean the *Moksha*, and the last of them the *Nirvāna*.

The wazir had indeed heard tenets of wisdom, understood them, responded to them, and segregated himself [from others] to the adherents thereof. The king was keeping nothing secret from him, and likewise the wazir hid nothing from him, except the subject of the [Buddhist?] religion and of wisdom. They lived together in this way for a long time, and whenever the wazir saw the king prostrating himself to his idols, making offerings to them, and behaving himself according to the behaviour [peculiar to the adherents] of their aberration, he became pensive, sad, and consulted his [Buddhist?] companions whether he ought to speak to him on this [subject]. They replied: 'Thou knowest thy companion [*i.e.* the king] best, and if thou thinkest him to be a [worthy] recipient of the tenets [of Buddhism?], then speak to him; but if not, take care not to direct him to the religion [of Buddha] and its professors, for the Sultân will be vexed thereby.' He continued: On a certain night when the people were resting—and in those days there was a great rain—the king said to the wazir: 'Art thou willing that we should walk about the town to see the state of the population, and the effect of the rain which we have had in these days?' He replied: 'Yes, if thou art so inclined.' Accordingly they roamed about in various directions of the town, and passed in a certain road near a heap of dung, belonging to the inhabitants of the town, which had grown to be a big hill, and the king perceived the brilliancy of a fire issuing from its side. He then said to the wazir: 'Come down with us; let us walk so that we may look at this fire closely, and know its knowledge [*i.e.* what it may reveal].' When they reached it [*i.e.* the dung-heap] they observed therein an excavation resembling a cave, which a poor mendicant had excavated and made a habitation for himself and his wife. Hearing sounds of song, both then looked from such a spot so that they could not be perceived from the cavern, and lo! they beheld a man of ugly aspect reclining on that [couch] which he had prepared for himself of garbage. He wore a garment of rags [taken] from the dunghill, and before him he had the fragment of

an earthen bowl [which had been] thrown [away by some person] on the said dunghill, but it contained a beverage. In his hand he held a bone, cast away from corpses, and he had tied thereon a skin belonging to the same, so as to resemble a drum. His wife was standing in front of him, her aspect and dress being the same as his own. She was serving him with drink, and whenever she addressed him, she addressed him as *Prince of men*, and when he spoke to her, he addressed her as *Princess of women*. There was among them gaiety, laughter, excitement, and more mutual dalliance than can be expressed,¹ so that the king was astonished at the condition they were in, and the delight they enjoyed. Then they departed, but his amazement had not ceased concerning what they had both seen, and he said to his wazir: 'I do not know that we [ever] enjoyed gaiety and delight such as we have seen with these two poor persons, and I think they will be continuing in this manner all night.' The wazir then took up the [subject of the] conversation after the king, and said: 'O king! I fear that we are as beguiled as they are!' He asked: 'How can that be?' The wazir continued: 'Because to those who know the everlasting kingdom a [terrestrial] kingdom is as this locality [which we have just seen] is to our eyes; and to those who hope for the mansions of eternal beatitude, thy mansions will appear as this cave [appears] to our eyes, and they will be astonished at the beauty and perfection [of all things] which thou enjoyest, as we are amazed at what these two destitute persons are imagining in their minds [that they are enjoying].' The king asked: 'And who are [men] of this description, and what do they describe concerning the everlasting kingdom?' The wazir replied: 'They are those who know Allah and seek eternity, [namely] the mansion of

¹ The so-called dung-heap was a place of cremation, the prince and princess a *Mehter* and *Mehdvani*, as all who are acquainted with India will readily admit; but of course, under the British Government, even the places of cremation have fallen under sanitary regulations and police supervision, so that the above description is not quite so faithful in our days as it was in ancient times. The Buddhists called a place of cremation simply a *heap*, so it is perhaps not surprising that our Arabic text calls it a *dung-heap*.

