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# BEST SHORT STORIES OF INDIA

(VOL. I)



TARAPOREVALA'S  
POPULAR INDIAN STORIES

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BY

Mr. A. S. P. AYYAR, M. A. (Oxon.), I. C. S.

GREAT SHORT STORIES FROM PANCHATANTRA AND  
HITOPADESA

INDIAN AFTER-DINNER STORIES . . .

'SENSE IN SEX' AND OTHER STORIES

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BY

The Hon'ble Mr. C. A. KINCAID, C. V. O., I. C. S. (Retd.)

SHRI KRISHNA OF DWARKA, AND OTHER STORIES

TALE OF 'TULSI PLANT, AND OTHER STUDIES

FOLK TALES OF SIND AND GUJARAT

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at the end of this book)*

# BEST SHORT STORIES OF INDIA

SELECTED AND EDITED

BY

PHYLLIS ATKINSON, B. Sc. Econ. (Lond.)

FOREWORD

BY

R. E. ENTHOVEN, C. I. E., I. C. S. (Retd.)

PREFACE

BY

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M. A., Ph. D., F. A. S. B.

INTRODUCTION

BY

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# FOREWORD

BY

R. E. Enthoven, C. I. E., I. C. S. (Retd.)

The folklore tales contained in the following pages appeared originally in the *Indian Antiquary*. The Punjab and Kashmir series were collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, notes being added by the Editor, the late Sir Richard Temple. For Western India and Southern India similar contributions were made by Putlibai Wadia and Pandit Natesa Sastri.

In the year 1865 the Governor of Bombay, Sir Bartle Frere, made a cold-weather tour in the Deccan and Carnatic, accompanied by his daughter Mary. In the service of the latter was a Lingayat attendant who had become a Christian convert. To while away the hours of leisure in camp, Mary Frere appealed to Anna, as the servant was called, to tell her a story. Many were the stories that Anna related, Punchkin, the Raja's Palace, Sodewa Bai and Chandra's Vengeance, to mention a few of them. Compiled into book form, these tales were subsequently published under the title of *Old Deccan Days*. The late Editor of the *Indian Antiquary* carried on the venture inaugurated by Mary Frere in the hope of interesting the British public in Indian folktales.

In Tawney's translation of Somadeva's *Kathasaritsagara*, recently republished with valuable notes by Penzer under the title of *The Ocean of Story*, we have ten volumes of Indian legends of fascinating interest. In the course of editing this valuable collection an opportunity has been taken to enlighten the reader by a series of essays on folklore beliefs and practices, which afford an insight into the minds of the silent millions of India.

The present collection contains many well known Indian tales with only occasional brief notes. As such, they will appeal to children and to older readers who appreciate a fairy tale for its imaginative interest. But two facts should be grasped by the reader unfamiliar with Indian thought. In the fairy tales of the West the transformation of human beings into trees and animals is no unfamiliar feature. In the East, from which the West has drawn many of its best known stories, the soul of man is believed to pass quite naturally from human beings to trees or animals. Marriages must in many cases take place in the presence of a branch



of the tree inhabited by the ancestral spirit. Such trees may also furnish suitable brides or bridegrooms to bereaved husbands and wives before they remarry a human being, or in the event of persons dying unmarried.

Again, with certain tribes, the human spirit embodied in some member of the tribe has such close affinity with the spirit of a wild animal that the death of the latter involves the death of both. We have instances of this belief in the following tales. The reader will find also in the following pages references to the working of the law of *Karma*, by which a spirit, in the course of re-incarnation, earns by its conduct in one life the right to birth in higher form or the penalty of submission to a humbler lot, as for instance that of being born in a low caste, deformed or as a leper.

The tales may, however, be read with interest by many who have no knowledge of Indian superstitions. A few words to supplement the brief foot-notes on the subject of the *Churel* (p.3), witchcraft worked through effigies (p.8), the panic-working legend of Momiai (p.8) and the general importance of good and bad omens may be useful to the reader.

The *Churel*, better known in Western India as *Alvantin*, is the ghost of a woman who has died pregnant, on the day of the birth of the child, or during the period of impurity. The dread of the *churel* extends to all classes and prevails in all parts of the country. She is apt to prove very troublesome to her husband, her successor, or a co-wife, as well as to the latter's children. In the Bombay Presidency there are *Poshi*, *Soshi* and *Toshi* churels. These are not always malevolent. Thus, *Poshi churels* are said to fondle children and render good service to the wife and husband. On the other hand *Soshi churels* are believed to ~~steal~~ <sup>drink</sup> the blood of their victims and prove very troublesome to their former family. In order to gain protection from the practices of evilly disposed *churels*, it is usual to strew mustard seed or cotton wool on the road taken by the funeral procession. It is firmly believed that the *churel* cannot return unless she is able to collect all the strewn seeds or wool during the night of the funeral ceremony.

The practice referred to in the footnote to p.8, i.e., the injuring and torturing of an image with the object of causing pain to the person whom it represents, is as old as the Atharvaveda. One of the best modern examples of this type of black magic is the life-sized nude female figure with long iron nails driven into the head, body and limbs, which was washed ashore at Calicut in 1903.

The practice is of course well known in the history of witchcraft in England.

In the same footnote a reference will be found to the strange popular belief on the subject of *Momiai*. The origin of this superstition has been traced to Persia. Serious trouble has arisen from time to time in India owing to the circulation of rumours that human victims are being seized, on one pretext or another, in order to prepare a valuable medicine from the head of the captive, who, for this purpose, is suspended by the heels over a fire. A recent instance is described in the Editor's preface to the last edition of Dr. Crooke's *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*. Measures taken in Bombay by the authorities in 1896 to combat the spread of bubonic plague by the removal of the sick to hospitals and the segregation of contacts led to a revival of the *momiai* scare, followed by the flight of panic-stricken multitudes from the city.

Instances of good and bad omens such as hearing the howling of a jackal, or meeting a *suvasini*, i.e., a happily married woman, and many others will be found in 'Little Ankle Bone' and 'The Five Cups.' Those who wish to pursue the subject further will find lists of good and bad omens in *The Folklore of Bombay*, p.249 *et seq.*, and Dr. Crooke's *Religion and Folklore of Northern India*, p.311 *et seq.*

Sir Richard Temple, in opening the columns of the *Indian Antiquary* to these folk tales, aimed at familiarizing his readers with the mentality of those to whom such stories are household words. We may suitably conclude this Foreword with a quotation from that genial and distinguished orientalist:—

'If it is true,' he writes, 'that familiarity breeds contempt, it is equally true that familiarity breeds respect. Thus does a real grasp of each other's beliefs, customs and ceremonies tend to promote international harmony and to create a peace which will pass all present understanding.'

**R. E. Enthoven**



## PREFACE

BY

Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, M. A., Ph. D., F. A. S. B.

“Best Short Stories of India”, which are being brought out in two volumes by D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., are really a collection of Folk Tales of India selected from among those published in the *Indian Antiquary* from time to time in its various volumes. The late Sir Richard Carnac Temple, whose demise all Indologists deeply mourn, intended writing a Preface to these volumes. Unfortunately the printing of these volumes could not be begun till after his death; and as the first of these volumes is only now nearing its completion, I have been asked to write this Preface as I was longest associated with him as Editor of the *Indian Antiquary*.

When in 1911 I for the first time became Editor of the *Indian Antiquary*, I was asked by many friends and even by some scholars why this learned journal was at all printing the folktales of India which at best could amuse children but could not be a subject of serious study to any scholar. But, with the intensive study of modern times and the analytical method of enquiry, we have now come to note how in the strata of apparently meaningless fiction lies buried a mass of valuable tradition relating to the early life of a people like precious stones in a dunghill. In the first place, it is worthy of note that the folklore of a people preserves for us the important events of its unrecorded history. It tells us how they pass out of a forgotten home into a new land, occasionally preserving an account of the regions traversed by them in the course of their migration and the difficulties faced or the enemies repelled in a struggle for self-preservation. It is true that the kernel of truth is often shrouded in a fable; nevertheless it is rescued from oblivion. Of course, in the memory of primitive folk, events and details undergo a curious transformation, and truths often appear to be lost under grotesque garbs created by the primitive imagination. Men are transformed into super-human beings, and redoubtable enemies into evil spirits. Nevertheless, the memory of a past civilization or extinct races is preserved, though in a queer fashion. Thus in the folklore of the Greeks we have traditions about the Cyclops, the story of golden Mycene, the race of the giants, the story of the Pelasgai,

the war against Troy, the story of Minos of Crete, and the story of the four Greek Tribes. These traditions were originally supposed to be without any meaning or value, but have afforded clue to workers in the dark labyrinth of pre-history and have enabled them to unravel the mysteries of the proto-historical period. Similarly, the Indian folklore enshrined in the Vedic literature points to the same conclusion. The accounts given in the Vedic hymns of the Panis, the Asuras, the Dasyus and other tribes with whom the Aryans fought in the course of their immigration into India and their further advance eastwards and southwards are no longer thought to be mythical. The Asuras have now been taken to be the Assyrians, and the Panis the Phoenicians. Similarly, the Ribhus, so frequently mentioned in the Rigveda, are no longer considered as supernatural aerial elves, but human chieftains of a remote age.

The second important branch of folklore consists of the fairy tales and fables. India is full of them. See for instance the fables of "The Tiger, the Brahman and the Jackal" on p. 19 or of "The Jackal and the Tiger" on p. 25 of this book. Many such stories have been told us in our childhood by our mothers and grandmothers and the old venerable ladies of the household. They no doubt amused us exceedingly in our tender age. As we grew up and picked up a bit of English and were given Grimm's or Hans Anderson's Fairy Tales to read, we were surprised to find the same scenes and incidents with which we were familiar when we heard the folktales in our childhood. As we studied for the Matriculation examination of our Universities and read the *Panchatantra* or the *Hitopadesa* in Sanskrit, our surprise was redoubled, and we wondered how the same folktales could be prevalent in three different places, namely, our household, our school and college classes, and the English bookshops. As we progressed in our University career and had to study the Jatakas or the Buddhist Birth Stories in Pali, our wonder and surprise became unbounded as we read the same stories there also. How could this be—we thought, and we insisted upon a solution of this mystery. The solution, however, we found, had been given long ago by the Indologists. The Sassanian king, Khosru Anushirvan (531-579 A. D.), sent a Persian physician, named Barzoi, to India, in order to translate the fables of the *Panchatantra* from Sanskrit into Pehlevi. From that rendering all the subsequent versions in Asia Minor and Europe, such as the Syriac, the Arabic, the Greek, the Persian, the Old Spanish, the Hebrew

and so forth have been derived. This is but natural. For these fables of animals can arise only in a country where the jackal and the lion are common animals. This can apply to India only, and not to any part of the Western world. But most of these stories have now been traced to a work much earlier than the *Panchatantra*, viz., the Pali Jatakas which have now been assigned to a time even prior to that of Buddha. It is therefore now generally admitted that the Nursery Stories of England and America originally arose in India in the 6th or 7th century B. C. It is not unlikely that these tales can be traced still further back, and who can tell, when and where they were first conceived? It is therefore scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of the fairy tales and fables which have not only amused but also edified the whole world by their ethico-didactic import.

Thirdly, folklore is the expression of the psychology of a people or a tribe. It gives us glimpses into the mind and the spirit of the people, and throws light on their social institutions. Even if we cursorily read the folktales printed in these volumes, we find that they depict a life which is fast disappearing in the environments of to-day. They represent Brahmans as poor, simple and devoted to the preservation of learning and religion. We find the people steeped in a strong belief in magic and sorcery. We hear of jealous co-wives and friction between the step-mother and her step-children. These aspects of life have well-nigh vanished from Modern India. That is the greater reason why these tales should be preserved from oblivion. In fact, they mirror the manners and customs of India about a century ago. Curious practices are also noticeable in some of these tales—practices which we never expected to be in vogue in India seventy-five years ago. We will take two stories from the 'Folklore in Western India' to show what we mean. "Devki Rani" (p. 169 ff) is doubtless a Hindu tale. Nevertheless, as we read it, we find both widow marriage and cow-killing mentioned. It is true that widow marriage was scarcely practised a century ago in Western India. Nevertheless, it had not fallen altogether into desuetude. But what about cow-killing, from which every Hindu recoiled with horror? Take again the story of "Surya and Chandra" (p. 188 ff). We find there a Kshatriya Raja having a Brahman bride. This also looks very singular. Nevertheless, such stories offer us pabulum for reflections as we are introduced to many social customs, which, we think, are extinct but which nevertheless were not unknown in certain parts of India.

There is another reason why the folktales of India deserve to be seriously studied. We find in them not only Hindu but also Arabic and Persian stories with their characteristic differences. The genuine Arabic and Persian tales relate more to the miracles performed by superhuman agencies, such as, the giants and the fairies and give a more minute description of love-affairs. The Hindu stories, on the other hand, have generally the animals as the acting characters and shows greater regard for the moral side by giving rewards to virtue, courage and humanity and meting out punishments to the wily and the wicked. This psychological aspect of the folktales is perhaps the most fascinating feature of the folklore study.

I have adduced enough arguments to show how very important is the study of folklore. But there is just one point in this connection, on which I should like to touch before finishing this Introduction. The same tale sometimes passes from one region into another and often reflects the mentality of the community where it is current or of the individual who narrates it. Perhaps the best instance of this kind is the story of "The Two Brothers", which occurs not only in the 'Folklore in Kashmir' on p. 66 but also in the 'Folklore in Western India' on p. 228. Even a cursory reading will convince anybody that it is essentially the same tale. But it is also worthy of note that the same story is prevalent in Bengal under the name of Cita and Vasanta, and, strange to say, it is known to that province in four different versions.<sup>1</sup> We have thus the version of Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar who tells it as it were in the language of the grand-mother, "simple, even archaic, full of naive rural charm and always to the point." The second version is that of Rev. Lalbehari De, where, however, we find a portion of another story, namely, that of Malatikusum, dove-tailed into it. The third version is that by Harinath Majumdar which is affected by pedantry, Sanskrit scholarship and modern propagandism, importing into it disquisitions on the burning questions of the day. The fourth is the Muhammadan version given by Golam Kader. In regard to it Rai Bahadur Dinesh Chandra Sen makes the following remarks: "An alien influence is distinctly marked in the Muhammadan version. The way in which the step-mother shamelessly offered her love to the two princes has not been mentioned in my summary for the sake of decency. The wicked-

<sup>1</sup> For yet another version of this story which is prevalent in Santal Parganas, see *Jour. and Proc. As. Soc. Beng.*, Vol. XXV. pp. 140-1 and also p. 147.

ness of the woman, her unrestrained passion, coquetry and vulgarity are of a shocking character. Such a tale could not be told in a Hindu household. The way in which the merchant's daughter and the Chinese princess declared their love for Vasanta in the Muhammadan version also discloses a lack of that self-control which characterises the heroines of the Hindu folktales."<sup>1</sup> It will be seen that practically the same tale is found in these four versions which are highly interesting from the psychological point of view, as they reflect the mentality of different individuals and different communities. It will be noticed that this tale is essentially the same as that of the "The Two Brothers" narrated in two different places in this book, and that there are certain elements in it, which show, on the one hand, how it migrated into Kashmir from a province situated in the sea coast, and, on the other, how it bears affinity to certain folktales current outside that country. I cannot conclude this Preface better than by quoting the following note by the late Sir Richard Temple on the Kashmir version of the tale which is published in *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI. p. 342 and which cites parallels from stories in other countries:

"I have kept this tale to the last owing to the strong doubt I had about it. It is so full of incident and bears so strong a family likeness to the tales in the *Alif Laila* and *Chuhar Darvesh* that it seemed impossible to consider it as a genuine Kashmir folklore. One part of the tale reminds one strongly of the legend of St. George and the Dragon, and another takes us to the sea side and doings on board the ship, which is odd for a Kashmir tale. There are also notions in it of the right of primogeniture and a reference to tree and serpent worship. However, in the "Adventures of Raja Rasalu" of Siyalkot, Punjab, I have found a tale which is the counterpart of a portion of this one, and as I have every reason to believe the story of Rasalu Raja to be genuine Punjab Folklore, I determined to give this also as genuine."

*D. R. Bhandarkar*

<sup>1</sup> *Literature of Bengal*, p. 189.





# INTRODUCTION

BY

Rao Bahadur Dr. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar, M. A., Ph. D., M. R. A. S.,  
F. R. Hist. S., F. A. S. B.

Folklore constitutes an important part of what is called social anthropology, or, to follow the greatest authority in the subject, Sir James Fraser, "mental anthropology", and the word folklore, an early invention of the nineteenth century, means very much more than the folk tales that follow, and constitutes an important branch of mental anthropology. Folklore itself falls into a number of divisions. Among them may be mentioned (1) early belief and custom, (2) narratives and sayings, and (3) art. Of these fairy tales get included among the second group.

The stories that are generally designated collectively Folk tales are narratives of various kinds to point a moral or otherwise to adorn a tale, and are generally of the character of fairy tales independent alike of the actuality of the occurrence, or even of its realistic possibility. Neither of these is matter really material to the question. These tales are meant to entertain, and their essential quality is to be attractive primarily. They mark, therefore, as such, a stage in the growth of the mind of people when they are as yet in the simple stage of mentality which is readily pleased by such tales. These tales therefore have a fascination even for the more mature intellect for a variety of reasons, and still form part of the more serious study of anthropology.

The first folklore society was constituted in England in 1878, and the *Indian Antiquary* set about collecting the folktales that follow with volume X of the journal, which is of date 1881, just three years after. Although folklore forms a part of the subjects coming within the purview of the *Indian Antiquary*, the actual work on this branch of its activity perhaps was due to the accession of Lt. R. C. Temple to the Board of Management of the journal in 1879.

Folk tales are the common heritage of perhaps all people generally, although many may not have preserved these with the same interest and care. So much might happen to break the continuity of a tradition and all that might have happened of such a tendency would naturally interrupt the continuity and

destroy the possibility of careful preservation. India may be regarded as pre-eminent in the preservation of its folklore and may be regarded as pre-eminently a land of fairy tales, judged merely from the mass of this class of literature that has been preserved and handed down to us in various forms. The Buddhist Jatakas, the tales of the *Panchatantra*, the fables known in Europe as the Fables of Aesop are generally well-known; but there is a great deal that is not so well known in this class of literature, not to speak of the floating tradition which has a large number as yet of uncollected stories. The best example of such a literary collection is the Brihat Katha of Gunadya, which, judged by the translations in Sanskrit which are alone available, and by such scraps of extracts or quotations that have come down to us, vied with the Mahabharata in point of variety and size, and provided the foundation for all romance and popular tale in Indian literature generally, as also in Indian tradition. Not a few of the Sanskrit dramas found their themes there, and to secular Sanskrit literature it seems to have offered a source of inspiration quite as important as the Mahabharata itself. We have three versions of it in Sanskrit now available. We have heard of a version or two referred to in Tamil, and there are references to a Southern version in Sanskrit, which does not appear to have come down to us. The date of composition of the Paisachi original is to be found in the early centuries of the Christian era, probably the first century after Christ, but it seems to have been preserved at least till the eleventh century—it may be much later. The orthodox abridged Sanskritised version of it is the Kathasarit-Sagara of Somadeva, although the Nepalese translation Brihat Katha Sloka Sangraha has been set up as a counter claimant to this honour. Folk tales in a sense constituted an essential part of Indian literary progress.

The *Indian Antiquary* did well to have taken up this branch of work early in its history, and, thanks to the labours of enthusiasts like Flora Annie Steel, Temple, and several others of their collaborators, a number of these have been collected and thrown into a readable form in English for the purpose of making them accessible to the English-reading public. They constitute, after all, but a small fraction of the tales that could be collected in the country. While the tales vary from place to place, and according to the language in which they happen to be current, there is a certain amount of commonness among them which shows a community of thought in the whole mass of the material that could thus be collected. It would be interesting to collect as many

of these from various localities as possible with a view to this comparative study. A further expansion of this field for comparison could be made with similar tales prevalent among more primitive peoples on one side, and even the early European peoples on the other so far as these exist yet. Either in the literature or in the floating traditions of various countries in Europe some such notions seem to have underlain the collection.

The tales that follow in this volume bring together the folk tales of the Punjab, Kashmir, Western India and a few from the South. It is the enterprise of Messrs. Taraporevala Sons & Co., that is responsible for bringing out a collected edition of these tales as they were published in the *Indian Antiquary*. It is to be hoped that the enterprising publishers would be rewarded by a reception which would exhibit the interest of the public in this particular department of the study of the growth of the Indian human mind.

*S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar*



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This collection of stories, taken from the files of the *Indian Antiquary*, marks the first attempt to bring together a characteristic group of the stories that have been passed down by word of mouth in various provinces of India.

Since the dawn of civilisation the tradition of tale-telling has gone unbroken; man's demand for stories is as strong and insatiable to-day as it was before he conceived of his weapons of flint, and India with her ancient and rich civilisation has proved no less fertile in the field of folklore.

Folklore had always been given a class apart in the literary annals of every country. Neither as fiction, romance nor adventure has it been entered, for it partakes of all three, and over all casts a charm of its own. This charm it is which gives it that peculiar quality of universal appeal with which it is always associated: for the simple mind its glamour and exaggerated romance has no less an attraction than has its quaint antiquity for the man of letters, while the fastidious are provided with ample material for satisfying their every and varied taste.

Each one of the stories in this anthology is truly a "tale which holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner," presenting in every page that charm and variety highly in keeping with the traditional literature of its kind. Indeed they achieve much more in living up to the exacting demands and high standards set by those Immortals of Fairy-Tale Land—Hans Andersen and Grimm. Scarcely a province that has not got its tale of beautiful princesses held captive by terrible ogres in isolated castles; of handsome princes fighting against enormous odds to win the fair ladies' release. It is of interest to note too that even the familiar exclamation of the Western tales—"Fee! Fi! Fo! Fum! I smell the blood of an Englishman!"—has been put into the mouths of the blood-thirsty ogres with which the stories are peopled.

Rich in such imaginative material—whose beauty cannot fail to appeal even to the "colder sensibilities of this prosaic age"—are the tales which hail from the Punjab and Kashmir. A great deal of their charm is perhaps due to the delicate and inspired translation rendered by Mrs. F. A. Steel and the Rev. J. Hinton Knowles. Such stories as "Fatteh Khan" and "Lambikin" require that tenderness of touch which only the gifted can supply. Richest in humour too are the tales from these two provinces. One can almost imagine a gentle smile playing over the face of the narrator as he tells of the little manikin's—Sir Bumble—impudence, of the sad demise of the poor hen-sparrow—which so vividly recalls the English favourite *Who Killed Cock Robin?*—and of the wily ways of Master Jackal.

It would not be generalising too much to say that this same fund of humour is not found in the tales of other provinces. Fanciful and richly romantic they are. The selection from Western and Southern India as from Bengal and the Central Provinces, abound in stirring episodes and situations pregnant with drama, but the tales become gradually less and less imaginative until some of those from the Telugu and the Telugu-Vaishnavas are nothing more nor less than the incantation of a prayer, the attempted propitiation of some outraged deity. Apart from these last two mentioned provinces, religion plays a surprisingly small part in the stories, although pilgrimages are frequently being undertaken to the Holy City and penances performed on the banks of the Sacred River, while the Brahman priest, too, constantly makes his appearance as one of the principal characters and inevitably lives, "happily ever afterwards" no doubt as an example of the reward of virtue.

A little needs to be said upon the numerous fables included among the stories as upon the part played by the animals in general. It is of interest to note in this connection that the question of the Indian or Greek origin of the fable is, for the historian, one of the most absorbing in literature. There are those who claim that the fables of the Occident drew all their inspiration from the ancient Sanskrit works, while another school contends that the Indian fable was the result of Greek influence. But to whichever be the honour of producing the original type the similarity between the two in many minor details is indeed remarkable. Taine has said "*La fable cache toujours un homme dans une bete. C'est par des qualites humaines qu'elle peint les animaux,*" and it is this instructive side of the fable that is valuable. The jackal, like his counterpart the fox, plays a part of cunning and deceit and strangely enough it is frequently the tiger—the Lord of the Forest—who is his dupe. The tiger on the whole seems to be a fierce, if guileless, personage, while the cow, true to the reverence with which orthodox Hinduism regards her, is the gentle adviser, the conferrer of benefits upon her possessor in the quaint form of tears of pearls or laughter of rubies. The monkey and the rat are the tricksters of the piece while the bear, like A. A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh, the "bear of little brain," manages to make the worst of his bargain.

The selection of the stories has throughout been made with a view to fulfilling the original purpose of the story-teller, that of giving the maximum pleasure to the audience. They will surely appeal to thousands to whom the many and differing dialects of India are as a sealed book.

In conclusion, the publishers wish to express their deep gratitude to the late Lieut.-Col. Sir Richard Carnac Temple, Editor of *The Indian Antiquary*, from whose files all the stories have been drawn. Without his willing consent this volume could never have been placed before the public.

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## FOLKLORE IN THE PUNJAB

### PRINCE LIONHEART AND HIS THREE FRIENDS

Once upon a time there lived a king and queen, as happy as they could be, but for one trouble—they had no children.

One day an old *faqir* came to the palace, and said to the queen: "Eat these barley-corns I give you, and in nine months you shall bear a beautiful little son."

The queen did as the *faqir* bid her, and sure enough, in the space of nine months, she bore the most beautiful prince that ever was seen. They called him Lionheart, he was so brave and strong and sturdy.

Now when he grew up Prince Lionheart became restless, and told the king, his father, that he wanted to travel. The king tried to dissuade him, but the Prince would hear of nothing else; so at last he obtained his father's consent and set off on his travels. He took with him three companions, a Knife-grinder, a Blacksmith, and a Carpenter.

Now when these four valiant young men had travelled a short distance, they came to a fine city lying in a deserted jangal. There were tall houses, broad bazars, and shops full of goods, but not a human being to be seen anywhere. This astonished them very much, but the Knife-grinder said: "Oh! I remember now. I have heard of this. A demon lives here, and will let no one come to dwell in the town. We had best be off."

But the Prince Lionheart said: "Pooh! not till I've had my dinner, for I am desperately hungry."

So they went to the shops and bought all they wanted, laying the proper price on the counter as there were no shopkeepers. Then they came back to the palace, and Prince Lionheart said: "O you Knife-grinder! 'tis your turn to cook the food. Do so quickly while we take another look at the town."

No sooner had they gone than the Knife-grinder went to the kitchen and began to cook the food. Just as it began to send up a savoury smell, he saw a little figure beside him clad in armour with sword and lance, riding on a gaily caparisoned mouse.

"Give me my dinner!" said the mannikin, angrily shaking his lance. "Your dinner! What an idea!" said the Knife-grinder laughing.

"Give it me at once," shrieked the little warrior, "or I'll hang you up to the nearest pipal<sup>1</sup> tree."

"Wah! Whippersnapper," answered the valiant Knife-grinder, "come nearer, and I'll crush you between my finger and thumb."

Without more ado the mannikin shot up into a terribly tall demon. The Knife-grinder fell on his knees, and cried for mercy, but in a trice he was hung on the topmost branch of the pipal tree.

"I'll teach you to cook in my kitchen," said the demon, and he gobbled up all the cakes that were ready, and disappeared.

Now the Knife-grinder wriggled so that the pipal branch broke, and he came crashing through the branches to the ground with no more hurt than a few bruises; but he was terribly frightened, and determined not to cook again. Therefore he crept into the sleeping room, and rolled himself up in a quilt. By and by in came the Prince and his companions, hungry as hunters, crying "Well, jolly Knife-grinder! where's the dinner?" "Oh! Oh!" groaned he from under the quilt, "I had nearly finished it when I got a fit of ague, and while I lay shivering and shaking a dog ran in and gobbled it up."

"What remains must do," said the Prince. "Here! you Blacksmith, do you cook the food whilst we go and have another look at the city?"

But the very same thing happened to the Blacksmith, that had happened to the Knife-grinder. He too crept to bed, rolled himself up in a quilt, and when the hungry Prince Lionheart arrived, lo! there was no dinner.

Then the Carpenter stayed behind to cook, but he fared no better than the two others; so when hungry Prince Lionheart returned there were three sick men, and no dinner. So the Prince Lionheart set to work to cook the food himself. No sooner had it begun to give off a savoury smell than the tiny mouse-warrior appeared.

"Upon my word! you *are* a pretty little little fellow," said the Prince. "Give me my dinner!" shrieked the mannikin.

<sup>1</sup> *Pipal, ficus religiosa.*—It is sacred among the Hindus and never cut by them. It is used in divination to find out the truth, the liar not daring to pluck the leaves.

"Your dinner! Ha ha! a good idea. Why, it's my dinner, my good sir. However, to avoid disputes let's fight it out," answered the Prince.

Then the mouse-warrior changed into a terribly tall demon, but the Prince only laughed, saying "There is a medium in all things. Before you were too small, now you are too big; as you seem to be able to alter your size without much trouble, suppose you show some spirit, and become just my size, neither less nor more. Then we can fight for our dinner." The demon thought there was reason in what the Prince said, so he grew smaller. Then they fought, but the Prince slew the demon with his sharp sword.

After that the Prince roused his friends, saying "O valiant ones! I have slain your fever." Then he wrote to all the people belonging to the town, and told them they might come back and dwell in safety on condition of taking the Knife-grinder as their king, giving him their richest and most beautiful maiden for his queen.

This they did with great joy. But the Knife-grinder said "Sire, I must follow your fortunes." Then answered Prince Lionheart: "Not so! See, here is a barley plant; care for it, and water it well. So long as it flourishes, know that I am well, but if it droops, know that I am in misfortune, and come and help me."

Then the Knife-grinder king remained behind, while the Prince, the Blacksmith and the Carpenter went on their travels.

By and by they came to another desolate city, and the Blacksmith said: "Oh! I remember now! a ghost<sup>1</sup> lives here, and will allow no one to come near. We had best be off." "Not so," said Prince Lionheart, "First I must have my dinner, for I am hungry."

So they bought what they wanted from shops, laying the proper price on the counters as there were no shopkeepers. Then the Prince said: "Oh Blacksmith! do you cook food, for it is your turn whilst I and the Carpenter look through the town."

No sooner had the Blacksmith prepared the food, and it began to smell deliciously, than the ghost appeared, awful and forbidding. The valiant Blacksmith didn't stop to parley, but flew

<sup>1</sup> *Churel*, the ghost of a woman who had died during childbirth. They are usually supposed to inhabit deserted wells and old pipal trees. The story of the presence of a *churel* seems usually to arise from some case of accidental drowning. They are supposed to be very ugly, black skinned, with protruding stomach and navel, and feet turned backwards; they can however assume the form of beautiful women.

into another room, and locked the door. When the Prince returned ever so hungry, there was no dinner to be found, and no Blacksmith.

So the Prince said: "Oh Carpenter, do you cook the food?" and the Carpenter fared no better, and flew into another room, and locked the door.

"This is too bad!" said Prince Lionheart, when he returned, and he began to cook the food himself. But when the ghost saw such a very handsome man, she would not appear as an old hag, but changed into a beautiful young woman.

However the Prince just looked at her feet, and when he saw they were set on hind-side-before, he knew at once what she was, so he drew his sharp sword, and said, "I must trouble you to take your own shape again, for I don't want to kill such a beautiful young woman." At this the ghost shrieked with rage, and turned once more to her own loathsome shape, but just as she did so Prince Lionheart gave one stroke of his sharp sword, and lo! she was dead. As soon as this happened the Blacksmith and the Carpenter crept out of their hiding places.

The Prince wrote to all the townfolk bidding them come back on condition of taking the Blacksmith to be their king, and giving him to wife the prettiest, richest and best born maiden in the town. This they did with pleasure.

After the wedding was over the Prince and the Carpenter set out on their travels: the Blacksmith king was loath to let them go, but Prince Lionheart gave him also a barley plant, saying "Water and tend it carefully. So long as it flourishes know that I am well, but if it droops, then I am in trouble, and do you come, and help me."

The Prince and the Carpenter had travelled but a short way when they came to a big town where they halted to rest. Now there was a Princess in the town who was as fair as the moon: the Carpenter saw her by chance, and fell so desperately in love with her that the Prince took pity on him, and said, "Stay you here and marry the Princess, and I will go on my travels alone." So the Carpenter was married to the Princess, and became king, and to him also Prince Lionheart gave a barley plant, and then set off on his travels alone.

After a time the Prince came to a river, and what was his astonishment to see a ruby of enormous size floating down the stream. He watched it wonderstruck, till another, and then another floated by. "This is very curious," said he, "I must go and find out whence they come."

He travelled up stream for two days and two nights, and came at last to a beautiful palace on the water's edge. By the palace grew a tree, on a branch of which hung a golden basket containing the head of a beautiful young woman: every minute a drop of blood fell from the bleeding head into the water, became a ruby, and floated away down the stream.

Prince Lionheart was overcome with pity at the sight, and tears rose to his eyes. He determined to search the palace and find out more about the beautiful and wonderful head.

He wandered through the marble rooms all richly decorated, but not a living creature did he see. At last in a sleeping room, on a lovely satin bed, he saw the headless body of the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. He thought at once, "This must be the body belonging to the beautiful and wonderful head." So he ran and fetched the head and placed it on the body; no sooner had they touched each other, than the maiden sat up and talked. The Prince was overjoyed, and begged the beautiful woman to tell him who she was. So she told him she was the daughter of a rich king: that a *jinn*<sup>1</sup> had fallen in love with her and carried her off to his palace, and that he was so jealous that every day when he left her, he cut off her head and hung it in the basket till his return. Then Prince Lionheart begged her to fly with him at once, but the Princess said, "Not so. First we must kill the *jinn* or he will pursue us." Then the Prince said "You must ask him in what thing his life lies." Then, shutting his eyes from the dreadful sight, he cut off his dear Princess's head, hung it in the golden basket, and hid himself in the next room.

By and by the *jinn* arrived. When he was putting on the Princess's head he cried, "Fee! Fa! fum! Mânush-gandh! This room smells of man's flesh."

But the Princess wept, saying, "How should I know anything! Am I not dead whilst you are away! Eat me if you like, and then I shall be dead altogether." But the *jinn*, who loved her to distraction, said he would rather die himself. "That would never do," said the Princess, "for if you were to be killed some day whilst you are away it would be very awkward for me. I should neither be alive nor dead."

"Never fear," answered the *jinn*, "I am not likely to be killed. My life lies in something quite safe." "I am glad of

<sup>1</sup> The *jinn* is altogether Muhammadan, whereas the rest of this tale appears to be Hindu. The incident of *jinn*s falling in love with girls is common in Muhammadan tales.



that," said the deceitful Princess, "tell me in what it lies, that I may help you to preserve it." But the *jinn* refused. At last, when the Princess coaxed and wheedled, and he began to get sleepy, he answered, "I shall never be killed except by a Prince called Lionheart, and then only if he can find the solitary tree, not far from here, where a dog and a horse keep sentinel, and can climb the tree, and kill the *Maina*<sup>1</sup> that sits singing in a golden cage, and then cut open its crop, and kill the bumble bee that is inside. But he will need to have a lion's heart or be very wise before he can reach the tree, and overcome its guardians." "How can they be overcome?" asked the Princess.

"In this way," said the *jinn*, who was dreadfully sleepy and tired of being cross-questioned: "In front of the horse lies a heap of bones, and in front of the dog a bundle of grass. Let him take a long bamboo and push the bones to the dog and the grass to the horse and they will let him pass."

The Prince overheard all this, and set off at once to find the solitary tree, which he did without any difficulty. The dog and the horse were savage and fierce, but became mild and peaceable when the bundles were changed. He climbed up the tree, seized the *maina*, and began to twist its neck. Just then the *jinn*, who was sleeping in the palace, became aware of what was happening, and flew through the air to do battle. The Prince saw him coming, and hastily cut open the *maina's* crop; there he found the bumble bee, and just as the *jinn* was alighting on the tree, the Prince tore off the insect's wings. Instantly the *jinn* fell to the ground with a crash; but he ran on determined to kill his enemy. Then the Prince twisted off the insect's legs, and lo! nothing remained of the *jinn* but the trunk, and when Prince Lionheart twisted the insect's neck, the life of the *jinn* went out entirely.

Prince Lionheart returned to the Princess, who was overjoyed to hear of her tyrant's death, and said "Let us return to my father's kingdom." "Not so," said the Princess, "first let us rest awhile and see what riches the palace contains." So they stayed, and one day the Princess said, "I will bathe in the river, and wash my beautiful hair." So she bathed in the river and combed her beautiful hair, every thread of which shone like gold. Now the Princess was proud of her golden hair, and when one or two long strands came out in the comb, she said "I will not throw

<sup>1</sup> A kind of starling well-known in India as a singing bird which can be taught to speak. It is sacred and never killed by Hindus.

them into the river to sink in the nasty mud". So she made a cup from a pipal leaf, laid the golden hairs in it, and let it float down the stream.

It chanced that the river flowed past a big city. The young king of that city was sailing on the river in a boat when he saw something sparkling like gold in the water, so he said to his boatmen—"Fetch me that glittering leaf."

When he saw the golden hairs, he thought he had never seen anything half so beautiful, and said "I will never rest day or night till I find the owner."

So he sent for the wise women to find where the owner of the beautiful hair lived. Said one old woman, "If she is on earth I will find her." Said the second, "If she is in heaven I will tear open the sky and bring her." But the third said, "*Wah*, if you tear open the sky I will put a patch in it so that no one will be able to tell the new piece from the old."

The king thought the last old woman much the cleverest, so he bid her go and seek for the owner of the golden glittering hair.

So the old woman set off up the river, in a grand boat, and by and by came to the palace of the *jinn*. She got out of the boat, sat down on the steps, and wept.

Now the Prince Lionheart had gone out hunting and the Princess was all alone. She had a tender heart, and when she heard the old woman weep she said to her, "Mother, why do you weep?"

"I weep," said the wise woman, "to think what will become of you if the handsome Prince is slain, and you are left here in the wilderness alone."

"Very true," said the Princess, and wept too.

That night she said, "Dear Prince, what should I do if you were killed?" Prince Lionheart laughed, saying, "That is not likely: for my life lies in safety."

But the Princess wept still, and asked "In what thing, dear Prince, does it lie, that I may help you to preserve it?"

"It lies," answered the Prince, "in my sharp sword, which never fails. If it were broken I should die."

"Then do not take it with you when you go hunting," begged the Princess, "it might come to harm."

But Prince Lionheart laughed at her fears. However, the very next day, when the Prince was going a hunting, she hid his strong, bright sword and put another in its place, so that the Prince was none the wiser.

And when the wise woman sat under the window and cried, she called out joyfully, "Don't cry any more, mother, for the Prince's life is safe to-day. It lies in his sword, and that is safely hidden away in my cupboard."

Then the old woman stole off to the cupboard while the Princess slept, and took the sword; then she made a big fire, and laid the sword in it. As it grew hotter and hotter, poor Prince Lionheart felt a hot fever creep over his body. He looked to see if anything burning had fallen on his sharp strong sword, but lo! it was not his own sword but a changeling.<sup>1</sup>

He cried out "I am undone!" and galloped homewards. But the wise woman blew up the fire so fast that the sword became red hot before the Prince could reach home, and just as he stood on the other side of the river, a rivet came out of the sword hilt; the hilt rolled off, and so did the Prince's head. And thus he died.

Then the old wise woman said to the Princess, "Daughter, your beautiful hair is all tangled, come and let me wash and dress it against your husband's return." So they went down the steps to the water. But the wise woman said, "Step into my boat, sweetheart; the water will be deeper out there." Then while the Princess' beautiful hair was over her eyes, the wicked old hag loosed the boat, and they went drifting down the stream. The Princess wept and wailed, but she could do nothing. However she vowed a great vow, and said "You wicked old thing: you are taking me away to some king's palace I know, but no matter who he is, I swear I will not look on his face for twelve years."

So when they arrived at the city the king caused a high palace to be built for the golden haired Princess, and there she lived

<sup>1</sup> This incident recalls the old European belief of killing and torturing the human body by effigy as it were, *i. e.* by making a wax effigy of the person to be tortured and sticking pins into it, the person of the original being supposed to feel pain in the parts stuck with pins. An exactly similar belief is current in Punjab, and is that referred to in this story. *Mehras*, *Bhujewas* and *Mirais*, being respectively the castes of doli-bearers, parchers of grain and attendants on natch-girls and singers are believed to be able to make *guddas*, effigies of cloth and rags or wax into which they stick pins, the person or the original being supposed to feel pain wherever the pins are stuck into the *gudda*. The cloth *gudda* used to be stuck on a pole and paraded in the streets for the purpose of annoying and insulting those who offended the *mirais*. It is a curious circumstance that this belief in making effigies is now attached to the Witchcraft Houses, the popular name in India for Masonic Lodges; the popular belief being that the Free masons make their victim touch a certain machine (sometimes wand) which causes him to revolve violently and eventually to die: he is then hung up by his heels, and holes are made in his head, through which the brains issue and fall into a pan over a slow fire, and are finally cooked into *Momyai*, a popular medicine in India supposed to strengthen the brain, and usually composed of wax etc. *Carans* is an effigy, or name of a person, which is buried in the ground after certain incantations. This ceremony is performed for the destruction of any person, to secure his affection, to subject him to obedience, to imprison him or deprive him of power of action or speech, to drive him away, or to bring him before one.

all alone, and no one was allowed to enter the courtyard but the hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Now when the Prince Lionheart died, the barley plant which he had given to the Knife-grinder King drooped and languished, and when the rivet came out of the sword and the Prince's head fell off, the barley stem broke right in two, and the ear tumbled on to the ground. The Knife-grinder King was dreadfully grieved, for he knew surely that some terrible trouble had befallen his dear Prince. But he gathered an army together and set off to help. On the way he met the Blacksmith King and the Carpenter King, who were on the same errand. Their barley plants had withered at the self-same minute. Now when the three friends found that the three barley plants had withered and died in the self-same manner, their hearts were very sad, but they determined to revenge their Prince's death if they could not save him. By and by they came to the riverside, and there they found the Prince's body all burnt and blistered, and the head lying on the ground close by. They looked for the Prince's sword, for they knew his life lay in it, and when they saw another in its place, their hearts were sadder than ever. Then they lifted the body and took it to the palace to weep over it, and lo! there they found the Prince's sword in a heap of ashes, all blistered and stained, with the rivet gone, and the hilt lying close by.

"That is soon mended," said the Blacksmith King. So he took the sword and spun his wheel so swiftly that the blisters and stains disappeared like magic, and the sword was bright and sharp as ever. As he did so the burns and scars disappeared from the Prince's body likewise, till at last he sat up and looked about him handsomer than ever.

"Where is my Princess?" asked he, and told his friends what had happened. "It's my turn now," said the Carpenter King. "Stay you here while I fetch the Princess. But first I must take your sword with me."

So he took the strong bright sword and set off to seek the Princess.

By and by he came to the King's town, and saw the high palace where the Princess lived. He asked the townspeople who lived there; and they told him a strange Princess, and that no one was allowed to enter the courtyard, save the hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Then he disguised himself as a woodman and called out under the windows, "Wood: wood: fifteen gold pieces for this bundle

of wood." The Princess, who was sitting on the roof, bid her maidens ask why it was so expensive.

"Because it was cut with this strong sharp sword," answered he. Then the Princess looked over the parapet and recognised Prince Lionheart's sword. So she said "Ask him if he has anything to sell."

Then the woodman said, "I have a wonderful palanquin," and in the evening he took it to show to the Princess. "Seat yourself in it, O Princess:" said he, "and try how it can fly." But the King's sister who was there said "You must not go alone." So she too got in and so did the wicked wise woman.

Then the Carpenter King jumped up outside, and lo! the palanquin began to fly like a bird higher and higher.

"I have had enough. Let us go down," said the King's sister. But the Carpenter took her and threw her into the river, over which they were then passing: but he waited till they came above the high palace before he threw the wise woman down, so she got smashed to pieces on the stones.

Then he, the Princess, and the strong bright sword flew away to the *jinn's* palace.

Prince Lionheart was overjoyed to see his dear Princess again, and they all set out for his father's kingdom.

Now when the poor old king his father saw the three armies coming he thought they came to fight him, so he went out to meet them, and said, "Take all my riches, but leave my people in peace. For I am old and weak and cannot fight. It would be different if my son Prince Lionheart were here, for he is as brave as a lion, but he left us years ago."

Then the Prince wept and told his father who he was, and that these were his old companions the Knife-grinder, the Blacksmith, and the Carpenter. Then he showed him the golden-haired Princess, and every one was delighted and lived happily ever after.

## THE SON OF SEVEN MOTHERS

Once upon a time there lived a king who had seven wives but no children. At last one day an old *faqir*<sup>1</sup> came and said

Folklore in the Punjab collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. X—1881, pp. 147-52.

<sup>1</sup> *Faqir* used in the Panjab for any devotee, Musalman or Hindu. A variation of this portion of the story is as follows: A jogi was sitting under a mango tree when the king happened to pass. The king knelt down in great sorrow before him, and told him he had seven wives and no child, and begged for an heir to the throne. Whereupon the jogi threw up a stick to knock down some mangoes and told the king he would have as many sons as mangoes fell. Seven mangoes fell

“Your desire shall be fulfilled, and each of your seven wives, shall bear a son.” At this promise the king was greatly rejoiced and made elaborate preparations for appropriate festivities throughout the length and breadth of his kingdom.

The seven queens lived in a splendid palace, and were attended by hundreds of servants and feasted on sweetmeats and confectionery. Now one day the king went out hunting, and before he left the palace the Seven Queens said to him: “Dear lord! do not hunt towards the north to-day, or evil will befall you, for we have dreamt bad dreams.”

The king to allay their fears promised faithfully not to hunt towards the north, but when he found no sport in the south, the east, and the west, he forgot all about the warning, and set off towards the north. He was just going home in despair of finding any game, when a white hind with golden horns and silver hoofs flashed by him into a thicket.

He scarcely saw it, so quickly did it pass, but he was instantly filled with a desire to follow and capture it. He therefore ordered his attendants to place themselves in a ring round the thicket, so as to encircle the hind. This they did, and as the circle narrowed there stood the white hind panting and afraid: but just as they thought to lay hands on her, she leapt right over the king's head and fled to the mountains.

The king set spurs to his horse and followed soon leaving his suite far behind him.

On, on, he rode till he came to a ravine in the hills where there was nothing to be seen but a small hovel: he was tired with his long ride, so he stopped, entered the hut, and asked for a drink of water. An old woman, ever so old, who was sitting spinning, bid her daughter bring drink, and when the girl came and held the vessel of water to the king's lips, he looked into her eyes, and knew instantly that she was none other than the white hind with the golden horns and the silver feet.

Then he said to her—“Come home with me, and be my wife:” but she laughed, saying, “You have seven wives already.” Then when he begged and prayed her to be his, she said, “You talk bravely of your love. Give me the eyes of your seven wives, then I will believe you.”

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which the jogi told the king to give to his wives—one each. The king did so, and seven sons were born, one from each wife. Six of the sons died, only one survived, who became the Son of the Seven mothers. Jogis are supposed popularly to have the power of granting offspring to childless persons, as have in fact all the saints or holy personages, according to the popular traditions.

So the king went home and had the eyes of his seven wives taken out, and then threw the seven poor blind creatures into a strong tower whence they could not escape. After that he took the fourteen eyes to the White Hind, who strung them as a necklace, and threw it round her mother's neck, saying, "Wear that, little mother, as a keepsake when I am gone."

So the king took the White Hind home as his bride, and gave her the Seven Queens' clothes and the Seven Queens' jewels and the Seven Queens' palace, so she had everything that even a witch could desire.

Now soon after their imprisonment, the first Queen's baby was born and the six other Queens were so hungry that they killed it, divided it into seven portions, and each ate her share.

The next day the Second Queen's baby was born, and they did the same with it, and so on every day till the last Queen's baby was born on the seventh day. Now when the other Queens came to the young mother, and said, "Give us your baby to eat as we gave you ours," she answered "Not so: See here are the six pieces you gave me as my share untouched, eat them, but leave me my child, you cannot complain."

The other Queens were displeased, but could say nothing. They were jealous nevertheless that the young queen should have preserved her baby's life by her self-denial and forethought.

At first, too, they disliked the handsome little boy, but they soon found out what a treasure he was: before he even began to walk he used to sit in one corner of the prison courtyard and scrape away at the wall. In an incredibly short space of time he had scraped a hole large enough for him to creep through.

Out he went, and soon returned laden with sweetmeats and comfits, which he divided equally amongst the Seven Queens.

As he grew older he made the hole bigger and slipped out two or three times a day to play with the little nobles in the town; and he was so funny, so full of tricks and antics that he was sure to be rewarded by some present or other, and whatever he received, he took home to his "seven mothers" as he called the Seven Queens.

At last, one day, when he was quite a big lad, he took his bow and arrow, and went to the palace where the White Hind lived in splendour and magnificence.

Pigeons were fluttering round the white marble turrets, so taking good aim he drew his bow and shot one dead. It came tumbling down past the very window where the White Hind was

sitting. She got up to see what was the matter, and looked out. There she saw a handsome young lad, and the moment she set her eyes on him, she knew by her arts that he was the king's son—for she was a witch.

She became furious at the sight and at once determined to destroy the lad. She therefore sent a servant to fetch him, and asked him to sell her the pigeon he had shot.

But the lad answered, "Not so. This pigeon is for my seven blind mothers, who live in the dark tower, and would starve unless I brought them food."

Then the white witch said, "Oh poor souls: if they could only get their eyes again: Give me that pigeon, my dear, and I promise to give you back your blind mothers' eyes." At this the Son of Seven Mothers was delighted.

The White Hind then said: "My mother will give you the eyes, for she wears them as a necklace. Take this message from me and she will give them without fail."

Then she gave him a bit of broken potsherd on which was written "Kill the bearer at once, and sprinkle his blood like water."

Now as the boy could not read he took the potsherd cheerfully, and set off to find the White Hind's mother. On the way he passed through a king's city, where every one looked sad.

"What ails you all?" asked he. Then the people answered, "The king's beautiful young daughter will not marry, so there will be no heir to the throne when the king dies. Every young man in the kingdom has been shown to her, but she will have none but the 'Son of Seven Mothers.' Who ever heard of such a thing? However the king has ordered that every stranger who comes to the town shall be brought before the Princess; so come now with us." Accordingly they led him into the presence, and no sooner had the Princess caught sight of him than she blushed saying, "Dear father, this is my choice"<sup>1</sup>.

Everyone rejoiced immensely at these welcome words, but the Son of Seven Mothers said, "I cannot stay now. First I must fetch my mothers' eyes, and then I will return for the wedding."

Now the princess was very learned and clever, so when she

<sup>1</sup> Appears to be an allusion to the long obsolete custom of *Swayamvara* or self-choice of a husband by Hindu princesses—the most popular form of marriage among Vedic Aryans. In the *Mahabharata* there is an account of Swayamvara of Draupadi. Griffith in his *Idylls from the Sanskrit* gives an admirable metrical account of the Swayamvara of Indumati and Aja from the *Raghuwamta*. The refusal of a princess to choose a husband till a certain man comes is a very common feature in German Folklore.



heard his story she said, "Shew me the message." When she saw the treacherous words written on the potsherd, and she said nothing to any one, but quietly took another potsherd, wrote on it, "Take care of this lad, and give him all he desires." Then she gave this to the Son of Seven Mothers, and kept the other potsherd herself.

So the Son of Seven Mothers set off to find the White Hind's mother.

She was a hideous old creature, and grumbled a good deal when she read the potsherd, but at last she took off the necklace of eyes, and gave it to him, saying "I'm sorry, there are only thirteen of them, but I was hungry last week and ate one."

The lad was only too delighted to get any at all, so he hurried home as fast as he could, and gave the eyes to his seven mothers. Two a piece to the six elder Queens, but only one to the youngest, saying, "Dear little mother, I will be your other eye always."

Then he set off to join his princess, but as he was passing the White Hind's palace he saw some pigeons on the roof. He drew his bow, and shot one; it came fluttering past the window, and the White Queen looked out, and lo! there was the handsome lad alive and well.

She was furious, and sent for him to tell her what had happened.

When she heard how he had brought back the thirteen eyes, and given them to the seven blind Queens, she nearly died of rage and spite. However, she said she was charmed to hear of his success, and told him that if he would give her this pigeon also, she would reward him with the jogi's wonderful cow, whose milk flows all day long, and makes a tank as big as a kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

The lad, nothing loth, gave her the pigeon, while she in return bid him go and ask her mother for the cow, giving him as before a potsherd on which was written, "Kill this lad without fail and sprinkle his blood like water."

<sup>1</sup> There seems to be a mixture of mythology here. The narrator of the tale could tell no story connected with this cow, and evidently used it in a general sense like the nine lakh necklace, etc. The modern Yogi is properly a Hindu devotee, the representative of the classical Yogi, the devotee seeking Yoga, the union of the living with the sublime soul. There are jogis, however, who are accompanied by snakes, and are popularly supposed to have supernatural powers like the jogi of this tale, who is explained to be a supernatural being much in the same way as the jinn. This jogi is said in the tale to be subject to Raja Indra, and his wonderful cow that gave a tank full of milk every day is probably the ancient *Kamadhenu*, Indra's cow, who grants all desires. *Kamadhenu* is now commonly applied to any cow giving an unusual quantity of milk. It is possible that the supernatural character of the jogi here may represent the *yoginis*, the eight sorceresses or female demons attendant on *Durga*.

So the Son of Seven Mothers set off on his errand, but first he went to see his dear Princess. She read the potsherd, and gave him another as before.

Now when the lad reached the old witch's hut, shewed her the potsherd, and asked for the jogi's cow, she grumbled dreadfully, saying "My daughter must be mad to give all her treasures away." However she told the boy how he was to get the cow, bidding him above all things not be afraid of the eighteen thousand demons that kept watch and ward over the treasure.<sup>1</sup>

So the boy set off boldly. By and bye he saw a milk-white tank guarded by the eighteen thousand demons. They were frightful to behold, but he plucked up courage and whistled a tune as he walked through them looking neither to the right nor to the left. At last he came to where the jogi's cow stood, white, beautiful and tall, while the jogi himself, who was king of all the demons, sat milking her day and night, and as he milked the milk streamed from her udder and filled the milk-white tank.

Then the jogi scowled and said "What do you want here?"

The lad answered as he had been told to do by the old witch:

"I want your skin, for Raja Indra wants a new kettledrum, and says your skin is nice and tough."

Then the jogi began to shiver and shake, for no jogi or jinn or witch or demon dares disobey Raja Indra's command.<sup>2</sup>

So he fell at the lad's feet saying "Spare me, and I will give you anything you desire, even my beautiful cow." At first the boy pretended he would not listen, but after a while he said, "well: give me the cow, and I daresay I shall find some other tough old skin that will answer my purpose as well as yours."

Then the jogi overwhelmed him with gratitude, and the Son of Seven Mothers drove off the cow.

He marched home as fast he could, and gave the cow to the Seven Queens, who were delighted to possess so marvellous an animal. They toiled from morning till night making curds and whey, and selling it to the confectioners, and still they could not use all the milk, so they became richer and richer day by day.

<sup>1</sup> There is no direct explanation of these 18,000 demons as far as I know—*Kamadhenu* was guarded by Indra's guard or attendants, who were in the older mythology the *Maruts* or winds and in the latter his innumerable court.

<sup>2</sup> This is against mythology. Indra was king of heaven, a ruler of gods, angels or fairies, but not of demons: of beneficent and not malevolent spirits. Among the Buddhists Indra as Sakra became the chief of the angels.

Then the prince set off once more to join his dear princess, but as he passed by the White Hind's palace, he saw some pigeons cooing on the turrets, and could not resist sending a bolt after them, and one fell dead just beneath the window where the White Hind was sitting. She looked out, and lo! there was the lad alive and well. She grew whiter than ever with rage and spite. She sent for him, and when he told her how kindly he had been received by her mother she nearly had a fit, so angry was she and furious. However she smiled sweetly, saying, "I kept my promise, did I not? Give me but this pigeon, and you shall have everything the world contains, for I will give you the millionfold rice that ripens in a night."

The young lad was delighted at the very idea, gave her the pigeon, and received in return a potsherd on which was written— "He has escaped you twice. Kill him this time without fail, and sprinkle his blood like water."

The Son of Seven Mothers set off to find the old witch, but on the way he went to see his dear Princess. She as usual read the potsherd, and gave the lad another in its place, on which was written, "Once again care for the lad, for his blood shall be your blood."

The old hag burst out into a rage when she saw this, and heard what the lad was to get. However, she dared not disobey her daughter, so she bid the lad go towards the north till he came to a rice-field full of golden rice guarded by eighteen millions of demons. "Do not be afraid of them," she said "look neither to the right nor to the left, but go straight to the middle of the field, and pluck the tall ear of rice which grows in the centre. Do not take more or less, and above all do not look round."

The lad did as he was bidden, and soon found the field of golden rice guarded by the eighteen millions of demons. He looked neither to the right nor to the left, but walked straight to the middle of the field, plucked the high golden ear which grew in the centre, but as he was returning soft voices called to him saying, "Take one more; oh please take one more", and one voice was so sweet that he turned round to see whence it came. No sooner had he turned than he became a little heap of ashes.

The old hag was terribly frightened when the lad did not return, and dreading her daughter's anger, set out to search for him.

She very soon came upon the heap of ashes, and knowing by witchcraft what had happened, she gathered the ashes together,

moistened them with water, and shaped the paste into the image of the lad. Then she put a drop of blood from her little finger into the mouth of the image, and immediately the lad stood before her alive and well. She scolded him soundly for disobeying her orders, saying "I save you this time to please my daughter, but don't try these tricks any more if you please."

Then the Prince went home with the millionfold rice that ripens in a night, and gave it to the Seven Queens, who became so rich that their wealth was noised abroad all through the city. Then the Prince went back to his dear Princess and married her. When the bridal ceremonies were over, she said "Take me to your own house, and I will restore you to your father's favour." So he took her home to the Seven Queens. Then she bid him build a palace exactly the same as the King's palace, and when it was finished she bade him ask the King to a feast. The King, who had heard much about the mysterious Son of Seven Mothers, came determined to find out the truth of the matter. What was his astonishment when he found himself in a palace exactly like his own. It was only to be equalled by his wonder when he was received by the young Prince as a revered father, and conducted at once into the presence of the Seven Queens. He was dumb with amazement till the young Princess, his daughter-in-law, stepped forth, and with much grace related to him the whole story. The King's heart was moved, and what with the sight of his Queens' sorrowful faces, and his handsome young son with his beautiful bride, his anger rose against the wicked witch who had wrought all this mischief, and he ordered her to be put to death.

So they buried the witch and ploughed up the ground and the Seven Queens walked over her grave into the palace, where they lived ever after.

### LAMBIKIN

Once upon a time there was a wee lambikin who frolicked about on his little tottering legs. One day he met a jackal who said, "Lambikin, Lambikin, shall I eat you?"

But Lambikin gave a little frisk, and answered:—

"To Granny's house I go:  
There I shall fatter grow,  
And you shall eat me so."

Folklore in the Punjab collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XII—1883, pp. 175-6.

The jackal, thinking this reasonable, let the lambikin pass, and soon afterwards the lambikin met a vulture, who said:—

“Lambikin, Lambikin, shall I eat you?”

But the lambikin answered as before, and the vulture, thinking it was only reasonable, let the little fellow pass.

And so on with a tiger, a wolf and a dog, until all the wild animals and birds had let little lambikin pass to go to his granny's house and get fatter. And they all licked their lips at thinking what a nice little mouthful he would be on his way back.

Now when the lambikin reached his granny's house he said to her, “Granny, please put me into the corn-bin, for I have promised to get fat.” When Granny heard this, she, of course, put him into the corn-bin at once, and there the greedy little creature remained for seven days and ate and ate and ate until he was so fat that he could scarcely waddle.

Then his granny said it was time for him to go home, as he was fat enough for anything. But the cunning little lambikin said:—

“If I do, Granny dear, some wild animal may eat me on the way back. The best plan will be for you to make a little drumikin out of the skin of my little brother that died, and then I can sit inside and trundle along. I am as tight as a drum myself.”

So his Granny made a little drumikin, and lambikin sat inside and trundled along. By and by he met the vulture, who called out, “Drumikin, have you seen Lambikin?” Then the Lambikin called out from inside:—

Lost in the forest and so are you!

On, Little Drumikin! Tum! Tum! Too!

“How very annoying,” replied the vulture, and sighed to think of the nice mouthful he had lost, while the crafty lambikin trundled on gaily giving the same answer to all the animals he met, and chuckling at his own cleverness. At last he met the jackal, but the jackal was not to be done. He recognised the lambikin's voice and said, “Oh, you've turned yourself inside out, have you? Come out of that!” Then he tore open the drumikin, and gobbled up lambikin.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A common baby story all over the Punjab. Told at much greater length by repeating the verses on meeting the various animals. It has been tried on English children with great success.

## THE TIGER, THE BRAHMAN AND THE JACKAL

Once on a time a tiger was caught in a trap. He tried in vain to get out through the bars, and rolled and bit with rage and grief when he failed. By chance a poor Brahman came by. "Let me out of this cage, oh pious one," cried the tiger.

"Nay, my friend," replied the Brahman wisely, "you would probably eat me if I did."

"Not so," swore the tiger with many oaths. "I would be forever grateful, and serve you as a slave."

Now when the tiger sobbed and sighed and wept and swore, the pious Brahman's heart softened and he opened the door of the cage. Out popped the tiger and seizing the poor man, said:—"What a fool you are: Now I shall eat you, for I am famished after having been cooped up so long."

In vain the Brahman pleaded and prayed. The most he could gain was a promise to abide by the decision of the first three things he chose to question as to the justice of the tiger's action. So the Brahman first asked a *pipal* tree that was standing by, but the *pipal* tree replied coldly:—"What have you to complain about? Don't I give shade and shelter to every traveller who comes by, and don't they tear down my branches to feed their cattle afterwards? Don't whimper, but be a man!"

So the Brahman went sadly further afield till he saw a buffalo turning a well, but the buffalo gave him no better answer, saying, "You are a fool to expect gratitude! Look at me! Whilst I gave milk they fed me on cotton seed and oil-cake, but now that I am dry they yoke me here, and give me refuse for fodder."

The Brahman sighed, but wandering on asked the road what it thought of the matter.

"What nonsense!" cried the road, "to expect anything else! Here am I, useful to all, yet everybody, rich or poor, great or small, tramples on me as he goes past, and gives me nothing but pipe ashes and grain husks."

So the Brahman returned sad and sorrowful. On his way he met a jackal, who called out:—

"Why, what's the matter, Mr. Brahman? You look as miserable as a Jatt in a shower!"

The Brahman told him all that had happened.

"How very confusing," said the Jackal, when the recital was ended: "Would you mind telling it me over again, for everything has got mixed up so."

And the Brahman told it all over again, but the jackal only shook his head in a distracted sort of way, and could not understand.

"It is very strange," said he sadly, "but it all goes in at one ear and on at the other. I will go to the place where it all happened, and then perhaps I shall be able to give a judgment."

So they came to where the tiger was waiting for the Brahman, and sharpening his teeth and claws.

"You've been away a long time," growled the beast, "but now let us begin *our* dinner."

"Our dinner!" thought the Brahman as his knees knocked together with fright; "what a very delicate way of putting it."

"Give me five minutes, my lord," he pleaded, "in order that I may explain matters to the jackal here, who is somewhat slow in his wits."

The tiger consented, and the Brahman began the whole story over again, not missing a single detail, and spinning as long a yarn as possible.

"Oh, my poor brain! oh! my poor brain!" cried the jackal wringing its paws. "Let me see! How did it begin? You were in the cage, and the tiger came walking by and....."

"What a fool you are!" interrupted the tiger. "*I* was in the cage."

"Yes, of course!" cried the jackal, pretending to tremble with fright; "*I* was in the cage. No, I wasn't! Oh, dear, where are my wits? The cage was in the Brahman, and the tiger came. No, the tiger was in the Brahman and the cage came walking by. Oh, don't mind me! Begin your dinner, for I shall never understand."

"Yes, you shall," cried the tiger in a rage with the jackal for his stupidity. "You *shall* understand me. Now look at me! I am the tiger."

"Yes, my lord."

"And that's the Brahman."

"Yes, my lord."

"And that's the 'cage.'"

"And *I* was in the cage. Do you understand?"

"Yes,—no,—please, my lord."

"Well," cried the tiger impatiently.

"Please, my lord, how did you get in?"

"How? In the usual way, of course."

"Oh, dear me! My head is beginning to whirl again. Don't be angry, my lord, but—please—what is the usual way?"

At this the tiger lost patience, and jumping into the cage, cried—

"*This* way! Now do you understand?"

"Exactly so," grinned the jackal, deftly shutting the door; "As we all were!!"

### THE RAT'S WEDDING

Once upon a time a rat was caught in a shower of rain. Being far from shelter, he set to work and soon dug a hole in the ground, in which he sat as dry as a bone. Now while he was digging he came on a fine bit of dry root. "This is quite a prize," said he to himself, "I must take it home."

So when the rain was over, he took the dry root in his mouth, and set off home. On the way he saw a man trying to light a fire while his children stood by and howled with hunger, "Dear me," said the rat, "what an awful noise! What is the matter?"

"The bairns are hungry," answered the man, "and want their breakfast, but the fire won't light because the sticks are wet, so how can I cook the bread?"

"If that is all," said the good-natured rat, "take this dry root. I'll warrant it will make a fine blaze."

"That's really most kind of you," replied the man gratefully, "and in return take this bit of dough."

"What a clever fellow I am," thought the rat as he trotted off, "what bargains I make! Fancy getting food that will last me for five days for an old stick! Wah!"

Soon after he saw a potter trying to pacify three little children who were howling, and crying, and screaming. "Dear! dear! what is the matter?" asked the rat.

"The bairns are hungry," answered the potter, "I haven't any food to give them."

"Is that all?" said the soft-hearted rat. "Here take this dough, cook it quickly."

"You are most obliging," cried the potter delighted, "and in return take one of those pipkins."



The rat was delighted at this exchange though he found the pot rather hard to carry. At last, however, he managed to balance it on his head, and went gingerly tink-a-tink, tink-a-tink, down the road, saying to himself "How clever I am! what a hand at a bargain! Wah!"

By and bye he came to where some cowherds were milking a buffalo in the jangal, and having no pail they used their shoes instead. "Oh fie!" cried the rat quite shocked, "what a nasty trick! Why don't you use a pail?"

"Haven't got one," growled the cowherds sulkily. They didn't see why the rat should call them over the coals.

"Is that all?" cried the cleanly rat. "Here, take this pipkin. I can't bear dirt!"

The cowherds were delighted, took the pipkin and milked away till it was quite full. Then they brought it to the rat, saying—"Here little fellow, drink your fill as a reward."

"Come! None of that!" cried the rat, who was as shrewd, as he was good-natured, "as if I could drink the worth of my pipkin at a draught! *I could not hold it!* Besides I always make good bargains, and you must just give me the buffalo."

"Rubbish!" returned the cowherds, "Who ever heard of such a price? Besides, what could you do with such a big beast? The pipkin was about as much as you could manage."

"Leave that to me," said the rat, "all you have to do is to give me the buffalo."

"All right," said the cowherds laughing. So just to humour the rat and for the fun of the thing, they loosed the buffalo's halter and began to tie it to the rat's tail.

"No! no!" shouted he in a great hurry. "It won't be safe there. Why, if that big brute were to pull, the skin would come off, and then where should I be? Tie it round my neck instead."

So they tied the rope round the rat's neck, and he set off gaily towards home; but when he came to the end of the tether, not a step further could he go, for the buffalo saw a fine tuft of grass in another direction, and marched off to eat it, and the rat willy-nilly had to trot behind. But he was much too proud to confess the fact, so he nodded his head gaily to the cowherds, and said, "Ta ta, I shall go home this way, it is a little round-about perhaps, but it is much shadier." And when the cowherds burst out laughing, he took no notice, but looked as dignified as possible.

"After all," he said to himself, "when one keeps a buffalo, one has to look after it when it is grazing. There is plenty of time before me, and the beast must get a bellyful of grass if it is to give any milk." So he trotted about amiably after the buffalo all day, making believe all the time. But by the evening he was dead tired of it, and was quite glad when the buffalo lay down under a tree to rest.

Just then a bridal party came by, and sat down in the shade to cook some food.

"What detestable meanness," grumbled the palanquin-bearers and servants, "fancy giving us plain *palau*<sup>1</sup> with never a scrape of meat in it. It would serve the skinflints right if we left the bride in a ditch."

"Dear me," said the rat, "what a shame! I sympathise with you entirely, and to show you how I feel for you, I will give you my buffalo, kill it and cook it."

"Phooh!" returned the servants, "what rubbish? Who heard of a rat who owned a buffalo?"

"Not often, I admit," replied the rat with pride, "but look yourself: don't you see I am leading the beast with string?"

"Bother the string!" cried a great big hungry bearer, "Master, or no Master, and I'll have meat for my dinner!"

Whereupon they killed the buffalo, and cooked the flesh, saying "Here little ratskin, have some *palau* in payment."

"Now look here! none of your sauce!" cried the rat, "you don't suppose I am going to give you my beautiful buffalo that gave quarts and quarts of milk for a wee bit of its flesh. No! I got a loaf for a bit of stick; I got a pot for a little loaf; I got a buffalo for an earthen pot, and now I'll have the bride for my buffalo, and nothing else!"

The servants by this time having satisfied their hunger became rather alarmed at what they had done, and came to the conclusion it would be best to escape while they could. So leaving the bride in the *dola* they bolted in different directions.

Then the rat drew aside the curtain, and in his sweetest voice, and with his best bow begged the bride to descend. She hardly knew whether to laugh or to cry, but as anything was better than staying alone in the jangal, she followed him as she was bid. The rat was delighted to find by her rich dress and jewels that she was a king's daughter, and went trotting along, saying to himself, "Oh, what a clever fellow I am! what bargains I do

<sup>1</sup> Boiled rice seasoned.

make to be sure! Wah! wah!" When they arrived at his hole, he said to the bride with a polite air—"Welcome, Madam, pray step in. I will show you the way." Whereupon he ran in first, but when he found the bride didn't follow, he put his nose out again, saying testily—"Why don't you come? It's rude to keep your husband waiting."

"My good Sir," laughed the bride, "I can't get in *there*."

"There is something in that," replied the rat thoughtfully, "I must build you a thatch somewhere. In the meantime sit under that wild plum tree."

"But I'm hungry," said the bride.

"Dear me, that's very sad," returned the rat, "I'll fetch you something in a trice."

So he ran into his hole and returned with an ear of millet, and one pea. "There's a fine dinner," said he triumphantly.

"I can't eat that," whispered the bride, "I want *palau* and cakes, and sweet eggs, *koftas*<sup>1</sup> and sugar-drops. I shall die if I don't get them."

"Dear, dear!" said the rat fretfully, "what a bother a bride is! Why don't you eat the wild plums?"

"I can't live on wild plums," replied the bride, "besides they are only half ripe, and I can't reach them."

"Rubbish!" cried the rat, "you must eat them for to-night, and to-morrow you can gather a basketful and sell them in the city, and then you can buy sugar-drops and sweet eggs and *koftas* and cakes."

So the very next morning the rat climbed up the plum tree, and nibbled away at the stalks till the fruit fell down. Then the king's daughter gathered them up, unripe as they were, and carried them to the town in a basket, calling out,

"Green plums I sell! green plums I sell;  
Princess am I, rat's bride as well."

As she passed by the palace, her mother heard the voice, and ran out—ever so happy to find her daughter safe again, for they thought she had been eaten by wild beasts. So they feasted and were very merry. By and bye who should come to the door but the rat with a big stick. He was in a frightful rage, and called out.

"Give me my wife! give me my wife! I gave a stick and I got a loaf; I gave a loaf and I got a pot; I gave a pot and I got a buffalo; I gave a buffalo and I got a bride. Give me my wife! Give me my wife!"

<sup>1</sup> A ball of fried meat highly spiced.

“La! son-in-law,” said the wily old Queen, “what a fuss you make! who wants to take away your wife? On the contrary we are delighted to see you. Just wait a bit till I spread a carpet, and then we will receive you in style.”

The rat was mollified by the old lady’s politeness, and waited patiently outside, while the cunning old thing cut a hole out of the middle of a stool, and put a red-hot flaming stone underneath covering up the hole with an iron sauce-pan lid, then she threw a fine embroidered cloth over all, and called out, “Come in now, my dear son-in-law, and rest yourself.”

“Dear me! how clever I am! what bargains I make!” said the rat to himself as he climbed on to the stool. “Here am I the son-in-law of a real live Queen! What will the neighbours say?”

He sat down on the edge of the stool at first, and after a time he said, “Dear me! mother-in-law! how hot your house is.”

“You are sitting out of the wind there,” said the wily Queen, “sit more in the middle. It’s cooler there.”

But it wasn’t! for the sauce-pan lid had become so hot that the rat fairly frizzled when he sat down, and stuck so that he left all his hair and the best part of his skin behind him, before he managed to escape, howling and vowing that he never, never, never would make a bargain anymore.

## THE JACKAL AND THE TIGER

An old tiger was in the habit of hunting in a particular *jangal*.

One day he caught a jackal and was proceeding to eat it when the jackal said:—

“Before you eat your dinner, had you not better kill that other tiger, or whilst you are lazily asleep he may hunt your forest, and perhaps kill you.”

“What tiger?” asked the king of beasts.

“Come with me and I will show you,” answered the jackal.

So he led the tiger to a well, and bid him look down. When the tiger saw his reflection in the water he hemmed and hawed, saying:—“That’s a poor old beast, and he isn’t doing any harm. He won’t rob me: why, he looks half-starved.”

“He has caught a fine fat jackal though,” said the wily prisoner, looking over the well too.

“So he has,” cried the tiger, “what a horrid old thief!”

And without pausing a moment he leapt down the well, and was killed on the spot.

And the jackal went home laughing.<sup>1</sup>

## DEATH AND BURIAL OF POOR HEN-SPARROW

Once upon a time there lived a cock-sparrow and his wife, who were both growing old. But the cock-sparrow was a gay bird, old as he was, and cast his eyes upon a lively young hen, and determined to marry her. So they had a grand wedding, everyone was very merry except the old wife, who went out and sat on a tree disconsolately just under a crow's nest. While she was there it began to rain, and the water fell drip, drip, on her feathers, but she was too sad to care. Now it so happened that the crow had used some scraps of dyed cloth in building its nest, and when they got wet, the colours ran and went drip, drip, on the old sparrow till she was as gay as a peacock. When she flew home the new wife was dreadfully jealous of her old co-wife<sup>2</sup> and asked her where she had managed to get that lovely dress.

“Easily enough,” she replied, “I just went into the dyer's vat.”

“I will go too,” thought the new wife, “I won't have that old thing better dressed than I am.”

So she flew off to the dyer's, and went pop into the middle of the vat, but it was scalding hot, and she was half dead before she managed to scramble out. Meanwhile, the old cock, not finding the new wife at home, flew about distracted in search of her, and wept salt

Folklore in the Punjab collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI—1882, pp. 169-72.

<sup>1</sup> A variant of the tale is known as “The Hare and the Tiger.”

A noteworthy variant of this tale is told in the Firozpur district, entitled:—

### THE VIXEN AND THE TIGER

An old tiger was in the habit of hunting in a certain *jungle*, and killing and eating any animal he might chance on. At last matters became so intolerable that the animals met together, and agreed to give up to him daily one of themselves, on condition that he ceased his hunting. One day it came to a vixen's turn to be eaten, but when she reached the tiger she represented to him that a similar arrangement had been made by the animals with his brother, and that it so happened that it was her turn to go to him, too, that day. This made the tiger very jealous, and he demanded to be shown his brother, whereupon the vixen showed him his own image in a well, and the tiger in his wrath jumped in and was drowned.

