

by name ABENNER, who persecuted the Christians and especially the ascetics. After this King had long been childless, a son, greatly desired, is born to him, a boy of matchless beauty. The King greatly rejoices, gives the child the name of JOSAPHAT, and summons the astrologers to predict his destiny. They foretell for the prince glory and prosperity beyond all his predecessors in the kingdom. One sage, most learned of all, assents to this, but declares that the scene of these glories will not be the paternal realm, and that the child will adopt the faith that his father persecutes.

This prediction greatly troubled King Abenner. In a secluded city he caused a splendid palace to be erected, within which his son was to abide, attended only by tutors and servants in the flower of youth and health. No one from without was to have access to the prince; and he was to witness none of the afflictions of humanity, poverty, disease, old age, or death, but only what was pleasant, so that he should have no inducement to think of the future life; nor was he ever to hear a word of CHRIST or His religion. And, hearing that some monks still survived in India, the King in his wrath ordered that any such, who should be found after three days, should be burnt alive.

The Prince grows up in seclusion, acquires all manner of learning, and exhibits singular endowments of wisdom and acuteness. At last he urges his father to allow him to pass the limits of the palace, and this the King reluctantly permits, after taking all precautions to arrange diverting spectacles, and to keep all painful objects at a distance. Or let us proceed in the Old English of the Golden Legend.* "Whan his fader herde this he was full of sorowe, and anone he let do make redy horses and ioyfull felawshyp to accompany him, in suche wyse that nothyng dyshonest sholde happen to hym. And on a tyme thus as the Kynges sone wente he mette a mesell and a blynde man, and whã he sawe them he was abashed and enquyred what them eyled. And his seruautes sayd: These ben passions that comen to men. And he demaunded yf the passyons came to all men. And they sayd nay. Thã sayd he, ben they knowen whiche men shall suffre. . . . And they answered, Who is he that may knowe ye aduentures of men. And he began to be moche anguysshous for ye incustomable thyng hereof. And another tyme he found a man moche aged, whiche had his chere froüced, his tethe fallen, and he was all croked for age. . . . And thã he demaüded what sholde be ye ende. And they sayd deth. . . . And this yonge man remembered ofte in his herte these thynges, and was in grete dyscöforte, but he shewed hỹ moche glad tofore his fader, and he desyred moche to be enformed and taught in these thỹges." [Fol. ccc. lii.]

At this time BARLAAM, a monk of great sanctity and knowledge in divine things, who dwelt in the wilderness of Sennaritis, having received a divine warning, travels to India in the disguise of a merchant, and gains access to Prince Josaphat, to whom he unfolds the Christian doctrine and the blessedness of the monastic life. Suspicion is raised against Barlaam, and he departs. But all efforts to shake the Prince's convictions are vain. As a last resource the King sends for a magician called Theudas, who removes the Prince's attendants and substitutes seductive girls, but all their blandishments are resisted through prayer. The King abandons these attempts and associates his son with himself in the government. The Prince uses his power to promote religion, and everything prospers in his hand. Finally King Abenner is drawn to the truth, and after some years of penitence dies. Josaphat then surrenders the kingdom to a friend called Barachias, and proceeds into the wilderness, where he wanders for two years seeking Barlaam, and much buffeted by the demons. "And whan Balaam had accöplysshed his dayes, he rested in peas about ye yere of Our Lorde. cccc. & lxxx. Josaphat left his realme the. xxv. yere of his age, and ledde the lyfe of an heremyte. xxxv. yere, and than rested in peas full of vertues, and was buried by the body of Balaam." [Fol. ccc. lvi.] The King Barachias afterwards arrives and transfers the bodies solemnly to India.

This is but the skeleton of the story, but the episodes and apologues which round

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