joy wherewith grief neither exists nor follows [or enters] it, but repose not fraught with fatigue, and light which is not followed by darkness, and knowledge not commingled with ignorance, and love not accompanied by hate; and content, and security, neither of which is coupled with wrath nor fear, and [whatever is] beautiful or pleasant, without any admixture of baseness or decay in either; health and life, followed neither by sickness nor by death, perfect immunity from all evils, and the plenitude of everything good.' The king asked: 'And do they record that there is any desire or any way to [attain] this abode?' He replied: 'Yes; they do not doubt that he who seeks it enters it.' He asked: 'Then why hast thou not informed me of this before to-day?' The wazir replied: 'Because the Sultân is blind to this [subject] and deaf. Blindness and deafness incite him to anger and impetuosity, intervening between him and between meditation and deliberation. His heart is occupied with various cares, near and distant; his audition is engaged with pleasant forgotten stories and gossip; his vision with extravagant colours and figures.' The king said: 'If this be true, we must not employ our nights and days, nor desire the use of our hearing and sight, in anything but this [subject], and if there be a doubt, it is incumbent on us to occupy ourselves with searching for a knowledge thereof, until we know whether it be true or false. And I am of opinion that thy concealing of this subject from me was not handsome, because I was trusting in thy affection, and considered thy [allegations of] excuse to be true.' The wazir said: 'Verily there is a close relationship between the beginning and the end of this subject [of asceticism], since both he who knows it, and he who is ignorant of it, [may] agree to abandon its precepts and to work for the world which is [or means] enmity to eternity; wherefore I have acted [thus, all] this time in not informing thee, from compassion towards, and from fear of, thee; like the swimmer towards his friend, who knew not how to swim, when he fell into the overwhelming water.'

The Swimmer and his Friend.

He [*i.e.* the king] asked : 'How was this ?' He [*i.e.* the wazir] replied : 'We have been informed that there were two intimate friends, one of whom was a swimmer, but the other possessed no knowledge of the art of swimming, nor boldness to venture into water ; both however happened to fall into deep water. The swimmer then swam to save himself from drowning, and looking at his companion found him [alternately] sinking and rising in the water. When he perceived his ignorance of swimming, and the small chance of [saving] his life, the desire for the preservation [of his friend] impelled him to approach him, but he dared not go very near, for fear he might catch hold of him, and they would both be drowned. He therefore began to show him how he was working with his hands, in order to direct him ; he accordingly moved his hands in a similar manner ; whereon, hoping to rescue him, he endangered his own life by approaching him so as to enable him to take hold of his hand. Then he swam with him till both of them came out [of the water] and were saved. In the same manner, O king, I have endangered my life in this [matter] with thee, although I was aware of thy strength and of my weakness ; but when I saw that the opportunity was suitable, I spoke to thee about it. Then wilt thou permit me to remind thee of these words ?' He replied : 'Yes ! Always !' The wazir accordingly did so, and the end thereof was unto salvation."

The king's son continued : "I do not occupy my mind with anything besides this path, and I am firmly determined to flee in the night with thee." The ascetic queried : "How canst thou come with me, whereas I possess no beast to carry me, neither gold nor silver ; have not provided food, nor habitation, and wish to remain only a short time in the country. How couldst thou habituate thyself to the society of those who are like the dead ?" The king's son asked : "How likenest thou them to the dead ?" He replied : "Because they have deadened their animal lives, they rejoice at physical death." The king's son said : "The worshippers

of idols also pretend that they have, like the ascetics, prevailed over [the fear of] death, but they drink and eat as the ascetics eat and drink; then what is the argument in this matter?"

*The Sparrow and the Fowler.*¹

The ascetic said: "It is recorded that a certain man had charge of a garden. When he entered it on the customary day he had appointed for the purpose, he beheld a sparrow perched on a tree, the fruit of which it was plundering. He therefore set a snare for it, captured it, and when he was about to slay it, the bird said: 'There is nothing in me to satiate thee. Wouldst thou prefer to do something better than what thou intendest?' He asked: 'And what is it?' The sparrow replied: 'Let me go my way, and I shall teach thee three maxims, which, if thou rememberest them, will be better for thee than all thou possessest.' The man said: 'I agree; then inform me of them.' It said: '[Not] till thou swearest to set me [first] at liberty.' He accordingly did so. It then said: 'Do not fall into despair for what thou hast lost; seek not what thou canst not attain; and do not believe in [a thing] which will not be.' Then he let go the bird, which flew away, perched on a branch, and said to the man: 'If thou hadst known what thou hast lost in me, thou wouldst be aware that thou hast been deprived of a great thing.' He asked: 'What is it?' It replied: 'If thou hadst slain me, thou wouldst have found in my gizzard a pearl like a goose egg, and wouldst have enjoyed [much pleasure for] the price of it all thy life.' When the man heard this, he repented of having set it free, and in order to decoy it, spoke as follows: 'Let bygones be bygones, remain in my company and do not abandon thy place, because we are under obligations to each other.' The sparrow then said: 'O fool! I see thou hast not remembered the [three] maxims, and hast not retained me when I fell into thy hands; for