<sup>2</sup> *Saukan*, co-wife—the cause of endless rhymes, songs, sayings, and proverbs in India mostly with a tendency to a wish on the part of one co-wife to be rid or freed from the other. “A witch is better than a fairy co-wife”:—Fallon, *New Hind. Dict.* No one can study the adages of India without being convinced that if the women hate one thing, except the mother-in-law, more than another it is the existence of polygamy.

tears when he found her half drowned and half scalded with all her feathers awry by the dyer's vat.

"What has happened?" quoth he.

The poor draggled thing could only gasp out

"My co-wife got dyed,

But I fell into the vat."

So the sparrow took her up tenderly in his bill, and flew away home with her. Just as he was crossing a big river the old hen-sparrow looked out of the nest, and when she saw her old husband bringing his bride home in such a sorry plight, she burst out laughing, and called out

"One is vexed, and one is grieved,

And one laughing is carried on high."

At this her husband was so enraged that he could not hold his tongue, but shouted out—"Hush, hush, you vulgar old thing."

Of course when he opened his mouth to speak the poor draggled bride fell out, went plump into the river, and was drowned.

Whereupon the cock-sparrow was so distracted with grief that he picked off all his feathers, till he was as bare as a ploughed field, and went and sat quite naked on a pipal tree and wept.

Then the pipal said to him: "What has happened?"

"Don't ask me," said cock-sparrow. "It isn't decent to ask questions when a body is in mourning."

But the pipal wouldn't be satisfied, so at last with sobs and tears the poor bereaved cock-sparrow said—

"One hen painted,

And the other was dyed,

And the cock loved her."

Then the pipal was overwhelmed with grief too, and said "I must mourn also." So it shed all its leaves on the spot. By and bye a buffalo came in the heat of the day to rest in the shade of the pipal, and was astonished to find nothing but bare twigs. "What has happened to you?" said the buffalo "you were as green as could be yesterday." "Don't ask me," whimpered the pipal, "where are your manners? Don't you know it isn't decent to ask questions when people are mourning?"

<sup>1</sup> This rhyme alludes to a proverb founded on a common tale. The verses usually run thus:—

First she was vexed, next she grieved:

The other went across mounted on the shoulder.

And the story goes that a man who had two wives had to cross a river. Both wives wanted to go across first, but in the end he took the youngest on his shoulder and left the elder behind to struggle across as she best could. The younger wife mocked the elder with the above words. Hence the sting of the old sparrow's speech in the text.

But the buffalo insisted, and at last with sobs and sighs the pipal said—

“One hen painted,  
And the other was dyed,  
And the cock loved her,  
So the pipal shed its leaves.”

“Dear! dear! dear!” cried the buffalo. “How very sad! I must mourn too.” So she immediately cast her horns and wept and wailed. After a while she went to drink water in the river.

“What is the matter?” cried the river. “And what have you done with your horns?”

“How rude you are?” wept the buffalo, “can’t you see I am in deep mourning? Don’t you know it isn’t manners to ask questions?”

But the river insisted till the buffalo with many sighs said:—

“One hen painted,  
And the other was dyed,  
And the cock loved her,  
So the pipal shed its leaves,  
And the buffalo her horns.”

“Dreadful!” cried the river, and wept so much that its water became quite salt.

By and bye a cuckoo came to bathe in the river. “What has happened?” said the cuckoo, “you are as salt as tears.”

“Don’t ask me,” mourned the river “it’s too dreadful for words.”

But when the cuckoo insisted, it said:—

“One hen painted,  
And the other was dyed,  
And the cock loved her,  
So the pipal shed its leaves,  
And the buffalo her horns,  
So the river became salt.”

“Oh dear! oh dear!” cried the cuckoo, “how very shocking! I must mourn too.” So he plucked out an eye and went and sat by a tradesman’s shop and wept.

“What’s the matter?” cried Bhagtu, the tradesman.

“Don’t ask me,” snivelled the cuckoo, “it is such awful grief! such sorrow!”

But when the tradesman persisted the cuckoo said:—

“One hen painted,  
And the other was dyed,

And the cock loved her,  
 So the pipal shed its leaves,  
 And the buffalo her horns,  
 So the river became salt,  
 And the cuckoo lost an eye."

"Bless me," cried Bhagtu, "but that is most distressing. I really must mourn too." So he wept and wailed till he lost his senses, so that when the king's maid-servant came to buy from him, he gave her pepper when she asked for turmeric, and onion when she asked for garlic, and wheat when she asked for pulse.

"Dear me, friend Bhagtu," cried the maid-servant, "what's the matter with you to-day?"

"Don't" cried the tradesman, "don't ask me! what can a man in such dreadful grief as I am know about onions and garlic and turmeric and pepper? It is too, too awful!"

But at last at the maid's entreaties he said:—

"One hen painted,  
 And the other was dyed,  
 And the cock loved her,  
 So the pipal shed its leaves,  
 And the buffalo her horns,  
 So the river became salt,  
 And the cuckoo lost an eye,  
 So Bhagtu went mad."

"Oh how sad!" cried the maid-servant, "I must mourn too." So she went to the palace saying dreadful things. "What is the matter?" cried the queen, "what distresses you?"

"Oh!" cried the maid, "such dreadful news,"

"One hen painted,  
 And the other was dyed,  
 And the cock loved her,  
 So the pipal shed its leaves,  
 And the buffalo her horns,  
 So the river became salt,  
 And the cuckoo lost an eye,  
 So Bhagtu went mad,  
 And the maid took to swearing."

"Dear me," cried the Queen, "that is very sad, and I ought to mourn too." So she set to work and danced as hard as she could till she got out of breath. Just then in came her little son, saw her dancing, and asked her why?



"One hén painted,  
 And the other was dyed,  
 And the cock loved her,  
 So the pipal shed its leaves,  
 And the buffalo her horns,  
 So the river became salt,  
 And the cuckoo lost an eye,  
 So Bhagtu went mad,  
 And the maid took to swearing,  
 So the Queen took to dancing,"

said the Queen, and went on dancing.

"I'll mourn too," cried the Prince, and immediately began to play the tambourine and dance. Hearing the noise the King came in, and asked what was the matter. "Oh!" said his son,

"One hen painted,  
 And the other was dyed,  
 And the cock loved her,  
 So the pipal shed its leaves,  
 And the buffalo her horns,  
 So the river became salt,  
 And the cuckoo lost an eye,  
 So Bhagtu went mad,  
 And the maid took to swearing,  
 So the Queen took to dancing,  
 And the Prince took to drumming."

"Capital!" cried the King, seizing a zither and thrumming away as he danced too. Then all four began to sing:

"One hen painted,  
 And the other was dyed,  
 And the cock loved her,  
 So the pipal shed its leaves,  
 And the buffalo her horns,  
 So the river became salt,  
 And the cuckoo lost an eye,  
 So Bhagtu went mad,  
 And the maid took to swearing,  
 So the Queen took to dancing,  
 And the Prince took to drumming,  
 And the King took to thrumming."

And that was the burial of the poor hen-sparrow.

## THE SPARROW AND THE CROW

A sparrow and a crow once agreed to cook *Khijri*<sup>1</sup> for their dinner. The crow brought pulse and the sparrow rice, and the sparrow did the cooking. When it was ready the crow came to claim his share. "No," said the sparrow, "you are dirty, go and wash your beak in the tank yonder, and after that sit down to dinner."

So the crow went to the tank, and said—

"You're Mr. Tank,  
I am Mr. Crow,  
Give me water,  
That I may wash my beak,  
And eat my *khijri*.  
See the bird's playfulness,  
I am a clean crow."

But the tank said: "I will give you water if you will go to the deer, break off one of its horns, and dig a hole in the ground close by me, and then I'll let my water run in clean and fresh."

So the crow went to the deer, and said—

"You are Mr. Deer,  
I am Mr. Crow,  
You give me a horn,  
And I will dig a hole,  
And take out the water,  
That I may wash my beak,  
And eat my *khijri*.  
See the bird's playfulness,  
I am a clean crow."

But the deer said: "I'll give you my horn if you will give me some buffalo's milk, for then I shall grow fat, and breaking my horn won't hurt me." So the crow went to a buffalo and said—

"You are Mrs. Buffalo,  
I am Mr. Crow,  
You give me milk,  
That I may give it the deer to drink,  
And break his horn,  
And dig the hole,  
And take out the water,  
And wash my beak,

Folklore in the Punjab collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IX—1880, pp. 207-9

<sup>1</sup> A dish of rice and dal.

And eat my *khijri*.  
 See the bird's playfulness,  
 I am a clean crow."

But the buffalo said: "Bring me some grass first, and I'll give you milk."

So the crow went to some grass, and said—

"You are Mr. Grass,  
 I am Mr. Crow,  
 You give me some grass,  
 That I may give it the buffalo,  
 And take her milk,  
 And give it the deer to drink,  
 And break his horn,  
 And dig the hole,  
 And take out the water,  
 And wash my beak,  
 And eat my *khijri*.  
 See the bird's playfulness,  
 I am a clean crow."

But the grass said: "Get a spade first, and then you can dig me up."

So the crow went to a blacksmith, and said—

"You are Mr. Blacksmith,  
 I am Mr. Crow,  
 You give me a spade,  
 And I will dig the grass,  
 That I may give it the buffalo to eat,  
 And take her milk,  
 And give it the deer to drink,  
 And break his horn,  
 And dig the hole,  
 And take out the water,  
 And wash my beak,  
 And eat my *khijri*.  
 See the bird's playfulness,  
 I am a clean crow."

"With pleasure," said the blacksmith, "if you will light the fire and blow the bellows."

So the crow began to light the fire and blow the bellows, and in so doing fell into the middle of the fire and was burnt.

So that was the end of him, and the sparrow ate all the *khijri*.

## SIR BUMBLE<sup>1</sup>

Once upon a time a soldier died, leaving a widow and one son. They were very poor, and at last matters became so bad that they had nothing to eat.

"Mother!" said the son, "give me two rupees, and I will seek my fortune in the world."

"Oh! ho!" said the mother, "and where am I, who haven't a pice wherewith to buy flour, to find two rupees?"

"There's that old coat of my father's," answered the lad, "look in the pocket; perchance there might be something there." So she looked, and behold! there were three rupees down in the very corner of the pocket. "More than I bargained for," said the lad, laughing. "See, mother! here is one for you, and I'll keep the other two for myself to pay my way until I find my fortune."

So he set off to find his fortune. On the way he saw a tigress, licking her paw and moaning terribly. He was going to run away, but she called to him faintly, saying "Good lad, take this thorn out for me, and I shall be for ever grateful." But the lad answered, "Not I! why, if I begin to pull it out, and it pains you, you will kill me with one blow."

"No!" said the tigress, "I will turn my face to this tree, and then when the pain comes I will strike the trunk."

"All right," answered the soldier's son. So he pulled out the thorn, and when the pain came, the tigress gave the trunk such a blow that it split all to pieces. Then the grateful tigress said, "As a reward take this box, only don't open it till you have travelled nine miles." So the soldier's son set off to find his fortune with the box. Now when he had gone about five miles, he felt certain the box was heavier than it was at first, and every step he took it seemed to grow heavier and heavier. Still he tried to struggle on, but when he had walked eight miles and a quarter, his patience gave way, and he cried:—"I believe that tigress was a witch, and is playing off her tricks on me. I will stand it no longer. Lie here, you wretched box; Heaven knows what you contain, and I don't care."

Folklore in the Punjab, collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. X—1881, pp. 40-3.

<sup>1</sup> The story is fairly well-known in the Punjab and is Muhammadan. It possesses considerable literary merits remarkable from their absence in most Panjab tales. The treatment is humorous and in many places poetical, and the tale as a whole gives the idea of its having been at some period committed to writing. The description of "Sir Bumble" as being a mannikin "one span high with a beard one span and a quarter long" occurs in *The Arabian Nights* and in some German tales. It is possible that Muhammadans brought the tale in with them during some of their interruptions.

So saying he threw the box down violently. It burst open, and out stepped a little old man. He was only one span high, but his beard was a span and a quarter long.

He began to abuse the lad roundly for throwing him down so hard. "Upon my word," said the soldier's son, "but you are weighty for your size, old gentleman. And what may your name be?"

"Sir Bumble," snapped the one span mannikin.

"Upon my word," said the soldier's son, "if you are all the box contained, I'm glad I didn't trouble to carry it further."

"That's not polite," returned the mannikin, "perhaps if you had carried it the full nine miles you would have found something better. It doesn't matter, however, for I'm quite good enough for you, and I shall serve you faithfully according to my mistress' orders."

"Serve me! Then I wish you would serve me with some dinner, for I'm mighty hungry. Here are two rupees to pay for it." No sooner had the soldier's son said this, than with a boom! bang! Sir Bumble whizzed away through the air to a confectioner's shop in the next town. There he stood, the one span mannikin with the span and a quarter beard, behind the preserving pan, and cried in ever so loud a voice, "Ho! ho! Sir Confectioner, bring me sweets."

The confectioner looked about but could not see any one. Sir Bumble was so small that he was quite hidden by the preserving pan, so he cried still louder: "Ho! ho! Sir Confectioner, bring me sweets."

Then when the confectioner looked about in vain for the customer, the mannikin got angry, and ran and pinched him on the legs and kicked him on the foot, saying—"Impudent knave, do you mean to say you can't see *me*? Why I was standing close beside the preserving pan."

The confectioner apologised humbly, and brought out his best sweets. Sir Bumble chose about a *man* (80 lbs.) of them, and said, "Here, tie them up in something, and give them into my hand. I'll carry them home."

"They'll be a good weight," smiled the confectioner.

"What's that to you?" snapped Sir Bumble, "do as I bid you, and here is your money." He jingled the two rupees in his pocket.

"All right, sir," said the man cheerfully; so he tied up the sweets, and placed the big bundle on Sir Bumble's hand, and lo! with a

boom! bing! he whizzed off with the rupees still in his pocket.

He alighted at a corn-dealer's shop, and standing behind a basket of flour, cried loudly, "Ho! ho! Sir Baniah, bring me flour."

Then the corn-dealer looked about for his noisy customer, but could see no one. Sir Bumble cried again: "Ho! ho! Sir Baniah, bring me flour." And when the man didn't answer, he flew into a violent rage, and ran and bit him in the leg, and pinched and kicked him, exclaiming: "Impudent varlet, do you mean to say you can't see *me*? Why I was standing close beside you behind that basket."

The corn-dealer apoloigised humbly, and asked Sir Bumble how much flour he wanted. "Two *mans*," said the mannikin. "Two *mans*, neither more nor less. Tie it up in a bundle, and I'll take it home."

"Your honour has a cart with you doubtless, or a beast of burden, for it will be heavy."

"Do as I bid you," shrieked Sir Bumble stamping his foot, "and here is your money." He once more jingled the two rupees in his pocket. So the corn-dealer tied up the flour in a bundle, and placed it in Sir Bumble's hand, when whizz! buzz! the mannikin flew off with the rupees still in his pocket.

The soldier's son was just wondering what had become of the one span mannikin, when with a whirr he alighted, and wiping his face and panting, said: "I hope I've brought enough, but you men have such terrible appetites."

"More than enough," laughed the lad when he saw the bundle.

Then Sir Bumble cooked the bread, and the soldier's son ate three cakes and a handful of sweets; but Sir Bumble gobbled up all the rest, saying at each mouthful, "You men have such terrible appetites."

After that the soldier's son and his one span servant travelled on and on till they came to the king's city. Now the king had a daughter called Princess Blossom, who was so lovely, and tender, and slim, and fair, that she only weighed five flowers.

Every morning she was weighed in golden scales, and always the scale turned when the fifth flower was put in, neither less nor more.

Now it so happened that the soldier's son caught a glimpse of the lovely, tender, slim, and fair Princess Blossom, and he fell dreadfully in love with her. He would not sleep, or eat his food

and said all day to his faithful mannikin, "Oh dear Sir Bumble! carry me to the Princess Blossom that I may see and speak to her."

"Carry you!" snapped the one span mannikin, "that's a likely story, why you're ten times as big as I am. You should carry me."

But when the soldier's son begged and prayed, and grew thin and pined away thinking of the Princess Blossom, Sir Bumble, who had a kind heart, was moved, and bid the lad sit on his hand. Then with a tremendous boom! bing! there they were in the palace. It was night-time, and the princess was asleep; she woke however with Sir Bumble's booming, and seeing a handsome young man beside her was quite frightened. She began to scream, but stopped when the soldier's son with great politeness begged her not to be alarmed. After this they began to talk together, and Sir Bumble stood at the door, where he struck a brick upon end so that nobody could see him, and did sentry. Now when morning was breaking, the soldier's son, and the Princess Blossom, tired of talking, had both fallen asleep; Sir Bumble, the faithful servant, thought to himself, "Someone will be coming soon, then he will be killed; and if I wake him he won't go." So without more ado he put his hand underneath the bed, and bing! boom! carried it into a large garden outside the town. There he set down the bed in the shade of the biggest tree, and pulling up the next biggest by the roots threw it over his shoulder, and marched up and down keeping guard.

Before long the whole town was in commotion. The Princess Blossom had been carried off, and everybody turned out to look for her. By-and-by a one-eyed Kotwal came to the garden gate. "What do you want here?" cried valiant Sir Bumble. "The Princess Blossom," answered the Kotwal. "I'll blossom you! get out of *my* garden, will you?" shrieked the one span mannikin with his span and a quarter beard. With that he belaboured the Kotwal's pony so hard with the tree, that it ran away, nearly throwing the rider.

The poor Kotwal went straight to the king, and said: "Your Majesty! I am sure the Princess Blossom is in your Highness' garden outside the town, only there is a terribly valiant little sentry who fights with a tree."

Then the king went with horses and men to the garden, and tried to get in. But Sir Bumble with his tree routed them all; half were killed and the rest ran away. The noise of the fight

awoke the young couple, and they determined at once to fly with each other. So when the fight was over, they all three set out to see the world.

Now the soldier's son was so enchanted with his good luck in winning the Princess Blossom that he said to Sir Bumble, "My fortune is made. I shan't want you any more, you can go back to your mistress."

"Pooh!" said Sir Bumble, "that's what you all think. There's trouble before you yet. However, have it your own way, only take this hair out of my beard, and if you want my help, burn it in the fire."

So Sir Bumble boomed off, and the soldier's son and the Princess Blossom lived and travelled together happily. At last they lost their way in the *jungals* one day, and had nothing to eat or to drink. When they were just about as hungry as they could be, a wandering Brahman appeared. Hearing their story, he said, "Oh poor children! come home with me, and I will give you something to eat."

If he had said "I will eat you", it would have been nearer the mark, for he was no Brahman, but an ogre dreadfully fond of handsome young men and slender girls. They went home with him, and he said: "Now get ready what you want to eat: here are all my keys; you may open all the cupboards except that with the golden key. Meanwhile I will go and gather firewood."

Then the Princess Blossom began to prepare the food, and meanwhile the soldier's son opened all the cupboards. He saw such lovely jewels, and dresses, and cups and platters, and bags of gold, that his curiosity got the better of him, and he said "I will see what wonderful thing is in the cupboard with the golden key." So he opened it, and lo! it was full of men's skulls picked quite clean. Then he flew to the princess and cried: "We are lost! this is no Brahman, but a horrid ogre."

Just then they heard him at the door, and the princess had barely time to thrust the hair into the fire before the ogre appeared. At the same moment a boom, boom, binging noise was heard in the air coming nearer and nearer. Then the ogre (who very well knew Sir Bumble's power) changed into a heavy rain which poured down in torrents, but Sir Bumble turned into the storm wind which beat back the rain. Then the ogre changed to a dove, and Sir Bumble pursued it as a hawk, and pressed it so hard that the ogre had barely time to change into a rose and



drop into Raja Indra's lap<sup>1</sup>, as he sat listening to some dancing girls singing. Then Sir Bumble, quick as thought, changed into an old musician, and standing beside the bard who was strumming the *sitar*, said "Brother, you are tired; let me play." Then he played so wonderfully and sang with such piercing sweetness that Raja Indra said: "What shall I give you as a reward? Name it, and it shall be yours." Then Sir Bumble said: "Only the rose in your lap." "I had rather you asked for something more, or something less," answered Raja Indra. "'Tis only a rose, but it fell from heaven: nevertheless take it." He threw the rose towards him, and lo! the petals all scattered on the ground. Sir Bumble threw himself on his knees, and gathered them up; but one petal escaped, and changed into a mouse. Then Sir Bumble changed into a cat and caught the mouse. All this time the soldier's son and the Princess Blossom were waiting to see what would happen in the ogre's hut. Suddenly with a boom! bing! Sir Bumble arrived, shook his head, and said, "You two had better go home; you can't take care of yourselves." So he gathered together all the jewels and gold in one hand, and placed the Princess and the soldier's son on the other, and flew through the air to their home, where the poor mother, who had been living on one rupee, was delighted to see them. Then with a louder bing! boom! than ever, and without waiting for thanks, Sir Bumble whizzed out of sight, and was never seen any more.

But the Soldier's son and Princess Blossom lived happily ever after.

### LITTLE ANKLE BONE

Once upon a time there was a little boy who went to live with his aunt, and she set him to tend sheep. So all day long he tended sheep in the wilds and blew on his little shepherd's pipe from morn till eve. Now one day a great big wolf appeared and looked hungrily at the little boy, and then at his fat sheep, and said, "Little boy, shall I eat you or your sheep?"

Then the little boy answered, "I don't know, Mr. Wolf; I must ask my aunt."

<sup>1</sup> Indra, originally the beneficent god of heaven, giver of rain, etc., in the later Hindu mythology took only second rank as ruler of the celestial beings who formed the Court of Indra, which was synonymous with licentiousness. He is usually known now as the Raja Indra, of whose doings and court innumerable stories are told and even books written. For the purpose of folk tales he appears as in this one as a *deus ex machina* to explain the unexplainable and help the situation.

Folklore in the Punjab collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XII—1883, pp. 103-4.

So all day long he played on the pipe, and in the evening when he brought the flock home he asked his aunt, saying:—

“Auntie, dear, a great big wolf asked me to-day if he should eat me or my sheep. Which shall it be?”

Then his aunt looked at him and then at the fat sheep, and answered sharply,—“Why, *you*, of course!”

So the little shepherd went off with his flock next morning and blew away contentedly on his pipe till the wolf came, and then he said:—“If you please, Mr. Wolf, auntie says you are to eat *me*.”

Now the wolf, savage as he was, could not help having just a little pity for the tiny shepherd with his tiny pipe, and said kindly,—“Could I do anything for you after I have eaten you?”

“Thank you,” replied the little shepherd, “if you would be so kind after you have picked my bones to thread my ankle bone on a string and hang it on the wild oak<sup>1</sup> that weeps over the pond yonder, I shall be much obliged.”

So the wolf when he had eaten the little boy and picked the bones did as he had promised, and hung the ankle bone by a string to the branches of the oak, where it danced and swung in the sunlight, and the winds whistled softly through it.

Now one day three robbers who had just robbed a palace came by, and seating themselves under the oak began to divide the spoils. Just as they were beginning to divide the golden pans and the silk apparel and the silver vessels into three heaps a jackal howled, and at the same instant as luck would have it the Little Ankle Bone’s thread snapped and down it fell on the head of one of the thieves like a stone. This the thieves considered to be a warning,<sup>2</sup> and whispering to each other that they were discovered they fled, leaving the treasure behind them.

“Now,” said Little Ankle Bone to himself, “I shall lead a fine life.” So he went into the town and bought a new shepherd’s pipe, and played so sweetly on it that all the beasts of the field and forest and all the birds of the air and the very fishes in the pond flocked to hear him. Then Little Ankle Bone built marble basins round the pond for the animals to drink out of, and sat all day under the oak and played to them, and in the evening the does and the tigresses and the she-wolves all came to

<sup>1</sup> Its branches grow very low, frequently touching the ground.

<sup>2</sup> Dogs barking (or jackals howling) during an enterprise is as commonly considered a bad omen in India as in Europe.

him to be milked. Some of the milk he drank and the rest flowed into the pond until at last it became a pond of milk which grew bigger and bigger day by day.

At last an old woman passing by heard the shepherd's pipe and following the sound came to the pond of milk. She was wonder-struck, especially when Little Ankle Bone called out: "Fill your pitcher, mother, fill your pitcher. All may drink who come hither."

So she filled her pitcher with milk and went her way. And as she journeyed she fell in with the king of the country, who, while hunting in the forest, had lost his way. Seeing the old woman's pitcher he called out:—"Give me a drink of water, good mother, for I am half dead of thirst."

"It is not water, but milk, my son," replied the old woman, "which I got from the Milky Pond yonder."

"The Milky Pond," cried the king, and began enquiring. After a while he determined to go and see it for himself. When he reached it and saw all the animals drinking out of the marble basins and heard Little Ankle Bone playing ever so sweetly under the oak tree, he said aloud:—"I'll have the little piper if I die for it."

No sooner did Little Ankle Bone hear this than he set off at a run with the king after him. Never was there such a chase, for Little Ankle Bone hid himself in the thickest briars and thorns, and the king was determined to have the little piper.

At last the king caught him and instantly it began to thunder and lighten terribly. Whereupon Little Ankle Bone cried out:—

"Oh why do you thunder and lighten,  
dark heavens?

Your noise is as nothing to what will arise,  
When the does that are waiting in vain  
for the milking,

Find poor Little Ankle Bone reft from  
their eyes."

He wept and wailed so that the king, seeing he had but an ankle bone in his hand, let the little creature go back to the pond. And there Little Ankle Bone still sits under the oak tree playing on his shepherd's pipe, while all the animals of the forest come to listen and drink out of the marble basins.

## THE KING WITH SEVEN SONS

Once upon a time there lived a Raja who had seven sons, and he determined within himself that he would marry his seven sons into the family of any king who had seven daughters.

Now there lived at the same time a king who had seven daughters, and he, too, determined to marry his seven daughters into the family of any king having seven sons.

Accordingly both kings started a party of Brahmans bearing betrothal presents in search of what was wanted.<sup>1</sup> It so happened that the two parties met by chance on the banks of a running canal, and stopped there to bathe. They fell to talking to each other, and found out they were both bound on the same errand. They were delighted to find that God had caused such a meeting, as otherwise they might have had to go a long way without falling in with the object of their search, so without further ado, they exchanged the presents and went home to their respective masters, who were much pleased to learn that God had granted all their desires.

The king with the seven sons fixed the marriage day, prepared the procession, and was about to start, when his youngest son said—"Oh king, if we all go, some enemy may come in our absence, and take away our country from us." The king answered, "*We* are obliged to go, but *you* can remain if you like." So the lad stayed. Now one day as he was going into the palace for his dinner, his aunt said to him—"You give yourself as many airs as if you were going to marry Princess Panjphularani."

Whereupon he was vexed, and said, "I can't go now, but when the king returns I will certainly go and marry Princess Panjphularani, and if I don't bring her, then I'll never see your face again."

As he was coming out again, an old woman stopped him, and said, "My son, hear my words, for I am in great distress, and you are a Prince, and can help me." But he answered "My good woman, I can't stay. I have some very important business." Then said she, "You are in as great a hurry as if you were going to marry Princess Panjphularani."

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Folklore in the Punjab collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI—1882, pp. 73-6.

<sup>1</sup>. *Tika*, a present of rice, etc., taken by the *purohit* or family priest of the proposing family to the other. Properly, it is only the bride's father that sends the *tika* to the bridegroom. The *purohitis* give the *tika* to each other, not to the parents or family. Barbers are also employed for this purpose.

A little further on the road he saw four faqirs squabbling, and asked them the cause of their quarrel. They answered "Our guru is dead, and has left four things behind him: his wallet, his staff, his brass pot, and his sandals.<sup>1</sup> The prince said, "Are these things so precious that you should fight over them?"

Then they answered, "Oh Prince, the value of these things is very great. Listen: the first pocket of the wallet will make and produce anything the person who smells at it desires except that it cannot make a man, the second pocket can even make a man. The staff will bring a dead man struck by it three times to life again. The brass pot, if properly cleaned and washed, will give the person who cleanses it thirty-six kinds of sumptuous food.<sup>2</sup> And lastly, he who wears the sandals can go wherever he pleases."

Then the Prince thought and said "There are four of you, and four things: take one each and be satisfied." But they replied, "We can't agree about it, for when one wants a thing all the others want it also, do you decide."

So the Prince shot four arrows into the air in four directions, saying "Whoever first finds the arrows shall have first choice."

Now, as soon as the four faqirs ran off to get the arrows, the Prince seized the wallet, the brass pot and the staff, and slipping on the sandals, said, "Take me to the city of Princess Panjphularani," and sure enough thither they took him without delay.

Beneath the palace of the Princess an old woman was living and the Prince found lodging with her. Now one day when the old woman was away at work, the Prince felt hungry: so he bethought him of the brass-pot which he washed and cleaned. It immediately produced the thirty-six kinds of sumptuous food. While he was eating the old woman returned, so he gave her some to eat likewise, and no sooner had she tasted it than she said "My son, live with me always."

So the Prince remained with her, and every day he made the brass pot produce the thirty-six kinds of sumptuous food.

At last one day he asked the old woman who it was that lived in the palace above: but she said, "My son, wait till this evening: I will tell you then." So when the night came he asked her again, saying, "Mother, whose light is burning in the palace

<sup>1</sup> A wallet is made of patches and is used by religious mendicants to receive scraps of food, etc. They are looked upon by the vulgar as uncanny articles, whence the proverb "the faqir's bag contains everything," *i. e.* he can work miracles.

<sup>2</sup> This is supposed to be the limit of all the different kinds of food a Hindu can eat.

above?" Then the old woman answered, "My child, it is the light of Princess Phularani's face." "What!" cried the Prince, "is she indeed like that?" Then he put on his sandals, saying, "Carry me, sandals, into Phularani's presence," and lo and behold! there he was. When the Princess saw him she first smiled and then wept: and when he asked her the cause, she said, "I smiled first at your beauty; and then I wept because when the gardener's wife comes to weigh me tomorrow I shall weigh more than five flowers, for this reason, that till to-day I have never seen a man, and now I have seen you. My father will kill you when he hears of it." But the Prince comforted her saying "I can't be killed. I have only to put on my sandals, and they will take me away."

Sure enough, when the gardener's wife weighed the Princess next morning, she weighed a great deal more than five flowers; in fact she weighed down all the flowers in the garden. The gardener's wife was much surprised, but she said nothing that day. But the next morning all the flowers in the garden would not suffice to weigh down the Princess, so the third day the gardener's wife told the king this extraordinary circumstance. The king was very angry, and ordered that a ditch full of indigo should be made round the Princess Phularani's bed. This was done, and as the prince came every night to see the Princess he fell into the ditch, and his clothes were dyed blue. Then the Princess wept, saying "See! you are all blue. My father will find you out now and hang you in the morning." But the Prince comforted her, and leaving the palace he went to a washerman's house, gave him one hundred rupees, and said, "Wash these clothes at once."

Now there happened to be a marriage at the washerman's house, so instead of washing the clothes, he put them aside; and next day when the marriage procession was starting he remembered the Prince's grand clothes, and put them on his own son, so that he might look smart. Now as the procession went along the road, it was met by Princess Phularani's father; and no sooner did he see the youth dressed from head to foot in blue, than he said to his courtiers, "That must be the man who goes to the Princess." So they seized the washerman's son, and asked him whence he got his blue suit. He replied, "It is not mine, but belongs to a king's son. Come with me, and I will show him to you."

So he took them to where the Prince lived, who was seized and taken before the king. He did not deny that he was the

person who visited the Princess, but when the king asked him how he went, he answered "Up the stairs."

The king was very angry at this, imprisoned the guard for neglecting their duty, and ordered the Prince to be hanged.

The Prince begged to be allowed first to speak to his adopted mother, the old woman, and when his request was granted, he took her aside, and said, "Mother, when I am dead, come in the night, and carry off my body: then take my jogi's staff, and hit me with it three times, and I shall come to life again."

The old woman did as she was bid, and sure enough, the Prince came to life again. He then took his wallet, put on his sandals, and went to the Princess Phularani. Then he made her smell at the first pocket of the wallet, and lo! she turned into a monkey. The Prince then left the palace, and when next morning the gardener's wife came, she only found a monkey, which rushed at her, and tried to bite her.

Meanwhile the Prince took his brass pot, his staff and his wallet, and putting on his sandals went into the city, and cried out "Doctor! Doctor! If any man is changed into an animal I possess the power of giving him his proper shape once more."

Then some soldiers who knew what had happened at the palace took him to the king, who asked him "Is it true that you can transform a bewitched person into his own shape again? If someone were changed into a monkey, could you put him straight again?" The Prince answered "I could do it in six months, but no one must interrupt me." Then the king agreed, and ordered at the Prince's request that no one else should go into the palace for six months. Then the Prince went inside the palace and made the Princess smell the second pocket of the wallet. She immediately became a woman again. There they remained happily together for six months, and when the time was up the Prince went out and told the guard that the cure was complete. Then the king came with his ministers and courtiers, and all were delighted to see the Princess once again.

Then the king said to the Prince "Ask for your reward, and you shall have it." So the Prince said "Give me your daughter in marriage, for I also am a king's son."

To this the king agreed, and they were married at once. Taking elephants, horses and an army with them the Prince and his bride returned to his father's city, and the Prince said with great delight "After all I have married the Princess Panjphularani and have brought her home."

## THE WONDERFUL RING

There once lived a king who had two sons. Now when he died one of the sons squandered the treasure and money and jewels in such a ruinous way that his brother said, "Take your own share, and go." So he took his share and spent it all in a short time.

When he had nothing left he asked his wife to give him what she had. But his wife said, "What have you left me? I have nothing but this one small jewel, and take that if you will." So he took the jewel, sold it for 400 rupees, and taking the money with him set off to make his fortune in the world. On the way he met a man with a cat which he wanted to sell. So the king's son bought it for 100 rupees. By-and-by he met a man with a dog, and asked the price. "Not less than 100 rupees, said the man. Then the king's son bought the dog too for 100 rupees. Not long after this he met a man with a parrot. "How much do you want for that parrot?" asked he. "Not less than 100 rupees," answered the man. So the king's son bought that parrot also. He had now only 100 rupees left.

At last he met a jogi carrying a serpent, and said, "Oh jogi, what is the price of that serpent?" "Not less than 100 rupees," answered the jogi. So the spendthrift gave him 100 rupees and took the serpent.

He had now no money left at all and so was forced to work for his living, but the hard labour wearied him dreadfully, for he was a king's son and not accustomed to work. Now when the serpent saw this, it pitied him, and said, "Come, prince, with me to my house." So it took him to its house, saying, "Wait you here till I call my father." Then the serpent went to its father, saying—"Father, I was caught by a jogi, but a man who was passing by, bought me for 100 rupees, and has been kind to me; so I have brought him to see you."

"Bring him here," said the Snake-father. Then the snake went outside to the prince and said, "My father calls you. He will ask you three times what reward you desire for saving me, so mind you answer, 'I want nothing but your ring as a remembrance.'"

Sure enough the Serpent-father said at once, "And now, my prince, ask for anything you please, and it is yours." But the king's son said, "I want nothing, for I have everything God can

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give." Then the Serpent-father asked again, "Tell me what you desire, and it is yours." But again the prince answered, "I have everything that God can give." However, when he asked the third time, he answered—"I want nothing, but I should like your ring." At this the Snake-father became very sorrowful, but taking the ring off his finger said, "If I had not promised, I would have turned you into a heap of ashes on the spot, for you have asked for my most treasured possession. But to redeem my promise, take the ring and go."

Now when they got outside, the king's son said to the serpent's son, "What is the use of this ring to me, and why did you make me ask for it? It would have been better if I had asked for heaps of gold and silver instead of this ring."

But the snake said, "I will tell you how to use the ring. First make a holy place,<sup>1</sup> put the ring in the middle, sprinkle it with butter-milk, and then no matter what you ask for, your desire will be instantly granted."

Then the prince went on his way with the magic ring. By-and-by he came near a city, and said to himself, "I must see if what the serpent told me is true." So he made a holy place, put the ring in the middle, sprinkled butter-milk over it, and said "Oh ring, get me some sweetmeats for dinner."

No sooner had he said this than the sweetmeats appeared. Then the prince ate his dinner and set off to the city. There he heard a proclamation which set forth that whosoever should build a golden palace with golden stairs to it in the midst of the sea, in the space of a single night, should be given half the kingdom, and the king's daughter in marriage, but if he failed he should be beheaded.

So the prince went to the court and said, "Oh my lord, I will do this thing."

The king looked at him astonished, saying "How can you do such a thing? Many princes have tried, failed, and lost their lives. See, here is a necklace made of their heads. Do not be rash, but go."

However the prince was not to be persuaded. He said again, "I will do this thing."

Upon this the king ordered him to build it that very night, and placed sentries over him lest he should run away. When night came and the sentries saw the prince lie down to sleep

<sup>1</sup> *Chaunka*, a square place used by Hindus when cooking and worshipping. It is considered to be purified and thence sanctified by being plastered with cow-dung.

quietly, they said among themselves "How will he build the palace?"

Towards morning however the prince awoke, got up, and made a holy place, put the ring in it, sprinkled the butter-milk, and said "Oh ring, build the golden palace with the stairs in the midst of the sea." And immediately the palace appeared, stairs and all. The sentries seeing this ran and told the king, who came with all his court, and there sure enough was the golden palace with the golden stairs built in the midst of the sea. Then the king gave the prince half of the kingdom, and the princess for his bride on the spot; but the prince said, "I don't want your kingdom," and went off to the palace he had built in the sea. However, they sent the princess after him, and he took her into the palace, and there they lived together.

Now, when the prince went hunting, he took the dog with him, but left the cat and the parrot in the palace to amuse the princess.

On the day when he returned she was very sorrowful, and when he asked her what was the matter, she said, "I want to be turned into gold just as you made this palace of gold."

So to please her the Prince made a holy place, put the ring in it, sprinkled the butter-milk, and said, "Oh ring, turn my wife into gold." And immediately she became a golden princess. Now one day when the prince was out hunting, the princess washed her head, and while she was combing her hair, two golden hairs fell from her head.

She said to herself, "My golden hairs are of no use here, for there are no poor people to whom I might give them." So she made a cup of leaves, put the hairs into it, and let it float away over the sea.

At last it drifted to the shore where a washerman was at work. When he saw the cup of leaves with the golden hairs in it, he was very much pleased, and took it to the king of that country, who in turn showed it to his son, and the prince was so struck by it, that he declared he would marry the owner of the beautiful hair or die.

Saying this he lay down on a dirty old bed, and refused to eat or drink anything. Now when the king saw his son's state, he was very sorrowful and cast about how he could find the golden-haired princess, and called all his ministers and nobles to discuss the matter. They thought it over, and agreed that no one but a

wise woman could help. So the king called all the wise women of the city, and one of them said "I will do it on condition that the king grants me all I ask."

Then the wise woman had a golden barge made in which was a silver cradle swinging from silken ropes, took four boatmen, and set sail in the direction whence the cup of leaves had come; telling the boatmen to stop rowing when she put up her finger, but to go on rowing when she put it down.

In two or three months they reached the golden palace. Then the wise woman knew at once that this must be the place where the golden princess lived, so she put up her finger, and the boatmen stopped rowing. Then she went into the palace, and when she saw the princess sitting there, she went up to her swiftly, put her hands on her head,<sup>1</sup> and said, "I am your aunt."

But the princess said "I never saw you before." Then the wise woman answered, "My child, you were quite a baby when I used to visit my sister."

Then she sat down by the princess, and talked to her, and lived with her in the palace.

One day she asked the princess "Your palace is in the midst of the sea. Tell me how it is your husband comes and goes."

The princess answered "We have a ring which gives us anything we want, and by its help my husband comes and goes. He never forgets his ring, but takes it with him."

Then the wise woman said, "My daughter, supposing a tiger were to kill your husband, how would you get out of this palace?"

The princess thought there was some truth in what the woman said, so that night after her husband had come in, and they had had their supper, and were going to bed, she said to him, "Supposing a wild animal were to kill you when you are hunting, and you had the ring with you, there would be no one to look after me here, and I should die. So give me the ring." The prince thought there was reason in what the princess said, so before he went away the next day, he gave her the ring.

When the pretended aunt asked the princess if she had got the ring, she answered, "Yes, I have; see, here it is." Then the wise woman said to her, "Come and have a sail on the sea," and

<sup>1</sup> The Punjabi custom is when visiting relatives or friends for women to place their hands on girls', or children's heads before sitting down as a token of friendship and goodwill.

when they reached the bottom of the golden stairs, she said, "Let us have a sail in this golden boat." So they went into the golden boat, and then the wise woman raised her finger, and the boatmen began to row. The princess, when she saw this, wept and said, "What are you doing, aunt, and whither are you taking me?" But the wise woman slapped the poor princess several times till she was silent.

At last they arrived at the city, and the wise woman sent word to the king that the princess had come. Then the king sent his covered palanquin for her, and took her away. The king was very much pleased at having found the princess, and sent her to his son's palace, but she said, "I will only agree to marry your son after six months provided my own husband does not appear meanwhile." Then the prince thought this was not a very hard condition, for it was not likely her husband would turn up, and if he or any guardian did, they could easily be killed; so the princess lived in a palace by herself, and would not even look at the prince.

Meanwhile her husband had come back from hunting, but when he called out to the princess from the seashore, there came no answer. However, when he went into the palace, the parrot flew up to its master at once, saying, "The princess's aunt had carried her off by some trick, and the palace is empty."

Then the prince fell on the ground in a fit, and when he had recovered he got up again, and the parrot said, "Wait here, my prince, and I will fly away and find out where the princess is."

So the parrot flew from city to city and from house to house, till it found the princess at last in a king's palace, and recognized her at once by her golden hair.

It flew up to her, and said, "I have come to look for you. Where is the ring?"

Then the princess said, "It will be a difficult task to get back the ring, for the wise woman always keeps it in her mouth."

Now the cat had gone with the parrot to search for the princess, and she came forward and said, "I'll get the ring. My plan is this. Let the princess ask the wise woman for some rice for supper to-night; then let her leave some of it, and scatter it in front of a rat-hole. When the rats come to eat the rice, I will catch one, and put its tail up the witch's nose while she is asleep. Then she will sneeze, and the ring will fall out of her mouth." So they agreed on that plan, and the cat did as she had proposed, and brought the ring to the prince. He was overjoyed and

immediately made a holy place, and put the ring in it, sprinkled the butter-milk, and said "Oh ring! bring my wife to me." At the same moment the princess appeared, and was exceeding pleased to find her dear prince once more.

### PRINCESS PEPPERINA<sup>1</sup>

A bulbul<sup>2</sup> and its mate lived in a forest and sang all day. At last the bulbul said "Oh husband, I should like some green chillies." The obedient lover flew off at once to find some. He flew and he flew, and he flew: still not in one single garden could he find a single green chilli. There was no fruit at all on the bushes, or it was red. At last in a desolate place he came to a magnificent garden; the tall mango trees shaded it, and innumerable flowers and fruits were to be seen, but not a single sign of life: no birds, no beasts, no insects. The bulbul flew down into the middle of the garden, and lo! there grew a single pepper plant, and on it hung one single large green chilli that shone like an emerald. So the bulbul flew home to his mate, and said, "Come with me, dear wife, and I will show you the most beautiful green chilli you ever saw."

Now the Jinn<sup>3</sup> to whom the garden belonged was asleep in a summer house; he generally slept for twelve years at a time, and then remained awake for twelve years. So he knew nothing about it when the bulbul and his wife arrived in the garden and began to eat his beautiful green chilli. It so happened, however, that the time for his awakening was drawing near, so he grew restless and had bad dreams while the bulbul's wife was eating the chilli. At the end of that time she laid one green glittering egg on the ground beneath the pepper plant, and then she and her mate flew away.

Just then the Jinn woke, and, as usual, went at once to see how his pet pepper plant was getting on. He found it pecked to pieces. Great was his sorrow and dismay; he wondered what had done the damage, knowing well that neither bird, beast nor insect lived in the garden. "Some horrid creeping thing from the world outside must have stolen in while I was asleep," said he to himself, "I will search for it and kill it." So he began to

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<sup>1</sup> *Shahzadi Mircha*: Princess Pepperina from pepper.

<sup>2</sup> Bulbul: Arabic, nightingale, now a naturalized word all over India.

<sup>3</sup> Spirit.

search and found nothing but the shining glittering green egg. He took it to the summer-house, wrapped it up in cotton wool, and laid it in a niche in the wall.

Every day he looked at it, and sighed to think of his lost chilli; but one morning when he went to the niche, lo and behold! the egg had disappeared, and in its place sat the loveliest little maiden. She was dressed from head to foot in emerald green, and round her throat hung a single large emerald, shaped just like a green chilli. The Jinn, who was good-hearted and fond of children, was delighted, and made it the business of his life to tend the Princess Pepperina, for that she told him was her name.

Now when the Princess Pepperina was about twelve years old, it became time for the Jinn to go to sleep again, and he racked his brains, what was to become of the princess meanwhile. It so happened that a king and his minister were hunting in the forest, and came upon the garden. Curious to see what was inside, they climbed over the wall, and found the beautiful Princess Pepperina seated by the pepper plant. The young king fell in love with her at once, saying, "Come and be my bride."

"Not so," said the Princess modestly. "The Jinn who owns this garden is as my father, and you must ask him; unfortunately he has a habit of eating men sometimes." But when she looked at the young king her heart softened; she had never seen any one so handsome and beautiful; so she said "Hide yourselves in the garden, and when the Jinn returns I will question him."

No sooner had the Jinn entered the summer-house than he called out "*Ho, ho, ho, manushgandh! manushgandh!*"<sup>1</sup>

Then the Princess said: "Dear Jinn, eat me if you will, for there is no man here, only me." But the Jinn kissed her, and caressed her, saying "Dear life! I would sooner eat bricks and mortar." After that the princess asked him what would happen to her when he fell asleep, and the good Jinn became sad and troubled at the thought of her loneliness. At last he said: "If I could only marry you to some young man, but there are none hereabouts: besides, your husband must be as beautiful as you are, and it will be a hard task to find such a one." Then the Princess Pepperina was rejoiced, and said: "Do you promise to marry me to any one, provided he is as beautiful as I am?"

<sup>1</sup> "I smell a man, I smell a man." This is a common expression put into the mouth of Jinn, etc. in stories, and is the counterpart apparently of the English "Fee, fa, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman."

The Jinn promised faithfully; then the princess clapped her hands, and out of a thicket came the young king.

When he stood beside the princess holding her hand, even the Jinn was obliged to confess that never was such a handsome couple seen. So the marriage was performed hurriedly, for already the Jinn began to yawn; but when he said goodbye to the princess, he wept so that it kept him awake, and he followed them in his thoughts till he longed to see her face once more. Then he changed himself into a dove, and flew after her, and fluttered above her head. When he had had a good look at her, and saw she was happy, he flew back again to his garden, and yawned, but the green mantle of Princess Pepperina floated before his eyes and kept him awake. So he changed himself into a hawk, and flew after her circling round her head. When he had assured himself of her welfare, he flew back to his garden and tried to sleep. But the soft eyes of the Princess seemed to look into his, so that he could not close them. At last he changed himself into an eagle, and soared far up into the sky, till with his bright piercing eyes he saw the princess away on the horizon entering a king's palace. Then he was satisfied, yawned and went to sleep.

Now the young king continued passionately in love with his new wife, but the other women were jealous, especially after she gave birth to the most lovely young prince that ever was seen; so they thought and thought how they might kill her or lay a snare for her. Every night they came to the door of the Queen's room and whispered to see if she was awake, saying—"The Princess Pepperina is awake, but all the world is fast asleep." Now the emerald which the Princess wore round her neck, was a talisman, and always told the truth. So it answered at once, "Not so! The Princess is asleep; it is the world that wakes." Then the wicked women shrunk away, for they knew they had no power to harm the Princess so long as the talisman was round her neck.

At last, one day when the Princess was bathing she took off the talisman, and left it by mistake in the bathing place. That night when the wicked women came and whispered—"The Princess Pepperina is awake, but all the world is fast asleep," the truthful talisman called out from the bathing place: "Not so! The Princess is asleep, it is the world that wakes." Then knowing by the direction whence the voice came that the talisman was not in its usual place, they stole into the room softly, killed the young prince who was sleeping in his crib, cut him into little bits, then laid them in his mother's bed, and gently stained her lips with his

blood. Then they called the king, and said — “See, your beautiful wife is an ogre. She has killed her child in order to eat his flesh.” Then the king was very wroth, and ordered her to be first whipped out of his dominions, and then killed.

So the beautiful Princess Pepperina was scourged out of the kingdom and slain; but when she died her body became a high white wall, her eyes turned into liquid pools of water, her green mantle into stretches of soft grass, her long twining hair into creepers and tendrils, while her scarlet mouth and white teeth changed to a bed of roses and narcissus. Then her soul took the form of chakwa and a chakwi, and floating on the liquid pools mourned her sad fate all day long.<sup>1</sup>

Now after many days, the king, who was full of distress for the loss of his young wife, went out hunting, and found no sport anywhere.

By chance he came to the high white wall, and being curious to see what it encircled, he climbed over it, and saw the green grass, and twining tendrils, the roses and narcissus, and the liquid pools with the chakwa and chakwi floating on them, singing sorrowfully. The king was hot and tired, so he lay down to rest on the grass and listened to the cry of the birds. Then the chakwa told his mate the whole story of the wicked women’s treachery, and the king listened with a beating heart.

The chakwi wept, saying — “Can she never become alive again?”

“If any one will catch us and hold us close together,” answered the chakwa, “with heart to heart, and then sever our heads from our bodies at one blow, so that neither of us shall die before the other, the Princess Pepperina will take her own form again.” The king, delighted at the prospect of seeing his love again, called the chakwa and chakwi to him: they came quite readily, and stood heart to heart, while he cut off their heads with one blow of his sword. No sooner were their heads off than there stood the Princess Pepperina, smiling and beautiful as ever: but strange to say, the liquid pools and grass, the rose and narcissus remained as they were.

<sup>1</sup> *Chakwa* and *chakwi* — The ruddy goose or sheldrake, the Brahmani duck. Dr. Fallon, *New Hind. Diet.*, says of this bird: — “It is found all over India in the winter. It breeds on rocks on the borders of the great Himalayan lakes. The bird extends all over central Europe and the greater part of Asia and Northern Africa. The Indians have a legend that two lovers for some indiscretion were turned into Brahmani ducks, and condemned to pass the night apart from each other on the opposite banks of a river. All night long each asks the other in turn if it shall join its mate, and the other is always in the negative. Chakwa — Shall I come? No, Chakwi. Chakwi — Shall I come? No, Chakwa.”



Then said the king—"Come away home, I will never mistrust you again, and I will kill the wicked traitors who belied you."

But the Princess said, "Not so. Let me live here always."

Just then the Jinn woke and yawned. He knew at once by his art where the Princess was, so he flew to her, saying "Just so! and here I will live also."

So he built them a magnificent palace, and there the Princess remained and was happy ever after.

### BAINGAN BADSHAHZADI—PRINCESS AUBERGINE

Once upon a time there lived a poor Brahman and his wife, so poor that they very often did not know where to turn for a meal.

One day in the *jungal* he saw a Baingan plant.<sup>1</sup> He dug it up, planted it by his cottage door, and watered it. It grew wonderfully, and by and by bore one large baingan fruit.

At last a day came when there was absolutely nothing in the house to eat. So the Brahman said—"Wife, pick the baingan, and get it ready for dinner." Then the Brahmani took a knife and cut the baingan fruit off: as she did so she thought she heard a sort of moan come from the tree. However, she sat down, and began to peel the baingan, when she heard a tiny voice, say quite distinctly "Take care please! oh do take care! peel more gently, or the knife will run into me." The Brahmani was terribly perplexed, but she peeled as gently as she could, and when she got through the rind, lo! out stepped the most beautiful little princess you ever saw.

The poor couple had no children, so they were delighted, and cherished her as their own, giving her the name of Princess Aubergine. Now a king lived close by who had a beautiful wife and seven young sons. By chance a slave girl from the palace went into the Brahman's hut to ask for fire, and saw the beautiful Aubergine. So she went home, and said to her mistress, "Oh, in a hovel yonder, lives a princess so beautiful that if my lord the king clapped eyes on her for a moment, you would soon be forgotten." This put the queen, who was a sorceress, into a fearful rage, and she cast about in her mind, to lay a trap for the beauti-

Folklore in the Punjab collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IX—1880, pp. 302-4.

<sup>1</sup> *Baingan* is an egg-plant, in French *aubergine*. It is usually called *Brinjal* by Europeans in India.

ful Princess Aubergine. If she could only get her into the palace, she felt sure she could manage to destroy her. So she sent a message to say she had heard much of Princess Aubergine's beauty, and would like to see it for herself.

Now the Princess was vain of her beauty, so she, nothing loth, went to the palace. The queen pretended to be wonder-struck, and said, "Now you must never leave me. You are only fit to live in a palace. You are my sister henceforth." So the Princess Aubergine, only too delighted, stayed, and they exchanged veils and became sisters.<sup>1</sup>

But the queen saw at a glance that Princess Aubergine was no human being but a fairy. Therefore she laid strong spells upon her while she slept, and asked "Now tell me true, in what thing does your life lie?" Then the Princess, spell-bound, answered, "In the life of your eldest son. Kill him and I too will die." So the wicked queen went next day to where her young son was sleeping, and killed him with her own hand. Then she sent the slave girl to Princess Aubergine's apartments to see if she too were dead, but the girl returned, saying "She is alive and well, reading her *Kalam-ul-lah*."<sup>2</sup>

Then the wicked queen was greatly incensed, and laid stronger spells on the princess, asking her again—"Now tell me true, in what thing does your life lie?" And she answered, "In the life of your second son. Kill him, and I too shall die." So the queen next day killed her second son with her own hands, and sent the slave girl to see if Princess Aubergine was also dead. But the slave girl returned, saying "She is alive and well, reading her *Kalam-ul-lah*." Then the queen was enraged and threw stronger spells on the poor princess, and this time when the queen asked, "Now tell me true, in what thing does your life lie?" she answered "In the life of your third son," and so it happened every day, till all the queen's seven young sons were killed.

Then the queen summoned up all her art, and laid such strong spells on the Princess Aubergine that she could no longer resist them, but when the queen asked, "Now tell me true in what thing does your life lie?" she sobbed and moaned—"In a river far from here, lives a fish red and green. Inside the fish you'll find a bumble bee, inside the bumble bee, there is a tiny box,

<sup>1</sup> Amongst the women of the Punjab a formal exchange of veils and drinking milk together from one cup is the common way of swearing friendship.

<sup>2</sup> *Kalam-ul-lah*, that is God's word, the *Quran*. This is another proof of the mixture of Hinduism and Muhammadanism in the Punjab among the lower classes before noticed, for here we have a girl brought up in a Brahman's house reading the *Quran*!

and in that box is the 'nine-lakh' necklace.<sup>1</sup> Put it on and I shall die."

So when the king returned from hunting, and came to visit the queen, she began to sob and cry.

"What is the matter, my queen?" asked he.

"Oh my life is wasted. I had better die," sobbed she.

"Nay", answered he, "tell me your desire."

Then she told him her life was bitter to her unless she possessed the "nine-lakh" necklace.

"But where is it to be found," said he.

So she said: "In a river far from here lives a fish. In the fish is a bumble bee, in the bee a box, and inside the box the nine-lakh necklace."

Now the king was kind to his wife, and grieved sincerely for the loss of his seven young sons, who, the queen said, had died suddenly of an infectious disease, and being anxious to comfort her, he ordered all the fishermen in the kingdom to fish for the queen's red fish. And when it was caught he had it opened, and sure enough inside was the bumble bee, and inside the bee was the box, and inside the box the nine-lakh necklace. So the queen put it on and was happy.

Now when Princess Aubergine had told her secret, she knew her life was gone, so she returned sadly to the Brahman's hut. She told the kind old people she would soon die, and begged them not to burn or bury her body. "This is what you must do," she said, "dress me in my finest clothes, scatter flowers on my bed, and carry me to the wildest *jangal*. Place the bed on the ground, and build a mud wall round it so high that no one can see over. And leave me there.

So when she died (at the very moment the wicked queen put on the nine-lakh necklace) the old Brahmans did as Princess Aubergine had requested them. Then the queen sent the slave girl to the Brahman's house to see if Aubergine were really dead and buried. She returned saying "she is dead, but not burnt or buried; they have carried her out to the *jangal*, and built a mud wall round her bed and there she lies beautiful as the moon." The queen was not satisfied, but she could do no more.

Now the king grieved for his fine young sons, and every day to try and forget his grief he went out hunting. Then said the

<sup>1</sup> This fabulous necklace of nine lakhs of rupees appears to have no particular story attached to it, and is used in a vague way as we would use the "philosopher's stone." The necklace is well-known in the Punjab and occurs in many of the folk tales.

queen, "Oh my lord, hunt if it pleases you to the east, and to the west, and to the south, but towards the north do not hunt, or evil may befall you." This she said for fear he should find the dead Princess Aubergine who lay towards the north. Now one day the king hunted to the east and the west and the south, but no game was to be found, so, without thinking of what the queen had said, he wandered alone to the north. Soon he saw a curious high enclosure with no door, and he wondered what it was; he climbed over, and lo! there on a bed decked with flowers lay the Princess Aubergine beautiful as the moon, or lovelier than any living woman. He could not believe she was dead, he became so enamoured of her beauty that he stayed beside her all day, praying and beseeking her to open her eyes. At night he returned to the palace, but with the dawning he took his bow, saying he was going out hunting alone, and ran to Aubergine. So he passed day after day kneeling by her bed, weeping and beseeking her to rise. Now after nine months had gone by, he one day found the most beautiful little boy imaginable lying by the side of the dead Aubergine. He was astonished, but taking the infant in his arms, he cared for it all day, and at night gave it back to its dead mother. After some time it began to talk, and one day the king said to it "Is your mother always dead?" Then the child answered "No! at night she is alive, and cares for me as you do in the day." Then the king bid the child ask his mother what made her die. The next day the boy answered "It is the nine-lakh necklace which the queen wears. At night she takes it off, and hangs it up beside her. Then my mother becomes alive again, but dies when the queen puts on the necklace next morning." At this the king was puzzled, and said, "Ask your mother to-night whose son you are."

Next day the boy answered "Mother bids me say I am your son, sent to console you for the loss of the seven fair sons the queen fouly murdered for the sake of Princess Aubergine." Then the king was very wroth, and said to the boy, "Ask your mother to-night how I am to recover the necklace from the wicked queen, and punish her."

Next day the boy said—"I am the person to take the necklace from the queen, only do you carry me to the palace to-night." So the king carried his little son back to the palace, and told all the courtiers that the child was his heir. Then the queen became mad with jealousy especially when she thought of her own seven dead sons, and she determined to poison the child.

So she prepared some beautiful poisoned sweetmeats, and caressed the boy, saying, "Here my son, eat these." But the child said "No, I will not eat them unless you let me play with that beautiful necklace you wear round your neck."

The queen was determined to poison the child, and seeing no other way of inducing him to eat the sweetmeats, she gave him the necklace; no sooner had he got it than he fled away so fast that no one could catch him. He ran to where the Princess Aubergine lay dead, and threw it round her neck; she immediately became alive again, lovelier than ever. Then the king came and asked her to go to the palace as his wife, but she said "I will never come until the wicked queen is dead, she would only murder me and my son. This is what you must do. Dig a deep ditch on the threshold of the door, fill it with scorpions and snakes, fling the wicked queen into it, and bury her alive. Then I will walk over her grave and be your wife."

So the king had the ditch dug and filled with scorpions and snakes. Then he went to his wife, and said, "Come and see something wonderful;" but she suspecting a trick would not come. Then they seized and bound her and flung her into the ditch amongst the scorpions and snakes, and covered her over with earth. Then Princess Aubergine and her son passed into the palace over the grave, and lived happily ever after.

## THE KING OF THE CROCODILES

A common story among all Punjab women

Once upon a time a farmer went out to look at his fields along the side of the river, and behold! all his young green wheat was trodden down by the crocodiles which were lying about in the crops like great logs of wood. (It is a common idea in Punjab that crocodiles go into riverside fields, but I do not know that there is any real foundation for it.) He was very angry and bid them go away, but they refused.

Now every day when he went down to the riverside to look at his young wheat, he found the crocodiles lying in the fields. At last he got very angry and threw stones at them. Then when they all rushed at him he was frightened, and begged them not to hurt him.

"We will not hurt you, or your fields if you will promise to give your daughter in marriage to us," said the crocodiles.

Folklore in the Punjab collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IX—1880, pp. 280-2.

The farmer in a great fright promised he would do so, and the crocodiles disappeared into the river. But when he told his wife what he had done, she was extremely vexed, for their daughter was beautiful as the moon, and her betrothal to a rich house had already taken place. So she persuaded her husband not to think anything more about his promise. But when the time of the wedding came, the bridegroom died. However, the farmer's daughter who was so beautiful soon had another asking,<sup>1</sup> but this time her suitor fell sick of a lingering illness. So it was whenever she was sought in betrothal, till the farmer's wife acknowledged that the crocodiles were determined her daughter should fulfil the promise made to them.

By her advice, the farmer went down to the river to try and persuade the crocodiles to release him from his promise. They would hear no excuse, but threatened him with fearful punishments if he did not at once fulfil it. He went home sorrowful but determined not to yield.

The very next day his daughter broke her leg. Then his wife cried: "These demons of crocodiles will kill us all: better let us give up our dear daughter."

So the farmer went to the river bank, and told the crocodiles that they might send the bridal procession (*barat*) as soon as they chose. The very next day a number of female crocodiles arrived with *mahindi*<sup>2</sup> etc. for the *sanchit*<sup>3</sup> they brought beautiful clothes and behaved with the utmost politeness. But the beautiful bride wept, and wailed "Are you marrying me to the river?" she said, "I shall be drowned."

Soon after the bridal procession arrived, and such a *barat* was never seen. In the middle sat the King of the Crocodiles covered with jewels. Some crocodiles played instruments of music, some danced, some carried on their heads baskets full of food, sweets, garments and jewels.

At the sight of these magnificent things the bride's heart was comforted, but when they put her into the *dola*<sup>4</sup> to carry her

<sup>1</sup> Offer of marriage is the universal usage

<sup>2</sup> Henna used for staining the hands and feet.

<sup>3</sup> The custom is to send a body of friends from the bridegroom's house to the bride's with henna, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Dola* is a large palanquin, used for bridal processions; a smaller and better known kind is the *dholi* in common use. This is the *Dhooly* of the English. It should be remarked here that among all classes in the Punjab the distinction between the Musalman and Hindu religious is not broadly marked in matter of ceremony; and, especially among the Jat Zamindars, the marriage ceremonies now observed by Musalmans and Hindus are almost identical and mostly of Hindu

away, she wept bitterly. When they arrived at the river they took her out of the *dola*, and dragged her into the river. She screamed fearfully, but behold! no sooner had they touched the water, than the stream divided, and the whole party disappeared down a path which seemed to lead to the bottom of the river. The girl's father returned home very much astonished at what he had seen.

Some months passed by: the mother wept as she had no news of her daughter, and said, "She is drowned, I know she is, and your story about the stream dividing is not true."

Now when the King of the Crocodiles was leaving with his bride, he gave a brick to her father, saying "If ever you want to see your daughter, go to the river, throw this brick as far as you can into the current, and you will see what you will see." So the farmer said to his wife, "I will go and find out for myself if my daughter be alive or dead." So he went to the river, whirled the stone round his head, and threw it far into the stream. Immediately the water rolled back, and there was a dry path leading down to the bottom. It was bordered by flowers and looked so inviting, that the farmer never hesitated, but hastened along it. By and by he came to a magnificent palace, with golden roof, and shining diamond walls with gardens and trees all round them, and a sentinel was pacing up and down before the door.

"Whose palace is this, sentry?" asked the farmer. "The King of the Crocodiles'," answered the sentry. Then the farmer was overjoyed. "My daughter is surely here," thought he, "and what a splendid house she has got: I only wish her bridegroom were half as handsome." Then he said to the sentry, "My daughter married the King of the Crocodiles. Is she within? I want to see her." The sentry laughed; "A likely story indeed! What! my master married your daughter! Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Now the queen was sitting inside by the open window. She was as happy as the day was long, with her handsome husband, for you must know he only took the form of a crocodile when he went on shore. In his river kingdom he was a handsome young prince. So the young queen was so happy she had never once thought of her home; but now she heard a voice speaking

origin. This is to be observed in all their tales introducing marriages. Hindus also frequently have Musalman wives, who remain such all their lives without social degradation. The custom of Musalman kings taking Hindu wives is of course historical; witness Akbar.

to the sentry, and said: "It is my father's voice." She went to the window, and looked out, and lo! there was her father standing in his poor clothes in the splendid court. She longed to run and meet him, but she dared not, for her husband had bidden her never to go out of, or let any one into, the palace without his permission. So she cried—"Oh my dear father, only wait till the King of Crocodiles returns, and I will let you in."

The farmer was not surprised that his daughter was afraid of her terrible husband, so he waited patiently. Very soon a crowd of horsemen trooped into the court, and in the midst of them, the handsomest young prince you ever set eyes upon, dressed from head to foot in golden armour. They all wore armour, only while he wore gold, the rest wore silver. Then the farmer fell down before the prince, and said—"Cherish me, oh King, for I am a poor man, whose daughter was carried off by the terrible King of the Crocodiles." Then the prince smiled, and said: "I am the King of the Crocodiles, and your daughter is a good obedient wife." Then there were great rejoicings, and the farmer after a few days' feasting begged that he might take his daughter home, to convince her mother that she was well and happy. But the Crocodile King said, "Not so; if you like I will give you a house and land here, and you can dwell with us."

So the farmer said he would ask his wife, and returned home, taking with him several bricks to throw into the water and make the stream divide. Next time he travelled to the Crocodile Kingdom, he brought his wife with him, and by degrees they became so fond of the beautiful river country, that at last they went to live there altogether with their son and daughter, the King and Queen of the Crocodiles.



# FOLKLORE IN KASHMIR

## THE THREE PRINCES

Once upon a time there lived a king, who was celebrated for his learning, power and prowess. This king had three sons, who were all in every way worthy of such a father, for they were brave, clever, handsome, wise and good.

One day the king, wishing to arrange for a successor to his throne, summoned the wazirs and bade them to help him in the matter.

“Take the princes,” he said, “and examine them thoroughly, and the one whom you approve of I will appoint to sit on the throne after me.”

In the course of a few days the wazirs waited on His Majesty with their answer. The chief wazir was spokesman, and said:—

“Concerning the appointment of a successor let the king not be angry, and we will speak. Our counsel is to send the princes out into the world and bid them trade; and then decide that whichever of them amasses the greatest fortune shall be king.”

Upon this all the wazirs bowed their heads in token of their unanimous approval of the plan.

“Be it so,” said the king, and he immediately told his pleasure to the princes.

When everything was ready the three princes started. They all travelled together to the sea and there took ship for some foreign country. As soon as they reached their destination they parted; one went in this direction, another in that, and the third in another, but before they separated they each bound themselves to return by a certain time to the spot whence they had parted.

The two elder brothers went and traded with their money and gained immense wealth, but the youngest brother wandered along the sea-coast, encamping here and there as it pleased him.

One day, while he was meditating what he should do with his money, a *gosain*<sup>1</sup> came and stayed with him for three days. The

Kashmiri Story. By The Rev. J. Hinton Knowles, F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVI. Part CXCVIII July 1887, Page 219.

<sup>1</sup> A Hindu Saint; a holy person.

holy man was so pleased with the respect and attention shown to him, that he determined to reward the prince.

"I am very grateful for your piety and goodness," he said. "Tell me your name, whence you came, and whither you are going." The prince explained everything to him.

"I understand," said the *gosain*. "You must stay here. Do not go any further, but remain here till your brothers return. Send your servants into the city to buy as much corn as possible, and when they bring it throw some of it into the sea every day, till it is all gone. Then wait and you shall reap an abundant harvest." Saying this the holy man blessed him and departed.

The prince acted according to the advice of the *gosain*. He bought an immense quantity of corn and had it piled up near his encampment. Every day for about six months he threw a certain measure of it into the sea, till the whole was spent. "Now," thought he, "I shall have my reward." He waited in great expectation for several days, but nothing appeared. "The *gosain* has deceived me," he said to himself. "I am a ruined man! Why was I so foolish as to listen to his wicked advice? What will my father and my brothers say to me when they hear that I have thrown all my money into the sea? How they will laugh at me! I shall never be able to show my face to them again! Ah me! Ah me! I will now go to another country. The day after to-morrow I will leave this cursed place." But these words were hastily spoken. When all was ready and the prince and his retinue were about to start, something happened. The corn that the prince had thrown into the river had been eaten by a big fish,<sup>1</sup> and as the news of the prince's liberality spread far and wide in the waters, shoals upon shoals of fish had come together to the place. The king of the fish had also come with them: but at last the supply had suddenly stopped!

"Why is this?" the king-fish asked. "We have been receiving corn for the last six months, and now for several days we have had nothing! Has the prince been rewarded for his kindness to us?"

"No," said the whole company. "We have not received any order to that effect."

"Then hear the order," said the king-fish. "Go immediately and recompense the prince. Each one of you take a ruby and give it to him."

<sup>1</sup> Kashmiri, *mateh* (Sanskrit *mateya*) a fish; the fish avatara of Vishnu.

Away went all the company of fish and deposited each a ruby on the shore near to the place where the prince was standing and looking mournfully across the sea. Attracted by the great noise in the water the prince turned towards them and saw the long row of rubies on the sand. "Wicked man that I am!" he exclaimed, "why am I thus rewarded? My want of faith does not deserve this." Saying this he at once gave an order to have all the preparations for departure stopped.

"I shall remain here," said he, "till my brothers return. Pitch the tents again."

While the encampment was once more being got ready he and his head man were occupied in collecting the long row of precious rubies that the fish had brought.

"Be careful," he said to the man, "that nothing of this matter reaches the ears of the people of the city or any other person whom we may meet. Let no mention of it be made to my brothers either. I charge you: see to it, that you fulfil your trust. You and the rest of my retinue shall not go unrewarded if you obey me."

The man promised, and every day after this, as long as the prince was in that place, the fish were daily fed with abundance of corn.

Now in order that his valuable treasures might not be discovered the prince had them placed in cakes of dung, that were dried in the sun; and after a while the day arrived for him to leave, so that he might reach the place where he was to meet his brothers by the appointed time. He was so punctual that he arrived there a day or two earlier than the other two princes. "Well, what luck?" they said to each other, when they all met.

Said the eldest prince, "I have been trading as a cloth merchant and have gained such and such wealth," mentioning an enormous sum of money.

"Well done!" exclaimed the other two brothers.

Said the second prince, "I have been trading as a *baniya*<sup>1</sup> and have amassed such and such money," also mentioning an enormous amount.

"Well done!" exclaimed the other two brothers.

Then spoke the youngest prince. "You see, O brothers," said he, "my fortune," and he pointed towards several loads of dung-cakes!"

"Hie! Hie!" cried the other two princes. "What could

<sup>1</sup> A shop-keeper, money-changer, etc.

have made our brother choose such a disgusting and unprofitable business?"

As soon as possible a ship was hired and the three princes with their retinues set sail for their own country. Now it happened that a most foolish arrangement had been made about wood for the voyage. Before they had got half way they had run short of that indispensable article, and therefore the two elder princes and the captain of the ship came to the youngest prince and begged him to allow them to use some piles of his dung-cakes, promising to pay him as soon as they landed.<sup>1</sup> The youngest prince consented, and the next morning gave them sufficient for the rest of the voyage, after having taken out the ruby that was in each. Thus in due time the ship arrived at her destination, and the royal passengers disembarked.<sup>2</sup> They immediately started for their father's palace, and the day after their return the king summoned the whole populace to a grand meeting to witness the appointment of his successor to the throne.

Accordingly there was an immense gathering. The king attended by all his court sat in state, and the people crowded round on all sides. Then the princes were summoned before his Majesty and the people, to show their wealth and tell their experience. First came the eldest prince, who in a loud voice declared what he had done, and what fortune had attended him. Afterwards came the second prince and did likewise. And when the people heard their words they cried, "Let him be king. Let him be king." But when the youngest prince appeared and showed his piles of dung-cakes the king and all the people laughed at him and told him to go.

"Be not hasty, O my father", he said; and then he turned and frowned on the people. "You laugh," he said to them all, "but presently you will repent of your laughter. See, in each of these dung-cakes there is a ruby, whose price is beyond value." And he broke open one of the cakes and let fall a ruby. "Look here, look here, look here," he shouted several times and each

<sup>1</sup> *Labar*, a dung-cake. Others with a hole in the middle are called *munar*, which are used chiefly by porters. Poor people in the valley burn the ordure of cattle for cooking their food and heating fish, *lagors* (brassiers); as any person will quickly discover, who happens to approach their quarters about meal-time. The ordure is collected, made into cakes, and dried in the sun.

<sup>2</sup> It is enquired *ante*, Vol. XV. P. 157; Why are Kashmiris so fond of "ship" stories?

(1) Besides the extensive communication carried on by boat in the Kashmir Valley is responsible for the idea, (2) Undoubtedly, too, the Sindbad tales have somewhat influenced the popular imagination, leading and repeating them. Very few Kashmiris have seen the sea or the ocean, and they often enquire about the *bad samandar* (great sea) and the *bad-dal* (the great

time broke one of the dung-cakes and let fall a ruby! Then all the people were amazed.

"I have never seen such rubies before," said the king. "Truly their value cannot be estimated. This my youngest son has got more wealth than the other two princes and I and all the people put together. He shall be king."

"Yes, yes. Let him be king!" was the reply of the whole assembly, and after this they were dismissed to their homes.

Not long afterwards the old king died and was cremated; and the youngest prince reigned in his stead, while the other two princes were appointed to the two chief positions under him.<sup>1</sup>

### THE TWO BROTHERS

Once upon a time there was a king, who had two young sons, that sat in school and learnt what king's sons ought to know. But while they were still learning, their mother the queen died, and their father the king shortly after married again. Now the new step-mother behaved as step-mothers usually do, and began by degrees to ill-use the poor boys. First she only gave them barley-meal cakes to eat, and then she took to making even these without salt. Then the meal was full of weevils and bad, and so on, till at last she took to beating them, and when they cried she told the king that they were peevish and sullen, so he beat them again.

At length the lads agreed that it was high time to seek for some remedy.

"Let us go into the world," said the younger one, "and earn our own living."

"Yes," answered the elder, "let us go at once, and never again eat bread under this roof."

"Not so, brother," replied the younger, who was a youth wise beyond years, "never leave home with an empty stomach."

So they ate their bread, bad as it was, and both mounting on one pony set out to seek their fortune.

Now, after they have journeyed some way into the country, they dismounted under a tree, and sat down to rest. By chance a *maina* and a parrot were resting on the branches, and they marvelled as to who should have the best place.

<sup>1</sup> The younger or youngest son is sometimes most fortunate—perhaps as a recompense for his position in the family, which is one of inferiority and therefore of poverty (in some cases).  
Folklore from Kashmir collected by Mrs. F. A. Stiel, with notes by John A. C. Tamm, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI—1882, pp. 122-3.

"I like your impertinence," said the *maina*, "pushing and striving to get to the top branch. Why! I am so important a bird, that if any man were to eat me he would become a minister."

"Make room for your betters," replied the parrot calmly, "if any man eats me he will become a king."

Hearing these words the brothers instantly drew out their cross-bows and aimed at the same time and the two birds fell dead. But the brothers were so fond of each other that neither would allow he had shot the parrot, even when the birds were cooked and ready to eat the lads were still disputing as to which bird they should eat, till the younger brother said, "we are only wasting time, you are the eldest and must take your right, for it was your fate to be born first."