¹ This parable occurs also in the Persian work *Shamsah va Qahqulah*, but is undoubtedly of ancient Indian origin. A notice of this work occurs in F. F. Arbuthnot's *Persian Portraits; a Sketch of Persian History, Literature, and Politics*, London, 1887, p. 119 seq.

now thou grieveest on account of having lost me, and wantest my return, which thou canst not attain; and thou [also] believest in [a thing] which cannot be, because my gizzard is the smallest [part] of what is in me, whereas the egg [of a goose] is greater than me.' And this nation of yours, O son of the king, have manufactured their idols with their own hands, but believe that they were created by them. They have guarded them for fear of being stolen; they nevertheless say that they are guarded by them. They spend upon them their gains, and believe that they are provided for by them. Thus they have sought what cannot be attained, and have believed in what will not be. But as to thy assertion that we eat, drink, and clothe ourselves like them, [I state that] our eating is imposed upon us by necessity, like eating the flesh of corpses, in the same manner as the king who was besieged by his foe in a cave on the seashore, with his wives and children. They had been long in the place, unable to escape, and had no provisions. One of them having died, and they being ready to perish [of starvation], they did this [*i.e.* consumed the corpse]. Thinkest thou they ate the food of necessity or of appetite?" He replied: "Yea! the food of extreme necessity." He continued: "This is the difference between our eating and their eating, because we eat to avert necessity and unwillingly, whereas they eat with appetite and not by compulsion." The king's son said: "As to the idols, I do not cease to hate them, as I despair of their [being anything] good. Then inform me what the first thing is thou invitest me to, in [the articles of] the religion?" He then replied: "Two things, namely, a knowledge of Allah, and practising what pleases Him." He asked: "How am I to know Him?" He replied: "Thou must know Him by the unity, by the power, and by His justice, His greatness and knowledge of all things [*i.e.* omniscience], and by His exaltation above all things."¹ He

¹ If A'b'dullah Ibn Muqaffa' was really the translator of the Pahlavi text into Arabic, it is no wonder that, although he occasionally mentions Allah, he abstains from alluding to the prophet Muhammad, to Islâm, or to tenets peculiar to that religion, because his orthodoxy and sincerity therein were always suspected. He was slain in a very cruel manner some years before A.H. 142, *i.e.* A.D. 759.

asked: "And what is the indication to all this?" The philosopher replied: "Thinkest thou not that when thou beholdest a made thing, thou knowest that it has a maker, although he may be absent from thee? In the same manner thou knowest Him in what thou seest of these made things, [such as] the sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the revolving of the spheres, the flowing of the water, the motion of the wind, of fire, and the design of all created things, that they have a powerful, wise creator, and he is the Most High, the Great." He asked: "Then what will please Him in us?" He replied: "That every one should do to another what he loves that he should do to him, and that he should abstain from doing to him what he would like another to abstain from doing to him.¹ Herein is righteousness, and in righteousness towards Allah the righteous [man] is [also] pleased." He said: "Verily, now thou hast made me acquainted with the deficiency in the religion of idols, and with the position [of myself therein?], which is not correct." "Verily, the position in any other except the religion of Allah will not expand [*i.e.* be of advantage to] thee." He asked: "And what hinders my position [*i.e.* continuation] in any other, and constricts that upon me?" He rejoined: "Ignorance and knowledge." He asked: "Then what is the constriction of ignorance, and what is the expansion [*i.e.* advantage] of knowledge?" He said: "Knowledge is wealth, and wealth is expansion; ignorance is poverty, and poverty is constriction." He asked: "And what demonstrates this [opinion]?" He replied: "Perceivest thou not that thy breast is constricted by thy ignorance of anything asked for, and that thou hopest for relief [of the constriction] only in the attainment of the knowledge thereof?" He rejoined: "Verily I have seen persons hoping for relief [from things] wherein no relief is, and I am not sure whether I am not one of them." He continued: "Shall I show thee and inform thee of this idea, and terrify thee con-

¹ These will easily be recognized as entirely evangelical sentiments, but also other ideas, formerly believed to be wholly and exclusively Christian, have been discovered in ancient Buddhist writings, *e.g.* the Pali *Dhammapada*.

cerning the position of those who entertain it, [contrary to those] who do not entertain it?" He replied: "Only that could frighten me thereat." He said: "Thou hast certainly heard paradise and [hell] fire mentioned, and although they possess a meaning assigned to a real thing, they would have no names [unless they existed in nature?]" He [the king's son] rejoined: "If a speaker desires to produce a meaningless oration, he can do it; and the poet has said:

Many a vain story is reasonable.

If therefore thou compellest me to believe all that is reasonable, thou forcest me to believe liars [also, because their lies may be reasonable]." He replied: "Verily, I compel thee to believe isolated words not concocted by the compositions of liars." The king's son said: "Thou hast of a certainty forced me to the belief in Allah, and what came [or was revealed] from him about rewards and punishments, and I shall prepare myself for reclusion in [*i.e.* from] the world." The ascetic replied: "Not everybody is fit for reclusion therein, because it is a prison to the righteous and a paradise to the wicked. And why should one not be a recluse therein who knows that the benefits of eternity cannot be enjoyed except by liberation from the bonds of the world; because there is a contrast in these two abodes, the building of the one being the destruction of the other. The expansions and benefits of eternity are, that the way to it is easy, and the gates of it are open to every one who travels on the road to it; whereas the constrictions and blemishes [*i.e.* disadvantages] of the world are, that [happiness in] it is unattainable to the majority of those who seek it, and that those who love it are more wretched than those who reject it, so that the slave thereof may perhaps attain more [of the prosperity] thereof by opposing [the allurements of] it; because it resembles a thirst-producing desert, full of beasts of prey, greedy thieves, reprobate satans, rapacious ghouls, and scorching simooms; its waters are lethal poison, and its plants [are like] the tree of death. In its centre there is a garden with an enclosure which cannot be scaled, and a strong gate. It contains fruitful trees and shady waters. Thus [it may be

seen that] after the said thirst-exciting desert, there is on one side of it fertility, and cultivation, and friendliness [of locality], whilst on the other side of it there is a sea of poison, over which the simoom of fire blows; nor is there any other issue from the said desert, except by these two ways [*i.e.* the barren and the fertile]. This desert is the adumbration of the world, with the changes and troubles contained therein. The garden in the centre of it represents the few pleasures which are therein commingled with calamities and miseries. The cultivation and fertility at one of its sides is like the reversed position [*i.e.* happiness] of the righteous in the next world, and the sea of poison is the reversed position [*i.e.* misery] of the wicked in eternity."

The philosopher Belavhar [thus] continued to pay visits to the king's son during four months, preaching to him and teaching him. After that Belavhar informed the son of the king that a festival of his, and of his companions, being at hand, he desired to go out to them, in order to be present thereat with them. The king's son replied: "I shall go out with thee." But Belavhar rejoined: "Verily, thy going out with me will irritate the king against me and against my companions, and will induce him to injure the adherents of asceticism, and our joy at their being with us will be marred, and thine at being with us; so that thou wouldst be cut off from thy purpose, which thou wilt attain in the joy [of having become an ascetic] with the permission of Allah, by the benignity [of thy compliance with the warning I just gave thee], inasmuch as thy remaining with the king will keep him off from [injuring] the adherents of the [Buddhist?] religion, which is [accounted as] worship to thee [or as a merit for protecting ascetics]. Though we entertain no aversion to death, we dislike to aid [the king] against ourselves [*i.e.* to get us into his power]." He asked: "Where have you assembled?" He replied: "In a fertile plain." He asked: "Of what kind is your food?" He continued: "Of its plants and vegetables, which are not the property of any one. But as to gardens, or fields, or cattle, or sheep, we have none of these [things]." He continued: "Take in