So the elder brother ate the parrot and the younger the *maina*, and then they mounted their pony and rode away. They had gone but a short way, however, when the elder brother missed the whip, and saying he had left it under the tree proposed to go back and find it.

"Not so," said the younger prince, "you are king, I am only the minister: it is my place to go and fetch the whip."

"Be it so," said the elder, "but take the pony, for then you will return the more quickly. I meanwhile will go on foot to the town: meet me there."

The younger brother accordingly rode back to the tree, but the snake-demon to whom it belonged had returned to his home in the interval. No sooner had the prince arrived there than the serpent flew at him and killed him. So there the poor prince lay dead at the foot of the tree.

Meanwhile the elder brother arriving in the town found it in a state of great commotion. The king had recently died, and though all the inhabitants had marched past the sacred elephant in file, the animal had not elected any one amongst them to the vacant throne by bowing down before and saluting the lucky individual as he passed. For in this manner were kings elected in that country.<sup>1</sup> So the people were much puzzled what to do, and orders had been issued by the Council that any stranger entering the gates was forthwith to be taken before the elephant to see if the particular animal preferred an alien to a citizen.

<sup>1</sup> This must be the white elephant, the legend about which is this:—He is the representative of the God Ganesa and as such he was kept by Rajas as a pet, and fed to benefit every thing with which he came in contact. After this he would go down on his knees to the Raja and saying his thanks for his food, this was taken as a sign that he acknowledged his royalty. He was never ridden upon by the Raja himself.

No sooner, therefore, had the elder prince entered the gates than he was seized by the guards and dragged without much ceremony, for there had been so many disappointments, before the sacred elephant. But this time there was no mistake, and the instant the animal caught sight of the prince it went down on its knees, and began saluting with its trunk in a great hurry. So the prince was acknowledged as the rightful king, and there were great rejoicings all over the city.

All this time the younger prince lay dead under the tree, and the king, his brother, after waiting and searching for him in vain, gave him up for lost and appointed another minister. But it so happened that a wise man and his wife came to the tree to fetch water from the fountain which flowed from its roots, for they being wise folk were not afraid of the serpent. Now the wise woman saw the dead lad and thought she had never seen any one so handsome in her life. She therefore took pity on the lad, and said to her husband—

“You talk much of your wisdom and power, show it me by bringing this dead lad to life.”

At first the wise man refused, saying it was beyond his power, but when his wife mocked at him, and called him a humbug, he got angry, and said—

“You shall see that though I cannot myself bring the boy to life, I have power to make others do the deed.”

Then he bid his wife fill her *lota*<sup>1</sup> at the fountain and lo! all the water in the spring ran into the little *lota* and the fountain was dry. She was much astonished, but the wise man said—

“Bring the *lota* with you, and come home, you shall see what you shall see.”

Now all the serpents that lived in the spring were dreadfully uncomfortable when it dried up, for serpents are thirsty creatures. They bore it for three days, but after that they went in a body to the wise man, and said, —

“Tell us what you want, but give us back our spring.”

Then the wise man promised to do so if they would restore the prince to life. This they gladly did, and then the wise man emptied the *lota*, and all the water flowed back to the spring, and the serpents drank and were happy.

The prince on coming to himself fancied he had fallen asleep, and fearing lest his brother should be angry at the delay seized the whip, mounted the pony which all this time had been quietly

<sup>1</sup> Small brass pot used for drinking purposes all over India.

grazing beside him, and rode off. But in his hurry he took the wrong road, and so it happened that he arrived at quite a different city from the one of which his brother had been made king.

It was late in the evening when he arrived, and having no money in his pocket he was at a loss how to get anything to eat. At last he saw a good-natured looking old woman herding goats, and said to her,—

“Mother, give me something to eat, and you may have this pony too, for it is yours.”

The old woman agreed, and the prince went to live in her house. After a few days he noticed that this old woman was sad, and so he asked her what was the matter.

“The matter is this, my son. In this kingdom there lives a demon, which every day devours one cake, one goat, and one young man, and in consideration of receiving this meal daily he leaves the other inhabitants in peace.

Therefore every day his meal has to be prepared, and it falls to the lot of every inhabitant to prepare it in turn on pain of death. It is my turn to-day. The cake I can make, the goat I have, but where is the young man?”

“But why does not someone kill this demon?” asked the young man.

“Many have tried, and the king has promised half his kingdom and his daughter in marriage to the victor, but all have failed,” answered the old woman, weeping bitterly.

“Don’t cry, mother,” said the prince, “you have been kind to me. Now I will repay your kindness by making part of the demon’s dinner.”

At first the old woman would not hear of such a thing, but the prince cheered her up, saying “Don’t fear for me, Goody, only make the cake as big as you can, and give me the finest and fattest goat you have.”

Accordingly in the evening the prince leading the goat and carrying the cake, the biggest ever seen, went to the tree where the demon came every evening to receive and devour his accustomed dinner. The prince tied the goat to a tree and laid the cake on the ground, but he himself stepped outside the trench, which was dug about the tree, and waited. Very soon the demon appeared, a most frightful monster. Now, as a rule, he generally ate up the young man first, just to slake his appetite, but that evening, seeing the biggest cake and the



primest and fattest goat he had ever set his eyes on, he could not resist gobbling them up, and just as he was finishing the last mouthful and was looking about for his man's flesh, the prince sprang at him sword in hand. They fought terribly, but at last the prince killed the demon, who, owing to his dinner, was not nearly so active as usual. He then cut off the demon's head, tied it up in his handkerchief to take as a trophy, and being tired and weary with the combat he lay down and fell fast asleep.

Now every morning a scavenger came to the demon's tree to clear away the remains of last night's feast, for the demon was mighty particular, and could not bear the smell of old bones. When the scavenger saw no bones in the usual place he was much astonished, and began to search for them, and there fast asleep he found the prince with the demon's head by his side.

"Ho! ho!" said the scavenger, "now's my chance!"

So he quietly lifted up the prince, put him into a clay-pit close by, and covered him all over with clay. Then he took the demon's head, and went to the king, and claimed half the kingdom and the princess as the reward for slaying the demon.

The king thought something was wrong, but being bound by his promise gave up half his kingdom, making an excuse about his daughter, who, he said, was not desirous of marriage for a year or two longer.

Now it so happened that some potters came to get clay that day from the clay-pit, and they were mightily astonished to find a handsome young man still breathing, but insensible, hidden under the clay. They took him home, and gave him to the women, who soon brought him round. He was grateful for their kindness, and hearing from their gossip how the strange scavenger had stepped in and defrauded him, he agreed, having nothing better to do, to stop with the potters and learn their trade. This he did so quickly and so cleverly, that the potters soon became famous for the beautiful patterns and excellent workmanship of their wares; so much so that the story of the young potter found in a clay pit became noised abroad. Nevertheless the young prince, knowing that he had no proof to bring forward in support of it, kept the history of his former life and conquest of the demon to himself, never breathing a word of it to any one. However, when the rumour of the wonderful young potter found in a clay pit reached the Scavenger King's ears, his bad conscience told him at once who it was, and he determined in some way or other to get rid of the young man.

Now just at that time the fleet of merchant vessels<sup>1</sup> which annually came to the city bringing merchandise and spices were detained in harbour by calms and contrary winds. So long were they detained that the merchants feared the delay would prevent their returning within the year. This was a serious matter, so that auguries were consulted and the answer given was that until a human sacrifice was made the vessels would be detained in the port. When this answer was reported to the Scavenger King he saw his opportunity, and said to his courtiers—"Be it so. But don't let us sacrifice a citizen. Give the merchants that good-for-nothing potter lad, who comes no one knows whence, and has no relatives."

The courtiers praised the kindness of the Scavenger King, and the prince was handed over to the merchants, who took him on board their ships and prepared to kill him. But he begged and prayed them to wait till evening on the chance of a breeze coming up, but none came. Then the prince took a knife and cut his little finger, and as the first drop of blood flowed forth the sails of the first ship filled with a strong wind, and she glided swiftly over the bar. With the second drop the second ship did likewise, till the whole fleet were sailing before the breeze. The merchants were enchanted, and thinking that in the prince they had a very valuable cargo indeed, they took great care of him, and treated him well.

At length they arrived at another city, which happened to be the very one where the prince's brother was the king, and while the merchants went to the bazar they left the prince to watch over the vessels. Now, weary of waiting and watching, the prince, to amuse himself, began to make a model of his father's palace out of the clay on the shore beside him, and growing interested in his work, he modelled and modelled away till he made the most beautiful thing you ever saw. There was the garden, the king on his throne and the courtiers sitting around. There were too the king's sons learning in school and even the very pigeons fluttering round the tower.

When it was finished the prince looked at it sighing till the tears came into his eyes. Just at that moment the minister's daughter surrounded by her women passed that way. She was wonderstruck at the beautiful model, but still more so at the handsome young man who sat sighing beside it. She went

<sup>1</sup> This is the part of the tale that seems doubtful as genuine Kashmiri Folklore. It is hard to see how the mountaineers got hold of a sea tale such as this now becomes, except from books.

straight home, locked all the doors, and refused to eat, and when her father sent to know what was the matter, she said—"I will neither eat nor drink till you marry me to the young man on the sea-shore, who sits sighing beside a king's palace made of clay."

At first the minister was very angry, but seeing his daughter was determined, and that she would starve herself to death if he did not give way, he consented at last to the marriage. However, he privately told the merchants to throw the young man overboard after a day or two and then to bring his daughter back.

Accordingly, a few days after the prince and the minister's daughter had sailed, the merchants pushed the young man overboard, as he was sitting near the prow. It so happened that from the minister's daughter's window in the stern a rope was hanging, and as the prince drifted past he clung to it and climbed up into her cabin. She hid him in her box, where he lay safely concealed. Every day when they brought her food she refused to eat, saying, "Leave it with me. Perhaps I may be hungry by and by." Then she shared the meal with her husband.

The merchants, thinking they had managed the affair very well, took the minister's daughter and her box back to her father, who was very much pleased, and rewarded them handsomely. She too was quite content, and letting her husband out of the box dressed him up as a woman-servant, so that he lived quite securely in the palace. Now the prince had of course told his wife his whole story, and she in return told him how the king of that country had been elected and how she was convinced he was none other than her husband's brother.

Now every day a bouquet was sent to the king from the minister's garden, and one day in the evening, when the prince in his disguise was walking about the flower-beds, he saw the gardener's daughter making up the bouquet, and said to her,—  
"I will teach you a new fashion."

Then he took the flowers, and tied them together as his father's gardener used to do.

The next morning when the king saw the bouquet, he turned pale, and said to the gardener, who trembled all over with fright—"Who made the bouquet?"

"I did, sire," said the gardener.

"You lie, knave," cried the king, "but go, bring me tomorrow just such another bouquet. If not, your head shall be the forfeit."

Then the gardener's daughter came weeping to the disguised prince, and telling him all, said—"Of your goodness make me yet another bouquet, or my father's head will be cut off."

This the prince willingly did, for he was certain now that the king was his brother, but in the bouquet he put a piece of paper with his name on it.

Now when the king saw the paper, he said to the gardener—"Only tell me the truth and I will forgive you."

Then the gardener confessed that one of the women servants in the minister's palace had made it for his daughter.

The king was much astonished, but bid the gardener's daughter take him with her when she went into the minister's garden to cut flowers. The moment the disguised prince saw the king he recognised him, and when the king asked him where he had learnt to tie flowers in that fashion, he replied by telling the history of the brothers as far as the meeting with the *maina* and the parrot. Then he stopped, saying he was tired that day, but would continue the next. The king was on pins and needles of excitement, but was obliged to wait.

The next day the prince told about his conquest of the demon and delivery by the potters. Then he said he was tired, and the king was obliged to wait yet another day, and so on for seven days, till the prince came to his being saved by the minister's daughter, and being disguised as a woman. Then the king fell on his brother's neck and they rejoiced greatly. And when the minister was told of his daughter's having made such a good marriage, he was so pleased that he voluntarily resigned his office in favour of his son-in-law. So what the *maina* and the parrot said came to be true, and the one brother became king and the other minister.

The first thing the king did was to send ambassadors to the court of the king who owned the country where the demon was killed, telling him the truth of the story, and how his brother being minister did not want half the kingdom. At this the king of that place was so delighted that he begged the minister Prince to accept his daughter as a bride. But the prince said, "No, I am married already, but give her to my brother."

So there were great rejoicings, and the Scavenger King was put to death, as he very well deserved.

THE BEAR'S BARGAIN<sup>1</sup>

Once upon a time a very old woodman with his very old wife lived in a hut close to the Lambardar's<sup>2</sup> orchard, so that the boughs of the fruit trees hung over the cottage yard, and if any of the ripe fruit fell into it, the old couple were allowed to eat it.

Now one day the old woman cooked some *khichri*, and the *khichri* smelt so good that the old man wanted to eat his dinner at once.

"Not till you've brought me a load of wood," said the old woman shaking her head, "after that we shall see."

So the old man set off to the forest and began to ~~hack and hew~~ with such a will, that he soon had quite a large bundle, and already seemed to smell the *khichri*. Just then a bear happened to pass by. Now, as a rule, bears are good enough fellows, but dreadfully inquisitive; so after saying "*As salam alaikum*" the bear asked the woodman what he was doing with such a very big bundle of wood.

"Oh, it is for my wife," said the woodman. "The fact is," he added confidentially, smacking his lips, "she has made such a fine *khichri*, and if I bring a large bundle of wood, she is sure to give me a large share of it. Oh, you should just smell it or taste it."

At this the bear's mouth began to water.

"Would she give me any if I brought a load of wood?" asked he.

"Perhaps if you brought a very big one," answered the woodman.

"If I brought six *mans*?"<sup>3</sup> "No, not six," answered the crafty woodman, "let us say ten."

"Ten *mans* is an awful lot," sighed the bear.

"There's saffron in the *khichri*," said the woodman.

The bear licked his lips. "Very well, go home and tell your wife to keep me some of the *khichri*. I'll be with you in a trice."

"Away went the woodman gleefully to his old wife, and told her how the bear has promised him ten *mans* of wood for a dish of *khichri*.

Folklore from Kashmir collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI—1882, pp. 340-1.

<sup>1</sup> Told by a Kashmiri boy amid roars of laughter round the camp fire at the Tar Sar Lake.—F. A. S.

<sup>2</sup> *Lambardar*—A village headman. He is an English institution connected principally with the collection of revenue.

<sup>3</sup> The *man* is roughly 80 lbs.

She agreed with him that he had made a good bargain, and so they sat down to dinner with the *khichri* in a brass pot between them.

"Remember to leave some for the bear," said the woodman to his wife, speaking with his mouth crammed full.

"Certainly, certainly," said she, helping herself to another mouthful.

Then after a time she said, speaking with her mouth full—"My dear, remember the bear."

"Certainly, certainly," said he, taking another handful.

So it went on, till there was not even a grain of rice left in the pot.

"What's to be done now," said the woodman, "it's all your fault for eating too much."

"I like that," answered his wife, "why you ate twice what I did, men always eat more than women."

"No, they don't."

"Yes, they do."

"Well, it's of no use quarrelling about it," said the woodman, "the *khichri*'s gone and the bear won't give us wood."

"Let us lock up everything there is to eat in the house, and go and hide ourselves in the garret," said the wife, "then the bear may think we have gone out. He'll rampage a little, no doubt, but ten to one he'll leave the wood, because it will be too much trouble to take it away."

So they locked up all the food there was in the house and hid themselves in the garret.

The bear all this time had been toiling and moiling away at his bundle of wood, which took him much longer to collect than he expected. However, he arrived at last at the woodman's hut, threw down the wood with a crash, and called out—"Here, good folk, is your wood: now give me my *khichri*."

But no one answered.

"Perhaps they have gone out," thought the bear, "and I shall find the *khichri* left for me inside."

So he lifted the latch and went in, but never a grain of *khichri* or anything to eat did he find, though he poked about everywhere. Only the empty *khichri* pot, which smelt nice, was there. That was all. The bear flew into a great rage, and would have taken his bundle of wood away again, but that it was so heavy.

"I'll take this at any rate," said he, seizing the *khichri*-pot, "for I'll not go empty-handed."

But as he left the house he caught sight of the *Lambardar's* fruit trees hanging over the edge of the yard. His mouth watered at the sight of some golden pears, the first ripe ones of the season, so he clambered over the wall and up the tree, gathered the biggest and the ripest he could find, and was just going to eat it, when he thought—"If I take these ripe pears home I shall be able to sell them for ever so much to the other bears. I can eat the unripe ones just as well. They are not really bad, though somewhat sour."

So he went on gathering, eating the green unripe ones, and putting the golden ripe ones into the *khichri*-pot to take home with him, till the pot was quite full. Now all the while the woodman's wife had been watching the bear through a crevice and holding her breath for fear he might find her out, and she held her breath so long, that, being asthmatic and having a cold in her head, she suddenly gave the most tremendous sneeze you ever heard.

The bear thought somebody had fired a gun at him, dropped the *khichri*-pot, and fled to the forest. As luck would have it, the pot fell into the cottage yard, so the woodman and his wife got the *khichri*, the pot, and wood, and the *Lambardar's* pears, but the bear got nothing but a stomach-ache from eating unripe fruit.

## THE TIGER AND THE FARMER'S WIFE

One day a farmer went to his field to plough with his bullocks. He had just yoked them when a tiger walked up to him, and said, "*As salam alikum*,<sup>1</sup> good morning."

"*W'alaikum as salam*, good morning," said the farmer trembling all over, but thinking it best to be polite.

"The Lord has sent me to eat your bullocks," said the tiger; "so like a God-fearing man obey orders and hand them over to me."

"What you say is curious," answered the farmer, whose courage, now that he saw it was a question of gobbling bullocks and not

Folklore from Kashmir collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI—1882, pp. 319-21.

<sup>1</sup> *As salam 'alaikum*, etc. "The Peace (of God) be upon you" is the ordinary Muhammadan morning salutation, always answered by *w'alaikum as salam*, "And upon you be the Peace (of God)." I remember an amusing corruption of it used to be current in the Circus in England after the Sikh wars. The hero would come into the arena, flourish his whip and shout, "Salem, I come" (*sic*. Salem pronounced as the biblical name) "meet me at noon in the Khyber pass"; I have since learnt that "Salem I come" is "*as salam 'alaikum*."

men, had returned, "because the Lord sent *me* here to plough my field and for that I must have bullocks. Are you sure you are not making a mistake?"

"I fancy I know best what the Lord told me," growled the tiger, showing his teeth, "so be quick and give me those bullocks."

But the farmer begged and prayed till at last he promised that if the tiger would spare the bullocks, he would go back to his house and fetch him a fine young milch cow instead.

To this the tiger agreed: so taking his oxen with him the farmer returned to his house. His wife, who was a very clever woman, seeing him return so early, called out—

"What, Lazybones, back again from the fields, and *my* work but just begun."

Then the farmer explained to her about his meeting with the tiger, and how to save the bullocks he had promised to give the milch cow. At this the wife began to cry, saying—

"A likely story, saving your bullocks at the expense of my cow! Where will the children get milk, and how can I cook without any butter ghi?"

"All very fine, wife," said the farmer, "but can we make bread without any corn? and how can you have corn without bullocks to plough the field? It is better to do without milk than without bread, so make haste and untie the cow."

"You are gaby," wept the wife, "if you had an ounce of sense in your brains, you'd think of some plan to get out of the scrape."

"Think yourself," cried the husband in a rage.

"Very well," replied the wife, "only if I think, you must obey; so go back to the tiger, and tell him the cow wouldn't come along with you, but that your wife is bringing it."

The farmer accordingly went back to the tiger, and found him sharpening his teeth and claws for very hunger: when he heard he had to wait yet a little longer for his food, he began lashing his tail and curling his whiskers in a way the farmer did not like.

Now, no sooner had the farmer left the house than his wife, going to the stable, saddled the pony. Then she put on the farmer's best clothes, tied the *pagri*<sup>1</sup> very high, and set off man-fashion, to the field where the tiger was. She rode up swaggering and bold, till she came to the corner, when she called out in a loud voice,—

<sup>1</sup> *Pagri*, a turban. Wearing a lofty *pagri*, for swagger, is a common trick in India still.



“Now, by the grace of God, may I find a tiger in this field, for I have not tasted tiger’s flesh since the day before yesterday, when, as luck would have it, I killed three.”

Hearing this the tiger became so much frightened that he turned tail and fled into the *jangal*; going away full tilt till he met his own jackal,<sup>1</sup> who called out,—

“My lord! my lord! whither away so fast?”

“Run! run!” cried the tiger, “there’s the very devil of a horseman in yonder field, who thinks nothing of eating three tigers.”

At this the jackal laughed, saying, “that was no horseman: that was only the farmer’s wife.”

“Are you sure?” asked the tiger pausing.

“Quite sure, my lord,” replied the jackal, “did you not see her pig tail?<sup>2</sup> Come! don’t give up your breakfast for a woman!”

“But you may be mistaken,” persisted the cowardly tiger. “It was the very devil of a horseman to look at.”

“Who’s afraid!” replied the brave jackal, “let’s go together.”

“But you may intend to betray me, and run away,” said the still suspicious tiger.

“In that case, let’s tie our tails together, and then I can’t,” replied the determined jackal, who did not want to be done out of his bones.

So they tied their tails together in a very fast knot, and set off gaily.

Now the farmer and his wife were still in the field laughing over the trick she had played the tiger, when her husband caught sight of the pair coming back so bravely with their tails tied together. He called out, “We are lost! we are lost!”

“Not at all, you gaby,” answered his wife, and walked towards the tiger and the jackal. When she got within hail she called out,—

“Now this is what I call kind, Mr. Jackal, to bring me such a nice fat tiger, but considering how many tigers there are in your father’s house, I think you might have brought me two: one will hardly be a mouthful.”

<sup>1</sup> Popularly tigers are supposed to be accompanied by jackals who show them their game and get the leavings for their pains. Every tiger is said to have his particular jackal. Hence the old Sanskrit phrase for jackal *vyaghranayaka*, tiger-leader.

<sup>2</sup> The Kashmiri woman’s hair is drawn to the back of the head and finely braided; the braids are then gathered together and being mixed with coarse woollen thread are worked into a very long plait terminated by a thick tassel, which reaches almost down to the ankles. It is highly suggestive of the Chinese pig tail, but it is far more graceful.

Hearing this the tiger became wild with fright and quite forgetting the jackal and the knot in their tails, he bolted away as hard as he could, dragging the jackal bumpity-bump-bump over all the stones. In vain the poor jackal howled and shrieked to the tiger to stop; the noise behind him only frightened the beast more, and away he went over hill and dale, till he was nearly dead with fatigue, and the poor jackal quite dead with bruises.

*Moral.* — Don't trust cowards.

## THE TROUBLESOME FRIEND

A muqaddam<sup>1</sup> became very friendly with another man of his village, who eventually proved to be such a mercenary individual that he determined to get rid of him. But this was easier said than done, for a very close friendship had sprung up between them, and he did not wish to seriously offend his friend, as he had revealed to him too much of his own private affairs.<sup>2</sup> At last he hit on the following plan:—

"Wife," said he, "this man will certainly call just as we are sitting down to dinner, in the hope that he, also, will get something to eat. I will go out now, but will come back later on to eat my food. Keep a little by you and put the rest aside; and when he comes, tell him that we have finished our meal. If he says, 'Never mind. You can cook something else for me', tell him that you dare not do so shameful a thing without your husband's permission. Be very civil to him, but do not give him any food."

When the man came the woman did as her husband had advised.

"I am sorry, Sir," she said, "that the muqaddam is out. If he were here, he would undoubtedly kill a cock for you."

"Why are you sorry?" he said. "It does not matter if your husband is out. I am here, and I am not ashamed to kill a cock."

"Never," said the woman. "If my husband heard of such a thing, he would be very angry with me. Please do not trouble, but go and come again at some other time, when the muqaddam is in."

A Kashmiri Story. By The Rev. J. Hinton Knowles, F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVI. Part. CXCVIII July, 1887, page 221.

<sup>1</sup> The chief man of a village.

<sup>2</sup> Which probably were not in a very satisfactory condition. The real oppressors of the people are these muqaddams and those immediately above them, who can do very much what they like.

However, the man was not to be so easily put off. "Trouble!" said he. "Believe me, I should really like to do a little work. Come now, let me kill a cock, while you prepare a fire to cook it for me. I will explain matters to the muqaddam when he returns."

Saying this he walked out into the yard, where the fowls were kept, and taking one of the finest cocks he could catch, proceeded to kill it.

"Oh, please do not," cried the woman. "My husband will be here soon, and will get some food for you."

But the man was not to be put off. He at once killed a cock, and handing it to the woman asked her to cook it for him. Seeing no way of escape out of the difficulty the woman obeyed, but before the meal was ready the muqaddam returned. "Salam, salam," he said to his friend, and after the few usual questions concerning his health and affairs, rushed to the kitchen and asked his wife what she had done. She told him everything.

"Very well," he said. "It is not of much consequence. We will get the better of this man yet. Listen! When the cock is ready, mind you give him only a little, but give it in the copper pot.<sup>1</sup> Give me the rest, but set it before me in the earthen pot."

As soon as the meal was ready the woman did so. However, the man was too sharp for them. He noticed the meagre quantity placed before him, and the abundance that was set before the muqaddam.

"No, no," he said. "Do you think that I am going to eat out of this copper pot and you out of that earthen pot? Never. This cannot be."

Thus saying, he seized the muqaddam's pot and put the copper one before him instead. In vain all remonstrance from the muqaddam. The latter might as well have held his breath. Seeing the state of affairs the muqaddam looked most significantly towards his wife and said:—

"For several days a dev<sup>2</sup> has haunted our house. Once or twice he has appeared about this time and put out all the light."

"Indeed!" said the visitor.

The woman took the hint and at once extinguished the lamp. When all was in total darkness the muqaddam put out his hand to take the earthenware pot from his friend, but the friend

<sup>1</sup> Kashmiri, *tram*, a copper vessel out of which the Musalmans eat. The Hindus do not make use of vessels made of this metal.

<sup>2</sup> A demon, a sprite, a devil.

perceived the movement, and placing the pot in his left hand seized the lamp-stand with the other and began to beat the muqaddam most unmercifully.

“Oh! oh!” exclaimed the muqaddam.

“What are you doing to my husband?” shouted the woman.

“The dev is trying to steal my food!” said the man.

“Be careful! Be careful!” he shouted to the supposed dev, and each time he struck him as hard as he could with the lamp-stand. At last the lamp-stand was broken, and the man ran out of the door, taking good care to carry the earthenware pot and its contents with him.

### FATTEH KHAN,<sup>1</sup> THE VALIANT WEAVER

Once upon a time there lived a little weaver, with a big head and thin legs, by name Fatteh Khan: but, because he was so small and weak and ridiculous, the people called him Fattu, little Fattu the weaver.

But for all his small size Fattu was brave, very brave, and would talk for hours of the heroic acts he would have done if Fate had given him opportunity. Fate however was not kind, and so Fattu remained little Fattu the weaver, laughed at by all for his boasting.

Now one day as Fattu was weaving cloth a musquito settled on his left hand just as he was throwing the shuttle with his right hand. By chance the shuttle sliding swiftly through the warp came into his hand just where the musquito had settled and squashed it. At this Fattu became desperately excited. “This is what I always said,” exclaimed he, “if I only had the chance I’d show my mettle. Now, how many people could have done that, I’d like to know? Killing a musquito is easy and throwing a shuttle is easy, but to do both at one time is a very different affair. It is easy to shoot a man, oh very easy: he is a good mark, something to see: besides bows and cross-bows are made for shooting, but to shoot a *musquito* with a *shuttle* is quite a different pair of boots.”

Folklore from Kashmir collected by Mrs F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI—1882, pp. 282-5.

<sup>1</sup> In common practice persons of no social standing, but of respectability, are addressed by a diminutive ending in *a*, the poor and insignificant by that in *u*. Persons also rising in life from very small beginnings assume the more honorific or full name as their prosperity increases in a way that often excites the amusement of their neighbours. The natives have a proverb about them:—

“According to his wealth he has three names;  
Parsu, Parsa, Paras Ram.”

The more he thought about it the more elated he became over his own skill and bravery, till he came to the conclusion that he would no longer be called Fattu. Now that he had shown his spirit he would be called in full Fatteh Khan: Fatteh Khan and nothing else.

When he announced this determination to the neighbours they laughed loudly, and though some did call him Fatteh Khan, it was with such sniggling and giggling and sly jesting that he went home in a rage. But he found his wife worse than his friends, for she, tired of her little husband's whims, sharply bid him hold his tongue and not make a fool of himself. On this, beside himself with pride and mortification, he seized her by the hair and beat her unmercifully, and then resolving to stay no longer where he was so slighted, he bid her make him some bread for his journey, and set about packing his bundle. "I will go into the world," said he to himself. "The man who can shoot a musquito with a shuttle ought not to hide his light under a bushel." So off he set with his bundle, his shuttle, and a huge loaf of bread tied up in a kerchief.

Now as he journeyed he came to a city where a dreadful elephant came daily to make a meal of some of the inhabitants. Many mighty warriors had gone out against it, but none had returned. Hearing this the valiant little man said to himself: "Now is my chance: to a man who has killed a musquito with one blow of a shuttle, an elephant is mere child's play."

So he went to the king, and announced that he was ready single-handed to slay the elephant. The king naturally thought he was mad, but when he persisted in his offer, he told him he was free to try his luck.

So at the hour when the elephant usually appeared Fatteh Khan went out to meet it armed with his shuttle. "It is a weapon I understand," said he valiantly to those who urged him to take a spear or a bow, "and it has done work in its time, I assure you."

It was a fine sight to see Fattu strutting out to kill the elephant, whilst the townspeople gathered in crowds on the walls: but alas for the valiant little weaver! No sooner did he see the elephant charging down on him, than all his courage oozed away. He forgot he was Fatteh Khan, dropped his bundle, his bread and his shuttle, and bolted away as hard as Fattu's little legs could carry him.

Now it so happened that Fattu's wife had made the bread sweet and had put spices into it, as she wanted to hide the taste of

the poison she had used with it: for she was a wicked revengeful woman, and wished to get rid of her tiresome whimsical husband.

The elephant as he charged past smelt the pieces, and catching up the bread with his trunk gobbled it down without stopping a moment. Poor Fattu scuttled away ever so fast, but the elephant soon overtook him. Then the little weaver in sheer desperation tried to double, and in doing so ran full tilt against the great beast. As luck would have it, just at that moment the poison took effect and the elephant fell to the ground dead.

Now when the spectators who thronged the city walls saw the monster fall, they could scarcely believe their eyes, but they were more astonished still when they ran up and found little Fattu sitting quietly on the elephant's dead body, and mopping his face with his handkerchief—"I just gave him a push," said he modestly, "and he fell down. Elephants are big brutes, but they have no strength to speak of."

The good folk were amazed at the light way in which Fattu spoke, and as they had been too far off to see distinctly what had happened, they believed what he said, and went and told the king that the little weaver was a fearful wee man, and just knocked the elephant over like a ninepin. Then the king said to himself "None of my warriors and wrestlers, no, not even the heroes of the old could have done this. I must secure this little man for my service." So he asked Fattah Khan why he was wandering about the world.

"For pleasure, or for service, or for conquest," answered the little man, laying such stress on the last word, and looking so fierce that the king in a great hurry made him Commander-in-Chief of his whole army, for fear he should take service elsewhere.

Now sometime after this a terribly savage tiger came ravaging the country. No one could kill it, and at last the city folk petitioned the king to send Fattah Khan out against it. So Fattah Khan went out in armour with sword and shield and ever so many cavalry and infantry behind him, for he was Commander-in-Chief now, and had quite forgotten all about weaving-looms and shuttles. But before he went he made the king promise that as a reward he would give him his daughter in marriage.

Fattu went out as gay as a lark, for he said to himself—"If I knocked over the elephant with one blow, the tiger won't have a chance against me. I really am invincible." But alas for the

valiant little weaver! No sooner did he see the tiger lashing its tail and charging down on him than he bolted away as hard as he could for the nearest tree and scrambled into the branches. There he sat like a monkey, while the tiger glowered at him from below. Now when the army saw their Commander-in-Chief bolt like a rabbit, they bolted away too, and came and told the king how the little hero had fled up a tree and was there still, while the tiger kept watch below. "There let him stay," said the king, secretly relieved.

All this time Fattu sat cowering in the tree while the tiger below sharpened his teeth and curled his whiskers and lashed his tail, and looked so fierce that Fattu very nearly tumbled down with fright at the sight. So one day, two days, three days, six days, seven days, past: on the seventh the tiger was fiercer and more hungry than ever. As for poor little Fattu, he was nearly starving, and so hungry that hunger made him brave, and he determined to try and slip past while the tiger took his midday snooze. So he crept stealthily down till his foot was within a yard of the ground, when suddenly the tiger jumped up with a roar. Fattu shrieked with fear, and, making a tremendous effort, swung himself into a branch, and cocked his legs over it to keep them out of reach, for the tiger's red panting mouth and white gleaming teeth were within half an inch of his toes. In doing so his dagger tumbled out of its sheath and fell right into the tiger's mouth which was wide open, went down its throat and into its stomach, so that it died. Fattu could scarcely believe his good luck, but after prodding the body with a branch, and finding it didn't move, he thought it really must be dead and ventured down. Then he cut off the head, wrapped it up in a kerchief, and went straight to the king.

"You and your army are all a nice lot of cowards," said he wrathfully. "Here have I been fighting the tiger for seven days and seven nights without bite or sup, while you've been snoozing at home. However, I forgive you: one can't expect every one to be brave." So Fattah Khan married the king's daughter and was greater hero than ever.

Now, after a time a neighbouring prince, who bore a grudge against the king, came with a huge army, and encamped outside the city, swearing to put every man, woman, and child within it to the sword.

Hearing this all the inhabitants cried out, with one accord, "Fattah Khan, Fattah Khan, to the rescue!" So the king ordered

Fatteh Khan to destroy the invading army, promising him half the kingdom as a reward.

Now, Fatteh Khan with all his boastings was not a fool, and he said to himself "This is altogether a different affair. A man may kill a musquito, an elephant, and a tiger, and yet be killed by another man. What is one against a thousand? Under the circumstances, I'd rather be Fattu the weaver than Fatteh Khan the hero."

So in the night he bid his wife rise, pack up her golden dishes, and follow him. "I've plenty of golden dishes at home," said he, "but these you have we'll want for the journey." Then he crept outside the city followed by his wife with the bundle, and began to steal through the enemy's camp.

Just as they were in the middle a cock-chafer flew into Fattu's face. "Run, run," cried he to his wife in a terrible fright, and set off as hard as he could, never stopping till he had reached his room and bolted the door. The poor woman set off to run too, dropping her bundle of golden dishes with a clang. This roused the enemy, who, fancying they were attacked, flew to arms, but being half asleep and the night being pitch-dark, they could not distinguish friend from foe, and fell on each other with such fierceness that before morning there was not one left alive.

Great was the rejoicings at Fatteh Khan's victory, as the reward of which he received half the kingdom.

After this he refused to fight any more, saying truly "that kings did not fight for themselves, but paid others to fight for them." So he lived in peace, and when he died every one said that he was the greatest hero that had ever lived.

## HOW THE SPRINGS CAME TO KASHMIR

Long ago there lived a holy Rishi<sup>1</sup> who used every day as an act of charity to give water to all the houses at Khru. But as there were 1100 houses and only one small stream it was a work of difficulty, and one hot summer there was scarcely any water at all. So the Rishi prayed to the Great Mother,<sup>2</sup> and she told him to go a certain *marg*<sup>3</sup>, and pick a certain flower that grew in a certain place, and taking it to the Lake at Gangabal,

Folklore from Kashmir collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI—1882, Page 260.

<sup>1</sup> Sages who practised unexampled austerities and were possessed of extraordinary piety, and thus attained to supernatural powers.

<sup>2</sup> Maharani, this may be Durga, the wife of Siva.

<sup>3</sup> A mountain meadow. They abound in Kashmir.



to throw it in. "Then return," said she, "and behind you as you walk will flow Ganga. But remember whatever happens do not look back."

So the Rishi went to the *marg*, picked the flower, which he carried to Gangabal in a cloth, and threw it into the water. Then he turned, and lo! behind him rose the sound of many waters following his footsteps.

But the demons<sup>1</sup> who kept guard were angry, and clapped and beat him on the neck and shoulders, but he took no notice. So two hours passed by till his patience wore out, and at last, when a demon changing itself into a wasp stung him behind the ear, he turned sharply round, saying "Don't Brother, don't." And lo! the Ganga turned too, and flowed back into the Lake. Then the Rishi prayed again to the Great Mother, but she was angry. At last after many days she said, "Ganga you cannot have, but take the cloth in which you carried the flower, and wherever you spread it out a spring of Ganga water will rise."

So as a penance for his disobedience the pious Rishi travelled all over Kashmir, and wherever water was scarce, he spread out his cloth, and lo! a spring appeared.

## GWASHBRARI AND WESTARWAN<sup>2</sup>

**A**ges ago, when the world was young and the mountains had just reared their heads to the heavens, Westarwan was the highest peak in all Kashmir. Far away in the west Nanga Parbat stood where it stands now, but its snowy cap only reached to Westarwan's shoulder, while Haramukh looked but a dwarf beside the giant king. But if Westarwan was the tallest, Gwashbrari was the most beautiful of mountains. Away in the north-east she glinted and glittered with her sea-green emerald glaciers, and Westarwan gazed and gazed at her loveliness till he fell in love with the beautiful Gwashbrari; but her heart was full of envy, and she thought of nothing but how she might humble the pride of the mighty king that reared his head so high above the

Folklore from Kashmir collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI—1882, pp. 259-60.

<sup>1</sup> The demons guarding water are now known as messengers of Varuna or the Ocean. Varuna's messengers are celebrated in the Vedic mythology, not in any way however as demons, but as the spies of the mighty God of Heaven, who numbers the winkings of all men's eyes.

"His spies descending from the sky  
glide all this world around,  
"Their thousand eyes all scanning  
sweep to earth's remotest bound."

—Muir's *Sanskrit Texts*.

<sup>2</sup> All the mountains mentioned in this tale are prominent peaks in Kashmir and belong to Mid-Himalayan range.

rest of the world. At last the fire of love grew so hot in Westarwan's heart that he put aside his pride and called aloud to Gwashbrari, "Oh beautiful far away mountain, kiss me, or I die."

But Gwashbrari answered craftily, "How can I kiss you, oh proud King, when you hold your head so high? Even if I could stand beside you my lips would not reach your lips, and behold how many miles of hill and dale lie between us."

But still Westarwan pleaded for a kiss, till Gwashbrari smiled, and said, "Those above must stoop, Sir King. If you would have a kiss forget your pride, reach that long length of yours towards me, and I will bend to kiss you."

Then Westarwan, stretching one great limb over the vale of Kashmir, reached over hill and dale to Gwashbrari's feet, but the glacier-hearted queen held her flashing head higher than ever, and laughed, saying: "Love humbles all."

And this is why Westarwan lies for ever stretched out over hill and dale, till he rests his head on Gwashbrari's feet.<sup>1</sup>

## THE OGRESS QUEEN

People tell of a king who had seven wives that were all childless. When he married the first he thought that she would certainly bear him a son. He hoped the same of the second, the third and the others; but no son was born to gladden his days, and to sit on the throne after him. This was a terrible, overwhelming grief to him.

One day he was walking in a neighbouring wood and bemoaning his lot, when he saw a most beautiful fairy.

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"I am very miserable," he replied. "Although I have seven wives, I have no son to call my own, and to make my heir. I came to this wood to-day hoping to meet some holy man, who would intercede for me."

"And do you expect to find such a person in this lonely place?" she asked laughing. "Only I live here. But I can help you. What will you give me, if I grant you the desires of your heart?"

"Give me a son, and you shall have half of my country."

A Kashmiri Story. By The Rev. J. Hinton Knowles, F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVI. Part CXCVII June, 1887, Page 185.

<sup>1</sup> The Westarwan ridge is the longest spur into the Valley of Kashmir. This and the remarkably clear tilt of the strata doubtless suggested this extremely fanciful and poetical legend.

“I will take none of your gold or your country. Marry me, and you shall have a son and heir.”

The king agreed, took the fairy to his palace, and very quickly made her his eighth wife. A short while afterwards all the other wives of the king became pregnant. However, the king's joy was not for long. The beautiful fairy whom he had married was none other than a *rakshasi*<sup>1</sup> who had appeared to his Majesty as a fairy, in order to deceive him and work mischief in the palace. Every night when the rest of the royal household were fast asleep she arose and going to the stables and out-houses ate an elephant, or two or three horses, or some sheep, or a camel; and then having satisfied her blood-thirsty appetite returned to her room, and came forth in the morning, as if nothing had happened. At first the king's servants feared to inform him of these things; but when they found that animals were being taken every night, they were obliged to go to him. Strict orders were at once given for the protection of the palace-buildings and guards were appointed to every room, but it was all in vain. Day by day the animals disappeared and nobody could tell how.

One night while the king was pacing his room, puzzled to know what to do, the supposed fairy, his wife, said:—

“What will you give me if I discover the thief?”

“Anything—everything,” the king replied.

“Very well; rest, and by the morning I will show you the cause of these things.”

His Majesty was soon sound asleep, and the wicked queen left the room. She went to the sheep-pens, and taking one of the sheep killed it, and filled an earthen vessel with its blood. Then she returned to the palace, went to the several rooms of the other wives of the king and stained their mouths and clothes with the blood that she had brought. Afterwards she went and lay down in the room, while the king was still sleeping. As soon as the day dawned she woke him and said to him:—

“I find that your other wives have taken and eaten the animals. They are not human beings. They are *rakshasis*. If you wish to preserve your life, you will beware of them. Go and see if I am not speaking the truth.”

The king did so, and when he saw the bloodstained mouths and garments of his other wives, he was terribly enraged. He ordered that their eyes should be put out, and that they should be thrown into a big, dry well, which was outside the city; and this was done.

<sup>1</sup> Ogress.

The very next day one of them gave birth to a son, who was eaten by them for food. The day after that another had a son, and he was likewise eaten. On the third day another wife was confined; on the fourth day another; on the fifth day another; and on the sixth day another: each gave birth to a son, who was eaten up in his turn. The seventh wife, whose time had not arrived, did not eat her portions of the other wives' children, but kept them till her own son was born, when she begged them not to kill him, and to take the portions which they had given her instead. Thus the child was spared, and through him in the future the lives of the seven queens were miraculously preserved.

The baby grew and became a strong and beautiful boy. When he was six years old the seven women thought they would try to show him a little of the outer world. But how were they to do this? The well was deep and its sides were perpendicular! At last they thought of standing on each other's heads; and the one who stood on the top of all took the boy and put him on the bank at the well's mouth. Away the little fellow ran to the palace, entered the king's kitchen and begged for some food. He got a lot of scraps, of which he ate a little and carried the rest to the well for his mother and the king's other wives.

This continued for some time, when one morning the cook asked him to stay and prepare some dishes for the king, saying, that his mother had just died and he was obliged to go and arrange for the cremation of the body. The boy promised to do his best and the cook left. That day the king was especially pleased with his meals. Everything was rightly cooked, nicely flavoured, and well served-up. In the evening the cook returned. The king sent for him and complimenting him on the exceedingly good food he had prepared, ordered him always to cook as well in the future. The cook honestly confessed that he had been absent the greater part of the day owing to his mother's death, and that a boy, whom he had hired for the occasion, had cooked the food. When he heard this the king was much surprised, and commanded the cook to give the boy regular employment in the kitchen. Thenceforth there was a great difference in the way the king's meals were served up; and his Majesty was more and more pleased with the boy, and constantly gave him presents. All these presents and all the food that the boy could gather he took daily to the well for his mother and the king's other wives.

On the way to the well every day he had to pass a holy faqir, who always blessed him and asked for alms, and generally

received something. In this way some years elapsed and the boy had developed into a still more beautiful youth, when by chance one day the wicked queen saw him. Struck with his beauty she asked him who he was and whence he came. Nothing doubting and not knowing the real character of the queen, he told her everything about himself and his mother, and the other women. From that hour the queen plotted against his life. She feigned sickness, and calling in a *hakim*<sup>1</sup> bribed him to persuade the king that she was very ill and that nothing, except the milk of a lioness, would cure her.

“My beloved, what is this I hear?” said the king when he went to see his wife in the evening. “The *hakim* says that you are ill, and that the milk of a lioness is required. But how can we get it? Who is there that will dare to attempt this?”

“The lad who serves here as cook. He is brave and faithful, and will do anything for you out of gratitude for all that you have done for him. Besides him I know of no other, whom you could send.”

“I will send for him and see.”

The lad readily promised, and next day started on his perilous journey. On the way he passed his friend the faqir, who said to him, “Whither are you going?” He told him of the king’s order, and how desirous he was of pleasing his Majesty, who had been so kind to him.

“Don’t go,” said the faqir. “Who are you to dare to presume to do such a thing?”

But the lad was resolute and valued not his life in the matter. Then said the faqir,—

“If you will not be dissuaded, follow my advice, and you will succeed and be preserved. When you meet a lioness aim an arrow at one of her teats. The arrow will strike her and the lioness will speak and ask you why you shot her. Then you must say that you did not intend to kill her, but simply thought that she would be glad if she could feed her cubs more quickly than before, and therefore pierced a hole in her teats, through which the milk would flow easily. You must also say that you pitied her cubs, who looked very weak and sickly, as though they required more nourishment.”

Then, blessing him, the faqir sent him on his journey. Thus encouraged the lad walked on with a glad heart. He soon saw a lioness with cubs, aimed an arrow at one of her teats, and struck

<sup>1</sup> Physician.

it. When the lioness angrily asked him to explain his action he replied as the faqir had instructed him, and added that the queen was seriously ill and was in need of lioness' milk."

"The queen!" said the lioness. "Do not you know that she is a *rakshasi*? Keep her at a distance, lest she kill and eat you!"

"I fear no harm," said the lad. "Her Majesty entertains no enmity against me."

"Very well, I will certainly give you some of my milk, but beware of the queen. Look here," said the lioness taking him to an immense block of rock, that had separated from the hill, "I will let a drop of my milk fall on this rock."

She did so, and the rock fell into a million pieces!

"You see the power of my milk. Well, if the queen were to drink the whole of what I have just given you, it would not have the slightest effect on her! She is a *rakshasi* and cannot be harmed by such things as this. However, if you will not believe me, go and see for yourself."

The lad returned and gave the milk to the king, who took it to his wife; and she drank the whole of it and professed to have been cured. The king was much pleased with the boy, and advanced him to a higher position among the servants of the palace: but the queen was determined to have him killed, and debated in her mind as to how she could accomplish this without offending the king. After some days she again pretended to be ill, and calling the king said to him, "I am getting ill again, but do not be anxious about me. My father, who lives in the jungle, whence the lioness' milk was brought, has a special medicine, that, I think, would cure me, if you will please send for it. The lad that fetched the milk might go." Accordingly the lad went. The way led past the faqir, who again said to him, "Whither are you going?" and the lad told him.

"Don't go," said he. "This man is a *rakshasa*, and will certainly kill you."

But the lad was determined as before.

"You will go then. Then go, but attend to my advice. When you see the *rakshasa*, call him 'grandfather.' He will ask you to scratch his back, which you must do—and do it very roughly."

The lad promised, and went on. The jungle was big and dense, and he thought that he would never reach the *rakshasa's* house. At last he saw him and cried out, "O my grandfather, I, your daughter's son, have come to say that my mother is ill and

cannot recover till she takes some medicine, which she says you have, and has sent me for it."

"All right," replied the *rakshasa*. "I will give it you, but first come and scratch my back. It's itching terribly."

The *rakshasa* had lied, for his back did not itch. He only wanted to see whether the lad was the true son of a *rakshasa* or not. When the lad dug his nails into the old *rakshasa's* flesh, as though he wanted to scratch off some of it, the *rakshasa* bade him desist, and giving him the medicine to the king, who at once took it to his wife; and she was cured. The king was more than ever pleased with the lad and gave him large presents, and in other ways favoured him.

The wicked queen was now put to her wits' end to know what to do with such a lad. He had escaped from the claws of the lioness and from the clutches of her father,—the gods only knew how! What could she do to him? Finally she determined to send him to her mother, a wretched old *rakshasi* that lived in a house in the wood not far from her father's place.

"He will not come back anymore," said the wicked queen to herself, and so she said to the king, "I have a very valuable comb at home, and I should like to have it brought here, if you will please send the boy for it. Let me know when he starts, and I will give him a letter for my mother."

The king complied, and the lad started, as usual passing by the faqir's place, and telling him where he was going. He, also, showed him the letter that the queen had given him.

"Let me read its contents," said the faqir, and when he had read them he said, "Are you deliberately going to be killed? This letter is an order for your death. Listen to it.—'The bearer of this letter is my bitter enemy. I shall not be able to accomplish anything as long as he is alive. Slay him as soon as he reaches you, and let me not hear of him anymore.'"

The boy trembled as he heard these terrible words, but he would not break his promise to the king, and was resolved to fulfil His Majesty's wishes, though it should cost him his life. So the faqir destroyed the queen's letter and wrote another after this manner: "This is my son. When he reaches you attend to his needs and show him all kindness." Giving it to the lad, he said, "Call the woman grandmother; and fear nothing."

The lad walked on and on till he reached the *rakshasi's* house, where he called the *rakshasi* 'grandmother', as the faqir had

advised him, and gave her the letter. On reading it she clasped the lad in her arms, and kissed him, and enquired much about her daughter and her royal husband. Every attention was shown him, and every delicious thing that the old *rakshasi* could think of, was provided for him. She also gave him many things, amongst others the following:—A jar of soap, which when dropped on the ground became a great and lofty mountain; a jar full of needles, which if let fall became a hill bristling with large needles; a jar full of water, which if poured out became an expanse of water as large as a sea. She also showed him the following things and explained their meaning:—Seven fine cocks, a spinning-wheel, a pigeon, a starling, and some medicine.

“These seven cocks,” she said, “contain the lives of your seven uncles, who are away for a few days. Only as long as the cocks live can your uncles hope to live. No power can hurt them as long as the seven cocks are safe and sound. The spinning-wheel contains my life. If it is broken, I, too, shall be broken and must die; but otherwise I shall live on for ever. The pigeon contains your grandfather’s life, and the starling your mother’s. As long as these live nothing can harm your grandfather or your mother. And the medicine has this quality: it can give sight to the blind.”

The lad thanked the old *rakshasi* for all that she had given him and shown him, and lay down to sleep. In the morning, when the *rakshasi* went to bathe in the river, the lad took the seven cocks and the pigeon and killed them and dashed the spinning-wheel on the ground, so that it was broken to pieces. Immediately the old *rakshasa* and the *rakshasi* and their seven sons perished. Then having secured the starling in a cage he took it and the precious medicine for restoring the sight, and started for the king’s palace. He stopped on the way to give the eye-medicine to his mother and the other women who were still in the well, and their sight immediately returned. They all clambered out of the well, and accompanied the lad to the palace, where he asked them to wait in one of the rooms, while he went and prepared the king for their coming.

“O king,” he said; “I have many secrets to reveal. I pray you to hear me. Your wife is a *rakshasi*, and plots against my life, knowing that I am the son of one of the wives, whom at her instigation you caused to be deprived of their sight and thrown into a well. She fears that somehow I shall become heir to the throne, and therefore wishes my speedy death. I have slain her



father and mother and seven brothers, and now I shall slay her. Her life is in this starling."

Saying this he suffocated the bird, and the wicked queen immediately died.

"Now come with me," said the boy, "and behold, O king, your true wives. There were seven sons born to your house, but six of them were slain to satisfy the cravings of hunger. I only am left alive."

"Oh! what have I done!" cried the king. "I have been deceived." And he wept bitterly. Henceforth the king's only son governed the country and by virtue of the charmed jars that the *rakshasi* had given him was able to conquer all the surrounding countries. And the old king spent the rest of his days with his seven wives in peace and happiness.

### PRINCE BAHRAM-I-GHOR AND THE FAIRY SHAHPASAND

Once upon a time there lived a king, who had one son, the Prince Bahram-i-Ghor, as beautiful as the sun. One day the Prince went out shooting, and hunted to the north and the south and the east, but found no game. Then he hunted towards the west, and suddenly out of a thicket flashed a golden deer. Gold were its hoofs and horns and legs, and gold its body. The Prince, astonished at the sight, bade his retainers form a large circle, and so gradually enclose the beautiful strange creature, saying—"Remember, I hold him accountable for its escape or capture towards whom the beast may run."

Closer and closer drew the circle, when suddenly the deer fled towards where the Prince stood, and he, pursuing it, caught it by one golden horn. Then the creature found human voice, and cried "Let me go. O Prince! and I will give you treasures."

But the Prince Bahram-i-Ghor laughed, saying, "I have gold and jewels enough, but I have no golden deer."

"Aye," returned the deer, "but I will give you more than gold and riches."

"What is that?" laughed the Prince. "Many things," pleaded the deer; "for one thing I will give you such a ride as mortal man before never had."

"Done," said the gay Prince, and vaulted on the golden deer's back. Then, like a bird from a thicket, the golden deer rose

through the air, and for seven days and seven nights it carried the Prince over all the world, over the hills and above the rivers and fields and towers. On the seventh day it touched the earth again, and instantly vanished from sight.

Prince Bahram-i-Ghor rubbed his eyes. He had never seen such a strange country before, everything was new and unfamiliar. He wandered about looking for the trace of a house or footstep, when out of the ground popped a wee old man.

“How did you come here, my son?” asked he politely.

Then Bahram-i-Ghor told him of the golden deer and of his ride, and how he was now quite lost and bewildered and knew not what road to take. Then the little old man said, “Do not fear; this, it is true, is demon-land, but no one will hurt you while I am by, for I am the demon Jasdrul<sup>1</sup> whose life you saved in the shape of the golden deer.”

Then the demon Jasdrul took Prince Bahram-i-Ghor to his house and gave him a hundred keys, saying,—“These are the keys of my hundred palaces and gardens. Amuse yourself by looking at them. Mayhap you may find something worth having.”

So, to amuse himself, Prince Bahram-i-Ghor opened one garden and palace every day, and in one he found gold and in another silver, in a third jewels, in a fourth rich stuffs, and so on through everything the heart could desire till he came to the hundredth palace.

When he opened the door of the garden which was surrounded by a high wall, he saw a miserable hovel full of poisonous things, herbs and stones and snakes and insects. So he shut the hovel door sharp, and turned to look at the garden. It was seven miles square, seven miles this way and that way and every way, and full of fruit trees, flowers, fountains, summer houses and streams.

He wandered seven miles this way and seven that, till he was so tired, that he lay down in a marble summer-house to rest on a golden bed spread with shawls, which he found there. Now while he slept the Princess Shahpasand<sup>2</sup> the fairy, came to take the air, fairy-like in the shape of a pigeon, and came flying over the garden and caught sight of the sleeping Prince. He looked so handsome and beautiful and splendid that she sank to the

<sup>1</sup> Probably a corruption of Dasaratha, the name of the father of Ramachandra

<sup>2</sup> *Shahpasand* means a king's delight, and is probably merely a fancy name.

earth at once, resuming her natural shape, as fairies always do when they touch the earth, and gave the Prince a kiss.

He woke up in a hurry, when Princess Shahpasand kneeling gracefully before him said, "Dear Prince! I have been looking for you everywhere."

The Prince no sooner set eyes on Princess Shahpasand than he fell desperately in love with her, so that they agreed to get married without delay. But the Prince was doubtful as to what the demon Jasdrul might say, and he felt bound to ask his consent. This to the Prince's surprise and delight he gave readily, rubbing his hands with glee, and saying—"I thought you would find her somehow. Now you will be happy. Remain here, and never think of going back to your own country any more."

So the Prince Bahram-i-Ghor and the fairy, Princess Shahpasand, were married and lived ever so happily for ever so long a time.

At last, however, Prince Bahram-i-Ghor began to think longingly of his home, his father the king, his mother the queen, his favourite horse and his hound. Then he began to speak of them every evening to the Princess, and sighed and sighed and sighed, till he grew quite pale.

Now the demon Jasdrul used to sit every night in a little room below that of the Prince and the Princess, and listen to what they said: when he heard the Prince talking of his own country he sighed too, for he was a kind-hearted demon and loved the Prince.

At last he asked the Prince one day why he was so pale and sighed so often. Then the Prince answered—"Oh good demon, let me go back to see my father and mother, my horse and my hound, for I am weary. Let me and the Princess go, or I will surely take poison and die."

The demon refused at first, but when the Prince persisted, he said—"Be it so, but you will repent and come back to me. Take this hair. When you are in trouble burn it, and I will come to your assistance."

Then very regretfully the demon said good-bye, and instantly Prince Bahram-i-Ghor and the Princess Shahpasand found themselves outside his native town. But everything was changed; his father and mother were both dead and a usurper had seized the throne, and put a price on Bahram-i-Ghor's head should he ever return. Luckily no one except an old huntsman recog-

nised him, as he, too, had changed much. But even the old huntsman would have nothing to do with the Prince, saying, "It is more than my life's worth."

At last when the Prince begged and prayed, the huntsman consented to let the Prince and Princess live in his house.

"My mother is blind, and will never see you," said he, "and you can help me to hunt as I used to help you before."

So the Prince Bahram-i-Ghor and the Princess Shahpasand went to live in the huntsman's house in a garret just under the wooden roof, and no one knew they were there.

Now one day, when the Prince had gone out to hunt as servant to the huntsman, the Princess Shahpasand washed her beautiful golden hair, which hung round her like a shower of gold-thread, and when she had washed it she combed it, setting the window a-jar to let the breeze come in and dry her hair.

Just then the Kotwal of the town happened to pass by, and casting his eyes upwards saw the beautiful Princess Shahpasand with her shower of golden hair. He was so overcome at the sight that he fell off his horse into the gutter. His servants picked him up, and took him back to the Kotwali<sup>1</sup> where he raved about the beautiful fairy in the huntsman's cottage. This set all the courtiers and officials wondering if he were not bewitched. At last it came to the King's ears, and he immediately sent down some soldiers to enquire.

"No one lives here," said the huntsman's old mother crossly, "no beautiful lady, nor ugly lady, nor any one at all but myself and my son. However, go to the garret, and see if you like."

Princess Shahpasand hearing this bolted the door, and seizing a knife cut a hole in the wooden roof, and flew out in the shape of a pigeon. So when the soldiers burst open the door they found no one there. Only as the Princess flew past the blind old crone she called out loudly, "I go to my father's house in the Emerald Mountain."

When the Prince returned, and found his beautiful Princess had fled, he was half distracted, but hearing the old woman's story of the mysterious voice, which said, "I go to my father's house in the Emerald Mountain," he became more tranquil. Yet, considering after a time that he had no notion where the Emerald Mountain was, he fell into a sad state. He cast himself on the ground, and sobbed and sighed. He refused to eat his

<sup>1</sup> The Kotwal's office, the city police station, a place held in great awe by all natives.

dinner or to speak any word but "O my dearest Princess! O my dearest Princess."

At last he remembered the demon Jasdrul's hair, and instantly taking it out he threw it into the fire, and lo! there was his old friend, who asked him what he wanted.

"Show me the way to the Emerald Mountain," said the Prince, "that I may find my dearest Princess."

Then the demon shook his head, saying,—"You'll never reach the Emerald Mountain alive, my son, so be guided by me, and forget all that has passed."

The Prince answered, "I have but one life, and that is gone if I lose my dearest Princess. As I must die, let me die seeking her."

So the demon Jasdrul very unwillingly carried the Prince back with him to demon-land, and giving him a magic wand, bade him travel over the country till he came to the demon Nanak Chand's house.

"You will meet with many dangers on the way," said the kind-hearted demon, "but, as no one can harm you so long as you bear the wand, do not part with it day or night. More I cannot do for you, but Nanak Chand, who is my elder brother, will tell you further."

So Prince Bahram-i-Ghor set out to travel through demon land, and met many dreadful things, but came to no harm because of the magic wand.

When he arrived at the demon Nanak Chand's house, the latter had just awaked from his sleep, which according to the habit of demons had lasted twelve whole years, and he was consequently desperately hungry. When he saw the young Prince his mouth watered, and he said to himself, "Here is a dainty morsel."

But on seeing the wand which the Prince carried he restrained his appetite, and asked politely what was wanted. Then the Prince told him the whole story, at which demon Nanak Chand shook his head, saying,—"You will never return from the Emerald Mountain alive, my son, so be guided by me and forget all that has passed."

Again the Prince replied, "I have but one life, and that is gone if I lose my dearest Princess. As I must die, let me die seeking her."

So demon Nanak Chand bid the prince travel through demon-land till he came to the demon Safed's<sup>1</sup> house, saying—"Take

<sup>1</sup> This demon Safed may be the modern representative of the classical Dhavala, the Demon Elephant of the quarter.

this *surma*<sup>1</sup> and when in need, put it on your eyes. Then whatever you look at will be near or far as you desire it. More I cannot do for you, but the demon Safed, who is my elder brother, will tell you further."

The Prince accordingly journeyed on through dangers and difficulties till he came to the house of the demon Safed, to whom he told his story, showing the *surma* and the magic wand. At this the demon Safed shook his head, saying,—“You will never return from the Emerald mountain alive, my son, so be guided by me and forget what has passed.”

Still the Prince answered as before, “I have but one life, and that is gone without my dearest Princess. As I must die, let me die seeking her.”

The demon nodded his head, saying—“You are a brave youth, so take this *yech's*<sup>2</sup> cap. Whenever you put it on, you will be invisible. Then journey to the North, and by and bye you will see the Emerald Mountain. Then just put the *Surma* on your eyes, for it is an enchanted hill, and the further you climb up it the higher it grows.<sup>3</sup> This *Surma* makes what is near far and what is far near. Then put on your invisible cap, enter the Emerald City, and find the Princess, if you can!”

Prince Bahram-i-Ghor set out joyfully to the North, and when he saw the Emerald Mountain he rubbed the *surma* on his eyes, and lo! what he desired was near, and what he desired not, was far. Then putting on the invisible cap, and entering the Emerald City, where houses, trees, dishes, furniture, pots and pans were all of emerald, he began to search for his dear Princess, but without success.

The fact is that the Princess was locked up inside seven prisons, for her father, who doted on her, was determined she should never fly away again. When she had disappeared he had wept bitterly, but when she returned he was dreadfully angry with her for giving him such a fright, and when she told him how she was married he locked up her at once, saying, “If your husband

1 Antimony.

<sup>2</sup> The Yech or Yach, (derived from the word *yakshas*, who attended on Kuvera, the god of wealth, and were guardians of his gardens and treasures) is a sort of woodland demon which entices men away from the right road at night and eats them. It has the power of assuming any shape. It cannot cross running water. The white cap which it wears is endowed with magical powers. It renders the wearer invisible. The Yech becomes the man's faithful servant as long as the cap is in the man's possession. The Yech is immensely powerful and at its human master's bidding will move whole mountains and towns.

<sup>3</sup> This is evidently an idea derived from the common phenomenon of ridge rising beyond ridge, each in turn deceiving the climber into the belief that he has reached the top.

comes to you, well and good, but you shall never go to him."

So inside seven prisons the poor Princess passed her days weeping and sighing. Now every day a woman servant brought the Princess her dinner in this manner. First she unlocked the outer door, and entered the outer prison, locking the door behind her. Then she unlocked the second door, and entered the second prison, locking the door behind her, and so on, till she came to the seventh prison, where the Princess Shahpasand sat. Here she left the dinner, returning as she had come.

Now the Prince, who was roaming about the city in his invisible cap, poking into all sorts of holes and corners, noticed this woman servant every evening at the same hour with a tray of sweets on her head going in a certain direction. Being curious he followed her, and when she opened the outer door he slipped in behind her. She, of course, could not see him, so she went on through all the seven prisons, the Prince following close behind. When they reached the seventh prison and the Prince saw his dear Princess, he could hardly restrain himself from calling her.

However, remembering he was invisible, he waited till the Princess began to eat, and while she ate he ate from the other side of the dish. The Princess at first could not believe her eyes when she saw the *pilau* disappearing in handfuls, and thought she must be dreaming, but when more than half the dishful had gone, she called out—"Who eats in the same dish with me?"

Then Prince Bahram-i-Ghor just lifted the cap a wee bit from his forehead, so that he was not quite visible, but showed like a figure by dawn-light. The Princess immediately called him by name, but wept thinking he was a ghost. Then the Prince removed the *yech* cap entirely, and the Princess wept with joy. When the King of the Emerald Mountain heard how the Princess's husband had found his way through dangers and difficulties to his dear Princess, the old man was much delighted, for he said, "Now that her husband has come to her, my daughter will never want to go to him."

So he made the Prince his heir, and they all lived happily ever after in the Emerald Kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The tale is a favourite and well-known one. It is impossible to say whether it is of Hindu or Musalman origin. It looks like a Hindu tale fastened on to Musalman heroes. This tale and stories about the Old Man of the Mountain have a certain family likeness which is worth observing.

## KING ALI MARDAN KHAN<sup>1</sup> AND THE SNAKE WOMAN<sup>2</sup>

Once upon a time King 'Ali Mardan Khan went out hunting and as he hunted in the forest above the Dal Lake<sup>3</sup> he saw before him a maiden beautiful as a flower, who was weeping bitterly. So he bade his followers remain behind, and going up to the beautiful damsel, he asked her who she was, and how she came into that wild forest alone.

"Oh, great king," she answered, "I am the Emperor of China's handmaiden, and as I was wandering about in the pleasure garden of the palace I lost my way. And now I must die, for I am hungry and weary."

Then the king said gallantly, "So fair a maiden must not die while 'Ali Mardan Khan can deliver her."

And calling to his servants he bade them convey the damsel to his palace in the Shalimar Gardens<sup>4</sup> and she, nothing loth, lived there with the king, who became so enamoured of her that he forgot everything else.

Now it so happened that the servant of a holy jogi was coming back from Gangabal<sup>5</sup> where he went every year to draw water for his master. As he passed the well of the Shalimar Gardens he saw the tops of the fountains that flashed in the sun like silver, and he said to himself "What wonder is this? I will go and see." So he put the vessel of water on the ground and went

Folklore from Kashmir collected by Mrs. F. A. Steel, with notes by Lieut. R. C. Temple, B. Sc., F. R. G. S., M. R. A. S., etc. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI—1882, pp. 230-2.

<sup>1</sup> The Celebrated 'Ali Mardan Khan of Shah Jahan's reign. He was for a time Governor of Kashmir (not king as the tal. says) about A. D. 1650, and was one of the most magnificent and best remembered the country ever had.

<sup>2</sup> The Snake Woman—The word used is *Lamia*, said in Kashmir to be a snake 200 years old, who has the power to turn into a woman at will. In Punjabi *lamia* is any long snake or serpent. The belief in the power of jogis to conquer snakes crops up in this tale. Similar legends about long-lived snakes abound in the neighbouring Kangra valley. 100 years' snakes can fly and are said to live in the sandal tree on the odour of the wood: they can also in Kashmir assume the shape of any animal. Only the 200 years' snake, *yahawwa*, can turn into a woman, while the 1000 years' snake can fly to the moon where he regales himself on nectar. In the Kangra district *Bhirti* is a malignant sprite who can assume any shape, man, animal, snake, etc. *Bhirti* has a special dislike to children and is held up to them as a bugbear. Mischiefs of all kinds, fires, etc. are put down to her; as also are cattle and agrarian thefts, a notion taken useful advantage of by the local thief. Like the *Lamia* she assumes her shape at night.

<sup>3</sup> The celebrated lake at Srinagar.

<sup>4</sup> At Srinagar, made by Jahangir, who preceded 'Ali Mardan Khan by a generation, being Shah Jahan's father. Moore has immortalized these gardens, the scene of the loves of Jahangir and Nur Mahal:

"And lo! if there be an Elysium on earth,  
It is this, it is this."

There are some Shalimar gardens near Lahore on the Amritsar Road made by Ranjit Singh.

<sup>5</sup> A holy lake on the top of Mt. Haramukh (16,905 ft.) in the North of Kashmir. It is one of the sources of the Jhelam river and the scene of an annual fair about 20th August.



in to see. There amid the fountains and trees he wandered astounded at their beauty, till wearied out he fell asleep.

Now the king was walking in the garden, and saw the man asleep, and noticed that he held something fast in his right hand. Stooping down he gently removed it, and found it was a small box containing a sweet-smelling ointment.<sup>1</sup> While he was looking at it the man awoke, and missing his box began to weep and wail. But the king bade him be comforted, and showing him the box, told him it should be returned to him safely if he told faithfully why he prized it so much. Then the man said: "O great king, the box is my master's, and contains a precious ointment of many virtues. So long as I have it in my hand, no harm can happen to me, and it enables me to go to Gangabal and return to my master with the water in so short a time that he is never without the sacred element."

"Tell me truly," said the king, "is your master indeed such a man? Is he indeed such a holy saint?"

Then said the servant, "He is indeed such a man, and there is nothing in the wide world he does not know."

Then the king became curious to see this holy man, so he said to the servant:—"Go home to your master, and tell him King 'Ali Mardan Khan has his box, and will keep it till he comes to fetch it himself."

So the servant set off to his master, but as he had not the magical box, it was two years and a half before he reached home. All this time King 'Ali Mardan Khan lived with the Snake Woman and forgot everything else in the wide world.<sup>2</sup> Yet he was not happy: a strange white look came into his face and a stony look into his eyes.

Now when the servant told his master, the jogi, what had happened, he was very angry with him, but as he could not live without the box which enabled him to get the water from Gangabal he set off to the Court of King, Ali Mardan Khan; when he arrived there the King gave him the box as he had promised.

Then the jogi said, "Oh king, you have been gracious to me, now in my turn I will do you a kind action. Tell me truly, had you always that white scared face and those stony eyes?"

<sup>1</sup> Jogis keep ointments and unguents to propitiate certain Gods with, e. g. Mahadev, Parbati Mahabir (Hanuman), Bhairava, Kali, etc.

<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact 'Ali Mardan Khan, like all the Mughal Emperors and Governors, merely stayed the summer in Kashmir. Indeed his journeys to and fro gave rise to an extravagance that has become historical.

"No," said the king, and hung his head.

"Tell me," said the jogi, "have you any strange woman in the palace?"

Then the king, who felt a strange relief in telling the jogi all about it, recounted the whole story from the beginning. Then said the jogi—

"Oh king, she is no handmaiden of the Emperor of China. She is nothing but a *Wasdeo*, a *Lamia*, the two hundred years' old snake who has the power of taking the form of a woman."

The king was very angry at first, but when the jogi insisted, he began to be afraid, and at last promised to do as he was bid, and so find out the truth of the matter.

Therefore, that very evening according to the jogi's order he had two kinds of *khichri*<sup>1</sup> made ready and placed in one dish. One half was sweet *khichri*, and the other half was very salt.

Now when dinner was served the sweet *khichri* side of the dish was put towards the king, but the salt side towards the Snake Woman. She found it very salt, but seeing the king eat away without any remark went on eating also. But after they had retired to rest, when the king by the jogi's orders was feigning sleep, the Snake Woman became so thirsty from all the salt food she had eaten, that she longed for water. As there was none in the room she had to go out for it. Now a Snake Woman always resumes her snake shape when she goes out at night. The king could scarcely lie still as he saw the beautiful woman in his arms change to a deadly slimy snake that slid out of the bed and out of the door into the garden. He followed it softly, it drank of every fountain by the way, but nothing quenched its thirst till it reached the Dal Lake, where it bathed and drank for hours.

Fully satisfied of the horrible truth the king begged the jogi to show him some way out of the trouble. Whereon the jogi said: "Don't be alarmed. I can save you and destroy this Snake Woman if you will do as I bid you." The king promised, and according to the jogi's orders had an oven made of a hundred different kinds of metal, very large and very strong, with a cover and a padlock. This was placed in a shady spot in the garden, and fastened to the ground with chains. Then the king said to the Snake Woman, "My heart's beloved! let us amuse ourselves with cooking our own food to-day."

<sup>1</sup> Sweet *khichri* consists of rice, sugar, cocoanut, raisins, almonds, cardamoms, and aniseed; salt *khichri* of pulse and rice.

She, nothing loth, consented. Then the king heated the oven very hot and set to work to knead bread, but being clumsy at it he found it hard work, so after he had baked two loaves he said to the Snake Woman—"To oblige me bake the bread while I knead it."

At first she refused, saying she did not like ovens, but when the king said, "Oh, I see you do not love me since you will not help me," she set to work with a bad grace to tend the baking.

The king watched his opportunity as she stooped over the oven's mouth to turn the loaves, gave her a shove in, clapped down the cover and locked it fast.

When the Snake Woman found herself caught, she bounded so that if it had not been for the chains she would have bounded out of the garden, oven and all, and this went on from four o'clock one day to four o'clock the next, when all was quiet. Then the jogi and the king waited till the oven was cold, and when they opened it the jogi took the ashes, and gave the king a small round stone that was in the middle of them, saying "This is the real essence of the Snake Woman, whatever you touch with it will turn to gold." But the king said—"Such a treasure as that is more than a man's life is worth, for it must bring envy and battle and murder with it." So when he went to Atak he threw it into the river near Hoti Mardan.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hoti Mardan, a frontier post, is a little to the north-west of Atak on the Lunda River. I do not know that Hoti Mardan had ever any connection with 'Ali Mardan Khan. I think it is pretty clear that this is an old tale fastened on to a celebrated man as a peg whereon to hang it.

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## FOLKLORE IN WESTERN INDIA

### THE TWO THAGS AND THE RAVARIYA<sup>1</sup>

There were two *thags* who had spent a great part of their lives in robbing and cheating their simple neighbours, but at last there came a time when they found that there was no more scope for the exercise of their talents in their native village, so they resolved upon going out to seek fresh fields and pastures new. They set out at once, and after a long journey came to a city, on the outskirts of which they saw a poor Ravariya, sitting near a wretched hut weaving his *patti*.<sup>2</sup>

“Tell us, brother,” said they, approaching him with a look of pity, “how it is that you do not live in the city, and prefer a wretched hovel in this solitary place to the fine houses there?”

“I am too poor,” replied the man, “to afford to rent a house in the city, and there is no one there generous enough to accommodate me for nothing; so I sit here all day doing my work, and when night comes I go and sleep under the roof I have made myself.” “And,” he added, “I live on an anna or two that I manage to earn by selling the two or three yards of *patti* I weave every day.”

“We really pity your lot, my man,” said the *thags*, “and henceforward shall be your best friends. Come now, get up and follow us to the river-side, where we shall give you a suit of clothes to put on in place of the wretched garments you now wear.” The Ravariya got up and followed them, rejoicing greatly at so much notice being taken of a poor man like himself by persons so much above him in life, as he thought the *thags* to be, for they were decently dressed and looked quite respectable. When they arrived at the river-side the *thags* bade the weaver get his head and his overgrown beard shaved and wash himself in the stream. After he had done all this they gave him a suit of clothes to wear, which he joyfully put on, while the two men

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Folklore in Western India. By Putlibai D. H. Wadia. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IV. Part CLXXIX. January, 1886. Page 2.

<sup>1</sup> A weaver of the broad tape used for bedsteads.

<sup>2</sup> The tape woven by Ravariyas.

said to him:—"Go now and attend to your work, but be always ready to render us whatever service we may require of you."

"Very well, *Ma bap*,"<sup>1</sup> answered the poor man and returned towards his hut, while the two *thags* went on towards the city. Entering it they wandered about for some time, watching for an opportunity of practising their vile art upon some poor victim, when they heard that the king of the country, who had a beautiful daughter, was looking out for some great prince as a husband for her. This put an idea into the heads of the *thags*, and they instantly retraced their steps to the hut of the Ravariya, whom they found hard at work at his *patti*. They bade him get up and follow them immediately, and the poor weaver, true to his promise, obeyed them.