thy provision-bag some property [or money?] for thy companions." He rejoined: "How could my companions be misguided by property; for I should be a wretched ambassador to them, if I were to come bringing to them [goods] of the world, which they have been verily struggling against till they have overcome it. Thus I would come to them as a foe, and renovate their lust. They have no need to meet an enemy, reminding them of the vanity of the world, because an enemy thereof is an enemy to poverty and destruction, whereas if they do not return thereto, what else are gold and jewels but various kinds of stones, for which we have no need in our [fertile] plain." He asked: "Then whence do you obtain clothes?" He replied: "These are one of our difficulties, and when we find a garment, we hope that it may be the last of our requirements from the world, and it compels us to have recourse to the adherents thereof." He said: "Then take a robe which thou mayest use [or give away]." He rejoined: "We do not renew garments until they are worn out, nor are we in haste to accumulate any for a day which we do not know whether we shall attain it or not." He asked: "Then whence hast thou this garment?" He replied: "This is a shell to which Satan is accustomed; I have assumed it to meet thee." Then he asked him to show him his dress, whereon he doffed the shell from a black skin stretched over an emaciated trunk [his body having such a black and lean appearance], and he [the king's son] felt pity when he beheld on his body the traces of devotion. He then said: "Accept from me a garment for thy body." He rejoined: "How could I accept for myself what I have declined [to accept] for my companions from affection for them; and, if it were proper, I would have procured them the benefit thereof." He continued: "Then leave with me these clothes of thine, and take others instead of them, because I should like to possess a pledge to keep from thee." He replied: "My wish to exchange something old for something new will extend my hopes in proportion of the time which each lasts. Then let it be so, but wilt thou give me a garment resembling it in decay?" Then he called for one

of his own garments, which he [the ascetic] took, and gave him a pledge [or promise] that he would return to him before the expiration of the year, in case he should not die or be overcome [or hindered by some accident]. He agreed, took leave of him, gave him his best wishes, and he [the ascetic] departed.

The king's son then secretly addicted himself to devotion, removed his clothes in the night, and donning the said [worn-out] garment [of the ascetic Belavhar] prayed therein till morning. The confidential servant of the king to [watch over] his son, being displeased with the access of Belavhar to the king's son, made use of a stratagem, and informed the king thereof, who then became very angry and sorrowful, but afterwards had recourse to gentleness [or delay] on account of what he hoped [to accomplish] by [the use of] cunning towards his son. He accordingly summoned to his presence an interpreter of dreams, [who was also] a sorcerer, and said: "We have been afflicted by the sting against which we had not ceased to be on our guard, and which we had feared concerning our son; then what is the advice?" The sorcerer replied: "The first advice is to call this man, namely Belavhar, and if we get hold of him, thou wilt strike him with our argument against the professors of asceticism, because they abstain from the food wherewith Allah has bountifully provided them to partake thereof, and to be thankful for it; and because they have cut themselves off from progeny, whereby alone the earth is made habitable, and the praise of Allah is augmented. If we thus attain what will turn the king's son [away from asceticism], and what will make him acquainted with his error, we shall have accomplished our purpose, or else we shall reprove him. Then I shall assume the form of the ascetic [by means of my sorcery?], in such a manner that the king's son will deny nothing of the covenant of his friend [and will not doubt that I am Belavhar]. Then I shall address him in his own language [according to his own ascetic tenets], by showing him the falseness thereof, and making him confess his aberration in his pretensions to abandon the cultivation

[or society] of the world, and verily this will be his medicine [or rather cure from asceticism], unless thou art of [a different] opinion." Accordingly the king issued a command

[Here the MS. breaks off in the middle of the sentence.]

The opinion of Dr. Fritz Hommel as to the manner of the probable termination of this MS., if the end of it had not been lost, is as follows :

On the leaf (or leaves) that are wanting the information would have been given, how the king intended to get hold of Belavhar and could not find him, but had instead of him captured another ascetic, and caused him to be tortured ; and how then the sorcerer's second advice was executed, and the false Belavhar (namely the sorcerer himself) was then introduced to the prince ; how then, furthermore, instead of the false ascetic having been able to confound the prince, the latter, on the contrary, had converted the sorcerer to asceticism ; how also a second sorcerer (in the Christian romance Theudas, surmised to be Devadatta in the Indian), who desires to seduce the prince by spectral appearances of beautiful women, is likewise by him led to a similar internal transformation ; and how then, at last, the king gives to his son one-half of his kingdom, hoping thereby again to turn him to worldly thoughts ; how the prince accepts it, but immediately after his father's death surrenders it to another man, in order entirely to withdraw himself into the desert, where he at last finds Belavhar again, and becomes after continuous asceticism and penance a real Buddha.