When they came to a secluded place the two men dressed the Ravariya in gold embroidered garments and jewels, and getting a litter from the city made him lie in it in the position of a sick man, bidding him neither to stir out of it, nor to utter a single syllable without their permission. They then ordered the bearers to carry the litter towards the city, and they themselves walked one on each side of it waving *chamris*.<sup>2</sup> They also hired every man and animal they could pick up on the road, till they had a respectable following of attendants, horses, and ponies.

They went on thus with a great show of pomp and parade till they reached one of the palaces of the king, when in a peremptory tone they ordered the gate-keeper to open the gate and give them ingress. The gate-keeper, however, refused to obey them, whereupon one of the *thags*, making a great show of authority, cried out:—"What! Is your Raja Sahib to wait till this wretched gate-keeper makes up his mind to open the gate? Not for worlds? So, fall on my men, and break open the gates that we may get in." The men made towards the gate with what sticks and staves they had for arms, and the poor gate-keeper, thinking them to be in earnest, opened the gates wide in great fright. The *thags* and their followers entered the palace with a great deal of noise and bustle, while the poor gate-keeper ran full speed to apprise the king, his master, of the advent of some great prince, with a formidable retinue, in the city, and to tell him how his men had taken forcible possession of the palace. The king forthwith sent his minister to inquire of the new-

<sup>1</sup> Lit., father and mother, but really an expression of respect: patron or protector.

<sup>2</sup> Whisks made of yaks' tails: a universal sign of Royalty in India.

comers who they were, and what had pleased the great prince to visit his territories.

The minister went accordingly, and begged admittance at the palace gates, but they refused to let him in. After making him wait outside for some time, one of the *thags* came out to meet him, whom the minister requested to usher him into the presence of the prince; but the *thag*, assuming an air of dignity, replied: — “No, no, we are not going to trouble our great Raja by taking you into his presence, for he is ill and requires quiet and rest. Go you, therefore on your way.”

The minister thereupon inquired of the *thag* whose son the prince was, and what was the object of his visit to the country.

“Oh! he is the son of that great monarch,” he replied, “who levies tribute on your master, and is come here for a change of air, in order to recruit his health, and does not, therefore, care to be disturbed either by you or by your master.”

The minister had therefore no alternative but to leave the palace, and he straightway returned to his master and acquainted him with the very cold reception he had met with at the hands of the strange prince’s attendants. The king attributed this to his having omitted to send the prince presents worthy of him, and so he got ready five trays full of *asharfis*<sup>1</sup> and bade the minister go once more to the prince and present them to him with his compliments, after instituting inquiries after his health. The king also instructed his minister to learn from the prince whether he was unmarried, and if he would do him the honour to accept the hand of his daughter in marriage.

The minister obeyed his royal master, and repaired to the residence of the strange Raja, accompanied by five men bearing the presents. This time, however, he obtained admittance into the palace without much trouble, so, going up to the *thags* he asked them to present him to their prince that he might lay at His Highness’s feet the presents his master had sent for him. The eyes of the *thags* glistened when the treasures were displayed to them, but thinking that if they held out a little longer they would get more out of the credulous king, they said to the minister: “Return home with your treasures, brother, the Raja Sahib is too ill to see you, besides, he wants none of your presents, and would never accept them. For what lacks he in his father’s treasury?”

<sup>1</sup> A Gold coin, value about 30 shillings.

The Minister, however, begged so hard to be presented to the prince, promising that if it did not please His Highness to accept the presents he would withdraw with them, that the *thags* yielded to his entreaties and told him to wait a while till they went and obtained their royal master's permission. Going to the Ravariya they instructed him how to act when they brought the minister into the room. "Mind you do not answer a single question of his," said they, "but after he has put a great many to you, utter only a long *han*<sup>1</sup> in response. And when he begs of you to accept the gifts he has brought do not make any reply to him. If, however, he still goes on imploring you to accept them, and will not withdraw from your presence, you can cry out as if tired of his importunities, 'Away with them!' and immediately make a pretence of going to sleep."

They then ushered the minister into the mock king's presence when he commenced inquiring after his health, but the sham Raja Sahib did not condescend to utter a single syllable in reply. He then begged the prince's acceptance of the presents his tributary had sent him, but even then the great man made no reply. At last, however, as if his patience had been completely exhausted, he cried out, "Away with them!" and in a moment the two *thags* turned the minister and the bearers of presents out of the room. The minister returned homewards, greatly disappointed at not having had an opportunity of mentioning to the foreign prince the proposal of marriage.

When the king found that his presents had not been accepted he began to fear that the great prince would slip through his fingers, and baulk him of his expectations of having him as his son-in-law, so he despatched the minister to him once more with still costlier presents. The eyes of the two *thags* sparkled with delight at sight of the treasure, but being consummate hypocrites they still made a pretence of not caring for them. At the minister's request, they went to the Ravariya under pretext of asking his permission for the minister to enter his presence, and said to him, "When the minister speaks to you behave yourself as you did the other day, and when he has begged very hard of you to accept the presents simply say, 'Now keep them and have done with it'."

Having thus tutored the mock king, they took the minister and his presents into the room where he lay in bed, and right well did he act his part, and when, at the conclusion of it, he

<sup>1</sup> i. e. 'yes'.

said, "Now keep them and have done with it," the *thags* ordered the bearers to put down their costly loads at His Highness's feet and withdraw. Taking leave of the prince with a low bow the minister went out of the room with one of the *thags*, while the other stood waving a *chamri* over the Ravariya's person.

"Is His Highness unmarried?" inquired the minister of his companion when out of hearing of the Ravariya.

"Yes," replied he.

"Can you then persuade him to honour my master by marrying his daughter? He will give her a large dowry and —"

"No, no," interrupted the *thag*, "do not entertain such an idea for a moment, he is too great a man to marry your master's daughter, and, besides, he is ill and not likely to think of matrimony at present."

"But there is no harm in asking his will," argued the minister, and he pressed the *thag* so hard that at last he thought it worthy to promise to broach the subject to the prince at the first opportunity and to let him know His Highness's will as early as possible.

In a few days the king received intimation through the minister that the great prince had been pleased to accept the offer of the hand of his daughter, and would be glad if the nuptials were solemnized at an early date. At this there were great rejoicings in the city and preparations for the approaching wedding went on for some days. The king placed a large palace at the disposal of his son-in-law, and soon after celebrated the wedding of the Ravariya and the princess with great pomp.

After the weaver was fairly installed in the palace with his royal wife, the two *thags*, fearing the chances of exposure, thought it high time that they should take their departure from the city. So they dismissed all their attendants, and under pretence of returning to the court of the bridegroom's father, they took their leave of the princess and her Ravariya husband, and left the city, taking care, however, to carry away with them all the costly presents, etc. they had received for the mock king, from the bride's father. When parting they did not forget to impress upon the Ravariya the necessity of his keeping himself well on his guard, so that there might be no exposure of the terrible swindle they had practised upon the king.

Some time after they had departed, it so happened that one evening, when the princess was sitting on an open balcony with



her lord, she expressed her desire to play a game of *chaupur*<sup>1</sup> with him by the light of the moon that was shining brightly at the time, but the Ravariya who had never played the game in his life, exclaimed, "What! play a game of *chaupur*, you foolish woman? I would rather weave a few yards of *patti*, sitting here under such a bright moon."

The poor woman was struck dumb at these words which revealed to her what her husband was, and could not utter a word in reply. She instantly withdrew into the palace, and from that moment ceased to have any intercourse with him. She remained thus estranged from him so long that life in the palace became insupportable to him, and one night he quietly slipped away, and, betaking himself to his hut in the jungle, resumed his old profession of weaving *pattis*.

After the lapse of a few years, the two *thags* began to be curious to know how the Ravariya was enjoying his high estate, and whether he was living or dead. So they journeyed once more to the city in which they had left him. When they came to the place where they had first found him they were greatly surprised to see him sitting there working away at his *pattis* as of old. On their inquiring of him the reason of his leaving the palace, he related in detail the conversation he had with his wife on that bright moonlight night; how it had led to his real position in life being known; how she had discarded him ever afterwards, and how, fearing for his head in case the king came to hear of it, he had run away from his wife, and had once more taken to his old profession of *patti* weaving.

"Never mind what has happened, but come with us once more to where we take you," said the *thags*, "and we shall make it all right for you."

So saying they took him to the river-side and gave him a string of beads, bidding him to continue sitting there telling his beads till he was sent for by his wife. They then left him, and, purchasing some *ghi* and *gul*<sup>2</sup> from the *bazar*, mixed them together. One of the *thags* covered his body with this composition, and the other got a litter and placed his besmeared companion in it. He then dressed himself in woman's clothes, and, adorning his person with rich jewels, transformed himself into a very good-looking young woman. Ordering the litter to be carried towards the city,

<sup>1</sup> A game played by moving men on a kind of chess board according to the throws of a kind of dice. In all folklore this is a 'royal' game. The whole process is detailed in *Legends of the Punjab*, Vol. I. Page 243 ff

<sup>2</sup> *Ghi* is boiled butter: *gul* is a coarse unrefined sugar.

he walked alongside of it, *chamri* in hand warding off the flies that sought to reach the *ghi* and *gul* with which his companion was covered. On the way he hired three or four men as attendants, and thus they all walked on until they came in sight of the palace the Ravariya had deserted. Ordering the litter to be set down on a spot well overlooked by one of the windows of the palace, he set some of the hirelings to cook their food and do such other work for them.

By-and-by, the princess, on coming to know that a woman, with an invalid in a litter, had put up near her palace, went up to the window to have a look at them. Seeing a beautiful woman well dressed, and decked with ornaments, attending to the wants of the occupant of the litter, she naturally inquired of the mock woman who she was, and what ailed the person she was nursing. The disguised *thag* replied, as though he were a woman, that she was a traveller who had broken her journey there, and the person she nursed was suffering from leprosy. The lady further inquired what relation the leper was to her, to which she replied that he was her husband.

"That loathsome leper your husband?" sneered the princess, with her nose in the air, "and you are nursing him?"

"Oh! despise not my poor husband," cried the transformed *thag*, pretending to be hurt by the words of the princess, "where does a woman seek for happiness but in her husband, her lord, her master? He has been suffering ever so long from this foul disease and I have been travelling about with him from country to country, vainly hoping that he would profit by change of climate; and at last, finding this place cool and pleasant, I have halted here and by your kind permission, shall stay here for a week or so. Is a woman to desert her husband because he is a leper? Oh no, not for worlds! I have always thought it my duty to serve and nurse my sick husband, however wearisome the task might be."

When the princess heard all this it brought thoughts of her own husband into her mind, and she began to reflect upon her conduct in deserting him merely because he happened to be a Ravariya by trade, whilst that rich and beautiful woman, as she took the *thag* to be, nursed and ministered to the wants of her husband although he was a filthy leper. The more the princess pondered over this incident the more she felt how heartless had been her conduct towards her husband, till at last she despatched her horsemen to find him out and to exhort him to

return to her immediately. In the meantime she intimated to the *thags* that she had no objection to their staying where they were as long as they pleased. The horsemen found the Ravariya sitting by the river-side telling his beads, just as the *thags* had left him, and succeeded in persuading him to return to his wife.

A day or two later the *thag* who played the part of a woman requested the princess to lend him some ten thousand rupees, promising to return them when remittances arrived from his country. In her great joy at the restoration of her husband to her, and knowing that she was in some measure indebted to the leper's wife for the happy event, the princess did not hesitate to give the loan asked for. That very night the *thags* quietly decamped from the city, and washed off their assumed forms at the first river that came in their way.

The Ravariya and his wife henceforward lived in peace and happiness, and the *thags* also turned over a new leaf and were reformed characters ever afterwards!

### THE SLEEPING NASIB

Once upon a time there lived two brothers, one of whom was possessed of ample means, while the other was utterly destitute, but the rich brother would not so much as give a handful of barley to save his brother and his poor family from starvation. One day the rich brother had occasion to give a large feast in honour of the nuptials of his children, and although he had invited a large number of his friends to it, he had not so much as sent a servant to ask his brother and his family to join them.

Now the poor brother, who had been long out of work, had exhausted all his resources, so that on the day of the feast he and his family had not a morsel of anything to eat, and this had been their state for two or three days past. Towards evening therefore he said to his wife: "Go, wife, and see if you can bring us some of the leavings of the feast. There must be some bones and crumbs left in the pots and dishes; so make haste and do bring us something." The poor woman accordingly went round to the back of her rich relative's house. But she saw at a glance that she was too late, as the pots and pans had already been scrubbed clean, and that there was, therefore, no chance of her getting anything. Just then she saw some white fluid in a large

tub, and knew that it was the water in which the rice for the feast had been washed. So she begged of the servants to let her have some of it; but the mistress of the house, who happened to come up at the time, forbade them to give her anything at all. "Even this water has its uses," said she, "and it must not be wasted," and she relentlessly turned her back on her poor , who had to walk home to her unfortunate little ones handed.

When she told her husband how she had been treated by his wife, he was beside himself with rage and disappointment and swore that he would go that very night to the rich fields of his brother and bring away some sheaves of barley, of him, to make bread for his starving little ones. So he took a scythe, and under cover of night stole noiselessly out of the house, and walked up to his brother's barley fields. But when he was entering one, his further progress was arrested by somebody, who looked like a watch-man, loudly asking him : wanted.

"Come here to take home some barley from this field of yours, since he is determined not to give me anything, although my children are actually dying for want of food. But who are you, to put yourself thus in my way?"

"I am your brother's nasib (luck), placed here to guard his fields, and I cannot let you have anything that belongs to me....." was the stern reply.

"My brother's nasib indeed!" exclaimed the poor man in surprise, "then, where on earth has my nasib stowed himself away that he would not help me to procure the means of subsistence for my starving wife and children?"

"Thy nasib!" said the other mockingly; "why, he lies sleeping beyond the seven seas; go thither if you wouldst find and wake him!"

So the poor fellow had to trudge back home just as he had come. The words of his brother's nasib, however, jarred on his memory, and he could not rest till he had told his wife of his interview with that strange being. She, in her turn, urged him to go and find out his nasib, and see if he could wake him from his slumbers, as they had suffered long enough from his lethargy.

The husband agreed to this, and the wife borrowed, or rather begged, some barley of her neighbours, ground it, and made it into bread, over which the poor starving children and the

unfortunate parents broke their four days' fast. The poor father then took leave of his family, and set out on his journey.

He had proceeded about twelve kos, or so, when he again felt the pangs of hunger, and sat down under the spreading shade of a tree to eat a loaf or two of the bread that his wife had reserved for his journey. Just then, a little mango dropped at his feet from the tree, and on looking up, he saw that he was under a mango-tree filled to luxuriance with a crop of fine mangoes. He eagerly picked up the fruit and gnawed at it, but to his great disappointment found that it was quite bitter! So he flung it away from his lips, and cursing his fate for not letting him enjoy even so much as a mango, again looked up at the tree and sighed. But the tree echoed back his sighs and said: "Brother, who art thou? and whither dost thou wend thy way? Have mercy upon me!"

"Oh! do not ask me that question," said the poor man in distress, "I do not like to dwell upon it."

On the tree, however, pressing him further, he replied: "As you are so very anxious to know my history, I shall tell it to you. Learn then first of all that—I am going in search of my nasib, who I am told lies asleep beyond the seven seas! He then unfolded to the sympathising tree the whole doleful tale of his poverty, his brother's brutal treatment of him, and his interview with his brother's nasib.

When the tree had heard all, it said: "I feel very much for you and hope you will succeed in finding out your nasib. And if ever you meet him, will you not do me the favour to ask him, if he can tell why it should be my lot to produce such bitter mangoes? Not a traveller that passes under me fails to take up one of my fruit, only to fling it from him in disgust on finding it taste so bitter and unwholesome, and curse me into the bargain."

"I will, with pleasure," was our hero's reply, as he listlessly rose and again proceeded on his weary journey. He had not gone many miles, however, when he saw a very strange sight. A large fish was rolling most restlessly on the sandy banks of a river—it would toss itself to and fro, and curse itself at every turn for being so miserable.

Our hero felt much grieved to see the plight the poor creature was in, when the fish, happening to look at him, asked him who he was, and where he was going.

On being told that he was going in search of his nasib, the fish said: "If you succeed in finding your nasib, will you ask him in my name, why it is that a poor creature like myself should be so ill used as to be made to leave its native element and to be tortured to death on these hot sands?"

"Very well," replied our hero, and went his way again.

Some days after this, he arrived at a large city, the towers of which seemed to touch the skies, so grand and beautiful was it. As he proceeded farther into it, admiring its lofty edifices and beautifully built palaces, he was told that the Raja of that place was just then engaged in having a new tower built, which, in spite of all the skill the best architects bestowed on it, tumbled down as soon as it was finished, without any apparent cause whatever. The poor traveller, therefore, out of mere curiosity, went near the tower, when the Raja, who was sitting by, with a disconsolate look, watching the operations of the workmen, was struck with his foreign look and manners, and asked him who he was, and where he was going. Our hero, thereupon, fell at the Raja's feet, related to him his strange story, and told him the nature of his errand. The Raja heard him through, and then desired him to inquire of his nasib, why it was that the tower he was bent on building collapsed as soon as it reached completion.

The poor man made his obeisance to the Raja, and promising to do his bidding, soon took leave of him.

He had not gone very far, however, on what now seemed to be his interminable journey, when he encountered a fine horse beautifully caparisoned and ready bridled, pasturing in a meadow.

On seeing him the steed looked sorrowfully at him and said: "Good Sir, you look as if you were laden with as much care as I am; tell me, therefore, where you are going, and what is the object of your journey?"

Our hero told him everything, and the horse, too, in his turn, charged him with a message to his nasib. He was to ask that personage, why it was that the gallant steed, so powerful and so handsome, was destined to his utter grief and despair to idle away his life in the manner he did, instead of being made to gallop and prance about under the control of a rider, although he was all-anxious to serve a master and go to the battlefield to share his fortunes, wherever he might wish to take him.

"Very well, my friend," replied our hero, "I shall do as you desire." So saying he patted the noble animal on its back and trudged along as before.

But as he proceeded further and further without so much as getting a glimpse of even one of the seven seas he had been told of, our hero felt utterly disheartened and tired out both in body and mind by the hardships and privations he was going through. So he threw himself under the shade of a large tree and soon fell fast asleep. But in a short time his slumbers were suddenly disturbed by the cries and yells of some eagles that had their nest in the topmost branches of the tree. No sooner, however, did he open his eyes than he saw a huge serpent creeping up the tree to get at the young eagles in the nest. He immediately drew his sword and divided the hideous crawling reptile into three pieces! The poor little eagles in the branches joined each other in a chorus of delight at this, and our hero, covering up the remains of their tormentor with his plaid, sheathed his sword, and soon fell fast asleep again.

When the old birds that had gone out in search of food came back and saw the traveller sleeping under the tree, they were at once seized with the idea that he was the enemy that had so long and so successfully been destroying their progeny; for many times before had that serpent succeeded in climbing the top of the tree and devouring either the birds' eggs or their little ones. So the enraged couple determined to be revenged upon him, and the male bird proposed that he would go and perch himself upon one of the topmost branches, and then fling himself down upon the sleeper with such violence as to crush him to death. The female bird, however, was for breaking the bones of the supposed enemy with one swoop of her powerful wing. At this stage, fortunately for our hero, the young birds interfered, and declared how the man had proved himself their friend by destroying their real enemy, the serpent, the carcass of which they pointed out to them covered up with the plaid. The old birds immediately tore the cloth open, and were convinced beyond doubt of the innocence of the sleeping man. So the old female bird, changing her anger into love, placed herself by his side, and began to fan him with her large wings, while the male flew away to a neighbouring city and pouncing upon a tray full of sweetmeats, temptingly displayed at a pastry cook's bore it away with him, and placed it at the feet of the still slumbering traveller.

When our hero awoke from his slumbers he saw the situation at a glance, and was deeply gratified at the attentions bestowed upon him. So without much hesitation he made a hearty meal of the sweet things he saw before him. It was, in fact, the first

hearty meal he had made for many and many a day, and, feeling very much refreshed in body and buoyant in spirits, he told the birds all his story, how he had left his starving children to set out in search of his nasib, how he had travelled to such a distance amidst great hardships and privations, and how he had hitherto met with no success. The birds felt deeply grieved for him, and told him that it was hopeless for him to try to cross the seven seas without their help, and that they would, therefore, as a small return for what he had done for them, give him one of their numerous brood that would carry him on its back and deposit him dry-shod and safe beyond the seven seas.

Our hero was profuse in his thanks to the birds, and soon mounted the back of one of the young eagles, and bidding a hearty farewell to his feathered friends resumed his journey, this time not over hard and rough roads and mountains, or through deep dark jungles, but through the fresh balmy air and the cool transcendent brightness of the skies.

All the seven seas were crossed one after another in quick succession, when from his lofty position in the air he one day perceived a human figure stretched at full length on a bleak and desolate beach. This he was led to believe must be his nasib, so he asked the good eagle to place him down near it.

The bird obeyed, and our hero, eagerly went up to the recumbent figure and drew away from his head the sheet in which it was enveloped. Finding, however, that it would not wake, he twisted one of the sluggard's great toes with such violence that he started up at once, and began to rub his eyes, and press his brows to ascertain where he was, and who had so rudely awakened him.

"You lazy idiot," cried our hero, half in delight at his success and half in anger, "do you know how much pain and misery you have caused me by thus slumbering peacefully on for years together? How can a man come by his share of the good things of this world while his nasib neglects him so much as to go and throw himself into such a deep slumber in so unapproachable a corner of the earth? Get up at once, and promise never to relapse again into slumber after I depart."

"No, no, I cannot sleep again, now that you have waked me," replied the nasib; "I was sleeping only because you had not hitherto taken the trouble to rouse me. Now that I have been awakened I shall attend you wherever you go, and will not let you want for anything."



"Very well, then," cried our hero, perfectly satisfied, "now look sharp and give me plain and true answers to a few questions I have been commissioned to ask you."

He then delivered to him all the different messages given to him by the mango-tree, the fish, the Raja, and the horse. The nasib listened with great attention, and then replied as follows:—

"The mango tree will bear bitter mangoes so long as it does not give up the treasure that lies buried under it.

The fish has a large solid slab of gold hidden in its stomach, which must be squeezed out of its body to relieve it of its sufferings.

As for the Raja—tell him to give up building towers for the present and turn his attention to his household, and he will find that, although his eldest daughter has long since passed her twelfth year, she has not yet been provided with a husband, which circumstance draws many a sigh from her heart, and as each sigh pierces the air, the lofty structure shakes under its spell and gives way. If the Raja therefore, first sees his daughter married, he will not have any more cause to complain."

Coming then to speak of the horse, the nasib patted our hero on his back, and continued:—

"The rider destined to gladden the heart of that noble animal is none but yourself. Go, therefore and mount him, and he will take you home to your family."

This terminated our hero's interview with his nasib, and after again admonishing him not to relapse into slumber, he mounted his aerial charger once more, and joyously turned his face homewards.

When the seven seas had again been crossed, the faithful bird took him to where he had found the horse, and laid him down safe beside him. The traveller then took leave of the eagle with many expressions of gratitude and going up to the steed stroked him gently and said: "Here I am sent to be your rider! I was predestined to ride you, but as my nasib was lying asleep to this time, I could not see my way to do so!"

"*Bi-smi-llah*," exclaimed the horse, "I am quite at your service." Our hero, thereupon, mounted the steed and the noble animal soon galloped away with him, and both horse and rider being infused with a sense of happiness did not feel the hardships and fatigues of the journey so much as they would have done under other circumstances.

While passing by the river on the banks of which he had perceived the fish writhing in agony, our hero saw that it was still there in the same sad plight. So he at once went up to it, and catching hold of it, squeezed the slab of gold out of its body, restored the poor creature to its element, and putting the gold into his wallet, made his way to the city where he had encountered the Raja.

When he arrived there he put up at a sarai, and purchased with the gold acquired from the fish, rich clothes, jewellery, and weapons befitting a young nobleman, and, attiring himself in them, presented himself before the Raja.

The Raja was surprised to see him, so much changed did he look from his former self, and welcoming him most cordially, gave him a seat of honour in the midst of his nobles. He then inquired of him whether his nasib had given him any solution of the vexed question of the collapse of the tower, and was delighted to hear in reply that so simple a matter was the cause of all the annoyance he had suffered, and all the expense he had been put to. With a view, therefore, to put an end to the difficulty at once, he ordered his daughter to be brought before him, and putting her hand into that of our hero, proclaimed him then and there his son-in-law.

After this the tower stood as erect and firm as the Raja wished it, and the whole kingdom resounded with the praises of the traveller who had been the means of contributing to its stability, and no one grudged him the hand of the fair princess as a reward for his services.

After a few days spent in feasting and merry-making, our hero took leave of his father-in-law, and set out on his homeward journey with a large retinue. When he reached the mango tree that produced bitter fruit, and sat down under its branches surrounded by all the evidences of wealth and honour, he could not help contrasting his former state with his present altered circumstances, and poured forth his thanks to the good Allah, who had hitherto befriended him. He then ordered his men to dig at the roots of the tree, and their labours were soon rewarded by the discovery of a large copper vessel, so heavy as to require the united strength of a number of men to haul it up. When the treasure trove was opened, it was found to be full of gold and jewels of great value, and our hero got the whole laden upon camels, and joyfully resumed his journey home. When he entered his native place with his bright cavalcade and his lovely

wife, quite a crowd of eager spectators gathered round him, and his brother and other relatives who were of the number, although they recognized him, were too awe-struck to address him. So he ordered his tents to be pitched in a prominent part of the town, and put up there with his bride. In due course he caused inquiries to be made regarding his first wife and his children, and soon had the satisfaction of embracing them once more. He was grieved to find them in the same half-starved, ill-clad condition he had left them in, but was nevertheless thankful that their life had been spared so long. His next step was to take his new bride to his first, and therefore more rightful wife, place her hand in hers, and bid her look upon her as a younger sister. This the old lady promised gladly to do.

All his friends and neighbours then called upon him to offer him their congratulations, and even his hard-hearted brother and his wife failed not to visit him, and wish him joy of his good fortune. Seeing now that he was a much richer man than themselves, they tried their best to ingratiate themselves into his favour, and the wife even went so far as to invite his two wives to a grand feast, which she said she was going to give in honour of his happy return and reunion with his family.

Our hero consented to let his wives go to the feast, and the next day the two ladies, attiring themselves in their best clothes and jewels, went to their brother-in-law's house, where a large party, consisting of ladies of the best families, had assembled to do them honour. After some time spent in the interchange of civilities, the whole company sat down to a sumptuous banquet. As the meal proceeded however, what was the surprise of the guests to see, that instead of putting the rich viands into her mouth, the old wife of our hero placed a tiny morsel each time on each of the different articles of her jewellery and on the deep gold embroidered borders of her sari. For some time no one dared to question her as to the reason of her strange behaviour, but at last one old woman, bolder than the rest, and who was, moreover, possessed of a sharp tongue, cried out in a loud voice: "Bibi, what are you about? You don't seem to have come here to feed yourself for up to now you have been doing nothing but feed your jewellery and your clothes!"

"You are right, old lady," replied our hero's wife, "you are quite right when you say that I have been feeding my jewellery and clothes; for has not this repast been provided, and all this distinguished company brought together, in honour of our rich

clothes and jewellery? There was a time, when neither my husband nor myself was thought fit to partake of our hostess's hospitality; nay, at one time, even so much as a bucketful of water in which rice had been washed for a feast, was refused to me, although my husband, my children and myself were starving. And all that because then we were not possessed of these fine clothes, and this jewellery!"

With these words she took her co-wife by the hand, and the two turning their backs on their hostess, walked majestically out to their palanquins and returned home.

The chagrin, disappointment, and rage of the hostess knew no bounds at this, especially as all her guests, instead of taking her part, began to laugh at her, and told her she had been well served for her ill-mannered pride and her hard-heartedness to her relatives when in distress. Nay, to show their contempt for her, they all left the feast unfinished, and went away to their homes in rapid succession.

Our hero passed the rest of his life with his two wives and their children very happily ever afterwards, and had never again any cause to complain against his nasib.

### THE MISTRESS OF EIGHT SHIPS: OR THE DISCARDED WIFE

Once upon a time there lived in a certain city a rich old merchant, who had an only daughter. They were all in all to each other, for the old man had lost his wife, and had no other child on whom to bestow his affection; while the young lady had no one else to care for and love her, her husband (to whom she was married at an early age) having for some reason best known to himself discarded her immediately after the marriage had been celebrated. Now the good old merchant had an elder brother, who was as great a merchant as himself, and was blessed with no less than seven sons, who were all clever and good young men, and managed the affairs of their aged father to his entire satisfaction. They even travelled to distant countries for the purpose of commerce, and each year brought home seven ships laden with gold as the fruit of their commercial enterprise. Now this fact was regarded by the uncle of the young men with mingled feelings of admiration and envy, for he was grieved to think that while his brother rejoiced in the satisfaction of having

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Folklore in Western India. By Putlibai D. H. Wadia. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII. Part CCXXI. May, 1889. Page 146.

seven such excellent sons, it was his misfortune not to be blessed with even one!

One day the old man said to his daughter: "I wish, my child, you had been born a boy, for although you make me supremely happy by your goodness and your tender regard for me, still it is not in your power to give me that satisfaction which your cousins give my brother, for you know they not only manage his business well, but every year add considerably to his fortune, and thus enhance his worth and reputation by their enterprise in commerce. How proud must he be of all those good sons of his! If I had but one son, and that son brought me, just for once, as much gold as they bring him each year, I should be happy indeed!"

"I wish, my father, with all my heart," cried the daughter "that I could be of as much service to you as a son. Though I am but a woman I have a brave heart, and if only I had your kind permission I also would go forth into the world as a merchant, and by the help of Allah bring you as much gold as your heart could desire."

"Oh! indeed!" cried her father laughing, and, pressing her to his heart, he added!—"Do not, my dear girl, for a moment suppose, that I in any way under-estimate your rare merits by longing for a son. No, my child; a daughter can do her duty as well as a son can do his, though each must do it in a different way; and believe me, no daughter in the world ever did her duty by her aged father so faithfully and so well as you do yours."

At this stage the conversation dropped; but from that moment the young lady resolved upon a course by which to give her father as much satisfaction as ever a son could. In a week's time she succeeded in persuading her father to fit out a large ship for her, and to load it with the costliest merchandise. She then waited till her cousins, the seven young men whom her father admired so much, had set sail, for she wished to follow in their wake and find out in which country they met with such a lucrative market for their goods.

When the time came for the cousins to set sail the young lady took an affectionate leave of her aged father, and dressing herself in man's attire went on board her ship and bade the captain steer it in the track of the seven ships. Away they sailed all the gallant vessels abreast of one another, followed at a short distance by our intrepid heroine's, and after a very long voyage all the eight ships entered the mouth of a magnificent river, and

there dropped anchor. The lady waited till her cousins had landed, one after another, and had begun to unload their ships. She then put out a boat herself and sailed in it towards the shore with a few attendants. On the landing-place she met her cousins who never for a moment suspecting who she was conceived a liking for her at first sight, and eagerly made up to her, with a view to forming her acquaintance. They found her to be a very agreeable person, and invited her to put up with them at a friend's house to which they were going.

This was just what our fair friend wished, anxious as she was to watch their movements, and to profit by their experience in commercial matters. She therefore gladly accepted the offer, and going back to her ship brought with her a few things that might be of use to her in her new abode, and accompanied her cousins to the house to which they had invited her to lodge with them.

When she arrived there she learnt that it was the house of a wealthy merchant of the city who was a friend of the young man's father, her uncle.

The master of the house welcomed our heroine very kindly, and formally invited her to share his hospitality with her friends. But what was her surprise and consternation when she recognised in her host and hostess her own father-in-law and mother-in-law! She had seen them at her wedding, and remembered their faces only too well, though, thanks to her disguise, they never suspected, even for a moment, that she was any other than a merchant's son. A lump rose in her throat, however, as the kind old people put to her question upon question as to whose son she was, from what country she hailed, and whether she was married. She was at a loss what reply to make to them,—all the circumstances connected with her marriage and her subsequent neglect by her husband rushing up to her memory; and so she stood highly abashed among people she had least expected to see, and thought she was going to forget herself; but the next moment she recovered her presence of mind, and replied to their interrogations as best she could.

The old people believed in all that she said, not noticing the change their questions had produced in her, and considered her to be a very agreeable and amiable young gentleman. But a still more dreadful ordeal awaited the poor young lady, for she had yet to face her husband, and she trembled to think of the consequences. She knew that there was not much love lost between them, and felt sure that as soon as he discovered her to

be his wife, he would put an end to her existence for masquerading in man's attire. At first she thought of quitting the house before her husband came in, but as she could think of no decent excuse for doing so, she preferred to remain where she was, and abide by the result.

A short time afterwards, her husband returned home and her heart palpitated with fear at sight of him. Her cousins introduced her to him as a highly respected friend of theirs, but he did not seem to notice anything extraordinary about her, and the interview passed off very satisfactorily.

The poor lady, who had set eyes on her husband then for the first time since their marriage (that event having taken place when they were little better than children), found him to be a very agreeable and good-natured young man, and her heart ached within her to think she should have been so long estranged from such a husband. But she suppressed her emotion, and wearing a brave front behaved towards him as unconcernedly as if he were quite a stranger to her, and in process of time she made herself highly agreeable not only to her cousins and to her parents-in-law, but also to her husband so much so that the latter even began to regard her with some affection.

It should be mentioned here that our heroine had with her a beautiful parrot, of rare worth and great intelligence. It could understand several languages, and talk them as well as any man or woman, and was moreover blessed with wisdom enough to do credit to any human being. This remarkable bird would fly from tree to tree and roof to roof, and bring its mistress the latest news from far and near, for people spoke freely in its presence, never suspecting that a parrot could understand what they said.

One evening, as the parrot was perched aloft in some nook in the roof of the merchant's house, it heard the following conversation going on between the hostess and her son:—

"You will see your mistake in time, though you don't believe me now, mother," the son was saying, "for as sure as I am alive this guest of ours whom we all so honour, is no more a man than you are! She is a woman, and the most beautiful and agreeable woman I ever looked upon into the bargain."

"Nonsense, my son," was the mother's reply; "why would a woman come to our house in man's attire? And again, how could a woman make such a successful merchant as we find this young man to be? I hope you will cease to talk such utter nonsense any more!"

Finding, however, that her son was not convinced by what she said, she added, "As you still appear to have your doubts on this subject, I shall show a way by which you can convince yourself of the sex of this guest of ours. To-morrow I shall send with the hot water that is taken up every morning for their bath, some rare perfumes and soaps; and if she is a woman, as you say, she will eagerly make use of them, for there is not a woman on earth who is insensible to the attractions of toilet-soaps and skin-beautifiers."

The parrot heard all this and, going to its mistress forthwith, poured into her ears every word of the conversation it had overheard, so that the lady remained on her guard; and when the next morning those attractive preparations were provided for her bath, she sent them away without so much as touching them.

The mother reported to her son in due time, but the young man had still his doubts, and the parrot, who was again in its old place in the roof, heard him say to her: "I give you great credit my good mother, for your good sense and judgment; but with all that I am not yet convinced. Show me, therefore, some other means of removing my suspicion."

"Wait then," cried the mother, "till to-night, and your wishes will be satisfied. To-night I shall order the choicest and sweetest viands for dinner, and if this young friend of ours is found to partake of them with greater relish than any of his companions, I shall allow that he is a woman, for all I know to the contrary; for women have a greater partiality for sweet dishes than men."

The faithful parrot, who had been hearing the above conversation, quickly flew to its mistress, and apprised her of the second test that awaited her, so that when dinner time came, our fair friend, though she was really partial to sweet dishes, behaved with so much self-denial that she came highly successful out of the ordeal.

For a few days after this it appeared to the old lady, the hostess, that the suspicions of her son had been laid at rest, for he did not trouble her anymore about the matter. But she was mistaken, for her son had all along been carefully watching every movement of his guest, so that one day a chance utterance or movement of the disguised lady confirmed his suspicions. So going up again to his mother, he said: Oh, mother! mother! believe me, our guest is a woman, and the sweetest creature that ever the sun shone upon! I want to tell it her to her face and to



win her love, for I have never before known a woman half so fascinating.

“Really my son, I am getting tired of your strange fancies,” replied his mother, “after the convincing proofs I have given you regarding the sex of the young merchant; surely you don’t expect me or your father to insult our guest by asking him point-blank whether he is a man or woman. Yet stay, I have another idea. I know of a certain flower which fades and withers away as soon as it is touched by a woman’s hand, while it remains fresh and fragrant if touched by a man’s. I shall order our florist to weave eight nets of such flowers and get one spread upon each of our guest’s beds to-night, and we shall then see whether you or I am right.”

The faithful parrot, who overheard this dialogue between the mother and her son, at once flew away to where its mistress was and told her every word of it. Our heroine was not a little flattered at the high encomiums passed on her beauty and charms by her husband, and felt half-inclined to reveal herself to him. On second thoughts, however, she changed her mind and sat down, thinking how she could come unscathed out of this rather difficult ordeal. But her favourite parrot came to her aid, and showed her a way out of the difficulty. It went and brought away from another florist a net woven with the same kind of flowers, and placed it high upon the roof, where its mistress’s hand could not reach. When the day dawned and the lady rose from her bed, the sagacious bird asked her to remove the crumpled and faded sheet of flowers from it, and spread on it, with its own beak and claws as neatly and as cleverly as any lady’s maid ever did, the second net of flowers that was in readiness. The lady then folded the faded net into a small bundle and the parrot took it into its beak, and flying far away into the sea with it, consigned it to the waves, so that no trace of it might remain.

The hostess and her son lost no time in examining the bed-chamber of our heroine, when she vacated it, and the old lady was now more than convinced that the object of her son’s suspicions was no other than what he appeared to be—a handsome and intelligent young gentleman. But the fond young man did not at all relish acknowledging his mistake; he did so with a very bad grace, and continued moody and dejected ever afterwards, for in his heart of hearts he still cherished the belief that his father’s guest belonged to the softer sex, on which account, there-

fore, he continued to treat our fair friend with the greatest affection and regard.

A few days after our heroine had gone through her last ordeal, her cousins began to make preparations for their homeward voyage, in which she also joined them; for she had already disposed of all her stock to very great advantage, and gold was daily pouring into her coffers in heaps.

The enamoured young man was not a little disconcerted at hearing of this intended departure of the little party, and he begged hard of his disguised wife to remain under his roof a little longer. But she excused herself as best she could, and on the day appointed for their departure, went on board her ship, followed by the tears and blessings of her love-lorn husband.

When the eight ships stood abreast of one another in the harbour, waiting to raise their anchors simultaneously at a given signal, our heroine whispered something in the parrot's ears and off flew the little bird with a bright little golden cup set with pearls and diamonds in its beak, and depositing it right into the hold of one of the seven ships of the brothers, immediately came back and perched upon its mistress's shoulder as if nothing had happened. Now just before the parrot performed this clever trick, all the seven brothers were assembled on the deck of our heroine's ship, for there they had arranged a grand feast in honour of their departure, and were eating and drinking merrily.

After holding high revel for some time the seven brothers took leave of their cousin, and each betook himself with his party to his own ship. As soon, however, as the fair lady's ship was cleared of all the guests, her attendants raised a hue and cry about a rich goblet that was missing. The lady had drunk her wine out of it in the presence of the guests, and it had then been handed round to each of the bystanders and was highly admired by them all. It had thus passed through several hands, and no wonder therefore that none of the servants remembered who had it last. Our heroine made a great show of anger at the loss of the precious goblet, which, it need hardly be mentioned, was the very one that the parrot had deposited into the hold of one of the seven ships. She sent for all her seven cousins in hot haste, and reported the loss to them. They all agreed that they had not only seen their good friend drink out of it, but had actually taken it into their hands for inspection, but none of them had any idea as to whether or not it had been returned to its place. At this the disguised fair one worked herself into a violent passion

and accused them all right and left of having stolen it. "I shall send my men to search each of your ships," cried she, "and shall stake this vessel of mine with all its valuable cargo on the hazard of finding it in one of them."

"And we in our turn agree to forfeit to you all our seven ships with their cargoes," cried the brothers with one voice, "if your men find the goblet in any of our ships!"

"Agreed!" cried our heroine, and forthwith she ordered some of her numerous attendants to go over all the seven vessels and leave no stone unturned till they found the missing cup. In about an hour's time, while the seven brothers were still warmly protesting their innocence to their accuser, the men returned with the missing cup in their hands, and declared that they had found it secreted in the hold of the ship of one of the seven brothers!

The brothers were nonplussed at this sudden turn events had taken, and stood looking at one another in silence, as if dumb-founded at this strange discovery. Our heroine, however, roused them to their senses by calling upon them in a loud voice to fulfil their obligations by handing over to her the seven ships; and the poor fellows, seeing no way out of this difficulty, there and then formally made over the ships to the clever stripling, and with crestfallen looks stood awaiting her commands. The lady, being touched with pity at their strange predicament, ordered them to remain in her own ship as her guests till they reached their native country. She then gave orders for the anchors of all the eight ships to be raised, and the little fleet soon began to sail out of the harbour with a favourable back wind.

[ Our brave heroine's husband, who was all this while standing sorrowfully on the shore, now waved his kerchief as a farewell to his departing charmer, with a very woe-begone countenance, as she was standing at the window of her cabin, when suddenly she flung off her disguise and stood before her enraptured lover, "a maid in all her charms!"

At this sudden and unexpected confirmation of all his doubts and hopes the young man's heart alternated between joy and grief, joy at finding that the object of his affections was after all a woman, and grief at being thus rudely separated from her, after all that he had endured on her account, and with a heavy heart he retraced his steps homewards. There he told to his mother all that had happened, and rebuked her for having discredited his statement so long and asked both his parents' permission to fit out a ship that very day and follow his fair enslaver wherever she

went, and either win her or perish in the attempt. The old couple seeing him so determined, consented, and furnished him with everything that he wanted for the voyage.

Without losing more time than was essentially necessary the love-lorn youth fitted out a fast-sailing vessel and soon started in pursuit of his fair charmer. Her vessel had, however, sailed clear out of sight by this time, and he could not even tell in what direction they had gone. So he sailed about at random through unknown seas, for many a month, making inquiries at every port he touched, till at last he came to the city in which he knew his discarded wife and her parents lived. Here everyone he met was talking of the clever daughter of the old merchant—"the mistress of eight ships" as they called her,—who had but a few days ago returned home after a long and successful voyage. He inquired the way to the house of this remarkable lady, and much to his surprise, nay to his rage and utter mortification, he was shown into the very house in which he now remembered he had gone through that most important ceremony of his life—his marriage.

Could it be possible, then, he thought, that it was only his wife—the girl he had so long discarded—that had so long and so successfully played upon his feelings, and had made herself so agreeable not only to himself, but to all others with whom she came into contact! What enraged him most was that she should have spent so many days in the company of young men like her cousins. Jealousy and hatred instantly took place of love in his heart, and he entered the house, swearing vengeance on his innocent wife! His old father-in-law welcomed him into the house with unmixed delight, but the son-in-law resented his kind treatment, and peremptorily demanded to be shown into his wife's presence.

Now it may be mentioned here that the old man and his daughter had been looking forward to this visit of the bridegroom every moment, as they had already heard of his arrival in the city from some friends. The young lady also had narrated to her father all that had taken place in the house of her parents-in-law, and the old man was therefore in a measure prepared to find his son-in-law in no enviable a frame of mind. Our heroine, too, fearing that in his rage and disappointment he would wreak his vengeance on her head, had taken precautions, to ensure her safety. She had prepared with her own deft fingers, a figure of herself in some soft material, and covering it with a fine skin, had dressed it in her own clothes and jewels. This figure she had

filled with the sweetest honey near the throat, and had placed it on her couch in the attitude of a woman fast asleep. When she heard her husband's footsteps approaching her room, she hid herself behind some curtains. Soon the young man rushed into the room, being escorted to the door of the chamber by his aged father-in-law who had left him at the threshold and retired to an adjoining room, there to await the course of events. The enraged husband then made the door of the apartment fast, and drawing his dagger, rushed up to where the figure was lying, and with a terrible imprecation plunged the cold steel into its throat. The violence with which he dealt the blow made some of the honey spurt out of the wound like real life blood and a drop of it fell on his lips, which were parted in anger, and he was surprised to find that it tasted very sweet. Repentance closely follows a rash deed, and so it did in this case.

"Ah!" cried he, "what have I done! I have killed with my own hands, one who but a short time ago was all in all to me! One for whom I have endured all the hardships of a rough sea-voyage. Then after a pause he added,— "how sweet her blood tastes; I am sure a faithless woman's blood can never taste half so sweet! Really I have committed a rash and unpardonable deed, I have shed an innocent woman's blood, and thereby destroyed my own happiness, and nothing but my own blood can atone for it." So saying he raised his dagger and was going to plunge it into his heart, when out rushed his faithful wife from her hiding-place, and stayed his hands in the very nick of time. The lady at that time wore the same disguise in which he had first seen her, and as she clung to his arms and pleaded for mercy, all his old love for her came back to him with redoubled force, and he clasped her in his arms!

The trick of the stuffed figure was then explained to him, and the young man was thankful to find it was no human blood that he had shed. Our heroine then gave him full explanation of the events that had brought her in so strange a fashion under his roof, and the two then went together to the old man and asked for his blessing.

After spending a few days with the good old man, the reconciled son-in-law took the dutiful daughter and faithful wife home to his native country, and there they lived ever afterwards in great happiness.

Before leaving with her husband, the young lady called all her seven cousins to her and explaining to them the trick by which

she had become possessed of their ships, restored the vessels to them with all their cargoes intact and gave besides a valuable present to each of them as a souvenir of the voyage they had made together.

### THE BLACK-HEADED MAN

There was once a young lion who was very strong and withal very valiant, and so defied everybody.

One day his mother said to him—"It is all very fine for you to be proud of your great strength, and to try your might on all you meet, for you know that we are lords of the forest and every creature owns our sway, but you do not seem to be aware that there is one being in this world who is more than a match for us, and can bid us defiance. He walks on two legs, and is known as the "Black-Headed Man." Beware of his wiles and stratagems, if you value your life."

"Very well," mused the young lord of the forest, "I should like very much to see what he is like. He must be a mighty and powerful creature if he can hold his own against me. I shall go and seek him out."

Having thus determined, the young lion wandered about roaring for several days, till one morning he chanced to enter a part of the forest that was rarely frequented by his kind. Just then a carpenter, with his bag of tools on his shoulders, and a white turban on his head, happened to pass by. The young lion skipped with delight at sight of him and cried—"Surely this must be the being my mother has told me to beware of: for does he not go on two legs? Now for it!"

Just then, however, he happened to look at the carpenter's head, and to his great disappointment found it was white and not black, as he had been led to believe. Nevertheless he thought he would go to him and ask him whether he knew where the "Black-Headed Man" was to be found, and if so, whether he would direct him in his search for that being.

He accordingly called out to the carpenter in a loud voice—"Hey, friend! stop! I wish to speak to you!" The poor man had no alternative but to obey, and the lion, going up to him said, "Can you tell me where I can find the 'Black-Headed Man' for I wish very much to form his acquaintance and to try my hand on him?"

The poor man's knees knocked together with fright as he heard this and he gave himself up for lost, when suddenly an idea entered his mind like a flash of lightning, and summoning up courage, he thus spoke to the valiant son of the lord of the forest:—

“You wish to see the ‘Black-Headed Man?’ Well, your curiosity shall be gratified, for I happen to know where to find him, so come along with me and I shall show him to you.”

The lion agreed to this, and the two walked on together for some time till they came to a large tree. Near this tree the carpenter stopped, and said to his companion:—

“If your Highness would condescend to wait here for a while, I shall show you what the ‘Black-Headed Man’ is like.”

He then set himself to work with his tools and began to cut a large hole through the trunk of the tree. When this was finished he fashioned a plank and fixed it at the top of the hole in such a way that it could slide up and down at pleasure, like the door of a mouse-trap. When all was ready, he requested the lion, who was eagerly watching his movements all the while, to come and put his head into the hole and look straight before him till he got a sight of the ‘Black-Headed Man.’

The lion, rejoiced at the prospect of seeing the being<sup>3</sup> he so much wished to meet, eagerly put his head through the hole, and in a trice the carpenter, who had already climbed the tree, let the trap-door slip down from above right on to the lion's neck, and pressed it so tight that he nearly squeezed the beast to death. He then got down and went to the other side of the tree, and uncovering his head, showed it to the dying lion, saying:—

“Your servant, the ‘Black-Headed Man,’ whom you wished so much to see, stands before you; pray, what would you with him?”

The poor lion, however, was by this time past replying, and the carpenter shouldering his bag of tools, walked home at leisure, glad to have escaped, by this stratagem, from the jaws of a savage beast!

### THE CHARITABLE FAQIR

Once upon a time two men were journeying together to a distant place. One of them, who was a water-carrier by trade, though very poor, was strictly honest. No privations, not even

famine, ever tempted him to sin. The other traveller, however, was quite the reverse. Though clever enough and strong enough to live by honest labour, he would not put his hand to anything but theft and plunder. He would roam about from place to place and rob unwary travellers for the sake of money.

After travelling several miles together, the two men halted near a well, and having refreshed themselves lay down to rest under a tree, hoping to resume their journey a little later in the day, when another traveller, who was passing by, stopped to drink at the well. He looked cautiously about him, but did not catch sight of the two men under the tree. So he put down a bundle that he carried on his head and stooped to draw water. The robber, who had been watching him all the while, crept stealthily up to him, put his foot upon the bundle, and catching hold of the poor fellow by the legs, was about to hurl him in, head foremost, when his companion, the honest water-carrier, suddenly coming up from behind, drew both the robber and his intended victim away from the well at immense risk to his own life. Thus the poor unoffending traveller was saved from certain death, and went his way rejoicing, after thanking his deliverer warmly, and suitably rewarding him for having saved his life.

The robber, in the meantime, had made himself scarce, and the water-carrier, therefore, resumed his journey alone. After a long time, however, he was again joined by the robber, who foamed with rage and cursed him all the way for having, as he said, obstructed him in following what he called his lawful profession, when all of a sudden he tripped against something, and stooping down to see what it was, found it to be a purse full of gold asrafis. He picked it up eagerly, and shewing it exultingly to his companion, said:—

“Here’s luck indeed! I was destined to come by gold in some way or other, and I have! Dare you now deprive me of this also?”

So saying, he ran away as fast as his legs could carry him, as if afraid that his companion might claim a share of the treasure.

The poor water-carrier was extremely surprised at this, and walked on, thinking how Allah could have seen fit to bestow so much favour upon such an unworthy individual as his late companion, when suddenly he happened to tread on some brambles, and a large sharp thorn pierced the sole of one of his bare feet.

The poor man whined and groaned with pain, and was, moreover, sorely grieved at heart to think that he, who deserved so much better at the hands of Allah, should be made so very



miserable, while he, to whom punishment should really be meted out, should be so miraculously favoured.

“Strange! very strange!” he cried out with indignation; “they are all false who uphold the justice and impartiality of Allah, for had he been just and impartial he would have shewn more consideration towards one who has never all his life so much as uttered a lie or harmed any living being. However severe have been my trials and privations, I have never once yielded to temptation, and still Allah, though he withholds from me all the good things of this earth, gives me my full share of misery. Surely it is of no use to be good or honest in this world.”

While he was giving way to his lamentations in this manner, a tall majestic and handsome man with a fine long beard came all unperceived and stood suddenly before him, and asked him the cause of his grief. The poor man narrated to the stranger all that had happened since he set on his journey, and then asked him whether or not he was justified in saying that Allah did not deal fairly by all his creatures.

“I cannot agree with you there, my friend,” replied the stranger, “though I fully sympathize with you in your sufferings. I am Gabriel, the Angel, deputed by Allah to visit the earth every day and take my own estimate of the good and evil that is wrought there, and am, therefore, in a position to say that Allah is always kind and just to every one, high or low.”

But the unhappy water-carrier, who felt himself miserably wronged, was not to be convinced by this. So he said:—

“If you are really the Angel Gabriel, I beseech you to go and ask Allah the reason why he should have thrown that purse of gold in the way of that cruel-hearted robber, while I, who am in every respect a much better man, should have been made miserable by having a thorn thrust into my foot.”

The Angel consented, but just as he was about to depart, a faqir, who had come up while the foregoing conversation was going on, stopped him, and prevailed upon him by his entreaties to hear his tale also.

“I, too, am struck with the iniquity of Allah,” he cried, “for do I not say my prayers regularly five times a day and exhort others to do likewise, and again, do I not beg only in the name of Allah? And still what does Allah give me? Nothing but a bit of bread and a draught of water, and that too not every day, while others, who scoff at prayers and religion, and who never

so much as pronounce the name of Allah even once a day, have a merry time of it, and eat and drink and enjoy themselves all their lives. How am I to understand that?"

"Have patience, my friend," said Gabriel; "I shall state your case to Allah and give you his answer to-morrow." So saying he quickly disappeared.

The water-carrier and the mendicant then began to travel together. The next day as the two were walking side by side, Gabriel joined them and said:—

"Here I am again, my friends; I have seen Allah and given him your messages, and now listen to what he has to say to them:—

"Firstly, you, my friend the water-carrier, thought it unjust of Allah that he should have given a purse of gold to that wicked man, and that, too, at a time when he least deserved it; but listen to what Allah has to say to it:—

"That same man who now so displeases him by his misbehaviour, does not, as you think, enjoy the favour of Allah, but on the contrary has incurred his deepest resentment as you will see. That man was born under such happy auspices that, had he feared Allah and done his will, he would have come to be crowned a king by this time. But as he, from his Childhood upwards, preferred a career of guilt and infamy, Allah in his rage held aloof every good thing from him, and gave him just enough to satisfy, only to a meagre extent, the demands of his destiny, which even he cannot avert.

"Thus, yesterday, when he found that purse of gold, he was destined to come by endless wealth; but Allah judges rightly, and he knew how little that wicked man deserved, so he in his wisdom gave him only a few coins of gold, just a semblance of what would have been his had he been honest and good, and still that fellow in his ignorance blesses his fortune, and does not know what he forfeits only for the pleasure of doing ill."

"And now as for yourself," continued Gabriel; "Allah says, he has never been unkind or unjust to you, but has, on the contrary, been very considerate in his dealings with you. You were, says he, born under such an evil star that you would have been much more miserable and unhappy in life than you have already been; but as you have always tried to be good and honest, Allah has helped you to pass through all your trials and troubles unscathed. You told me yesterday that Allah considered it fit to put a thorn in your way and thus caused you to suffer

pain, and you naturally enough thought Allah to be very unkind. What will you say, however, when Allah declares that that very thorn was the means of saving your life, as you will learn presently. At the exact minute that that thorn entered your foot, it was decreed that you should be accused of some great crime which you had never committed, and that your head should be cut off. But seeing that you had been good and dutiful all your life, and had, moreover, just then exerted yourself to save a human being from death, Allah was pleased with you, and he in his mercy substituted the thorn for the headman's sword, since, as I told you before, it is not in his power to avert a man's destiny, and the few drops of blood that flowed from your foot compensated for the life-blood which, it was ordained, should flow in abundance that very same moment from your neck. Don't you now think that, by thus saving your life, Allah amply rewarded you for all your good acts? Learn, therefore, always to bow to his will, however unintelligible his ways may appear to you at first sight."

The poor good-natured water-carrier was so struck with all that he had heard, and was so overcome with grief and shame at the idea of ever having doubted the justice and wisdom of Allah, that he fell on his knees and prayed loudly to him to forgive him, and then, kissing the feet of Gabriel, he besought him to intercede on his behalf and obtain for him the pardon of Allah.

And now came the faqir's turn, for he too was impatient to hear why Allah had thought fit to keep him so very poor; so turning to him, Gabriel said:—

"My good man, I am really very sorry for you, as is also Allah himself, for he says you have been destined to remain most miserably poor. In fact, Allah says, he does not see how to keep your body and soul together for the rest of your life, for you have still a good many years to live, and there are only five rupees left now out of what you were destined to earn during the whole term of your existence. You will therefore have to pass the rest of your life in a much poorer and still more miserable condition, than you are in now."

"Is it indeed so?" cried the mendicant in a despairing tone, with tears in his eyes.

"Alas! it is but too true," replied the Angel; "and now detain me no further; for I must go."

But the faqir caught hold of him by the hem of his

garment, for an idea had entered his head just then, and said:—

“Gabriel, good Angel, do hear me for a minute more. Wilt thou go once more and ask Allah to send the messenger of death to me at once, so that I may be spared the uneasiness and misery I am destined to suffer? Do pray to him, however, to send me first the five rupees still reserved for me, so that, before I die, I may taste of some at least of the many good things that I constantly see everywhere but have never been fortunate enough to partake of. If you tell Allah all this, good Angel, I am sure he will grant me what I ask.”

Gabriel agreed to carry the message to Allah, and quickly disappeared.

The mendicant and the water-carrier soon afterwards parted company and went their respective ways. The faqir, in due course, arrived at his hut, and after saying his prayers with great devotion in the belief that he was soon to go to the other world, lay down to sleep.

The next day when he opened his eyes, what was his delight to see exactly five rupees lying by his side! He took them up eagerly and hurried with them to the *bazar*. There he saw ever so many nice things spread out before him. No end of sweetmeats and fruits and vegetables to eat and beautiful clothes to wear, such as he had never in his whole life dreamt even of touching! But that day he thought himself rich enough to buy anything. As fine clothes, however, possessed no interest for a man who was about to die the next morning, he invested all the five rupees in buying toothsome eatables and delicious *sharbats*, and went back to his hut rejoicing.

There he cooked his food, and after duly saying his prayers, ate and drank till he could do so no more. He then again said his prayers, thanked Allah for the good things he had given him, and laid himself down on his bed with his eyes closed and his lips uttering the name of Allah, expecting every moment the messenger of death to come and bear his soul away.

Instead, however, of that grim visitor, two poor beggars like himself came to the faqir's door, and asked for alms.

“Come in, friends,” said he, “I have no money to give you, but I have some food left in those pots yonder, of which you are welcome to partake in the name of Allah, for it is all his own.”

The hungry wayfarers thereupon set to eat, and soon emptied

the pots of all their contents. They then thanked the good man for his hospitality, and resumed their journey.

Evening came, and still there was no sign of the messenger of death; so the *faqir* got up and said his prayers, and again quietly settled down to rest and soon fell fast asleep.

When he opened his eyes in the morning, the first thing they lighted upon was five bright new silver coins again! He was very much surprised at this, and could not for the life of him make out how they came to be there again. He, nevertheless, pocketed the money, and ran out of his hut to go in search of Gabriel, and learn from him the meaning of this mystery. The Angel, however, was invisible that day, so the mendicant again wended his way to the *bazar* and purchased a good many nice things to eat and drink, thinking that Allah had seen fit to keep him on this earth for one day more.

Going home, he cooked the food as before, and after making a hearty meal of it, he called in the first beggar that happened to pass by his door at the time, and gave away to him, in the name of Allah, all that remained in his pots. Then, saying his prayers as usual, he lay down in his bed, fully expecting every moment to be his last, and was soon wrapped in sleep. Strange to say, however, he not only found himself alive and well the next morning, but again saw five bright silver coins lying by his side in the same place as on the two previous days.

Things went on like this for about a week, when one day Gabriel suddenly appeared to the *faqir*. The latter's first words to the Angel were:—

“Gabriel, you have made some strange mistake! Did you not tell me the other day that five rupees was all that was left for me to live upon for the rest of my life! How is it then that day after day I rise in the morning, and see five bright silver coins by my bedside! I spend them in buying the good things of this earth, and give away what remains to the poor, and go to bed in the belief that the angel of death will take me away from this world during the night. Nevertheless, I find myself alive and well every morning. Really, I cannot understand how Allah has been pleased to be so good and merciful to me!”

“You are a fool,” replied Gabriel, “not to see how that is, but you are a mortal after all, and mortals are not expected to understand the ways of Allah. You say you give away the remains of your food every night in the name of Allah; well then, do you suppose that Allah is so mean as not to return

to you whatever you give away in his name? Do you not know that whatever one gives away to the poor he lends to Allah, and Allah not only returns what has been thus lent to him, but returns it with interest. The five rupees that Allah gives you every morning, are credited back to you every evening when you feed the poor in his name, and thus it is that you see five fresh coins by your bedside every morning. As long, therefore, as you continue to give to the poor in his name, so long will Allah bestow upon you the wherewithal to do such acts of charity.

The *faqir* was overjoyed at this, and went home fully determined to be generous and charitable all his life, so that he might for ever earn the favour and protection of Allah.

### LALPARI AND KEVRAPARI

Once upon a time there was in a certain country a powerful Raja, who lived very happily with his queen and his little son in a strong fortress. He was very fond of hunting, and generally spent whole days in that pursuit, away in the forest, with his prime minister and his attendants.

One day the Raja and the Wazir started at full speed in pursuit of some game, leaving the escort behind. After a time they came to a beautiful well, situated in a thick forest. The well was so nicely built, that they halted near it to examine it, and were very much surprised to see so magnificent a specimen of architecture in a place where no human footstep ever trod. While they were admiring the workmanship of the well the Wazir's eye happened to rest on an inscription carved on one side of it, which he thus deciphered:—

“Should the Wazir miss this opportunity of murdering the Raja, the Raja will get the Wazir murdered twelve years hence.”

When the Wazir read these lines he was seized with so strong a desire to kill the Raja on the spot that he did not care to read another inscription that was just underneath, and which ran thus:—

“Should the Wazir murder the Raja on this day, the Raja will rise up into life twelve years hence and murder the Wazir.”

The Raja was so lost in admiration of the beauties of the well that for some time he saw neither of the two inscriptions. When at last, however, his eye happened to rest upon

Folklore in Western India. By Putlibai D. H. Wadia. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVI. Part CXCVIII. July, 1917. Page 210.

them, he stooped to read them and the wicked Wazir, taking advantage of the opportunity, threw a noose round his neck and strangled him.

He then tied up the dead boby in a bundle and leaving it by the side of the well, left the forest, and putting himself at the head of a trusty band of followers, which he had among the escort, marched with them to the king's palace. When the Rani, who was anxiously watching for the Raja's return from the window of the palace, with her little son on her knee, saw the Wazir from a distance galloping up without his Royal master, she at once suspected that the Wazir had killed him, and was riding in hot haste to besiege the fortress, and to capture her and her son. She was so frightened that for some time she did not know what to do, when suddenly a thought struck her. She twisted her sari into a rope, and tying her boy on her back, slid down by one of the back windows of her room and made her way out of the fortress.

When the Wazir entered and discovered the queen's escape he immediately set out in pursuit of her with a number of his men, and overtook her just as she had reached the seashore. Finding him so close, the Rani, in despair, plunged headlong into the foaming waves. The Wazir gave her up for lost, but to his great surprise he saw that the waters divided before her as she fell, and disclosed a path over which she could walk on unhurt. He tried to follow her, when lo! the waters closed around him and his men, and it was with the greatest difficulty that they managed to save themselves.

While the Rani walked on through the waves with her son tied to her back, he amused himself by picking up some sparkling red things that he saw floating past him and showing them to his mother with great delight. She at once saw that they were rubies of great value.

After a while she reached the shore and found herself in a small village. Here she hired a little cottage and lived in it like a private individual. After some time her little son grew up into a fine boy, made friends with several of the neighbours' children, and often went out to play with them. One day as they were playing a game of marbles, the little prince displayed his magnificent rubies, and began to use them in place of ordinary marbles.

Now a carpenter's son, who was one of his playmates, took a fancy to the rubies, and quietly slipped two of them into his pocket, and carrying them home showed them to his father. The

father at once knew what they were, and forthwith went with them to the Raja of the country, and offered them to him for sale. The Raja demanded to know where he had got them, and was surprised to hear that the poor man's son had obtained them from a playmate. Struck by the richness of the jewels, the king was curious to know who was the owner of such rare gems, and ordered the carpenter to bring his son's playmate into his presence. He bought the jewels, however, at a high price and made a present of them to his only daughter. The young princess hung them in a ribbon round her neck and in her joy went to her pet parrot and said:—

“Dear Poll! don't I look a very pretty princess with my rubies? Do look at them!”

What!” cried the bird disdainfully, “only two rubies! why, a princess like you should have a string of them long enough to reach down to your toes! and then my pretty mistress would certainly look every inch a queen!”

This set the princess a-thinking for a while, and then she said: “But, Polly dear, how am I to obtain any more of these rubies?”

“Go to the king, your father,” was the bird's reply, “throw these two rubies at him, and leave him in a pet, and then shut yourself up in your room and refuse to eat or drink. When he comes to you and inquires into the cause of your grief, tell him that you want a string of rubies like these long enough to hang down to your toes, and as sure as I am living your father will procure them for you.”

The young lady acted upon this advice, and the Raja, who spared nothing that could give her pleasure, sent messengers to the carpenter, and ordered him into his presence, together with the boy from whom his son had obtained the rubies. When the young prince appeared before him he inquired of him how he had come to be in possession of such precious rubies. The boy related to him how he had picked them up from the sea, and the Raja thereupon bade him go once more into the sea and bring him some more.

Overjoyed at being entrusted with such a mission, the young prince forthwith went home and acquainted his mother with all that had happened. She too, was glad at the idea of her son having found such an opportunity of serving the king of the country, and joyfully permitted him to go in search of the rubies.

The young man immediately went to the sea-shore and walk-



ed fearlessly into the waters. Again a path was opened up for him, by which he proceeded onwards till he was stopped by something that touched his feet. On stooping to examine it, he found it to be the roof of a large palace beneath the sea. He soon contrived to find an entrance into it, and was very much struck with its beauty and grandeur. But what was his surprise when, as he proceeded further, he beheld a beautiful damsel lying upon a golden bedstead, with her head severed from her body and placed on a pillow by her side, while the life-blood that trickled from her throat rolled down the golden bedstead, and each drop, turning immediately into a beautiful ruby, made its way into the sea! The lad stood amazed at the sight for some time, uncertain what to do, when suddenly he heard a voice loud as thunder in the distance. He immediately ran out of the room and hid himself under a hay-stack that was near. No sooner had he done so than he saw a fierce giant enter the room, who sniffed about here and there for a while, and at last exclaimed:—

“I smell a man! I smell some human being! who is it? come forth!”

Meeting, however, with no response he took a sword that lay near the bedstead, and placing the head in its proper place upon the body, passed the sword up and down the neck of the lady three times, when lo! the fair maiden rose and left the bed.

The giant then bade her tell him who had entered the palace during his absence, and when she replied that nobody had done so to her knowledge, he stamped his feet with rage. At last, however, the soft words and blandishments of the fair lady soothed him and calmed his temper. The young prince, who had watched all this from under the hay-stack, thought it prudent to remain where he was till the giant departed again.

With the morning the giant went out again, but before doing so he again separated the poor girl's head from her body, and left her as before, with the blood trickling from her throat on to the golden bedstead. When he was quite clear of the palace, the lad came out of his hiding place and placing the fair lady's head upon the shoulders, passed the sword that lay by, three times up and down her throat, just as he had seen the giant do, and to his great delight, found the young lady restored to life. The poor creature was greatly surprised as well as delighted to see such a

being as the young man near her, never having seen any human creature before. They soon made great friends, and the prince told her of the bright and happy world that there was beyond the sea, and of the many millions of beings like him inhabiting it, and exclaimed how nice it would be for her to leave that dreary palace and to accompany him to his native country. They were so taken up with each other that they quite forgot that there was such a being as the giant in existence, when suddenly the damsel observed the shades of night setting in. She was greatly terrified and begged her companion to separate her head from her body, and place her in the position in which he had found her, but before he did so she gave him two separate powders, one black and the other white, and said that by smelling the former he would be transformed into a fly, while if he smelt the latter he would resume his own shape again. The young man thereupon decapitated the young lady and immediately smelt the black powder, and had scarcely stuck himself against the ceiling just over the golden bed, when the giant entered the room.

He at once brought the young lady to life as before, and questioned her very sharply as to whether anyone had come near her during his absence, for he again smelt a human being somewhere. The girl replied that she had been lying a headless corpse since he had left her, and knew of nobody having entered the room. Reassured by these words he retired for the night, and soon fell fast asleep.

Next morning the giant again proceeded to cut the throat of the young girl, who was no other than his daughter, and though she protested at this want of confidence in her, he disregarded her entreaties, and separating her head from her body as usual, went out of the palace. The young man, as soon as he saw the giant's back turned, flew to the place where he had placed the white powder, smelt it, and resumed his own shape again. He then brought the damsel to life and entreated her to leave her father's roof and accompany him into the great world above the waters. After a great deal of persuasion she consented and they left the palace beneath the sea together. In their haste, however, they forgot to carry away with them some of the rubies that were scattered about. Just as they were nearing the coast the lad thought of the errand he had been sent upon, but being so far away from the place where the rubies were lying, he was at a loss what to do. His fair companion,

however, showed him a way out of the difficulty. She told him to cut her throat with the giant's sword which he had brought away with him, and to allow the blood to trickle into the sea, when each drop would be changed into a precious ruby. He did so, and collecting as large a quantity of the rubies as he could carry, he put the head and the body together and restored the fair damsel to life by the aid of his sword.

After a long journey through the sea they arrived at the young prince's house; the good Rani was greatly delighted to see her boy come back safe and sound, and to find that he was accompanied by so lovely a lady. Soon afterwards the young couple got themselves married and in due time the prince went into the presence of the Raja with the rubies, and displaying them before him claimed his reward. The princess, who had been anxiously waiting for the rubies was so pleased with the young man for having brought her the precious gems that she would bestow no less a reward upon him than her own hand in marriage, and as the king, her father, raised no objection to their union, they were married with great pomp after a few days.

The Raja gave them a large palace to live in, and the widowed Rani and the prince's first wife Lalpari, or Fairy Ruby, as she was called, and the princess, all went and lived together in it. The princess got a large necklace made of the rubies, and putting it on one day she went with her heart full of joy near the cage of her pet parrot, and said:

"Pretty Polly! pretty Polly! what do I look like now? Don't I look every inch a queen, with this necklace of rubies reaching down to my toes?"

The cunning bird, however, damped her spirits by exclaiming: "Oh, what is this necklace to a princess like you, when you cannot wear in your hair that sweet-smelling kevra flower which sends forth its fragrance for a hundred miles round!"

This made the princess unhappy again, and she said:—"Where do you think, Polly, I could get such a flower?"

"Your father will procure it for you somehow, if you will sit dejected in a corner, refusing either to dress or to eat your food till he promises to get it for you."

The princess followed the advice of the parrot in every particular, and when the Raja saw his pet child so unhappy he could not but promise to get the flower for her at any cost, if she would but consent to be her usual self again. The princess,

upon this, left off sulking, and soon was as gay as ever, while the Raja ordered it to be proclaimed throughout the city that whoever brought the kevrá flower, that sent forth its fragrance for a hundred miles round, would be rewarded by having a large portion of the king's dominions made over to him.

Just about this time, Lalpari happened to remark to her husband that though she had been very happy with him, she had one source of grief. She had a sister, who was also a fairy, living far away in the jungles, in a small box within an elephant's ear, and whom she had not seen for many years. She knew that her sister was very unhappy where she was, and would be only too glad to get out of her narrow prison to liberty and life. The prince, for his wife's sake, undertook to go and fetch her if she would but describe to him her whereabouts.

"Walk on," she said, "towards the South, till you arrive at an extraordinarily large tree, and there you'll see a monstrous elephant lying under it. You must climb up the tree unseen, if you value your life, and must hide yourself in it for some time. You will then see that as soon as the elephant flaps his ears a box will fall out of one of them, from which a fairy will pop out and forthwith begin giving the monstrous beast a bath. As soon as you see her, drop this letter, which I give you for her, right into her lap, and you will find that as soon as the elephant goes to sleep, she will allow you to bring her away with you here. She is known by the name of Kevrapari."

"Very well," said the prince, "I shall find her out, if only to please my dear Lalpari."

So taking leave of the Raja, his mother, and both his wives, the Prince set out once more on a long journey. After some time he came to where the elephant was lying and climbing up the tree under which he lay, he waited till Kevrapari popped out of her box, and shampooed the elephant till he went to sleep. He then gently threw the letter into her lap. She took it up and read it, and then looked up to him with a meaning smile, as much as to say that she would be glad to be delivered from the companionship of the loathsome brute. So when the elephant fell fast asleep the prince cautiously slipped down the tree, and shutting the little fairy up in her box, he took her away with him, leaving the elephant to sleep at his ease.

Great was the joy of every one to see the prince once more amongst them. Everybody accorded him a cordial welcome, save

his second wife, the princess, who had been staying at her father's house during her husband's absence:

The next morning, the lovely Kevrapari sat down to rinse out her mouth, when out of it dropped a beautiful sweet-smelling kevra flower, and the people for miles round were regaled with its powerful fragrance, so that every one thought that the kevra flower, for which the Raja had proclaimed so great a reward, had been found at last.

The sweet odour of the kevra reached the princess, and her joy knew no bounds. She was all anxiety to set her eyes upon it, when her husband went up to her with the wonderful flower in his hand, and made her a present of it! Some days later the prince married Kevrapari too, and became the happy husband of three wives.

Twelve years had by this time rolled over the widowed queen's head. One day the prince went to hunt in the forest, and had gone far in pursuit of some game and was hot and tired, when by chance he arrived at the same well near which his father had been murdered. He, however, knew nothing about his father's death, save that he had been killed by his prime minister, but his glance happened to fall on the two inscriptions upon the sides of the well and then the whole truth flashed upon him. He argued also that as twelve years had already rolled by since his father's death he must have come to life again.

He determined, therefore, to go in search of him, when he encountered an old man in close proximity to the well. He soon got into conversation with him and the old man told him that he was a Raja, who had been murdered by his Wazir twelve years ago on that very spot, and that he had but recently come to life again.

The prince, who was overjoyed at thus unexpectedly meeting his father, told him who he was himself, and, mounting him upon his own horse, took him joyfully home to his mother. The good Rani's joy knew no bounds when she saw her husband alive again, and there were great rejoicings in the palace on his account. The Raja, too, welcomed the old man as his pet child's father-in-law, and honoured him greatly as the ex-ruler of a neighbouring state. By his help the prince soon afterwards succeeded in regaining possession of his father's territories, and in driving the usurper from the throne.

It need hardly be mentioned that the Wazir, who fled from the fortress, was easily overtaken and killed, and the prince with

his aged father and mother and his three wives soon returned to his native country, and restored his father to the throne, which he occupied undisturbed for many years afterwards.

### RANI JHAJHANI

There lived in a certain country, a very rich merchant, who was blessed with seven sons. Now all these sons were married and had settled down in life, with the exception of the youngest, who was a very mischievously inclined young man, and loved to indulge in wild pranks, much to the annoyance of every one connected with him. His chief delight was in teasing and worrying his sisters-in-law, who, however, dared not complain against him for fear of incurring the displeasure of their husbands' parents, who loved their youngest son very fondly. For this reason they were so tired of him that they were always wishing he would marry and turn into a sober, steady young man, like his elder brothers.

One day, as he was indulging in his wild pranks and playing his tricks upon his sisters-in-law rather too freely, one of them cried out impatiently:—

“I wish this young rogue were married, for I am sure he would be ashamed of behaving himself like this in the presence of a wife.”

“Married!” said another sneeringly. “I should like to know how he could get married! There is not a girl in the universe that he considers fit to be his wife, for has he not rejected offers from the parents of the prettiest girls that ever the sun shone upon? It may be that he aspires to the hand of Rani Jhajhani, the paragon of beauty.”

Now this Rani Jhajhani was a fairy princess, the fame of whose beauty had travelled far and wide, and who was always held up as a pattern of all the feminine graces. This was the first time, however, that the young man has heard of her, and he was seized with an ardent desire to find her out and marry her, if only to spite his sisters-in-law.

He accordingly went to his parents and begged hard of them to be allowed to go in search of the fairy Rani Jhajhani, saying that he would die for love of her if they thwarted his wishes in the matter. His father did his best to dissuade him from going on such a wild-goose chase, since, being a fairy, she was inaccessible to a mortal; but the young man was firm, and would not

listen to reason, and soon succeeded in obtaining the consent of his parents to go in search of his fairy love.

Accordingly, one fine day, he took leave of all his friends and relations and set out on his perilous adventure. For several days he travelled on and on, without stopping, till at last his horse died under him from sheer fatigue. Nothing daunted, however, he continued his journey on foot till he was foot-sore and weary. At last he reached a stream of fresh water, on the banks of which he sat down to rest himself. No sooner had he done so than there appeared before him, to his great surprise, an old man of a venerable and holy aspect. The lad threw himself on his knees before the saint and begged for his blessing with tears in his eyes. The holy man had pity on him and said kindly:—

“Tell me, young man, how can I be of service to you?”

The youth told him how he was bent upon obtaining the hand of Rani Jhajhani in marriage, and how, with that view, he had been wandering for months without getting the least clue as to the whereabouts of the lovely lady, and finished by begging of the saint to put him in the way of finding her out.

“What!” said the old man in surprise. “You aspire to the hand of Rani Jhajhani! It is utterly impossible for a mortal, such as you, to reach her palace. Look there, do you see those mountains far away on the horizon? They are very large and high, and you will have to cross them one by one before you reach the Rani’s palace. But this is quite impossible, for you must know that these are not mountains in reality, but giants guarding the fairy princess, whom you seek to marry, and they will devour you the instant you venture within their reach. So take an old man’s advice, return to your parents, and give up all thoughts of obtaining a fairy for your wife.”

But the young man was too brave to be deterred by such dangers, and said:—

“For the sake of Rani Jhajhani I am ready to fight even these formidable giants, only show me the way to her palace and I shall remain ever grateful to you.”

“Very well, then,” said the holy man, “since you are bent on your ruin, I cannot help you. Come with me and I will lead you a part of the way, for I dare not traverse all of it.”

The young man followed him till they came to a narrow passage, at the end of which lay stretched the first of the giants guarding the fairy. The sage left him there and at parting once more advised him to give up his mad exploit, but the youth

was firm, and the sage therefore parted from him in great sorrow.

As soon as the old man had departed the youth began to look about him and found to his great delight that the giant was fast asleep. Seeing a number of horses grazing near, he caught one of them, and after killing it, dressed it nicely with some delicious spices which he had with him, lighted a large fire, and roasted it whole. He then carried the savoury mess to the great giant, and placed it before him. The giant who by this time had finished his nap, only growled with rage at finding himself unable to do justice to the substantial meal set before him; for, as the young man found, he was firmly rooted to the ground owing to his nails and hair having grown into the earth on account of his great age. The youth was overjoyed at this, for here was an opportunity of ingratiating himself into his good graces. He had only to use his knife and his scissors and set the unwieldy being free to gain his gratitude for ever; so he at once set to work and extricated the monster from his uncomfortable position. As soon as he was free, however, he thus spoke to his deliverer:—

“Young man, were it not for the service you have rendered me, I would have devoured you this instant for daring to come here, but as it is, I forgive you. Tell me now how I can reward you for your kindness to me.”

“I require no other reward from you,” said the young man, “than to be allowed to pass by you, in order to reach the palace of Rani Jhajhani.”

The giant was wild with rage at what he thought the impudence of the young man in wishing to reach the Rani's palace. He stamped his feet and raved, and would have devoured him there and then, had not the sense of gratitude he was labouring under, triumphed over his desire to kill him, and so he said:—

“Young man, I not only forgive you your impudence and let you go hence in safety, but to mark my sense of the debt I owe you for freeing me from my bonds, I give you this signet ring. On your way to Rani Jhajhani's palace, you will encounter six other giants like me, but they will all allow you to pass by unmolested if you show them this ring.”

The young man thanked him very much, and taking the signet ring from him once more set out on his journey. He soon reached the place where the second giant was lying and serving him as he had done the first, he showed him the ring, at sight of which the monster stepped aside and let him pass by.



He thus went on passing one giant after another till he came to the last. When he had freed him also like the rest, and feasted him, the giant expressed to him his gratitude more warmly than the others had done, and asked him to let him know how he could reward him. Upon this the young man said:—

“I want nothing of you, except that you lead me to Rani Jhajhani’s palace, for I am dying to see her.”

“I regret,” replied the giant, “that I cannot lead you there in person, but I give you this flower. If you smell it the right way you will turn into a parrot, and if you smell it the other way, you will be able to resume your own shape. Put it to your nose now and as soon as you are a parrot, fly straight on till you see the roof of a palace. Perch upon that roof, for it will be the roof of Rani Jhajhani’s Palace.

Thanking the giant warmly for his great kindness, the young man smelt the flower, and in the form of a parrot flew straight on, till he reached the Rani’s palace. As he sat perched upon the roof he perceived through a chink in it that the giant king, whose daughter Rani Jhajhani was, was with her at the time. So he waited till he saw him take up a stick that lay by, touch his daughter gently with it, and throwing her into a trance, walk out of the palace, leaving the fair Rani alone.

When the giant was gone a safe distance, the parrot flew into the apartment in which the lady lay, and smelling the flower the wrong way, resumed his original shape. He then took up the stick that lay by, and touched the lady gently with it, just as he had seen the giant do, when to his great joy, she woke from her trance, and began to look at him with her beautiful eyes, so beautiful that for a time he was quite dazzled by their brilliancy! The lady on her part also, seemed greatly astonished to see the youth, having never set eyes on any human being before. But she soon got over her surprise and expressed herself greatly delighted at seeing him. Each found the other so agreeable that they conversed on till dusk, when the lady suddenly recollected that it was time for the giant, her father, to return to the palace. She thereupon requested the youth to throw her into a trance again by the aid of the magic wand. Before complying with her request, however, he begged of her to ascertain from her father whether he was mortal, and if so whether he knew in what manner he would come by his death. The lady promised to obtain the information for him, and the youth, throwing her into a trance, assumed the shape of a parrot once more, went

out of the palace and rested for the night in a niche in the roof.

Hardly had the young man left the room when the giant entered it, touched the fairy with the magic wand and brought her to her senses. The two then sat down to their dinner together, and in the course of it the lady inquired of her father in a casual way whether he was mortal and whether she had cause ever to fear his death.

"My daughter," he replied, "you need never have any fear of my dying. Nobody can kill me so long as the parrot on yonder island lives, for it holds the key of my life."

"What parrot, father, and what island?" asked the lady innocently, not knowing that her late visiter was on the roof, in the shape of a parrot, hearing every word they uttered.

"Far, far away in the sea," replied the giant, "there is a small island, on which is a golden cage hung high up in the air. In that cage is the parrot with whose life mine is connected. As soon as some one shall wring its neck and kill it, I am dead. But I am sure no one can ever do so. In the first place, no one would be able to get to the island; and secondly the cage is hung too high for any one to reach it. So I am quite certain that no one will ever cause my death. Some human beings that have been by accident thrown upon the shores of that island from time to time, have been transformed by me into stones, and stones they will remain until a few drops of water from a well there are sprinkled on them."

The young man, who had been hearing all this, waited till day-break, and as soon as it was light, spread his wings and flew away into the sea. After a very long journey he reached the island and to his great joy, saw the golden cage hung up there just as the giant had said. He flew up to it, and opening the door, caught the parrot by its neck.

The giant, at the same moment, felt a tightness at his throat and ran with all speed towards the sea into which he plunged headlong. The young man waited till he saw the giant come wading through the waters, towards the island, and as soon as his antagonist touched the shore, he wrung the poor parrot's neck and killed it. And lo! the same instant the huge giant fell down dead, and lay, stretching his immense length over half the island.

The young man now once again resumed human shape and, drawing some water out of the well that was hard by, sprinkled

it little by little on the stones he found lying in different parts of the island; and they soon began to be transformed into human beings, and to rise up one by one, and walk about.

They could scarcely realise where they were, so long had they been lying there lifeless as stones, but their deliverer soon brought them to a sense of their true position and they all felt very grateful towards him. They then walked, all together, to the sea-shore, where to their great joy they found their ships lying at anchor. So grateful did they feel towards the young man, that they all offered to place their ships at his disposal and to take him to his native country, and each and all pressed upon him rich presents, for most of them were either rich merchants, or great princes. But he would accept nothing from them. He would be amply repaid, he told them, if only they prepared him a document setting forth all the services he had rendered them, and put their signatures to it. This they did with great pleasure, and presented the document to him with many expressions of gratitude. After this they all went on board their ships and sailed away.

The youth then smelt the magic flower and assuming the shape of a parrot, flew with all speed towards the Rani's palace. When he arrived into her presence he found her lamenting her father's death, of which she had come to know by certain indications around her. He soothed her as best he could, and held out hopes that her father might yet return, for he wished to keep her ignorant of the fact that he himself was his destroyer. But she was convinced that her father was dead, and was inconsolable for a long time. A few days after this, finding her a little calmer, he declared his love for her and begged her to accompany him to his native country. To this she readily consented, and the two started together on their journey, having first transformed themselves into parrots by the aid of the magic flower, and soon arrived within the precincts of the city in which the youth's father, the old merchant, lived. Finding themselves safe there, Rani Jhajhani and her lover resumed their original shapes. The latter then purchased a horse for himself, and a magnificent palanquin for the Rani, and hired a number of attendants to wait upon her. Then with a view to preparing his father for the reception of the renowned Rani Jhajhani with all fitting pomp, he left the fairy in a fine mango-grove by the side of a river, and proceeded alone towards his father's residence.

Whilst he was away, the Rani amused herself by talking to such women as happened to pass by the place where her palan-

quin was set down, for everything around her was new to her and afforded her delight.

Just then a poor potter woman happened to go by, and seeing such a beautiful lady in the palanquin, stopped out of curiosity to look at her. Rani Jhajhani beckoned her to come near, and entered into conversation with her, in the course of which she told her who she was, and what had brought her to that strange city. Now the jewels and rich clothes that the fairy queen wore excited the cupidity of the potter woman and she resolved to possess herself of them by some means. She thereupon suggested that the Rani should bathe in the cool waters of a well that was situated some yards away, and, the fairy consenting, they went up to it together. After the Rani had had her bath, the potter woman told her that a strange whim had taken possession of her, namely that they should change dresses to see how each looked in the other's costume. The unsuspecting Rani agreed to this and the dresses were interchanged. After wearing the potter woman's clothes the Rani leant over the brink of the well, and looked into it, to see her reflection in the waters. The potter woman taking advantage of this opportunity, seized her by the legs and threw her head-first into the well. This done, she quickly drew the veil of the fairy's dress over her face, walked up to the palanquin, and got into it unperceived by any one.

The bearers, thinking her to be their mistress, asked no questions, and she remained undisturbed in the palanquin, until the young merchant returned with his parents, attended by a long train of musicians, to fetch his bride home. But what was his dismay, on opening the doors of the palanquin, to find a strange woman lying inside in place of the beautiful fairy he had left in it a few hours before! He was struck dumb at being confronted by such a fright, for be it mentioned, the potter woman was one of the ugliest of her sex, and having lost one of her eyes was known in her village by the nick-name of *Kani Kobai*.<sup>1</sup> When he had recovered from his astonishment he asked her who she was and what she was doing there in place of the fairy Rani. At this *Kani Kobai* began to sob aloud, and replied that she was no other than the fairy queen herself, who had been thus transformed into an ugly one-eyed creature by a wicked magician that had visited her in his absence. The youth being of a credulous disposition believed her story, and quietly took her home, having previously countermanded all the grand preparations made for the reception

<sup>1</sup> i. e. One-eyed Kobai.

of his fairy bride. He did, however, suspect some treachery, and sounded the attendants; but could learn nothing from them as to what had happened. So he consigned *Kani Kobai* to a secluded part of his house, where he left her to herself, and shutting himself up in his own apartments remained there brooding over his misfortune. Everybody laughed at him for having gone so far to bring home such an ugly wife, and his sisters-in-law took every occasion to tease him about it. He could not, however, see his way to getting rid of her, for he feared that after all she might be his own Rani Jhajhani miraculously transformed into an ugly woman. After some time, finding his grief unbearable, he walked up to the place where he had left Rani Jhajhani and thoroughly examined every spot to see if he could find any traces of her. On looking down into the well, however, he saw a beautiful ball of choice flowers, floating on the surface. He soon drew it out carried it home with him, and laid it carefully by the side of his bed. When he rose the next morning he was surprised to see the flowers as fresh and beautiful as before. In short, so fascinated was he with them by this time that he could not rest a minute without seeing and smelling them.

One day while he was away on some business, *Kani Kobai* entered the room and tearing the ball of flowers to pieces threw it away. Great was the sorrow of the youth when he returned to see his favourite flowers gone. He questioned the servants about them, but could get nothing out of them. After a few days, however, happening to go out into the garden he saw the petals of some flowers lying under his window. He was so charmed with their fragrance that he ordered a chair to be placed on the spot, and sat there gazing rapturously at them. In a short time, however, he was surprised to find a sweet-scented herb growing out of the petals. He liked it so that he would sit there for days together inhaling the fragrance of it. *Kani Kobai* watched this and, growing as jealous of the fragrant herb as she had been of the ball of flowers, she one day tore it up by the roots and boiled it in a quantity of water. She then took the mess to the farthest end of the garden, and poured it into a deep hole dug in the ground.

When the young man found the herb also gone he was beside himself with grief and wandered about in the garden every day in the hope of finding at least a fragment of the plant he loved so well, when one day his attention was attracted by a magnificent mango-tree which he saw growing at one end of it, and so much

was he charmed with the beauty of it that he was loath to leave the spot where it grew. So he got a summer-house built for him under its shade and his chief delight was to sit there enjoying the refreshing odour of its blossoms. In a few days' time the tree bore a fine crop of fruit, which ripened into extraordinarily large and beautiful mangoes. So the old merchant had them distributed amongst all his friends and servants, who all declared that they had never tasted such mangoes before. One evening, however, after the tree had been stripped of nearly all its fruit, while the poor heart-broken youth was sitting under its shade, one of the gardeners approached him and said, that, though each and all of his brother-servants had a mango or two given them, he was the only one who had not had his share. Upon this his young master ordered him to go up the tree and take as many as he could find there. The gardener climbed the tree and after a great deal of search succeeded in finding only one mango, which, however, was so large and beautiful that on coming down he showed it to his master with great delight.

"This mango is the best of all that this tree has borne my good man," said his master, "take it home and I am sure you and your wife will enjoy it greatly."

The man went home and gave the beautiful ripe fruit to his wife who proceeded to cut it. Just, however, as she laid the knife on it a child's voice from within was heard to say:—

"Be careful, mamma, or you'll hurt me."

The woman shrieked with terror at this extraordinary occurrence and threw down the mango. But her husband took it up and cut it open with great care, when lo! a pretty little girl popped out of it, and stood before them. The gardener and his wife were overjoyed at seeing her, and felt sure, that as they had not been blessed with any children, Iswar had in this miraculous manner given them a child to gladden their hearts in their old age.

Fearing lest somebody else should claim her, the old people lodged her in a secluded part of their house and brought her up as their own daughter. The girl grew so rapidly that in a few months' time she was a full-grown woman, the light and joy of the poor occupants of the cottage, who made much of her.

Now it happened that ever since the day the merchant's son gave the mango to the gardener, the gardener's cottage had such fascination for him that he left his favourite seat under the

mango tree and began roaming round the humble abode. He was at a loss to understand what it was that attracted him, till one day he happened to see a beautiful young lady very much like his own Rani Jhjhani at one of the windows. She drew her head in just as their eyes met, and the young man, after waiting for some time in the hope that she would return once more to the window, sent for the gardener and questioned him narrowly as to who the fair lady was and what had brought her to his house.

"She is my own daughter, Maharaj!" he said, joining his hands together in supplication.

"You were never known to have any children, my man, and how come you to have a daughter now?" said his master, "you have nothing to fear from me. Only tell me who she is and where she has come from."

Then the poor man told his master how he had found her in the mango he himself had given him, and how he had brought her up as his own child, and concluded by begging him not to take her away. So the youth expressed a desire to see the lady, and the gardener accordingly took him into the cottage and presented him to her. No sooner had he seen her than he cried out:—

"My own Jhjhani! Where were you all this time away from me? I have been so miserable and unhappy without you."

But she turned away from him and said coldly:—

"Go and ask your beloved *Kani Kobai*, and she will tell you."

The youth was so startled at these words that he could not speak for some minutes; but at last he recovered himself and said:—

"For mercy's sake tell me how *Kani Kobai* came to be in your place, for I know nothing about it."

Now the maiden had heard all about the youth's disappointment at finding *Kani Kobai* in place of his beautiful fairy bride from the gardener and his wife, and how he had been passing a miserable life ever since. So her heart melted towards him and she related to him how *Kani Kobai* had persuaded her to exchange clothes with her, and thrown her into a well; how she was soon after changed into the ball of flowers, which he had found and taken home; how *Kani Kobai* had torn it to pieces, and how a precious herb had grown out of the petals; how that herb, too, was boiled into a mess by *Kani Kobai* and poured into a deep hole, and how, on that spot the mango tree had grown, on which his

gardener had found the mango that contained her. The youth flew into a rage at this narration of his fairy bride's wrongs, and running up to the house seized *Kani Kobai* by the hair and dragged her before Rani Jhajhani. The two then extracted from her a confession of her guilt, and the young merchant immediately had her driven away in great disgrace.

Soon afterwards the young lover succeeded in persuading Rani Jhajhani to marry him, and the wedding was celebrated with great pomp, and they lived very happily ever afterwards. Nor were the gardener and his wife forgotten. The young merchant bestowed upon them a handsome pension for life and gave them a nice new house to live in, next to his own, where they spent the rest of their lives in great comfort and happiness.

### THE BITER BIT OR THE RAJA WHO SOLD HIS RANI

A certain Raja had married six wives, one after another; and not content with so many, he one day married a seventh, who was prettier than all the others, and in course of time became a greater favourite of the Raja than any one of the others had ever been. No wonder they all felt very jealous of her.

Now the Raja was a very sensible man, and knew that if he kept all his wives together in one place they would be sure to quarrel with one another; so in order to prevent this he assigned to each a separate palace and establishment, as soon as he married her. In like manner he had provided his seventh wife also with a palace, servants, carriages, and so on.

The young queen, who was a prime-minister's daughter, though very noble-minded and virtuous, was a lively young lady, and therefore did not relish the idea of being mewed up in a palace the whole day, with no other company but that of the king when he chose to visit her, or of one or other of her co-wives, who now and then called to have a chat with her. So sometimes, when there was a bright moon shining, the young lady would order her litter and be carried out into the city. The beautiful stalls that lined the roads, had a special charm for her, and nothing gave her greater pleasure than to stop at the different shops, and buy some of the good things they contained. Being, however, frank and open-hearted by nature, she would



relate to her co-wives all her little nocturnal adventures, telling them how pleasant it was to visit the bazar on a moonlight night, to buy sweet-meats at one shop and pan (betel) leaves and betel nuts at another, and so on, and often invited them to accompany her. But they all knew that they would incur the Raja's displeasure if they acceded to her request, and so were content to remain at home. They could not, however, bear to see the young queen as high in the king's favour as ever, although she wandered about by night in direct opposition to his wishes, and would have told him all they knew about their erring co-wife, had they not been restrained by fear, lest the Raja should disbelieve them, and, considering the accusation to be prompted by malice and jealousy on their part, should turn the tables upon them. So they hit upon a plan by which the Raja himself might listen with his own ears to his favourite's account of her nocturnal wanderings, and accordingly one day one of them was deputed to watch for a favourable opportunity and drop a hint to the Raja, that if he went to his youngest wife's palace that day unknown to her, he would hear something that would convince him how little she deserved the love and affection he lavished upon her. The plan succeeded, and the Raja went and hid himself behind a curtain in the youngest Rani's palace, while the elder one who had gone there before him led her unsuspecting rival into conversation.

"How did you like your moonlight excursion last night?" she asked.

"Oh, immensely!" replied the Rani, "how brightly the moon shone, how very pleasant it was, and how pretty the market place looked."

"Indeed! and what did you see there, my dear?" asked her co-wife.

"Such pretty confectioners' shops with the sweetmeats so temptingly displayed."

"Oh indeed!" said the wily woman, smacking her lips in anticipation of the great disgrace that awaited her rival,—"and what saw you next, my dear? Do tell me."

"At a very pretty stall," she said, "I saw a man selling pan leaves and betel nuts and"—

"And you purchased none of the good things?" exclaimed the other interrupting her.

"To be sure, I did," was the reply, "I bought some sweet-meats at one shop, some pan leaves at another, and"—

“And! and! come! what next?” cried out the Raja, unable to restrain himself any longer, while the wife, of whose faithlessness he now felt convinced, waxed so eloquent, “what else did you do?”

“Nothing more,” replied the young lady promptly and quite unabashed, “My eyes opened just as I left the pan-seller’s stall and of course I found it was all a dream.”

“A dream!” repeated the Raja, going up to her, “you have been speaking all this time of a dream, and this jealous woman,” he said, shaking his fist at the other Rani, who was quite taken aback at the presence of mind displayed by her young rival,—“and this jealous woman would lead me to believe you were really in the habit of wandering about by moonlight? Away with her to prison at once!” and in spite of all her protestations of innocence, the poor woman was taken out of the room.

The Raja was so enraged with her that he forthwith went to his own palace, and issued orders to the town-crier to proclaim throughout the city that one of the Raja’s wives was to be sold the next morning in the market-place, with all the jewellery upon her, for a lakh and a quarter of rupees. The poor Rani was very much distressed to hear of this order in her prison, and wished death would come to her relief and save her from such disgrace. When, however, the youngest Rani heard of this cruel sentence, she felt sorely grieved at what she considered her husband’s unjustifiable severity, and her spirit revolted at the idea of another person suffering for a fault committed by her; so she nobly resolved to make a clean breast of it to the Raja, to assure him of her co-wife’s innocence, and to tell him that if he wanted to see justice done he had better sell her in the market-place, instead of the elder Rani. When the Raja heard this, he was greatly exasperated, though he could not help admiring the noble conduct and love of justice of his beloved wife. He therefore forthwith revoked the harsh order, and set the elder Rani free. But he thought he might as well make an example of the guilty one, so as to deter others from doing what she had done, and accordingly ordered it to be proclaimed throughout the city that the Raja’s youngest wife, being found guilty of disobeying the commands of her lord, was sentenced to stand in the market-place, buried up to her waist in a pit dug for the purpose, and that whoever filled the pit up to the brim with gold, was to have her. By fixing such an enormous price on her, the Raja flattered himself that he would never be able to get any one to buy her,

but that the degradation and insult to which she would thus be subjected would tame her haughty spirit, and make her more submissive to him in future. So the next morning the young Rani was led away to the market-place, and buried up to her waist in the ground. The poor creature had no alternative but to stand there and allow herself to be stared at by every passer-by. Beautiful though she was, she had to stand thus exposed for a considerable time, as the heavy price set upon her deterred people from coming forward to purchase her.

At last, when she was almost despairing of being released, and wished rather to die than to go back to the Raja whom she now hated for his shameful treatment of her, a young man, who appeared to be a stranger to the place, walked up to where she was standing, and inquired of those around who the beautiful lady was, and why she was exposed like that in the market-place.<sup>1</sup> On being made acquainted with her story he felt so deeply for her and was so shocked at the inhuman conduct of the Raja, that he resolved to give away all he had, to take her out of the hands of such a monster. Being himself a man of liberal and enlightened ideas, he had disagreed with his father on certain points and parted from him in anger, so he admired the independent spirit displayed by the young lady, and sympathized greatly with her. The Rani, too, conceived a liking for him at first sight, and wished in her heart that he would purchase her. The merchant soon left her, hurried on board the ship in which he had arrived at the town, and landing all the gold and valuables he had, sold the latter in the market for as much gold as they could fetch, and threw all the precious metal into the pit. But though he had disposed of everything he had, the young merchant found to his dismay that there was still some gold wanting to fill the pit before he could take possession of the Rani, and was therefore at his wit's end to know what to do, when the Rani, who had been watching him all the while, saw the predicament in which he was, and knowing that, for lack of only a small quantity of the precious metal with which the pit was nearly full, she would have to go back to the tender mercies of the Raja, whom she so hated, she called him to her, and thanking him for all that he had done for her, offered to place at his disposal all the jewellery she wore, that he might convert it into gold and thus make up the deficiency. The young man was very glad at this expression of the pretty Rani's regard for him,

<sup>1</sup> This part of the tale is comparable with a well-known story in the *Alif Laila*.—Ed.

and forthwith sold all the jewels she gave him in the market, and to his great joy they fetched gold enough to fill the pit up to the brim. The Rani, too, was overjoyed at this, and the young man carried the beautiful young lady triumphantly away from the market place, amidst the cheers of the people who had assembled there.

Knowing of no other place where they could go, the pair put up at a dharamsala,<sup>1</sup> and after having rested themselves for some time, they began to consider how they could best manage to live. The young man was quite a stranger to the place, and, as he told his companion, was on his way to his father's country returning there after having been away for several years trading in different countries, when chance brought them together; and since he had given away in purchasing her the immense wealth he had amassed, he had not so much as a copper left, with which to begin life anew. The lady, too, having parted with all her jewellery, was not in a position to help her noble deliverer in the least, and so they sat for a considerable time thinking as to what course they should adopt under the circumstances, when the young lady happened to put her hand to one of her ears, and found to her great joy that she had still a small ear-ring left in it. She took it out at once, and, giving it to her companion, said—"if you but knew some art by which we could get our living, you can purchase enough materials by selling this trinket to enable you to practise it."

This set them both thinking again, till the man at last recollected that he used to make some very beautiful bamboo baskets when he was young, and he thought he could make them as well now as before.

"Very good indeed," said the lady, "and I think I, too, can make myself useful in some way. When I was a girl I used to make some very nice paper flowers, having learnt the art from some poor people whom I used to visit, and if my memory does not fail me the flowers that I made were greatly admired at that time, so, if you buy some bamboos and paper, and the other requisites, we shall soon set to work and earn money sufficient to buy us enough for our present necessities."

The man went to the market with the ear-ring, and having disposed of it, purchased out of the money all that they wanted. The two then set to work, and the man made some very pretty baskets, while his fair companion quickly prepared some pretty flowers and decorated the baskets with them. The next morning

<sup>1</sup> A free inn for Hindus, usually attached to a place of worship.

the merchant took the baskets to the bazar, and was glad to find that they fetched a good deal more than he ever expected they would, and learnt moreover that such baskets were in great demand in the city. So the two worked on with a good heart, and their baskets improved so much, day by day, that in a short time the young merchant found that he had laid by enough money to enable him to engage passages for himself and his companion, in a ship bound to his native country.

Now, thought the Rani, was the time to have her revenge on the old Raja. So she asked the young man to prepare the nicest basket he had ever made, and making some very pretty flowers herself, decorated the basket with them, and the two then went to the Raja's palace to sell it. When the merchant was summoned into the presence of the Raja, who was seated in the palace gardens, the lady kept out of sight, though within earshot, in a corner. The Raja, when he saw the basket, was loud in his praises of it, and said that it was worth any sum the maker might ask for it, and inquired of the young man for how much he would part with it. The young man, who had been already tutored by his fair companion as to what to say, replied promptly—"The price I set upon my basket is one lakh and a half of rupees."

The Raja, who had extolled the bamboo basket so highly, thought that if he now refused to pay what was asked for it, he would be giving the lie to his own words, so he ordered the money to be counted out to the man, while his courtiers laughed in their sleeves at what they considered his folly in giving such a large sum of money for a bamboo basket. At last when the basket-maker had taken possession of his money and was making his obeisance to the Raja before leaving, the young Rani came out of her hidingplace, and bowing to the Raja said—"Raja Sahib, a few days ago you sought to degrade me in the eyes of the people of your city, and it is my turn now, and I repay the obligation with interest, for this day I have made you the laughing-stock of the nobles of your court. You sold me that day in the market-place, and to-day I am revenged upon you. Remember the saying that—

"The Raja prides himself on his crown and kingdom, and the minister on his virtues, while the virtuous woman proves her chastity in various ways."

So saying the lady walked away with the young man, leaving the Raja in no very enviable a frame of mind.

Soon afterwards the young merchant embarked with his companion for his native country. When he arrived there, he found that his father's anger was much softened by their long separation, for he received them both kindly, and when he was made acquainted with the history of the young lady, he was so pleased with her that in a few days he celebrated his son's nuptials with her with great pomp, and at his death left him in sole possession of his great wealth.

## SUNABAI JAI

There was once a great merchant named Danta Seth, who had seven sons, but no daughter. So he and his wife prayed to Iswara incessantly to bless them with one, till at last he heard their prayers and a daughter was born to them. They were so overjoyed at this that they made the occasion one of great rejoicing,<sup>1</sup> gave away large sums of money in alms to Brahmans, and regularly afterwards, every morning, the mother waved a string of pearls over the little girl's head and gave it away to the poor.<sup>2</sup>

They had also a golden swing made for her, on which her seven sisters-in-law<sup>3</sup> were made to swing her all day long. Thus Sunabai Jai, as she was called, grew up in great happiness and comfort, and was petted by all the friends and relations of her parents. But alas! this state of things did not last long. Before she was seven or eight years old, her parents died, leaving her under the care of her seven brothers, and their wives. The demeanour of the latter instantly changed towards her, and they who during the life-time of her parents had vied with one another in showing their love for her, now not only refused point blank to swing her, or to do any other service for her, but often told her to get out of the swing, and perform the household duties with them.

Not long after the old people had gone to their rest, the young men, their sons, bethought themselves of going to distant parts for the purpose of commerce, and getting ready a ship they

Folklore in Western India. By Putlibai D. H. Wadia. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XV Part CXC. December, 1886. Page 365.

<sup>1</sup> Note that the birth of a daughter would not, in India, be ordinarily an occasion for rejoicings.

<sup>2</sup> On auspicious occasions rice, cocoanuts, sugar, betelnuts, dates (dried), are waved over a person's head and then thrown or given away, for they are believed to carry away all the misfortunes that might be in store for the person in question. Sometimes rich people wave such precious things as pearls over their children's heads with the same object.

<sup>3</sup> i. e. the infant brides of their seven infant sons.

sailed away in it, leaving Sunabai Jai to the tender mercies of their wives. Before taking their departure, however, they bade them take great care of the little girl, and told them not to let her want for anything during the time they were away. But as soon as their backs were turned and the sisters-in-law found the child fully within their power, they disregarded the parting injunctions of their husbands, and set her to do all the household work they had been made to do when their mother-in-law was alive. Not content even with this, they often beat and scolded her, and, in short, tried to make her life as miserable as possible.

One day, one of them ordered her to go and bring dry wood for fuel from the jungle, and when the girl looked about for a rope with which to tie the bundle, they all scolded her and would not let her take any.

"Don't tie the dried sticks into a bundle," they said, "and yet, mind you bring as many as we used to do, when you were swinging at your ease in your golden swing."

The poor girl went out without a rope, and after she had collected a large number of sticks, she found that she could not carry more than three or four sticks on her head at a time without tying them together, so she sat down in a corner and began to cry. At this a large serpent crept out of its hole and said to her:—

"Well, Sunabai Jai, what is the cause of your tears?"

Then the little girl replied:—

"Danta Seth had seven sons and after them came  
Sunabai Jai,

Over whose head a string of pearls was waved  
every morning,

But now, all the seven brothers have gone away  
in a ship, leaving her alone,

And all the seven sisters-in-law ill-treat Sunabai  
Jai."

"And they have bade me," she continued, "fetch firewood but have given me no rope with which to tie the sticks together, and I find that I cannot carry more than two or three sticks on my head, while they have ordered me to bring home a large bundle."

The serpent felt pity for her and said:—

"Fear not, good Sunabai Jai, I shall instantly remove the cause of your grief. See here. I will stretch myself at full length upon the ground, and you must place your sticks in the middle of my

body, and then, when you have piled up as many as you can carry, I will wind myself round them like a rope, and you will thus be able to carry the bundle easily."

Sunabai Jai thanked the serpent, who soon wound himself round the sticks she placed upon his body, and the little girl walked homewards with the bundle on her head. As she threw down the bundle in the yard all the seven sisters-in-law came running out of the house to scold her for bringing only a few sticks from the jungle, as they thought. But what was their astonishment to see as large a bundle on the ground as one could fairly carry. They were struck dumb with surprise, and could not for the life of them comprehend how the little child could have carried so many sticks on her head without tying them together, for the serpent, it must be mentioned, had glided gently away, before they could observe it.

They were, however, very much provoked, and resolved to subject her to severer ordeals. So one day one of the worthy ladies covered a large heavy quilt with ghi and oil, and bade Sunabai Jai go to the sea-shore and wash it clean, firmly believing that this time she would either be drowned in the attempt or return home to get a good caning. Poor Sunabai Jai dragged the quilt to the sea-side, and sitting down upon a stone began to cry at the utter impossibility of washing such a dirty, oily, heavy thing single-handed, and without the aid of soap or anything. However, she went to work after a time, but though she used all her strength till she was quite exhausted, the quilt remained as dirty as ever. So she again sat down in disappointment and cried more bitterly than ever.

There was nothing near her but a few cranes, who had all along been watching the poor girl. When they heard her cry they all flew towards her, and one of them asked her why she was crying. Sunabai Jai replied:—

"Danta Seth had seven sons and after them came

Sunabai Jai,

Over whose head a string of pearls was waved  
every morning;

But now, all the seven brothers have gone away  
in a ship, leaving her alone,

And all the seven sisters-in-law ill-treat Sunabai  
Jai."

She then related to them how she had been sent to wash the dirty quilt by her sisters-in-law.



“Is that all?” said the crane, who acted as spokesman: “then dry your tears, and we shall wash it for you in a trice.”

Sunabai Jai agreed, and immediately the cranes set to work, flapping their wings backwards and forwards upon it, and dipping it now and then into the water, till they had made it in a short time as white as their own plumage. Sunabai Jai was very grateful to them for this, and carried the quilt home to her sisters-in-law in triumph.

They were very much chagrined, not only to see Sunabai Jai return home safe and sound, but to find that she had brought back the quilt, clean and white beyond their expectations. So they said nothing at the time, but inwardly swore to subject her to still greater hardships, to see how she came successfully through them all. So after a few days they mixed a *phara*<sup>1</sup> of rice and a *phara* of dal (pulse) together and ordered her to go into the yard and separate them.

“Be careful,” said they, “not to lose a single grain out of these two *pharas*, for we have counted every one!”

The poor girl carried the mixture into the yard as desired, and sat down to her work, but she had no idea how she was ever to separate so many small things as the grains of rice from the dal. So she cried and cried till even the sparrows on the large trees in the yard were moved by her tears, and they came down to her to inquire into the cause of her grief. Whereupon Sunabai Jai repeated to them how

“Danta Seth had seven sons and after them came  
Sunabai Jai,  
Over whose head a string of pearls was waved  
every morning;  
But now all the seven brothers have gone away  
in a ship, leaving her alone,  
And all the seven sisters-in-law ill-treat Sunabai  
Jai.”

And she informed them of what her sisters-in-law had set her to do, when forthwith a large flock of sparrows set to work, and separated the rice from the dal with their beaks, making two large separate heaps in no time. Sunabai Jai joyfully took the separated grains into the house. Her sisters-in-law could not believe their eyes, so astonished were they to see the job done so quickly. One of them, however, making a pretence of counting the grains, said:—

<sup>1</sup> A *Phara* is a corn-measure of 16 *payalis*, or 64 *seers*

“Stop, stop! Sunabai Jai, is that the way you do your work? I find the rice short just by one grain; pray how do you account for that? Go and fetch it this instant, or we shall beat you within an inch of your life.”

The poor child went back into the yard, and began to look for the missing grain of rice, with eyes full of tears, when she beheld a sparrow flying into the house. She followed it, and to the surprise of all, the bird dropped a grain of rice into the heap, and flew away.

At this the women grew very jealous of the poor child, and bethought themselves of some sure method of getting rid of her. They therefore ordered her one day to go into the jungle and get for them some tigress's milk, firmly believing that she would meet with her death in the attempt. Little Sunabai Jai had no conception of the dangerous nature of the errand she was sent upon, and so she fearlessly wandered here and there in the jungle in search of a tigress, but fortunately for her she did not find one. So, fatigued and utterly prostrated, she sank down on the ground in a thick part of it, and cried for help; when lo! a tigress sprang out of a bush hard by, and seeing Sunabai Jai, said:—

“Well, Sunabai, what are you doing here, and why are you crying?”

Then Sunabai Jai told her tale in the following words:—

“Danta Seth had seven sons and after them came  
Sunabai Jai,  
Over whose head a string of pearls was waved  
every morning;  
But now all the seven brothers have gone away  
in a ship, leaving her alone,  
And all the seven sisters-in-law ill-treat Sunabai  
Jai.”

“My sisters-in-law have sent me,” she continued, “to fetch the milk of a tigress, and of a surety I don't know where to find it.”

At this the tigress took pity on her and gave her some of her own milk, which she carried home in the pail she had brought for the purpose.

Great was the surprise and disappointment of the seven women on seeing Sunabai Jai come home alive and unhurt once more, and when she placed before them the pail with the tigress's milk in it, their astonishment knew no bounds. They now clearly saw

that she was under the special protection of Fate, and that, therefore, every attempt of theirs to get rid of her would come to nothing. Still, however, they persevered and one day told her to take a large piece of cloth, go to the sea-side, and bring in it the foam of the ocean. Not suspecting the uselessness of making such an attempt, the little girl went to the sea-side, and passed nearly the whole day up to her knees in the water, trying to catch some at least of the foam that floated by her, but to her great dismay she found how utterly impracticable such a thing was. Her tears fell fast when she saw that it was getting dark, and thought how far she had to go, and how, if she went home empty-handed, her sisters-in-law would visit her with the severest punishment they could inflict, when her attention was attracted by a solitary sail. She felt great interest in watching the movements of the ship which was fast making for the shore; when it neared her she recognised it to be that of her brothers, and her delight was unbounded.

Being seized with a desire to give her brothers a surprise, little Sunabai Jai hid herself behind a rock till they landed. The vessel anchored in due time, and the seven young men put off in a boat for the shore. As soon as they stepped on dry land, the little girl, unable to restrain herself any longer, ran up to them and was clasped in their arms. When the excitement of this most unexpected meeting was over, the brothers inquired of her what she was doing on the sea-shore so far away from home. She related to them all that had befallen her since their departure, and told them how that day she had been sent to fetch foam from the sea. The brothers were greatly enraged on learning of the inhuman conduct of their wives, and resolved to punish them as they deserved. So they took Sunabai Jai on board their ship, and kept her there till the following morning, when one of them, cutting open his thigh with his knife, put his little sister into it and sewed up the rent! They then went ashore and walked leisurely home. When they arrived there, their wives were greatly surprised to see them, for they had not expected them to return so soon. Pretending to know nothing of Sunabai Jai, they demanded of them where she was, when the wicked women replied that she had behaved very badly after their departure, and had taken to wandering about at her pleasure, regardless of their admonitions, and that morning, too, she had gone no one knew where, without their permission; but would come back, sure enough, in the evening, as was her wont.

“Very well,” said the men, “let us have something for our breakfast now, and mind, if Sunabai Jai does not return by dusk we shall hold you answerable for her life.”

The seven women, who had not seen the poor girl all the previous day and night, began to tremble at these words, and devoutly prayed that she would return home in safety. When they were at their meals, however, they noticed that one of the men every now and then placed a morsel of food upon his thigh, and that it soon disappeared therefrom, to be replaced by another; but, seeing their husbands were in an angry mood they dared not ask them any questions. At last, when night came and there were no signs of Sunabai Jai, the brothers were furious and bade their wives on pain of death to tell them what they had done with her. Seeing further prevarication useless, they all confessed their guilt, and expressed their fear that Sunabai Jai was drowned in the sea; when, to their great dismay, one of the brothers opened the rent in his thigh, and pulled out Sunabai Jai, as large as life and as well as ever. Upon this, the wicked women fell on their knees, and begged loudly to be forgiven, but their husbands were inexorable; they shaved their heads and cut off their noses and mounting them upon donkeys, sent them away to their parents' houses, to live there in disgrace for the rest of their lives!

### DEVKI RANI

Once upon a time there lived a farmer, who was rich in all earthly possessions, but had the misfortune to lose his wife and to find his only daughter motherless at a very tender age. After the death of her mother, the whole burden of the household duties devolved upon the little girl, and among other things she had to cook the daily food for her father and herself. In the art of cookery, however, the poor little girl was very deficient, and had, therefore, now and then to seek the advice of a neighbour, a woman who, though sweet of tongue and fair of form, was cunning and false-hearted. She would often come into the house under pretence of directing the girl in her household duties, though in reality she made every endeavour to involve her more and more in difficulties, and painted her before her father as a girl hopelessly inefficient in every respect.

In doing this, the crafty woman had a double object. She wanted to ruin the poor girl in the estimation of her father and

to impress upon the old man the advisability of marrying a second wife, and that wife her own worthy self. Unfortunately for the poor motherless child, the plan succeeded, and the farmer married his fair neighbour one fine day. The little girl in her innocence welcomed her with every manifestation of delight, and she was duly installed mistress of the house.

Things went on smoothly for some days, but by degrees the false woman threw off her mask and revealed herself in her own true colours. She treated her step-daughter very cruelly, and subjected her to all sorts of indignities. Somehow or other, the poor thing was always in trouble. Continual dropping wears away a stone, and the complaints of her alleged misdoings were so frequent, that her father grew sick and tired of it all, and came to look upon his poor little daughter as a being utterly unworthy of his regard. She had, however, no one to whom she could tell her wrongs, and had, therefore, to bear her lot in silence.

The lapse of a year or two saw the birth of another daughter to the farmer, but this event only served to fill the cup of the poor child's misery to the brim, for the cruel step-mother, who had up to this time barely tolerated her step-daughter as a dependent in the house, now wished to get rid of her altogether. So one day she found out a pretext for sending her to the woods in the hope that some wild animal might devour her. She deputed to the poor creature the task of taking out an old cow of her dead mother to graze: "Take her out with you," she said, "for I cannot trust her with anyone else, she is your mother's cow, and" she added sarcastically "she perhaps might put up with your ill-nature and your stupid ways, and rid me for a time at least of your troublesome company."

These words brought tears to the unfortunate girl's eyes but she meekly went to the stables, and throwing a halter round the cow's head, took her away with her to the fields.

A crust of dry bread was all that the hard-hearted woman had given her for noon-day meal. She ate it, and took a cooling draught from a spring hard by, and wandered about in childish freedom through the fields with her charge.

Day after day was the girl thus sent out with the cow, a bit of dry bread for her food and little or no clothing to protect her from the sun and the rain. But the child was patient by nature, and complained not, nor had she any friend to whom she could turn for sympathy. The old cow, however, evinced great love for her and shed many a tear in pity for her sad lot. At last, one

day, Iswara miraculously endowed the dumb creature with the power of speech, and she said to the girl: "My dear child, how your good mother must be weeping in heaven to see you so miserable. She was kind to me as well as to all around her, and Iswara has for her sake given me the power to help you; so, do as I bid you. Place your dry crust of bread into my mouth, and see what follows." The girl did so, and rather regretfully watched the cow gulp down the bread for she was very hungry. But a moment after, the cow opened her large mouth again, when lo! it was filled with the daintiest and most wholesome food. The delighted child ate heartily of it, and being greatly refreshed, lay down beside the cow as she would have done by the side of her own mother.

Things went on like this for many months, and the child throve so well on the wholesome food thus strangely provided for her that her shrewd step-mother noticed the change, and suspected some interference with her plans. So one day, she sent her own little girl after her half-sister to watch her movements, and the little spy came upon her just as she was removing the eatables from the cow's mouth and spreading them before her on some leaves on the ground, prior to partaking of them.

Our heroine, suspecting nothing wrong in this unexpected visit of her younger sister, gave her a kind welcome, and invited her to a share of the tempting things spread over the ground. The crafty child readily sat down to the meal, and, when she had eaten her fill, rose to go. Before she left, however, the elder sister made her promise not to tell their mother what she had seen and done in the jungle that day. But the ungrateful little thing could not hold her tongue. She related to her mother all about the miraculous power of the cow, at which the wicked woman flew into a terrible rage, and vowed to destroy the cow before she was a day older. Accordingly, when the farmer came home that evening, she complained of a severe headache, and said that a physician, who had visited her, had prescribed as a remedy the fresh hot blood of a cow, to be applied to it. The farmer, thereupon ran out to get a good cow, but she called him back, and suggested that they could not do better than use the tough old cow that had once belonged to his first wife and had now grown utterly useless. It was all the same to the henpecked husband, and the poor cow's doom was sealed. The very next morning the butcher was asked to come round with his big sharp knife.

Now, the cow was as wise as any old woman, and when she saw her protege's little sister trip into the fields, she knew what she was sent for, and felt sure that her end was near and inevitable. So she said to her little companion, as soon as the intruder's back was turned: "My child, it is all very well for you so long as I live, but something tells me that my end is approaching, and when I am gone, who will love you and tend you as I do?"

"Then, I, too, shall die," replied the child weeping and throwing her arms round the old beast's neck, for certainly she was the only friend she had upon earth.

"No, no, it will not come to that," said the cow soothingly, "if you remember and follow instructions. If ever I die or am killed, and my carcass thrown to the crows, do you take care, child, to collect some at least of my flesh, and bury it into the ground in some unfrequented corner of your father's land. Do not touch this spot for thirty-one days, but after that period is past, if you find yourself in any trouble, come and dig at the spot again, call on me by name, and I shall help you."

The next morning brought the butcher with his knife to the farmer's door, and before the girl could take the good mother cow to the meadows, she was dragged out and slaughtered, and a pailful of her fresh warm blood was promptly carried to the mistress of the house, who had remained in bed nursing her headache. She immediately issued orders to the butcher to cut up the carcass of the dead beast into ever so many small fragments, and to scatter them to the four winds, so that no one might make the least attempt to put them together and bring her to life again. The butcher did as he was desired, but our little heroine, overwhelmed with grief and despair, stole quietly out of the house, possessed herself of a piece or two of the flesh and hurriedly buried it, as she had been instructed.

The poor cow had not been dead and gone many days when the cruel step-mother again began to invent plans, by which to dispose of her husband's first-born. Among other things she would send her with a large basket into the jungle, and bid her bring it home with her in the evening filled with sticks for fuel.

One day, while going about on her errand, she placed her empty basket on a large stone, and went into a thicket in search of dry sticks, when a gust of wind suddenly swept the basket away. The poor thing beat her breast for fear lest she might lose it and incur her step-mother's displeasure, and ran eagerly in pursuit of it. But the wind was too strong for her, and it

carried the basket further and further away, till at last she found herself in quite a strange place, and saw it roll up to the feet of a pious Brahman engaged in his devotions. As the basket touched his feet, he took it up to the great dismay of our little heroine, who cried piteously and begged him to give it back to her.

Now the Brahman was no other than Iswara himself, who had come upon earth in this guise for some purpose of his own. He smiled graciously on the poor child, and said as he flung the basket back to her: "Here, Devki Rani, take back thy basket. The sun and the moon shall adorn thy brow, and Padma (The Lotus) deck thy feet. Thou shalt cast thy radiance wherever thou goest, shed pearls for tears, and throw out rubies with thy laughter."

The young creature hardly comprehended the meaning of these strange words. To recover her basket was all that she desired, and away she flew home with it. But when she went into the presence of her step-mother, what an ejaculation of surprise greeted her! What could have worked that transformation in her poor despised step-daughter. Her beauty sparkled like lightning and almost blinded the eye of the beholder. What could have brought about such a change in her. Surely the poor girl herself could not tell. But by threats and coaxing, administered by turns, her step-mother got out of her the whole story of her adventure in the jungle, and persuaded her to take her half-sister with her to the woods the next morning, and get the same wonderful change worked in her, for be it mentioned the half-sister was as plain as plain could be, greatly to the detriment of her mother's pride. So the next morning our heroine started forth with her basket, accompanied by the younger girl, and duly placed it on the same stone. Presently a high wind arose and carried away the basket, and the younger girl ran after it till it reached the same Brahman impersonation of Iswara. He caught hold of it as before, but when the girl cried and begged it back, he called her Mutkuli Rani, and tossed the basket back towards her with a curse. The words had a terrible effect upon the girl, for there and then she was transformed into a disgustingly ugly creature, with a horrible squint in her eye, and a frightful hump back.

Her elder sister, when she saw this, wept both for pity at her sister's misfortune, and for fear of her mother's resentment, and went up to the Brahman to entreat him to restore her to her original shape, but to her great dismay he had disappeared.



So the two wended their way homewards, and what was the disappointment and chagrin of the mother to see her much loved daughter many degrees uglier than she had been. She rushed upon our little heroine, and would have killed her on the spot, had she not run away and hid herself for the night.

The next morning she rose betimes, and went to the place where she had buried some of the cow's flesh, for the prescribed period of thirty-one days had now passed. Upon removing the earth that she had piled upon the flesh, she, to her great surprise, discovered a flight of steps leading downwards, and when she came to the end of them, she found herself dragged into the passage by some unseen hand. Lower down and still lower she went, till at last she saw around her a large palace very richly and handsomely furnished, the presiding divinity of which was a middle aged motherly lady, who introduced herself to her as her old friend the cow. This good creature rejoiced greatly to see our young heroine there, and welcoming her cordially, invited her to stay with her for the rest of her life, which she was only too glad to do.

After some days the fame of the marvellous beauty of the cow's *protege* reached the ears of the Raja of those subterranean regions, a handsome young man, and he sent messengers to ask the cow to give him her adopted daughter in marriage.

The cow, for so we must still continue to call her, consented readily, for what man, short of a Raja, could be fit mate for one so beautiful, but she stipulated that she must obtain the consent of the girl's father before she could give her in marriage to him. So the Raja sent his men to invite the farmer into his presence that he might obtain his consent. The farmer's wife, however, felt so highly flattered at her husband being thus bidden into a Raja's presence, that she too went underground with the messengers, accompanied by her own daughter.

The farmer was duly presented before the Raja as the beautiful lady's father, and he humbly and most thankfully gave his consent to her marriage. Meanwhile his crafty wife remained with the cow, and, not knowing her in her transformed state, thanked her for befriending her step-daughter, and said that she had been very much grieved at the poor child's unaccountable absence from home, adding that she had always loved her, and had only chastised her occasionally for her own good. The cow, however, knew how much of this to believe, but she shook her head and said nothing, and even allowed her to do all the kind offices,

which it is a mother's privilege to perform when her daughter is to be married.

And here the wicked woman saw her opportunity and seized it. On the day appointed for the wedding she herself elected to bathe and dress the bride, and, under pretence of applying some perfume to her head, she thrust a long sharp magic needle, that she had concealed about her person, deep into her head. The poor girl was speedily transformed into a bright little bird, and flew away into the air before any one could know what had happened, and her scheming step-mother at once installed her own daughter in her place, and quickly dressing her in the bridal clothes threw a *chhadar* round her, as is the custom, and carried her in her own arms to the side of the bridegroom. The ceremony was then soon performed over them, and the princely bridegroom, without suspecting whom he had married, joyously bore his bride home.

In due course, however, the fraud was discovered, and poor Mutkuli Rani soon found herself consigned to a dungeon, dark and dismal. But the Raja's disappointment at the loss of his true-love was so great that he nearly wept his eyes out, and caused search to be made for her high and low, but in vain. He also threatened the farmer, as well as the cow, with death if they failed to reveal what had become of her, but they protested their ignorance of her whereabouts, and the Raja had therefore to give her up for lost, and to bear his grief as best as he could.

Some days after this it happened that a beggar came to the door of his palace and asked for alms, and his servants threw him a copper, as usual, for even a Raja cannot give more than a copper to each beggar, since thousands come to his door every day. That day, however, the beggar would not go away with what he had got, but said "What anomalies are to be met with in this world. Within a stone's throw of this place lives a Dhobi, and at his door I have just got a handful of pearls—real rare pearls for alms; while here in a king's palace I have been given only a copper coin. Why, judging from what an humble subject of his has given me, I should at least get a cart-load of pearls, if not more, at the Raja's door. This must indeed be a strange country where a subject is richer or more generous than his sovereign".

These words of the beggar fell upon the Raja's ears, and both startled him and wounded his pride. What must be the meaning of them. "Surely, that man's gains must be ill-gotten, since he gave away so lavishly," thought the Raja,

and he forthwith sent his men and had the Dhobi brought before him. And what a strange and romantic tale did this humble individual unfold to his sovereign. He said that he had long been doing the washing of the Royal household, and that it was not by robbing or killing any one that he had come by his wealth, but that it had pleased Iswara to bestow his bounty upon him in a miraculous way. On being asked to explain himself, he proceeded in these words:—

“Of late, a little bird has taken to coming and perching on one of my hanging lines, each night exactly at the stroke of twelve, and every time it comes it puts this strange question to me. “*Are* Dhobi, to whom belongs this Raja?” and with an involuntary impulse, for which I cannot account, my lips utter this reply, whether I be asleep or awake: “To Devki Rani”. At this the bird laughs a sweet ringing laugh like that of a young lady, and with it throws forth from its mouth the rarest rubies that ever were seen.”

The Raja listened with wrapt attention and surprise, while the Dhobi continued: “As soon as it has done laughing, I again hear its voice asking me another question, “*Are* Dhobi, who occupies the *gadi* now?” To which I am again compelled to reply instinctively: “Mutmuli Rani.” At this the little bird sobs and weeps and sheds numberless large bright pearls for tears. After this short dialogue it flies away and I sleep on, taking care to rise before day-break and collect the jewels and pearls, for I believe that I have an exclusive right to them.”

“Nobody dare dispute your right to them, Dhobi,” said the Raja re-assuringly after this frank avowal of the honest fellow, “but what I want is the little bird itself. So let me watch you to-night, and see if I can contrive to get possession of the sweet prattler.”

“Oh! that can easily be done, Maharaj, by placing some bird-lime on the line, and throwing a handkerchief over the bird just as it has done speaking,” suggested the Dhobi readily.

That same night the Raja went to the Dhobi's yard with a couple of his attendants, and laid himself down, covered from head to foot, in a sort of bower shaded over by a jasmine creeper, just underneath the very spot where the line on which the bird was wont to perch, was stretched. The Dhobi had already smeared it with bird-lime, so that there was nothing for the Raja to do, but to lie in wait till the bird's arrival.

Exactly at the hour mentioned by the Dhobi the bird came

and perched itself on its favourite line just over the Raja's head, and at once began to ask the usual questions:

"*Are* Dhobi, to whom belongs this Raj?" And the Dhobi, who had all the time been snoring regardless of the Raja's presence replied as before: "To Devki Rani." And, sure as the Dhobi had said, she laughed a light silvery laugh that went straight to the heart of the young Raja, and brought him out of the recess in spite of himself. But the bird heeded him not, and went on: "*Are*, Dhobi, who is the present occupant of the *gadi*?" The answer as before was, "Mutkuli Rani." And the bird began to sob and weep in a manner that very nearly broke the heart of her listener, and would have flown away, had it not found its tiny feet stuck to the line, and its body covered over with a large cloth thrown over it from behind.

In a twinkling of an eye it was a prisoner in the hands of the king, who pressed it to his heart, and walked away with it to his palace, leaving the Dhobi to rise at his usual hour and collect the rubies and pearls that had dropped from the mouth of his nocturnal guest.

Never was the prince happier than on that morning, as he sat stroking the bird's head, for he felt an unaccountable regard and affection for it. All of a sudden, however, he discovered what looked like a needle stuck into the bird's head, and on pulling it out, what was his joy to find his feathered friend transformed into his own long-lost bride.

Between her smiles and her tears—showers of rubies and pearls—Devki Rani related to her lover the trick that had been played upon her by her step-mother. The Raja was so angry that he forthwith ordered Mutkuli Rani and her mother to be summoned before him, and having had their noses and ears cut off, banished them out of his kingdom.

He then took Devki Rani into the presence of her kind friend and guardian, the cow, and with her consent, soon celebrated his nuptials with the beautiful lady with due pomp and splendour and lived happily with her ever afterwards.

## THE PRINCESS MALIKA-JARIKA

**T**here was once a rich old merchant who had seven sons. One day he called them to him and said:—"My sons, it is high time now that you were married and settled in life, for I am

growing older every day, and am anxious to distribute my wealth among you before death calls me away from this world."

The young men were nothing loth to do as their father desired and jumped at his proposal, but the old man added:—"Not so fast, my boys, there is a certain condition to be fulfilled, and a certain test to be applied to you, before you come by your partners in life and obtain possession of my wealth. So listen attentively to what I say."

"On a certain day, which we shall appoint, after consulting the astrologers, you all are to go with your bows and arrows to an open maidan outside the city, where each one of you is to shoot an arrow from his bow in whatever direction he likes best, and I shall trust to the hand of fate to guide it to the feet of the fortunate lady, who is destined to be the bride of the owner of the arrow."

"Agreed," said the brothers, who were all eager both to display their skill in archery, as well as to come by their wives in such a romantic fashion. So they soon set about making preparations for that eventful occasion.

When the day fixed by their father, with the aid of his astrologers, came round, the seven young men and their father accompanied by a number of their friends and relatives, went to the appointed place, and when everything was ready and the signal given, the seven brothers, who had taken care to put their particular marks on their arrows, shot them in seven different directions.

After a long time of anxious waiting, the arrows were one by one recovered and brought back to their owners, along with tokens from the fair ladies at whose feet chance or fate had guided them; all except that of the merchant's youngest son. Long and vigorous was the search made for it not only all that day, but for many and many a day following, but to no purpose. The arrow had flown over hill and valley and over river and ocean, for no trace of it could be found over the entire country.

At last, when no stone had been left unturned, and all hope of finding the lost arrow was abandoned, the old man taunted his son about his ill-luck in not being able to procure himself a partner in life, and expressed his belief that he must be a very wicked fellow thus to have incurred the displeasure of God. The poor youth felt so humiliated at this that he quitted the land of his birth in despair, and became a wanderer in distant countries; whilst his father celebrated the nuptials of his six sons with great pomp and rejoicings, and regardless of his youngest

son's claims, distributed his large wealth equally amongst them. Our hero roamed about for days and months from one place to another in search of his lost arrow, but in vain, till at last he became a mere aimless and homeless wanderer, for whom life could have no zest or charm.

One day, however, as he was thus roaming through a large forest in an unknown country, his eye chanced to fall upon a large iron ring fixed to what appeared to be a door, and what was his joy to find, in close proximity to the ring, his own long-lost arrow entangled amongst some thorns and brambles that grew there. Naturally the youth's first impulse was to draw out the arrow from its place; but he soon changed his mind, reflecting that perhaps it marked the spot where he ought to look for his bride. So he took hold of the ring and pulled at it with all his might, and to his great joy the door yielded and revealed to his astonished gaze a dark and narrow passage, which evidently led to some subterranean abode.

Without any delay our hero boldly entered this passage and soon found himself sliding downwards and downwards, as if impelled by some unknown power within. When he at last recovered the use of his legs, he found himself in the midst of a beautiful garden, so tastefully laid out and so well stocked with beautiful fruits and flowers of a strange kind, that he was for a while quite entranced, and felt certain that he could be nowhere but in fairyland, for such things could not belong to the world he had lived in. He looked about him to see if he could find any traces of the inhabitants of that strange and most picturesque place, but nothing met his eye, far and near, save fruits and flowers, and butterflies and birds of rare plumage, while the only other living being he noticed there, was a solitary she-monkey, that was swinging herself to and fro amongst the branches of the trees.

As he walked about in the garden, however, our hero saw in one part of it, a large and very beautiful palace, and on entering it found it full of gold and silver jewels. Every piece of furniture in that noble edifice was made either of one of these metals or the other, and was, moreover, studded with diamonds and rubies. But go where he would in it, he could find no evidence of any living being, human or otherwise. As he was sitting, however, in one of the halls of this wonderful palace, he perceived to his great surprise, that a sumptuous feast was being spread before him by invisible hands, while a voice whispered in his ear — "Get up, take thy bath, and partake of these good things." He instantly

turned round and looked about to find who it was that had spoken to him, but could see no one. So he got up and, doing as he was bid, sat down to the repast, and did ample justice to the rich viands that were placed before him, having had no food all that day. By and by, the she-monkey he had observed in the garden came in also, and began skipping about from room to room and making herself quite at home, just as if she were sole mistress of the place.

Our hero remained in this strange place for several days and had nothing to do, but to eat and drink and enjoy himself. But at last he got tired of the monotony of his situation, for, besides the monkey, he himself was the only living thing in that palace, and she, he thought, was no company for a young man, notwithstanding that every now and then she went and sat by his side, looked wistfully into his face, and asked him by signs to follow her all throughout the palace and the garden, and to look at the wonderful things it contained. One day, therefore, he took his leave and closing behind him the massive iron door made his way back to his father's country.

When at last after a long time and toilsome journey the long-forgotten wanderer reached home, he received but a cold welcome from his father and brothers, and they all laughed at him, when he related to them where and how he had found his lost arrow. So he thought it prudent not to say anything about the wonderful palace or the she-monkey just then, and kept his own counsel. The six brothers were all happy with their six wives, who were all clever and beautiful, and the old man, their father, extolled the virtues of his daughters-in-law to the skies, and exultingly showed his son the nice and valuable presents the ladies had brought specially for himself. Amongst them were some exquisitely embroidered little carpets worked by the ladies themselves, which the old man admired most of all, though our hero eyed them with contempt, as he compared them to the rare specimens of workmanship which he had seen in the underground palace.

Not desiring under these circumstances to prolong his stay with his father, our hero one day quietly left his house, and speedily returned to the subterranean palace, to which, it need not be mentioned, some strange power was constantly attracting him. When he reached it the she-monkey again went skipping up to him, and played and frisked about him with great glee.

But our hero's heart was sad to think that he should have

only a she-monkey to welcome him in a place, which he felt was to him like a home, and one where he most loved to go, and he began to look at the unsightly animal with tears in his eyes. She seemed, however, to understand what he felt, for, going up to him, she commenced to stroke his head and to bathe his feet. But our hero turned away from her in disgust, and said in a rage "Begone, thou ugly creature, I don't want thee to come so near me."

"Hold thy tongue," replied the monkey, all of a sudden speaking like a human being, "I only do as I am bid. If thou utterest one rude word to me thou shalt have to rue it before long."

The poor young man was nonplussed at this, and said nothing, but his heart grew sad to think in what an unenviable position he had been placed. "My arrow," he contemplated, "came all the way over to the gate leading to this strange place, in which the only living being I can see is this monkey, and since my arrow was destined to indicate the place, where I was to find my bride, am I to content myself with believing that this she-monkey is my lady-love and this fairy palace her bower?" As this thought struck him tears began to gush forth from his eyes and trickled down his cheeks. The she-monkey, observing this, looked very much distressed, and thus addressed him words of sympathy and comfort, "Do not lose heart and give way like that, my friend; only confide in me and tell me the cause of thy grief, and I shall do my best to help thee."

But our hero had not the heart to tell her the real cause of his sorrow; so he said:—"I am sorry I appear unhappy in a place where no pains are spared to make me comfortable, but I am grieved when I think how I am taunted by my father and laughed at by my brothers at every turn, owing to my not having as yet been able to secure a wife for myself. The last time I visited my father he showed me some rich and artistically embroidered carpets, which he said had been worked for him specially by his six daughters-in-law, and cast the cruel fact again in my teeth, that I had not as yet been blessed with a wife, much less with a clever one."

"Is that all?" cried the monkey. "I doubt whether they can show anything like the carpets and other beautiful things you see in this palace."

"Certainly not," replied the youth, "nobody in my country has ever seen anything half so beautiful and precious; but my only regret is that not one of all these things can I present to my father as the handiwork of my own bride."



"Oh, yes, you can," cried the monkey, picking out several rich and beautiful carpets all studded with diamonds and rubies, out of a heap lying in one of the rooms, "take these to your father, and lay them at his feet as the results of the unaided efforts of your future bride."

The youth was quite taken aback at these words. What could she mean by saying that the carpets had been worked by his future bride? Could it be that they had been worked by herself? No, the embroidery was too fine and tasteful to be done by a monkey. Surely there must be some beautiful fairy hidden away somewhere, at whose bidding the she-monkey was thrusting her odious presence upon him. However, he thought it wise to take the monkey's advice, and bidding her adieu, once more started to his native country with the carpets and many other precious and beautiful articles besides.

As was to be expected, the carpets were greatly admired by each and all of his relatives, and every one who saw them desired eagerly to behold the fair lady, whose clever fingers had worked such superb specimens of embroidery. Our hero, instead of being elated at this, was downcast and dejected, for he could not, for the life of him, think how he was to produce his future bride before his father and his relatives, since he himself had not as yet had the pleasure of seeing her. So he said nothing more about the affair to them, and soon after quietly turned his back once more on the land of his birth making a mental resolve at the same time, never to return home without finding a bride worthy of himself.

When he reached the underground palace he found the she-monkey in her usual place among the trees, and she began to question him as to how he had been received by his father this time.

Our hero, however, was too much absorbed in thinking of the fair lady, who he imagined had worked the carpets, to give heed to the monkey's questions. He was wondering when it was destined that he should see her, when a strange voice thus whispered to him "If thou wouldst see her at all, swear to forget thy parents, thy relations, and thy country, and to renounce for ever all thoughts of ever returning to them, and promise to stay here for weal or for woe."

The youth was surprised at this, but he nevertheless did as he was bid, and in the course of a few days his eyes began to see in the palace living beings such as he had never seen there before. He

could see male and female slaves flitting from one room to another, as they did the household work, he could see gardeners tending the flowers and shrubs, and fair ladies waiting upon the she-monkey, who, to his despair, still appeared to be the mistress of all. His dislike, however, for the company of this creature began to wear off by degrees, and he tried to make himself comfortable, since some mystic power appeared to tempt him to stay in that place.

A good many days passed away in this manner, when our hero one day again heard a voice that said to him:—"If thou wouldst like to wed thy bride, thou art at liberty to go and bring thy father and all thy kinsfolk to this place, when thy nuptials will be celebrated with great splendour in their presence."

"But must I not ask to see my bride first?" cried the youth in answer. "No that cannot be," was the reply. "Thou must place implicit confidence in us, and in return we promise that thy parents and thyself shall behold as fair a princess as ever was seen by mortal eyes, but that will be only when all thy kinsfolk have assembled here to take part in the wedding ceremony, and not before."

The youth was fain to put faith in these promises, so tempting were they. So he started off for his native country, and on arriving there, besought his father and brothers to go with him to the underground palace, and witness his nuptials with the fair worker of those beautiful carpets. Accordingly, the old man and his sons sent round invitations to all their friends and relatives, and fixing an auspicious day, they all set out to go where the youth led them. The latter in his turn tried to look cheerful and composed in their presence, but at heart he was ill at ease, for he was not yet quite sure whether the bride he was going to wed would not after all turn out to be the she-monkey herself, and he shuddered to think what would be his discomfiture in such a case.

After a long and toilsome journey the whole cavalcade of friends and relatives arrived at the door leading to the narrow passage, and on passing through it they all found themselves in that wonderfully laid-out garden. When they had gone about for some time and admired the beautiful fruits and flowers, with which the trees were laden, our hero took them into the palace, where things still more beautiful greeted their sight. But here, as well as in the garden, they were surprised not to meet with any human beings, when all of a sudden they heard a voice that bade them welcome, and told them to wash themselves and

partake of the feast that was being spread out for them in one of the large rooms.

As the guests were all very hungry they needed no second bidding, but sat themselves down and began to partake heartily of the sumptuous banquet provided for them by some unseen agency. While they were thus enjoying themselves a voice again addressed them thus:—"My guests, you are welcome to this feast. Eat and drink to your hearts' content, and when you have done, I request each of you to carry away the silver tray and the golden cup that has been placed before you to take your meals from, and to keep them as souvenirs of the memorable wedding of the fairy-princess Malika-Jarika with a human being."

On hearing these words all the guests began to look in different directions in the hope of seeing the fairy-bride, but no Malika-Jarika greeted their sight nor any living being, save the hideous she-monkey, who was all this while moving about here and there with the air of an hostess, and seemed to be in the best of spirits, to the great consternation of our hero, who could not help associating her presence with the thought that she must be the princess Malika-Jarika herself, who was going to wed him. His doubts, however, were soon laid at rest, for when the feast was nearly over, the she-monkey suddenly drew off from her person, what appeared like a coil or skin, and lo! there stood before the astonished gaze of all a very beautiful fairy such as they had never even dreamed of.

This lovely creature immediately went up to our hero and joyfully exclaimed:—"Behold in me the fairy-princess, to whose abode fate led thy steps. My name is the princess Malika-Jarika, and I am sole mistress of this beautiful palace and of all the land for miles around. I am ready and willing to marry thee, but on one condition, namely, that thou takest charge of, and guardest as thy own life, this coil or skin that I have just cast off, for know that, as long as it remains intact, so long only shall I go about in this my fairy form." The young man eagerly took the coil from her hands, and carefully folding it, put it into a box, and locked it up for safety in one of the rooms of the palace.

The wedding ceremony was soon after gone through amidst great rejoicings, and each and all congratulated our hero on his having been blessed with such a very rich and beautiful wife. The six brothers of the fortunate youth, however, felt jealous of him and could not bear to see him so happy. So they went up to him while the fairy was away, and with an air of the greatest concern,

expressed to him their fears regarding the coil, and told him to beware lest his bride should take it into her head to put it on again, and resume the hideous shape of a monkey. His father and his relatives, too, when they heard this, shared the same fears, and they all joined in persuading the unsuspecting youth to destroy the coil. For some time he was firm, but at last, being unable to withstand the joint advice and entreaties of so many, he threw the coil into the fire. No sooner, however, did the flames touch it, than the fairy, who was at a distance, uttered a loud and piteous scream, came running up, and speedily thrusting her hand into the fire, drew out the burning coil and hurriedly put it on.

All this happened in the twinkling of an eye, and the merchant and his sons and their guests suddenly found the scene around them transformed into a dense and dark forest, all traces of the fairy-palace and garden having vanished before them. Our hero was beside himself with rage and grief at this, and swore never to return home, until he had found his beloved bride again. So, leaving him to indulge his grief in that lonely forest, his father and the rest wended their way homewards.

When they were all gone the youth again saw the she-monkey jumping from tree to tree, and uttering piteous screams. So he went up to her and besought her to forgive him, and to receive him into her favour. But she wept bitterly, and said, "No, no, that is not in my power to do; still, if thy repentance is sincere, leave me for the present, and let us hope some day to meet again." With these words she vanished from his sight, and there was nothing but darkness around. Just then a voice was heard to say, "If ever again you seek the fairy-princess, let this be your watchword:—"What about that affair?"". "Very well," muttered the youth thankfully, "I'll remember it to the end of my days," and then, in obedience to the will of the she-monkey, he made his way out of the forest.

For many and many a month afterwards the unhappy youth wandered aimlessly about from country to country, for he hardly knew in what particular direction to turn, in order to go in search of his lost bride. At last, being fatigued both in mind and body, he sank down under the shade of a large tree, and felt that he was dying.

As to the fairy-princess, having had the misfortune to touch a human being, the poor spirit had lost caste, and was no longer the light aerial being that all fairies are; moreover, she had contracted the odour of mortals by coming into contact with them, and

the fairies would not let her mix with them, until she had gone through a severe form of purification. This was nothing less than throwing seven hundred pails of water over her body each morning, and remaining among the trees the rest of the day, so that she might be dried in the sun and cleansed of all impurities. This made the poor fairy very unhappy, and she passed her days in great sorrow.

Meanwhile we had left our hero, tired and worn out under a tree for some days, being unable to proceed further. One day he heard a strange voice overhead, and looking up, saw that a very large serpent had climbed up the tree and was going to devour the young ones of an eagle, which had its nest among the branches. So he went up the tree as fast as his worn-out limbs allowed and succeeded in killing the serpent before it could do any injury to the young eagles. Just then both the parent birds came up and were deeply grateful to the brave young man for having saved the lives of their little ones, and asked him to command their services in any way he wished. But the youth said to them with a sad smile:—"No friends, it is not in your power to help me, since my only object in life is to discover the fairy-princess Malika-Jarika, and I am firmly resolved never to taste the sweets of life until I have found her." "Oh! is that all you want?" exclaimed the male bird, "then it is easy enough. I know the abodes of all the fairies; so you have only to ride upon my back and I shall fly with you to the country of the Jins and fairies in no time."

These words of the eagle gave new life to the disabled youth, and he fearlessly mounted the large bird's back, and in a few minutes arrived at the country of the Jins. At parting the good old eagle gave the youth a sweet sounding fife, and said:—"By simply blowing into this fife you will be able to produce music so sweet that all the fairies and Jins will gather round you to hear it. The king of the Jins will be so pleased with your performance, that he will offer you whatever you may ask for, on condition that you consent to stay with him for ever. But remember that you are not on any account to mention the name of fairy-princess, or to utter the watchword that has been given to you, or your head will pay the penalty of your indiscretion. However much the king may entreat you to accept some present from him, you must only say that you require nothing and have to go back the next morning.

"He will then bring you gold and silver and rare jewels and also the most beautiful fairies you ever saw, but you must still

remain firm and inflexible. Then at last he will bring forth to you some of the ugliest women in his kingdom, amongst whom will be one strikingly hideous in appearance, whom you will know by her coalblack complexion and her large projecting teeth. This woman you are to express your willingness to have, for underneath that dark skin and ugly features will be found hidden the beautiful princess, whom you are so anxious to meet."

The youth thanked the eagle and promised to remember all his instructions, when the good bird added "Let us part now, but, before we do so, let me give you this feather of mine. If ever trouble comes over you, hold it before a fire and burn it, and I shall be immediately at your side." And so saying it flew away.

Just then our hero commenced operations. He began to blow into the fife, and although he had no knowledge whatever of music, he produced from it such exquisite melody that just as the eagle had predicted, there gathered round him a large concourse of Jins and fairies along with their king and queen, and the former offered to bestow upon him whatever he might wish for, if he only consented to stay with them. Our hero, however, acted his part admirably, and refused everything that was offered him in succession, until at last the ugly women were brought before him. Then only did his eyes begin to sparkle, and he chose from among them the one the eagle had described to him, and she, to his great delight, soon turned out to be his own long-lost bride.

The two young people lived very happily together for some time, and cared for nothing else besides each other's company. But at last the youth felt a longing to return to his native country and see his father. The fairy-princess, too, was willing to go with him, though her father stoutly refused to give them his permission, and they were thinking of stealing away unknown to him, when an unforeseen difficulty arose. How were they, especially our hero, who was only a mortal, to travel through the air, since no land or sea appeared to connect his father's country with fairyland? In this dilemma the youth bethought him of the eagle, and forthwith burned its feather. The Faithful bird speedily obeyed the summons, and without losing any more time, both the young people mounted its back. The good bird flew incessantly, till it placed its precious burden at the feet of the old merchant; now very feeble and living all by himself in the old house, neglected by his six sons, who were fast throwing away the money he had so thoughtlessly given them. The old man's joy knew no bounds at seeing his long-lost son and his beautiful

bride once more. He entreated them to stay with him till death called him away, which he thought was very near. Both the young people readily consented to this, and lived with the old man till the last; and after his death returned to fairyland once more, where they lived very happily for the rest of their lives.

### SURYA AND CHANDRA

Once there was a Raja, who was very fond of going about his kingdom in disguise, and acquired, by that means, knowledge of a good many things happening in every part of it.

One day standing under the shade of the tree near a well, he noticed a group of girls, all in the first flush of womanhood, chattering away and imparting to one another all their little hopes and fears, prospects and designs, as girls of the same age are wont to do when they get together. The Raja felt interested, and stood quietly listening, as one of them said: "Now sisters, I propose that, instead of wasting our time in idle talk, we tell one another what special qualification each can boast of. For my part I can do a good many things that other girls can also do, but there is one thing in which I excel all others, and what do you think it is?"

"We really cannot say," replied the others laughing; "pray, tell us what it is in which you excel all other girls.

"Why!" said the first speaker, who was, by the way, a betel-nut seller's daughter, "I can divide one small betel-nut into so many fragments, that after each member of a large assemblage,—say the largest wedding party—had one, there would still be some to spare."

"Ha ha, what does that signify?" laughed one who was a pan-leaf seller's daughter, "I can divide one pan-leaf,—one small pan-leaf you know—into as many pieces, as you can your betel-nut, and I am sure my friends here will agree that that shews greater skill."

And so the girls went on and on, till at last one, who looked not only prettier than the rest, but also considerably superior by birth and breeding, outdid them all by the very magnitude and nature of her boast.

"I" said she, when her friends called on her to speak and tell them what special qualification she had, "I am destined to give birth to the sun and the moon."

Her companions were taken aback at this strange declaration

and while some giggled, others laughed at her as a dreamer. But the Raja, who had watched her with special interest, was so struck with the force of her strange words, that he was seized with an eager desire to win her in marriage, and thus to share her destiny of bringing the sun and the moon in human shape upon earth.

So, when the girl separated from her companions, he followed her up to her house, unnoticed, and found that she belonged to a very respectable Brahman family.

This proved, however, no bar to his wishes, for he sent messengers to her father to ask him to give his daughter in marriage to him, and—where was a subject that had the courage to refuse what royalty marked for his own? So, despite the difference in their castes, the Brahman lady was married to the Kshatriya Raja amid great pomp and rejoicings on both sides.

Now this Raja had three other wives, but his Brahman bride was placed above them all on account of the strange and interesting destiny she was reputed to be the means of fulfilling. Consequently, the others grew jealous of her, and now and then devised plans for bringing her into disfavour with the Raja, but, for some time, without success.

Things went on like this for some time till it was whispered in the household that the Rani was *enceinte*, and soon the news got wind, and there were great rejoicings throughout the kingdom, for the sun and the moon were soon to be born upon earth. But the Raja knew how much he had to fear from the jealousy of his other Ranis, and had constantly to be on guard lest they should find means to harm his favourite wife or her expected progeny in some way.

Now, unfortunately, it happened that war broke out with a neighbouring power just when the time of the lady's delivery came near, and the Raja had to go out himself at the head of his large army to fight the enemy. So he cautioned his Brahman wife against the wiles of her co-wives, and giving her a large drum, told her to beat it with all her might as soon as she was seized with the pangs of maternity, assuring her that the sound of that miraculous instrument would reach him wherever he was, and soon bring him back to her.

As soon, however, as the Raja's back was turned, the three crafty and jealous women set to work, and by their wiles and flattery succeeded in inducing the simple Brahman girl to tell them all about the drum, and the wicked Ranis lost no time in



cutting it right through. When the time came for the poor lady to make use of it, she beat it with all her strength, but it would give out no sound. She was too simple, however, to suspect her co-wives of having tampered with it, for she thought all along that they were her well-wishers, as they kept constantly near her and made much of her. She was moreover indiscreet enough to ask them to be near her and attend to her, when her expected twins were born,—the sun represented by a divinely handsome boy, the moon by a bewitchingly lovely girl. And now the crafty women had their opportunity. As soon as the little twins came into the world, they covered up the mother's eyes on some pretext or other, and taking away the dear little babes deposited them side by side in a little wooden box, and set it afloat in the sea. In the meantime the midwife, whom they had completely bought over to their interests, put in the twins' place, by the mother's side, a log of wood and a broom, and then calling in the ladies and the officers of the court, told them to see what the lady had given birth to. The poor lady herself, however refused to believe the hag's story, and suspected foul play, but had not the courage to speak while the Raja was absent.

The Raja, on his part, had been counting the days as they passed by, and expecting every moment to hear the sound of the drum; but as several days passed and he heard it not, he could no longer control his impatience; so throwing up the chances of war, he at once bent his steps homewards. But what was his surprise on arriving there to see that the courtiers and others who had come forward to meet him, wore long faces, and while some sympathized with him, others laughed at him for being duped by a cunning woman who had devised that plan of inveigling him into marrying her. The Raja was beside himself with rage at this, and when he went into the presence of the Rani, and the broom and the log of wood were produced before him, he struck the poor lady in his anger and forthwith ordered her to be cast into prison.

And what a prison her enemies contrived her to be consigned to. It was a dreary little room hemmed in between four massive walls, with just one small window in one of them to let in the air. Some coarse food and water was all that was given to her each day through that small window, and that too, was barely enough to keep body and soul together, and in this wretched state the poor creature had to pass endless days and nights. Hope, however, sustained her through this trial, for she knew that she was

innocent, and that a day would come when those who had brought about her ruin would be exposed.

While these events were taking place, the wooden box which contained the two little babes floated calmly on the surface of the ocean, till at last it was cast on a distant shore just at the feet of a poor devotee of the sun, who lived by begging, and spent his days and nights on the desolate beach, worshipping the sun and the moon by turns. He eagerly picked up the box and on opening it, was no less surprised than delighted to see what it contained. The cry of hunger, which the dear little things gave just as the box was opened awakened a feeling of the deepest love and tenderness in his breast, and he wished he were a woman and could suckle them, for he had with him then neither milk nor any other kind of food which he could give them. In sheer desperation, therefore, if only to keep them from crying, he put a finger of his into each of the little mouths, when lo! the poor hungry babes began to derive sustenance from them and were soon satisfied! The devotee was delighted at this, and taking the little ones into his hut, fed them in this strange manner whenever they were hungry, and soon found that they throve beautifully on the nourishment they derived from his fingers.

After a year or so, when the little ones were able to eat solid food, he would put them in some safe place, and going into the neighbouring town, beg food for them in the name of the sun and the moon. The people all revered this good man, and cheerfully gave him what they could spare, and he would return to his hut and divide what he thus got with the little ones, just as a loving mother would do. Now the devotee, by means of his occult powers, had found out who his little charges were, and had consequently named the boy Surya and the girl Chandra. When Surya and Chandra were about seven or eight years old, the good old man felt that his end was approaching. So, one day he called them to his bedside and gave them two things, a stove in which he had constantly been in the habit of keeping a fire burning, and a stick with a rope attached to it. He told them that if they wanted for anything after he was dead, they had only to burn some incense on the fire in the stove, and they would get it. As for the stick and the rope, he told them, if ever they wanted to chastise or punish any one, they had only to whisper their instructions to the stick and the rope, and they would immediately set to work and give the culprit as good a thrashing as ever was given to anyone.

Soon after the good old devotee had gone to his rest, the two young people thought of going forth into the world and finding out who their parents were, for they had learnt from their late benefactor how they had been discarded and entrusted to the mercy of the waves.

So, as a first step, they expressed to the stove a wish to have a beautiful garden, and in it a golden palace, such as human hands could never build, in a place they chose for themselves. And soon they found themselves in a gorgeous golden palace, whose walls and roof shone so brightly against the sun, that they cast reflection on their father's palace which was, as chance would have it, situated at the distance of about ten miles from it. The Raja was surprised at this, and sent forth his men to make inquiries as to the source of that strange light, when he was told that a lustrous palace of pure gold had risen up in the midst of the jungle, and was occupied by a beauteous lady and her brother. At this mention of a beauteous lady, the Raja was seized with an eager desire to see her, and to win her favour, and offered a large reward to any one who would undertake to persuade her to let him have just a look at her.

Several persons came forward to compete for the reward, but the Raja selected out of them one, a shrewd old hag with a glib and flattering tongue, and sent her forth on her errand.

By bribing the servants of Chandra, the fair lady of the golden palace, this old hag succeeded in getting admitted into her presence and soon ingratiated herself into her favour. As poor Chandra was often left by herself all day, while her brother was engaged in some outdoor pursuit, she gradually began to like the company of the old hag, who frequently found means to visit her when alone, on some pretence or other. Soon the shrewd woman succeeded in wheedling the innocent young creature into telling her all her strange story, and then set about devising a plan to get rid of Chandra's brother. So, one day she said to her: "Fair lady, you have got the best garden the eyes ever beheld, all the large trees in it are both beautiful and rare, and is it not a pity, therefore, that such a magnificent collection should lack that rarest of all trees, the sandal-wood tree, which is found at bottom of the well of Chandan Pari."

"Ah!" sighed Chandra, "I should so like to have it." And the cunning woman, seeing her opportunity, enlarged so much upon the merits and the beauty of the tree, that Chandra was seized with an eager desire to possess it, and would not let her brother rest,

till he promised to go and bring it for her. So one morning Surya set out in the direction indicated by the old woman, determined to procure the sandal-wood tree. He travelled on and on for many a day, till one day he perceived a most lovely fairy sitting on the brink of a well in the midst of a very dark and deep jungle. But just as Surya's eye fell on her the little sprite hid her face with her hands and dropped swiftly into the well. Surya threw himself in after her, and soon found at the bottom a dry path, leading into a large palace situated in the bowels of the earth. He entered it, and the same sweet little fairy again greeted his sight. She would have run away from him this time also, but he speedily took hold of her hand, quieted her fears, and succeeded in getting her to converse with him. They sat talking, till the time came for the return home of the *rakshasa*, whose daughter the *Pari* was, when the *Pari* converted Surya into a fly, in which guise he remained sticking to the ceiling right over the lady's head. The *rakshasa* soon entered, with a number of dead bodies of men and women slung over his back, and began sniffing about and calling out loudly that he suspected the presence of a human being in or about the palace. But his daughter said: "Do not be so angry, dear father, without cause, for the smell of human beings that pervades this place proceeds only out of the dead bodies you carry on your back." The *rakshasa*, however, continued fretting and foaming, and made things very unpleasant for his poor daughter that evening. When morning came, the giant again went out, and the *Pari* soon restored Surya to his original shape. This went on for some time, till the two became fast friends. So one day Surya persuaded his fair companion to tell him whether she knew how her father was to come by his death. Now the *Pari* had learned from her father that there was a pair of doves living in a crevice in the walls of the well, over their heads, one grey and the other milk-white and that the milk-white dove held his life in its bosom, so that, if it were destroyed the *rakshasa* would fall where he stood, and instantly come by his death. The simple little *Pari* repeated all this to her admirer, and he lost no time in profiting by the information he thus obtained, and one morning as soon as the *rakshasa* went out, he went to the well, and pulling the two doves out of the crevice, flung the grey one away into the air, and instantly broke the neck of the milk-white one.

The *rakshasa*, who was somewhere about, gave a tremendous yell as he felt his own neck wrung violently, and fell down dead with

a heavy thud. Instantly, there sprung up around Surya a host of other *rakshasas*, fierce, strong, and wild, who would have instantly killed him for having destroyed their chief, but he forthwith drew out his miraculous stick and rope, which he always carried with him, and bid them tie up all the *rakshasas* and give them as severe a thrashing as they could. The stick and the rope speedily set to work, and the *rakshasas* received so severe a thrashing that they all roared out with pain and begged of our hero to have pity upon them, and promised in that event to become his slaves and remain so all their lives.

"Very well, then," said Surya; "do as I bid you. Bring the *Pari* and the Chandan-tree, that is the boast of her garden, out of this well, and follow me." The *rakshasas* were nothing loth, for one of them jumped in and brought out the *Pari*, all trembling and disconsolate at the loss of her father, while the others went into the garden, and cutting out a portion of the ground on which the Chandan-tree grew, followed Surya and the *Pari* to the palace of gold.

Chandra was in ecstasies, not only to see her brother alive and well, but also, the Chandan-tree she had been longing for so much and the pretty little Chandan *Pari* as well.

The old hag, however, who had never expected Surya to come back alive, was disconcerted at his sudden arrival, as it interfered with her plans regarding his sister. She, however, stifled her disappointment as best she could, and putting on a pleasant smile, welcomed our hero with every manifestation of regard and admiration, and congratulated him on having attained his object. Surya then persuaded Chandan *Pari* to forgive him for having caused her father's death, and to give him her hand in marriage, and the three lived happily together in that magnificent palace for some time, Chandra and the *Pari* having become fast friends. But the old hag, who was bent upon Surya's destruction, again devised a plan to get rid of him, and one day, while he was talking to his sister and extolling the charms of his fairy wife, the old wretch, who was present, craftily put in, by way of a remark, that he thought his Chandan *Pari* beautiful, only because he had not seen the world-renowned *Pari* of Unchhatra, who lived under the magnificent tree called Unchhatra.

Surya at once fell into the trap, and expressed his determination to go in search of this new *Pari* at once. Now this *Pari*, as the hag well knew, was so cruel as she was beautiful, and all those that went to win her came back no more. She had a magic comb, which

she kept constantly with her, and as soon as any one rode near enough to lay hands on her, she turned up her hair with it, and, in the twinkling of an eye, both horse and rider were transformed into stone. Our hero, however, who knew nothing of this, put a pinch of incense over the fire in the magic stove, and wished that he might be provided with a fleet steed, such as would traverse the longest distance in the twinkling of an eye, and lo! there presently stood before him just such a horse.

Surya was delighted, and soon taking leave of his *Pari*-wife and his beloved sister, he mounted the fiery charger, and galloped away like lightning. The gallant charger seemed to know the abode of the *Pari* of Unchhatra, and to be aware also of the trick of the comb, for, as soon as he spied her sitting under her favourite tree, he leapt almost right into her lap, and, before she could raise her hand and put the comb to her hair, Surya seized her by the wrist, and wrested it away. Unchhatra, finding herself thus suddenly deprived of her magic power, fell down at the feet of her valiant conqueror, and swooned right away. Surya promptly dismounted, and raising her head on his lap, tried every means to bring her round. As soon as she was restored to her senses, and was able to speak, she acknowledged Surya's supremacy over her, and promised to be his slave and servant all her life. The only favour, however, which she asked of him, when he had assured her of his forgiveness, was to be allowed to make use of her comb once more, not to do harm to anybody, for that power was now lost to her for ever, but to undo the mischief it had already caused. Our hero consented, and restored the comb to her, and she immediately turned her beautiful golden hair downwards with it, when, in a moment, several large stones, that were lying scattered about here and there, began to assume strange shapes, and soon numberless young men and horses were seen "to rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake." The *Pari* asked pardon of all the young men for having allowed them to lie there so long, bereft of sense and motion, and they willingly forgave her, and, seeing the coveted place by her side already occupied by one who appeared far above them all, both in looks and bearing, they bowed low their heads to Surya and went their different ways.

Our hero then went home with his new *Pari* and her Unchhatra-tree and soon there was another wedding at the golden palace, and both the *Paris*, being very sensible young ladies, lived harmoniously together as co-wives. But the old hag, who, up to this time, had been doing her best to lure poor Chandra to

destruction, although without success, began now to find the place too hot for her, for the *Pari* of Unchhatra, who was as clever as she was beautiful, saw through the flimsy veil of friendship under which the wretch had been hiding her black purpose, and persuaded her husband to send her to the right about. So the crafty old woman had to return crestfallen into the presence of the Raja, who immediately consigned her to the tender mercies of the executioner for having failed to perform the task she had undertaken.

Now the *Pari* of Unchhatra, who was blessed with the faculty of knowing the past, the present, and the future, one day told Surya and Chandra all the strange history of their birth and parentage, and they were agreeably surprised to learn that their father was a Raja who lived in a city only about ten *kos* (20 miles) distant from their palace. The *Pari* then advised them to arrange a grand feast, and invite the Raja and all his subjects to it. Surya and Chandra did accordingly, and asked of the fire in the magic stove to erect for them a row of *mandapas*, stretching from the palace almost to the gates of their father's city, provided with every comfort and luxury, and soon there rose up in the jungle as magnificent a line of canvas structures as human eyes ever beheld before. Separate *mandapas* were set apart for each different caste of people, so that not only were the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas provided for, but even the poor down-trodden Sudras were not forgotten. They, too, had a group of *mandapas* to themselves, fitted up and decorated in such a sumptuous style that the Raja, as he came to the feast with his three wives and a gay train of courtiers and followers, was nearly walking into one of them by mistake, and thus polluting himself. What then can we say of the range of *mandapas* that were set apart for the Raja and his Ranis. The ceiling was formed to resemble the lustrous concave of the sky, and was spangled with the brightest diamonds and sapphires to represent the sun and the moon and the stars. The furniture and fittings also, which were of gold, silver and diamonds, were in perfect keeping with the magnificent ceiling—in short, there was nothing left to be desired.

Now the object of the *Pari* of Unchhatra in getting her husband to invite the Raja to the feast with all his subjects, high or low, so that not a dog should be left behind, was that he would thus be obliged to bring also his discarded wife—the mother of his twin children, and therefore his most rightful Rani. But when she was told that he had the effrontery to come with-

out her, leaving her behind hemmed in between the four walls of her prison, when the whole town had turned out to the feast, she instantly ordered that but two seats, or rather *masnada*, were to be placed in the midst of the royal *mandapa*, and stood by watching as the Raja entered with his three wicked Ranis. Surya, and Chandra lovingly escorted him to one of the seats of honour, and, as the elder of the Ranis, who had taken the principal part in bringing about the ruin of the Brahman lady, and was now high in the Raja's favour, moved forward to take the seat beside him, Unchhatra pulled her back, and demanded of the Raja whether it was she who had the right to occupy the seat of honour by his side. The Raja was nonplussed at this and said nothing, but as the *Pari* insisted upon knowing the truth, he had to confess that there was another, who had once a better right to fill that place, but had forfeited it when she was found out to be an impostor. Unchhatra then called upon him to explain what imposture it was that she had practised upon him, and he related how she had inveigled him into marriage with her by boasting that she was destined to be the mother of the sun and the moon and how, instead of giving birth to those luminaries, she had brought forth a broom and a log of wood, and how she had been consigned to prison in consequence. But the *Pari*, who, as we said, was cognisant of the whole story, related to the assemblage the trick the elder Ranis had played upon the poor unoffending Brahman girl and the way in which they had mercilessly cast adrift her new-born babes, and called upon the midwife, who was standing among the crowd around, to testify to the truth of what she said. The midwife, seeing the turn things had taken, made a clean breast of everything, and the whole assemblage thereupon heaped reproaches upon the heads of the offending Ranis for having so sinfully misled their lord and master and encompassed the ruin of the mother of the most illustrious twins ever born.

Unchhatra then introduced Surya and Chandra to their father, and so great was the rage of the Raja at the treatment they and their mother had experienced at the hands of the wicked co-wives, that he ordered a large pit to be dug near the city gates, and had them buried in it waist deep, and left there to be torn alive by beasts and birds of prey.

Surya and Chandra, in the meantime, had hastened to the city with some of the Raja's attendants, and breaking open the walls of the prison, brought out their poor long-suffering mother. Just a spark of life was all that was left in her poor emaciated



frame, but by care and attention she was soon brought round, and who can describe her joy, when she learnt that it was her own dear son and daughter who had been the means of bringing about her deliverance from what had been to her but a living death!

She embraced her dear twins again and again, and forgot all her past misery in the joy of meeting them.

At last, when she was apprised of the fate of her cruel tormentors and was told that the Raja repented of his conduct towards her, and asked to be forgiven, the good Rani shed tears, and wished to be united to him once more. There was nothing but joy and rejoicing all over the kingdom, when the news went forth that the Raja had, after all, had the proud distinction of being the progenitor of the sun and moon in human shape upon earth.

### THE FLOATING PALACE, OR THE THREE WISE PRECEPTS

Once upon a time there lived in a certain city a merchant who had an only son. When this son came of age, the father, with a view to putting his business capacities to the test, proposed to place at his disposal a sum of money large enough to enable him to begin life as a respectable merchant, but with this proviso, that if, at the end of a certain period, the merchant found that the young man had made good use of the money entrusted to him and showed an aptitude for business, he would leave him in his will all his immense wealth, but if, on the contrary, he found that his son was wanting in that foresight and shrewdness which are the characteristics of a merchant, and launched into unprofitable speculations and thus lost money, he would disinherit him without mercy.

The young man, who had all along hoped that he would one day quietly come into possession of his father's wealth, demurred at first at this proposal, but when he saw that the old man was determined, he reluctantly consented, and taking the money from his father went to all his friends and consulted with them as to what he had best do with it.

They all suggested different ways in which to make use of the money, till at last one old man, who was reputed to be a sage proposed to him that if he made over the whole to him he would in return give him something worth all of it and more. The

simple young man agreed, and keeping but a trifle for himself made over all the rest of the money to the old fellow, and that worthy in return gave our hero a sheet of paper neatly folded, saying with a look of great importance, "Take this, my good friend, make good use of it, and you will find that this scrap of paper is worth a great deal more than the sum you have invested in its purchase."

Our hero took it home, and on opening it found the following sentences inscribed on it in bold characters:—

1. "Hesitate not, but tread boldly.
2. "A sister in prosperity (lit. plenty), a true friend in adversity (lit. scarcity).
3. "He who falls asleep within a king's palace is lost, while he who keeps awake is saved."

The credulous youngster read the lines over and over again and then treasured up the paper like a thing of great value. He then invested the small sum he had still left in a few cheap articles of merchandise, and quietly booked himself as a passenger on board a ship bound for a distant shore.

The father, who had all this while been watching his son's movements, felt very sorry to find that though he had placed a large sum of money in his hands, he was fitting himself out as a petty trader only, instead of chartering a whole ship for himself and his wares, as became the son of a great merchant, and so when the time came for the young man to bid farewell to his father the latter remonstrated with him strongly on what he considered his meanness, and the two parted in high anger.

The poor fellow went on board with a heavy heart and the ship sailed away. After a long voyage, she entered the mouth of a large river, and cast anchor near a magnificent city situated on its banks.

Now in the middle of this river, and at a short distance from the city, there was a large and most beautiful palace, which was the wonder of all who came from far and near, for instead of being built on *terra firma*, it appeared to be floating over the surface of the waters, rising, as it were, from the depths of the river, without a yard of dry land around, along which one could walk to the door and enter in. Besides the beauty and grandeur of the palace itself, there was another object that attracted the attention of the people on board, and that was a lovely damsel who appeared at one of its windows.

Our young hero, however, did not seem to take much interest either in the damsel or in the palace, so occupied was his mind

with his own affairs, although he constantly heard his fellow-passengers discussing among themselves as to how it could be that the palace appeared to float on the surface of the river and how people could go in and come out of it.

Now as our young hero was thinking of landing and entering the city to see if he could find a market for any of his wares there, the owner of the beautiful palace, who had been watching him all the while, called out to him and invited him to come to it. The young man could not for the life of him see how he was to approach the palace, in the absence of any visible means of communication with it, and was greatly puzzled as to how he was to act, when he bethought him of the old man and his scrap of paper, and the first sentence in it showed him a way out of his difficulty. It ran thus:—“Hesitate not, but tread boldly.” So he went as close up to the palace as a boat could take him and then, to convince himself that it was really water that surrounded the palace, he plucked a piece of thread from his garments, and let it fall unperceived by any one upon what seemed to be the surface of the water, and to his great delight he found that the thread remained as dry as before, for it was not water that encircled the palace, but only a pavement of glass, so cleverly contrived as to resemble the water around, and thus deceive the unwary stranger’s eye.

This contrivance not only served to attract attention towards the palace, but gave the owner, who was a bad character and enticed away unwary strangers into his den to rob them of their possessions, time to observe closely and form his opinion of the person to whom he offered his hospitality.

So when he saw our hero walking boldly on, as if he had found out the trick of the glass pavement, the bad man felt himself outdone for once, and thought he had to deal with one who might be more than a match for him. Nevertheless he welcomed him with great show of kindness, and pressed him to remain in his palace and consider it as his own till he could find suitable quarters for himself in the city.

The unsuspecting young man saw no reason why he should not accept the proffered hospitality; and ordering all his wares to be brought over to the palace, he took up his abode there with the minister and his daughter.

He had a very pleasant time of it for some weeks, for his host and his daughter treated him with so much kindness and affability that he could hardly think of quitting their hospitable abode.

There was one thing, however, which made the young man feel very uneasy as to his future. The sale of what few goods he had brought with him realized but a trifling sum of money, which melted away like snow in his hands in the face of the great expenses he had to incur to keep up appearances, and he had nothing left which he could invest once more in merchandise and thus try his luck again. So he wandered aimlessly from one part of the city to another in the hope of finding some suitable means of earning a livelihood.

One day as he was walking about the streets dressed in rather a homely suit of clothes and presenting a care-worn appearance, he happened to catch sight of his only sister, who he knew had married into a wealthy family, and had often occasion to visit the city he was in, with her parents-in-law. She was standing at one of the windows of a large house, and their eyes met as he looked up, but she drew in her head and did not appear to notice him. So he went up to the door and desired one of the servants to go up and inform his mistress that her brother wished to see her. But the rich lady thought it beneath her dignity to acknowledge so near a relationship with one who went about on foot unattended by any servants or horses, and dressed in a style not at all becoming her father's son. So she sent him word that she did not want to see him or to have anything to do with him.

This hurt the poor fellow's feelings to the quick, and he walked away from the house in no very enviable frame of mind. He had not proceeded far, however, when he fell in with a person whose face he remembered as that of an old playfellow, the son of a man of very modest means, who had once been on very good terms with his father. The other recognized him also, and the two men, after greeting each other very kindly, began to talk of their private affairs. When this old acquaintance heard our hero's story, and learnt in what manner he had parted with the large sum of money placed at his disposal by his father, how he had been left amongst strangers without the means of subsistence, and how heartlessly his own sister had disowned him, he felt very sorry for him, and offered to place at his disposal a small sum of money which he had scraped together out of his slender earnings, saying:—"Take this, it is all I have; I am but a poor man's son, and can content myself with only the bare necessaries of life, but it is a different thing with you, who have been bred in the lap of luxury; make therefore what use you choose of this money, and do not concern yourself as to how you are to return

it to me. First of all, provide yourself with suitable apparel, buy a good horse, and keep a few servants, and you will soon see that you will find credit in the city. Nor will you have cause any longer to complain of the coldness of your sister, for, if you do as I tell you, she will lose no time in owning you as her brother."

The rich man's son was greatly touched with his poor old friend's generosity, and accepted his offer with the greatest reluctance. At the same time the second of those dearly-bought sentences, "a sister in prosperity, a true friend in adversity," came to his recollection, and he praised the wisdom of the old man.

This newly found friend took the opportunity of warning our young hero against the apparent kindness and friendship of the owner of the floating palace, who, he informed him, was one of the ministers of the state, but was known to be a very dangerous character. So at parting, the young merchant made a promise to his friend to bid good-bye to his host and his daughter as early as circumstances permitted.

Shortly after this his host, the minister, who had long since found out that his guest was worth nothing to him, but was on the contrary continuing to be a burden upon him, set about thinking of some method by which to get rid of him. At last he hit upon a plan by which to dispose of him effectually.

The king, his master, had an only daughter who was afflicted with an incurable disease, which had baffled the skill of a great many physicians, who had come from far and near to cure her and win the promised reward. This reward was nothing less than the hand of the fair Princess herself and the sovereignty of half her father's kingdom. Nearly every day a physician presented himself before the king and obtained permission to watch by the Princess's bed and find out what it was she was suffering from, with a view to cure her, but before next morning he was found lying dead in the chamber. So the wily minister thought this a very feasible mode of doing away with his young guest, and going up to the king one day, he told him that he had a man staying with him, who was proficient in the healing art, but pretended for some reason or other to be ignorant of it, and that, therefore, if the king wished to secure his services he had only to send his men to bring him into the royal presence, and see if he could not induce him by threats and promises to undertake the cure of the Princess.

The king agreed to this, and sent armed men to the floating palace to seize the stranger and bring him into his presence.

When the guards seized hold of the unsuspecting young man, he, in his fright, asked his host to interfere and save him, but the doublefaced villain, still pretending to be his friend, advised him to obey the king's mandate without opposition and leave the rest to fate.

Acting upon this advice the young man went with the guards and stood before the king who questioned him as to the extent of his knowledge of medicine and offered him the promised reward if he took the Princess's case in hand and cured her. But our hero declared himself quite ignorant of any knowledge of medicine and related how he was only a merchant's son. The king, however, would not believe him, and the more the poor fellow declared himself ignorant, the more the deluded king disbelieved him, so much was his mind prejudiced by the minister's story.

At last, partly by threats and partly by promises, the monarch induced the young man to consent to keep watch by the Princess's bed for one day at least and leave chance to do the rest, hoping that the sight of the poor lady's misery would melt his heart and induce him to try his remedies on her.

So the supposed physician went with the attendants into the chamber where the sick Princess lay and was there left alone with her. Not knowing what to do, he sat for some time narrowly watching the fair patient. He saw that her abdomen was swollen to an enormous height, and heard groans of great agony issuing from her mouth. In other respects, however, she appeared to be all right, for her highly beautiful face was calm and serene, and she looked as if she were wrapped in sweet slumber, in which state, as he had been told by the attendants who had led him into the chamber, she had been lying for months past, taking no other food but milk, which too had to be poured down her throat. The young man felt greatly for her, and fervently wished he had the power to do something for the poor suffering creature. He sat by her bed the whole day, watching her movements, and towards evening he ordered the attendants to strew her bed with soft, fragrant flowers, for, he said to himself, "how bedsore and tired she must be feeling, lying here so long and so cheerless! The odour of sweet flowers will do her good". So they strewed her bed with the choicest flowers that could be had, and placing a pail of milk near her bed, retired, leaving her alone with the reputed physician.

Left thus alone to his thoughts our hero sat and pondered for

a while on what he thought his very equivocal position, wondering much how the king could have been led into considering him a physician, and how the next morning he would be able to account for his failure in curing the Princess. By degrees slumber began to steal upon him and he was about to lie down to go to sleep, when all at once he remembered the lines. "He who sleeps in a king's palace is lost, while he who keeps awake is saved." So up he started and rubbing his eyes and shaking off sleep, he sat intently gazing at the Princess again. Nor was his night's vigil unrewarded, for about midnight, he perceived the patient writhing in great agony, and giving out low moans, indicative of extreme pain. He thereupon went nearer her bed and stood by, gazing with pity on her lovely face, when what should he see but a fierce serpent slowly thrusting its head out of the poor lady's mouth, and looking stealthily about as if to see whether there was any one near! The young man, surprised and bewildered as he was by this unexpected sight, had presence of mind enough left to hide himself behind some curtains and watch what followed. The loathsome reptile, seeing the coast clear, began to draw its whole length out of the princess's body, inch by inch, without fear, the Princess all the while giving low groans of agony, and finally with a heavy jerk it fell out amongst the flowers, and hid itself beneath them. Seeing his prey thus secure our hero came out of his hiding place and was just going to strike it with his sword, when the greedy reptile, happening to see the pail of milk hard by, slid from amongst the flowers and glided towards it. Just then the brave young man drew his sword and gave the hateful creature such a heavy blow with it as to kill it on the spot.

The joy of our hero knew no bounds when he saw the venomous reptile that had so long been tormenting the sweet Princess lying dead on the one hand, and that beautiful lady, now free from pain, with her abdomen fallen to its natural level, pouring forth her thanks on the other.

He allowed the loathsome carcass of the dreaded reptile to remain where it was, that he might show it to the king as a trophy of his victory, and engaged in a pleasant chat with the fair princess.

With morning a couple of sweepers who had been sent there as usual came into the room to clear away the remains of any physician who may have dared to treat the Princess that night, but what was their surprise when they saw the physician alive

and hearty conversing with the Princess, who was herself sitting up in bed, looking quite well and happy, and a large serpent lying dead beside her bed. They withdrew respectfully and spread the good news everywhere in the palace, so that the king was soon on the spot.

When the monarch saw the body of the huge reptile and found his beloved daughter sitting up in her bed and looking cheerful and happy he comprehended at a glance what had happened, and was beside himself with joy. He held his dear child to his heart, and then, embracing the reputed physician, congratulated him on his success. Now it was that every one came to know what the poor Princess had been suffering from, and how it came about that every physician who attended her was found dead in the morning, for, judging from the account our hero gave the king, the venomous reptile had been in the habit of coming every night out of the poor lady's mouth and stinging the unfortunate physician in attendance on her while he was asleep.

The young merchant now felt really thankful to the old man who had given him, among others, the lines that warned him against going to sleep within a king's palace, for he clearly saw that but for them he too would have lost his life like the other physicians.

There was immense joy and rejoicing all over the kingdom when the Princess for the first time after her recovery from her terrible illness, rode through the city, and the fame of the fair-haired youngster who had cured her, when so many others had failed, spread far and wide, and every one, high and low, sought his friendship and did him honour. Nor was our hero's sister tardy in her attentions towards him, now that he stood so high in the royal favour. She sent messengers to invite him to make her house his home, and expressed herself highly concerned in his welfare; but her brother knew her too well to be carried away by these manifestations of her regard, and sent her word that he could do well without a sister who had discarded him when he was poor, and wanted now to make up to him only because he was rich and powerful.

Now that his beloved daughter was thoroughly cured, the king thought it high time that the promised reward should be bestowed upon her deliverer. So he sent for his astrologers and bade them fix upon a day on which to celebrate the Princess's wedding with the young merchant. But our hero's heart was not as light as it should be, considering that he was loved by the



Princess as much as he loved her, and that they both looked forward to their union with the greatest rapture; for he saw that the proud nobles and grandees of the king's court looked upon him as a mere upstart and a creature of circumstance. He thought, therefore, of going back to his own country to solicit his father's forgiveness and bring him over with all his friends and relatives to celebrate his nuptials with the king's daughter with fitting pomp and ceremony. So he obtained the king's permission, and fitting out a magnificent ship sailed in it to his native country.

His father was both surprised and happy to see him back again and greeted him with the greatest kindness, for his heart was glad to find that his son had at last shown himself possessed of those qualities that he prized in a merchant's son, by making the most of the money he had placed in his hands. So he made preparations on a grand scale and sailed with a train of friends and relatives towards the country of his daughter-in-law elect, and there amidst universal rejoicing, the nuptials of the illustrious pair were celebrated with immense pomp, and the promised half of the kingdom was soon made over to the happy bridegroom.

Our hero, however, did not forget, amidst all this pomp and rejoicing, the poor friend who had assisted him in his poverty. He duly sent for him, and not only returned to him with interest the money he had so generously placed in his hands when he was poor and needy, but bestowed upon him a high post as a reward for his unselfish and disinterested friendship.

## THE WONDERFUL TREE

**I**n a certain country there lived, once upon a time, a powerful Raja, who had seven daughters, but no sons. The eldest of these daughters, however, had one son, and the second of them had two, but the Raja bestowed all his affection on the two sons of the younger daughter, and totally neglected the son of her elder sister, although he was much wiser, braver, and altogether a better lad than they. Perhaps his quiet, retiring nature had something to do with his not being liked by his grandfather, for, though made of better stuff than his cousins, he was thoroughly unassuming in his manners; while the other two Princes, though

they did but little, made a show of doing much and used continuously to boast of their exploits.

Be that as it may, the poor lad took the old King's cold treatment of himself much to heart, and longed for some opportunity of doing him some signal service whereby he might win his approbation, for, be it mentioned, that the lad entertained a sincere regard for his grandsire.

Now, one day it happened that the Raja was enjoying a noonday siesta from which his *wazir* awoke him rather abruptly. At this the Raja was very angry and frowned upon him in such a manner that the poor old man began to tremble, and falling upon his knees, asked his sovereign's forgiveness for having so thoughtlessly disturbed his rest. But the Raja's wrath was too great to be appeased by this mark of his *wazir's* repentance, for by being thus rudely disturbed from his slumbers he had lost something much more precious than his noonday rest.

"You have not the slightest idea," cried the monarch fiercely, "what this folly of yours has cost me. Just at the moment you called out to me to awake, I was in the midst of such a very delightful dream as seldom falls to the lot of mortals to dream. I found myself in a strange country where, among other strange things, I saw a wonderful tree rising up to the skies, whose trunk was made of a solid silver, whose branches were of gold, and whose leaves were nothing but large bright emeralds, while thousands of peerless pearls were hanging on it in place of fruit!

"Whilst I was wrapt in admiration at this wonderful sight, somebody was going to tell me how I could obtain possession of that magnificent tree, when you so rudely snatched me away from dream-land, and the glorious vision vanished, leaving me in the dark as to how I was to become the happy possessor of such a grand work of Nature. I charge you, therefore, to go this instant and bring me just such a tree, on pain of forfeiting not only all your worldly goods, but your hoary head as well!"

The poor *wazir* was ready to faint with fear and gave himself up for lost, for he knew not where to go in search of such an object as the Raja had dreamt of. But the two favourite grandsons of the Raja, who had been attracted there by the noise, went to their grandfather and begged hard to be allowed to go in search of the marvellous tree instead of the old *wazir*. Now these two crafty young fellows had hardly courage enough to undertake any ordinary enterprise, let alone going in search of such an unheard of object, but they hoped by these means to get a lot

of money in their hands so that they might go abroad and enjoy themselves. The Raja, however, believed them, and giving them great praise for what he called their pluck, handed them as much gold as they asked for and sent them away well equipped and supplied with ample provisions. No sooner were the two young men out of their grandfather's city, than they fell into bad company and began to squander the money away to their hearts' content.

Whilst the two brothers were thus enjoying themselves, their cousin, the only son of the Raja's eldest daughter, also coming to hear of his grandfather's remarkable dream, got his mother to scrape together some gold, and with it started quietly off in search of the wonderful tree.

After wandering about from one country to another for some time, he at last found himself in the midst of a large forest. He journeyed through it for some distance, when one day he encountered a huge *nag*<sup>1</sup> who lay stretched at full length in his way, and arrested his further progress. The young Prince, however, was not daunted by this sight. He mustered up all his courage, and drawing his sword, boldly attacked the fierce monster which was in reality a demon in the shape of a serpent and was known far and wide by the name of Lal. This demon, it was said, guarded the forest against all strangers, and was believed to be invincible. But our hero fought with him so bravely and dexterously, that in a short time he cut him into pieces and killed him. As soon as the breath left the body of his foe, the youth found before him a broad path leading right into the heart of the forest. He walked boldly on for some time till he came in sight of a large garden, so charmingly laid out as to appear to be evidently the abode of fairies. Just then, a very beautiful little fairy came out of a recess, and looking with great astonishment at the youngster said, "What could have brought you here? Surely nothing short of my father's death could have opened the way for a stranger to enter our home!" With this she fell a-weeping, and began to tear her hair and rend her clothes.

The young man tried to soothe her and said, "Although I have killed your father, my little fairy, I have done so in self-defence, and I promise you I will not harm a hair on your head; but on one condition, viz., that you tell me where I can find the tree with the silver trunk, golden branches, emerald leaves, and pearls for fruit; for I have come in search of it and am determined to have it."

<sup>1</sup> Serpent.

"Oh! that I can easily do, young man," she said, "for I myself, who am called the silver *pari*<sup>1</sup> together with my sisters, the gold *pari*, the emerald *pari*, and the pearl *pari*, form the tree you are speaking of, and if you only manage to bring us all four together, you will soon see the tree before you."

"Tell me then, where to find your sisters," said the Prince eagerly, "and I shall lose no time in bringing them to you."

"Well then, take this silver ring and go straight on till you find my sister, the gold *pari*, and give it to her." The youth did as he was bid, and soon catching sight of the gold *pari*, handed her the silver ring and asked her to accompany him to her sister.

The gold *pari*, knew why the youth wanted her, so she said, "Before I go with you, you must find out two more of my sisters; so here take this gold ring and go further on till you find my sister, the emerald *pari*." He did so, and the emerald *pari* in her turn gave him an emerald ring and sent him on to her sister, the pearl *pari*, and that lady, at once recognizing the token, received the youth with great kindness, and gave him a sword, which, she told him, when held in a particular position, was endowed with the power of bringing the four sisters together and changing them into the wonderful tree with the silver trunk, golden branches, emerald leaves, and pearl fruits; while, as soon as its position was reversed, the tree separated into the four little fairies again.

In order to satisfy himself that the fairy's words were true, our hero tried the experiment there and then, when lo! there stood before him just such a tree as his grandfather had expressed his wish to obtain, and his young heart leapt with joy at the thought of how the old Raja would love him and load him with favours for having been instrumental in realizing his dream. He, therefore, instantly converted the tree into the four fairies once again, and started off with them for his native country.

After a few months' journey, the young Prince one day found himself in a large city, where he fell in with his two cousins. They were holding high revel there with a number of companions like themselves, and were very much surprised to see him. The poor youth, in his innocence, recounted to them his adventures in the forest, and showed them the four fairies, and the magic sword with which they could be converted into the tree which

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<sup>1</sup> Fairy.

was the object of their grandfather's desire. This awoke a feeling of jealousy in the hearts of those ill-natured young men, and they fell to devising some plan by which to put an end to our hero's life and take possession of his magic sword and his fairies. They, however, thought fit to disguise their feelings for a time, and offered to accompany him to their native country.

After a few days' journey, the three cousins halted for the night on a cool spot near a well, and after taking their meals went to sleep. About midnight one of the two brothers aroused our hero from his slumber, and pretending to be ill, entreated him to fetch a draught of cool water from the well to quench his thirst. The unsuspecting lad, seeing nothing extraordinary in this request, ran at once to the well, leaving his magic sword under his pillow where he had placed it for the night. The two wicked brothers thereupon followed him stealthily, and just as he was bending over the well to draw water, they seized him by the legs and threw him in, head foremost. This done, they went back to the place where they had pitched their camp, took possession of the magic sword, and telling the fairies that their cousin had gone away in advance to apprise their grandfather of their coming, and to prepare him for giving them fit reception, made arrangements for resuming the journey. The little sprites, however, at once suspected foul play, but seeing that they were in the power of those unscrupulous young men, said nothing at the time, and quietly went away with them. But as they marched along they took the precaution of throwing large tufts of their lustrous hair here and there on the road, so that, should their young captor be still alive, he might find no difficulty in following them.

The two brothers journeyed home direct and in due course arrived there. They were received with great joy and delight by their indulgent grand-parent, who was in a fever of impatience to behold the wonderful tree. The two wicked young men soon found however that, though they had become possessed of the magic sword, they did not know how to use it so as to convert the fairies into the magnificent tree.

They, therefore, turned the sword about in several ways, passed it backwards and forwards over the heads of the fairies, and tried diverse methods of bringing about the transformation, but in vain, till at last the old Raja was very much enraged with them and rebuked them severely for thus imposing upon his credulity.

In the meantime our hero, who had been taken out of the well by a passing stranger, had speedily found his way home guided by the tufts of the fairies' hair. So one day, just as the Raja, being fairly tired of the lies with which his younger daughter's sons were putting him off from day to day, was about to question the fairies themselves as to the truth of their story, the young Prince rushed into the garden where the court was assembled, and stood before his aged grandfather. As soon as the fairies spied him, they all cried out with joy "Here's the brave young hero, who killed our father, Lal, and brought us away from fairyland, and he alone knows the secret of converting us into the tree with the silver trunk. These others are murderers and robbers, for they robbed their cousin and tried to kill him."

At these words of the fairies the Raja ordered those two grandsons of his to deliver up the magic sword into the hands of their cousin, which they did with crestfallen and downcast looks. Our hero immediately waved it about in the proper way, when behold! there stood the magnificent tree in place of the beautiful little maidens.

The old Raja was overjoyed at his dream being at last realized, and embracing his eldest daughter's only son with great warmth, he there and then proclaimed him his heir, and on hearing from him of the treatment he had received at the hands of his cousins ordered them to instant execution.

## PRINCE SABAR

There was once a great and powerful Sultan who had seven daughters. He was very fond of them all, more especially of the youngest, who, likewise, was the pet of the whole family. It was natural, therefore, that she should be regarded with jealousy by her elder sisters.

One day the Sultan, being in a humorous mood, summoned them all before him and put to them the following rather queer question:—

"Do you attribute the prosperity and happiness which you now enjoy to the influence of your own qismat or mine? Tell me the exact truth, without fear or prevarication, for I want to see what each of you have to say on the subject."

Folklore in Western India. By Putlibai D. H. Wadia. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVI. Part CCII. November, 1887. Page 322.

Without a moment's delay six of the girls cried out at once, "Of course, father, there is not the least doubt that it is to your good star that we are all indebted for all the happiness we enjoy."

What was the surprise, however, of the Sultan when he found that his youngest and best loved daughter observed complete silence, while her sisters were speaking, and looked embarrassed and ill at ease, as if she had something on her lips that she dared not utter.

"What is it?" he cried out, rather put out at this strange behaviour of the young lady; "What is it that prevents your speaking out, my child, like your sisters? Surely you don't mean to disagree with them?"

"I am very sorry to differ from them, my father," she replied hesitatingly, "but I mean to answer your question in quite a different way. My opinion is that your destiny cannot in any wise guide ours; we have each our separate qismat which influences us either for good or for evil. I am sure it cannot be otherwise. Were it not for my own good star I could never have been your daughter and a princess."

"Oh indeed!" cried the Sultan indignantly, "so you owe all your happiness to your own good star? Is this the return you make for all the love I have bestowed upon you? You ungrateful creature! We shall see how your qismat favours you in the future. Ho! guards, seize this undutiful girl, drive her away from my palace and never let me see her face again!"

The guards thereupon surrounded the poor girl, and she quietly walked with them out of the precincts of the town, when they left her.

Some time after this the Sultan bethought himself of going on a visit to a distant country. So he got ready a beautiful ship, and on the auspicious day fixed upon by the astrologers for him to set out on the voyage, he took leave of all his friends and relations, as well as of his subjects, previous to embarking. While taking a last affectionate farewell of his six daughters he asked each of them to name some particular object on which she had set her heart, and he would be happy to buy it for her. The girls each named the object that most suited her fancy and the Sultan at once went on board accompanied by his courtiers and a host of followers with bands of music playing.

At the appointed hour the mariners unfurled the sails, and raised the anchor, but what was their surprise to find that the ship, in spite of a most favourable wind, stood stock-still, like an

obstinate horse. They spent a good deal of time in endeavouring to find out what it was that impeded her progress, for they knew that everything both in and out of the vessel was to a pin as it ought to be. At last the Sultan sent for the most clever astrologers from the city and they, after a great deal of deliberation, declared that the ship did not move only because the Sultan had neglected one of his nearest blood relations, and had not asked her instructions as to what gift he was to bring her from the country he was going to. The Sultan was at once put in mind of his youngest daughter, and though rather crestfallen he expressed great indignation at the idea of obstacles being thrown in his way on account of such a worthless creature. He, however, at once despatched messengers to find out the poor victim of his displeasure, and learn from her what she would have her father buy for her in the strange land for which he was bound.

One of the messengers after a great deal of fruitless search found her at last in a jungle, under the far-spreading branches of a large tree, where she lived like an ascetic devoted to the service of Allah. She was at prayer when the man approached her and was so deeply absorbed in it that she hardly noticed him. So he called out to her, and in a rude half-hearted sort of way delivered his message to her demanding an immediate reply.

The princess being in the midst of her prayer vouchsafed to him no reply, but simply said, "sabar".<sup>1</sup> The messenger however was disposed to take this mandate as a reply from her and at once left her, and hurrying to his master, told him that the princess had asked for a thing called "Sabar".

"Sabar," said the Sultan, "what can the stupid creature mean by it! It is just like her impudence to send me such a reply, but she shall have her deserts."

As he was speaking these words the vessel commenced to move and being a good sailer she went at a remarkably rapid rate and soon reached her destination.

As soon as the ship dropped anchor there the Sultan landed with all his followers. He remained in the city for several days, and enjoyed himself immensely. When it was time for him to leave, he began to prepare for his return journey. He had spared neither pains nor gold in procuring the choice things that his six favourite daughters had wished for and had them safely stored in the ship. As for his youngest daughter's request he

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<sup>1</sup> *i. e.*, "have patience."



met with the same reply wherever he inquired for it, namely, that there was no such thing as *sabar* anywhere on earth. The Sultan, therefore, persuaded himself that there was no use in wasting more time in search of it, since nobody knew anything about it and accordingly went on board without it.

In due time the anchor was raised and the sails unfurled; but lo! the vessel again stood firm as a rock! The Sultan at once knew what this was owing to, and in great rage directed his servants once more to go on shore and inquire of every passer-by in the streets whether he or she knew of any one who had the mysterious thing called *sabar* for sale, and who would part with it for a large sum of money. The servants wandered all over the city the whole day in search of that rare commodity, but every one whom they questioned about it laughed at them for their pains. They were tired of the business and were just going to give it up, at least for the day, when a poor old woman happened to pass by, and on their putting her the same question that they had put to thousands before, that day, she replied:—

“*Sabar*! Oh yes, I know of a thing that is called by that name. It is a stone, lying half buried in my yard. It has lain there ever since I was born, and has been known as the ‘*Sabar Stone*.’ What price would you pay for it?”

The servants were very glad to hear this, and said, “Come, good woman, let us have it, and we shall give you a handful of gold for it.

The woman was in high glee at being offered so much as a handful of gold for a worthless stone, for it was much beyond her wildest expectations. So she took them to her cottage in all haste and readily parted with the big rough stone, in exchange for the gold they gave for it. The men hurried to the shore with the stone and as soon as they placed it on board the ship she began to sail away at a rapid rate, and in a few days the Sultan reached home in safety.

A day or two after his arrival he sent the stone to where his daughter lived with the same messenger whom he had despatched to her before. When she saw her father’s servant approach her, with a heavy burden on his head, she was rejoiced to think that his heart had softened towards her, and that as a proof of it he had sent her a rich present. But what was her grief when, upon the man coming near, she saw nothing but a huge black stone upon his head. He laid his burden down at her feet, and said rather gruffly: “Here’s the thing, the ‘*Sabar*’ you asked for!

Surely your star seems to be a very bright one, my lady, for while the Sultan brought your sisters the choicest diamonds and rubies he could find, to your share has fallen only a rough black stone. Keep it safe, however, my lady, for it will serve you at least for washing your clothes on." So saying he walked away.

At these taunting words the poor girl was wounded to the heart and burst out crying and was very unhappy for the rest of the day. The next morning she put all her strength together and rolled the stone into a corner, with the intention of putting it to the very use her father's servant had advised her.

Day after day the poor girl went on scrubbing and rubbing her rags on the stone, and thinking of her once great position as a princess, and the respect and admiration she commanded at her father's court, till the tears would start to her eyes at the thought of her altered state.

After using it for a few days she noticed that the stone was gradually wearing away and getting thinner and thinner every day. She attributed this to its softness, and thought no more of it, till one day its surface suddenly broke under the pressure of her hand, and to her great surprise she saw a beautiful fan lying neatly folded in a recess inside the stone. She pulled it out at once, and having been a stranger to such luxury for a long time she began fanning herself with it, when lo! and behold! as if in response to the waving of the fan a very handsome, tall, and sprightly young prince appeared before her and stood as if awaiting her commands! She was so much confused at this sight that she dropped the fan and was running away to hide herself, when the prince caught her in his arms, and tried to calm her fears by telling her that the fan possessed the power of summoning himself, who was called Prince Sabar, from wherever he might be, if it were only waved in the usual way that fans are used. If, however, he said, it were waved the other way it could make him return to his father's territory at once. The princess was very much surprised at this, and picking up the fan, playfully gave it a shake or two, when all at once the prince vanished from her sight! She was much distressed at this, but soon waved the fan the right way and succeeded in getting him back to her.

In a short time she grew so fond of him that she thenceforth scrupulously avoided waving the fan anymore and kept him constantly near her. In time the prince had a large palace built for her, near her cottage and she went and lived there with him in great pomp, and was very happy. Whenever Prince Sabar wished

to see his parents he would persuade her to wave the fan in the required way, and he was immediately transported to their palace. With the exception of these visits Prince Sabar never left the princess alone.

Now it happened that the Sultan and his six daughters got wind of this happy change in the fortunes of their despised relative; whereupon the sisters were mightily jealous of her, while the Sultan was so much chagrined and mortified that he would not even have her mentioned in his hearing. One day the six girls, without asking the Sultan's permission, paid a visit to their youngest sister. She welcomed them in all the joy of a loving heart, and pressed them to remain; but they soon went away, promising to return some other day.

After they were gone Prince Sabar who had learnt from the princess herself all the particulars of the ill-treatment she had received at the hands of her father, expressed his doubts as to the advisability of admitting them into her new home, for he feared that in their jealousy at her good fortune they would not scruple to adopt some means of putting an end to her happiness. But the artless and unsuspecting princess thought differently, and looked forward with rapture to those days on which she expected visits from them.

One day the prince expressed a desire to pay an evening's visit to his parents and the Princess waved her fan and allowed him to go. Some time after he was gone she felt so lonely and sad that she was wishing to summon him back again, when to her joy her sisters came on a visit to her and remained with her till late in the night.

She was very happy in their company, and laughed and conversed with them with a light heart. Her sisters, however, were a little reserved and embarrassed, and did not freely respond to her gaiety, not only because they felt very jealous of her, but because they had that evening planned the destruction of the good Prince Sabar. So while some of them held their unsuspecting sister in conversation the others quietly glided into the room where Prince Sabar's bed was, and pulling out the bed-sheet, spread upon the mattress with their own hands a quantity of pounded glass, mixed with a poison of the worst kind, which they had brought with them for the purpose. Then hastily spreading the sheet again they got out of the room and joined their sisters.

When night had far advanced the six wicked princesses left their sister's palace on their return home.

Hardly were they gone when the princess waved her fan and got her beloved Prince Sabar once more near her. As it was late at night when he came he felt tired and sleepy, and went at once to bed, while the princess proceeded to say her prayers before doing the same. All at once, however, Prince Sabar cried out, "Help! O help me! I am pierced on all sides with something and don't know what to do! I am sure it is the work of those wicked sisters of yours. I told you not to countenance their visits; but you would have your will. Now you will soon be able to enjoy their company to your heart's content, for I am well-nigh dead! Do! for Heaven's sake wave your fan, and let me go back to my parents."

The bewildered princess ran up to him and found him covered all over with powdered glass which had entered his flesh and had caused it to bleed on all sides. She had him at once removed to another bed and was proceeding to extract the pieces of glass from his flesh when the prince cried out that he was not going to remain with her any longer, and forced her much against her will to wave the fan, and thus had himself transported to his native country.

After his departure the princess was in the greatest distress. She wept and tore her hair and waved her fan again and again to make him come back to her, but to her great sorrow he did not come. She cursed herself for having confided in her sisters, and wept very much at the thought that it was perhaps because her lord was dead that he did not return to her.

After passing a sleepless night she rose betimes and dressed herself in the guise of an itinerant vendor of drugs, such as go through the jungles collecting roots and herbs, and administer to the cure of human ailments. Thus disguised she soon left the palace to go in search of her lost lover's abode.

For days she wandered from jungle to jungle without finding the least trace of her dear Prince Sabar, till at last she felt so fatigued and ill that she almost despaired of her own life. One day, as she was resting herself on the banks of a large river under the shade of some trees, she observed a pair of song birds sitting upon its branches, conversing with each other like human beings. One of them said—

"How poor Prince Sabar is suffering! How I pity the unfortunate young man! I wish somebody would come to know of the healing properties of my excrement! If one were only to apply it all over his body, in the twinkling of an eye all the

poisoned glass would come out of his flesh and a second application would heal the wounds and make the skin as whole as before."

"Oh! this is all very well, but supposing some one were to collect a quantity of your excrement how is he to go with it to the other side of this large river where the prince's palace is situated?" asked the other bird.

"Easy enough," said the first, "he has only to remove some of the bark of this very tree that we are perching upon, and make it into a pair of enchanted sandals for his feet, and by wearing them he would be able to walk safely over the river. I wish there were some human being about here to listen to what I am saying."

Having uttered these words, the birds flew away. The poor disheartened princess was so overjoyed to hear what the bird had said that she regained her lost strength, and starting rapidly up from the ground on which she had been lying, she tore out a long strip of the bark of the tree with a knife and soon fashioned a pair of sandals out of it. She then made them fast to her feet with the aid of some fibres, and then collected as much of the excrement as she could carry in her valise. Then swinging it over her shoulders she hastily prepared to cross the river, though her heart misgave her and she could hardly believe that a pair of sandals such as she wore could have the power of enabling her to wade through such a large rushing stream as the one before her. She therefore first put one foot and then the other into the water, and was hesitating whether to proceed further or withdraw, when suddenly she found herself gliding smoothly and at her ease over the surface of the water. In a very short time she was on the other side of the river, and found that she had arrived in quite a strange land.

Being dressed and equipped like an itinerant physician<sup>1</sup> she soon gathered a large crowd around her, from whom she speedily obtained information about Prince Sabar's condition. She was told that his life had been despaired of and that though there were a number of the most skilful physicians attending him, their united efforts had up to that time failed to give him any relief.

Upon this the princess quickly turned her steps towards the royal palace, and arriving there boldly proclaimed that she possessed the means of curing the prince, and desired to be taken to him.

<sup>1</sup> Vaid.

As the prince's father had issued a proclamation calling upon physicians from far and wide to come and try their skill upon his beloved son, the disguised princess was at once led into the presence of her long-lost lover. She was much grieved to see his wan looks and emaciated condition, and tears stole down her cheeks; but she dashed them off, and putting on a brave front, ordered a soft, white sheet to be brought to her; and laying it on the floor, spread a quantity of the bird's excrement thickly over it. She then carefully wrapped it all round the prince's person and placing his head upon a pillow stroked it gently with her own soft hands till he fell into a sweet slumber. His parents were surprised and delighted at this, for though the poor prince had long been unconscious of everything around him, he had known no sleep for days.

After a few hours' deep slumber during which the princess sat by his bedside watching him, the young man opened his eyes. The look of acute suffering that had been for months seen on his visage was now gone and he appeared calm and refreshed.

The princess then removed the sheet from his body, and what was the surprise of every one present to see it covered with any amount of glass and foul matter! The skin still had a scratched and wounded look, so the princess applied the excrement once more to it and in a few hours the prince was so well as to be able to rise and walk about.

The joy of his parents knew no bounds at this miraculous restoration of their son to health, to say nothing of the great gratification of the princess who had, however, to dissemble and wear a most disinterested look.

Prince Sabar's father, the old king, who took her only for a wandering *vaid*, offered to bestow on her any amount of gold she wished for, but she stoutly refused to take anything at all. The prince and his parents were grieved at this refusal, and the latter in their anxiety to reward their son's deliverer by any means in their power, tried to force the richest gifts they could think of on her; but the princess was firm, and told them that she was resolved to accept of nothing in consideration of her services, except the ring the prince had on his finger, the dagger he wore by his side, and the silk handkerchief he had in his hand. The prince at once divested himself of the three things she had asked for, and made them over to her. She put them in her valise and, saying that she was content with what she had got, at once left the palace.

By the help of her miraculous sandals she once more forded the river and after a long journey by land, arrived at her own palace.

Casting off her disguise, she decked herself in a beautiful and becoming costume, and taking the magic fan in her hand summoned the prince before her.

This time he soon obeyed the potent mandate, and came to her. He, however, stood before her with his head turned away, and said angrily:—

“Why should you want my company now? Surely your dear sisters’ company ought to be enough for you!”

But the princess pretended not to understand him, and said:—

“Tell me, my dear lord, all that happened to you after you forced me that day to send you away? I have been so unhappy since then, and none of my wicked sisters have visited me in your absence, for I have resolved to have nothing to do with them, after the most cruel way in which they served you that day; and I promise you therefore never to see them again.”

This pacified the prince and he related to her all the story of his illness, how he had suffered the most intense agony for months together, and how a poor wandering *vaid* had succeeded in curing him after the most skilful physicians had failed. “I would give almost anything,” he cried rather warmly, “to see that noble deliverer of mine once more, and thank him for what he has done for me, so completely has he won my heart by his engaging manners. He seemed to have come on purpose to cure me, but still he would accept of nothing but my ring, my dagger, and my handkerchief.”

The princess immediately produced the ring, and the dagger, and the handkerchief and showing them to the prince, said, “Are these the three things you gave the *vaid* who cured you, my love?”

The prince at once recognized them and put her question upon question as to how she had come by them, and whether it was she who had sent the *vaid* to him. The princess thereupon related to him all her adventures from the time she had first started in search of him and ended by showing him the sandals by the help of which she had crossed the river.

The delight of the prince knew no bounds, when he learnt that it was to his own sweet princess that he was indebted for his life. He pressed her to his heart and thanked her for all that she had undergone for his sake.

A few days after this he took her to his native country and introduced her to his parents as the wandering *vaid* that had restored to them their only son. They were so happy to find that the so-called *vaid* was none other than a princess, who loved their son dearly, that they forthwith made preparations to have her married to the prince with befitting pomp.

Many days before the day fixed for the wedding the old king sent letters to all the neighbouring sovereigns and chiefs inviting them to his court to take part in the rejoicings. Amongst those who accepted the invitations was the father of the young princess, whom the king had specially invited at Prince Sabar's request.

On the day following the wedding, Prince Sabar's father held a grand *darbar*, at which he introduced all his royal guests to the married couple. When the turn of the princess's father came to be introduced to them, he was very much surprised on recognizing in the bride his own daughter, whom he had discarded long ago for what he considered her undutiful conduct towards him. The princess fell at his feet and entreated him to forgive her, now that she had proved to him beyond doubt that it was her own *qismat* that had brought about this happy change in her condition in spite of all the ill-usage she had received at his hands.

The Sultan was so struck with the force of her reasoning that he raised her up, and embracing her before the assembled court loudly expressed to her, his regret at his inhuman conduct towards her, admitting at the same time that he was now convinced it is to one's own *qismat* that one is indebted for everything good or bad in this world.

## THE ARTIST'S STRATAGEM, OR THE PRINCESS WHO WAS RESOLVED NEVER TO MARRY

Once upon a time there lived a great Raja, who had an only daughter. She was very beautiful and highly accomplished, and numbered amongst her other favourite pursuits that of hunting. She frequently went long distances on hunting excursions with a number of attendants, and penetrated the deepest recesses of the forest in search of sport.

One day, as she was galloping after a fine buck, she all of a sudden found herself in a dense forest, and saw that she had



ridden considerably ahead of her followers. So she waited for a time and then climbed up a tree to try if she could see some signs of them in the far distance or find some way out of the forest; but on gaining the topmost branch she was appalled to see a great fire in the distance,—evidently a part of the forest in flames.

The poor princess was, as it were, nailed to the spot at this awe-inspiring sight, and stood there watching for hours the fork-tongued monster wrapping trees and shrubs, as well as the haunts and homes of numberless birds and beasts in his fiery embrace, and destroying everything that came in its way. She could see whole herds of deer and cattle running about in a mad frenzy at their inability to find their way out of what seemed to them to be certain death, and birds of strange and varied plumage, suffocated by the thick smoke and unable to fly in the heavy atmosphere, charged with flying embers from the great fires around, uttering piercing screams of anguish before yielding to their inevitable doom.

In the midst of all this scene of woe the good princess was deeply moved to see a pair of wild geese straining every nerve to save their young ones from the clutches of the fire. Their difficulty was enhanced by the facts that the poor little creatures had as yet no wings, and were therefore totally unable to take care of themselves, and that it was beyond the old bird's strength to carry them in their beaks, as they tried hard to do, away from the closely pressing flames. So they flew about distractedly here and there, not knowing what to do, till the fire came too near to leave them any hopes of saving either themselves or their young ones. Just, however, as the flames were about to catch the nest, the old male bird, not wishing to sacrifice his own life, since he was unable to save those of his family, made a last desperate attempt, and with one effort found himself safe out of the reach of danger; while at the self-same moment the poor mother goose, as if resenting his selfish conduct, threw herself like a canopy over her unfortunate brood, and, with a wild scream of anguish, suffered herself to be burnt in the flames that just then closed over her and her innocent offspring.

The princess, who had watched all this with growing interest, was deeply touched at the sight. "Ah," said she to herself, "how selfish and false these males are! I am sure they are the same all the world over, whether they be birds, beasts or men! I shall therefore neither have anything to do with them, nor

trust them; nay I shall continue single all my life rather than marry one of them."

Hardly had the princess formed this rather rash resolve when she perceived her attendants coming towards her. They had come there to look for her, and when she got down and joined them they were highly delighted, for they had given her up for lost.

But from this day forth our heroine wore a grave look, shunned the society of all her male friends, and declared to her parents her firm determination never to enter the bonds of matrimony. This caused the old people great grief, and they implored her to tell them what had made her form so unwise a resolve. But the princess remained silent and would give them no explanation, so at last everybody came to believe that the king's daughter was not for marriage, and the number of suitors for her hand consequently fell off.

One day it happened that a great and renowned artist paid a visit to the great Raja's court, and by His Majesty's command executed some very rare paintings for the royal palace, and when the time came for his departure he begged of the beautiful Princess to give him a few sittings, to which she agreed after great hesitation, and allowed him to draw upon canvas a faithful likeness of her fairy face and figure. In a few days the picture was finished, but the artist, instead of handing it over to the princess, quietly went out of the city with it.

Now, the artist knew of an old Raja, who was a great connoisseur of paintings, so he went straight up to him with the Princess's portrait, and sold it to him for a large sum of money. The picture was duly hung up in the great hall of audience, where it soon became the cynosure of all eyes and the topic of universal admiration, and all who looked upon it were struck with the enchanting beauty of the fair subject, and wondered very much who the original could be.

A few days after this it happened that the king's only son and the heir to his throne, who was away hunting when the picture was purchased, returned to the capital, and as soon as he saw the picture fell head over heels in love with the lovely image on the canvas, without even taking the trouble of inquiring who the original was. He gave up all enjoyment, shunned all pleasure, and moped away in silence in a corner of the palace, to the great grief of his aged father, who, when he learned the cause of his son's sorrow, felt very anxious about his health, and sent

messengers in search of the artist, with a view to finding out who was the subject of his picture. But all search proved fruitless, for the artist had long left the country and gone away, nobody knew where.

This vexed the young prince still more, and told so very badly upon his health and his temper that he grew highly capricious and headstrong, and regarded everyone with the greatest disfavour. One day the prime minister, an old and trusted servant of the State, happened to arouse him by mistake from a reverie into which he had fallen, and he lost his temper to such an extent as to sentence the poor old man to death there and then. Now, in the old Raja's palace the young prince's word being law, the old man saw nothing for it but to submit to his doom. As he was, however, being led away to execution the old Raja heard of it, and summoning his son into his presence, prevailed upon him to grant the old man a remission of his sentence for a few days, so that during that period he might make over charge of his public and private duties to other hands. To this the prince, after some difficulty, consented, and the old prime minister was allowed to go home to his family for the time.

He was resolved not to distress his family by telling them of the doom that awaited him, but they soon suspected from his pale and careworn look that something was wrong with him. They dared not question him, however, for some time, till his youngest daughter, who was a great favourite, at last put together all her courage, and, by her winning and persuasive ways, succeeded in learning from him the cause of his sorrow.

Now this young lady was very clever and full of resource, so she soon found a way of getting her father out of the difficulty. She went in person to the young prince, and, having succeeded in getting an audience, begged very hard of him to spare her old father's life till such time as she herself could go abroad and make an effort to find out who the original of that wonderful painting was, and in what part of the world she lived.

This pleased the prince very much, for in the scheme which the young lady unfolded to him he saw some prospect of realizing what was to him at the best a dream. He therefore readily withdrew his terrible mandate, and the good old prime minister was once more welcomed by the Raja, who gladly restored him to his former high position.

Soon after this the prime minister's daughter began to prepare for her journey. At first she set to work and drew a faithful

copy of the great artist's picture, and then, dressing herself in male attire, set out on her travels as an artist bound to some distant country. She had an arduous task before her no doubt, for she hardly knew which way to go and where to inquire about the princess, but filial affection lent her courage, and she firmly resolved either to find out the princess or perish in the attempt.

So she travelled on and on for many months, and showed the picture wherever she halted, and to all she met, in the hope that it would be identified, but all to no purpose. At last, after more than a year's weary wandering, she arrived at a very distant and, to her, a very strange country, and there, to her great joy, everyone who saw the picture pronounced it to be a true and speaking likeness of the daughter of the Raja of the country: "she," they said, "who is determined never to marry."

"Never to marry!" said the fair artist in surprise, "and what has made her form such a strange resolve?"

"Nobody can tell," was the reply, "even her parents do not know it."

This news somewhat damped the ardour of the prime minister's daughter, for it was quite an unforeseen exigency and she was at a loss to know how her mission could be successful with one who was thus determined never to enter the bonds of matrimony.

Nevertheless, she took heart, and, hiring a house in close proximity to the Raja's palace, opened her studio there. Each day she sat there near a window which commanded a view of the palace, and worked away with her paints and brushes, till at last the Raja's attention was drawn towards her. So one day the Raja summoned her into his presence, and, after closely examining all her pictures and other works of art, extolled them highly and honoured her with a commission to execute some paintings for a palace which he was then building for the special use of his favourite and only daughter. The fair artist willingly obeyed the king's command, having in the meanwhile seen the princess several times with her own eyes, and made sure that she was no other than the original of the picture which had driven her prince well-nigh out of his senses. Accordingly, when the palace was ready, she went there and set to work painting the most artistic and lovely designs she could imagine on the walls, under the arches, and in every suitable place. The Raja and all the nobles and even the ladies of the court paid occasional visits to the palace, and they all, with one voice, admired both the

workmanship of the artist and his choice of subjects. Each picture seemed to be a study in itself, and each had a history of its own which the artist related in a most interesting and winning manner. This latter fact drew a number of other female visitors to the palace, amongst whom were the ladies in immediate attendance on the princess, and these the artist thought were the persons most likely to know and tell her the reason why the princess shunned the society of men, and why she was determined never to enter into wedlock.

So she soon set to work and won them over to her with her persuasive arts and delightful ways, and succeeded in learning from one of them, to whom the princess had confided her secret, the true story of her adventure in the forest and her consequent determination.

This was all the artist desired, and directly afterwards she drew on one of the walls of the drawing-room a picture just the reverse of what the princess had seen in the forest—a picture representing the infidelity of the female and the devotion of the male. For the geese she substituted a pair of antelopes, while in place of the princess she made to stand a very handsome young prince, so young, so brave, and so handsome, as to win the heart of any woman.

When this picture was ready our artist persuaded all the lady friends of the princess to request her to come and have a look at it, and at last one day, to her great joy, the princess honoured her with a visit, and going from picture to picture highly admired the artist's skill. When, however, she at last came to the picture of the antelopes and the prince she seemed greatly surprised and stood for a while lost in thought. Then, turning to the artist, she said:

“What is the history of this picture, my good friend?”

“O! fair princess!” replied the disguised daughter of the prime minister, “this picture represents an adventure the prince of our country had some time ago in a forest—perhaps it might not interest you much, madam, though it concerns us, loyal subjects of his father, very nearly, as this very episode in our prince's life has brought a change over his whole existence, for since that time he has shunned all thoughts of marriage, as he believes that the fair sex are all false and faithless and that it is of no use to trust them. This determination of his son and heir causes our good old Raja great grief, and has thrown a gloom over his whole court.”

"How strange!" cried the princess, interrupting the artist, "can males then be faithful and females false? I, for one, always believed it was the males who were false and faithless everywhere on earth; but now I see that there are two sides even to this question. I have as yet observed but one instance, and have since then been labouring under a false impression, but I shall not judge men so harshly hereafter."

"O! I am so glad to hear you say so, good princess," cried the artist in delight; "how I wish our good prince too would see his mistake as you do yours."

"Some one should point it out to him, I think," said the princess, "and perhaps, like me, he too might change his mind. As I have benefited by an episode in his life so he might profit by one in mine, and therefore you are at full liberty to relate my case to him and see what effect it has on him."

"Surely I shall, with the greatest pleasure, when I get home," replied the artist, her little heart fluttering with joy at this unexpected success in her undertaking.

Now, from this day it became known all throughout the Raja's dominions that the fair princess had conquered her aversion to matrimony, and was once more open to offers of marriage, and there was again a crowd of eager aspirants to her hand. But the princess studiously discarded all their attentions, and seemed to derive no pleasure from their company. Her chief delight was in looking at the pictures the artist had painted in the new palace, and talking to her solely about the young prince, in whom she felt greatly interested.

The fair artist, thereupon, to secure the interests of her Raja's son, fanned the flame by telling her strange and vividly-coloured stories of his manliness, valour and virtues, till at last she inspired her with such a love for him that one day, being unable to contain herself, the princess expressed an earnest desire to see him. This was the very thing the clever young lady desired, and she readily promised to go back to her country and do all in her power to bring her prince to the feet of the fair princess by telling him her story and thereby creating in him a desire to see her.

Great was the joy both of the old prime minister, her father, and the gallant young prince when our fair artist returned home after a long absence, and related to them the successful termination of her mission. The old man hailed her as the saviour of his life, and the young prince loaded her with honours and precious gifts.

Immediately afterwards the prince set out with a grand cavalcade and a magnificent train of followers for the court of our fair heroine's father, and, needless to say, he was soon accepted as a worthy suitor for the fair princess's hand, and in the course of a few days their union was celebrated with due splendour and rejoicings.

## THE TWO BROTHERS

There was once a great Raja, who lived very happily with his wife and two sons. The two boys were very dutiful and lovable little creatures, and their parents were extremely fond of them. But unfortunately it happened that when they were scarcely seven or eight years old, the queen, their mother, began to show symptoms of a fatal malady. The Raja did all in his power to restore her to health, but in vain. So at last he was advised by his physicians to remove her to a summer palace belonging to him, which was situated in a remote part of his dominions and enjoyed a congenial and salubrious climate.

Now the windows of the queen's apartment in that palace looked into the garden, and each day as she lay in her bed she observed a pair of sparrows chirping and twittering amongst the leaves of a tree in which they had their nest, and carrying grains of corn for their little ones in it. It made the poor invalid happy to see the wee little things being taken so much care of, for it took her thoughts to her own dear little boys whom she made so much of; but sorrow filled her heart the next instant when it struck her that one day she herself might be taken from them and they might be left without the loving care and comforting hand of their mother.

This went on for some time, till one day the queen was deeply moved to see the hen-sparrow grow sick and die in a neighbouring bush, leaving the poor cock in the wildest grief and the little ones wondering why she did not come to them for so long. The queen felt deeply for the little ones, and used to scatter seeds from her window to enable the poor stricken cock-sparrow to pick them up for his motherless brood.

And thus it was for some time, till one day another hen-sparrow appeared upon the scene and began to build another nest hard by; and then commenced a trying time for the nestlings, for this

hen, who seemed to have taken the place of their mother, grew so jealous of the love the cock-sparrow lavished upon them, that she would not so much as allow him to procure them their food, and took every opportunity to peck at them with her beak and to hustle them about. By degrees the cock-sparrow, too, learned to regard them with disfavour, and joined his new mate in illtreating them in various ways. On one occasion the hen-sparrow's jealousy rose to such a pitch that both she and the cock pulled out the feathers of the poor motherless birds, and finally threw them out of the nest down on to the ground. The queen, who had been watching all this with the keenest interest and the greatest grief, burst into tears at the thought that her own boys would one day share the same fate as the little birds, should death remove her from them, as from the nature of her malady she knew it soon must. The king, who happened to be near at the time, inquired into the cause of her grief, whereupon she told him the whole history of the feathered family, and added that she feared her own dear boys would meet with a similar fate after her death. The king soothed her to the best of his power, and expressed a hope that she would long be spared to her children; but the Rani was inconsolable, and wanted the king to give her a solemn promise that if ever he married a second wife after her death he would not allow her to illtreat his sons. In vain the king assured her that he was determined not to marry a second wife and give the boys a step-mother, but the queen would not believe him, saying that she knew better, and that his position in life required that he must have some one to share the throne with him. She entreated him, therefore, to select a good-tempered and kind-hearted woman for his second wife, and to keep her sons as independent of her as possible. The king promised to do all that she desired, and soothed her by kind words and soft entreaties to take heart, and hope for a speedy recovery.

After this the queen's illness took a turn for the worse, and in a short time she closed her eyes for ever with her dear little boys weeping on her breast.

The Raja was sorely grieved at this, and sought by every means in his power both to comfort his motherless sons and to promote their happiness. He kept them constantly by his side, and spared no pains to make them contented with their lot and forget their mother's loss.

This happy state of things, however, did not last long; for in a couple of years' time the courtiers began to impress upon the



king's mind the advisability of a second marriage, so that he was at last persuaded to listen to them and marry the daughter of a neighbouring Raja.

As soon as the new queen was installed into the palace she began to look with displeasure at the hold the young princes had on the king's heart, and her displeasure soon ripened into jealousy. She objected so strongly to the boys being constantly in his company that the king had to ask them to avoid being seen with him so often. The boys, who were wise beyond their years, soon saw the awkward position in which their father was placed, and did their best to keep themselves as much out of their step-mother's way as possible. But still the wicked woman went on finding fault with them in one way or other, and kept bothering the king with a thousand complaints about them, so that he became tired of them and it struck him that perhaps he himself had been spoiling the boys with over-indulgence, and with this idea he too began to illtreat the poor little princes.

One day it happened that the queen was out in the garden by herself enjoying the fresh air and the charming scenery, when suddenly a ball studded all over with diamonds and pearls came rolling up to her feet. She guessed at once that the ball could belong to nobody save her own step-sons, for they alone could afford such costly play-things, and was going to pick it up, when the eldest of the two boys jumped over the wall into the garden and running up to where the queen was sitting took up the ball and ran away with it at full speed. But as soon as he turned his back on her the queen gave a loud scream, and began to weep bitterly, to tear her hair, and to rend her clothes, so that the attendants went running up to her to learn the cause of her grief, and, in reply to their enquiries, she told them that she had been grossly insulted by her eldest step-son. They soon took her into the palace and there she told the king such a black story against his eldest son that in his wrath he began to rave like a madman, and swore that he would never look upon both the boys' faces as long as he lived, and gave orders that they should that very instant be driven out of the palace. But the queen would not be pacified even with this, and threatened to poison herself if the king did not that very moment pass sentence of death upon both his sons. The king thereupon issued orders to his chief executioner to take the two boys away to some dense forest and, after putting out their eyes, to leave them there to be devoured by wild beasts; and further commanded at the queen's suggestion

that their eyes be brought before him as a proof that the cruel sentence had been put into execution.

The executioner, who was an old man, took the poor boys into his custody and set out with them towards a dense forest. But all the way there the young princes entreated him to have pity on them and not deprive them of their eyes; and they pleaded so sweetly for mercy that even the hard heart of the executioner melted, and he promised that he would not hurt a single hair of their heads.

At this the boys fell at the old man's feet and thanked him for his kindness with hearts full of gratitude. The executioner, however, was at a loss to think where he could procure two pairs of eyes to lay before the queen in place of theirs, for he dared not return without them; so the three hit upon a plan by which to deceive the wicked queen.

They took their bows and arrows and killed a couple of wild fawns, and plucking out their eyes tied them up, dripping with blood, in a handkerchief. The executioner then bade the princes be of good cheer and went back towards the palace with the bundle containing the eyes in his hand. As soon as he was gone the two brothers, overcome with grief and fatigue, went to sleep under a large tree. When they awoke the next morning they felt very thirsty and looked about them for water, but there was none to be had on the spot. So the eldest boy said:—

“Sit here awhile, my brother, under this tree, while I go to some other part of the forest and get you some water to drink, and, if possible, some wild fruits or roots for food, for as we have been fasting so long, you must be feeling very hungry.”

The little boy agreed to this, and sat down under the tree. He waited there for a very long time, but his brother did not turn up, and at last he began to fear that his dear brother had been devoured by some wild beast, when all at once he distinctly heard voices over his head. He looked up and saw that a chakva and a chakvi, who were perched upon one of the branches of the tree, were talking to each other like human beings.

“You may pride yourself as much as you please, Chakvi,” the chakva was saying, “upon the medicinal properties of your feathers; but you could show nothing to equal certain properties I possess.”

“Oh indeed!” replied the chakvi, “pray what is it that is so marvellous about you? Would you not tell me?”

"Well," said the chakva, "I would never have spoken of it, but I break silence for this once, Chakvi, since you are so eager to know of it, but pray don't tell any one about it."

"No, I shan't," returned the chakvi, and the chakva resumed, "The man who eats my head will the next day be crowned king, whereas he who eats my liver will have twelve years of weary travelling and wandering about for his pains, but will attain immense happiness at the end of that period."

The bird had hardly spoken these words when up went an arrow from the bow of the young prince lying underneath and down fell the poor chakva gasping for breath!

"So much for your boasting!" cried the chakvi in distress and flew away. The young prince soon pulled out the poor bird's feathers, and gathering a few sticks together, lighted a brisk fire and roasted the little bird over it, meaning to share it with his brother on his return. Being hungry, however, he did not wait for his brother to come up, but dividing the bird into two parts, he put aside the forepart with the head for his brother and ate the rest, liver and all, himself; for he thought that if ever the bird's words came true, he would much rather have his eldest brother to be king than himself.

Shortly after the eldest prince returned with some water, having failed to procure anything for food. So his brother gave him the head and shoulders of the bird to eat, and told him the whole story of the chakva and the chakvi, and the two brothers laughed and jested over it for some time and then fell fast asleep.

The next morning when they awoke they felt very hungry, the youngest especially feeling so weak for want of food as not to be able to rise from the ground on which he was lying. Upon this the elder brother said:—

"I shall go and make another attempt to find food. I have plenty of gold in my pocket, only I do not know where to buy food with it." So saying he set out at full speed and went straight on till he came within sight of a large city. He made towards it with all haste, but found that as it was very early in the morning the gates of the city had not been opened. So tired and hungry he sat upon a stone and waited. At sunrise the gates were opened, and he at once walked in through them; but what was his surprise and consternation to find himself surrounded by armed men, who took him rather gruffly by the arms and said, "Come along, young man, since it has been your lot to be the first to enter these gates this morning we must take you to

the queen and see what follows." And so they gave him a horse to ride and escorted him with great haste towards the queen's palace.

Now the reason of this mysterious behaviour on the part of the guards was that the king of the country had recently died without an heir, and the court astrologers had predicted that the heir to the throne would be the first to enter the gates of the city the day after the king's death, and that the sacred court elephant would of its own accord throw a garland of flowers round his neck. The queen had therefore posted the guards at the gates of the city that morning with orders to bring to her the first man that entered them.

When the guards dismounted at the palace with the handsome young prince in their charge, the queen ordered all the nobles of the court to assemble in the courtyard. She then gave orders for the sacred elephant to be brought round and put a garland of flowers on its trunk saying,—"Throw this round the neck of him who is destined by Isvara to occupy my husband's vacant throne!" The elephant looked around for some time and then made towards the place where the young prince was standing and dexterously threw the garland round his neck. At this there arose a loud shout of joy from the assembled multitude, and the newly elected king was taken into the palace and installed on the throne by chief guru of the court. Next day there were great rejoicings throughout the kingdom, and the young prince was proclaimed king with great pomp. The poor lad, however, was not happy at this sudden change in his fortunes, for he thought of his brother whom he had left half-dead from want of food in the forest, and who, he feared, had perhaps died of starvation. He nevertheless despatched messengers in search of him and waited anxiously for their return.

Meanwhile the younger brother after waiting for a few hours for his brother, put all his strength together and went in search of food and water. He wandered about for some time till chance led his footsteps towards a small stream, and there he refreshed himself with its delicious fresh water and the wild fruit that he found growing on its banks. This partially restored his strength, and he walked on till he came upon an old potter digging for clay near a clay-pit.

"Shall I help you in digging clay, sir?" said the lad to the potter. "I am in search of some employment and would do anything for you if you would only give me some bread to eat."

The potter had pity on him and said: "Yes, if you are really willing to work you may dig clay for me while I work at the wheel, and in the evening I shall give you a good dinner in return."

So the prince at once set about his task and worked away with such a will that before evening the potter took a liking to him, and taking him home treated him to a hearty dinner.

By degrees the young prince learned the art of making pots, and he so improved upon the old potter's method that in a short time he was able to turn out the finest and most artistically designed pots ever seen, till at last the old potter became famous for the beautiful workmanship of his wares and grew quite rich in a short time.

Now the potter had no children, so he and his wife adopted the good prince as their son, and treated him with the greatest kindness and affection.

After remaining with them for some time, the young prince one day asked the potter's and his wife's permission to go on a journey, saying that though they loved him as their own son and made him want for nothing, he felt very anxious about his brother, and was therefore determined to find out what had become of him since they parted.

The old people felt grieved at the idea of parting with him, but seeing that he was determined, gave him their permission with the greatest reluctance, and once more the young prince set off in search of his brother.

For several years he wandered about from one country to another without finding any trace of his lost brother, till at last one evening he sat down weary and dejected on the door-step of a poor old woman's cottage, and being very hungry, looked wistfully at some wheaten bread she was baking. The poor woman, when she saw the weary traveller, took pity on him and invited him to enter the cottage and partake of some bread.

The youth went in, but was surprised to see the woman weeping and sighing bitterly as she made her bread.

"What ails you, good mother?" cried he in a kind voice. "Tell me the cause of your grief, and I shall do my best to help you."

Upon this the old woman said—"A fierce ogre has long infested this part of the country, and of late he had been spreading his ravages far and wide, and our king being unable to cope with him was obliged to enter into an agreement to supply him with a cart-

load of sweet wheaten cakes, a couple of goats, and a young man every day, in consideration of which the ogre leaves the rest of the inhabitants unmolested. Now the king finds the cakes and the goats himself, but calls upon the inhabitants to supply the young men, and so each family has to give one every day. To-night it is my turn, and I must send my dear son to be devoured by this monster." So saying the old creature burst into a flood of tears.

"Don't weep, my good woman," said the prince kindly, "but listen to what I say; let me go to the ogre to-night in place of your son, and by the help of Isvara I shall kill the monster."

But the old woman's son, who was also a brave fellow, would not hear of a stranger sacrificing himself, as he thought, to save his life, so an altercation took place between them, which lasted till midnight, when the king's guards came up to the door and demanded her son of the old woman.

The young prince, however, shut him up in a room, and opening the door rushed out and joined the guards. They soon mounted him upon one of the carts they had brought with them full of provisions, and binding him hand and foot drove away.

When they arrived at the spot where they usually left the ogre's meal they stopped, and unyoking the oxen went away with them, leaving the young man there with the goats and the cakes in the carts.

They had hardly gone a few yards when the clever youth managed to extricate one of his arms from the cords with which they were tied, and pulling out a sharp knife from his pocket cut all the cords and set himself free. He then got out of the cart and hid himself under it. Presently the ogre came foaming at the mouth and smacking his lips in anticipation of his favourite meal, when the brave prince dexterously hurled a number of cakes at his feet and as he stooped to eat them he crept unperceived under his body and plunged his sharp bright knife right into his heart! The monster fell back with a groan, and the prince, stepping aside, plunged his knife again and again into his body before he had time to recover from his consternation, and after a sharp encounter succeeded in putting him to death. He then opened the ogre's large mouth, and cutting off his tongue and severing his tail from his body he tied them up in a bundle, made full speed towards the old woman's house, and feeling very tired, soon fell fast asleep in her verandah.

The next morning, when the cartmen went back with their bullocks to fetch the carts as was their wont, they were surprised to see the goats unhurt, the man missing, and the ogre lying dead at some distance.

Now the king of the country had issued a proclamation some time previously to the effect that he would give half his kingdom and his daughter in marriage to any one who would kill the ogre, so the cartmen thought that, as chance had thrown this opportunity of enriching themselves in their way, they should make the most of it, and determined, therefore, to go and tell the king that they had killed the ogre and claim the promised reward.

So they put a hundred pairs of bullocks together and dragged the huge monster towards the king's palace, and loudly proclaimed before the assembled court that they had killed him by the sheer force of arms.

The king, however, disbelieved their story and asked them to produce the weapons with which they had fought the ogre and deprived him of his life.

The poor swains were nonplussed at this, and for a time they could say nothing. At last one of them mustered up courage to say "I wounded him with my knife, Maharaj, while my friend here thrashed him with his club and between us two we managed to despatch him."

"And will you show me the wonderful knife with which you killed such a monster?" said the king.

The cartman thereupon drew out of his girdle a rusty old blade and showed it to the king amidst the great merriment of the courtiers, while our young hero, who had been in court all the while watching the proceedings, could not help bursting out into a loud laugh.

At this the king ordered him to be brought before him and asked him what it was that had made him laugh so loud.

Then the young man related to the Raja all about his adventures with the ogre in such a plain straightforward way that the king was quite convinced of the truth of his narration. His Majesty, however, ordered him to produce the weapon he had used in the encounter, and the prince at once drew out his sharp bright knife and flashed it before the eyes of the assembled multitude.

The cartmen, as might be supposed, made a show of disbelieving the youth's story, and loudly protested against being robbed of their just reward by a stripling like him. Upon this

the prince begged of the king to ask the cartmen what had become of the ogre's tongue and tail.

"Oh, perhaps he never had any!" cried the men simultaneously, "for when we killed him we found him without them."

"Then wait till I show them to you," cried the prince, and opening a bundle and taking out the tongue and the tail, he placed them before the king as a convincing proof that it was he who had killed the ogre.

The king at once ordered the cartmen to be ignominiously driven away, and embracing the young prince, hailed him as the deliverer of his country. He then, as promised in the proclamation, transferred the sovereignty of half his kingdom to him and made preparations for his marriage.

The astrologers having fixed upon the day on which to celebrate the auspicious event there were great rejoicings in the city and the old king sent out numerous invitations to all the neighbouring Rajas to join in the festivities. Among those who accepted them was one young Raja who was said to have been elected to the throne by a court elephant and who was held in high esteem by his subjects. So our hero was naturally very eager to see him, for he thought that if ever the chakva's words had come true it must have been his brother who had been made king in this singular fashion. So he looked forward with great interest to the day on which this Raja was expected to arrive.

The day came round at last, and the young prince's heart leapt within him for joy when he recognized in the royal visitor his long-lost brother. The two brothers greeted each other very affectionately and told each other of all that had happened since they had parted, and so much was the elder affected with the narration of his younger brother's sufferings that he fell upon his neck and the two big men wept like little children.

This unexpected meeting of the brothers lent greater hilarity to the joyful proceedings, and the two spent several happy days in each other's company.

When the wedding festivities were over they resolved to go and pay a visit to their old father. So they got ready a large army and marched with it towards their native country.

After several days' weary marching they reached the place and pitched their camp on the outskirts of their father's capital. The old man, being duly informed of this, trembled to think that some foreign Rajas, more powerful than himself, had come to deprive him of his throne. It was then that he thought of his sons, and



regretted very much that they were not living to help him in his old age, having been condemned to an early death owing to the evil influence exercised upon him by his wife, who, be it mentioned, had long revealed herself to him in her true colours. So he thought it best to conciliate the invaders and make peace with them on easy terms, and accordingly sent his prime minister to them with rich presents and offers of more, if they would let him remain in undisturbed possession of his kingdom.

The two Rajas in their turn sent back word that they had not come to his country with any hostile intent, but only meant to pay him a friendly visit. So the old king went out himself to meet them and implored them with clasped hands to have mercy on him in his old age and not to shed the blood of his innocent subjects since his two brave sons lived no longer to protect them.

At this both the brothers fell at their father's feet and begged him to receive back to his heart his long-lost sons, telling him how the good executioner had spared their eye-sight and how they had come to be in the state in which he found them.

The old king could not believe his eyes, so strange it seemed to him, that the sons whom he had mourned as dead should be standing before him.

The brothers then caused their step-mother to be brought before them in order to question her in the king's presence as to the foul charge she had laid at their door.

The wicked woman, however, felt so ashamed of herself that she fell at the young men's feet and confessed her guilt.

The king, who had long seen his mistake, at once ordered her to be driven out of the kingdom, and the father and his two sons then entered the city with great pomp and lived very happily ever afterwards.

# FOLKLORE IN SOUTHERN INDIA

## THE FOUR GOOD MAXIMS

In a certain village there lived a poor merchant of the Chetti caste. He had an only son, to whom, on his death-bed, he handed a palm-leaf as his only property. The following four maxims were inscribed on it:

- (1) "Travel not without a living assistant.
- (2) "Sleep not in an inn.
- (3) "Neglect not what four or five people say.
- (4) "Be not always open towards your wife."

Receiving the leaf containing the four maxims, the old Chetti's son, who had the greatest regard for his father, promised him, in his last moments, that he would observe each and every one of those maxims to its last letter. Then the old man died, and the funeral rites were duly performed over him.

After the death of the old Chetti, the difficulties of his son increased, for he had nothing to live upon. So he resolved to travel to some distant place, and there to earn his livelihood. While he was thinking over this, Somusetti,—for that was the youth's name,—bethought him of his father's first maxim,—not to travel without a living assistant. But where was he to go for an assistant in his poverty-stricken condition? As he was thinking and worrying over this, a crab happened to crawl slowly past him and placing literal interpretation on his father's words, he took hold of the crab, and put it in an earthen pan full of water, and covering the mouth with a cocoanut-shell started on his journey, with his mind at ease, for had he not now a living assistant for his journey?

In this way Somusetti travelled for about a day, till only one watch remained before the lord of day should sink out of sight. He was extremely tired and seeing a fine shady banyan tree, he laid himself down, overcome by exhaustion, under the cool shade to sleep and give rest to his wearied limbs. The pan, with the crab in it, he kept by his side.

Half-an-hour or so after Somusetti had gone to sleep, a crow, which had its nest on the top of the banyan tree, began to caw. Now this was a very dangerous crow, for as soon as it cawed, a serpent—the incarnation of Death itself—used to come out of an ant-hole near the tree and drink up the life of any sleeper lying in its shadow. Not one sleeper till that day had ever survived his sleep, and so the tree was much dreaded. However, on this occasion, the crab came out of its pan and pinched Somusetti's hand, and he suddenly awoke in consequence. Getting up he saw the huge black serpent coming towards him, and away he ran with all the speed that he could command.

Meeting some neatherd boys not far off, he related to them his narrow escape, and they, with one voice, exclaimed that he was a most fortunate man. Said they:—"Friend, many a man has slept under that tree, but not one, except yourself, ever rose up alive. It is the most dreaded tree in the neighbourhood and is known by the name of the Crow-cawing tree. No one from our villages near ever approaches that tree, but only weary travellers, whom we cannot warn or persuade, for we all try to do so when we can; and whenever they resort to it, they always die." So saying the boys went about their duties, and Somusetti, too, thanking his stars and wondering at the wisdom of his father's first maxim, through which alone he had been saved, pursued his course and before twilight reached a village.

He went down the street crying, "Who will feed this beggar with a handful of rice?" Half-a-dozen of the villagers gave him each a handful or two of cooked rice, which served him for his simple supper. He then went begging for a lodging wherein to sleep. But though a few would feed him, not a single soul in the whole village would permit him to sleep in his house. Not that the poor villagers were wanting in hospitality, for such kindness has always been proverbial among the rural population of India, specially among Hindus. But unfortunately for Somusetti, this particular village was subject to attacks by robbers; and every now and then some crafty robber had visited it as a beggar or a traveller, and requested the villagers for a place to sleep in. Many a time had their hospitality been requited by plunder; for the pretended traveller would open the door of his host to his comrades, and thus help them to do their terrible work. The misery that the villagers had on several occasions experienced, had obliged them, without making any distinction between good and bad, never to allow anyone to sleep in their

houses. They all suggested that Somusetti should go to the village-inn to sleep. But our hero, remembering his father's second maxim—not to sleep in an inn,—preferred the open plain adjoining the village. Thither he went, and spreading a couple of rags on the ground, prepared himself for sleep, thinking over his father's words which had saved his life the preceding night, and admiring his sagacity.

That day's adventures were so impressed upon his mind that, though he was very weary, he did not for a long time fall asleep. At last nature overcame him and he closed his eyelids, but only for a short repose. For as soon as he had stretched his limbs in sleep, he dreamt that a serpent was pursuing him and was almost at the point of biting him. This dream, which was nothing but a recollection of his previous adventure, was not yet finished, when he imagined that several persons were beating him. This was no dream, but a stern reality, for on opening his eyes, he discovered that he was surrounded by a gang of robbers, each one of whom was giving him a blow, saying:—"Give me what you have in your hand." Unable to bear the severe beating to which he was being subjected he collected the rags spread on the ground, and in a pitiable tone said:—"These are all I have in this world, take them and spare my life." Some of the robbers, a little better-hearted than the others, said that he was a pauper, and that it would be as well for them to leave him alone. Others however gave him additional blows for not having anything of any use with him, and walked off with his rags.<sup>1</sup>

All soon left him and proceeded towards the village. Somusetti sat up stupefied, not knowing what to do. He had avoided the village-inn as he had been bidden, and had chosen the most harmless spot he could find, and yet thieves had plundered him of his rags! The danger of the day and horror of the night, not yet over, passed and repassed before his mind, and the more he thought the more stupefied he became. At last, after thinking and thinking for some two or three hours, he rose up from that place, resolving to go to the village-inn, notwithstanding his father's warning words, and spend the remainder of the night there. However, he had not proceeded far when he saw the robbers again. He kept out of their way, and after they had passed, proceeded to the village and to the inn, against entering which his father had so wisely warned him. And what a spectacle

<sup>1</sup> A practice very common among the predatory classes in India, who almost always treat their poorer victims in this way.

met his eyes! He found the whole village assembled outside the inn, for the robbers had chosen that spot for their havoc that night, and had murdered every soul sleeping in it! Not a soul that had slept there had escaped the cruel hands of the blood-thirsty ruffians, who had come there specially that night because they had heard from one of their spies that a rich traveller was then sojourning there. Somusetti, who a moment before had been calling himself a fool for not having gone into the public inn for his night's repose, now shed tears of joy to the memory of his father.

By this time it was dawn, and the villagers requested Somusetti to oblige them by burying the murdered persons. It is loathsome work to bury the unclaimed dead, and he would have avoided the task, but the old Chetti's third maxim,—“neglect not what four or five people say,”—rushed into his mind, and, true to his promise, he willingly consented to perform the disagreeable task. In return, the villagers promised to pay him at the rate of five fanams for every dead body interred, and gave him the privilege of taking for his own use any property that he might find on the dead. Our hero thus gained a double advantage; he was obeying his father's third maxim, and he was profiting himself materially by it. His reward was indeed a double one, for though the robbers had plundered all the people in the inn before putting them to death, still a great deal remained on the bodies. One of them, indeed, who had been a Chetti, had in his waist cloth nine rubies tied up in a rag, and these Somusetti secretly removed and secured without arousing any suspicions. The great wealth he thus acquired in the remuneration for his duty, made him at once very rich, in addition to the possession of the nine rubies. He thought that he had now enough to live upon, and returned to his own village. Near it there was an old temple of Kali, in ruins, and to this he resorted in the dead of night, and underneath the idol itself buried his nine rubies and a great part of his other treasure. What remained with him was enough for him to lead a respectable life. He took to wife a girl of respectable family, and lived with her for a while in happiness and comfort.

Unlike the usual run of Chettis, who are proverbial for their stinginess, Somusetti was known in his village for his liberality. And whenever all his available cash was exhausted, he would ask his wife for a little rice for a meal or two, as he was going to a village near, to try and make some more money. Now he had never

informed his wife where he had buried his treasure, for his father's fourth and last maxim was, "be not always open with your wife." And Somusetti had benefited so much by the strict observation of the first three maxims, that he had every reason to give more than usual weight to the last one. So he always kept his treasure hiding place underneath the image of Kali a dead secret; but he now and then went to it, in the dead of night, when his cash was exhausted, pretending to be absent from the village, and always returned with enough for his expenses. This he did for a long time, and little by little he bought land, extended his house, and made jewels for his wife. She was a very simple and good-natured woman, but even she began to suspect that her husband must be the master of some miraculous power, to be growing rich in this way. She often asked him how he managed, every time he left the village, to return with so much money. He kept the truth from her for a long time, but she went on worrying him repeatedly. Even iron by constant hammering gives way, and the heart of a man, especially under feminine charms, has much less chance. So, notwithstanding his strict resolution to observe his father's words to their last letter, our hero at last told the whole truth to his wife, warning her at the same time to keep it a dead secret, and never to open her lips to anyone about it. He told her that he had brought with him a great quantity of money and nine rubies, that all the money had been spent, that he had sold one of the rubies for nine *karors* of *mohars*, on which money he was still living, and that when that was gone, he had still eight more rubies, each of which was worth the same enormous sum. How great was his wife's joy when she heard this news from her husband! Her whole face beamed over with it, and she swore to keep the secret. Thus did our hero, for once in his life, notwithstanding his strict resolution to observe his father's maxims, deviate from the last of them, and we shall now see the consequences.

The very next day the mistress of the neighbouring house, paying her usual visit to Somusetti's wife, observed unusual brightness in her face, and on repeatedly enquiring the cause of it learnt all the secret of Somusetti's wealth. In fact Somusetti's wife told all about the rubies, the place where they lay buried, and everything else, to her friend, repeatedly asking her to keep the secret, as of course she swore over and over again to do. The conversation was very engrossing. The more attentively the neighbour listened, the more excited Somusetti's wife became,

and went over and over the same facts. Having thus learnt the whole affair, the neighbour took her leave, and naturally the first thing she did was to communicate it to her husband, who in his ambition and covetousness at the increasing prosperity of Somusetti, robbed him of the remaining eight rubies that very night.

A day or two passed without his knowing of the heavy loss that had befallen him, but, on the third day after the communication of his secret to his wife, Somusetti began to be a little uneasy in mind at having disclosed it in spite of his father's strict injunctions, and resolved to go that very night to the temple of Kali to examine his treasure. Accordingly he went, without informing his wife about it, and from that moment his happiness left him. When he missed his rubies, he stood petrified for a while and then lost his reason.

Plucking wild flowers, making them into wreaths, and adorning his body with them, he began to wander from village to village and from city to city, crying "Give me back my eight rubies," and saying nothing else, no matter what people might say to him. His wife, who knew well enough why the change had come over her husband, cursed herself for her carelessness, and not knowing what else to do, followed her husband, secretly watching him and feeding him. For very shame, she never gave out the reason of her husband's madness, nor mentioned her relationship to him; but as her inward conscience chided her for being the cause of all his grief, she, like a good wife, determined to share his miseries. In this way more than two years passed. And Somusetti, among other peculiarities, would never taste a morsel of rice, even when hungry. If rice was placed before him by some one through the kindness of his wife, he would fling it away, muttering, "Give me back my eight rubies."

Thus wandering over several countries, he at last reached a great city, the king of which was famous throughout the country for his liberality to beggars. Never would he taste a handful of rice without feeding them first, and for their special entertainment he had built a large dining-shed, and used to superintend their meals in person. The day on which Somusetti joined the beggars of the city at their dinner, the king, as usual, came to watch the feeding. Every beggar was soon engaged at his meal, except our hero, who was almost famished with hunger. A man in his state would naturally go straight for his dish. But Somusetti cared for nothing that was placed before him, and only

kept muttering "Give me back my eight rubies," sometimes to the wall, sometimes to the leaf-plate in front of him, and sometimes to the servants. The king's attention was drawn to this unfortunate beggar, who never even tasted the rice, famished though he was, but kept on talking about rubies instead. He thought that there must be some connection between rubies and his madness, and as he had bought a ruby the previous day from a merchant, he sent for it, in the hope that the beggar might take a little food on seeing it. The ruby was brought and placed before Somusetti who seized it and said:—"One has come; bring back the other seven." This he kept on saying incessantly. The king now concluded that there was some special reason for his madness, and ordered his servants to watch him carefully, and do their utmost to feed him. He also secretly issued orders to have the merchant who had sold him the ruby the previous day brought to him. Now this man, it must be explained, was no other than the neighbour of Somusetti who had stolen the rubies. To avoid all suspicion he had travelled to this distant country to sell his ill-gotten gains, but fearing that a sudden sale of all the rubies might awaken suspicion, he had begun, on the previous day, by selling one only to the king, promising to bring another the next evening. In the evening according to his promise, he brought the second ruby. The king gladly bought it, and, promising to double the price for a third, demanded it on the third evening. Thus the rubies began to come to him one after another and every evening, after a purchase, the king returned with it secretly to Somusetti, whose madness began to decrease by degrees on the recovery of his lost rubies one by one. The king went on playing the trick of promising double and treble the price, till the last and eighth ruby was bought, and then he at once issued orders to have the merchant arrested and imprisoned till the history of the rubies was known. On the production of the eighth ruby Somusetti was entirely cured of his madness, and falling at the feet of the king related the whole story of the four maxims, how he had disobeyed the last of them, and what calamities had come upon him in consequence. The king was highly pleased, and after punishing the pretended merchant with death, he restored the rubies to their rightful owner, Somusetti. And our hero, not to be outdone for his liberality, presented half of them to the king who had taken so much pains in bringing him back to his senses, and returned with the other four to his own country.



As soon as he was restored to his original state, he learnt about his wife, how she had guarded and followed him all along throughout his miseries; and forgetting that she was the cause of all of them, he pardoned her faults and lived happily with her. And the good woman too, seeing that all these miseries had resulted from the wealth not being placed in the house, exercised a most scrupulous care over her husband's property, especially remembering the sufferings that both had undergone.

### THE MONKEY WITH THE TOM-TOM

**I**n a remote wood there lived a monkey, and one day while he was eating wood-apples, a sharp thorn from the tree ran into the tip of his tail. He tried his best to get it out but could not. So he proceeded to the nearest village, and calling the barber asked him to oblige him by removing the thorn.

"Friend barber," said the monkey, "a thorn has run into my tail. Kindly remove it and I will reward you."

The barber took up his razor and began to examine the tail but as he was cutting out the thorn he cut off the tip of the tail. The monkey was greatly enraged and said:—

"Friend barber, give me back my tail. If you cannot do that, give me your razor."

The barber was now in a difficulty, and as he could not replace the tip of the tail he had to give up his razor to the monkey.

The monkey, went back to the wood with his razor thus trickishly acquired. On the way he met an old woman, who was cutting fuel from a dried-up tree.

"Grandmother, grandmother," said the monkey, "the tree is very hard. You had better use this sharp razor, and you will cut your fuel easily."

The poor woman was very pleased, and took the razor from the monkey. In cutting the wood she, of course, blunted the razor, and the monkey seeing his razor thus spoiled, said:—

"Grandmother, you have spoiled my razor. So you must either give me your fuel or get me a better razor."

The woman was not able to procure another razor. So she gave the monkey her fuel and returned to her house bearing no load that day.

The roguish monkey now put the bundle of dry fuel on his head and proceeded to a village to sell it. There he met an old woman seated by the roadside and making puddings. Said the monkey to her:—

“Grandmother, grandmother, you are making puddings and your fuel is already exhausted. Use mine also and make more cakes.”

The old lady thanked him for his kindness and used his fuel for her puddings. The cunning monkey waited till the last stick of his fuel was burnt up, and then he said to the old woman:—

“Grandmother, grandmother, return me my fuel or give me all your puddings.”

She was unable to return him the fuel, and so had to give him all her puddings.

The monkey with the basket of puddings on his head walked and walked till he met a Pariah<sup>1</sup> coming with a tom-tom towards him.

“Brother Pariah,” said the monkey; “I have a basketful of puddings to give you. Will you in return present me with your tom-tom?”

The Pariah gladly agreed, as he was then very hungry, and had nothing with him to eat.

The monkey now ascended with the tom-tom to the topmost branch of a big tree and there beat his drum most triumphantly, saying in honour of his several tricks.

“I lost my tail and got a razor, dum,<sup>2</sup> dum.”

“I lost my razor and got a bundle of fuel, dum, dum.”

“I lost my fuel and got a basket of puddings, dum, dum.”

“I lost my puddings and got a tom-tom, dum, dum.”

Thus there are rogues in this innocent world, who live to glory over their wicked tricks.

## THE BEGGAR AND THE FIVE MUFFINS

**I**n a certain village there lived a poor beggar and his wife. The man used to go out every morning with a clean vessel in his hand, return home with rice enough for the day's meal, and thus the pair lived on in extreme poverty.

<sup>1</sup> A low caste man—Pariah.

<sup>2</sup> In response to the sound of the tom-tom.

One day a poor Madhava Brahman invited them to a feast, and, among Madhavas, muffins<sup>1</sup> are always a part of the good things on festive occasions. So during the feast the beggar and his wife had their fill of muffins. They were so pleased with them that the woman was extremely anxious to prepare some more muffins in her own house, and began to save every day a little rice from what her husband brought her for the purpose. When enough had been thus collected she begged a poor neighbour's wife to give her a little black pulse, which the latter—praised be her charity—readily did. The faces of the beggar and his wife literally glowed with joy that day, for were they not to taste the long-desired muffins a second time?

The woman soon turned the rice she had been saving and the black pulse she had obtained from her neighbour into a paste, and mixing it well with a little salt, green chillies, coriander seed and curds, set it in a pan on the fire; and with her mouth watering all the while prepared five muffins! By the time her husband had returned from collecting his alms, she was just turning the fifth muffin out of the pan! And when she placed the whole five muffins before him, his mouth, too, began to water. He kept two for himself and two he placed before his wife, but what was to be done with the fifth? He did not grasp the way out of this difficulty. That half and half make one and that each could take two and a half muffins was a question too hard for him to solve. The beloved muffins must not be torn in pieces; so he said to his wife that either he or she must take the remaining one. But how were they to decide which should be the lucky one?

The husband proposed:—"Let us both shut our eyes and stretch ourselves as if in sleep each on a verandah on either side the kitchen. Whoever opens an eye and speaks first gets only two muffins; and the other gets three."

So great was the desire of each to get the three muffins that they both abided by the agreement, and the woman, though her mouth watered for the muffins, resolved to go through the ordeal. She placed the five cakes in a pan and covered it over with another pan. She then carefully bolted the door inside, and asking her husband to go into the east verandah, lay down in the west one. Sleep did not come to her and with closed eyes she kept guard over her husband: for if he spoke first he would have only two muffins and the other three would come to her share. Her husband was equally watchful over her.

<sup>1</sup> Tossai.

Thus passed one whole day, and two and three! The house was never opened! No beggar came to receive the morning pittance. The whole village began to enquire after the missing beggar. What had become of him? What had become of his wife? "See whether his house is locked on the outside and whether he has left us to go to some other village," advised the greybeards. So the village watch came and tried to push the door open, but it would not open! "Surely," said they "it is locked on the inside! Some great calamity must have happened. Perhaps thieves have entered the house and after plundering their property murdered the inmates."

"But what property is a beggar likely to have?" thought the village assembly, and not liking to waste time in idle speculation, they sent two watchmen to climb the roof and open the latch from the inside. Meanwhile the whole village men, women and children, stood before the beggar's house to see what had taken place inside. The watchmen jumped into the house and to their horror found the beggar and his wife stretched on opposite verandahs like two corpses. They opened the door, and the whole village rushed in. They, too, saw the beggar and his wife lying so still that they thought them to be dead. And though the beggar pair had heard everything that passed around them, neither would open an eye or speak. For whoever did it first would get only two muffins!

At the public expense, two green litters of bamboo and cocoanut leaves were prepared on which to remove the unfortunate pair to the cremation ground. "How loving they must have been to have died together like this!" said some of the greybeards of the village.

In time the cremation-ground was reached, and the village watchmen had collected a score of dried cowdung-cakes and a bundle of fire-wood from each house for the funeral pyre<sup>1</sup>. From these charitable contributions two pyres had been prepared, one for the man and one for the woman. The pyres were then lighted and when the fire approached his leg, the man thought it time to give up the ordeal and to be satisfied with only two muffins! So while the villagers were still continuing the funeral rites, they suddenly heard a voice:

"I shall be satisfied with two muffins!"

Immediately another voice replied from the woman's pyre:—

"I have gained the day; let me have the three!"

<sup>1</sup> The village custom in South India when a death occurs in the village.

The villagers were amazed and ran away. One bold man alone stood face to face with the supposed dead husband and wife. He was a bold man, indeed, for when a dead man or a man supposed to have died comes to life village people consider him to be a ghost. However, this bold villager questioned the beggars until he came to know their story. Then he went after the runaways and to their great amazement related the whole story of the five muffins.

But what was to be done to the people who had thus voluntarily faced death out of a love for muffins? Persons who had ascended the green litter and slept on the funeral pyre could never come back to the village! If they did the whole village would perish. So the elders built a small hut in a deserted meadow outside the village and made the beggar and his wife live there.

Ever after that memorable day our hero and his wife were called the muffin beggar and the muffin beggar's wife, and many old ladies and young children from the village used to bring them muffins in the morning and evening, out of pity for them for had they not loved muffins so much that they underwent death in life?

### THE WISE MEN OF PUNGANUR, THE MADRASI GOTHAM.<sup>1</sup>

A generation or two before Mahamudha, there lived in the kingdom of Punganur a king named Nirbuddhi ('the witless'). Beyond eating, sleeping and hunting wild beasts, he knew of no pleasures. He was extremely weak in intellect, and as usual was surrounded by equally stupid ministers. Stupidity was the sole possession of His Majesty and the officers of his court; stubbornness and ready execution of orders, their rule of life; and as to knowledge of anything but what came before their eyes, they had none. One virtue of Nirbuddhi's court was—if it may be termed a virtue—that, whatever the sovereign commanded, the court was ready to obey, and that too at the cost of life!

It is the custom at courts, in villages, and at bathing *ghats* in India, for a Brahman to read out of a palm-leaf book, generally called the *panchang*, the asterism, lunar date, etc., of each day, so that people may know them and be careful to perform the pre-

Folklore in Southern India. By S. M. Natesa Sastri. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XX. Part CCXLVIII. June 1891. Page 221.

<sup>1</sup> Related by a friend from North-Arcot who had spent a great part of his life at Punganur in the North-Arcot District.

scribed rites so essential for a Brahman and others of the twice-born caste. In accordance with this rule, a poor Brahman of Punganur used to proceed to the palace and read out the particulars of each day from the *panchang*. This he did of hereditary right, as his father and grandfather had done before him, and so there was nothing unusual about it.

On a certain day, just as the king had got out of his bed and sat outside his palace on a cot with a big vessel full of water to wash his face and teeth, the *panchang*-reading Brahman appeared at his regular morning duty, and read out from a palm-leaf book which he carried under his left arm, thus:—

“Om! This day is Sunday, the fifteenth day of the month of Magha in the year Khara. The lunar day (*tithi*) to-day is Ekadasi.<sup>1</sup> Ekadasi lasts up to the eleventh *ghatika*. Then Ekadasi goes out, and Dvadasi comes in. The *rahukala* (evil time) to-day is at twenty-six and a quarter *ghatikas*. May there be prosperity to all!”

Having thus read out, the Brahman was slowly closing his oblong book with a stealthy look at His Majesty’s face to see how Nirbuddhi appreciated his remarks. But the storm had already begun. The royal face changed colour.

“Stop, you mischievous Brahman!” he said.

The unfolded book dropped down, and the timid creature stood shivering with fear and confusion.

“What is the meaning of this stuff that you are daily muttering? You cannot deceive me as you deceive the public, by the holy ashes so profusely smeared over you and your *rudraksha* beads. You come to my court daily in the morning and mutter that Dvitiya<sup>2</sup> goes out, Tritiya<sup>2</sup> comes in; Ekadasi<sup>2</sup> goes out, Dvadasi<sup>2</sup> comes in; and so on, and so forth. I understand! Some one goes out daily and some one comes in without my knowledge; I do not like such a state of affairs in my kingdom. So I now order that neither shall Ekadasi go out, nor shall Dvadasi come in. Will you see to it or not?” roared out the king.

The harsh tone of His Majesty made his numerous ministers assemble round him and wait with impatience for the Brahman’s reply!

After bowing, he said respectfully:—“Most gracious sovereign! permit this mean dog from your wide kingdom to say that Ekadasi and Dvadasi are tithis, not to be perceived by mortal eyes,

<sup>1</sup> The eleventh day of a lunar fortnight.

<sup>2</sup> The 2nd, 3rd, 11th and 12th days of a lunar fortnight.

and that it is altogether impossible to prevent the one from going out or the other from coming in."

"Stop your mouth! you vile Brahman," roared out many voices, and for very fear he had to do so.

"Neither shall Ekadasi go out, nor shall Dvadasi come in," roared out His Majesty, and when the Brahman again said that it was impossible, he was at once ordered to jail. A hundred hands were at once at his throat, and he was pushed out of the palace and thrown into prison.

Then His Majesty thus addressed his chief minister:—"Did you hear what that vile wretch said? That Ekadasi and Dvadasi are *tithis*, not to be perceived by mortal eyes. Do you think that there is anything in this world which would escape our sight?"

"No, my most gracious sovereign!" said the chief minister.

"Then to business," continued the king; "you must set a strict watch over the town and guard every nook and corner, and see that no person goes out of the town at the eleventh *ghatika* to-day, and that no person enters the town at that time."

"Agreed," said the minister, "I shall keep so strict a guard that even the breeze will find it difficult to move in or out."

"Again," said the king; "Ekadasi and Dvadasi may be jugglers, and they may assume some curious shapes, and thus, defeating our vigilance, may go out or come in. Take care that no object, either animate or inanimate, brute or mortal, comes in or goes out at the eleventh *ghatika*. Let the time-announcers be strictly warned to give out every second of each *ghatika* to-day, that you and your soldiers may have your eyes wide open at that exact time."

"All this shall be duly attended to," nodded the chief minister. And many voices were heard extolling the king to the skies at his sagacity in giving such very strict injunctions. His Majesty, not to take up any more of the precious time of his chief minister, ordered him off to his duty, and went into his palace.

The chief minister who was entirely lost in admiration for some minutes at the forethought with which the king had given him so many valuable instructions, congratulated himself on his good fortune in having been placed under the benign rule of such an intelligent monarch, and, in order not to lose any more time in

mere praises, got up from his seat. Every soldier in Punganur was proud of his service that day, and of shewing his zeal and energy in guarding the kingdom, and swore an oath that he might be called a bastard if he allowed the Ekadasi to escape. The minister too was very proud to see so many faithful followers, and, assembling all the soldiers, arranged them in a circle round the city. Every inch was thus most carefully guarded, and the minister, as he rode round and round, saw many a soldier stretching out his hands and swearing that he would break the head of Ekadasi just as he would a ripe cocoanut, if he would only pass his way. Thus was the town most carefully guarded. The minister went his rounds, and the time-announcers bawled out every second with all their might all day long, and there was only one second more for the eleventh *ghatika* to be finished!

“Attention! Care!” roared out the minister. There was no stir anywhere. Even the elements dreaded on that occasion the power of the minister and his zealous soldiers!

“Eleventh *ghatika*,” roared the time-announcer. Just at that moment a rat ran out close by the minister.

“Ekadasi is going out in the disguise of a rat,” he shouted.

“Catch him, pull him to pieces,” responded many voices. But alas! the rat had already disappeared into his hole in the ground!

“Out upon you, fools! What will our sovereign say when he comes to know that so many of us were on guard to-day, and still allowed Ekadasi to escape?” mourned the minister.

“No, my lord, let us bore holes and trace out the disguised Ekadasi,” said many voices, and at once the operation commenced.

The news, that, at the exact time declared by the Brahman, Ekadasi in the disguise of a rat had escaped and thus gone out, spread like wild-fire throughout the town. Cursing himself for not being on the spot, the king appeared on the scene, and it was a great consolation to him that Ekadasi had entered into a hole, for, wherever he might have gone, he would trace that hole to its very source and take Ekadasi prisoner. Thus consoled, after a volley of abuse, he told his minister to go and govern his kingdom in his stead, exercising paternal care over every one, until he came back bringing Ekadasi prisoner. It might be the work of a few hours or weeks or months or years, but until the return of the sovereign the minister was to reign over Punganur. Thus was



the matter settled. The minister cursed himself for his carelessness at the eleventh *ghatika* and his failure to catch the runaway *tithi*. However, he consoled himself that he had yet ample opportunities of regaining his lord's favour by good government during his absence in pursuit of Ekadasi.

The king set to work with two hundred of his most faithful soldiers, and went on tracing the holes, for one led into another, and before the close of the day he was over five *kos* away from his kingdom. First a rat, then a mouse, and then a bandicoot, would run out and hide itself in another and yet another hole.

"There goes Ekadasi disguised as a mouse, and now as a bandicoot," bawled out the soldiers.

Thus the search continued for several days. Every one worked hard from morn to eve, and rested his weary limbs all night, to begin work with renewed energy the next day. Still Ekadasi remained uncaught, and the soldiers undiminished in their zeal and energy as long as the runaway was yet at liberty and the king in the camp.

Meanwhile the minister, true to his master's orders, governed Punganur as a father would his family. The oppressors were punished, the weak were protected, and justice in the peculiar fashion of Punganur was administered to every one who asked for it. The ladies in the seraglio of the king were carefully attended to. Orders were issued that the minister was keeping watch over the kingdom day and night, and that every soul might go to him freely at any time, day or night, and claim his attention and service. Thus was the government of Punganur carried on in excellent fashion, and no one felt for a moment the absence of their gracious king who had gone out in pursuit of Ekadasi. In this way a full month passed, till there came the first night of the second month, and about the eleventh *ghatika*, the minister was sitting on the outer verandah of his house chewing betel-leaves after his supper all alone, and revolving in his mind certain new plans and methods of government to be adopted next day.

Suddenly there came running a maid-servant of the queen, gasping for breath.

"What is the matter? Is the Rani Amma well! Quick! Speak!" said the minister, changing colour at the sudden appearance of the woman, and his body perspiring profusely, partly at the fear excited by such an unexpected visit, and partly from the chewing of warm betel-leaves.

“Oh, great minister,” gasped the maid, “God alone must protect us. Our Rani always sleeps soundly every night, and as usual went to bed at the fifth *ghatika* to-night and soon fell into a good sleep. We stood round her, fanning her, as is our duty, when at the seventh *ghatika* her snoring stopped and she said ‘*ha*’ and turning on her left side, began to snore again as usual. We have never heard her say ‘*ha*’ before in her sleep; so I have come running to consult you as to the cause of it,” gasped the maid.

The minister pondered awhile and said:—“The utterance of ‘*ha*’ usually succeeds a poisonous bite. I fear that some serpent has stung Her Majesty. But let us not be rash. You had better fly back to her again and continue your strict watch. If again you observe her say ‘*ha*’ in her sleep and turn on her side, report it at once to me. Be off at once to your duty.”

The maid ran away, and the minister, thinking it unwise to sleep that night, kept wide awake. If a leaf was stirred by the breeze, he imagined it to be the maid coming in again. And at last even so it was, for she appeared again at the fifteenth *ghatika*, and reported that a second ‘*ha*’ was uttered in her sleep by the Rani.

“Be not confused! Patience is the motto of great men! Let us hear it a third time, and then we shall be certain that the poison is working. And it won’t be too late to commence the cure. Go and watch over Her Majesty.”

Thus the minister again dismissed the maid, but two *ghatikas* were scarcely over before the maid appeared for the third time, with tears in her eyes and said:—“Alas! minister, God is cruel! We are all undone! The Rani uttered ‘*ha ha*’; twice, this time! What shall we do?”

The minister did not know what to do, and despatched a speedy messenger to fetch the serpent-doctor.

“Say that the minister requires his services to attend on the Rani, who has been bitten by a serpent,” said the minister, and off the messenger flew with the swiftness of a kite.

The doctor’s house was reached, but he was not at home, for he had gone out the previous evening to a neighbouring village five *kos* off, and a messenger went in pursuit of him. Meanwhile the doctor’s son, who was also a serpent-doctor on a smaller scale than his father came to the minister.

“Your father is not here then?” said the minister.

"No, my lord; but he will be here early in the morning; but what does your lordship require? My services are at your disposal. I have been for the last ten years a regular student at the feet of my venerable father," replied the boy-doctor.

"Then," said the minister; "the Rani is stung by a serpent. You must cure Her Majesty at once of the poison."

"Alas," continued the boy, "I have not yet come to that chapter of the book, and I have heard my father say often that the curing of poisonous bites is an extremely easy thing, provided that the poison has not ascended up to the head. So, as a precaution, I would advice that the head be separated from the body, so as to make sure that the venom has not ascended there. If this advice is followed, the cure may be commenced at any time."

"You are a clever doctor, though still a boy. It is most unfortunate that your studies have not yet reached the chapter on poisons. But let us not be wasting time. Well, maid, go back at once to the seraglio, and without the least disturbance sever the head of the queen from her body and keep it detached. We shall know if the poison has killed her, when the doctor arrives in the morning. Here is my signet-ring, which will stop any one who might want to prevent you from carrying out my orders."

Thus, giving his signet-ring to the maid-servant and sending the boy-doctor home, the minister retired for a short sleep.

The head of the Rani was, alas! in strict accordance with the orders of the minister, severed from her body, and in a second life went out of her, for no other cause but that of the extreme stupidity of the Punganur State! Morning dawned, and the old doctor with the messenger returned home, bringing with him his bag containing the rare medicines. He was no doubt a clever man in his profession, but his son, who had reached the Punganur standard of wisdom, reported to him the advice he had given. The father cursed himself for having begotten such a son, and his only thought now was how to rescue himself and his son from the consequences of the murder of the Rani. Luckily, nothing was impossible in the kingdom of Punganur. So, hiding his confusion, he stood before the minister, who took him without the loss of a moment to the seraglio. There the body of the queen lay in its blood, minus its head.

"What do you say now? Put the head straight at once and begin your cure," cried the minister.

“Alas! most mighty minister! The maids have been a little careless in placing the severed head. It should not have been placed exactly opposite the trunk. The poison has taken the opportunity to travel into the head by the direct road left open! There is no hope of life now! If they had kept the head in any other direction but that exactly opposite, I could have opened my bag and ground my medicine. Now even Dhanvantari<sup>1</sup> himself would find it impossible.”

Thus said the old doctor, and put on a mournful face. The minister believed every word he had said, and so did the maids, and fell to quoting the fatalistic argument that the queen had lived out her destined life. So what was the use of mourning over the past? The dead body must be cremated.

“The dead close their eyes in peace: the living have to undergo all the trouble and expense of cremating the body,” as the proverb has it, the minister argued to himself. “The queen is dead. The king is now absent in the pursuit of Ekadasi. He won’t return till that wretched *tithi* is caught. The corpse cannot wait till then. I cannot cremate it in the ground reserved for that purpose; for this is not an ordinary corpse. The king might think himself insulted. She was his queen, while living. I shall not diminish her honour in death, but will cremate her body in the palace, at the very spot where she died. If a portion of the palace is burnt down, I can easily have it repaired; but it is impossible to repair the displeasure of an enraged king.”

Thus pondering deeply over the subject, the Punganur minister gave orders for the funeral pile to be heaped upon the very spot where the queen had died. Sandal-wood, blackwood and every costly wood were used: *ghi* was poured on the pyre in profusion; and none had the courage to gainsay the orders of the minister, or the sense to foresee the evils they would produce. The body was set on the pile, and the fire lighted, and not only the pyre but the whole palace was in flames!

Now, it is considered the greatest of insults in Hindu society, to put out the fire of the funeral pyre until the body is consumed. So, notwithstanding that the whole palace was in flames, the minister never thought of putting out the fire.

He thought to himself:—“What would the king think of me if I, his minister,—his servant,—put out the fire before the body of the queen was consumed? Let the palace, or even the whole town, be burnt down; but let no one dare to quench the

<sup>1</sup> The god of medicines.

funeral fire." Thus did he order, and almost half of the town was in flames by the time the body of the queen was entirely burnt. By that time, the fire raged so severely that no one dared to approach it. No amount of ordinary water could quench it. What was to be done?

Just then a thought came into the mind of the minister, that it would be the wisest course to break open the embankment of a big lake five kos long and five kos broad, situated at the western end of the town and on a higher level! The order was executed in a moment, and a huge volume of water rushed down in full force, and in the twinkling of an eye had carried away almost the whole town, and of course quenched the fire. The minister and other high officials of the State, guided by the instinct of self-preservation, had located themselves, with many others who were destined to live, on the embankment, and were thus saved.

When the body of the queen had been thus cremated, and the fire quenched, the minister thought it his duty to send a full report of his administration to the absent king. He filled several pages with a florid account of his good government, in terms which may be left to the imagination. He dwelt at length on his administration of the Punganur kingdom since his master had left it, on the queen's death from the poisonous bite, on the remedies he adopted, on the supremacy of fate, on his own ideas of cremating her body, on its successful accomplishment, on the iron hand of fate that had set the town in flames, on the course he followed to quench the conflagration, and on the procedure he adopted to relieve the sufferers.

He had two very trustworthy peons under him: one a Nayak, named Kondal Nayakan, and another a Muhammadan named Miran Sa. These two were jealous of each other, and each wanted to have the honour of carrying the report in person to His Majesty. The minister chose Miran Sa, and giving the document to him, ordered him to proceed to the king.

Great was the joy of Miran Sa, not that he himself was chosen but that Kondal Nayak was not chosen. He took the huge document, tied it in a Kerchief round his loins, and marched off in haste. In his joy at the special honour conferred upon him, he walked fast the whole day and almost the whole night, till at last nature began to exert her influence and overpower his zeal. Just at the third ghatika before the dawn of the second day of his journey, he lay down under a tree to rest a while, and fell into

a profound sleep. The spot where he slept was near the kingdom of Karvetnagar, and in a neighbouring village there lived a barber, who used every morning to go to the palace of Karvetnagar to shave the king; but, however fine and sharp his razor might be, the king always found fault with him for being a bad hand at his work. Now the barber happened to pass by the spot where Miran Sa was asleep, and thought he to himself:—

“The king always accuses me of being a bad hand at shaving. I shall just test the truth of his remarks. Here is a person asleep and if I successfully shave him without rousing him, what doubt will there be then that I am a first-rate barber?”

Thus resolving, he placed his cup with water in it before the sleeping peon and set to work. First he shaved Miran Sa's beard clean off, and twisted up the Muhammadan's moustache into the form and cut of a Nayak's. He then applied the Nayak caste mark to Miran Sa's forehead, and setting a glass in front of the sleeper, replaced his razor and cup in his bag, and, glad at heart that he had shaved a sleeping person without disturbing him and that he was a very clever hand at his work, he proceeded to Karvetnagar.

A ghatika or two after the barber had left, Miran Sa awoke from his sleep. He saw his face reflected in the glass in front of him. The Nayak cut of his moustaches, and the mark on his forehead were promptly noticed by him.

Said he in amazement to himself:—“What, after all, the minister has deceived me! I prided myself yesterday that the minister had sent Miran Sa to the king.<sup>1</sup> Now I see that the person who goes to the king is not Miran Sa, but Kondal Nayakan! Ah! vile minister. You have deceived me. You have not sent Miran Sa, but Kondal Nayakan, to the king. However, I shall soon have an opportunity of carrying tales to the king. I shall report to His Majesty how you deceived me, by sending Miran Sa first and Kondal Nayakan afterwards.”

Thus argued the transformed Miran Sa, and rose up and proceeded to the king and handed him the administration report. The king read over the whole document with the greatest imaginable pleasure, and was apparently satisfied with every act of his minister! What else could the readers expect from a fool

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<sup>1</sup> This is an extremely fine specimen of Punganur wisdom, where a person forgetting his own identity, imagines to himself that he is a different person and argues to himself as if he were sometimes himself and sometimes another.

who was in pursuit of Ekadasi? At the last page His Majesty stopped and said:—

“What a fool the minister is! He has filled so many pages with every possible information, but is silent on a most important point. There were several kinds of fish in the Punganur lake. He has not said a word about them. Where did they go when the embankment was cut open? What became of them? Why has the fool not put in a word about it?”

Just as the monarch finished his last sentence, the transformed Miran Sa said:—“Most gracious sovereign, I can give Your Majesty the information needed, for I was that day on the very spot. As soon as the embankment was cut open and the waters rushed out, all the fish in the lake climbed up the babul trees which are so numerous on the bank, and building their nests there, are living safe in them at this very moment!”

Thus said Miran Sa, or Kondal Nayakan, as you may choose to term him. The king was highly pleased, as he was sure to see his fish in their nests on the babul trees on his return to his kingdom! For the great consolation thus given him in good time, he appointed Miran Sa to the minister's post and ordered him to govern Punganur in his absence, and degraded the minister who had omitted to remark on the fish in his report. Thus Miran Sa, without any effort of his own, got the minister's place, and receiving the order, started back for Punganur. But all the way he was in great doubt as to who had been made minister—Miran Sa or Kondal Nayakan! “God must descend from his high place in heaven to clear up such a doubt!” said he, as he returned to Punganur, and took his seat as Viceroy of Punganur.

While all these changes were taking place, Ekadasi remained uncaught. The more they searched, the more distant seemed the hope of ever catching him. Sometimes he took the form of a bird and flew away, and sometimes he was transformed into a hare. Thus there was no end to his jugglery, transformations and transmigrations. The king had already been in pursuit of him for nearly a year, and there was still no hope of Ekadasi being caught, and of the king returning to Punganur.

In the Karvetnager State, there lived an intelligent Brahman who had long been witness of the mad acts of Nirbuddhi, and it seemed to him that there would be no end to them. He pitied the stupidity of the monarch, and wanted to convince him of his foolishness by a simple example. He hired a palanquin and half a dozen bearers. Seating himself in it, he ordered the bearers to

carry him with a loud sing-song howl through Nirbuddhi's camp.

"If the king asks you who goes in the palanquin, tell him Ekadasi, the Brahman, rides in it."

Thus instructing the bearers, the Brahman proceeded in his palanquin, and Nirbuddhi heard a great sing-song howl near his camp.

"Stop that palanquin! Who is he that dares to ride in it so boldly, when Our Majesty is encamped here?" Thus said the king, and the bearers replied as already instructed by the Brahman.

The king thought—"Blessed be my life to-day! I have been searching almost a whole year for Ekadasi! This Brahman who is named after him, must be able to give me some clue as to how to catch him."

Thus thinking, he saluted the Brahman, and requested him to help in catching Ekadasi.

The Brahman came down from the palanquin, and said:—"Most gracious monarch! We are all men. Ekadasi is a god. We cannot catch him. Since you have been in pursuit of him, he has been to Punganur twenty-four times,<sup>1</sup> and returned back to his place."

"What!" said the astonished king. "How can he go to Punganur while so many of us are pursuing him? I saw him last evening running away as a hare."

"No, my supreme lord! you are wrong. Can you prevent the sun from going to Punganur by all your vigilance? It must go and return every day: is it not so? Even so Ekadasi travels with the sun, and appears once on every fifteenth day at Punganur as the sun appears there every day."

This simple illustration at last convinced the king, that all his efforts to catch the Ekadasi were a mad-man's project after all! He returned to his kingdom, and, appointing Ekadasi, the Brahman, as his minister, reigned for a long time. Owing to the intelligence of this minister, the kingdom improved a little, but they say that it took several generations for it to reach the level of the intelligence of its neighbours!

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<sup>1</sup> Quite true: there had been 24 Ekadasis in the interval.



## A KNOCK ON THE HEAD OF AKIRI

**I**n the town of Tanjore there once lived a famous musician named Mahāsena. He was a great specialist in singing the great tune known as Akiri.<sup>1</sup> But it vexed him very much that this tune which he so greatly admired and which he had so carefully cultivated, should be thought so inauspicious in the morning. He had a great desire to prove to the world that the idea entertained by it towards Akiri was wrong. But, of course, he must first prove it to himself before his taking up to the task of doing so to the public at large. But how to do it?

Mahasena argued thus with himself:—"They say that if Akiri is sung in the morning, we cannot get any food during the whole day. All right. If I start with food in my hand sing Akiri first and then eat that food, will it not amount to a proof that the belief held by the people about Akiri is wrong?"

Thus thought he, and resolved to put the idea into execution. But he could not sing as he proposed in the town, for his brother musicians and others who would recognise the tune would not permit it. So he resolved to go outside the town to some respectable distance and away from the public notice, and there put his resolution to the test. He started with food tied up in his upper-cloth, and left home very early in the morning, five ghatikas before sunrise. Just at dawn he reached the banks of the river Vettar, whose bed was dry, as the summer season had almost set in. He walked up the bed a little distance, and chose a fine, sandy and secluded spot to sit down and sing Akiri. The place itself, the fresh morning, the luxuriant bamboo groves on either side of the river, the thousand and one birds which had already commenced their songs to greet the rising lord of the day—all these fired the ambition of Mahasena to begin the Akiri at once, and do full justice in the clear morning to the tune he had so specially cultivated. He sat down. Near him a bamboo was hanging down, and in order not to spoil the food by placing it on the bare sand he tied the bundle to the tip of a branch of the hanging bamboo and commenced his favourite Akiri. A person who has specially cultivated a certain tune generally takes ten or twelve ghatikas time to

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Folklore in Southern India. By Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri. *The Indian Antiquary*, Part CCCXIII. Vol. XXV. November, 1896.

<sup>1</sup> This is the name of a tune in South Indian music. The time for singing it is generally between 8 p. m. and 4 a. m. and it is the tune most adopted for giving vent to mournful feelings. It is most melodious but it is considered very inauspicious to sing it after six in the morning, for there is also a belief among the musicians of Southern India that he who sings Akiri at six will go without food during the day.

do full justice to it,<sup>1</sup> and our musician, shaded by the extensive shadow of the bamboos behind, did not perceive the heat of the ascending sun, and went on singing, he had only to bathe in the crystal water that was running in a small part of the river and eat the food he had with him. So, without any anxiety about his going without food in consequence of singing his favourite tune, Mahasena went on exhausting all the several minute stanzas of the Akiri. The more he sang the more he enjoyed his music, and relished above all the means devised by him to overthrow a prejudice. At last the song was finished and he looked for his bundle of food.

Alas! Prejudice had won the day. His bundle was no more within his reach, but was hanging high above him just as he had tied it on the tip of the bamboo. Now the bamboo reed has the peculiarity of bending down low at night. As the sun advances in the morning the bamboo advances from its pendent posture, and stands almost erect during midday. This Mahasena did not know, nor had he brains enough to suspect it.

“So after all, what they say about Akiri is too true,” thought he. And as the bamboo is not a plant which one can easily climb up, Mahasena had to give up his bundle of food. His upper cloth too was lost. So, with only a single cloth remaining with him he proceeded to the waterside, bathed, finished his ablutions, and proceeded to the nearest village to beg a meal from some charitable person.

Fortunately for him he had not far to go. At a ghatika's distance there was a Brahman village, where a rich Mirasdar<sup>2</sup> was celebrating the birthday of his first-born child. On such occasions every Brahman is freely fed, provided he is present at the time of eating. Mahasena thought that an opportunity of proving to the public that by singing Akiri a person does not go without food for the rest of the day was not yet lost. So he at once approached the host and requested to be fed. The Mirasdar in reply explained to him that all the available space in the house was taken up by Brahmans who had already commenced to eat, but said that if he would wait for half a ghatika he could join in the second batch for meals. “As you please, Sir” said Mahasena, inwardly delighted, as so short a time did not make much difference and he would soon have his food. And was he not right?

<sup>1</sup> Have we not here a key to the endlessness of native musical performance?

<sup>2</sup> A landed proprietor.

Who would refuse him food on the occasion of public feeding? Soon the first batch of meals were over and the guests left the house after receiving betel leaves and areca-nuts. Only a select few, about a dozen, remained for the second batch: and all these, with the exception of Mahasena, were the inmates of the house. Ten or twelve leaves were spread now in the hall of the Mirasdar's house, and all the remaining diners sat down before them. Mahasena occupied one corner. The moment the food was served in his leaf his heart leapt with joy, not at the sight of the food itself, but at the idea that he had secured food to eat, notwithstanding that he had sung Akiri that mornig. Now after serving food to all, the lady of the house pours *apochana*-water into each diner's hand as a sign to commence, and according to this custom the Mirasdar's wife poured a spoonful of water in the up-raised palm of Mahasena, with whom she commenced the *apochana*-ceremony that day. As soon as Mahasena received the *apochana*, he uttered aloud and in joy, even before drinking it, "A knock on the head of Akiri." But alas! before he finished the words and before he had lifted up his right palm to drink the *apochana*, he received several blows on his back from one or two servants of the house, who lifted him up from his seat, notwithstanding his cries and lamentations, and pushed him out bolting the door behind. Mahasena cried out from the street to be allowed to explain: he wept: he begged. But no one would pity him. No one would open the gate for him.

What a world of misery? He had sat before his leaf, he had witnessed the serving of the food, he had received even the *apochana*, and yet he had not tasted one grain of food. "Is this all for having sung Akiri? Why should I have been thus thrashed and pushed out?" he argued.

By this time the second batch of diners had finished, the door was opened, and the master of the house came out. "Get away, Sir. Do not stand before me," were the first words he uttered on seeing Mahasena. "You are a beggar. You came to me begging for meals. What have I done to you that you should insult my wife thus? Is this your return for her having given you the *apochana* first?"

Our musician stood bewildered. Where and how had he abused the wife of the Mirasdar? He ransacked his brains. He found no clue. He pleaded innocence. And again roared the master, "'A knock on the head of Akiri' did you not say? And why should a beggar say such a thing of the wife of

a respectable Mirasdar? Is it for her having given you the apochana first?"

Now unfortunately for Mahasena the name of the Mirasdar's wife was Akiri Ammal or Akiri. And as soon as he had spoken, every one took his words to be aimed at the good woman. However, when the whole thing was explained and the real state of affairs understood, Mahasena was excused and was given his food.

But it was then very late in the day. So he made up his mind never more to sing Akiri in the mornings, and returned home a wiser man.

### THE BITER'S BIT (A NOODLE STORY)

**I**n Tanjore there lived a rogue of the first water, practising roguery as his profession, and living solely by it; so much so that he was known throughout the country as the Tanjore Rogue. No one dared to have anything to do with him, for people felt sure of falling into his clutches and becoming duped by him. After living a long time in Tanjore as a true devotee to this profession, the Tanjore rogue found it impossible to keep his life and soul together any longer there. Doors were shut against him, as soon as it was known that he was approaching a house. Men and women ran and hid themselves in unknown places, as soon as they perceived him at a very great distance. His name was in every one's mouth, and life any longer in Tanjore became an impossibility. So the rogue resolved to try his fortune in some other place, and calling his wife, addressed her thus:—

"My dear, we have been living hitherto very happily here. Till now I have had a very successful profession, and found a way to earn thousands. I had an easy part to play. With very little labour I managed to dupe others continually. But now the times have changed. People have become wise. Very few fools come my way now to be duped. My name is a byeword, and instead of finding a doubtful livelihood here, I have resolved to go elsewhere leaving you to live upon what little we have saved. I need not tell you that I am so clever that I will earn thousands in no time and soon return to your side."

"My dear husband," replied she "you have spoken like a true hero. I give you my full permission to go, for I am sure that you will succeed wherever you may go, though my confidence

of your success in this city has been completely lost by our sad experience of the last few months."

Thus saying, she ran off and soon returned with a big clay-ball and a handful of cooked rice: a proceeding which puzzled the rogue himself. She then rounded off the clay-ball and applied to its surface the cooked grains so nicely and so cleverly that the minutest inspection could not distinguish the clay underneath.

The rogue now saw what she meant.

"Done like a rogue's wife," said he. "Language fails me to express my praise, my dear."

"Am I not your wife, my lord?" said she smilingly. "Why should the rice at home be wasted? Why should you not, in starting out to earn a livelihood by your profession in a distant place, begin to practise it on the way? You can meet with some fellow-traveller on the road, and exchange with him this ball of rice, and thus commence to live by your noble art from the very starting point."

"May the God of Roguery shower his boons upon you, my dear. May he keep you, who have outwitted me in my own art, safe till my return."

Thus saying, the Tanjore Rogue took leave of his wife, and, with the ball suspended on his shoulder, started towards the north.

Now, there was a second rogue, called the Trichinopoly Rogue, who had made his position in Trichinopoly as impossible as had the Tanjore rogue in Tanjore. With the permission of his wife the Trichinopoly Rogue, too, had started to try his fortunes in another country. He also must have something for the way, and so his wife brought him a small brass vessel filled with sand to within a quarter of an inch of the top, and scattered over it a thin layer of raw rice.

Both the rogues met. The patron God of roguery had so arranged it. For how long could he keep apart such master gems of his own creation? They met as strangers for the first time in their lives on the banks of the river Coleroon.

"May I know who the gentleman is that I have the happiness of meeting to-day?" asked the Tanjore Rogue without knowing who the stranger was.

"I am a traveller for the present, a native of Trichinopoly," was the answer which the other rogue gave.

He then came to know that the stranger was a native of Tanjore and a traveller like himself. Beyond this they knew nothing

of each other, for each was careful in his own way. By this time they had both bathed in the river and finished their ablutions. The Tanjore Rogue was waiting for an opportunity to get his ball of rice exchanged, just as the other rogue was with his vessel of raw rice, for each had seen what the other had for his dinner. The Tanjore rogue first began:—

“That disreputable wife of mine gave me cold rice tied up in this bundle. I am not in a good health, and if I eat cold rice I fear I may fall ill. I do not know what to do. There appears to be no village near us. If I could only get hold of some raw rice I could cook it in your vessel.

The Trichinopoly Rogue was very glad to hear this suggestion, and as soon as the Tanjore Rogue had finished his speech, he said:—

“My friend, I am sorry for you. Yes, when you are not in good health eating cold rice will be bad for you. The first thing to be cared for is health particularly when you are travelling. I am very hungry. If you give me your rice, I have no objection to giving you my rice and the vessel too. What matters it if it takes some time? You can cook and eat, and if there is anything left over, you can give it me.”

Each felt himself elated in having deceived the other, and the exchange was readily made, as if they had been friends for a long time. The Trichinopoly Rogue was the first to discover that he had accidentally met a person who had outwitted him in his own art.

He turned round to see what the Tanjore Rogue was doing, but he had not yet discovered the trick that had been played upon him, for he was collecting dried sticks to light a fire. Said he to himself:—

“Oh! he has not yet discovered the trick. I shall leave him alone till he does it.”

So thought he, and he had not long to wait, for as soon as the fire began to burn, the Tanjore Rogue took the vessel to the side of the water to clean the rice before setting it on the fire. When the water was mixed with the rice the trick was discovered, and for a minute the Tanjore Rogue stood dumb with astonishment. He directed his eyes towards the Trichinopoly Rogue, who smiled and approached his friend.

“Was it proper on your part to have deceived me thus?” was the question which the Tanjore Rogue put him.

“Was it proper on your part to have deceived me thus?” was the reply he received.

They then fell into a long conversation and many were the tales and adventures which each rogue related about himself to the other. In this pleasant conversation they spent a long time, forgetting hunger, fatigue and exhaustion. After full five ghatikas of their beloved subject, said the one rogue to the other:—

“It is now plain that we are able men in our own way, and that we have started to earn a livelihood in foreign parts. We must continue friends from this moment. We must have a common object and work together for it. So from this minute we must embrace each other as brothers in a common cause.”

“Agreed,” said the other, and from that minute they became friends.

The sun had now set and the two men walked as fast as they could to some place where they might find something to eat. It was a jungly tract of land, but at last the sight of a dim light cheered their hopes. It was a lonely cottage in that wilderness, and its sole inhabitant was a bent old woman of three score years or more. She was an old lady who had seen a good deal of misfortune in her younger days, and who had retired to that forest to lead a secluded life. But even there her greed followed her, and she was a seller of puddings in the forest. For though the place appeared gloomy during night it was not so during day. Many neatherds frequented that part in the daytime with their cattle, as the place afforded a good pasture, and the old woman sold them puddings and made money, saving a good sum in time. The rogues knocked at the door and demanded entrance.

“Who are you?” asked the old woman from inside.

“We are travellers in search of a place for food and rest,” was the answer. Again the same question was put, and again the same answer given. For the third time the question was repeated and when the same answer was a third time given the door flew open.<sup>1</sup> The rogues gave money to the old woman, who fed them sumptuously. After the meal was over the strangers related to the old lady how they had come out in search of adventure, and how they would be highly obliged if she would advise them on that subject. The old woman was flattered.

“My dear sons,” said she. “You seem to be young men. I have no children. You live under my roof as my own children.

<sup>1</sup> It is a belief among Hindus that devils knock at houses at night to play mischief with the inmates. The devils do not answer three times. Hence to test whether the knocker is a real person or a devil the inmates ask thrice before opening the door in the night.

I will feed you well, and impose upon you a very light task in return. I have a very quiet beast, a cow which one of you will have to take out to graze. There is no pasture near this cottage, so you will have to take her out a ghatika's distance near to a tank, where there is abundant grass. There are fruit trees near the tank, under which you can protect yourself from the sun, while the cow is grazing. This is a job in which one of you may be engaged. As for the other, I have a few beds of cabbages in my backyard, which must be daily watered. A few buckets of water will quite suffice. If one of you manages the cow and the other waters the cabbages, you can remain under my roof as long as you wish, and pay nothing for your food."

These terms seemed very lenient to the two rogues. The grazing of a quiet cow and the watering of a few cabbage plots must be easy, even if one had to do both. The bargain was soon struck, and the two rogues had more than enough to eat that night, and fell sound asleep.

The morning dawned, and both the rogues had something for breakfast. The old woman promised to give them a very sumptuous hot meal at night, and started the Trichinopoly Rogue with something to eat in hand for mid-day, to graze the cow. The Tanjore Rogue had to water the cabbage plots in the backyard, and so was sure of his mid-day meal at home.

The Trichinopoly Rogue started with the cow, and had a very quiet business of it till he reached the tank. He thanked his stars for having conducted him to the old lady, for what trouble could arise from grazing a quiet cow? Cows in India are proverbial for their meekness, but there are exceptions. As soon as the tank was reached, the rogue untied the cow and it began to graze even more quietly than he expected.

"What a fine time I shall have," thought the rogue.

But in a moment all his hopes were changed. Suddenly the cow took to her heels and for fear of losing the animal, and, as a consequence his evening meal, the rogue followed it headlong. But he was no match for the cow, for she had not thus been led out to graze for several days, it might have been even for months. She was far in advance of the rogue, and knowing that he could not overtake her for some time, stopped to graze. The rogue slackened his pace, and walked up slowly, gaining, in the meantime, fresh vigour to recommence the race, in case there was any occasion for it. The brute did not disappoint him. It was grazing again quietly.



"Poor thing; it was, perhaps, terrified at some object at first, and so ran off so wildly. She is now grazing quietly according to her nature. I shall reach her in a minute," thought he, and he reached the cow but, unfortunately, not to catch her. Just as he was on the point of catching her the cow again took to her heels; again the rogue began the race, again the cow stopped and began to graze; again, though not with so much hope as at first the rogue slackened his pace, regained strength, and was almost at the point of catching her. Again he failed. And so the whole day, even without having time for his mid-day meal, the Trichinopoly Rogue was after the cow. He was always unsuccessful in catching her. He had traversed nearly twenty kos by the time that evening approached, and he had gone round the big tank and its neighbourhood nearly a hundred times. But at last, fortune seemed to pity even the worst type of rogue, and, as if more out of pity than anything else, the cow allowed itself to be caught.

"I shall never bring you up here again to graze. I shall, instead, give such a glowing description of you to my friend the Tanjore Rogue and change my job with him tomorrow. Watering a few plots must be extremely easy."

Thus thinking within himself, and composing his face, for with a dismal face one cannot play a devil's part, he slowly led the cow to the cottage of the old woman. His whole body was in pain. Several thorns had become embedded in his feet. He had hitherto lead an easy life in roguery, but that day seemed to be a punishment for all his sins. Still with a composed countenance he returned home.

Meanwhile, the Tanjore Rogue in the backyard had only to water four or five green plots.

"I could do it in half a ghatika," thought he.

There was a hand pikotta<sup>1</sup> at which he had to work, and the condition was that he should not cease work till the plots were full of water to the brim. He was at work till mid-day, and then found that the water baled up was not even a quarter of the quantity required.

"What? My hands are already red with work. I have pain from top to toe, and yet the plots are not a quarter full. What can be the reason?" thought the Tanjore Rogue, and tried his best to find out the cause, but without result.

Now this was all clever trickery in the old woman of the wood. The fact was that in the midst of the plots, the old woman had

<sup>1</sup> A pikotta is a country water lift.

placed subterranean tunnels by means of which the water was guided underground to a long distance, and there used for irrigating several acres of land. This was so well managed that there was not the least room for any suspicion. The Tanjore Rogue with all his cleverness was not able to find the trick out though he surmised that there was some roguery at the bottom of it. The old woman came to him at mid-day, and took him very kindly inside the house for a light meal, and then requested him to proceed to his task. Even before a ghatika was wanting to evening, and as if she took the greatest compassion on the man she visited him again, and spoke thus:—

“My son. Don't mind the trouble. You can do the rest tomorrow, cease work and take rest.”

He thanked her for her kindness, left the pikotta and came to the *pyal* outside the house. Sitting there, he began to chew betel-leaves and areca-nut, and as he was engaged in this, the thought passed and repassed his mind:—

“What a fool I have been? If I had taken out the cow, I would have had a better time of it to-day than the tiresome duty of watering these plots. There comes my brother rogue with a joyful countenance. Perhaps he has had a very happy time of it. I shall give him a good description of my work and change my job tomorrow with him.”

Just as he was thus speaking, the Trichinopoly Rogue approached the house with the cow with him.

“How did you fare to-day, my friend?” asked the Tanjore Rogue.

“Oh! I have had a most happy day of it. What fine fruit trees are on the banks of the tank there, and I had no difficulty at all of any kind. I unloosened the cow to graze and passed the day sleeping under the shade of trees, and eating fruit. What a fine beast this cow is, too. It grazes quietly like a child.”

Thus said the Trichinopoly Rogue, and the composed way in which he told his tale made the Tanjore Rogue believe what he said. Soon the other rogue began:—

“Oh! You do not know what I had to do. It was all over in a quarter of a ghatika. Half a dozen potsful of water to each plot was all that was wanted in the business. So I passed the day in sleep and chewing betel. Come on, sit down; you had better have some.”

The cow was tied up in its proper place, and the two rogues sat down on the *pyal* of the cottage in the twilight. The pain

and hardness of the work of the day were so predominant in their minds, that each easily believed the work of the other to be easier than his own, and each suggested an exchange of work, which was readily accepted.

The morning dawned. According to the mutual agreement the Tanjore Rogue took out the cow to graze, and the Trichinopoly Rogue went to water the cabbage. Each soon discovered how he had been duped by the other. In the evening they again met.

“What, brother, was it proper on your part to have deceived me thus?” asked the Tanjore Rogue, and the Trichinopoly Rogue replied:—“What brother, was it proper on your part to have deceived me thus?”

Then the two rogues came, a second time, to an agreement that they should not direct their ingenuity to deceiving each other; but that they should always act in accord. They resolved to do so, and held a long talk as to how to deceive the old woman, and walk away with all her money. The old woman overheard all this conversation.

“I am too clever for such tricks,” thought she, and was careful in her own way. Now the old woman was herself an extremely clever rogue, and the very next morning, as if, of her own accord, she called the rogues to her side, opened her big box to them, shewed them all the gold, silver, and copper that she had there, and promised to bequeath the whole property to them, in case they pleased her by their work. The rogues, then, though their task was very difficult, wanted somehow to continue it for a short time, waiting for an opportunity to plunder the woman. But she was not a person so easily to be made the subject of their deception.

One noon, when both the rogues were absent on their duty, she buried all her treasure in a very secret corner of her house, locking up in the box heavy things, like broken pieces of stones, old rotten iron, etc. The box and the seal were left in their original shape. After the rogues had their supper that night, she called them both near her, and slowly whispered to them thus:—

“My sons, as you have made up your mind to live with me like my own children, you must little by little, know all my ways. I keep my box full of money in the house during the white half of the month; in the dark half of the month I throw the box in the well. It is always better to be safe, as we live in a wood. Kindly help me, my dears, by removing the box to the

side of the well, and by dropping it down there gently without making noise."

The rogues did not suspect anything, for, more or less, the reason of what she did seemed very natural, and so they assisted her in removing the box to the well side and dropping it in. The old woman held up the light as they did the work.

At about midnight the rogues went to the well. The Tanjore Rogue stood on the brink, while the Trichinopoly Rogue entered by the aid of a strong rope, one end of which was in the hand of the Tanjore Rogue. As everything had to be done very secretly the *pikotta* was not resorted to in order to get down into the well. The Trichinopoly Rogue went into the water and brought up the box in one dive, but he said that he had not yet secured the box, and that he must have a second, a third, and a fourth dive. Meanwhile, he opened the box in the well and found that both he and his friend at the mouth of the well had been deceived. It now struck him that he might have been deceived again by the Tanjore Rogue. What guarantee was there that he would be safely lifted up? So he addressed him as follows:—

"My friend, our miseries are at an end. What immense treasure this box contains. It is very heavy. When I am ready I shall shake the rope which I have attached to the box. But be careful in drawing up the box, for if the rope breaks in the middle the whole weight of the box will fall on my head and I shall die. After drawing up the box let down the rope again for me, and draw me up."

The Tanjore Rogue drew up the box, and as soon as it reached the surface, he lifted it up, placed it on his head, and went off as fast as he could. His object in this was to evade the Trichinopoly Rogue, and take the whole property for his own use. When he had gone far enough to feel safe from pursuit a voice fell on his ears:—

"Walk a little slower, my friend."

"What, has the Trichinopoly Rogue followed me?" He stopped for a minute, then quickened his pace a little. Again the same words fell on his ears:—

"Walk a little slower, my friend."

Again he stopped, and putting down the box, discovered the Trichinopoly Rogue, whom he had imagined all this while to be pining away at the bottom of the well, in the box itself.

"Was it proper on your part to have deceived me thus?" asked the Tanjore Rogue.

“Was it proper on your part to have deceived me thus?” replied the Trichinopoly Rogue, and added that if he had not adopted that plan he would have been left in the well, as proved by the action of the Tanjore Rogue.

For a third time they came to an agreement that they should not deceive each other thus, but it was of no avail. They soon parted company, and went away to different places to try their skill independently.

### GOOD BEGETS GOOD

**I**n a certain town there reigned a king named Patnipriya,<sup>1</sup> to whose court a poor old Brahman, named Papabhiru,<sup>2</sup> came every morning, with a yellow lime in his hand, and, presenting it to the king, pronounced a benediction:—

“If good is sown, then good will grow:

If bad is sown, then bad will grow:

Thus good or bad the end will show.”

The king respected as much the noble benediction of the Brahman as he did his grey hairs.

In this way the presentation of the fruit was daily continued, though the Brahman had nothing to request from the king, but simply wished to pay his respects. On observing that he had no ulterior motives, but was merely actuated by *rajasevana*, or duty to his king, the king's admiration for his old morning visitor increased the more.

After presenting the fruit the Brahman waited upon his sovereign till his puja<sup>3</sup> was over, and then went home where his wife kept ready for him all the requisites for his own puja. Papabhiru then partook of what dinner his wife had prepared for him. Sometimes, however, a Brahman neighbour sent him an invitation to dinner, which he at once accepted. His father, before he breathed his last, had called him to his bedside, and, pronouncing his last benediction, had thus advised him—

“Morning meal do thou never spurn,

Nor say thou what thine eyes discern,

But serve thy king for fame to earn.”

Folklore in Southern India. By Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVI Part CXCV. March, 1887. Page 107.

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.* Lover of his wife.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.* A shudderer at sin.

<sup>3</sup> Worship of the household gods.

Thus it was that Papabhiru began his visits to the king, nor did he ever reject an invitation to dinner, though it might come at a very inconvenient time.

Now on a certain *ekadasi*<sup>1</sup> morning, Papabhiru went to the king to pay his respects as usual, with the lime and the benediction, but found that he had gone to his puja and so followed him there. On seeing the Brahman the king's face glowed with pleasure and he said:—

“My most revered god on earth,<sup>2</sup> I thought that some ill must have befallen you, when I missed you in the council-hall this morning, but praised be Paramesvara for having sent you to me, though it is a little late. I never do my puja without placing my scimitar by the side of the god, but last night I left it in my queen's room. It is under the pillow of the couch on which I usually sleep. Until you came I could find no suitable person to fetch it for me, and so I have waited for you. Would you kindly take the trouble to fetch it for me?”

The poor Brahman was only too glad of the opportunity thus presented to him of serving his king, and so he ran to the *harem* and into the room where the king usually slept.

Now, Patnipriya was very fond of his queen; but she was not faithful to him, and allowed the king's minister to pay visits to her. The most convenient time for such meetings was during the king's puja. Of course the poor Brahman, Papabhiru, knew nothing of this, and when he entered the room, a shocking scene met his eyes. He closed them in horror, and lifting up the pillow, felt for the scimitar, then turning his back on the couch, he retraced his steps, placed the sword before the king, and took his leave. True, however, to his father's last words, “Nor say thou what thine eyes discern,” he never opened his lips, and went his way with a heavy heart.

The queen and her wicked visitor were greatly alarmed.

“That rogue of an old Brahman has seen us and may report us to the king at the first opportunity,” faltered the minister.

But the queen, as bold in words as in sin, said: “I will have him murdered before the sun rises. Wait you here. I shall inform the king of what is to be done and report the result to you, and then you may go home.”

So saying, she assumed the guise of a most chaste lady who had resisted the temptations of a wicked man, and stood before

<sup>1</sup> The eleventh lunar day of every fortnight, on which a fast is observed by orthodox Hindus.

<sup>2</sup> *Bhusura*, *Bhudeva*, a generic name for a Brahman.

her royal husband who was at his worship. Patnipriya rose up and asked her the reason for her sudden appearance.

Said she:—"Your Majesty seems to think the whole world as innocent as yourself. That wretched old Brahman, though his hair is as white as milk, has not forgotten his younger days. Fortunately for us there were several maids by me when he approached me, and so he fled away without his vile intentions being fulfilled. If you do not order his death before tomorrow morning, I shall kill myself."

The king was much vexed with what he heard, and all the regard he had for the Brahman disappeared at once. He called two of his executioners and spoke to them thus before his wife:—

"Take a large iron caldron, to the east gate of the town and keep it boiling to the brim with gingely oil.<sup>1</sup> A certain person shall come to you in the morning and ask you, 'Is it all done?' Without observing who he is, tie his hands and feet and throw him into the boiling oil. When he has been boiled to death, put out the fire and empty out the oil."

The executioners received the order and went away to perform their terrible duty. The queen, too, glad at heart at having thus successfully arranged for the murder of the Brahman, reported the fact to the Minister, but said nothing about the special question to be put by the victim. The Minister, much pleased, went to his palace and waited for the news of the Brahman's death.

When his puja was over the king sent for Papabhiru, and the poor Brahman, never having before been sent for at such a time, made his appearance with a beating heart. When he arrived the king, in order to arouse no suspicion in his mind, said gently to him: "My dear Brahman, tomorrow morning, when you go to make your ablutions, pass by the east gate. There you will see two persons seated by the side of a large caldron. Ask them, 'Is it all done?' And whatever reply they give you, come and communicate to me."

Thus spoke the king, firmly believing that Papabhiru would never return to him; while the Brahman, glad to be able to serve the king a second time next morning, went home and slept soundly. Early in the morning, even a ghatika before his usual time, he got up, and, placing on his head a bag containing dry clothes, proceeded to the river for his morning bath. He took the road to the eastern gate as he had been ordered,

<sup>1</sup> Oil of sesamum: til and gingely oil are the ordinary names for this common product of India.

but had not walked far when a friend invited him to a dvadasi<sup>1</sup> breakfast.

“My poor old mother did not taste even a drop of water the whole of the ekadasi, (yesterday). Rice and hot water for a bath are ready. Pour a little of the water over your head,<sup>2</sup> pronounce one gayatri<sup>3</sup> and taste a handful of rice. Whatever may be the urgency of your business, oblige me for my poor mother’s sake.” Thus spoke his friend, and Papabhiru, out of regard to his father’s order never to spurn a morning meal, ran in haste into his friend’s house to oblige him; the king’s order all the while sitting heavily on his mind.

Meanwhile the minister was most anxious to hear the news of the Brahman’s death, but was afraid to send any one to inquire about it, lest he should rouse suspicion. So he went himself to the east gate, as soon as the sun had risen, and asked the executioners, sitting by the side of the caldron, by way of a simple question: ‘Is the business all done?’ And as they were instructed not to observe who the person was that came to question them, but to tie him up and boil him in the oil, they, notwithstanding his howls, bound him and threw him in. As soon as he was dead, they extinguished the fire, poured out the oil, and turned over the caldron, corpse and all.

The Brahman finished his dvadasi breakfast, in great haste, and, with the betel leaf still in his hand, ran to the gate to inquire of the persons seated by the caldron whether it was all done. When he put them the question, they smilingly replied, “Yes, Sir, it is all done. The minister is boiled to death. We gave full execution to the king’s orders. You may go and report the affair to him.”

The Brahman, not knowing the reason for the course events had taken, ran back and reported the reply of the executioners to the king. The minister’s interference in the affair at once kindled suspicion in the king’s mind. He unsheathed his scimitar, and holding it in his right hand, twisted the lock of hair on the Brahman’s head into his left. He then asked him whether he had not tried to dishonour his queen the previous morning, and told him that, if he concealed the truth, he would make an end of him. The poor Brahman now confessed what he had seen,

<sup>1</sup> Dvadasi is the twelfth lunar day, on which early in the morning, before even the fifth ghatika is over, every orthodox Hindu is obliged by his religious codes to break the previous day’s fast.

<sup>2</sup> Lit. a ‘chombu-ful’: the chombu is a small vessel.

<sup>3</sup> A sacred hymn.



on which the king threw down the scimitar and fell down on his knees before him.

“The words of thy benediction, O respected Brahman, have only now been explained to me. Thou hast sown nothing but good; and good, hast thou reaped, in having thy life preserved. The wicked Minister, — whose conscious guilt made him so very anxious to hear about thy death, — because he sowed a bad intention in his heart, has reaped evil, even a death that he never expected. Another victim of evil sowing remains in my queen, in whom I placed an undeserved love.”

So spake he, and ordered her to the gallows. The old Brahman he appointed his Minister, and reigned with him for a long time.

### LIGHT MAKES PROSPERITY

There is a proverb “light makes prosperity,” and the following story is related to explain it.

In the town of Govindapathi there lived a merchant named Pasupati Setti, who had a son and a daughter. The son’s name was Vinita and the daughter’s Garvi, and while still playmates they made a mutual vow, that in case they ever had children that could be married together, they would certainly see that this was done. Garvi grew up to marry a very rich merchant, and gave birth in due course to three daughters, the last of whom was named Suguni. Vinita, too, had three sons. Before, however, this brother and sister could fulfil their vow an event happened which threw a gloom over all their expectations.

Pasupati Setti died, and his creditors — for he had many — grew troublesome. All his property had to be sold to clear his debts, and within a month or two after his father’s death Vinita was reduced to the condition of a penniless pauper. But being a sensible person he patiently bore up against his calamity, and tried his best to live an honest life on what little was left to him.

His sister Garvi, was, as has been already said, married into a rich family, and when she saw the penniless condition of her brother the engagements she had entered into with him began to trouble her. To give or not to give her daughters in marriage to the sons of her brother! This was the question that occupied her thoughts for several months, till at last she determined within herself never to give poor husbands to her children. Fortunately

for her two young merchants of respectable family offered themselves to her two eldest daughters; she gladly accepted them and had the weddings celebrated. The last daughter, Suguni, alone remained unmarried.

Vinita was sorely troubled in his heart at this disappointment as he never thought that his sister would thus look down upon his poverty; but, being very sensible, he never interfered and said no word. The vow of his childhood was, however, known to every one, and some came to sympathise with him; while others spoke in a reproachful tone to Garvi for having broken her promise, because her brother had become poor through unforeseen circumstances. Their remarks fell on the ears of Suguni, who was as yet unmarried, and also was a very learned and sensible girl. She found her uncle Vinita extremely courteous and respectful, and his sons all persons of virtue and good nature. The thought that her mother should have ignored all these excellent and rare qualities in favour of mere worldly possessions vexed her heart sorely. So, though it is considered most disrespectful for a girl in Hindu society to choose a boy as her husband, she approached her mother and thus addressed her:

“Mother, I have heard all the story about your vow to your brother to marry us — myself and my sisters — to his sons, our cousins. But I am ashamed to see that you have unwarrantably broken it in the case of my sisters. I cannot bear with such shame. I cannot marry any one in the world except one of my three cousins. You must make up your mind to give me your consent.

Garvi was astonished to hear her youngest daughter talk thus to her.

“You wish to marry a beggar?” said she. “We will never agree to it, and if you persist we will give you away to your penniless pauper, but we will never see your face again.”

But Suguni persisted. So her marriage with the youngest son of Vinita was arranged. He had never spoken a word about it to his sister, but he had waited to make matches for his children till all his sister's daughters had been given away, and when he heard that Suguni was determined to marry his youngest son, he was very pleased. He soon fixed upon two girls from a poor family for his other sons, and celebrated the three weddings as became his position.

Suguni was as noble in her conduct as in her love for her poor cousin. She was never proud or insolent on account of having come from a rich family. Nor did she ever disregard her husband, or his brothers, or father.

Now Vinita and his sons used to go out in the mornings to gather dried leaves which his daughters-in-law stitched into plates (*patravali*), and the male members of the family sold them in the bazar for about four *panams*<sup>1</sup> each. Sometimes these leaf-plates would go for more, sometimes for less: but whatever money the father-in-law brought home his daughters-in-law used for the day's expense. The youngest of them was Suguni, who spent the money most judiciously and fed her father-in-law and his sons sumptuously. Whatever remained she partook of with her two poor sisters-in-law, and lived most contentedly. And the family respected Suguni as a paragon of virtue, and had a very great regard for her. Her parents, as they had threatened, never returned to see how their last, and of course once beloved, child was faring in her husband's home. Thus a couple of years went by.

One day the king of the town was taking an oil bath, and pulling a ring off his finger, left it in a niche in the open courtyard. A *garuda* (Brahmani kite) was at that moment describing circles in the air and, mistaking the glittering rubies in the ring for flesh, pounced upon it and flew away. Finding it to be not flesh but stone he dropped it in the house of Suguni's husband. She happened to be alone working in the courtyard, while her sisters-in-law and the others were in different parts of the house. So she took up the sparkling ring and hid it in her lap.

Soon afterwards she heard a proclamation made in the street that the king had lost a valuable ring, and that any person who could trace it and give it back to him should obtain a great reward. Suguni called her husband and his brothers and thus addressed them:—

“My lord and brothers, kindly forgive me for having kept the king's ring. Exactly at midday a *garuda* dropped it in our courtyard and here it is. We must all go to the king, and there, before you three, I shall deliver up the ring, explaining how I got it. When His Majesty desires me to name my reward I shall do so, and beg of you never to contradict or gainsay my desires, if they appear very humble in your opinion.”

The brothers agreed, and they all started to the palace. They had a very great respect for Suguni, and expected a good result from this visit to the king.

<sup>1</sup> A *panam* is generally worth two *annas*.

The palace was reached, and the ring was given back to the king with the explanation. His Majesty was charmed at the modesty and truthfulness of Suguni, and asked her to name her reward.

“My most gracious Sovereign! King of kings! Supreme lord! Only a slight favour thy dog of a servant requests of your Majesty. It is this, that on a Friday night all the lights in the town be extinguished, and not a lamp be lit even in the palace. Only the house of thy dog of a servant must be lighted up with such lights as it can afford.”

“Agreed, most modest lady. We grant your request, and we permit you to have the privilege you desire this very next Friday.”

Joyfully she bowed before his majesty and returned with her husband and the others to her house. She then pledged the last jewel she had by her and procured some money.

Friday came. She fasted the whole day, and as soon as twilight approached she called both the brothers of her husband, and thus addressed them:—

“My brothers, I have made arrangements for lighting up our house with one thousand lamps to-night. One of you without ever closing your eyes for a moment must watch the front of our house and the other the back. If a woman of a graceful appearance and of queenly majesty wishes you to permit her to enter it, tell her boldly to swear first never to leave it again. If she solemnly agrees to this, then permit her to come in. If in the same way any woman wishes to go out, make a similar condition that she must swear never to return at any time in her life.”

What Suguni said seemed ridiculous to the brothers; but they allowed her to have her way, and waited to see patiently what would take place.

The whole town was gloomy that night, except Suguni's house: for, by order of His Majesty, no light was lit in any other house. *The Astalakshmis*—the Eight Prosperities—entered the town that night and went from house to house in every street. All of them were dark, and the only house lit up was Suguni's. They tried to enter it, but the brother at the door stopped them and ordered them to take the oath. This they did, and when he came to understand that these ladies were the Eight Prosperities he admired the sagacity of his brother's wife,

A nimisha after the eight ladies had gone in there came out of the house a hideous female and requested permission to go, but the brother at the back would not permit this unless she swore never to come back again. She solemnly swore, and the next moment he came to know that she was the *Mudevi*, or Adversity, the elder sister of Prosperity.

For she said: "My sisters have come. I cannot stay here for a minute longer. God bless you and your people. I swear by everything sacred never to come back."

And so, unable to breathe there any longer, Adversity ran away.

When the morning dawned, the prosperities had already taken up a permanent abode with the family. The rice bag became filled. The cash chest overflowed with money. The pot contained milk. And thus plenty began to reign, in Suguni's house from that day. The three brothers and her father-in-law were overjoyed at the way Suguni had driven away their poverty for ever, and even Suguni's parents did not feel it a disgrace to come and beg their daughter's pardon. She nobly granted it and lived with all the members of her family in prosperity for a long life.

It is a notion, therefore, among orthodox Hindus, that light in the house bings prosperity, and darkness adversity.

## THE SHOWER OF GOLD AND SCORPIONS

**I**n a certain town there lived a great landholder, whose house was only a small one. One day it occurred to him that it was not in keeping with his position, and having plenty of money to spare, he resolved to build himself a mansion befitting his position. So he called the best workmen round about him, and fixing on an auspicious day according to the recommendation of the local soothsayers, he built the mansion strictly according to the advice of the wise men, and it was soon completed; and then our hero, accompanied by Brahmans reciting the four Vedas, by musicians playing on various instruments, and by dancing-girls in gay procession, entered and settled in it,<sup>1</sup> finding every part of it to his heart's content. With the feasting of several thousands

Folklore in Southern India. By Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XIX. Part CCXXXIX. October, 1890. Page 311.

<sup>1</sup> It is the opinion of Hindus that new houses should be entered with music and dancing. The house that is not warmed with the dancing of dancing-girls (courtesans) will never be liked by the gods!

of Brahmans in its halls, a busy day closed, and all the guests took their leave, leaving the owner to the sole enjoyment of the house. And he, too, much exhausted by attending upon his many guests, took his supper early, and with his wife and children retired to rest.

The place being new to him he was unable to sleep that night, and at about midnight he heard a voice saying, "Shall I fall down? shall I fall down?" It proceeded from no person, as far as he could see, but went on and on without any break. The landlord was greatly frightened, thinking it must have proceeded from some devil or other, who had got into the house before he had warmed it. He was also afraid that if he continued to occupy it, the devil would pull the roof down over his head. Horrified at the terrors which his imagination aggravated every moment, he spent the night in the greatest anxiety. And the voice never stopped!

At last the day dawned, and at the first appearance of the light our hero thought to himself:—"The great god, Maheswara, has been extremely merciful to me, and has preserved me and my family from the devil throughout this terrible night just past. Surely, if I continue to live here, some day or other I shall be buried alive by the falling debris of my own house! Let the devil enjoy my palace; my old cottage will do for me! In it I have lived comfortably till now, and in it I shall continue to live happily for many a day more."

Thus thinking, the very next morning after he had occupied his new mansion, he quitted it for his old cottage! The suddenness with which he moved back to his old house was in itself more than enough to create a talk throughout the town that the mansion was haunted, and it became a most dreaded spot, and story after story was freely invented to spread its notoriety throughout the country round about.

In that same town there lived a poor beggar Brahman. Beggars are always notorious for having more children than they can support, and in accordance with the general rule this Brahman had half a dozen,—three sons and three daughters. They all lived in a miserable hut, where the children were always ill from the damp. Poverty and misery pinched him in every direction, and his troubles increased day by day and hour by hour. At last he became so disgusted with his life which was a very misery to him, that he often resolved upon suicide. But such an idea is most repulsive to a Hindu, because the darkest world and dirtiest

hell are the abode set apart for those who give up their lives in that way. So at last he resolved thus within himself:—"What if I go to the house which is said to be haunted? If I sleep there one night, the devil in it will kill me, and there will be an end of my miseries!"

So thought he, and going to the owner, spoke thus:—"My master! I am very poor. The winter is fast approaching, and I have no house to live in. If you would kindly permit me to live in a room or two of your great unoccupied mansion, I shall be highly obliged."

The owner was at first afraid to give him leave, lest some injury should befall himself. But then it occurred to him that if all went right with the poor Brahman, the evil name it bore would be removed. And wishing to use the Brahman as an experiment, he promised to let him use the house from that next day, and was so kind as to demand no rent! The Brahman received the keys, and resolved to give up his life by sleeping in the haunted house the next night. Thought he:—"If I die to-morrow, who will protect my six children? None of them are grown up, and I have no relatives or friends in this world to give me or my children a morsel of rice. So if I leave them behind me, it must be more to their misery than anything else. So I shall take them also with me to the haunted house, and there let what happens to me happen to them also."

Thus this wretched Brahman, who had at first resolved to give up his life in the haunted house, changed it into an intention of the wholesale murder of his family. His wife was the incarnation of virtue, and though she lived in a state of abject poverty, never gainsaid what her husband resolved upon. And so, with his cares laid aside, the begging Brahman entered the mansion, apparently to live in it, but at heart in order to sacrifice himself and his whole family to the devil who dwelt there.

The day passed and night approached, and the little children, after partaking of the meagre repast their poor mother could spare for them, retired to rest. They had not even a covering to protect them from the cold of the night. But being accustomed to a hard life, they nevertheless went composedly to sleep. Their poor mother, too, who always consoled herself with the thought that the God who had given her so many children would somehow or other protect them, according to the doctrine—"He never sends mouths without also sending meat"—she too slept soundly. The poor father alone lay awake, and as he trimmed

the lamp, he took a farewell look at the innocent faces sound asleep around him. Almost immediately he heard the voice:—“Shall I fall down? shall I fall down?” His heart, which he had steeled into preparation for death, fairly gave way. But after deep thought he came back again to his original resolution, and fully determined to die with his whole family, and said aloud:—“Why do you thus threaten me who am boldly resolved already? Fall down at once, and take me and my children away.”

Thus saying he lifted his head to see the house fall, but instead there rained from the roof a torrent of gold mohurs, which soon filled the unoccupied parts of the room. After about a *ghatika* the torrent of gold stopped, and the Brahman rose up and heaped all coins in a corner. He then awakened his wife, and related to her all that he had intended and all that had happened. Finding that fortune had begun to favour him, he gathered money every night, and with it bought houses and jewels and lands and other things he wanted.

The owner of the house, finding him daily growing richer and richer as a result of dwelling in the haunted house, asked him one day the reason of it, and the Brahman related to him the whole affair without concealing anything. The owner of the property was then very sorry for his cowardice, and at having missed the opportunities previously offered him; and so he said to the Brahman:—“You have now been a long while occupying my house, will you kindly vacate it for me?”

The Brahman replied:—“I have been from my birth a beggar, and what I have already gained is more than enough for me. All my present advantages are due to your kindness, and I will vacate it this very moment. Go you and live in it and amass wealth. It is your property.”

The owner occupied it without delay, so as to lose no time over his money-making. He did not wait to remove his family, postponing that till the next day. His anxiety was all for the night, and many a time did he curse his timidity for abandoning the mansion at the first sound of “shall I fall down?” and kept on calculating how much money he had already lost by his cowardice. The night approached, and he went into the house to sleep,—or rather to watch. At midnight, just as he was expecting to hear it, a voice fell upon his ear, saying, “Shall I fall down? shall I fall down?” He at once fell into a humble posture and said:—“My good god; excuse my stupidity in having so long refused your good graces. I have come to my proper senses at last. Shower down the mohurs.”



Thus said the owner, and at once the voice stopped, and immediately a torrent, alas! not of mohurs, but of scorpions, began to descend on the landlord who, looking for the money, never noticed then. Going up close, one scratch was enough to give him an idea of the shower! Starting back he observed by the light that, instead of mohurs, scorpions were falling down from the roof. "Stop," said he, unable to bear the horrid sight, and at once the torrent dried up, and our hero fled from the house, almost mad with pain.

However, he kept what had occurred secret, and resolved to try his luck a second night. Secretly he sent servants to examine the whole house, and kill all the scorpions. Several thousands were killed that day, and the following night our hero tried his luck again, seeing torrents of scorpions, but never a mohur!

Then he sent for the Brahman and asked him whether he could shew him the mohurs falling. "Agreed," said he, and on the third night they both slept in the mansion. At midnight when the voice was heard, and the permission was given a torrent commenced. The very sight of it frightened away our hero, but the Brahman never stirred a step, and employed himself in heaping up the fall.

"Are you a magician or sorcerer, that these scorpions do not injure you?" cried our hero, from a respectful distance. "No, my master!" replied our Brahman; "these are all coins and not scorpions."

Then the owner found out that what appeared to him as scorpions, were mohurs to the Brahman, and calling him to his side, said with much respect:—"Holy Brahman, you are indeed fortunate. Take this house and reap the benefit of your good luck. If you give me anything after getting it, I shall be happy to receive it. As for myself, all these coins appear to me as scorpions." Thus said the rich landlord, and made the Brahman master of the mansion, and the latter, being a good man, freely shared whatever he got from the house with the owner of it.

The moral as drawn by the Tamil people is, that he who is fortunate will get a thing, while the unfortunate will never get it.

## THE ARCH-IMPOSTOR

**I**n a certain country there lived a Brahman who had seven sons. One moonlight night he called them all to his side and questioned them as to what they would most like to do at that moment. The first said that he would like to water his fields; the second, that he would go out on a journey; the third, that he would plough his lands, and so on. But the seventh and the last said that he would spend that fine moonlight night in a beautiful house with lovely girls by his side. The father was pleased with the simple replies of the first six boys; but when the last—who was the youngest—expressed so evil a desire, in such a presence, and in such a way, his rage knew no bounds. “Quit my house at once,” said the father, and away ran the seventh son.

He left his country and his house that very night, as he was ashamed to live under his father’s roof any longer, and went to the wood hard by. In the midst of this wood there dwelt an old woman who used to sell muffins and puddings to shepherds and boy neatherds who frequented the wood in the course of their employment. This had been her source of livelihood for several years, and she had in this way amassed considerable wealth in the shape of gold coins which she kept locked up in a small box. Now the seventh son, on his banishment from home, went to her and said:—

“Madam, I am a poor helpless orphan, will you kindly take me into your service? I shall be a great help to you in your old age.”

So the old woman, pitying the poverty of the boy, and thinking he could help her, took him into her service, and promised to feed him and bring him up as her own son.

“What is your name?” asked the grandam.

“My name,” replied the boy, “is Last Year!”

No doubt it was a queer name, but the old woman did not suspect anything, and thought within herself that such a designation was possible.

Full six years the boy lived with her, and behaved in such a way that she came to regard him almost as her son. She was delighted that God had sent her in her old age such a helper.

One night, just before going to supper, this boy, who had now

grown to be a man, threw away all the water in the house, and then sat down to his food. Consequently, when his meal was over, there was no water in the house to wash his hands with; so the old woman went out to fetch water from a well that was at a little distance. The boy who will be henceforth called the Arch-Impostor, resolved to take the opportunity thus given him to walk away with all the old woman's savings. He did not wait to wash his hands, but ran off at once with her box of money. Going to a little distance in the wood, he broke it open, emptied the contents into his cloth, and went onwards wandering at random. He walked on for two days and nights, and on the third morning was on the point of emerging from the forest.

Just after he had run away the old woman returned with water from the well, and found no boy. The thought rushed into her mind at once that she might have been deceived, and on quickly searching, she missed her box. Running to the village near her house she raised a loud cry, saying, "Last Year robbed my box, Last Year robbed my box," meaning of course that the person named "Last Year" had taken away her box. But as the words she used also mean, "last year (some one) robbed my box," the people only thought she had gone mad, and sent her away. However often she might explain that "Last Year" was the name of a man, they would not listen to her. Thus was the poor woman deceived.

Meanwhile, the Arch-Impostor, whom we left on the point of emerging from the forest with his bundle of gold coins on his back, was attacked by a bear. He had covered his body and the bundle as well with his upper cloth so as not to arouse suspicion. The bear placed one of its front paws on his shoulder where his bundle was, and the man, to prevent the animal from doing any harm to him, took a firm hold of the other front paw which the beast had also raised; and ran round and round with it. Meanwhile the paw on his shoulder had made a hole in the bundle of coins, so that every now and then a gold coin dropped out. While this was going on a rich Muhammadan merchant, having a load of money with him, happened to ride by. Seeing a traveller attacked by a bear, he at once went to the rescue. Whereupon the Arch-Impostor, ever ready to turn everything to his own advantage, addressed him thus:—

"Friend, calmly pursue your course. Do not disturb yourself. This is a bear on which I pronounce an incantation whereby it drops a gold coin every time it is touched with its

I am testing it now, and have chosen this place to avoid the curiosity of other people. So, do not disturb me."

The Muhammadan, deceived by the composure with which the impostor spoke, and never suspecting that the coins were dropping from his bundle, replied:—"Friend, you appear to be a Brahman from your face, and it is not very proper for a Brahman to keep a bear in his house. Give it to me, and instruct me in the incantation. Take in return all the money I have on my horse, and the horse too if you like."

This was exactly what the impostor thought the Muhammadan would say. "My idea is working well," thought he within himself, and proceeded to feign reluctance to part with his bear. He also so managed that more coins began to drop, and the more the coins dropped the more the Muhammadan's mind was possessed of an ambition to become the master of the miraculous bear. He begged hard of the Brahman, and the latter, as if unwilling to part with a brute which a few moments before he feared would take his life(!), at last told the Muhammadan to tie its hind legs together with a cord, and then its front legs. In this way the brute was safely caught. The Brahman then pronounced a meaningless incantation over it, told the Muhammadan to repeat it unceasingly for a month before trying its efficacy. He then picked up every gold coin he had dropped, and took leave of his Muslim friend. Telling him that his house was in the New Street of Madura, he went away with the horse and all the money on it. The Muhammadan merchant, fully believing that after a month's repetition the incantation would have the effect he saw, spent nearly all his days engaged in repeating it, and in taking care of the bear.

The Arch-Impostor after thus duping the poor Muslim, pursued his journey, and reached a village about evening. It was a very inhospitable village, and after searching here and there for a place to sleep in, he at last came to the street occupied by the courtezans. He chose the best house, took his bedding into the outer verandah, and lay down with his bundles beneath his head and his horse tied to a tree in front of the house. As he had a large amount of money to guard, sleep did not come to his eyes; he could merely pretend to be sleeping. At about dawn his horse evacuated, and the impostor pushed two gold coins into each piece of the horse-dung. He then returned to his bed and pretended to sleep as before. The sweeper of the house soon after came out to do her daily duty, and after sweeping the

outer verandah went up to the horse to remove the horse-dung. But the Arch-Impostor at once arose and said:—"Do not touch the dung of that horse. It is all so much gold." After saying this he carefully collected it, and took out the gold coins. The sweeper was amazed. She ran in and informed the mistress of the house of what she saw. The courtesan came out, and to her astonishment she saw the impostor taking two gold coins out of each piece of the horse-dung. Quite amazed she asked what it all meant, and our hero replied:—

"Madam! This is a horse given to me by a *yogi*,<sup>1</sup> who instructed me in a *mantra*.<sup>2</sup> I pronounced it over the horse for a month, and ever since that period it has had the power of dropping gold coins with its ordure." The amazed and ambitious courtesan wanted to get possession of the horse, and learn the *mantra*. And our hero with a good deal of pretended reluctance parted with his horse in return for all her property. He then taught her some gibberish, which he told her was an incantation. He also told her that she must repeat it for a month, before it would work.

Thus deceiving the woman of the wood, the Muhammadan merchant, and the courtesan, our hero went to Madura, bought a good house in the New Street, true to his word to the Musalman (and this was the only truth which he ever uttered in his life), and there married the daughter of a rich Brahman, and lived happily and in comfort.

The old woman of the wood was almost mad after the loss of her hard-earned money. She traced the footprints of treacherous Last Year and followed them up, hoping to find him out some day or other. After a month's journey in the tracks she reached the place where the Muhammadan merchant was engaged in rearing the bear. He had long before the old woman's arrival finished the required number of incantations, and had gone round with the bear more than a thousand times without success. The old woman engaged him in conversation, and he related everything to her. This led to a mutual explanation of the manner in which they had been duped. The fiery Musalman flew into a rage, and said:—"We must trace out the rogue and punish him."

The old woman agreed, and they both started for Madura. In their first day's journey they chanced to go to the village where the courtesan had been befooled, and where her story

<sup>1</sup> Sage.

<sup>2</sup> Incantation.

was well known. Every child there could tell them how over a month ago a rogue had come there and had deceived her about a horse and an incantation, and had walked away with all her property. The Musalman soon identified the horse, and so the courtezan joined the old lady and the Muslim, and they all three went to Madura.

They found their enemy in the New Street, and he, getting up with a cheerful smile, welcomed them all, and after enquiring of their welfare asked them whether they had found the incantations useful. The old woman he consoled with an explanation of his sudden departure. He then requested them all to bathe and take their food, and himself showed the way to the river. Returning before the others, he asked his wife to prepare the ground for his worship of the household god, and also asked her to keep a pestle ready for him. He then asked her to bring the meal, pudding, etc., to be offered to the god, and to dress herself up as an old woman. He also told her that he would lightly beat her with the pestle, and throw her into the house, after which she was to suddenly appear again in the garb of a young woman, which, of course, was her natural attire. All these instructions were issued before his three friends returned from the river, and though Musalmans and courtezans are never allowed to enter the inner parts of a Brahman's house, he pretended to show special consideration to them, and asked them to take their seats at a respectful distance, so as to observe what passed inside. The impostor then proceeded with the worship of the god on a grand scale. He pronounced several incantations, and when the worship was drawing to a close, an old woman, i. e. his wife in that attire, brought the offerings. He caught hold of her by her hair, and with his other hand felt for the pestle. The Musalman and the others at once flew to the rescue of the old woman, but with a smile of perfect composure the impostor said:—

“My friends, do not think I want to kill her. If I beat her with this pestle and throw her into the house, she will return as a young girl. I have made many such old women young by the administration of this pestle.” Thus saying he proceeded to beat the old woman and threw her into the house. And the impostor's wife, as well up in tricks as her husband, though she had lived with him for less than a month, came out as a young girl. The three old friends who came to be even with the old rogue wondered at what they saw.

They consulted among themselves:—"The fellow is really here; so, we can wreak our vengeance upon him whenever we choose. For the present let us obtain his pestle and depart as friends."

The worship was soon over, and our hero proceeded to look to the convenience of his visitors. He asked them to have some food, and superintended their meals himself. They all concealed their anger for the nonce in the hope of getting hold of the pestle, which he gladly allowed them to take away for a week. The three thus duped again went away to their respective houses with the pestle, and made arrangements as to the use of it.

The courtesan knew many old women in her street whom she wished to convert into young ones. So she wanted it first, and the old lady of the wood made up her mind to stay with her to witness the experiment, while the Muhammadan merchant agreed to take the pestle after a week from the courtesan. Thus it was her fortune to try it first. Alas! many a woman she killed with it in the fond hope that one at least would be transformed to a young woman. No transformation came after all; only death was the result. So before even the week was up the courtesan sent the pestle to the Muslim, duly informing him how unsuccessful she found it to be. But he blamed her not being a good hand at thrashing, and had soon himself pounded to death several old women among his relatives. Being then again deceived he went to the courtesan, and said to her: "My friend, see how we have been duped a second time. How many of our dear relatives we have killed. Let us go to that man again, and kill him before he again contrives to deceive us."

"Agreed," said she, and they started off again with the old lady of the wood. After a long journey, they reached the impostor's house, and found him absent. On enquiry they came to know that he had gone to the river to bathe. The old lady remained in his house, and the other two went after him. They carried a bag with them, and strong ropes also, and finding him bathing all alone, they surprised him, and tying up his hands and legs put him in the bag, and took him to a mountain near-by to burn him alive as a full revenge for all his deception. Climbing to the very top of it they placed the bundle down and went to the jungle near to collect fuel for the fire. The impostor was now in an awkward plight, but he kept saying to himself:—"I don't want to marry that girl, I don't want to marry that girl."

Now, while the Musalman and the courtezan were away in the jungle collecting fuel, a neatherd who was grazing a herd of cows a little below was attracted by the voice that kept on saying:—"I don't want to marry that girl." Coming up to him he said:—"What is the meaning of what you say? Why are you tied up thus in a bundle?"

Hope at once dawned in the impostor's breast, and he hastily replied:—"Friend, whoever you may be, you are my protector. Release me at once from this bag. My uncle and aunt want to marry me to a girl whom I do not like. Against my will they carried me up here to marry me to her. Fortunately they have just gone to some spring near-by to quench their thirst."

The stupid neatherd, little suspecting that it was odd that a man should be married on the top of a mountain, promised to open the bag and let him out on condition he would allow him to go into the bag himself, and thus be placed in his happy position.

"Agreed," said the impostor, and so the bag was quickly opened, the ropes round his legs and hands untied, and the neatherd packed up in his place. Our hero then went to the place where the herd of cows was grazing, and returned home with them. Here he found the old lady of the wood waiting and welcomed her heartily, telling her that all his wealth was hers, and promising to regard her as his own mother, as she had been one to him for six years.

Meanwhile the Musalman and the courtezan had lighted a large fire in the jungle and went for the bag. The neatherd inside kept quite silent for fear, if he spoke, that the change that had taken place would become known. But, instead of being married to a young girl, he was soon thrown into the fire.

"Thus have we killed our impostor," said the friends:—"Now let us go to his house and plunder it." So they returned exulting to the New Street of Madura where the impostor was sitting outside his house chewing betel, and expecting them every moment. The thousand and one cows he had obtained were still standing outside. When the pair saw him safely seated outside his own house and smiling welcome to them, their wonder knew no bounds. "We threw you an hour ago in the fire," said they, "and how are you sitting here safe?"

"Yes, my friends," replied he, "as soon as you threw me into the fire, I went to *Kailasa*, the world of felicity, and met



my father and grandfather. They told me that my time to live in the world was not over and sent me back with these kine."

"Then the same presents will be given to us, too, if we go to that world of heavenly bliss?" said they.

"Undoubtedly," replied the impostor and then with their consent he took them to the mountain and threw them into the fire never more to revive and return with presents.

Returning home and relieved for ever from his troublesome friends the Arch-Impostor lived happily, protecting the old woman of the wood, who had protected him in his younger days.

Though the hero has the worst of characters, still the relaters of this story excuse him for his presence of mind in all his hardships, and draw a moral from it that ambition is bad. The Musalman and the courtezan, even though they repeatedly found out their friend, were always fired with ambition, and at last lost their lives through it.

### THE REIGN OF LAKSHMI

**F**ar from any city, in an unfrequented wood, there lived a hermit who had long taken to a retired life. Little occupation had he, except meditation and contemplation.

One day the Goddess of Prosperity, Lakshmi, stood before him and said "Holy Sire, I have come to reign in you."

"Who are you?" said the sage.

"Lakshmi," said the Goddess.

"Of what use are you to me, who have renounced the world?" asked the sage.

"I must abide with you for some time. It is so written in your destiny. Therefore accept me," spoke the goddess.

"If so," said the sage, "as you came to me after giving me intimation of your visit, you ought to inform me before you leave me, when the term of your reign over my destiny is closed."

"Agreed," said the Goddess of Prosperity, and remained within the sage.

The holy hermit being thus assured that the reign of prosperity had commenced in him, proceeded to test the truth of the statement of the goddess. He at once went to the town near which he lived, and, advancing to the assembly in which

the king was sitting with his ministers and other officers of state, lifted up his right leg and kicked the monarch on the head.

"An end to that impertinent wretch!" said many voices, but at the same moment from under the fallen crown a venomous serpent with its hood spread was discovered. It was Lakshmi herself, for she had appeared there in that form to save the sage. And as soon as this great wonder was discovered, every one in the hall exclaimed, "This is a great sage who knows the secret of the Three Ages (*Trikalajñani*), and perceiving that a serpent was lying concealed in the king's crown he kicked it down."

The king, too, was extremely delighted at this saving of his life, and at once gave the sage the post of the prime minister with full powers; while the hermit for his part, owing to Lakshmi continuing her reign in him, discharged his duties most satisfactorily. After two years the sage again wished to know whether Lakshmi still continued in him, and to test her work, notwithstanding her promise that she would inform him before she left him. Soon one occasion at midnight he entered the king's *harem*. As he was prime minister, the guards, though in their proper places, did not dare to prevent him, and without any hindrance he went into the chamber where the monarch was sleeping with his queen. He laid hold of both of them and proceeded to drag them, while yet asleep, out of their room. Of course they awoke and were highly annoyed at this impertinence; but were unable to extricate themselves from his grasp. However, what was their wonder when the roof of the chamber in which they had been sleeping suddenly fell in. Every one praised once more the sage minister, as one who knew the secret of the Three Ages. After this occurrence the king reposed the greatest confidence in his minister, and so did every one in the State.

A year after this second test of the presence of Lakshmi in him the minister started with the king on a hunting expedition. The party was very large and the chase occupied a long time. Towards the end of the chase a stag suddenly appeared to the king and his favourite minister and drew them away from the party. Long did the king and minister pursue it, but found themselves unable to overtake it. Looking back they found themselves separated from their party and alone in the thick jungle. The lord of day was just over their heads, and darting his rays fiercely. The king was utterly worn out, and proposed to the minister that it would be better for both of them to give up

their quarry to rest a while before they returned to their followers; and the minister agreed to his master's wishes. So they both got down from their steeds and leaving the animals free to find grass and water sat down under the shade of a big banyan tree. Close by, there was a clear rivulet at which they quenched their thirst, and the king then prepared to go to sleep, asking the minister to sit with his legs folded, so that he might place his head on his right thigh and sleep comfortably. While the king was thus snoring away the day at ease, a great *garuda*, the king of birds, perched upon a bough of the tree exactly over the king's head and fell to preying upon a venomous serpent which it had brought from a great ant-hill. A drop of poison from the serpent dropped on the king's throat and our hero the minister perceived it. Thinking that the poison might cause the king's death if it found its way inside the body through the pores of the skin, he took out a small knife which he had with him to gently remove the fatal drop. Just at this moment the goddess Lakshmi, true to her promise, stood before him and asked his permission to go. He permitted her to do so and placed the knife on the king's throat. The king suddenly awoke and finding the minister with a knife at his throat upbraided him with treachery.

"If I had thoughts of killing you, my lord, I could have done it long ago. Look at the king of birds up above you, and also look at the serpent he is feasting upon. A drop of poison fell from the mouth of that deadly reptile on your Majesty's throat and for trying to remove it, I am abused. But there is no use in my remaining any longer with you." Thus spoke the minister and explained to the king how up to that moment Lakshmi had reigned in him. He continued, "As the goddess Lakshmi remained in me up till now even my impertinent acts have met with your Majesty's approval. When I kicked at your lordship's crown and when I dragged your Majesty and your queen out of your bed-chamber, Lakshmi it was that saved me by taking the shape of a serpent from under your crown, and by pulling down the roof of the room. Now that she has abandoned me, but a moment ago even a good act has been misunderstood."

He then requested the king to allow him to continue in the forest to perform penance. But the king, not to be outdone in liberality, gave him again the minister's place. Our hermit, however, fearing that after Lakshmi had left him it would be unwise to accept any appointment, preferred to remain in the woods.

The moral drawn by natives of South India from this story is that only as long as the Goddess of Prosperity reigns in us we can expect to be in good circumstances.

### THE FIVE CUPS

In a certain village there lived an extremely poor Brahman, named Bhikshu, who had nothing to live upon. Every morning he rose in the *Brahmamuhurta*<sup>1</sup> from his bed, went to the river, bathed, and finished his prayers by the third or fourth ghatika of the day. After this his wife gave him a copper vessel cleaned and washed, which he used to take in his hand and went a-begging street by street, and house by house, reciting the *Upanishads*.<sup>2</sup> At about the tenth ghatika Bhikshu used to return home with the vessel filled with rice and a few vegetables with which the charitably disposed had presented him. He then performed his noonday ablutions and the *devatarchana*—the worship of his household gods. His wife cooked the rice meanwhile, and after each platter had been duly offered to the god, Bhikshu sat down to his dinner. Whatever remained after serving her husband the Brahmani ate. Such was their daily routine. If fortunately Bhikshu ever brought more rice than was sufficient for one meal for himself and his wife, the hearth glowed a second time with fire, and a second meal was cooked. If not, they had to be content with a single meal for the day, and passed their night in hunger and in sorrowing over their poverty.

This kind of life went on for several years till one day Bhikshu's wife was much vexed, and calling her husband to her side thus addressed him:—

“My dearest Bhikshu, we have remained in this misery so long that death seems more welcome to us than life. But the great god Mahesvara will not take us to his abode, until the full punishment for all our sins committed in a former life is duly undergone in this life in the shape of extreme poverty. And as for yourself you never cared to learn anything by which to gain an honourable livelihood. The only thing you seem to have studied in your younger days was *unchchhavritti*—the collection of alms! I beseech you to go somewhere and return with some learning in *you*.”

Folklore in Southern India. By Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri. *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVI. Part CXCVIII. July 1887 Page 214.

<sup>1</sup> *Brahmamuhurta*, the second half of the last watch of a night, from 4½ to 6 A. M. so called as being sacred to Brahma.

<sup>2</sup> *Upanishad*, sacred writings of the Brahmans, explaining the true sense of the Vedas.

The Brahmani's words put shame into her husband's heart and he resolved within himself to start the next morning in search of some knowledge to eke out honourably the remainder of his life. His wife, too, did not cook all the rice he got that day, but reserved a portion to give to him for the way.

Early next day when Bhikshu went for his bath—for Brahmanism is lost if the morning bath and ablution are renounced for a day even—his wife rose up and bathing hastily in the well in her garden, cooked the remaining rice and made ready a small bundle of food for her husband's use. When Bhikshu came back he smiled upon his wife for her kindness, and passing his left hand under the bundle placed it firmly on his left shoulder. His wife then ran out before him to see whether the omen was good. An old lady with a *ghata* (pot) full of newly drawn water was coming towards her.

"My dear husband, the great god favours your journey. A sumangali<sup>1</sup> approaches. Start at once," cried she, and off went her husband.

Bhikshu had to go through a pathless forest to find some strange country in his search after knowledge. The scorching sun was too much for him, and he was greatly tired; but though his hunger was great he did not mind. He walked and walked, till he came to the banks of a dry river bed in one part of which, however, a small stream was flowing gently. His fatigue was so great that he took the bundle off his shoulder, and after hanging it on the branch of an *ingudi*<sup>2</sup> tree fell into a deep slumber beneath it.

Fortunately for him, while he was thus sound asleep, Parvati and Paramesvara happened to pass that way. The goddess was very hungry. Said she to her lord!

"My great lord, here sleeps a poor Brahman. The rice he brought for his meal is hanging in the *ingudi* tree. I am very hungry. Let us both eat of the bundle and then pursue our way."

<sup>1</sup> A married woman, whose approach is a good omen. Omens differ in different countries: among the Dravidians the good omens are a married woman, virgin, dancing-woman, "double" Brahman, music, flowers, fruits, flag, umbrella, sugar-cane, cooked rice, milk, flesh, fire, toddy, elephant, horse, cows, cloth, king, Pearls, clarified rice (*Akshata*) and fried rice (*loja*). If any of these approach the omen is supposed to be good and the purpose for which one goes out will succeed. The bad omens are a widow, "Single" Brahman, three Vaisyas, two Sudras, tiger, serpent, fuel, scythe, wood-axe, crow-bar, bil, new pot, a man in a masque, butter-milk (*chak*) curds, a cough, any utterance of a preventive nature, untimely rain, thunder, wind, fasting person, person with his head newly shaved, sorrowful exclamations of Ha! Hada! etc.

<sup>2</sup> *Terminalia catappa*, a tree that grows in marshy places and by the side of rivers; always described by Sanskrit poets in wild scenes; it occurs in the *Ramayana*, *Sakuntala* and other works.

The great god could not but agree. He himself took down the bundle and went up to the flowing stream. Parvati followed and they both ate their fill and came back, while Bhikshu was still asleep.

“Poor soul, he sleeps soundly enough, without knowing that we have emptied his bundle of rice. What will he do for his meal when he gets up?” said Parvati, and the great god, asking her not to be concerned about it, took five gold cups from under his feet, and tied them up in the empty cloth. The goddess’s face glowed with joy and she hung the bundle with five cups in it where the bundle of rice had been, and went behind her lord to Mount Kailasa.<sup>1</sup>

In the evening Bhikshu awoke, and there were only five or six ghatikas remaining before the sun would set. He snatched down his bundle hastily and flew to the stream. It felt a little heavier, and not knowing how to account for this he opened it, when lo! five cups made of gold and arranged one inside another met his eyes. As he separated the cups, from out of each there came a being from the Divine World, and served him with a thousand varieties of dishes. He was delighted at what he saw, and at once interpreted it to be a divine gift. When he put the cups back into their original position the goddesses disappeared, and he thought within himself that his poverty must have left him from that moment, and returned home hastily with a cheerful countenance to meet his wife.

Alas, poor woman! She had given away the little rice she had that morning to her husband, when she sent him on his expedition in search of knowledge, and as there was no one to give her another handful she had fasted the whole night, and was praying for death or the return of her lord to put an end to her miseries. At about the seventh ghatika—for it took this much time for her husband to reach home—a couple of taps were heard at the door accompanied by “*Adiye*—O lady”—and she ran at once to open the latch, for she recognised the voice to be her lord’s. A small light from a thin single wick was burning in her left hand, while with her right hand she opened the latch and she discovered her husband standing with a cheerful face at the gate.

“Has my Lord returned so soon?” said she.

“Yes, wife. The gift of Paramesvara has been so great,” replied Bhikshu, and after carefully bolting the door, he went in, followed by his wife.

<sup>1</sup> The abode of Siva in the Himalayas.

He then related to her how Paramesvara had conferred upon him five gold cups of extraordinary merit, and to prove that what he told her was not untrue, he fed her by means of the newly acquired vessels. She was extremely delighted at the divine favour which had thus dawned upon her, and in honour of it wished to give a public feast to the villagers. Bhikshu agreed to the idea and was much pleased at the charitable disposition of his wife. And then they had nothing to lose by it, for the cups would feed any number of persons! So Bhikshu undertook to invite in the morning all the males of the village and ordered his wife to invite all the females.

Accordingly, after his morning duties were over, Bhikshu went to all the houses and invited the male inhabitants of the village to a dinner at his house, and his wife invited all the members of the fair sex. But they were amazed to hear that he was to give them all a dinner!

“How could a beggar do such a thing?” said they; “but if we do not go he may think that we have insulted his poverty. So we must go for form’s sake, after dinner at home.”

In this way they all duly came to Bhikshu’s house, and seeing no signs of cooking or of a dinner in the place, they were all glad of having eaten first in their own homes.

Bhikshu received all the male guests and seated them in their proper places, while his wife received and arranged for all the female guests. When the arrangements were complete Bhikshu went inside and opened his bundle of five cups and separated them. Several divine damsels came out from each cup, highly ornamented. Wreaths of sweet-scented jasmynes were entwined in their coiled locks, and each had a dish in her hand. The first lady spread the leaves. The second sprinkled water and placed a lota<sup>1</sup> by the side of each guest, while the others served the contents of their platters into the leaves of the guests. It was a most charming sight to see this bevy of fair maidens at their work, until the whole party was served. Foolish guests, they were not prepared to eat, for they had eaten their fill at home. So, after enjoying the sight more than their meal they all returned home, congratulating Bhikshu on this manifestation of the divine favour.

Now there was a rich land-holder in the village, notorious for his ambition for anything and everything, whose name was Asavan. He came to Bhikshu and requested him to give full parti-

<sup>1</sup> A drinking cup with a neck smaller than its body.

culars as to how he had obtained the cups. Bhikshu related to him the whole story to which Asavan listened quite unconcernedly, and went his way. He then ordered his wife to give him some food tied up in a bundle and started with it next morning to the ingudi tree. There he suspended his rice, as Bhikshu had done, and pretended to sleep, but only kept his eyes closed. That day, too, Parvati and Paramesvara passed that way and ate of his bundle. On returning to the bank the great god placed five cups also in Asavan's bundle, as he had done in Bhikshu's. Asavan observed all that had passed and was delighted at the divine favour. He did not even open his bundle, but came running home.

His great idea now was to invite all the villagers and give them a grand feast before he himself tested the boon. Accordingly the whole village was called in the next morning, and all came hungry, and sat in a row to taste of the divine dishes. Asavan treated them courteously and going inside opened the cups. When Lo! several barbers came out of each cup and shaved the guests clean! And as they were divine the guests could not get out of their clutches, and one and all left the house cursing Asavan!

## THE CONQUEST OF FATE

**I**n the Dakshinadesa there lived a Brahman boy who from his childhood was given a very liberal education in Sanscrit. He had read so much in philosophy that before he reached the sixteenth year of his life he began to despise the pleasures of the world. Everything which he saw was an illusion (*mithya*) to him. So he resolved to renounce the world and to go to a forest, there to meet with some great sage, and pass his days with him in peace and happiness.

Having thus made up his mind, he left his home one day without the knowledge of his parents and travelled towards the Dandakaranya. After wandering for a long time in that impenetrable forest, and undergoing all the miseries of a wood inhabited only by wild beasts, he reached the banks of the Tungabhadra. His sufferings in his wanderings in a forest untrodden by human feet, his loneliness in the midst of wild beasts, his fears whether after all he had not failed in his search for consolation in a preceptor



to teach him the higher branches of philosophy, came up one after another before his mind. Dejected and weary, he cast his glance forward as far as it could reach. Was it a reality or only imagination? He saw before him a lonely cottage of leaves (*parnasala*). To a lonely traveller even the appearance of shelter is welcome, so he followed up his vision till it became a reality, and an aged hoary Brahman, full fourscore and more in years, welcomed our young philosopher.

"What has brought you here, my child, to this lonely forest thus alone?" spoke in a sweet voice the hoary lord of the cottage of leaves.

"A thirst for knowledge, so that I may acquire the mastery over the higher branches of philosophy," was the reply of our young adventurer, whose name was Subrahmanya.

"Sit down my child," said the old sage, much pleased that in this Kaliyuga, which is one long epoch of sin, there was at least one young lad who had forsaken his home for philosophy.

Having thus seen our hero safely relieved from falling a prey to the tigers and lions of the Dandakaranya, let us enquire into the story of the old sage. In the good old days even of this Kaliyuga, learned people, after fully enjoying the world, retired to the forests, with or without their wives, to pass the decline of life in solemn solitude and contemplation. When they went with their wives they were said to undergo the *vanaprastha* stage of family life. The hoary sage of our story was undergoing *vanaprastha*, for he was in the woods with his wife. His name while living was Jnananidhi. He had built a neat (*parnasala*, or) cottage of leaves, on the banks of the commingled waters of the Tunga and Bhadra, and here his days and nights were spent in meditation. Though old in years he retained the full vigour of manhood, the result of a well-spent youth. The life of his later years was most simple and sinless.

"Remote from man, with God he passed his days;  
Prayer all his business, all his pleasures praise."

The wood yielded him herbs, fruits and roots, and the river, proverbial<sup>1</sup> for its sweet waters, supplied him with drink. He lived, in fact, as simply as the bard who sang.

"But from the mountain's grassy side  
A guiltless feast I bring;  
A bag with herbs and fruits supplied,  
And water from the spring."

<sup>1</sup> *Ganga mana Tunga pana*. The Ganges for bath and Tunga (*Tungabhadra*) for drink.

His faithful wife brought him these, while Jnananidhi himself devoted his whole time to the contemplation of God.

Such was Jnananidhi—the abode of all knowledge—to whom the boy-philosopher, Subrahmanya, resorted. After questioning each other both were mightily pleased at the fortune which had brought them together. Jnananidhi was glad to impart his hard-earned knowledge during his leisure moments to the young student, and Subrahmanya, with that longing which made him renounce the city and take to the woods, eagerly swallowed and assimilated whatever was administered to him. He relieved his mother—for such he regarded his master's wife—of all her troubles, and used himself to go out to bring the fruits, herbs and roots necessary for the repasts of the little family. Thus passed five years, by which time our young friend had become learned in the many branches of Aryan philosophy.

Jnananidhi had a desire to visit the source of the Tungabhadra, but his wife was eight months advanced in her pregnancy. So he could not take her; and to take care of her he had to leave behind his disciple, Subrahmanya. Thus, after commending the old lady to Subrahmanya's care, and leaving for female assistance another sage's wife, whom he had brought from a distant forest, Jnananidhi went his way.

The time for confinement was fast approaching, and the old lady even felt the pangs of labour. Her attendant remained with her inside the cottage, while Subrahmanya sat outside anxiously waiting to hear that his master's wife had been safely brought to bed.

Now, there is a strong belief among Hindus that Brahma, the great creator, writes on everyone's head at the time of his birth his future fortunes in life. He is supposed to do this just at the moment of birth, when the child leaves the womb of its mother and enters the world. Of course, the great God when he enters the room to discharge his onerous duty, is invisible to all human eyes. But the eyes of Subrahmanya were not exactly human. The supreme knowledge which Jnananidhi had imparted to him made it easy for him to discern at once a person entering most impolitely the room in which his master's wife was being confined.

"Let your reverence stop here," said the disciple angrily though respectfully. The great God shuddered, for he had been in the habit of entering hourly innumerable buildings on his eternal rounds of duty, but never till then had a human being perceived him and asked him to stop. His wonder knew no

measure, and as he stood bewildered the following reprimand fell on his ears: "Hoary Brahman sage (for so Brahma appeared), it is unbecoming your age thus to enter the hut of my master, unallowed by me, who am watching here. My teacher's wife is in labour. Hold your steps."

Brahma hastily—for the time of inscribing the future fortune on the forehead of the baby to be born was fast approaching—explained to Subrahmanya who he was and what brought him there. As soon as our young hero came to know the person who stood before him he rose up, and, tying his upper cloth round his hips as a mark of respect, went round the Creator thrice, fell down before Brahma's most holy feet and begged his pardon. Brahma had not much time. He wanted to go in at once, but our young friend would not leave the God until he explained what he meant to write on the head of the child. "My son!" said Brahma, "I myself do not know what my iron nail will write on the head of the child. When the child is coming into the world I place the nail on its head, and the instrument writes the fate of the baby in proportion to its good or bad acts in its former life. To delay me is merely wrong. Let me go in."

"Then," said Subrahmanya, "your Holiness must inform me when your Holiness goes out what has been written on the child's head." "Agreed," said Brahma and went in. After a moment he returned, and Subrahmanya at the door asked the God what his nail had written.

"My child!" said Brahma, "I will inform you what it wrote; but if you disclose it to anyone your head will split into a thousand pieces. The child is a male child. It has before it a very hard life. A buffalo and a sack of grain will be its livelihood. What is to be done? Perhaps it had not done any good acts in its former life, and as the result of its sin then it must undergo miseries now."

"What! Your supreme Holiness, the father of this child is a great sage. And is this the fate reserved to the son of a sage?" wept the true disciple of the sage.

"What have I to do with the matter? The fruits of acts in a former life must be undergone in the present life. But, remember, if you should reveal this news to anyone your head will split into a thousand pieces."

Having said this Brahma went away, leaving Subrahmanya extremely pained to hear that the son of a great sage was to have a hard life. He could not even open his lips on the subject, for

if he did his head would be split. In sorrow he passed some days, when Jnananidhi returned from his pilgrimage and was delighted to see his wife and the child doing well, and in the learned company of the old sage our young disciple forgot all his sorrow.

Three more years passed away in deep study, and again the old sage wanted to go on a pilgrimage to the sacred source of the Tungabhadra. Again was his wife pregnant, and he had to leave her and his disciple behind with the usual temporary female assistance. Again, too, did Brahma appear at the moment of birth, but found easy admittance as Subrahmanya had now become acquainted with him owing to the previous confinement. Again did Brahma take an oath from him not to communicate the fortunes of the second child, with the curse that if he broke his oath his head would split into a thousand pieces. The child was a female, and the nail had written that her fate was to be that of a courtesan! She would obtain her living after her attaining maturity by prostitution. Our young philosopher was deeply grieved. The most shameful and sinful life of lives was to be the lot of a daughter of a most holy sage. The thought vexed him to such a degree that language has no words to express it. After worrying a great deal he consoled himself with the soothing philosophies of the fatalists that fate alone governs the world.

The old sage in due course returned, and Subrahmanya spent two more happy years with him. After a little more than ten years had been thus spent the boy reached to five years and the girl to two. The more they advanced in years the more did the recollection of their future fate pain Subrahmanya. So one morning he humbly requested the old sage to permit him to go on a long journey to the Himalayas and other mountains, and Jnananidhi, knowing that all the knowledge he could impart had been grasped by the young disciple, permitted him with a glad heart to satisfy his curiosity.

Subrahmanya, therefore, set out and after several years, during which he visited several towns and learned men, reached the Himalayas. There he saw many sages, and lived with them for some time. He did not remain in one place, for his object was more to examine the world. So he went from place to place, and after a long and interesting journey of twenty years he again returned to the banks of the Tungabhadra, at the very place where he lived for ten years and imbibed philosophical knowledge from Jnananidhi. But he saw there neither Jnananidhi nor his

old wife. They had long since fallen a prey to the lord of death. Much afflicted at heart to see his master and mistress no more, he went to the nearest town, and there after a deal of search he found a coolie with a single buffalo. The fate which Brahma's nail had written on his master's son rushed into the mind of Subrahmanya. He approached the coolie, and, inspecting him closely found distinct indications of his master's face in the labourer. His pain knew no bounds to see the son of a great sage thus earning his livelihood out of a buffalo. He followed him to his home, and found that he had a wife and two children. One sack of corn he had in his house and no more, from which he took out a portion every day and gave to his wife to be husked. The rice was cooked, and with the petty earnings of a coolie, he and his family kept body and soul together. Each time the corn in the sack became exhausted he used to be able to save enough to replenish it again with corn. Thus did he, according to the writing of Brahma's nail, pass his days. Kapali was the name of this coolie, the sage's son.

"Do you know me, Kapali?" said our hero, as he remembered his name.

The coolie was astonished to hear his name so readily pronounced by one who was apparently a stranger to him, but he said, "I am sorry that I do not know you, sir."

Subrahmanya then explained to him who he was and requested him to follow his advice. "My dear son," said he, "do as I bid you. Early tomorrow morning leave your bed and take your buffalo and the corn sack to the market. Dispose of them for whatever amount they will fetch you. Do not think twice about the matter. Buy all that is necessary for a sumptuous meal from the sale-proceeds and eat it all up at once without reserving a morsel for the morrow. You will get a great deal more than you can eat in a day. But do not reserve any, even the smallest portion of it. Feed several other Brahmans with it. Do not think that I advise you for your ruin. You will see in the end that what your father's disciple tells you is for your own prosperity."

However, whatever the sage might say, Kapali could not bring himself to believe him. "What shall I do to feed my wife and children tomorrow if I sell everything belonging to me to-day?" Thus thought Kapali and consulted his wife.

Now she was a very virtuous and intelligent woman. Said she, "My dear lord, we have heard that your father was a great

*mahatma*. This disciple must equally be a *mahatma*. His holiness would not advise us to our ruin. Let us follow the sage's advise."

When Kapali's wife thus supported the sage he resolved to dispose of his beast and sack the next morning, and he did so accordingly. The provisions he bought were enough to feed fifty Brahmans morning and evening as well as his own family. So that day he fed Brahmans for the first time in his life. Night came on, and after an adventurous day Kapali retired to sleep, but sleep he could not. Meanwhile Subrahmanya was sleeping on the bare verandah outside the house, and Kapali came to the sage and said, "Holy sage, nearly half of the night is spent and there are only fifteen *ghatikas* more for the dawn. What shall I do for the morrow for my hungry children? All that I had, I have spent. I have not even a morsel of cold rice for the morning."

Subrahmanya showed him some money that he had in his hand, enough to buy a buffalo and a sack of corn in case the great God did not help him, and asked him to spend that night, at least the remainder of it, in calm sleep. So Kapali with his heart at ease retired to rest.

He had not slept more than ten *ghatikas* when he dreamt that all his family—his wife and children—were screaming for a mouthful of rice. Suddenly he awoke and cursed his poverty which had always made such thoughts prominent in his mind. There were only five *ghatikas* for the lord of the day to make his appearance in the eastern horizon, and before this could happen he wanted to finish his morning bath and ablutions, and so he went to his garden to bathe at the well. The shed for the buffalo was erected in the garden, and it had been his habit daily before bathing to give fresh straw to his beast. That morning he thought he was spared that duty. But, wonder of wonders! He saw another buffalo standing there. He cursed his poverty again which imagined things impossible. How could it be possible that his beast should be standing there when he had sold it the previous morning? So he went into the shed and found a real buffalo standing there. He could not believe his eyes, and hastily brought a lamp from his house. It was, however, a real buffalo, and beside it was a sack of corn! His heart leapt with joy, and he ran out to tell to his patron, Subrahmanya. But when the latter heard it he said with a disgusted air, "My dear Kapali, why do you care so much? Why do you feel overjoyed? Take the beast at once with the corn-sack and sell them as you did yesterday."

Kapali at once obeyed the orders and changed the money into provisions. Again fifty Brahmans were fed the next day too, and nothing was reserved for the third day's use. Thus it went on in Kapali's house. Every morning he found a buffalo and a sack of corn, which he sold and fed Brahmans with the proceeds. In this way a month passed. Said Subrahmanya one day, "My dear Kapali, I am your holy father's disciple, and I would never advise you to do a thing prejudicial to your welfare. When I came to know that you were the son of the great sage, Jnananidhi, and were leading so wretched a life, I came to see you in order to alleviate your miseries. I have now done so, and pointed out the way to you to live comfortably. Daily must you continue thus. Do as you have been doing for the past one month, and never reserve anything, for if you reserve a portion all this happiness may fail, and you will have to revert to your former wretched life. I have done my duty towards you. If you become ambitious of hoarding up money this fortune may desert you?"

Kapali agreed to follow the advice of the sage to the uttermost detail and requested him to remain in his house. Again said Subrahmanya, "My son! I have better work before me than living in your house. So please excuse me. But before leaving you I request you to inform me as to where your sister is. She was a child of two years of age when I saw her twenty years ago. She must be about twenty-two or twenty-three now. Where is she?"

Tears trickled down the eyes of Kapali when his sister was mentioned. Said he, "Do not think of her, my father. She is lost to the world. I am ashamed to think of her. Why should we think of such a wretch at this happy time?"

At once the inscription made by Brahma's nail rushed into Subrahmanya's mind and he understood what was meant. Said he, "Never mind; be open and tell me where she is."

Then her brother, Kapali, with his eyes still wet with tears, said that his sister, the daughter of the sage Jnananidhi, was leading the worst of lives as a courtesan in an adjoining village, and that her name was Kalyani.

Subrahmanya took leave of Kapali and his wife, after blessing his little children and again warning his friend. He had conferred what happiness he could upon his master's son, and now the thought of reforming his master's daughter reigned supreme in his heart. He went at once to the village indicated and reached it at

about nightfall. After an easy search he found her house and knocked at the door. The door was at once opened, for Kalyani's profession was such that never did she wait for a second knock. But on that day she was astonished to see a face such as she could never expect to approach her house.

"Do you know me, Kalyani?" said Subrahmanya, and she in reply said that she did not. He then explained who he was, and when she came to know that it was a disciple of her father that was standing before her she wept most bitterly. The thought that, after having been born of such a holy sage, she had adopted so wretched a life, the most shameful in the world, made her miserable at the heart. She fell down at his feet and asked to be forgiven. She then explained to him her extreme misery, and the hard necessity which had compelled her to take to her present way of living. He then consoled her and spoke thus: "My dear daughter! My heart burns to see that necessity drove you to this wretched life. But I can redeem you if you will only follow my advice. From this night you had better shut your door, and never open it to any other person except to him who brings to you a large measure full of pearls of the first water. You follow this advice for a day and I shall then advise you further." Being the daughter of a great sage, and having been compelled by necessity to take to a wretched life, she readily consented to follow the advice of her father's disciple when he promised to redeem her. She bolted the door, and as her customers used to visit her at night, several came that night and knocked. To all she stated from within that her condition was a large measure full of pearls. Her visitors, considering she had gone mad, went away. The night was almost drawing to a close and all her customers had gone away disappointed. Who was there in the village to give to her one measure full of pearls for one night with her? But as the nail of Brahma had fixed for her such a life as stated, some one was bound to comply with her terms. And as there was no human being who could do so, the God Brahma himself assumed the shape of a young man, and, with a measure full of pearls, visited her in the last watch of the night and remained with her.

When morning dawned he disappeared, and when Kalyani explained to the disciple of her father the next morning that after all one person had visited her with a measure full of pearls on the previous night he was glad to hear of it. He knew that his suggestion was working well. Said he, "My dear daughter, you are



pure hereafter from this day. There are very few people in this world who could afford to give you a measure full of pearls every night. So, he that brought you the pearls last night must continue to do so every night, and he shall be hereafter your only husband. No other person must ever hereafter see your face, and you must obey my orders. You must sell all the pearls he brings you every day and convert them into money. This money you should spend in feeding the poor and other charities. None of it must you reserve for the next day, neither must you entertain a desire to hoard up money. The day you fail to follow my advice you will lose your husband, and then you will have to fall back on your former wretched life."

Thus said Subrahmanya, and Kalyani agreed to follow his injunctions strictly. He then went to live under a tree opposite to her house for a month to see whether his plan was working well, and found that indeed it worked admirably.

Thus, after having conferred happiness, to the best of his abilities, on the son and daughter of his former master, Subrahmanya took leave of Kalyani, and with her permission, most reluctantly given, he pursued his pilgrimage.

One moonlight night, after a long sleep, Subrahmanya rose up almost at midnight, and hearing the crows crowing he mistook it for the dawn and commenced his journey. He had not proceeded far, when on his way he met a beautiful person coming before him, with a sack of corn on his head and a bundle of pearls tied up in the end of his upper cloth on his shoulder, leading a buffalo before him.

"Who are you sir, walking thus in this forest?" said Subrahmanya.

When thus addressed the person before him threw down the sack and wept most bitterly. "See sir, my head is almost become bald by having to bear to Kapali's house a sack of corn every night. This buffalo I lead to Kapali's shed, and this bundle of pearls I take to Kalyani's house. My nail wrote their fate on their respective heads, and by your device I have to supply them with what my nail wrote. When will you relieve me of these troubles?"

Thus wept Brahma, for it was no other. He was the Creator and Protector of all beings, and when Subrahmanya had pointed out the way for his master's children and they had conquered fate, Brahma too was conquered. So the great God soon gave them eternal felicity and relieved himself of his troubles.

## TARAPOREVALA'S BOOKS ON INDIAN SUBJECTS

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